



**The West Virginia Folklife Program Presents
Virtual Herbalism and “Sheep-to-Shawl” Apprenticeship Showcases**

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

Charleston—On two weekdays in June, The West Virginia Folklife Program, a project of the West Virginia Humanities Council, will present two virtual showcases, featuring participants in its 2020-2021 Folklife Apprenticeship Program.

On Wednesday, June 9 at noon, herbalist Leenie Hobbie of Hampshire County and apprentice Jon Falcone of Hardy County will hold their virtual showcase event, screening their slideshow “Traditional Appalachian Herbalism in the Time of COVID,” leading a guided indoor wild herb walk, and hosting a Q&A.

On Thursday, June 17 at noon, “sheep-to-shawl” apprentice pair Kathy Evans of Preston County and apprentice Margaret Bruning of Randolph County will hold their virtual showcase, screening a video about their apprenticeship in sheep husbandry and fiber arts and hosting a Q&A. Both events are free and open to the public, but attendees should register at wvfolklife.org.

As part of the 2020-2021 West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program, Leenie Hobbie of Rio led an apprenticeship in traditional Appalachian herbalism with Jon Falcone of Lost River. Hobbie has been a family herbalist for over 30 years, originally learning the tradition from her grandmother, who used both garden-grown and wild harvested plants at her home in the mountains of Southwestern Virginia. She has studied with acclaimed herbalists across the country and has taught the tradition within her community in Hampshire County. Falcone is a novice herbalist who hopes to apply his skills to his future homestead in West Virginia.

Kathy Evans of Bruceton Mills led an apprenticeship titled “Sheep to Shawl: The Art of Raising Sheep and Creating Fiber Arts,” with apprentice Margaret Bruning of Elkins. Evans is a fifth-generation farmer and owner of Evans Knob Farm in Preston County, where she cultivates Certified Naturally Grown vegetables and raises sheep and poultry. She teaches and exhibits her fiber arts both in West Virginia and across the country and has been featured in *Modern Farmer* and *Morgantown Magazine*. Bruning grew up on a goat farm in upstate New York and has been a lifelong fiber artist. She and her husband David raise sheep at their homestead in Randolph County.

[The West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program](#) offers a stipend to West Virginia master traditional artists or tradition bearers working with qualified apprentices on a year-long in-depth apprenticeship in their cultural expression or traditional art form. These apprenticeships aim to facilitate the transmission of techniques and artistry of the forms, as well as their histories and traditions. This marks the second year of the biennial Folklife Apprenticeship Program.

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 <http://wvhumanities.org/programs/west-virginia-folklife-program/> and wvfolklife.org or contact Emily Hilliard at hilliard@wvhumanities.org or (304)346-8500.

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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 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.