From the Executive Director

A Bird’s-Eye View of 50 Years

As I’ve often said, one of the best parts of this job is having a bird’s-eye view of the excellent cultural work being done everywhere in the Mountain State. At the halfway point of our 50th anniversary year, I daresay the Council staff has seen much more of that work than at any point since I arrived here in 2018.

We’ve been on the road quite a lot lately. We’ve hosted 50th anniversary receptions in Huntington and Beckley, planned a week of commemorative events around West Virginia Day at our Charleston headquarters in June, and will hold another anniversary reception in Shepherdstown in July. As summer turns to fall, we’ll plan for more celebrations elsewhere in the state.

And as usual, we’ve had a busy season of grants and programs. We’ve visited film festivals, community festivals, music workshops, lectures, local history exhibits, and many other events supported by the Humanities Council that help West Virginians preserve our traditions and tell our stories.

But if you haven’t had a chance to hear us tell our own story during this landmark year, by all means, take a moment to visit our dedicated WVHC 50th Anniversary Home Page (wvhumanities.org/50th-anniversary) for a closer look at our work over the last half-century.

Our 50th Anniversary Timeline is a scrollable multimedia version of the Council’s history, featuring a wealth of archival photos, and a review of major events and milestones from the 1970s to the present.

You’ll also find our 50th Anniversary Postcard Series, designed exclusively for the Council in honor of our golden year by West Virginia artist Caroline Murphy. The series features people and places deeply connected to the Council and our home state. (If you’d like to receive the full set of cards over the course of this year, please contact our main office directly.)

You’ll learn how you can host your own Mountain State Trivia Event, using custom questions derived from e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia online. (And if you live in the Charleston area, keep an eye out for a special Council-hosted Trivia Night coming up this summer!)

This year we’ve had a unique chance to travel the state to celebrate both the Council’s work, and the work of the many people and organizations who give our work meaning. Please watch for us out on the road during the second half of our golden year. And until we see you again, be well, and look out for one another.

—Eric Waggoner

Artist Caroline Murphy designed this and 11 other collectible postcards in honor of the Council’s 50 years.
The West Virginia Humanities Council is a nonprofit institution governed by its Board of Directors. The next Board meeting is in Shepherdstown, July 12, 2024, and is open to the public.

George “Gib” Brown, President, Clarksburg
Leslie Baker, Beckley
Matthew Bond, Charleston
Gregory Coble, Shepherdstown
Laurie Erickson, Morgantown
Cicero Fain III, Huntington
Ann Farr, Frankford
Patrick Felton, Wheeling
Rita Hedrick-Helmick, Glenville
Charles Ledbetter, Charleston
J. Dan McCarthy, Fayetteville
Michele Moure-Reeves, Mathias
Paul Papadopoulos, Hurricane
Katrena Ramsey, Ravenswood
Karen Rice, Martinsburg
Lisa Rose, Morgantown
Tom Sopher, Beckley
Megan Tarbett, Hurricane
Pam Tarr, Charleston
John Unger, Martinsburg
Bryson VanNostrand, Buckhannon
Lydia Warren, Fairmont

The Council held its spring 2024 Board meeting April 14 at the Historic Black Knight in Beckley. The night before, the Council hosted a reception for Board members and friends of the Council, featuring music by Lady D, “West Virginia’s First Lady of Soul,” and Andrew Caldwell. The Board approved four new members: Gregory Coble of Shepherdstown, Ann Farr of Frankford, Patrick Felton of Wheeling, and Lydia Warren of Fairmont. In addition, Matthew Bond of Charleston joined our Board in October.

Two new citizen members were elected to the Council’s Program Committee: Elizabeth Satterfield, Curator and Director of Education at Arthurdale Heritage in Preston County, and Alexandra Schneider, Director of Brooke County Public Libraries. Current members Amanda Chapman and Rachael Meads were reelected to second terms. All were elected by vote through ballots on the Council’s website and in the winter issue of People & Mountains. The Program Committee recommends funding decisions to the Council Board of Directors. The 22-member committee includes 11 members drawn from the Council Board and 11 citizen members who represent the public.

When the Wind Blows

As weather events go, it could have been much worse. Our historic MacFarland-Hubbard House headquarters and staff survived the severe storms and tornadoes that struck central West Virginia on April 2. Four of our trees, however, were not as fortunate. The storm took out two magnolia and two holly trees; the magnolias were nearly 100 years old. We are in the planning stages of replacing them. Meanwhile, our remarkable 188-year-old building survived virtually unscathed.

