

# Meet the Featured Speakers

## Tuesday, January 24



### **KEN JENKINS**

**7:30 PM – Wilderness Adventures in the Smokies**

**Ken Jenkins**, professional photographer and father of Wilderness Wildlife Week, is known throughout North America. He is an accomplished author of numerous books covering black bears, grizzlies and other wildlife. Because of Ken's vision in 1990, Wilderness Wildlife Week is a free event built around the principles of family, education and enjoyment of the outdoors. While Wilderness Wildlife Week is an award-winning event, having won prestigious awards from the International Festivals and Events Association, the best facet of the event is that the event has remained true to its values and has continued to grow and incorporate new components to further educate, entertain and connect folks to our natural world.

## Wednesday, January 25

### **DAVID MORRIS**

**7:30 PM - From Bison to Bears - An Adventure in America's First Park**

David Morris is a retired nurse anesthetist who now lives in southwestern Michigan. While practicing in Knoxville for forty years, he spent much of his free time in the Smokies hiking and backpacking. He is co-author of *Waterfalls of the Smokies* and *Family Hiking in the Smokies*, as well as a contributing author of *Hiking Trails of the Smokies*. He returns to the area often to hike with his friends and family.



### **CHARLES MAYNARD**

**7:30 PM - From Bison to Bears - An Adventure in America's First Park**

Charles Maynard is a writer, storyteller, and United Methodist minister who lives in Knoxville, TN. Charles was the founding Executive Director of Friends of the Smokies and has written extensively in books and magazines about the Smokies and other National Parks. He co-authored with David Morris and Hal Hubbs – *Waterfalls of the Smokies* and *Family Hiking in the Smokies*. He was a contributing author of *Hiking Trails of the Smokies*. He also authored the children's book – *Going Along to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park* as well as *Churches of the Smokies*.

Charles and David have been leading hikes for groups since 1992 and have shared many hiking adventures in the Smokies and beyond.



## Thursday, January 26

### **KEN JENKINS**

**7:30 PM – Heaven & Nature Sings**

**Ken Jenkins** grew up in nearby Newport, Tennessee, a small town at the foothills to the Great Smoky Mountains. He has always been very proud to be from that area. Some of the finest people he has ever met live there. Ken spent his early years around folks that care about each other, work very hard, and encourage each other... people that love their country, trust in God, and want for very little.

Ken was never without work from the time he was 12 years of age. His outdoor interests were keen as far back as he can remember. His mother and father and brother camped and hiked in the mountains all of his young life. The Jenkins family loaded the station wagon every summer and crossed the country on a shoestring budget.

Ken had a camera as early as 12 years of age and began to get real serious about his photography in his early twenties. After all of these years, he still gets just as excited when he is watching a bear or a beaver as he did when he was young. The joy of watching and experiencing and learning has always been superior to the recording of that subject.

It has been a wonderful pursuit traveling around this wonderful world and recording the beauty of God's hand. Ken's favorite areas are in the Far North because of the untouched beauty and abundance of wildlife. He spends time in twelve different national parks each year along with many days along America's rivers. Ken has climbed all over his beloved Smokies where he lives on the edge of the park. He has many projects that involve the scenes and subjects in the Great Smoky Mountains. Many, many days are spent with wildlife of various species.

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## Thursday, January 26

**JUDY FELTS**

**7:30 PM – Heaven & Nature Sings**

**Judy Felts**, originally from Arkansas, graduated with a degree in music and later moved to the Nashville area to pursue her music career. She was a performer at Opryland as well as keyboard and vocalist for Grand Ole Opry star Bill Anderson. Judy has been utilized as a keynote speaker, worship leader and soloist for various churches, conferences and mission events. In addition to Judy's solo ministry, she also performs with Lee Porter as a duo with piano, guitar, string bass and percussion. They have performed together for the last nine years and are available for churches, conferences and events. Judy and her husband Mike have been attending Wilderness Wildlife Week since 2000 and have a love for hiking and the outdoors.



## Friday, January 27

**THE SUTTON FAMILY: JOSH, CASSIE, AND HARVEY**

**7:30 PM – The Appalachian Trail with a Four year old**

Follow the epic journey of a family daring to take their 4 year old on a 2,193 mile trek through snow, ice, and endless rain, while backpacking in the wilderness for 7 months. Harvey Sutton becomes the youngest Northbound thru hiker of the Appalachian Trail with his parents Josh & Cassie, by traversing the oldest mountain range in the world. The Appalachian Trail only has a 25% success rate, as it follows America's East coast through 14 states.

Concluding with the final obstacle on Mt. Katahdin with the rule that climbers must be over 6 years old to go beyond tree line to the summit, the Sutton family made headlines after they partitioned and received special permits from the Park Authorities to reach the peak.

They had exciting adventures as well and learned how a family can face multiple physical and mental challenges, all while making trail life a whimsical journey for their son.

Being well known in the long distance trail community they have done numerous in person speaking engagements, podcast and news interviews all over, including Lester Holt's Nightly News, NPR, CNN, and RTL German Television. Come see how a young family overcame such an epic journey and answer all the questions you have about how they did it.



## Saturday, January 28

**STANFORD JOHNSON WITH RICHARD WAY**

**7 PM: Murder and Mayhem in the Great Smoky Mountains**

**Stanford Johnson** is a native East Tennessean and two-time honorably discharged and former homeless Army Veteran. He served as an enlisted Military Policeman in the Berlin Brigade, then after he fulfilled his degree and commissioning requirements at The University of North Georgia, as a Field Artillery Officer in the Third Infantry Division and the First Armored Division.

He's also a former United Methodist Church Senior Pastor.

Currently he volunteers as a Peer Recovery Specialist, a W.R.A.P. and Celebrate Recovery Inside facilitator and Veterans Mentor with his home county's veterans.

When he's not writing you can likely find him in his backyard, which is The Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and when he's really blessed, spending time with his son Zachariah and Zach's lovely girlfriend, Vanessa.

He's currently working on a number of writing projects, including the definitive account of White-capping in Sevier County in the 1890s, a memoir, and a book of daily meditations.

