



## *From the Executive Director*

I've said it before, but it bears repeating: One of the most rewarding parts of this job—maybe the single most rewarding part—is having the chance to see how much outstanding cultural work goes on in West Virginia. In population centers, local neighborhoods, and rural communities, again and again we see people working to document and preserve their history, and to pass on the skills—artistic, practical, culinary and more—that give us all a sense of our own personal place in a much larger story.

As we approach the end of the programming year here at the Humanities Council, we're again taking the opportunity to look back over the many excellent projects, events, and initiatives we've been able to support, as well as the original programs we've developed and offered statewide. You'll read about much of that work in this issue: From commemoration of the Blair Mountain Centennial to the celebration of Appalachian literature, from folklife showcases

to archival restoration and historic preservation, work in the humanities has not merely survived a historically challenging year, but once again illustrated how relevant and central the humanities are to a healthy public life.

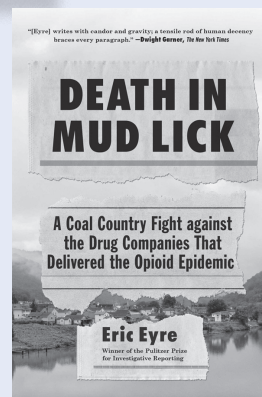
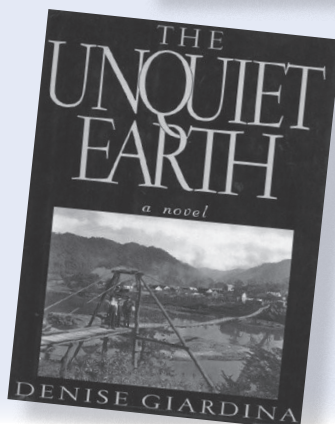
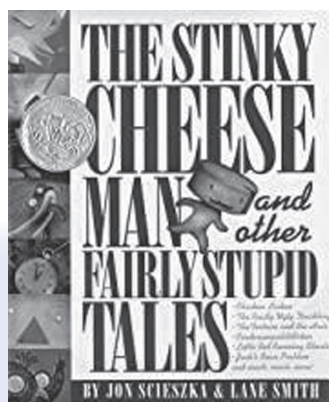
The past several

months have brought sweeping changes to the way we do that work, and to the way that hundreds of state, local and community cultural organizations serve their public. Particularly in a time of necessary precaution, we've found that people everywhere remain hungry for the personal connection—the human connection, to say it plainly—that the humanities provide. The Council saw record numbers of audiences accessing our new and expanded digital programming. We also funded an increased number of media projects through our regular grants, helping other organizations and nonprofits to create original audiovisual content for immediate and future audience enjoyment.

In that spirit of innovation, the Council is once again glad to serve as a Charter Presenter for the West Virginia Book Festival, which will offer its first all-virtual event series on October 22 and 23. Like many state book festivals, this year WVBF will host acclaimed authors for presentations, discussions, and workshop sessions in a format that supports public health and safety. For an updated schedule of featured authors and events, visit [www.wvbookfestival.org](http://www.wvbookfestival.org).

It's important to recognize that none of what we do could work without our membership, the community of supporters within and outside of West Virginia who share our vision of the humanities as

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Fall 2021

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Crossroads



West Virginia Book Festival featured authors. Visit [www.wvbookfestival.org](http://www.wvbookfestival.org) for livestream schedule.

### The West Virginia Humanities Council

is a nonprofit institution governed by its Board of Directors. The next Board meeting is October 22, 2021, and is open to the public.

Billy Joe Peyton, President  
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*Clarksburg*

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*Hurricane*

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*Martinsburg*

Bryson VanNostrand

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### The West Virginia Humanities Council's 2021 McCreight Lecture in the Humanities

has been canceled due to public health concerns surrounding COVID-19 and recent transmission rates of the Delta variant. The annual event, which takes place in Charleston each fall, often in conjunction with the West Virginia Book Festival, was scheduled this year for October 21. This postponement, while not ideal, is the best way to ensure continuity of the McCreight Lecture experience for our presenters and guests.

