

Our new executive director. . .

## Welcome, Eric Waggoner!

**E**ric Waggoner has traveled widely in his professional work and freelance writing, and his education took him as far away as the desert Southwest, but he will be coming home to the Kanawha Valley when he takes over as executive director of the West Virginia Humanities Council in October. Our new head guy is a deeply rooted West Virginian. Waggoner was raised in the Charleston area, where his father directed the West Virginia Library Commission and his mother worked at the state archives. He recalls growing up among relatives stretching back three generations.

Waggoner was educated at West Virginia Wesleyan College, Old Dominion University and Arizona State University, earning a PhD in American Literature from Arizona State in 2001. Since 2002, he has been a member of the West Virginia Wesleyan faculty in Buckhannon. He chaired the English Department through the spring of 2018, also serving as interim director of the college's School of Fine Arts and Humanities. He previously was chair of the Wesleyan faculty senate and ex officio member of the board of trustees.

He is widely published, as well. In addition to numerous academic papers and presentations, Waggoner has authored what he estimates as hundreds of freelance interviews, articles and reviews in the field of music and film journalism. He has frequently contributed to alternative urban weeklies including the *Detroit Metro Times*, *Seattle Weekly*, and others.

The Humanities Council looked to a



*Eric Waggoner at Humanities Council headquarters in Charleston.*

combination of talents in hiring Waggoner.

“Running a state humanities council is an unusual job,” said Dan Foster, who chaired the search committee. Foster’s previous role as Council board president brought him into regular contact with representatives of humanities councils from across the country, and he sees the executive job as a one-of-a-kind position in each state.

“There’s not much of a peer pool,” he noted. “Each state’s executive director is pretty much custom-made. You’re looking for someone with the academic training of a first-class humanist along with significant administrative experience, who also is committed to the state he or she serves.

“We think we got the right mix with Eric,” Foster added, pointing to Waggoner’s advanced degrees and his administrative experience. “His hands-on work in running various programs at Wesleyan and on the faculty senate and board of trustees brings a level of experience that even top-notch academics often lack. At the West Virginia Humanities Council he’ll be responsible for maintaining the highest intellectual standards

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## The West Virginia Humanities Council

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Next Board Meeting  
October 26, 2018,  
Charleston.  
Open to the public.

# Moving On

I like to quote Merle Haggard at life's significant moments, and maybe the line that fits best for retirement is "been workin' every day since I was 20." That's from Merle's great song, "Big City (turn me loose and set me free)," and it's been going through my mind since I announced my departure from the Humanities Council.

I figure Merle chose 20 because it rhymes easier than something down in the 'teens. As a country boy coming up the hard way, I imagine he was workin' from a good bit before age 20, and certainly that was true for me. Between work and school I've been at it pretty much nonstop for more than 50 years – and well, I'm ready for something else now.

Saying that, I've got no complaints. I've had two great jobs squarely within my field of interest that occupied the greater part of my life. My work put me in every county of West Virginia many times over, in every town of any size, and on what surely seems like every road and byway. From Cucumber to New Cumberland, I've been there, Delbarton to Shenandoah Junction, and it's been my special joy to distill the Mountain State story for readers of *Goldenseal* magazine and the *West Virginia Encyclopedia*.

I started with the Humanities Council in February 1997, so I'm going on 22 years now. I suppose the *Encyclopedia*, in its print and online versions, and restoration of the historic MacFarland-Hubbard House have been my particular babies. But our real work since 1997 has been the millions of dollars mobilized for humanities grants statewide and the countless programs those dollars helped support. I can't say I've expanded programming as much as I'd like, but I'm satisfied we are on a sounder financial footing than ever before.

So what are my plans, after working all this time? I've told so many people that I'm going to wash the car on my first day off that I suppose I'll really have to do that – the car washing standing for all the personal chores I've neglected. No doubt there will be other catching up, as well: literally a fence to paint, and brush keeps growing on a certain Summers County ridge that I know pretty well. Then there's a book project I've been working on, and I hope to stay involved with the online *Encyclopedia*.

