



Smithsonian Tour Looks At Legacies of Change Across the Mountain State



*“... the whole of reality is like an ever-flowing stream, ...
 nothing is ever at rest for a moment. The substance of
 the things we see is in constant change.”*

-Heraclitus

West Virginia has seen its share of change in the last hundred years. This year, for instance, many Mountaineers are looking back to spring 1921, when thousands of miners were in open, armed revolt across the southern half of the state, engaging in violent clashes across ridgeline and holler in the Three Days Battle of the Tug, the Battle of Blair Mountain, and countless more nameless skirmishes. To the West Virginians of today, those miners are heroes who fought against corporate tyranny in defense of their Constitutional rights, but at the time they were often branded seditionists and put on trial for treason. One contemporary newspaper declared that the miners were “red-soaked in the doctrines of Bolshevism” (James Green, *The Devil Is Here in These Hills*). And though many of the social, political, and economic conditions that created the Mine Wars have passed into history, the legacies of those events are still with us.

Also come and gone over the past quarter-century are a half-dozen tours by the Smithsonian Museum on Main Street program. Sponsored by the West Virginia Humanities

Council, these unique, topical traveling exhibits have included such themes as traditional music (*New Harmonies*) and World War II manufacturing (*Produce for Victory*). The 2021-2022 tour, set to debut this summer in the Potomac Highlands, has its sights on something both more ambitious, and harder to define.

Crossroads: Change in Rural America invites its seven host communities to explore how they have changed over the last century, and to engage in a dialogue about where they’re headed, and where they want to be. The traveling exhibit’s main content displays the incomparable quality we’ve all come to expect of the Smithsonian—but there’s a lot more to it than that. Each host community, with additional funding from the Humanities Council, produces its own companion programming as well. Between locally curated exhibits, performances, speakers, concerts, and more, you could visit every single tour site and find a completely new experience.

The Crossroads exhibit tasks each community with going deeper than a simple recounting of history and tradition. Each of the tour’s seven

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The West Virginia Humanities Council is a nonprofit institution governed by its Board of Directors. The next Board meeting is July 23, 2021, and is open to the public.

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From the Executive Director

Building an issue of *People & Mountains*, while not exactly stress-free, usually isn’t an enormous challenge. There’s always something interesting going on around the Council offices—a new program, an exciting grant project, or a chance to celebrate the achievements of Council staff or partners—and more than enough news to share with our members.

But some issues, like this one, are devilishly challenging, and for exactly the same reason. As you’ll see, we’re emerging from a year of postponements and cancellations with a bold plan to deliver more and broader programming, both in and outside West Virginia, than we ever have before. Throughout this year and into 2022, the Council will mount traveling exhibits, celebrate book releases, begin new collaborations with state and national partners, and continue delivering both our traditional programs and innovative new ones to audiences wherever they live, in real and virtual spaces.

Our upcoming Museum on Main Street collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution, discussed in this issue’s cover story, focuses on change. And many changes are taking place behind the scenes at the Council these days. We’ve been improving our home office, Charleston’s historic MacFarland-Hubbard House, in eager anticipation of the day when we can host public gatherings again. We’re embarked on a comprehensive rebuild of *e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, to make the premier reference work on West Virginia more valuable for the hundreds of thousands of users around the world who access it daily.

Most happily, the Council is preparing for the launch of its 2021 American Rescue Plan emergency grant relief program, which will deliver hundreds of thousands of dollars to West Virginia cultural and community institutions, museums, historical sites, and other humanities-centered nonprofits impacted by COVID-19. West Virginia’s arts and culture sector contributes \$1.5 billion to the state’s economy annually. These grants will help ensure job security for the thousands of workers in West Virginia’s cultural economy, and mission continuity for the organizations that employ them.

We’ve all been craving good news. In these pages, we hope to bring more than a little your way.

—Eric Waggoner

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

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We welcome letters, comments, and financial contributions. Please address correspondence to West Virginia Humanities Council, 1310 Kanawha Blvd E, Charleston WV 25301 or email wwhuman@wwhumanities.org.

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The **Board of Directors** welcomes two new members who were elected at the April 23 Board meeting: Rosemary Hathaway of Morgantown and Charles Ledbetter of Charleston. Patrick Cassidy, Margaret Mary Layne and Patricia Proctor were elected to second terms. We would like to thank departing Board members Charlie Delauder, Elliot Hicks, and Timothy Sweet for their dedication and years of service. New officers were also elected as follows: Margaret Mary Layne as Treasurer and Kelli Johnson as Secretary.