West Virginia Humanities Council Staff

Eric Waggoner, Executive Director
Stan Bumgardner, e-WV Media Editor
Heather Campbell, Fiscal Officer

Katie Morris, Development Director
Erin Riebe, Grants Administrator
Tricia Stringer, Operations Manager

Kyle Warmack, Program Officer
Jennie Williams, State Folklorist

Publication Design by AC Designs

People & Mountains Summer 2024
Grants Awarded: October 2023 - February 2024

- Alchemy Theatre Troupe, 7th Annual West Virginia Shakespeare Festival
- Appalachian Forest Heritage Area, Discover the Appalachian Forest, exhibit plan
- Grow Ohio Valley, Wheeling Community Cookbook Project
- Harpers Ferry Park Association, Known Unknowns: Enslaved and Enslavers in Harpers Ferry
- Marshall University Research Corporation, Dr. Carter G. Woodson Lyceum’s Black History Institute
- Martinsburg-Berkeley County NAACP, The Sumner-Ramer Memorial School: Preserving the History of Black American Education in Martinsburg
- National Coal Heritage Area Authority, Clear Fork Rail Trail Interpretive Plan
- Shepherd University Foundation, The Art of Storytelling: Teaching and Telling in the Classroom across the Curriculum, teacher institute
- Step by Step, Inc., Engaging West Virginians with Our Literary Heritage, website
- West Virginia Mine Wars Museum, A Window into History: Upgrading the Bloody Mingo Exhibit
- West Virginia Public Broadcasting Foundation, Us & Them, Season 10, podcast
- West Virginia Symphony Orchestra, A Melding of Cultures State Tour
- West Virginia University Research Corporation, Art and AI, panel discussion
- West Virginia University Research Corporation, WVU Libraries’ Art in the Libraries Program Retrospective Exhibition

2024 Fellowships Awarded

- Gwen Bergner, Reviving Zora Neale Hurston’s Zombie
- Benjamin Campbell, Irish Mountains: Isolation as a Construct of Celtic Mythology in Southern West Virginia
- Rose Casey, Inheriting Racialized Dispossession: Succession Law in South African Literature
- Scott Davidson, Who Is the Author of AI-Generated Projects? Rethinking Authorship and Copyright in an AI World
- Renee Nicholson, Healthcare Is Human: A Narrative Medicine Approach in West Virginia
- Betty Rivard, Coming Full Circle: The Life and Legacy of a Pioneer in Air Pollution Control
- Irina Rodimtseva, A Field Guide to Interconnectedness
- Sam Stack Jr., William Woodson Trent (1878-1960): Teacher, Educational Leader, and Politician
- Christy Perry Tuohey, The Union Civil War Hospitals of West Virginia, 1861-1865
- Megan Vendemia, The Commodification and Ethics of Augmented Reality Appearance Filters: A Critical Review

In the moving documentary The Sumner-Ramer Memorial School, eight former students, including Judy Banks Joseph (pictured), share their memories of attending Martinsburg’s former segregated school. You can search for the film on YouTube.
Congratulations to Grow Ohio Valley on its newly self-published Wheeling community cookbook, *A Little of This, a Little of That*. With funding in part from a West Virginia Humanities Council grant, Emma Goldenthal and Corbin T. Lanker compiled this wonderful collection of recipes, photography, and food stories from 26 local contributors. On December 14, 2023, Grow Ohio Valley hosted a celebratory potluck dinner at Centre Market in downtown Wheeling.

The project was inspired by *The Foxfire Book of Appalachian Cookery* (1984) and traditional community cookbooks, which historically have been authored by women and are commonly associated with churches and social clubs. “The many stories shared in this book are interconnected by common threads,” Emma writes in the foreword. “Our contributors often spoke about how special dishes and ingredients help maintain family traditions and cultural ties, especially around the holidays. Others reflected on how a meal or dish can be an opportunity for expressing love and care, or a way to navigate grief and change. Some contributors shared childhood memories that cherished foods evoke. And others yet showed us how cooking can be an intuitive practice, a knowing rather than a mere collection of steps, or an avenue for creativity and experimentation.”

The cookbooks are available for purchase at Wheeling’s Centre Market or at growov.org/communitycookbook. Proceeds go toward future community education programming in Wheeling, including Grow Ohio Valley’s after-school cooking classes for fourth and fifth graders.

—Jennie S. Williams

**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 $2,000 or less and support small projects, single events, or planning/consultation.
Due: June 1, Oct. 1, Feb. 1, April 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 wvhumanities.org, email riebe@wvhumanities.org, or call 304-346-8500.
Melding Cultures through Music

Funded in part by a West Virginia Humanities Council grant, the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra (WVSO) in April 2024 offered immersive concert experiences across the state, bringing together Appalachian and Korean cultures. The WVSO visited Elkins, Fairmont, Charleston, Lewisburg, and Williamstown. American composer Theodore Wiprud and gamin, a Korean soloist, explored music theory and how cultural influences impact its formation and progression.

