



IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 M.A. degree in Appalachian Studies approved for fall 2019
- 2 Appalachian Studies students attend Dinner with Strangers
- 2 Murtagh inducted into Phi Beta Delta International Honor Society
- 3 Students participate in Alternative Spring Break in Southern West Virginia
- 3 Shepherd students complete Celtic Roots tour in May
- 4 Students present research at national conference, on campus
- 6 News makers in Appalachian
 - Twila Smith
 - Benjamin Bankhurst
 - 'Hillbilly' documentary
 - Adam Booth



Cecelia Mason

ABOVE: Pictured (l. to r.) are Dr. Richard Stevens, dean of graduate studies; Dr. Sylvia Bailey Shurbutt, director, Center for Appalachian Studies and Communities; and Dr. Scott Beard, provost.

M.A. degree in Appalachian Studies approved for fall 2019

The new Master of Arts degree in Appalachian Studies received official approval from the Higher Learning Commission in March 2019. The degree has a number of special features that will be of interest to the community and give it distinction among other master's degrees in this interdisciplinary field as well as give it remarkable versatility and application.

Shepherd's M.A. in Appalachian Studies builds upon a number of nationally recognized programs, including the National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute Voices from the Misty Mountains and the Power of Storytelling, the Speak Storytelling Series founded by award-winning storyteller Adam Booth, the Appalachian Heritage Festival and the Heritage Writer-in-Residence program that partners with the West Virginia Center for the Book to select West Virginia's Common Read writer each year, the West Virginia Fiction Competition, the Anthology of Appalachian Writers, and a vibrant Appalachian Community Speakers Series that has brought to West Virginia a range of scholars and writers such as Silas House, Frank X Walker and the Affrilachian poets, and speakers about community issues such as rural health, the racial divide, and environmental and educational issues in Appalachia. However, it is the versatility and practicality of the interdisciplinary M.A. in Appalachian Studies and its curricular innovation that gives it distinction. The new M.A. utilizes the current Shepherd Graduate Certificate in Appalachian Studies so that any student with the certificate may apply all the credits directly toward the M.A. Likewise, anyone starting the M.A. program and unable to finish can take away the certificate for his or her work.

There are two tracks or concentrations available for the M.A.: 1) an **Appalachian History, Culture and Heritage** track or 2) **Preserving Appalachian Communities, Business Development, and the Environ-**

continued on page 3



Dr. Sylvia Bailey Shurbutt

Director, Center for Appalachian Studies and Communities

Gardiner Hall 125
304-876-5207
sshurbut@shepherd.edu





LEFT: Participants in the Dinner with Strangers event hosted by Shepherdstown residents are (l. to r.) Alexander Jones, English major, Hagerstown, Maryland; Aneyla Dozier, English education major Martinsburg; Jessica Braner, history major, Hedgesville; Allison Wharton, history major, Charles Town; Rebecca Ayraud, dinner host; Stephen Ayraud, dinner host; Carolyn Rodis, dinner guest; and Abigail Cleary, biology major, Fairplay, Maryland.

Shepherdstown couple hosts Appalachian Studies students for a Dinner with Strangers in March

Appalachian Studies students from Shepherd University spent an evening in March in the home of Shepherdstown residents Rebecca and Stephen Ayraud, who hosted a Dinner with Strangers.

“We had a delightful time with the students,” said Stephen Ayraud. “They each contributed to the evening. They are all very busy with their lives and shared stories of their families and their struggles to get where they are. Several have significant family obligations that compete with available time for their education. They have much admiration for their Shepherd instructors and shared some of their struggles with us. On the whole we were impressed with their dedication and hope for the future and found them very inspiring.”

The Ayrauds participate in Shepherd’s Lifelong Learning program and are involved with the Speak Story Series.

“Even though we are longtime downtown residents, we have few opportunities to interact with Shepherd students,” Ayraud said. “We tried to share with the students our excitement of being part of a community of volunteers and the possibilities of new experiences beyond our careers.”

Shepherdstown resident Carolyn Rodis was a dinner guest, along with students Jessica Braner, history major, Hedgesville; Aneyla Dozier, English education major, Martinsburg; Ally Wharton, history major, Appalachian Studies Advisory Board member, Charles Town; Alexander Jones, English major, Hagerstown, Maryland; and Abigail Cleary, biology major and Shepherd Speaks student coordinator, Fairplay, Maryland.

“I thought the evening was lovely and I enjoyed meeting new people and sharing our experiences,” Cleary said. “The conversation was fascinating and the food was delicious. I loved hearing about other people’s stories and their involvement with the university. Overall, I thought the night was a great learning opportunity and I’m happy that I was given the chance to attend this event and meet everyone.”

