



Folklife Apprenticeship Showcases in Charleston and Arthurdale

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Charleston, W. Va. – The West Virginia Folklife Program, a project of the West Virginia Humanities Council, will present two showcases to celebrate the ten participating pairs of the 2024-25 West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program.

The West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program supports expert traditional artists in West Virginia as they mentor dedicated apprentices on a yearlong apprenticeship in their cultural expression or traditional art form. “We invite the public to meet the traditional artists at these events, and join us in celebrating their incredible achievements in passing on important family and community traditions,” says State Folklorist Jennie Williams. These upcoming showcases mark the conclusion of the fourth round of this biennial program.

The first of two showcases will be on Saturday, November 1, 2025, at 1:00 p.m., and will take place at the West Virginia Humanities Council’s historic headquarters at 1310 Kanawha Blvd E in Charleston. It is free and open to the public, with demonstrations, performances, and refreshments.

Five participating pairs will be featured at the event in Charleston on November 1: white oak basket maker Judy Van Gundy and her apprentice Andrea Brandon-Hennig (Randolph County), gardener and farmer Dural Miller and his apprentice Linesha Frith (Kanawha County), Appalachian candy maker Nancy Nelson and her apprentice Kenneth “KD” Jones (Kanawha County), Appalachian storyteller Bill Hairston and his apprentice Aristotle Jones (Kanawha/Monongalia counties), and clawhammer banjo player Tim Bing and his apprentice Edwin McCoy (Cabell/Monroe counties). Refreshments will include candy samples made by the candy-making apprenticeship pair.

The second showcase will be on Sunday, November 9, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. at Arthurdale Heritage, 18 Q Rd in Arthurdale. This event celebrates five more participating Folklife Apprenticeship pairs: fiber artist Margaret Bruning and her apprentice Nevada Tribble (Randolph County), Katie McCoy who studied fiddle repair under the late Richard Eddy (Monongalia County), Primitive Baptist hymn singer Ginny Hawker and her apprentice Mary Linscheid (Randolph/Monongalia

counties), old-time fiddler Ben Townsend and his apprentice Bodhi Gibbons-Guinn (Hampshire County & Alleghany County, Md.), and square dance caller Taylor Runner and his apprentice Annick Odom (Monongalia County). A square dance will follow the other demonstrations. This free event is dedicated to the memory of Richard Eddy (1943-2025).

The West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program and these showcases are made possible with generous support from the National Endowment for the Arts, The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation, Mid Atlantic Arts' Central Appalachia Living Traditions program, and donations from the public.

For more information and to RSVP for this free event, go to wvfolklife.org. Contact Jennie Williams with questions at 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.

Recommended Photos with Captions:



JonesHairstonWVHC2025.jpg

Aristotle Jones (left) with his storytelling mentor Bill Hairston (right). Photo by Jennie Williams.



RunnerCallsDanceWVHC2025.jpg

Taylor Runner (center) calls a square dance at the 2025 Vandalia Gathering. Taylor is leading an apprenticeship in square dance calling with his apprentice Annick Odom (pictured playing upright bass). Photo by Jennie Williams.