

PRESS RELEASE

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Zackary Vernon Receives First Alex Albright Creative Nonfiction Prize

New faculty member at Appalachian State University Zackary Vernon is the winner of the premiere Alex Albright Creative Nonfiction Prize for his essay entitled “Boone Summer: Adventures of a Bad Environmentalist.” Vernon will receive \$250, and his essay will be published in the 25th issue of the *North Carolina Literary Review* in 2016.

Alex Albright, *NCLR*'s founding editor, said of the first recipient of the prize named in his honor, “Zackary Vernon's narrative stood out as the best of the submissions not just because it's so well written, but also because it is about so much more than the author's experience. Through the lens of personal experience, he explores cultural, environmental, and regional subjects that make it an important addition to our state's tradition of excellence in nonfiction writing. His Boston-to-Boone nexus is a terrific hook, and I look forward to reading the book that this chapter introduces.” “Boone Summer: Adventures of a Bad Environmentalist” is the first chapter of Vernon's book project on environmental and agricultural activism in the South, particularly Southern Appalachia. The essay includes the author's internal dialogue regarding environmentalism in his personal life and the world around him, including his relationship with a neighbor and his interactions with Eustace Conway, who runs Turtle Island Preserve. Vernon explains, “Each chapter of the book analyzes one local activity--homesteading, fishing, hunting, skiing, hiking, eating, drinking--in order to determine whether it's possible to be a resource-consuming and pleasure-seeking person while also being a good environmental steward.”

Zackary Vernon grew up in Pawleys Island, SC, and earned a B.A. in English from Clemson University. He moved to North Carolina for the master's program in English at North Carolina State University, which he completed with a thesis on North Carolina poet and fiction writer Ron Rash. Vernon went on to earn his Ph.D. in English from UNC Chapel Hill with a dissertation on literature and film of the Cold War era. In fall 2015, he joined the faculty of Appalachian State University as an Assistant Professor of Contemporary American and Southern literature, and he has recently contracted with the University of South Carolina Press to co-edit a book of scholarly essays on Rash.

North Carolina Literary Review Editor Margaret Bauer noted of this first recipient of the Albright Prize, “Submissions are read ‘blind’ for the competition, so it was a nice surprise when we connected the title of Alex's selection with a familiar name, someone who has served *NCLR* in various capacities: Zack began reviewing books for *NCLR* while he was a graduate student at UNC, then went on to submit interviews and essays.” Vernon's interview with Ron Rash and Terry Roberts about their World War I novels appeared in *NCLR* 2014, which also included Vernon's Pushcart-nominated essay on Allan Gurganus.

Published since 1992 by East Carolina University and the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association, the *North Carolina Literary Review* has won numerous awards and citations. *NCLR* subscribers can read Vernon's prize-winning essay in the 2016 issue, as well as submit their own creative nonfiction to next year's Albright competition. For subscription information, go to <http://www.nclr.ecu.edu/subscrip.html>.