2021 seems to call for something new. Even though here at the Council we don’t wait for a full trip around the sun to kick off new programs, or announce the latest round of grants, this year feels like a good time to show off the incredible range the humanities cover in West Virginia and beyond—the broader side, the more obscure side, even the lighter side.

The Broad Side. the Council’s new bimonthly publication, will feature personal stories, book and podcast recommendations, short dispatches from around the state, and brief items for further exploration. These notes won’t be tied to ongoing Council grants or programs. Instead, they’ll provide our readers with interesting historical and contemporary notes, recommendations for reading or travel, and unique perspectives on the humanities from all around West Virginia.

The Broad Side aims to embrace a spirit of intellectual adventure, and invite you to join us in exploring the West Virginia road—real and imaginary—that often go less traveled.

We kick off our inaugural issue with the autobiographical, nautical experiences of Council Board member Ensign Dan McCarthy (later Vice Admiral McCarthy)—a story we don’t often encounter in a landlocked state! We hope you enjoy this journey with us, as every other month, The Broad Side keeps us all on our toes—eagerly peering into the many facets of life in this Mountain State of ours.

The Council has launched its first podcast series, Mysterious Mountains, which explores the imaginary landscape of West Virginia through the lens of genre fiction and folklore. Our first season of twelve episodes highlights the “Uncle Abner” mysteries by Harrison County-born author Melville Davison Post (1869–1930). Post’s mystery tales were among the most popular detective stories in America for decades after their original publication were among the most popular detective stories in America for decades after their original publication.

Our first episode of this first season of Mysterious Mountains features a complete reading of an Uncle Abner story, followed by in-depth conversations with scholars from diverse disciplines inside and outside West Virginia on specific aspects of each story.

Prestigious Romani scholar Dr. Ian Hancock dives into the history of “Gypsy” stereotypes in literature and popular culture; Dr. Lynn Linder of West Virginia Wesleyan College illuminates the history of the detective fiction genre; Olivia Jones, curator of the Grave Creek Mound and Archaeological Complex in Moundville, excavates what we know about the ancient mound builder civilization; Dr. Suzanne Bray speaks with us from France about ‘Uncle Abner’ and the history of “Gypsy” stereotypes in literature and popular culture; Dr. Lynn Linder of West Virginia Wesleyan College illuminates the history of the detective fiction genre; Olivia Jones, curator of the Grave Creek Mound and Archaeological Complex in Moundville, excavates what we know about the ancient mound builder civilization; Dr. Suzanne Bray speaks with us from France about ‘Uncle Abner’ and the history of “Gypsy” stereotypes in literature and popular culture; Dr. Lynn Linder of West Virginia Wesleyan College illuminates the history of the detective fiction genre; Olivia Jones, curator of the Grave Creek Mound and Archaeological Complex in Moundville, excavates what we know about the ancient mound builder civilization; Dr. Suzanne Bray speaks with us from France about ‘Uncle Abner’ and the history of “Gypsy” stereotypes in literature and popular culture.

As the ship’s Supply Officer, my department of 225 crew members (about fifteen percent of the crew) was responsible for an array of services including food service, stores, pay, contracting, laundry and retail services in support of the crew and the ship’s operations. During the shakedown cruise, the food service team was the focus of attention.

The cruise itself was the first circumnavigation of the globe by a battleship since Theodore Roosevelt’s “Great White Fleet” eighty years before—a fleet which included the first battleship named USS Missouri (BB-11). We made eleven diplomatic stops during that cruise. Among other things, we functioned as the U.S. representative to the 75th anniversary celebration of the Royal Australian Navy in Sydney Harbor and commemorating the 40th anniversary of the return of the remains of the Turkish ambassador to the United States in Istanbul, Turkey.