Continued from page 1

host towns has different aspirations, and faces unique challenges. Approximately every six weeks, the tour will travel to a new community.

Moorefield—the first stop when *Crossroads* opens in late August 2021—is looking to its agricultural history. As the number one agricultural producing county in West Virginia, the changes in land usage and agricultural practices will be explored through tours, exhibitions, and oral histories presented across Hardy County.

After Moorefield, Weston will explore the legacy of its nineteenth-century crossroads—today's Routes 19 and 33—and how they gave the town its unique identity. New highway construction will soon link the town to Interstate 81 in Virginia, bringing new challenges and opportunities.

Crossroads then cruises southward to Welch, as the city undertakes revitalization efforts in the heart of former coal country. They'll look back on a century of the good and not-so-good about being the "Free State of McDowell," ranging from music to coalfields sports and immigrant communities.

Back up north, the homestead at Arthurdale—created at the behest of Eleanor Roosevelt during the 1930s—ponders questions of historical identity and the role of government during global crises such as the Great Depression and the present pandemic.

High in the Northern Panhandle, the Weirton Area Museum and Cultural Center will take a look at life after Weirton Steel closed, as well as the diverse community of immigrants that took root in Hancock and Brooke counties while the mill was in its heyday.

A little to Weirton's south, the Wetzel County Museum in New Martinsville will consider a century of oil and gas booms and busts in the area, their impact on the citizens of northern West Virginia, and the paths forward.

Finally, as summer 2022 begins, the "Phoenix City" of Mount Hope will partner with the National Coal Heritage Area Authority and the National Park Service to talk about revitalizing one of the New River Gorge's most prosperous former coal towns. *Crossroads* will dive into the vibrant life of a city that has one of the largest percentages of African American residents in the state.

The effort these groups are pouring into bringing the themes of *Crossroads* to life is an example to us all, and the Council supports each local team with additional funding, logistics, and training workshops. *Crossroads* joins a rich tradition of Smithsonian Museum on Main Street tours through the Mountain State, and as these seven communities prepare to open their hearts, histories, and dreams to the world, it's clear that change isn't always something to be feared.

We welcome four new citizen members to the Council's **Program Committee**. Rachael Meads teaches Appalachian culture, music, and ethnomusicology at Shepherd University. Amanda Chapman is an assistant professor in the Department of Language and Literature at Glenville State College. Sam Petsonk is a Beckley-based lawyer and a lifelong bluegrass and old-time musician. Jim Broomall is a professor of history at Shepherd University, and the director of the George Tyler Moore Center for the Study of the Civil War. Elections are held by public ballot presented in the winter issue of *People & Mountains*. The Program Committee oversees Humanities Council programs and recommends grants for approval by the Board of Directors.

Fellowships Awarded

Humanities Council Fellowships are awarded annually to college faculty and independent scholars for research and writing in the humanities. The \$3,000 grants are unique in the Mountain State. The 2021 Humanities Fellows and their subjects are:

Manal Alnatour, Morgantown,
The Intersecting Lives and Work of Syrian Women Refugees in Connecticut

William Brustein, Morgantown,
Phantom Enemies: Anti-Semitism Without Jews, Germany, France, and the U.S.

Erin Carlson, Morgantown,
Place and Its Power: Working Towards a Just Economic Transition for Rural Appalachians

Nancy Caronia, Morgantown,
You Are My Best Maid: Gender and Diasporic Italian Women in Denise Giardina's Storming Heaven

Schuyler Chapman, Glenville,
From Living the Good Life to Whole Living: The Neoliberal Turn and the Back-to-the-Land Movements of Appalachia

Kirk Hazen, Morgantown,
Sociolinguistic Variation and Change in Appalachia

Sarah Morris, Morgantown,
Transformation, Translation, and Complication: "Take Me Home, Country Roads"

María Pérez, Morgantown,
Yearned Geographies: Caves, Archive, and Kin in Venezuelan Speleology

Amy Thompson, Morgantown,
Attitudes Toward and Accessibility of Languages Other Than English in West Virginia

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: Sept. 1, Feb. 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, email riebe@wvhumanities.org, or call 304-346-8500.

Battle of Blair Mountain Centennial



Miners give up their weapons after the Battle of Blair Mountain.

