



From the Executive Director

What Connects Us

Among its other benefits, the humanities can improve our lives by teaching us how not to be afraid. Rather than a primary lesson, though, I think that's often a corollary one—a secondary effect, one that arises from the careful thought and reflection the humanities encourage.

In studying history, in learning about living traditions and arts, in reading stories that reflect our own experiences or open us to understanding ones somewhat unlike our own, it's possible to

stories we choose to tell, and the stories we choose to pay attention to, matter immensely. They have direct and practical impact not only in our private lives, but in public life—the life we all share, and in which we participate together.

Throughout 2022 the West Virginia Humanities Council will engage in a series of projects under the general heading “A More Perfect Union.” Through direct programming and grants, the Council will seek to offer and support projects that focus on civic engagement, the

direct participation in public life through voting, volunteerism, and other forms of public service; and civics education, the informed understanding of the rights, responsibilities, and concerns of citizenship on levels from the local to the national.

The primary goal of this initiative is to encourage a better understanding of how our public and civic lives can function peaceably, fairly, and effectively. But a secondary effect is to remind us that education is one antidote, perhaps the most effective antidote, to fear.

Our shared public discourse, now so often dominated by partial information and extreme emotion, tends neither to reward nor even to encourage quiet and

deliberate thought. The challenges we face, in our home communities and as a nation, require exactly that—clear thinking and civil discussion—if we're to meet them effectively.

Debate and disagreement are essential to a properly functioning democracy. With a foundation of an informed and engaged civitas, even our disagreements can lead to improved conditions. During the coming year the Humanities Council will strive to foster projects that support that informed engagement. We will continue to deliver our popular legacy and annual programs, too, and you'll read about those in this issue as well. We're grateful for your support, and we look forward to the work we'll do together.

—Eric Waggoner



be led again and again to the consideration of values common to humanity—community, family, a desire to improve conditions where we can. These values take multiple forms, to be sure. But the need for community and connection, the desire to contribute to something bigger than we are by ourselves, and the impulse to share the stories of who we are and what we value, appear to be bedrock elements of the human experience, across time and across borders.

The humanities don't have a monopoly on ethical or philosophical considerations. Even the hard sciences touch on such matters. But the humanities are invariably narrative. They not only permit, but require us to craft stories from the raw material of our experiences, our beliefs, even our moments of doubt and uncertainty. The

Winter
2021-2022

1

What Connects
Us

2

What's New

4

Folklife



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: **April 1**, June 1, Oct. 1, Feb. 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: \$20,000 Due: Sept. 1

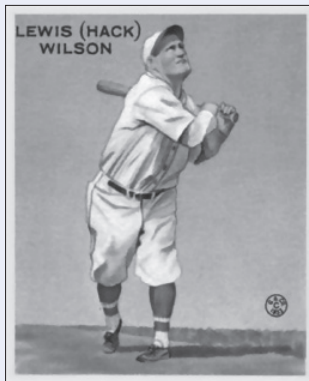
For more information, applications and guidelines visit www.wvhumanities.org, email riebe@wvhumanities.org or call 304-346-8500.

Mysterious Mountains Podcast

In 2021, the Council launched the first season of its new podcast *Mysterious Mountains*, which explores the imaginary landscape of West Virginia through the lens of genre fiction and folklore. The first season features the Harrison County *Uncle Abner* detective stories of Melville Davisson Post, and will wrap up its last few episodes in early 2022—paving the way for season two!

Our second season will jump into 20th century territory with the short works of John F. Suter (1914-1996). Though born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, as a child he moved with his family to Charleston, West Virginia, and spent most of his life there working as a chemical engineer for corporate giant Union Carbide. After writing a handful of scripts for radio dramas, his literary career took off in 1953 with a short story published in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*. From the 1950s to the 1980s he was published dozens of times in *Ellery Queen*, the *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* book series, and numerous other genre magazines and mystery anthologies. The podcast will feature some of Suter's works not seen since their original publication.

For more information on the podcast, visit the *Mysterious Mountains* page on our website, www.wvhumanities.org. You can listen to the podcast on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Pandora, Spotify, Audible, or any of your favorite podcast apps, or on the web at mysteriousmountains.podbean.com.



1933 Goudey baseball card

known as “The Earl of Elkview,” tech entrepreneur and Marshall University President Brad Smith, and baseball greats Hack Wilson and Bill Mazeroski.

We were also busy “behind the screen” in 2021. Last summer, in consultation with Formed Function LLC of Morgantown, the Council embarked on a full rebuild and redesign of *e-WV* to keep pace with recent innovations in online and software platforms, and to make accessing the site easier and more intuitive for users. *e-WV* will remain up and running throughout the rebuild process. The end result will be a smoother, faster, and more streamlined experience for the millions of people who access the site as a resource for classroom teaching, historical research, or just to learn more about Mountain State history and culture.



