

Rocket Boys/October Sky Festival Soars into Beckley October 2nd and 3rd

Featuring Homer Hickam and other Rocket Boys, Landau Eugene Murphy Jr., Rocket Launches, WV Film Festival and more

BECKLEY, WV, USA, September 22, 2015 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Rocket Boys/October Sky Festival is coming to Beckley, West Virginia the first weekend in October, just in time for peak mountain fall foliage, featuring Homer Hickam and the Rocket Boys in person, rocket launches, book signings, guided coal mine tours, a WV themed film festival, a very special concert by America's Got Talent winner Landau Eugene Murphy Jr. and more!

Acclaimed author and Coalwood, WV native Homer Hickam is coming home to West Virginia just prior to publisher

HarperCollins releasing his highly anticipated new novel "Carrying Albert Home" on October 13th. The book, featuring Hickam's parents Homer Sr., Elsie, and their pet alligator Albert, is receiving rave initial reviews. Early indications are that "Albert" may become Hickam's biggest book since "Rocket Boys" became a runaway hit and New York Times #1 bestseller. The new novel already has 14 international publishers (more than "Rocket Boys" after nearly twenty years), has been selected by a major book club, given several major awards, and will be a Reader's Digest Condensed book. "We're very thankful that Homer and his publisher were able to work the festival into an incredibly busy schedule with the release of "Carrying Albert Home" coming up," says Scott Hill, the Rocket Boys Festival director. "We're all very excited about his new book and can't wait to hear about it."

The Rocket Boys/October Sky Festival two central locations are Beckley's New River Park/Exhibition Coal Mine and Tamarack Cultural Center. New River Park boasts an authentic exhibition working coal mine that will be open for discounted tours, taking riders on a motorized tour 1,500 feet underground. The park also features an award-winning youth museum and planetarium, great Appalachian food, a complete full-size replica of a 1950's mining town like Coalwood, a miner's museum, and much more. Tamarack will feature a week-long Rocket Boys West Virginia Film Festival, which will include We Are Marshall, Paradise Park, Druid Peak, and a Friday night October 2nd screening of October Sky, featuring Homer and the Rocket Boys, followed by a very special concert performance by Landau Eugene Murphy Jr.

Landau is enjoying his biggest year since winning America's Got Talent in 2011; his sold-out tour has



taken him from coast to coast and his new live in-concert DVD is slated for a Christmas release. Most of the popular singer's "Soul Sinatra" concert dates have taken him out of state, so this is a rare opportunity to see Landau and his band in a small, intimate setting at Tamarack. Murphy is doing a special salute to Frank Sinatra on this year's tour to mark the Chairman of the Board's 100th birthday year. A limited number of Landau tickets, including Gold Circle seating in the first two rows, are on sale now at www.landauattamarack.brownpaperticket.com.

On Saturday October 3rd, fans of Homer Hickam's New York Times #1 best seller Rocket Boys, the movie version October Sky, and Homer's other best sellers will have the opportunity to enjoy free autograph signings and photo ops with actual Rocket Boys Hickam, Roy Lee

Cooke, Jimmy "O'Dell" Carroll and Billy Rose.

The annual Rocket Boys/October Sky Festival will include a writers' workshop hosted by Homer Hickam for aspiring and seasoned authors. The festival will also feature book signings from other notable writers including Dreama Denver, wife of late "Gilligan's Island" star Bob Denver and author of "Gilligan's Dreams," Daniel Boyd, the West Virginia filmmaker ("Chillers," "Invasion of the Space Preachers," "Paradise Park") and author whose latest graphic novel "Carbon" is set in the West Virginia coalfields, and Landau Murphy Jr., whose memoir "From Washing Cars to Hollywood Star" was an Amazon.com best seller. The book just received a Reader's Favorite award, which Murphy will accept during ceremonies in Miami in November.

One of the Rocket Boys/October Sky Festival highlights is the dozens of students from schools all over America who join Hickam and the other Rocket Boys to launch rockets at New River Park's hilltop "Cape Coalwood" launch pad. Rocket kits and launch supplies will be available for purchase at the festival. Proceeds will benefit the Rocket Boys/October Sky Festival and the local chapter of the American Red Cross.

Construction and launch is easy – even for first timers. Students from Homer Hickam's alma mater Virginia Tech will be there to assist. NASA representatives from Goddard Space Flight Center will also be in attendance to talk rockets and space with festivalgoers and provide their rocketry expertise.

More information on the Rocket Boys/October Sky Festival, including a complete schedule of events and lodging information, is available online at www.rocketboysfestival.com. Beckley, WV is located on Interstate 64 in southern West Virginia, and is also accessible via Beckley/Raleigh County Airport with daily non-stops to Charlotte Douglas International Airport and Amtrak service on the Cardinal line.

For media interview requests prior to the event with Rocket Boys Roy Lee Cooke, O'Dell Carroll and



Landau Eugene Murphy Jr.

Billy Rose, or special guest Landau Eugene Murphy Jr., contact Jessica Lloyd with Allen Media Strategies by calling (703) 589-8960 or by email at jessica@allenmediastrategies.com.

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