### Congratulations, Emily!

The Council is pleased to congratulate Emily Hilliard, our inaugural West Virginia State Folklorist, on her new position with the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation. Emily joined our staff in 2015, at the launch of the new West Virginia Folklife Program. During her six years with the Council, Emily has worked tirelessly to document, preserve, and share the story of West Virginia's many living traditions, and the communities of people who keep them alive. It comes as no surprise to anyone who knows Emily that the next stage in her professional journey will find her continuing that good work on the regional level. Still, she will be missed: Emily has brought increased diversity, mobility, and collaborative energy to the Council's almost 50-year history of telling West Virginia's stories. We are untellably grateful for her time at the Humanities Council as a core staff member.



Michael Keller

The **Board of Directors** elected new member Katrena Ramsey of Ravenswood at its July meeting. We thank departing member Gayle Manchin for her years of service.

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

*The West Virginia Humanities Council, an independent nonpartisan nonprofit, is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.*

We welcome letters, comments, and financial contributions. Please address correspondence to West Virginia Humanities Council, 1310 Kanawha Blvd E, Charleston WV 25301 or email [wvhuman@wvhumanities.org](mailto:wvhuman@wvhumanities.org).

#### West Virginia Humanities Council Staff

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Emily Hilliard, State Folklorist

Mike Keller, Media Editor/e-WV

Victoria Paul, Director of Development

Erin Riebe, Grants Administrator

Tricia Stringer, Operations Manager

Kyle Warmack, Program Officer

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The West Virginia Humanities Council welcomes nominations for its **Board of Directors**. Board members are chosen from all parts of West Virginia and serve without compensation, although expenses are reimbursed. We also welcome nominations for **Program Committee** citizen members, who are elected from the general public. The **Program Committee** recommends funding and program decisions to the Council's **Board of Directors**.

Please send recommendations with brief biographical information to [riebe@wvhumanities.org](mailto:riebe@wvhumanities.org). The deadline for nominations is December 17, 2021.

Continued from page 1

essential to our sense of history, our collective memory, and our social health. We've been delighted, and humbled, to see that our member individuals and institutions have maintained their faith in our work, in all of its forms, throughout a difficult year and beyond. We plan to honor that faith through continued innovation and ongoing commitment to excellence in our grants and programs.

I grew up in a small town. Like a lot of kids in

small towns, for a time I believed there wasn't anything there to hold my attention, that nothing of importance could ever happen there. Of course I was wrong. There was a deep history there, and the evidence of that history was all around me, long before I learned how to pay attention to it. That informed, reflective attention is where every opportunity for true learning begins. Perhaps more than anything else, the humanities teach us exactly that: how to pay attention.

—Eric Waggoner

The West Virginia Humanities Council awarded over \$550,000 in **American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Emergency Relief Grants** to 34 West Virginia cultural institutions to help ensure staff retention and program delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic. Made possible by the NEH as part of the ARP Act, these relief grants help pay operational and programming costs for West Virginia cultural organizations that have been economically impacted by COVID-19.

Council Executive Director Eric Waggoner says "We are once again grateful to be able to assist West Virginia's many excellent cultural organizations, and their employees, as we move through this difficult time together."

**T**he Council has begun work on a new program to honor veterans in the Mountain State.

### **The West Virginia National Cemeteries Project**

will give two classes of Grafton High School students the opportunity to conduct original archival research and write biographies for veterans interred in Taylor County's two national cemeteries. Grafton National Cemetery (above) and the West Virginia National Cemetery both lie in or near the county seat of Grafton.