“I am glad to have been chosen to represent Appalachian Studies during the Dinner with Strangers,” Wharton said. “This is a wonderful way to connect Shepherd students to the community, and from this experience I was able to be a part of conversations regarding my state and to try and understand the perspective of those not native to West Virginia.”

Jones said he found the Dinner with Strangers to be “a particularly enlightening evening. The hosts were the most accommodating, preparing an entire vegan meal for all of us and sharing their home for an evening. I think it is important for these connections to exist between native Appalachians and those who choose to migrate here so that dialogue can occur to help those unfamiliar with our rich and often painful history. This dinner was certainly a step in the direction of enlightenment for all participants.”

“The relationship between the town and the university is one of the things I love most about Shepherd,” Dozier said. “I really enjoyed the opportunity to get to know a few community members on a deeper level and to see Shepherdstown from their perspective. I learned that we love this place for many of the same reasons.” ■

Murtagh inducted into Phi Beta Delta International Honor Society

Appalachian Studies graduate student Sean Murtagh was inducted into the Phi Beta Delta International Honor Society on April 2. Sean was the first student to use the Shepherd Appalachian Studies Graduate Certificate at the University of the West of Scotland to finish the M.A. in media studies at UWS in December 2018.

Sean was involved with the May 31-June 1 Phi Beta Delta International Conference Innovative Strategies in Promoting Global Learning held at Shepherd and organized by Dean Ann Marie Legreid. APST Center Director Dr. Sylvia Bailey Shurbutt made a presentation at Session IV titled “Celtic Roots and Global Appalachia: Bringing International Learning and Curricular Innovation to the Mountains of West Virginia.” ■



Sean Murtagh (r.) and Dr. Denis Berenshot

M.A. degree in Appalachian Studies approved for fall 2019

continued from page 1

ment track. Both have immense popular and practical appeal as well as direct application to a range of fields and disciplines which the degree will enhance.

The new M.A. in Appalachian Studies also has an optional global studies component, which is part of the Celtic Roots and Global Appalachia emphasis. Students who select an optional semester abroad studying at any of our partner institutions or at the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) will be exempt from the required electives for the M.A. Certificate students already have the option of using their Shepherd work as the first module toward an M.A. in media studies degree at UWS. Now, any student who has finished the APST Graduate Certificate and spent a semester in Scotland has the possibility of achieving two master's degrees, one in media studies from UWS and one in Appalachian Studies from Shepherd upon completion of one of the two Shepherd Appalachian Studies concentrations.

Graduate students may also elect to work a semester in the region through the internship program, or with the legislature, which likewise suffices for the required electives. These practical and global options make the new M.A. in Appalachian Studies flexible and appropriate for many different fields and student interest.

Most required courses for the degree can be taken through distance learning options, and all of the courses are developed to give the graduate student a solid understanding of the Appalachian region. While anyone who meets Shepherd graduate admissions requirements can pursue the M.A. in Appalachian Studies, the specific target audience includes: 1) students for whom a graduate degree in an interdisciplinary Appalachian Studies curriculum would improve their qualifications for the job market in the region; 2) students who are already in the workforce in education, politics and government, local and regional planning, economic development, business, recreation and hospitality, service organizations, leisure support, environmental studies or the park service, historic preservation, cultural and arts organizations, health-related administrative careers, and those whose careers will profit from a deeper knowledge and understanding of the region; and 3) students who are interested in understanding the region from a variety of historical, cultural, and global perspectives, and whose knowledge base will be enhanced through study and research of Appalachia.

Asked about what this new degree will offer both the community and students from across the country, Shepherd University Provost Scott

Beard said, "We are thrilled to begin offering a graduate degree in Appalachian Studies, one that builds on the outcomes of our undergraduate program and offers outstanding opportunities that are particularly appealing and distinctive to those wishing to learn more about our region. A signature feature of the new program includes study and field experiences both in Appalachia and abroad, our Appalachian Writer-in-Residence program that partners students directly with experts in the field, and the community service component. All these initiatives provide enhanced engagement opportu-

nities as students become aware of the broad spectrum of Appalachian culture and needs of the Appalachian community."

For information about the new M.A. in Appalachian Studies, contact Dr. Richie Stevens, dean of Graduate Studies, at rstevens@shepherd.edu or Dr. Sylvia Bailey Shurbutt, director of the Center for Appalachian Studies and Communities, at sshurbutt@shepherd.edu. Visit the Shepherd University Catalog for details on the curriculum: <http://catalog.shepherd.edu/content.php?cattoid=13&navid=2199>. ■



Students participate in Alternative Spring Break in Southern W.Va.