As for the loafing part, got it covered: Debra and I love to travel, so maybe we'll get to do a little more ramblin,' to give the last word to You-Know-Who.

– Ken Sullivan

*People & Mountains is published three times a year by the West Virginia Humanities Council.*

*A state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the West Virginia Humanities Council serves West Virginia through grants and direct programs in the humanities.*

*We welcome letters, comments, and financial contributions. Please address correspondence to West Virginia Humanities Council, 1310 Kanawha Boulevard, East, Charleston, WV 25301 or zuros@wvhumanities.org.*

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**We welcome nominees for the board of directors. Each year the Humanities Council board of directors renews itself by adding several new members. Board members are chosen from all parts of West Virginia and serve without compensation although expenses are reimbursed. Please send recommendations with brief biographical information to [waggoner@wvhumanities.org](mailto:waggoner@wvhumanities.org).**

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while also keeping the bills paid and the lights on. All those things are important.”

Waggoner replaces Ken Sullivan, who is departing after more than 20 years as executive director. Sullivan called retirement a bittersweet decision and said he was reassured by the care with which his replacement was recruited.

“Naturally I was an interested bystander,” Sullivan said. “I was not a member of the search committee but thought Dan put together an outstanding group, including four past Humanities Council board presidents and the current president and vice-president. He had a couple of attorneys and a retired university chancellor among other good people – just really an A-team of current and past leaders of the Council, our most experienced people.”

“And I was pleased with the choice they made,” Sullivan added. “While I didn’t hire Eric Waggoner I know him pretty well, and he

*“Running a state humanities council is an unusual job,” says search committee chair Dan Foster, “responsible for maintaining high intellectual standards while also keeping the bills paid and the lights on.”*

knows us. He’s just finishing his second term as an elected citizen member of the Humanities Council program committee, and has taken part in Council programs over the years. I’m glad we were able to hire from within our own circle, someone who is acquainted with the mission and culture of our organization, what we do and how we do it.

“No doubt he’ll reject the cliché as an English prof, but Eric should hit the ground running,” Sullivan said. Sullivan plans to stay on for two weeks after the new director begins work and hopes to continue a long-term involvement with the Council’s online *West Virginia Encyclopedia*.

Looking ahead, Sullivan acknowledged that there will be a shift of perspective as a literary scholar replaces a historian of long standing in the job. He pointed out that the heart of Humanities Council programming has been its emphasis on West Virginia, however, and he figures that’s not likely to change. “I believe Eric shares that commitment, and I’m sure the West Virginia story may be interpreted through our literature as well as our history, and no doubt through other fields in the humanities as well. It will be interesting to see how things shape up.”

The big change comes October 1. Eric and his partner Jessica Spruill look forward to moving to Charleston with young son Arlo.

In the meantime Waggoner plans to get to know his future colleagues better, recently dropping by Council headquarters for an informal lunch with the staff. Everyone agreed that the chemistry was good, and employees were reassured that the new director anticipates no abrupt changes.

“I expect to spend the first six months learning the ropes, getting to know Council staff and what they do,” Waggoner confirmed in a newspaper interview shortly after being hired. “I’m going to shut up and keep my eyes and ears open. They’ve got things working really well, and I’m going to learn from them.”

## Changing of the Guard

When Eric Waggoner becomes executive director on October 1, he follows two long-serving executives who together guided the West Virginia Humanities Council for nearly all its 44-year history.

Charles H. “Chuck” Daugherty became executive director in 1976 and continued for the next two decades. Daugherty, previously a political scientist at the University of Charleston, left the job in 1996 to assist in his wife’s work in the post-Cold War transition of Slovakia.

Ken Sullivan followed Daugherty in early 1997. Previously the editor of *Goldenseal*, West Virginia’s popular folklife magazine, Sullivan is a historian specializing in West Virginia and Appalachia.