In this pilot year of what is hoped to be an ongoing



Michael Keller

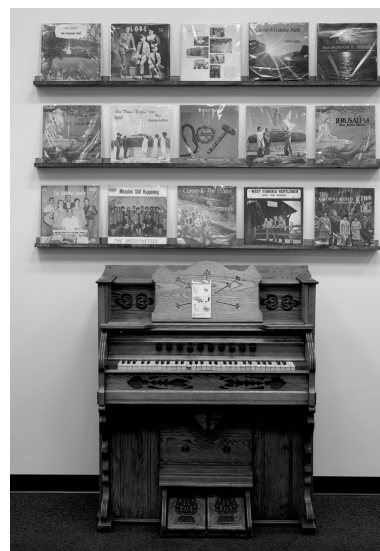
annual program, pairs of students will be assisted in their research by the West Virginia State Archives, WVU's public history department, and the Taylor County Historical & Genealogical Society. The resulting biographies will be posted by Memorial Day 2022 on the Council's website, and also

displayed on the Veterans Legacy Memorial website operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The project is funded by an award from the U.S. National Cemetery Administration, a part of the VA.

The **West Virginia Museum of Music** opened in early June in the Charleston Town Center Mall. The museum takes a broad look at music from West Virginia, and the instruments and tools used to create it. Visitors will have the opportunity to see an exhibit featuring stunning turn-of-the-century lithographs of music publisher and composer E. T. Paull; large-format framed posters representing notable state music events; vintage amplifiers and recording equipment; and six "In the Spotlight" sections featuring the instruments of West Virginia musicians.

The Museum hosted an open house on June 12 that featured performances by 2015 WV Music Hall of Fame inductee John Ellison; a trio featuring 2015 inductee Bob Thompson, upcoming inductee Vince Lewis, and longtime Charleston bassist Jim Martin; and other musicians.

The Museum, supported by a grant from the Humanities Council, will be open during mall hours on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. For more information visit [www.wvmusichalloffame.com](http://www.wvmusichalloffame.com).



Michael Keller

*Late 1800s pump organ, restored by Bob and Marge Chenoweth, donated by the family.*





West Virginia native Marie Manilla is serving as the 2021 Appalachian Heritage Writer-in-Residence at Shepherd University. The extraordinary success and rave reviews of Manilla's third book, *The Patron Saint of Ugly*, established her as a literary force to be reckoned with. Her book received the Appalachian Studies Association's Weatherford Award in 2014. Weatherford fiction judges called *The Patron Saint of Ugly* "comedic and heartbreaking," focusing on issues of "prejudice, bias, and bullying" while exploring "race, class, and equality for women in the new Appalachia." The novel was also

chosen as the **One Book One West Virginia** selection for 2021 by the West Virginia Library Commission.

The AHWIR program, founded in 1998, honors the work of contemporary Appalachian writers whose writing has shown a commitment to the understanding of the region's culture, language, history, and traditions. The Appalachian Heritage Writer's Award is presented annually to a writer whose work features, or draws upon, this cultural heritage. The recipient of the award fulfills a brief residency, enriching the campus and community with lectures, workshops, and special programs as part of the Appalachian Heritage Writer-in-Residence Project, sponsored by the West Virginia Humanities Council.

Past writers-in-residence include Dorothy Allison, Wiley Cash, Silas House, and Denise Giardina. For more information about the program and author, visit [www.shepherd.edu/ahwir](http://www.shepherd.edu/ahwir).

**West Virginia Folklife**, in partnership with the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, presents the *Homegrown Foodways in West Virginia* program, a series of four short films that explore a range of food traditions in the state. The series is produced by West Virginia farmers, chefs, and foodways storytellers Mike Costello and Amy Dawson of Lost Creek Farm in Harrison County. Films included are *Foraging and Relations* with Jonathan Hall (right); *Korean Heritage and Kimchi* with Marlyn McClendon; *Italian Heritage, Ravioli and Sauce* with Lou Maiuri; and *Turkish Cuisine* with Mehmet Öztan.



Outgoing State Folklorist Emily Hilliard, filmmakers Costello and Dawson, AFC staff, and featured practitioners also hosted a culminating virtual discussion in September. The films are accessible for viewing on the Library of Congress' and West Virginia Folklife's YouTube channels. Additional information can be found at [www.wvfolklife.org](http://www.wvfolklife.org).