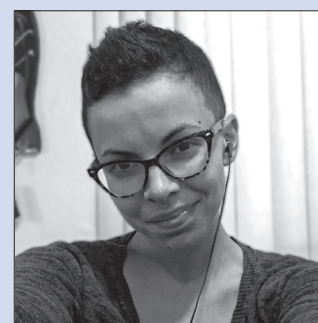
August 2021 marks the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Blair Mountain. Labor Day weekend will be packed with activities across the southern coalfields of West Virginia. Events include a kickoff concert on Friday evening in Charleston,

featuring Phil Wiggins and other *Matewan* movie soundtrack performers, a reenactment of the 50-mile Miners March, and the Blair Centennial Finale hosted by the UMWA at the Annual Labor Day Rally.

The Battle of Blair Mountain Centennial events will tell both a historical and a contemporary story. Organizations and individuals across the state and beyond are collaborating to honor this landmark event in U.S. labor history. These events aim to commemorate the significance of the Battle of Blair Mountain in 1921, memorialize the brave men and women who fought for the civil rights of miners and their families, and celebrate the ongoing spirit of Blair Mountain.

For more information and updates visit www.blair100.com or call 304-691-0014.

The **2021 Little Lecture** series concludes June 27 at 2 p.m. with game and experience designer Ivone Alexandre (right) presenting "History and the Humanities in Game Design," highlighting the influences on their creative process. Alexandre has designed in multiple mediums for Walt Disney Imagineering, Meow Wolf in Santa Fe, and other game companies. The lecture will be presented virtually on YouTube, Facebook, and the Council's website. For more information or to view archived lectures, please visit our website at www.wvhumanities.org.



West Virginia State Parks have long provided a fitting venue for the Council's *History Alive!* performances. After the restrictions



of last year, we are happy to report that *History Alive!* is back in action at many parks around the state. Please visit the events page at www.wvhumanities.org for the full schedule.



In yet another expansion of Council programming, our new podcast *Mysterious Mountains* is now available through the Dial-A-Story programs of several public libraries in Brooke, Gilmer, and Mason counties. This program allows the Council to expand its reach in offering direct programming to more citizens across the state. While the podcast is already free and available to the public via the website www.mysteriousmountains.podbean.com and most other major podcast apps, Dial-A-Story provides improved accessibility to patrons for whom the availability of smart devices or high speed internet may be limited.

Mysterious Mountains allows listeners to discover West Virginia as it has been portrayed in detective fiction, ghost stories, campfire tales, and more. The podcast's current season focuses on the *Uncle Abner* detective stories of Harrison County author Melville Davisson Post, who was once one of the country's most successful mystery writers. Keep listening after each story ends as conversations with expert scholars reveal deeper layers within the text.

The Council makes each episode available to public libraries free of charge for their Dial-A-Story programs. If your local library is interested in adding *Mysterious Mountains* to its offerings, ask library staff to contact Program Officer Kyle Warmack via his email warmack@wvhumanities.org for more details.

The Humanities Council announces the 2022 publication of State Folklorist Emily Hilliard's book *Making Our Future: Culture, Community, and Public Folklore in West Virginia Today* by The University of North Carolina Press. Chapters on the 2018 and 2019 Teachers' Strike, independent pro-wrestling, foodways, video game Fallout 76, and more draw from Hilliard's fieldwork as state folklorist. The book presents a picture of contemporary folklife in the Mountain State, illustrating how public folklore offers a framework for understanding grassroots culture as it evolves.

"Emily's collection is both a snapshot of several of West Virginia's rich and varied present-day communities, and a state-of-the-field report on Folklife studies," says Council Executive Director Eric Waggoner. "We're very proud, though certainly not surprised, that it's found a home at such a notable academic press."



Briefs

e-WV, the online version of *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, continues to be updated while we begin website renovations. New content includes articles on sculptor Frank C. Gaylord, Crimson Tide coach Nick Saban, and the Freemasons. Visit www.wvencyclopedia.org to view more than 2,300 articles, original exhibits, and interactive maps.

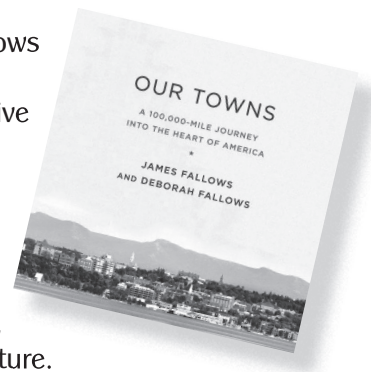
The **Appalachian Authors' Roundtable**, supported by a Humanities Council grant, is an annual FestivALL event curated and hosted by West Virginia Poet Laureate **Marc Harshman**. This year's panel will feature authors who have also worked as translators: Randi Ward (Icelandic, Faeroese, Norwegian, Danish, German, and others), Katerina Stoykova-Klemer (Bulgarian), Jeremy Paden (Spanish), and Brian Henry (Slovenian). Due to COVID-19, FestivALL will deliver the Roundtable event to a limited live audience. The event will also be recorded for later viewing on the FestivALL YouTube Channel on June 20. Visit www.festivallcharleston.com for details.