“Chuck fled the country before I took over,” Sullivan joked, “but I’ve promised to stick around for Eric’s first two weeks.” Sullivan noted that the late James Rowley, former board president, had pitched in as interim director after Daugherty’s departure, and that there had been three short-term directors during the 1974-76 founding period.

Sullivan doubts that anyone needs to commit decades to the job but thinks the Humanities Council has been fortunate in the stability of its leadership. “We are not asking 20 years of Eric Waggoner’s life,” he mused, “but who knows how it may work out?”

Meet the new guy: The Humanities Council will host an open-house reception for Eric Waggoner at the MacFarland-Hubbard House, 1310 Kanawha Boulevard, East, Charleston, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Friday, October 19. Come look him over!



## e-WV continues to grow

When *e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia* went online in 2010, it began with 2,200 articles from the original print encyclopedia. But history happens every day, and no longer constrained by the limitation of printing on paper *e-WV* staff has steadily added new articles, with several posted recently.

After publishing an article on the 2016 floods, for example, another was added on a flood 100 years earlier. The Flood

of 1916 devastated the Cabin Creek area of Kanawha County, killing 71, destroying 900 homes, obliterating 18 miles of railroad track and closing coal mines. It is still the second deadliest flood in West Virginia, topped only by Buffalo Creek in 1972.

More recently, *e-WV* has added articles on the C8 chemical contamination near Parkersburg and the 2018 teachers strike (above). The latter was the first statewide strike by West Virginia teachers since 1990. The successful walkout inspired teachers elsewhere to follow suit, and five other states organized work stoppages over pay, benefits and state funding for education.

To view these and other articles about West Virginia's people, history, and places, visit [www.wvencyclopedia.org](http://www.wvencyclopedia.org).

**Museum on Main Street:** In 2021 the Humanities Council will again sponsor a state tour of a Smithsonian traveling exhibit through the Museum on Main Street program. The exhibit, *Crossroads: Change in Rural America*, will visit six West Virginia communities from August 2021 to June 2022. A request for proposals will soon be issued seeking venues interested in participating in the tour.



WWII Japanese bayonet.

## Bataan and Corregidor

The day after the December 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor, Japanese aircraft began ravaging U.S. airfields in the Philippines. Though U.S. and Filipino infantrymen defended the Bataan Peninsula for months, they were ordered to surrender in April 1942. This resulted in the capture of over 70,000 prisoners who were forced to march over 65 miles to prison camps. Thousands died on the "Bataan Death March." Thousands more perished in camps or on "hell ships" which transported POWs to Japan to support the Japanese war effort.

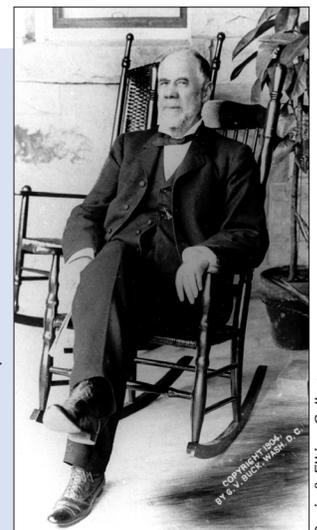
The American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Museum in Wellsburg holds the largest collection of objects relating to the defense of the Philippines during WWII. With financial support from a Humanities Council grant, the museum can now display and properly archive its collection.

The museum, located at 945 Main Street in Wellsburg, is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Call (304) 737-7295.

**Coal and Coke:** The Blackwater Canyon Rail Trail near Thomas in Tucker County features five new signs interpreting the history of the area's rail, mining, and timber industries. With additional support from Humanities Council grants, the Friends of Blackwater will soon develop and install five more signs.

The trail follows the road grade of the former West Virginia Central & Pittsburgh (*sic*) Railway, founded in the 1880s by self-made millionaire and U.S. Senator Henry Gassaway Davis (right) to tap the region's rich coal and timber resources and advance his industrial interests in West Virginia. At the operation's peak there were nine mines and nearly 1,000 coke ovens within a mile of Thomas.