In March, Rachael Meads and Dr. Tom Segar traveled to southern West Virginia with 15 students who spent a week learning about Appalachia and participating in community service as part of Shepherd's Alternative Spring Break initiative sponsored by the Office of Student Engagement. The students, who had the opportunity to receive APST 476 Practicum credit for their service, volunteered with Coalfield Development Corporation in Wayne, West Virginia, helping support CDC's social enterprises focused on revitalizing Appalachian economies. The students hosted fundraisers and raised money to support their travel costs. Their work made a huge impact on the communities they served. Students had the opportunity to meet with Coalfield Development Corporation founder and Shepherd alumnus Brandon Dennison '08 as well as a diverse array of experts in social entrepreneurship, sustainable agriculture, and community organizing. Student reflections demonstrated that through participating in this project they gained a new understanding of the region that challenged previous stereotypes and perceptions. In addition, many students expressed a newfound desire to remain in the region after graduation. ■

Shepherd students complete Celtic Roots tour in May

Fifteen community members and Appalachian Studies students traveled to Spain and France, May 7-18, searching for their Celtic Roots and exploring the places featured in the Celtic Roots course, APST 430/530. Highlights of the tour were Segovia, Toledo, and museums and adventures in Madrid that featured Picasso's *Guernica*, the haunts of Oscar Wilde and Ernest Hemingway, Pamplona, a winery tour in Saint Émilion, and searching the streets of Paris for stories of the Lost Generation and writers like Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald, James Joyce, and Sylvia Beach.

West Virginia Common Read writer Karen Spears Zacharias and daughter Shelby joined the travelers as they explored Bayeux, France, D-Day's Omaha Beach, and the American Cemetery, places featured in Zacharias's novel *Burdy*. For photographs and details about the trip, visit the APST Facebook. ■

Students present research at national conference, on campus

Shepherd students presented at the National Appalachian Studies Conference in Asheville, North Carolina, March 15-17. NEH Misty Mountains Institute teacher Honoria Middough presented her work "Narratives of Appalachia." APST Graduate Certificate student Megan Rynne presented "Shepherd Speaks and the Power of Storytelling," which examined her work organizing the Shepherd Speaks StoryCorp project. Cam Mallow, history major and APST minor, presented his work on the program developed in the fall, "West Virginia's Forgotten Union Soldiers: The Andersonville Story." A session on the Anthology of Appalachian Writers was presented to a packed room, with both Silas House and Ron Rash in attendance.

History major, APST minor, and APST Board student member Ally Wharton presented her work on the Shepherd Speaks StoryCorp project at the April 17 Shepherd University Student Forum, while Cam Mallow presented his research at the Shepherd Poster Research Forum, held also on April 17. ■



Honorio Middough and author Silas House



Ally Wharton



Cam Mallow



ABOVE: Writers Ashley Wilkins (Shepherd 2016), Neva Bryan, Karen Spears Zacharias, Jayne Moore Waldrop, Connie Green, and Marc Harshman (West Virginia Poet Laureate) wait to read from the Anthology at the National Appalachian Studies Conference.

NEWS MAKERS IN APPALACHIA

West Virginia teacher **Twila Smith** shared with the community and teacher education students her story of survival when a teen shooter threatened her classroom on August 25, 2015. A social studies teacher at Phillip Barbour High School, Smith reflected on how to stay safe in today's classroom in her presentation titled "A Tale of One Teacher: How 27 Students and Mrs. Smith Survived a Teen Shooter." See details at <https://www.shepherd.edu/news/teacher-to-share-her-experience-january-16-on-surviving-a-classroom-shooter/>.



Twila Smith

Dr. Benjamin Bankhurst is one of two historians to receive a grant from the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture at the College of William and Mary. Bankhurst and his colleague Dr. Kyle Roberts from Loyola University Chicago will use the \$5,000 grant to digitalize collections for the Maryland Loyalist Project. See details at <https://www.shepherd.edu/news/shepherd-loyola-chicago-awarded-grant-to-create-historical-database/>.



Benjamin Bankhurst

Hillbilly, a documentary by Ashley York and Sally Rubin, was screened before a packed house at Reynolds Hall on February 21. A collaboration among the Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church, the Center for Appalachian Studies and the Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education brought filmmaker Rubin to Shepherd to speak about the film and stereotypes in Appalachia. See details at <https://www.shepherd.edu/news/showing-of-documentary-hillbilly-planned-for-february-21/>.

Adam Booth unveiled the 2019 Speak Story season at fundraiser held February 10. The roster of storytellers included Jim May at the February 10 fundraiser; Alton Takiyama-Chung, March 19; Carolina Quioga-Stultz, May 7; Megan Hicks, June 11; Judith Black, July 13; and Adam Booth, August 13. The highlight of the season were Storytellers in Residence Michael and Carrie Kline, who brought with them a range of programs for the campus and outreach into the community on April 9. Read about the Klins and the Storyteller in Residence program at <https://www.shepherd.edu/news/speak-story-series-to-host-concerts-april-9-and-12/>. ■



Adam Booth