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New Film Series Presented by the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress & the West Virginia Folklife Program Explores Food Traditions in West Virginia

Charleston, WV– (August 9, 2021).- The [West Virginia Folklife Program](#) at the [West Virginia Humanities Council](#) is launching the new [Homegrown Foodways in West Virginia](#) film series, presenting four short films that explore a range of food traditions in the state. The series will be produced by West Virginia farmers, chefs, and foodways storytellers Mike Costello and Amy Dawson of Lost Creek Farm in Harrison County.

The first film in the series, presented in conjunction with the American Folklife Center (AFC) at the Library of Congress, will premiere on the [AFC's Facebook page](#) on Wednesday, August 18, followed by premieres on Wednesday, September 1 and Wednesday, September 15 (double feature). There will also be a culminating discussion panel on Thursday, September 30, featuring AFC staff, West Virginia State Folklorist Emily Hilliard, filmmakers Mike Costello and Amy Dawson, and foodways practitioners featured in the films. After the series premiere, the films will be accessible for viewing on the Library of Congress' YouTube channel.

Homegrown Foodways in West Virginia films:

Wednesday, August 18 @ noon: *Foraging and Relations with Jonathan Hall*

Filmmakers Costello and Dawson will be joined by fellow hunter and forager Jonathan Hall as they sustainably harvest and preserve ramps. Jonathan reflects on the experience of being a [Black outdoorsman](#) hunting and foraging in virtually all-white spaces in rural West Virginia, discussing how racism has created unique barriers to entry to the practice of outdoor foodways traditions in Appalachia. As a teacher to his friends, to his children, and professionally, as a geography professor at West Virginia University, Jonathan uses wild food to educate about the conservation of the resources that sustain us, informed by the ethos of “relations” that has guided Indigenous communities for thousands of years before white settlers arrived in Appalachia.

Wednesday, September 1 @ noon: *Kimchi Fermentation with Marlyn McClendon*

Marlyn McClendon remembers the pungent smell of kimchi wafting from her lunchbox in the middle school cafeteria, but what she especially recalls are the sneers and snickers that followed. Growing up in Huntington, West Virginia, she was often teased by classmates over her Korean-American identity. Over the years she developed a deeper appreciation for her Korean heritage—as well as a closer relationship



with her Korean-born mother—largely through food. Now living in the remote community of Lobelia, in Pocahontas County, Marlyn explores both her Korean and Appalachian heritage at the dinner table, often preparing traditional Korean foods with ingredients grown or foraged nearby. In this video, Marlyn and her mother, Yong, prepare traditional kimchi and a variety of other Korean dishes for a meal shared with friends and neighbors.

Wednesday, September 15 @ noon: *Ravioli and Sauce with Lou Maiuri*

Lou Maiuri, 92, is the son of Italian immigrants who arrived in West Virginia in the early 1900s. “Italians are big on food,” Lou says from his basement cellar, where the shelves are lined with preserved peppers, canned beans, and a family-recipe pasta sauce he’s been making for 70 years. Mike and Amy often find themselves exploring Italian-American foodways in West Virginia in places like Clarksburg’s historic Glen Elk District with its bakeries and delicatessens, at traditional spaghetti houses, and with seasoned cooks like Maiuri, who shares his recipe for homemade pasta sauce and ravioli in this video.

Wednesday, September 15 @ noon: *Turkish Cuisine with Mehmet Öztan*

In the small mountain community of Reedsville, in northern West Virginia, sits a farm where hundreds of varieties of heirloom seeds are preserved, but relatively few of these varieties are known as Appalachian heirlooms; they’re mostly Turkish seeds from Mehmet Öztan’s home country. Mehmet, who is the owner of [Two Seeds in a Pod Heirloom Seed Company](#), and is a teaching artist in the 2020-2021 [West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program](#), got into saving seeds after he moved to the U.S. and had a difficult time accessing ingredients he knew growing up in the Turkish capital of Ankara. He has used seeds and communal meals prepared in the traditional brick oven he and his partner Amy Thompson built in their backyard to establish new connections with the rural community where he now lives. In this video, Mehmet prepares a hearty bean stew and lavash, a traditional rustic bread, in his backyard oven.

For more information visit the [American Folklife Center blog](#).

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. For more information on the event and West Virginia Folklife Program, visit [wvfolklife.org](#) or contact Emily Hilliard at [hilliard@wvhumanities.org](#) or (304)346-8500.

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 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. For more information visit wvhumanities.org.

The American Folklife Center was created by Congress in 1976 and placed at the Library of Congress to “preserve and present American folklife” through programs of research, documentation, archival presentation, reference service, live performance, exhibition, public programs and training. The Center includes the Archive of Folk Culture, established in 1928 and now one of the largest collections of ethnographic material from the United States and around the world.

The Library of Congress is the world’s largest library, offering access to the creative record of the United States — and extensive materials from around the world — both on-site and online. It is the main research arm of the U.S. Congress and the home of the U.S. Copyright Office. Explore collections, reference services and other programs and plan a visit at loc.gov, access the official site for U.S. federal legislative information at congress.gov and register creative works of authorship at copyright.gov.

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