The first sign along the trail is situated near the entrance to the former Davis Coal and Coke Company's Buxton and Landstreet Store, which now serves as a gallery and studio space. Each sign features historic images of important sites along the trail. Visit [saveblackwater.org](http://saveblackwater.org).





## Grant Categories

The Humanities Council welcomes applications in the following grant categories.

**Major Grants** (\$20,000 maximum) support major humanities projects, symposiums, conferences, exhibits, lectures.

**Due:** Feb. 1, Sept. 1

**Minigrants** (\$1,500 maximum) support small projects, single events, or planning and consultation. **Due:** \*Oct. 1, Feb. 1, April 1, June 1

**Fellowships** (\$3,000) support research and writing projects by humanities faculty and independent scholars.

**Due:** Feb. 1

**Media Grants** (\$20,000 maximum) support projects intended to produce audio or video products, websites, or a newspaper series.

**Due:** Sept. 1

**Publication Grants** (\$20,000 maximum) are available to nonprofit presses and academic presses, and support the production phase of a completed manuscript.

**Due:** Sept. 1

**Teacher Institute Grants** (\$25,000 maximum) are available to colleges and universities, and the state Department of Education, and support summer seminars for secondary and elementary teachers.

**Due:** Sept. 1

\* Approaching deadline.

*Fellowship and grant applications may be submitted online at [www.wvhumanities.org](http://www.wvhumanities.org). Contact Erin Riebe with any questions at (304)346-8500 or [riebe@wvhumanities.org](mailto:riebe@wvhumanities.org).*



Emily Hilliard

Annie Stroud and Doug Van Gundy entertain Humanities Council friends.

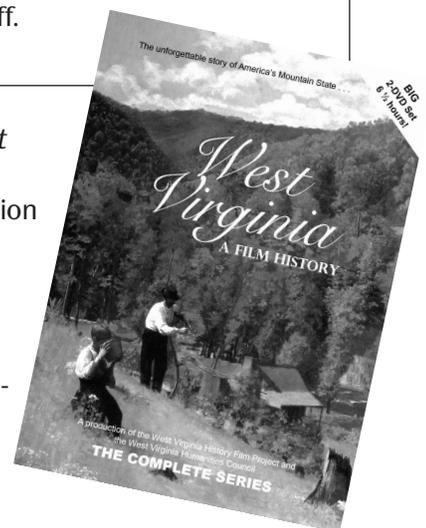
**Raising friends in Morgantown:** The Humanities Council held its fifth “friendraiser” event at WVU Blaney House last April, highlighting the Folklife Apprenticeship Program. Special thanks to President E. Gordon Gee, Laurie Erickson, Susan Hardesty, Robin Yorty and other staff at West Virginia University for making this event a great success. Guests enjoyed light refreshments and old-time music from fiddler Doug Van Gundy and apprentice Annie Stroud, participants in the first class of the West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program.



Michael Keller

**Tricia Stringer is our new office administrator.** She holds a B.A. in marketing from DePaul University and previously worked as the administrative coordinator for the Kanawha County Public Library. Tricia is in charge of day-to-day operations at the Humanities Council and provides general support to the staff. Welcome Tricia!

**Give the gift of West Virginia:** *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, now in its second printing, and the acclaimed public television series, *West Virginia: A Film History*, are the perfect holiday gifts for West Virginians everywhere. Both are available at bookstores, or directly from the West Virginia Humanities Council at (304)346-8500 or at [www.wvhumanities.org](http://www.wvhumanities.org). The 927-page hardbound encyclopedia sells for \$44.95 and the two-DVD film history for \$29.95.



The Humanities Council Holiday Open House is Friday, December 7, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the 1836 MacFarland-Hubbard House, 1310 Kanawha Boulevard, E., Charleston. Join us for historic decorations and holiday cheer!

