



# WEST VIRGINIA HUMANITIES COUNCIL

## The West Virginia Folklife Program Presents Folklife Apprenticeship Showcase at the Robinson Grand Performing Arts Center

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Clarksburg, W.Va.—The West Virginia Folklife Program, a project of the West Virginia Humanities Council, will present the final of three showcases featuring its 2022-2023 Folklife Apprenticeship Program at Robinson Grand Performing Arts Center in Clarksburg on Sunday, November 5, 2023.

This showcase celebrates Appalachian storytelling traditions in West Virginia with Bil Lepp of Kanawha County and his apprentice James Froemel of Monongalia County. Bil has been writing and telling stories on stage for over 30 years and touring professionally since 2003. Bil and James have both participated in the West Virginia Storytellers Guild. Bil is a five-time champ of the Vandalia Gathering's Liars Contest, and James earned his fourth win in the contest this year.

The showcase is free and open to the public. At 3 p.m., the showcase will begin with performances by Froemel and Lepp. West Virginia State Folklorist Jennie Williams will lead a conversation with the apprenticeship pair and the audience to discuss traditional storytelling and their apprenticeship experiences. A reception will follow.

The first event, held on September 9th at the Phil Gainer Community Center in Elkins, celebrated fiber arts with Enrica McMillon (Randolph County) and her apprentice Barbara Weaner (Tucker County), soul food cooking with Xavier Oglesby and his apprentice and niece Brooklynn Oglesby (Raleigh County), and mushroom foraging with Sharon Briggs and her apprentice Anthony Murray (Hampshire County). On September 30, we hosted our second showcase at the Frank and Jane Gabor West Virginia Folklife Center at Fairmont State University to celebrate music-related folklife apprenticeships. Gerry Milnes (Randolph County) and his apprentice Annick Odom (Monongalia County) practiced old-time fiddle, Joe Herrmann and his apprentice Dakota Karper (Hampshire County) practiced clawhammer banjo, and Chris Haddox and his apprentice Mary Linscheid (Monongalia County) practiced fiddle repair.

While this showcase is free, we are requesting RSVPs for the event and reception. To RSVP, please go to [wvfolklife.org](http://wvfolklife.org) and see ["Save the Dates for the WV Folklife Apprenticeship Showcases."](#)

[The West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program](#) offers a stipend to West Virginia 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 encourage experts in their respective art forms to share their techniques and artistry, as well as the histories and traditions of these folklife practices. This marks the third 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 [wvfolklife.org](http://wvfolklife.org) or <http://wvhumanities.org/programs/west-virginia-folklife-program/>, or contact Jennie Williams at [williams@wvhumanities.org](mailto:williams@wvhumanities.org) or (304)346-8500.

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*The West Virginia Humanities Council, an independent nonprofit corporation, is governed by a board of directors whose members are drawn from all parts of West Virginia. The state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), it is 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.*



**James Froemel (left) and Bil Lepp (right). Photo by Mike Keller.**