

"It's the Path that Matters" Welcome, Chairman Peede!

Jon Peede, acting chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, will visit West Virginia for History Day, February 22. This excerpt is from a recent speech he made introducing himself to a national humanities conference.

When I was growing up in the Deep South, when we met a stranger, we'd ask, "Where are you from? Who are your people?" as a way of getting to know one another.

We didn't ask: "What's your job?" Which, in Washington, is a good thing — because job titles tend to change quickly.

Now, I'm not going to give a lecture, or illuminate a scholarly matter, or reveal any embargoed information. I'm going to talk to you.

I'm going to tell you where I'm from.

I grew up in a small town in Mississippi, graduating from high school in a class of 30 or so students. There I first encountered the verse of Walt Whitman and learned I was "large," that "I contain multitudes."

On Sundays, the preacher contradicted the poet, saying that our bodies were "the temple of the Holy Ghost" — this caused a good bit of guilt, depending on what you had been up to on Saturday night.

Here's the thing: dead gay poet, living straight preacher, they both educated me, expanded my thinking, made me a better person. I never saw a reason then — nor do I now — to reject either voice or the life journey that gave rise to that voice.

When you're from a rural state or a poor city or an underserved community, neighborhood, or group, you get used to false assumptions when you leave it for other lands. The best way I know to overcome stereotypes is to bring people into proximity with one another.

We all know that inclusion matters. But you have to make it manifest in a real way. You have to align your philosophy and your practices together.

You want to know about my humanities background, and I could tell you that I graduated from Vanderbilt in English and from the Southern Studies graduate program at the University of

Mississippi under (former NEH chairman) Bill Ferris.

I was a mediocre chemistry major until my final year in college — but the Classics and English would never let go of me. I found my path in the humanities in my senior year, and Bill Ferris took a chance on me, offering me a graduate fellowship.

I could tell you that I began my career as a university press editor in the fields of literature and history, then spent the last 25 years as a writer, editor, grants administrator.

Or I can tell you that I read Whitman as boy, saw Eudora Welty at the grocery store thumping a melon to gauge if it was ripe, sang weekly at school while the now-forgotten Miss Cole led us on an old upright piano.

Honestly, the career milestones don't matter, it's the path that matters.

— Jon Parrish Peede



Vincent Ricardel

Chairman Peede speaking at a recent conference.

Winter
2017-2018

1

Chairman Peede

2

What's New

4

Frankenstein



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:** *Feb. 1, April 1, June 1, Oct. 1

Fellowships (\$2,500) 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 Deadlines!

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

High honors for Hawks Nest essayist

Charleston writer Catherine Venable Moore's article on the Hawks Nest Tunnel tragedy was chosen for inclusion in *Best American Essays of 2017*, part of the prestigious "Best American" series published annually by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

The essay, written with the support of a 2016 Humanities Council fellowship, was previously published in *Oxford American* magazine and soon will be used as the introduction to a Council-funded book by WVU Press.

The Hawks Nest story began in the spring of 1930, when thousands of men began digging into a Fayette County mountainside to divert the waters of New River for electric power generation. The tunnel project devolved into America's worst industrial disaster as hundreds of workers, primarily African Americans, developed silicosis. Many died from it.

As the awful story unfolded, Hawks Nest became the subject of extensive press attention and a Congressional investigation. Among those taking an interest was the poet Muriel Rukeyser, who traveled from New York to Gauley Bridge in 1936 with photographer Nancy Naumburg. The result was *The Book of the Dead*, the 1938 poem cycle by Rukeyser. WVU Press will reissue *The Book of the Dead* in February, with Moore's introduction and a selection of Naumburg photographs.

You may purchase *The Book of the Dead* in bookstores, by calling 1(866)WVU-PRES, or by visiting wvupressonline.com.

Hawks Nest Tunnel under construction.



Revisiting the Classics

On February 8-9, Latin clubs and classes from throughout West Virginia's high schools will gather in Morgantown for an annual convention of the West Virginia Junior Classical League. The youth organization encourages an appreciation of ancient Greek and Roman culture, language, and literature.

Students will share their knowledge of the ancient world and compete in various written and oral contests. Author Vicky Alvear Shecter will deliver the keynote address, and the Classic Club of Wheeling's Linsly School will reenact a Roman wedding.