## Donations April 1, 2018 - July 31, 2018

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## Laying it on thick



Humanities Council stewardship of the 1836 MacFarland-Hubbard House continues with the repainting of interior rooms. The first phase, consisting mostly of public spaces, will be done this fall. All work should be completed within a year.

After the Humanities Council purchased the historic property as its headquarters in 1999, rooms were painted in colors typical of the 1830s, the decade the house was built. Greens, blues, yellows and greys predominated. While this fall's painting will largely follow that palette, it is hoped that a better idea of the actual original room colors may eventually be developed. The discovery this summer of an original baseboard, nailed at some time in the past to a joist under the house, will provide a sample for color analysis, and other clues to the initial paint scheme are also being sought.

Contact Victoria Paul at [v.paul@wvhumanities.org](mailto:v.paul@wvhumanities.org) to contribute to this important work.

### Celebrate Arts & Humanities Month in October!

You may do that at the McCreight Lecture and the West Virginia Book Festival, and at other great events to be found at [www.wvhumanities.org](http://www.wvhumanities.org).

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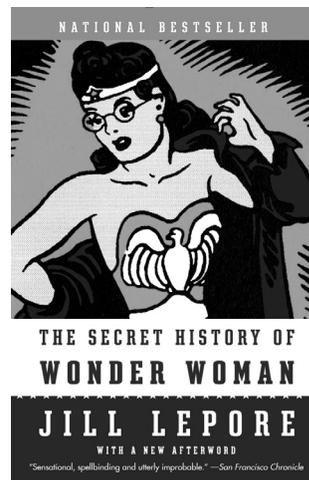
## Lepore to do McCreight Lecture

Award-winning author and popular historian Jill Lepore will deliver the 2018 McCreight Lecture in the Humanities at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, October 25. Lepore, who is the David Woods Kemper Professor of American History at Harvard University, will present her new work *These Truths: A History of the United States*. The event will be held in Riggleman Hall at the University of Charleston and is free and open to the public. A book signing will follow.

Lepore has contributed to *The New Yorker* since 2005, writing about American history, law, literature, and politics. A recent series examines the election of 2016, considering the role of polls, facts, parties, and the conventions. Other recent essays consider grief, child welfare, torture, guns, and the archiving of the Internet. Lepore also writes about popular culture as in *The Secret History of Wonder Woman*



McCreight Lecturer Jill Lepore writes about Wonder Woman, among other subjects.



and *Book of Ages: The Life and Opinions of Jane Franklin* (Knopf, 2013).

Her essays and reviews have appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Times Literary Supplement*, and elsewhere.

Lepore joined the Harvard History Department in 2003 and has served as Chair of the History and Literature Program. Since 2015, she has also taught at Harvard Law School. Call (304)346-8500 or visit [www.wvhumanities.org](http://www.wvhumanities.org).

(Knopf, 2014), winner of the 2015 American History Book Prize.

Jill Lepore's earlier writing includes a trilogy of books that together constitute a political history of early America: *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (Knopf, 1998); *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan* (Knopf, 2005);

The McCreight Lecture kicks off the **2018 West Virginia Book Festival**, which continues at the Charleston Civic Center on Friday and Saturday, October 26-27. This year's festival features bestselling authors Dennis Lehane, Debbie Macomber, and others. West Virginia authors will also be on hand along with publishers and other vendors in the festival Marketplace.

The West Virginia Book Company will sell books by festival authors at each presentation and in the Marketplace. Writing workshops will be offered on Friday, and the children's Word Play area will be open Friday and Saturday. The popular used book sale will be held on Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The Book Festival is free and open to the public. The sponsors are the Kanawha County Public Library, the Library Foundation of Kanawha County, Inc., the *Charleston Gazette-Mail*, and the West Virginia Humanities Council. Visit [www.wvbookfestival.org](http://www.wvbookfestival.org).