Korean-born U.S.-based multi-instrumentalist gamin is known for her traditional Korean wind performances. She tours worldwide performing both traditional Korean music and cross-disciplinary pieces. She’s been artist-in-residence at the Asian Cultural Council and collaborated in cross-cultural improvisations with premieres at New York’s Roulette Theater, The New School University, and Metropolitan Museum.

The concerts ranged from a new commission by Wiprud to Aaron Copland’s Appalachian Spring. “Wiprud’s commission for the traditional Korean Piri,” WVSO President Joe Tackett notes, “showcased gamin’s high level of talent.”

“The arts not only feed our hunger for beauty,” adds Eric Waggoner, executive director of the Humanities Council, “they can nourish cultural understanding and human connections across borders of every kind. We are delighted to lend our support to this wonderful program.”

The West Virginia Symphony Orchestra performs at Charleston’s Christ Church United Methodist in April. Conducting is Alex Amsel, and performing is gamin.

Mark Your Calendars

The West Virginia Humanities Council is delighted to announce award-winning author Percival Everett as our speaker for the 2024 Betsy K. McCreight Lecture in the Humanities. Everett’s 2001 novel Erasure was adapted into the 2023 Oscar-winning film American Fiction. He is now receiving rave reviews for his new novel James, a re-imagining of Mark Twain’s The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn from the character Jim’s point of view. You can read much more about this exciting speaker in our fall issue. The 2024 McCreight Lecture will be held on Thursday, October 17, in Charleston.
We’re very happy to welcome Katie Morris as the West Virginia Humanities Council’s new development director. Katie, originally from Ravenswood, earned a B.A. in English from the University of Charleston and an M.A. in public administration from Marshall University.

For the last six years, she’s been the special assistant to West Virginia First Lady Cathy Justice, managing arts and educational programming; creating and managing Friends with Paws, the first statewide school therapy dog program; developing and overseeing the First Lady’s student artist series; and working with artists statewide on the First Lady’s annual holiday ornament project.

“After I finished grad school,” Katie says, “I really wanted to stay in West Virginia and make a difference. The Humanities Council is a perfect fit. I like projects with a purpose, and that’s exactly what we do here at the Council.”

She describes her favorite hobby as spending quality time with her family and enjoys traveling, art events, and cooking.

Katie also loves talking with folks who share her enthusiasm for the humanities—longtime or new donors, and anyone else who wants to discuss what the Council is all about. Let Katie know the types of creative events happening in your own communities. You can contact her at 304-346-8500 or morris@wvhumanities.org.

Welcome aboard, Katie!

Introducing Development Director Katie Morris

Donations November 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024

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Council supporters and staff celebrate our 50th anniversary at a reception at Marshall University in February. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for news about upcoming receptions in Shepherdstown in July and elsewhere throughout the year. We’d like to say “thank you” in person for your essential support and friendship over these many years.
Please drop my name.

Please change my name/address as indicated at right.

I receive more than one copy.

Please add my friend at the above address.

The Council will host a series of programs in honor of West Virginia’s 161st birthday.
The celebrations begin at 2 p.m. on June 20 at the MacFarland-Hubbard House, 1310 Kanawha Boulevard E., in Charleston, with light refreshments and tours of our historic property. Doug Wood will present his new History Alive! character, Thomas Ingles, who straddled two cultures before and after the birth of the United States. In 1755, Ingles was captured along with his mother, Mary Draper Ingles, and raised by the Shawnee. As an adult, he fought against many of those same Shawnee at the Battle of Point Pleasant 250 years ago.

On Friday, June 21, at 5:30 p.m., the Council and its West Virginia Folklife Program will host a conversation at Taylor Books in Charleston with author Dr. Jasper Waugh-Quasebarth. He and State Folklorist Jennie Williams will discuss his new book Finding the Singing Spruce: Musical Instrument Makers and Appalachia’s Mountain Forests, published by West Virginia University Press in 2023.

The weekend wraps up back at the MacFarland-Hubbard House at 2 p.m., on Sunday, June 23, with our final Little Lecture of the year. Noted legal expert and author Robert Miller will discuss how European powers used the “doctrine of discovery” in pre- and post-colonial times to assert legal rights to Indigenous lands and control over Indigenous peoples. Miller is a member of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma. Admission is $10 per person and includes refreshments after the lecture. For reservations to the Little Lecture, please call 304-346-8500 in advance.

Finally, as part of our tribute to the Mountain State’s birthday, the Council’s traveling exhibit Born of Rebellion: West Virginia Statehood and the Civil War will be on display in the State Capitol rotunda the entire month of June during public hours. In July, Born of Rebellion will move to the campus of Shepherd University. Please check our website and social media as we add new tour stops.