The convention is supported by a grant from the Humanities Council. Contact Nicoletta Villa-Sella at (304)233-3260.

Little Lectures

The 2018 Little Lectures kick off on Sunday, March 25, at 2:00 p.m. at the historic MacFarland-Hubbard House in Charleston. Marshall University journalism professor Burnis Morris (right) will discuss black history pioneer Carter G. Woodson and his Huntington connections. Peabody Award-winning documentary filmmaker Elaine McMillion Sheldon will speak on May 20 about her work, including the Netflix documentary *Heroin(e)*. The complete schedule will be announced in February. Visit wvhumanities.org.



Music Hall of Fame

Six musicians will be inducted into the West Virginia Music Hall of Fame on February 10. The class of 2018 joins 46 earlier inductees. New honorees include Hasil Adkins, Ann Magnuson, Frank Hutchison, the Morris Brothers, Fred "Sonic" Smith, and Michael W. Smith. A documentary vignette on each, produced with the support of a Humanities Council grant, will be shown. For information visit wvmusichalloffame.com.



John and David, the Morris Brothers.

History App: Clio is a wiki-style website and mobile application developed by Professor David Trowbridge of Marshall University. With nearly 30,000 historical entries from across the country, Clio is designed to inspire users to visit these places and provides on-location information once there. Visit theclio.com to try it yourself.



Salt Celebrated

A Kanawha County community celebrated its rich back story with the first annual Malden Salt Fest in October. Malden was a center of the 19th century salt business, which was the predecessor to the chemical industry that followed. The festival also celebrated the local legacy of Booker T. Washington, whose family story was intertwined with that of the salt industry, as well as the region's emerging food scene.

The recently restored J.Q. Dickinson Salt-Works hosted the event with other venues in Malden. The West Virginia Folklife Program participated through an oral history project documenting the descendants of salt industry workers.

Pulitzer Programs: This spring, the Humanities Council partners with the *Charleston Gazette-Mail* and journalism schools at Marshall and WVU to present three Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists with ties to the Mountain State. The project is made possible by a grant from the "Democracy and the Informed Citizen" initiative administered by the National Federation of State Humanities Councils, with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Pulitzer Prizes.

Eric Eyre of the *Gazette-Mail*, who received a 2017 Pulitzer for his series "Painkiller Profiteers," will speak at the two journalism schools and in Charleston. Eyre will be joined at WVU by Charleston resident Eric Newhouse, a 2000 Pulitzer winner while with the *Great Falls Tribune* in Montana. At Marshall, Eyre will team up with 2016 Pulitzer winner and Marshall alumnus John Hackworth. Further details in February, at wvhumanities.org.

Program Committee Election

Please help choose citizen members for the Humanities Council program committee. Your vote gives the public a voice in our grants and program decisions. Vote for five of the candidates below:

___ **Leslie Baker**, Raleigh County, is the Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Beckley. She is an incumbent and eligible for re-election.

___ **Bob Bonar**, Calhoun County, is President of the Calhoun County Historical Society. He is an incumbent and eligible for re-election.

___ **Charles Keeney**, Kanawha County, is Professor of History at Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College. He is an incumbent and eligible for re-election.

___ **Burnis Morris**, Cabell County, is the Carter G. Woodson Professor of Journalism and Mass Communications at Marshall University.

___ **Jason Phillips**, Monongalia County, is the Eberly Professor of Civil War Studies at West Virginia University.

___ **Gabriel Reiger**, Mercer County, teaches Medieval and Renaissance English literature at Concord University. He directs the Appalachian Shakespeare Project.

___ **Peter Staffel**, Brooke County, is Professor of English and Director of the Honors Program in the Humanities Department at West Liberty University.

___ **H. G. Young III**, Wood County, is Professor of Music at West Virginia University-Parkersburg, and is active as a chorale conductor.

Return your ballot by mail to the West Virginia Humanities Council or email your choices to payne@wvhumanities.org by March 1, 2018.

Medical History Lectures Conclude: A two-year public lecture series on the history of medicine, funded by a Humanities Council grant, wraps up February 20 at the WVU Health Sciences Center in Martinsburg. Dr. William Ramsey, chief collaboration officer and director of coordination and logistics for the Center, will discuss Hippocrates and the Hippocratic Oath. This ancient oath, traditionally taken by all physicians, famously pledges them first of all to do no harm. The lecture begins at 6:30 p.m. Contact kiefc@wvmedicine.org.