Each stop was marked by several formal receptions and special meals held on board, and usually hosted by the appropriate U.S. ambassador in the countries we were visiting. While each stop had its memorable highlights, one that sticks in my mind was a stop in Naples, Italy. Each time we made a formal stop, we used for these formal receptions that began in the Wardroom (the officer’s dining area) and on the ceremonial “surrender deck”—where the formal surrender had been signed in Tokyo Bay to end the War in the Pacific in 1945. We would escort the guests to the forecastle (the upper deck in the bow of the ship) where our onboard Marine Corps Security Detachment would perform a special ceremony. Things didn’t go quite like that in Naples.

Normally, the guests would readily move in queue, but in Italy, the guests refused to leave until all the food had been consumed—devouring even the decorative breads we used as displays on the tables. Perhaps the root of the problem was that we had used local wines, which were permitted to bring with us for the formal reception.

I left MISSOURI in June of 1986 with more memories than I can adequately describe in a short article. She was decommissioned on March 31, 1992, after having served in the Gulf War. Today she rests in Pearl Harbor, adjacent to the USS Arizona Memorial. Together they form fitting bookends of the Pacific War, and mark the conclusion of the battleship era and a long line of proud ships, including USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB-48).

While my ACCESS Missouri journey ended in 1987, my Navy career was far from over—I retired from the Navy in 2007 with the rank of Vice Admiral. Though a native of Farmington, Michigan, I moved to West Virginia in 2012 to oversee the opening of the Summit Bechtel Reserve near New River Gorge for the Boy Scouts of America—and have called the Mountain State home ever since. As a naval officer, being landlocked is a strange feeling, but I’ve learned that the relationships you build as a service member are not broken as a result of geographical location.

What is impressed on members of our generation is the recognition and obvious appreciation of veterans and their service in this state. Having lived through the late Sixties and early Seventies in military service, I have seen the extreme care and concern level of treatment of its veterans. I’m proud to be in West Virginia and to support the veterans of this state.
EVENTS
FEBRUARY- MARCH 2021

Always check with the venue or hosting organization of an event before attending, especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, as schedules may change without the knowledge of the Council. For more information, you can also visit the calendar on our website, www.wvhumanities.org.

Feb 2 The Great Migration - presentation by Maggie Brown. Presented by Augusta Heritage Center. Virtual, 7pm
Feb 3 "Pu‘ukoulu" documentary - film screening and discussion. Register at CATF.org. Virtual, 6:30pm
Feb 9 A Visit with Master Artist Joey Saye - Presented by Augusta Heritage Center. Virtual, 7pm
Feb 10 Harriet Tubman - History Alive! Hosted by Marion County Public Library Virtual, 6:30pm
Feb 17 Beanie Smith - History Alive! Hosted by Bridge Valley Community & Technical College. Virtual, 12:15pm
Feb 23 "The Crossing: Irish and Appalachian Musical Connections" - presentation by Tim O'Brien. Presented by Augusta Heritage Center. Virtual, 7pm
Mar 9 "Women in Old-Time Music" - presentation by Alice Gerrard. Presented by Augusta Heritage Center. Virtual, 7pm
Mar 16 A Visit with Master Artist Lonnie Norwood - Presented by Augusta Heritage Center. Virtual, 7pm
Mar 23 "Art and Social Justice in Beckley, WV" - presentation by Dorris Fields. Presented by Augusta Heritage Center. Virtual, 7pm
Mar 28 Saving the Blair Mountain Battlefield - Little Lecture by Chuck Keeny. Virtual or MacFarland-Hubbard House, Charleston, 2pm
Mar 30 A Visit with Master Artist Elizabeth LaPrelle - Presented by Augusta Heritage Center. Virtual, 7pm

All events presented by Augusta Heritage Center can be streamed live on the listed date at fb.com/augustaheritagecenter/live

For more information on those events, visit augustaartsandculture.org/events

www.wvhumanities.org  facebook.com/wvhumanities  twitter.com/wvhumanities  instagram.com/wvhumanities