

Sweet Briar Celebrates Launch of Dr. Joe Sacksteder's Hack House

Sweet Briar celebrates Dr. Joe Sacksteder's second novel, Hack House, with a live reading, author Q&A, and guest appearance by writer Brittany Cavallaro.

SWEET BRIAR, VA, UNITED STATES, April 22, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Sweet Briar College celebrated Assistant Professor of [English and Creative Writing](#) Dr. Joe Sacksteder for the launch of his latest book, Hack House.

His second full-length novel, Hack House turns Dr. Sacksteder's real life experiences as a house painter while obtaining his M.A. and the lore of a real home into fiction. The story chronicles the work of the six members of the Lotus Painting crew on the Losada family home, a historic Victorian house with a sinister past. Deemed "unendingly hilarious and inventive" by Angela Woodward, author of Ink and Natural Wonders, Hack House is



Dr. Sacksteder's experimental horror novel Hack House explores the true story behind a Michigan home with a sinister past.

an experimental horror novel that steadily simmers as home improvement devolves into home invasion throughout one blistering Michigan summer.

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Assistant Professor of English and Creative Writing Dr. Joe Sacksteder

“The more I looked into the history of this house my painting crew was working on—built using absconded investments in the fraudulent Electric Sugar Refining Company of the 1880s in New York City—the more haunted the property started to feel,” Dr. Sacksteder said of the book's inspiration. “At its heart, though, the novel is about manual labor, prompting readers to think critically about how the effects of repetitive, grueling work cumulatively register on the body, psyche, and

environment.”

During the launch event in the Anne Gary Pannell Center, Dr. Sacksteder was introduced by colleague and friend Dr. Susannah Nevison before reading an excerpt from *Hack House*. A book signing followed the reading, and copies are available for purchase in the [College's Book Shop](#). The launch also featured a reading by New York Times bestselling author Brittany Cavallaro, who shared several poems and an excerpt from her young adult novel, *A Study in Charlotte*.

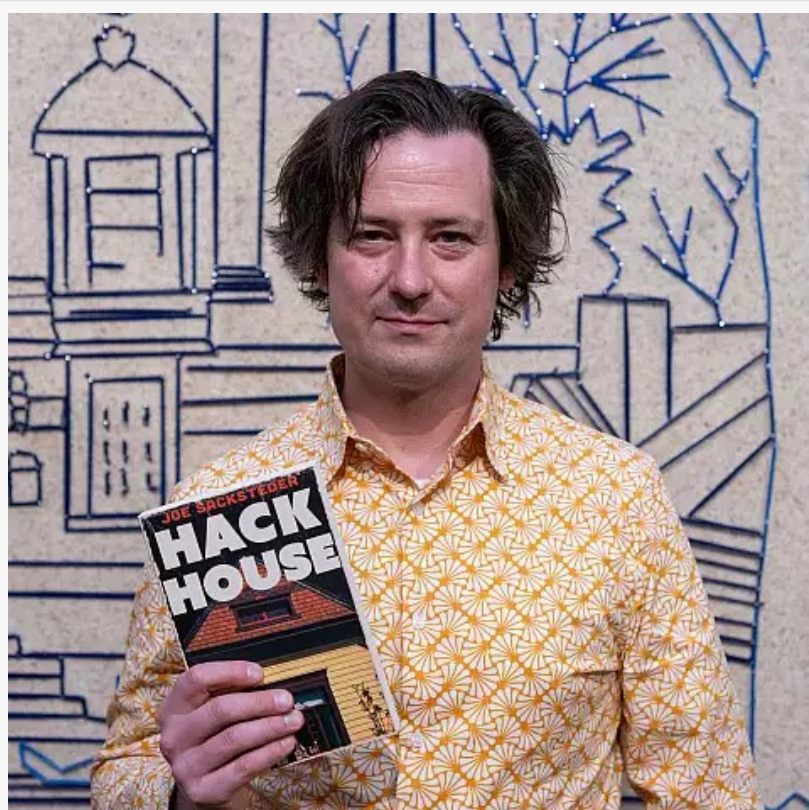
A fan of horror, Dr. Sacksteder has brought his interest in the horror genre to Sweet Briar several times this year, including through his English and Creative Writing elective, "Scary Stories: Tradition and Innovation," an art exhibition, *Scary Stories: The High Road/Strange Mirrors* and most recently during a Sweet Talks presentation on Alvin Schwartz's *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* anthologies.

Dr. Sacksteder has previously released *Make/Shift*, a short story collection; *Driftless Quintet*, his first novel; and "Fugitive Traces," an album of audio collage, in addition to other publications. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Utah, an M.A. from Eastern Michigan University, and a B.A. from St. John's University in Minnesota. He teaches multi-genre, multidisciplinary classes with a focus on fiction, aesthetics, and genre hybridity.

[The Kelley & C.T. Fitzpatrick Center for Creativity, Design, and the Arts](#) and the Writers Series supported this event. Alumnae, families, and friends interested in supporting the arts are encouraged to attend events on campus and make a gift to the Friends of Art at sbc.edu/friends-groups.

To learn more about studying English and Creative Writing at Sweet Briar College, contact Admissions at admissions@sbc.edu or call 434-381-6142.

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Dr. Joe Sacksteder launches his second novel, *Hack House*.

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