West Virginia Humanities Council
1310 Kanawha Blvd., East
Charleston, WV 25301

Address Service Requested

- ☐ Please drop my name.
☐ Please change my name/address as indicated at right.
☐ I receive more than one copy.

- ☐ Please add my friend at the above address.

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Charleston, WV
Permit No. 2269

The West Virginia Humanities Council gratefully acknowledges support from the National Endowment for the Humanities; the Office of the West Virginia Secretary of Education and the Arts; and foundations, corporations, and individuals throughout the Mountain State and beyond.

Aging well: Frankenstein at 200

In 1816, the English writer Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin and soon-to-be husband Percy Shelley gathered with Mary's stepsister and their host (the poet Lord Byron) in Geneva, Switzerland. Due to cold, dark summer nights brought on by a volcanic eruption, the young group spent their time indoors drinking and sharing stories of ghosts, the occult and galvanism. Likely out of boredom, they engaged in a competition to write the best horror story. While pondering possibilities over the next several days, Mary had a dream of a mad scientist named Victor Frankenstein creating a new man from body parts robbed from cemeteries, a misbegotten creature eventually shunned by society and seeking revenge.

After returning to England and marrying poet Shelley, Mary's nightmare evolved into written fiction. After months of transforming her dream into a novel, the first edition of *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus* was published anonymously on January 1, 1818. The second edition appeared a few years later and credited Mary Shelley as the author.

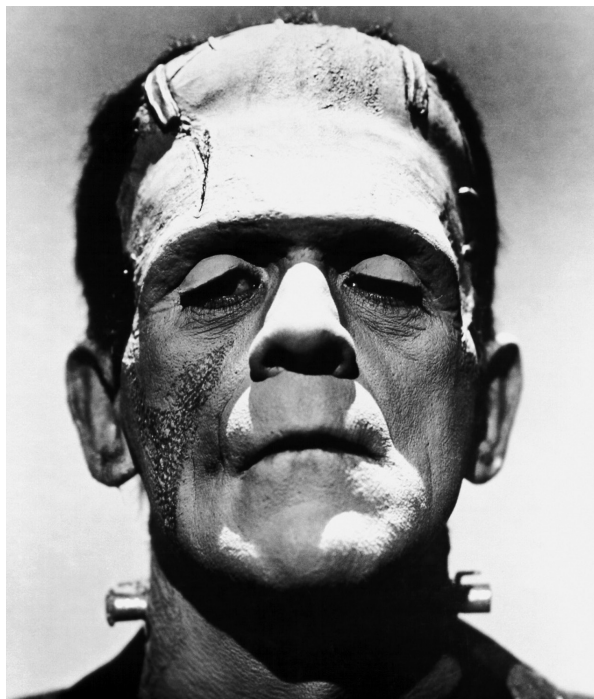
Now, to celebrate the 200th anniversary of *Frankenstein's* first publication, West Liberty

University is planning a series of activities throughout 2018 with the support of a Humanities Council grant. The celebration kicks off on Tuesday, April 3, with presentations by WLU faculty on topics related to Shelley's famous horror novel.

Angela Rehbein, associate professor of English, will speak on the abundant afterlife of Shelley's novel in a presentation titled "Frankenstein and the Fecundity of Fiction." Aaron Harper, assistant professor of philosophy, will consider philosophical dimensions to the novel in his presentation, "Alienation and Self-Alienation in Frankenstein." Matthew Zdilla,

associate professor of biology, will address modern-day manifestations of the medical discourses that Shelley explores in *Frankenstein*, including the reanimation of lifeless body parts by electrical stimulation. The lectures begin at 10 a.m. at the West Liberty Highlands Center.

The Frankenstein bicentennial will continue through the year with film screenings, mini-lectures, book discussions, and an exhibit. For more information, contact Professor Rehbein at (304)336-8818 or by email at angela.rehbein@westliberty.edu.



Boris Karloff as Frankenstein.

People & Mountains is published three times a year by the West Virginia Humanities Council. We welcome letters, comments, and financial contributions. Address correspondence to 1310 Kanawha Boulevard, E., Charleston, WV 25301 or sonis@wvhumanities.org.