**The Battle of Blair Mountain Centennial Kick-off Event** took place at the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center on September 3. Commemorative events, supported in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the West Virginia Humanities Council, were held throughout the state during September. For more information about Blair Mountain and the Mine Wars, visit [www.wvminewars.com](http://www.wvminewars.com) or [www.blair100.com](http://www.blair100.com).



Visitors with the Mother Jones Heritage Project inflatable.

**The West Virginia Encyclopedia** continues to add new articles and update existing articles on its e-WV website. New content features Charleston artist Susan Poffenbarger; Dr. Patrice Harris, the first African-American woman appointed head of the American Medical Association; and Pastor Robert Graetz, who helped organize the Montgomery Bus Boycott. There are several entries on subjects of current interest. Projects related to the Battle of Blair Mountain, the Blennerhassett Family, and Weirton Steel recently received Humanities Council grants to support work documenting their history. All this and more can be found at [www.wvencyclopedia.org](http://www.wvencyclopedia.org).



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Chuck Ripper

## Huntington Sesquicentennial Exhibit

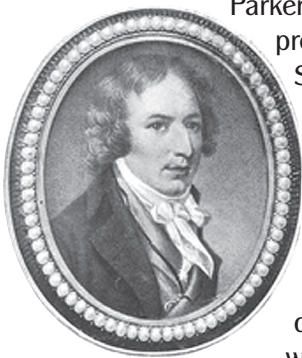
In celebration of the Huntington Sesquicentennial, the Huntington Museum of Art will present an exhibit of artwork produced by Huntingtonians during the past 150 years. This exhibit will introduce the community to artists from Huntington's long and rich artistic history, and will celebrate the creative spirit of the Jewel City. The primary focus includes artists who have lived and worked in the city, ranging from familiar names such as Chuck Ripper and Adele Thornton Lewis to former Huntington barber Billy Scott, whose paintings depict the lives of the city's African-American residents in bygone days.

Funded by a Council grant, the *Huntington Sesquicentennial Exhibit* will be on view at the Huntington Museum of Art from September 18, 2021, through January 16, 2022. An opening reception is tentatively planned for Friday, October 22, 2021, the 200th birthday of railroad mogul Collis P. Huntington, founder of the city.

Through a grant from the West Virginia Humanities Council, the **Rivers to Ridges Heritage Trail** recently installed an interpretive historical marker in Nitro's Living Memorial Park. The marker provides visitors a brief history of the city and its World War I Museum, located at 2003 20th Street, near the park.

***The Blennerhassetts***, an hour-long documentary by Kanawha County-based filmmakers MotionMasters, is airing on West Virginia Public Broadcasting (check local listings for schedule).

Film segments are also viewable at the Blennerhassett Museum in Parkersburg. Area residents attended a free premiere on Saturday, August 28, at the Smoot Theatre in downtown Parkersburg.



Harman Blennerhassett.

MotionMasters president Diana Sole-Walko said "The Blennerhassett story is an interesting one. And I think it's particularly timely right now when as a nation we're asking questions about 'what is treason?' And 'what is the legal definition of that?' And the Blennerhassetts were involved with Aaron Burr, a founding American who was charged with treason. So, I think it's an interesting story."

Country music star and West Virginia native Kathy Mattea narrates the documentary, which Sole-Walko says covers all facets of the Blennerhassetts' life and times. It features interviews with several historians, including Ray Swick, historian emeritus for Blennerhassett Island Historical State Park. A Humanities Council grant provided support for the film.

## Briefs

***Food Justice in Appalachia*** is scheduled to open on World Food Day (October 16) at the WVU Downtown Campus Library from 4 to 6 p.m. The exhibit is supported by a Council grant and includes a live virtual component. Original art by 18 regional artists is juxtaposed with viewpoints from Appalachian nonprofit organizations, farmers, food system development programs, cooperatives, and activists, as well as personal perspectives on Appalachian food traditions. The exhibit highlights various subthemes in the complex social movement for food justice and offers suggestions for action to shape a more just, equitable, and sustainable food system. Visit <https://exhibits.lib.wvu.edu> for more information.