The **Humanities Council** is eager to begin its "listening tour" of West Virginia, originally planned for 2020. As conditions permit, staff will travel the state in 2021-2022 meeting with community stakeholders and civic leaders. Our goal is to share information about Council grant and programming opportunities, and to learn about local cultural conditions and community organizations firsthand. Visits to Upshur and Tyler counties were already in the early stages of preparation when the tour was postponed. The Council anticipates visits to a half-dozen sites in the first leg of its tour, with more to follow.

Save the Date

Both the **West Virginia Humanities Council's annual McCreight Lecture in the Humanities** and **The West Virginia Book Festival** return to **Charleston** this year after a hiatus due to COVID in 2020.

Award-winning journalists and bestselling authors James and Deborah Fallows are the featured speakers at the **McCreight Lecture**, to be held **Thursday, October 21**, in Charleston (time and venue TBA). The Fallows are the creative minds behind the new HBO documentary "Our Towns," which is drawn from their 2018 *New York Times* bestselling book *Our Towns: A 100,000-Mile Journey into the Heart of America*. In the film, which premiered on April 13, 2021, the couple revisit eight of the towns across America that were featured in the book—including Charleston, West Virginia. While in Charleston, the Fallows spoke with local entrepreneurs, community leaders, and artists for an in-depth profile of the city's present-day character and culture.



The **2021 West Virginia Book Festival** will be held **Friday, October 22, and Saturday, October 23**, at the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center. The event will feature presentations from

West Virginia Book Festival

bestselling national authors, local and regional authors, writing workshops, family activities, a literary marketplace, and an enormous used book sale. All events and programs are free and open to the public. This year's headlining authors are *New York Times* bestselling author Colson Whitehead; author, singer, and mastermind behind the 2018 thriller *Bird Box*, Josh Malerman; popular children's author Jon Scieszka; Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter and author Eric Eyre; and West Virginia native and author Denise Giardina.

For more information on these events, visit www.wvhumanities.org and www.wvbookfestival.org.

Donations November 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021

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News from the West Virginia Folklife Program

Apprenticeships

Though most 2020-2021 West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship pairs extended their apprenticeships in order to safely adapt to COVID-19 restrictions, several pairs are now completing their year of study.

At noon on Wednesday, June 9, 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.



Photo courtesy of Margaret Bruning

At noon on Thursday, June 17, "sheep-to-shawl" apprentice pair Kathy Evans of Preston County and Margaret Bruning (left) 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. Visit www.wvfolklife.org for more information on how to attend the apprenticeship events.

Fiddler Joe Herrmann and apprentice Dakota Karper, both of Hampshire County, and banjo player Kim Johnson and apprentice Cody Jordan, both of Kanawha County, recently completed their respective apprenticeships; we plan to host a live showcase with them at the Humanities Council when it is safe to do so.

Oral History Workshop

State Folklorist Emily Hilliard recently led an oral history workshop for sites across the state

participating in *Crossroads: Change in Rural America*, an exhibit from the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Services (SITES) as part of their Museum on Main Street Program. To learn more about the program visit wvhumanities.org/programs/crossroads/.

Legends and Lore

On Sunday, June 27, from 2 to 3 p.m., the Ferguson Rock Legends & Lore Roadside Marker will be unveiled at the Wildwood House Museum at 121 Laurel Terrace in Beckley. The marker commemorates the rock where, according to local folklore, a hunter inscribed his own epitaph after he was thrown off his horse sometime in the year 1814. Others suggest the rock was inscribed by a member of the Ferguson family of fur trappers from Franklin County, Virginia. For more information on the unveiling, visit www.wgpfoundation.org/events.

New Video Featuring NEA National Heritage Fellow John Morris

On March 4, the National Endowment for the Arts honored the 2020 National Heritage Fellows with its video *The Culture of America: A Cross-Country Visit with the National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellows*. Clay County fiddler John D. Morris (above) is one of the 2020 honorees. State Folklorist Emily Hilliard interviewed Morris for the video release, which is now accessible on YouTube from the NEA website at www.arts.gov/honors/heritage.



Michael Keller