Little Lectures:

The 2022 Little Lecture series kicks off Sunday, March 27, at 2 p.m. West Virginia University professor Erik Herron and graduate researcher Paige Wantlin will share their recent work on *Election Integrity and Processes: West Virginia's Contributions to a More Perfect Union*. This is the first of a special, five-part Little Lectures focusing on civics and the democratic process, made possible with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities "A More Perfect Union" initiative. Erik and Paige have been collaborating on a project related to elections in West Virginia since 2020.

If COVID-19 conditions allow, lectures will be held in-person at the historic MacFarland-Hubbard House in Charleston with videos of each lecture to be released afterward on YouTube, Facebook, and the Council's website. If health conditions prevent in-person events, virtual premieres will be held on each lecture date just as they were throughout 2020-21. This year's five lectures will be presented once each month from March through July. For the full schedule and any updates regarding in-person attendance, please visit our website at www.wvhumanities.org.

The Smithsonian exhibit *Crossroads: Change in Rural America*

continues its tour around the Mountain State. The exhibit examines the present-day turning point at which many rural American towns find themselves.

Since the early 1900s, rural America has experienced significant changes in demographics, educational opportunities, access to services, and economic viability. Today, the population of the nation's rural areas is less than half of what it was in 1900, yet America's small towns continue to creatively focus on new opportunities for growth and development. Economic innovation, including investment in cultural and creative economies, has helped many communities create their own renaissance.

Every host community will offer a unique and local take on the exhibit's main theme. Please contact the local host organizations listed below for more information on their planned *Crossroads* programming.

Weirton – Weirton Area Museum and Cultural Center
January 31 through March 9, 2022

New Martinsville – Wetzel County Museum
March 11 through April 20, 2022

Mt. Hope – Coal Heritage Discovery Center
April 22 through May 30, 2022

Welch – Jack Caffrey Arts and Cultural Center
June 3 through July 6, 2022



Linda Zimmer presents her historical marionette show "Eleanor's Garden" as part of *Crossroads* Arthurdale programming.

Kendyl Bostic

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 no more than four:

___ **Jenny Archer**, Hampshire County, is a private development consultant and serves as the Board Chair for The River House in Capon Bridge.

___ **Jody Evans**, Hardy County, is a retired employee of the CIA who has been involved with several international and intercultural programs dedicated to promoting peace and cross-cultural exchange. Evans is an incumbent and eligible for re-election.

___ **Savannah Guz**, Hancock County, is president and executive director of the Weirton Area Museum and Cultural Center.

___ **Dan Holbrook**, Cabell County, is Professor Emeritus of History at Marshall University where he served as department chair for 10 years.

___ **Sudhaker Jamkhandi**, Mercer County, is tenured Professor of English at Bluefield State College and Director of the Office of International Initiatives.

___ **Thomas Schoffler**, Upshur County, is Associate Professor of Theatre Arts at West Virginia Wesleyan College, and a professional actor and director.

___ **H. G. Young**, Wood County, is Professor of Music at West Virginia University at Parkersburg and is active as a conductor and musicologist. Young is an incumbent and eligible for re-election.

Return your ballot by mail to the West Virginia Humanities Council or access online at www.wvhumanities.org by March 11.

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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.

Welcome State Folklorist Jennie Williams

The West Virginia Humanities Council, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, welcomes Jennie Williams as its new State Folklorist. Jennie joined the Council staff on January 18, 2022.

Jennie Williams grew up in Frederick, Maryland, and attended the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and Indiana University in Bloomington where she is currently a Ph.D. candidate in ethnomusicology. During her work with Traditional Arts Indiana (TAI) at IU, she secured funding from the National Endowment for the Arts to restart the TAI Apprenticeship Program, which has since supported four cohorts of artists. Jennie has worked with a range of local, regional, and national arts programs including the NEA, Maryland Traditions, *Mississippi Folklife*, and Smithsonian Folkways Recordings.

A proficient mandolin and guitar player with a knowledge of traditional music repertoire, Jennie

has worked extensively in traditional music circles as both a performer and a field researcher. She compiled her IU dissertation fieldwork into a video featuring photography, interview clips, and performances and stories delivered by musicians in southern Indiana on their front porches during the pandemic.

"We're delighted to welcome Jennie to this excellent staff," says Executive Director Eric Waggoner. "She has a demonstrated personal and professional expertise in preserving and celebrating living traditions. We're very excited to see Jennie bring her vision to the Council's West Virginia Folklife Program."

Keep up with the West Virginia Folklife Program by visiting wvfolklife.org, and following us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, and YouTube.



Michael Keller

Legends & Lore

The West Virginia Folklife Program at the Humanities Council works in partnership with The William G. Pomeroy Foundation to bring the national Legends & Lore Roadside Marker Program to the state of West Virginia. The program was created to help promote cultural tourism and commemorate legends and folklore as an important part of every community's cultural heritage. Recent installations commemorate the 1905 Cowen Shootout in Webster County and the ghost of Mamie Thurman in Logan County.

West Virginia nonprofit organizations, municipalities, and nonprofit educational institutions are eligible to apply for a roadside marker commemorating an important tradition or story in their communities. Applications are accepted twice a year. First-round 2022 applications will be available online March 13 and will be due May 2. For full details visit www.wvhumanities.org or www.wvfolklife.org.

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.