Through articles, photographs, advertisements, local sports segments, and recipe sections, the **Weirton Steel Employees Bulletins** offer more than 50 years of social and economic history about the men and women who worked at Weirton Steel, one of West Virginia's greatest economic generators in the 1940s and 1950s. Supported by a Council grant, the collection provides details about the employees' role in wartime activities, both abroad and on the home front, offering users a fascinating view of the region's role in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. To view, visit [www.weirtonareamuseum.com/archive](http://www.weirtonareamuseum.com/archive).

The latest William G. Pomeroy Foundation **Legends & Lore** historical marker for the Philippi Mummies has been installed outside the Barbour County Historical Museum where the mummies are displayed. The next application deadline for the markers is October 11. Guidelines and applications are available at [www.wvfolklife.org](http://www.wvfolklife.org), or call 304-346-8500.



## Grant Categories

*The Humanities Council welcomes applications in the following grant categories.*

**Major Grants** support humanities events such as symposiums, conferences, exhibits and lectures. Maximum award: \$20,000. Due: Feb. 1, Sept. 1

**Minigrants** have a budget of \$1,500 or less and support small projects, single events, or planning/consultation. Due: Oct. 1, Feb. 1, April 1, June 1

**Fellowships** of \$3,000 support research and writing projects for humanities faculty and independent scholars. Due: Feb. 1

**Media Grants** support the production of electronic or film materials, or a newspaper series. Maximum award: \$20,000. Due: Sept. 1

**Publication Grants** are available to recognized nonprofit and academic presses and support only the production phase of a completed manuscript. Maximum award: \$20,000. Due: Sept. 1

**Teacher Institute Grants** are available to colleges and universities and the state Department of Education, and support summer seminars for secondary and elementary teachers. Maximum award: \$25,000. Due: Sept. 1

*For more information, applications, and guidelines visit [www.wvhumanities.org](http://www.wvhumanities.org), email [riebe@wvhumanities.org](mailto:riebe@wvhumanities.org), or call 304-346-8500.*



Emily Hilliard

*Lorelie Nicolas-Tenney harvests sorghum at Appalachian Acres Farm in Upshur County.*

**L**isten to a young Jackson County man as he demonstrates a turkey caller he made from black walnut and slate found on his family's land. Stop in for lunch at the home of a Charleston cook as she prepares Indian roti, curries, and chutney. Tune in to ballads dating from the 16th century sung by Glenville ballad singer Phyllis Marks. Listen to a Jefferson County NAACP leader as he discusses his efforts to preserve the home of John Blessing, a friend of abolitionist John Brown. Or take a trip to the Weirton Serbian Picnic where volunteers roast hundreds of chickens over wood-fired spits. These diverse experiences are all possible without leaving your home, through the newly accessible digital West Virginia Folklife Collection housed at the West Virginia and Regional History Center at West Virginia University Libraries.

The original, ongoing collection consists of nearly 2,500 documentary items generated by folklife fieldwork and programs conducted by the West Virginia Folklife Program since November 2015. Those items include unique primary source material such as field-recorded interviews and other audio recordings, transcriptions, photo and video documentation, ephemera, and some material objects documenting the vernacular culture, beliefs, occupational skills, and expressive culture of contemporary tradition bearers, folk and traditional artists, and cultural communities across West Virginia.

Highlights and subcollections include materials documenting the foodways and community celebrations of the Randolph County Swiss community of Helvetia, the Scotts Run Community Museum in Monongalia County, the 2018 West Virginia Teachers' Strike, and Summers County collector Jim Costa's 18th- and 19th-century farm tools and objects of rural life, as well as participants in the West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program.

The goal of The West Virginia Folklife Collection is to create a publicly accessible archive of past, current, and future West Virginia folklife, folk and traditional arts, and cultural heritage. Archival materials were collected by the West Virginia state folklorist and additional West Virginia Humanities Council staff, along with partners and contracted documentarians that worked with the individuals and communities featured in the collection.

