



West Virginia Folklife Program to Hold Public Interest Meeting in Ripley

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**Contact: Emily Hilliard 304.346.8500
hilliard@wvhumanities.org**

Charleston—On Tuesday, January 31, state folklorist Emily Hilliard brings the West Virginia Folklife Program to Ripley with a public interest meeting at the Senior Citizen Center at 121 S. Court Street. Hilliard will present a free public talk titled “What is Folklore?” at 10:30 a.m.

Hilliard is conducting a statewide fieldwork survey to assess and document current folklife activity in West Virginia. “Folklife traditions are community-based creative expressions,” she said. “Those can include traditional music and dance, foodways, material culture, faith-based expressions, occupational lore, and more.” Hilliard will give a brief presentation on the discipline of folklore and her current work in West Virginia, and take feedback from the audience on local traditions, traditional artists, and tradition bearers in their community.

Hilliard stresses the importance of community involvement in this folklife survey. “This work is about honoring and supporting the creative contributions of West Virginians. We welcome public input on those traditions and tradition bearers valued by local people.” The Ripley meeting follows similar events in Charleston, Williamson, Wheeling, and Sandyville, and in the coming months, Hilliard will hold gatherings in other communities across the state.

The West Virginia Folklife Program is a project of the West Virginia Humanities Council and is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Folk & Traditional Arts Program. West Virginia Folklife is dedicated to the documentation, preservation, presentation, and support of West Virginia’s vibrant cultural heritage and living traditions.

Emily Hilliard may be reached at hilliard@wvhumanities.org or (304) 346-8500. The Folklife Program

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also has a toll-free Folklife Hotline, 1-844-618-3747, where the public may share information about local traditional artists, craftspeople, musicians, home cooks, or elders, or contribute a song, story, or other piece of folklore or community tradition.

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The West Virginia Humanities Council is a nonprofit corporation governed by a board of directors whose members are drawn from all parts of West Virginia. It is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, supported by the NEH, the State of West Virginia, and by contributions from the private sector. The purposes of the West Virginia Humanities Council are educational, and its mission is to support a vigorous program in the humanities statewide in West Virginia.