The West Virginia Folklife Collection at WVU Libraries is online at [wvfolklife.lib.wvu.edu](http://wvfolklife.lib.wvu.edu).

Through regular and predictable donations, our ♦ GEM (give-every-month) donors are providing a steady and cost-effective source of income to the Humanities Council. A monthly gift in any amount will qualify you as a Council GEM. For more information on this and other donation options available, please contact Victoria Paul at [v.paul@wvhumanities.org](mailto:v.paul@wvhumanities.org) or call 304-346-8500.

### Donations April 1 - July 31, 2021

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The West Virginia Folklife Program presented two virtual showcases featuring participants in its **2020-2021 Folklife Apprenticeship Program**. On Wednesday, September 22, forest farmers Ed and Carole Daniels of Randolph County and apprentice Clara Haizlett of Brooke County held their virtual showcase event, discussing their apprenticeship in sustainable cultivation of ginseng and other forest botanicals, and hosting a Q&A. On Thursday, September 23, old-time fiddler Joe Herrmann and apprentice Dakota Karper, both of Hampshire County, and old-time banjo player Kim Johnson and apprentice Cody Jordan, both of Kanawha County, held their virtual showcase, presenting a concert and hosting a Q&A. Both events were recorded and are accessible for viewing on West Virginia Folklife's YouTube channel. Visit [www.wvfolklife.org](http://www.wvfolklife.org) for more details.



Kim Johnson and Cody Jordan.

Emily Hilliard

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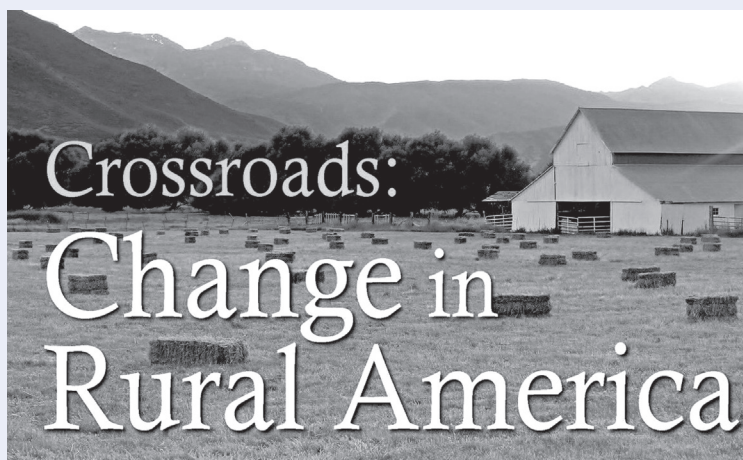
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The West Virginia Humanities Council gratefully acknowledges support from the National Endowment for the Humanities; the West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History; and foundations, corporations, and individuals throughout the Mountain State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



The statewide tour of The Smithsonian Institution exhibit *Crossroads: Change in Rural America* kicked off at Moorefield High School on Monday, August 30. After departing Hardy County at the end of September, *Crossroads* will travel to six additional sites around the state, opening at the following dates and locations:

**Weston, Lewis County** – *Museum of American Glass*  
October 6 through November 14, 2021

**Welch, McDowell County** – *Jack Caffrey Arts and Cultural Center*  
November 18 through December 27, 2021

**Arthurdale, Preston County** – *Arthurdale Heritage, Inc.*  
January 4 through February 5, 2022

**Weirton, Hancock and Brooke Counties** – *Weirton Area Museum and Cultural Center*  
February 12 through March 19, 2022

**New Martinsville, Wetzel County** – *Wetzel County Museum*  
March 25 through April 28, 2022

**Mt. Hope, Fayette County** – *Coal Heritage Discovery Center*  
May 8 through June 5, 2022

Every host community offers a unique and local take on the exhibit's main theme, and presents a diverse range of activities including craft demonstrations, historical tours, theatrical productions, and more. Visit the *Crossroads* page on the Council's website at [www.wvhumanities.org](http://www.wvhumanities.org) for host organization contact and event information.