Shepherd University Appalachian Heritage Writer-In-Residence and West Virginia Common Read Series Push on Despite COVID-19

Award-winning poet and fiction writer Dorothy Allison and the AHWIR Committee completed the program series this September without a glitch, using the wonders of technology to bring Allison to West Virginia and to fulfill obligations of the West Virginia Humanities Council which supports the series. Despite the pandemic, endless wildfires in northern California, forcing her to evacuate her home three times, and an array of pressures, Dorothy Allison delivered with flying colors, talking to book clubs, holding the Writers Master Class, speaking at the Writer’s Life and the Scarbo-rough Lecture events, and inspiring us all. Allison received the Appalachian Heritage Writer’s Award at the September 24 event, and she presented the West Virginia Fiction Competition Awards: 1st Place to Jordan Carter’s “June Drop” (Morgantown), 2nd Place to Cat Pleska’s “A Killing Time” (Scotts Depot), 3rd Place to Pat Donohoe (Shepherdstown), with 7th grader Caroline Higginbottom’s “Side with Me” receiving the Judges’ Choice Award (Linsly School, Wheeling). All events were live-streamed on the Shepherd University YouTube channel or carried via Zoom; and for the first time, these events could be enjoyed by all West Virginians across the state.

Dr. Sylvia Bailey Shurbutt, director of the Center for Appalachian Studies and Communities, told one of the largest audiences that we have ever served for the series, “We learned from this terrible COVID event that that we can remain safe and still touch the lives of people across the state and country with the Writer-in-Residence program events. Technology will allow us to be more inclusive in the future with the series.”

Appalachian writer Marie Manilla has been selected as 2021 Appalachian Heritage Writer-in-Residence and West Virginia Common Read Author. Manilla is author of the story collection Still Lives and Plumbs (2010) as well as the novel Strapnel (2012). Her award-winning 2014 novel The Patron Saint of Ugly has been selected as the One Book One West Virginia Common Read. Manilla will be working with the Shepherd University Center for Appalachian Studies and Communities and the West Virginia Library Association, which co-partners with the center to create the Appalachian Heritage Writer-in-Residence series.

Marie Manilla, a Weatherford Award and a Pushcart nominee, is a graduate of the Iowa Writers Workshop, a West Virginia native, and lives today in Huntington.

Center for Appalachian Studies and Communities Proposes New Undergraduate APST Degree

This fall, the Shepherd University Curriculum and Instruction committee approved a remarkable new APST undergraduate interdisciplinary degree, with both B.A. and B.S. tracks. This new way to deliver quality degrees to Shepherd students, both innovative and with little start-up cost, will begin accepting students in fall 2021. The new undergraduate degree will provide a B.A. track for students wishing to move on to graduate school, the teaching profession, or law, and a B.S. track to provide students with tools to enter directly into a range of professions and fields allowing them to remain and work in West Virginia and in the Appalachian region. The new degree will feature many of the academic hallmarks of the APST program, including global Appalachia awareness and service learning.
COVID-19 Delays But Doesn’t Cancel
Celtic Roots Scottish Highlands Study Tour

Originally scheduled for May, the Celtic Roots Highlands and Orkney Islands tour has been re-scheduled for July 25-August 6, 2021, to allow time for vaccines to become universally available and students and community members to travel safely to the United Kingdom. The new timeframe will also take travelers to Scotland when the hills are aflame with heather, and our journey to the Orkney Islands at the northernmost tip of Scotland will present travelers with endless sunsets. Hotels are 3 and 4 star, and highlights include the village of Grasmere, afternoon tea at Wordsworth's Dove Cottage, market day at the village of Keswick on Derwentwater, the Burns home and museum at Ayr, Edinburgh's Royal Mile, Inverness Castle, Loch Ness, Scott's Abbotsford, Whitby Abbey ruin, the Brontë Haworth parsonage at the edge of the Yorkshire Moors, and three days in London at the end of the tour. To read about tour details and the spring Celtic Roots class, see www.shepherd.edu/news/appalachian-studies-program-to-host-summer-2021-trip-to-scotland. To register for the tour, visit https://worldstrides.com/custom/celtic-roots-global-appalachia-highlands-hebrides.

Appalachian Studies
Spring 2021 Courses

Appalachian Culture
40889/40798 APST 256/556 (Core 2nd Tier Hum, MD) 3 credits
Monday, 6-8:40 p.m.
Knutti 203, Meads

Art of Storytelling and Folktales
40570/40713 APST 345/545 (Core 2nd Tier Arts, MD) 3 credits
Tuesday, 6-8:40 p.m.
Knutti 205, Booth

West Virginia and Appalachian Region
41292/41297 APST/HIST 309/509 3 credits
Tuesday and Thursday, 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m.
TBA, Bankhurst

Celtic Roots: Scotland
41293/41088 APST 430/530 3 credits
Monday and Wednesday, 4:30-5:45 p.m.
Byrd CHE 165, Shurbutt

Global Appalachian Travel Field Experience
41294/40941 APST 431 3 credits
TBA, TBA

Appalachian Studies Practicum
4129/40783 APST 476/576 1-3 credits
TBA, Shurbutt

Alternative Spring Break
40363/41103 APST 476/576 3 credits
TBA, Shurbutt

Appalachian Studies, M.A.
http://catalog.shepherd.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=13&poid=1565&returnto=2199

Appalachian Studies Minor
http://catalog.shepherd.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=13&poid=1178&returnto=2195

Enjoy an experience of a lifetime, service learning at its best, through alternative spring break—receive course credit for your service through the APST 476/576-02 course.
Fall 2020 News Makers from the Center for Appalachian Studies and Communities

Adam Booth Named Shepherd University Storyteller in Residence

Storyteller Adam Booth has been appointed by President Hendrix as Shepherd University’s first Storyteller-in-Residence. Booth, who teaches in the Center for Appalachian Studies and Communities, will take his SPEAK international storytelling series on to its next stage of development as a nonprofit organization. Booth developed the SPEAK series from a small, nascent storytelling entity into an international event, bringing storytellers from across the world to West Virginia and to Shepherdstown.

The Storyteller-in-Residence position will both honor Booth and keep him connected to the University, allowing him to continue to utilize Shepherd facilities for his series. While the series will no longer be directly connected to the Appalachian Studies Center, it will carry forth the message of the power of storytelling, central to the work and mission of the center. The President’s Club has supported SPEAK’s community outreach in the past, particularly in bringing storytelling to the local schools. “Our stories reflect our culture and heritage, and the most fundamental parts of ourselves,” said center Director Shurbutt. “They are likewise essential for our survival.”

Booth, who continues to be involved with the center’s grants and community outreach, will teach the APST 345/545 Storytelling course this spring, on Tuesday nights from 6-8:40 p.m. His storytelling series will start again in February. Community members who wish to support his work as Shepherd University Storyteller-in-Residence can donate at the Foundation’s Storyteller website at www.shepherd.edu/storyteller-in-residence. To read more about Adam Booth and the Storyteller in Residence, see www.shepherd.edu/news/adam-booth-named-storyteller-in-residence.

Appalachian Studies Literature Students Engage in Local Community Service and Research

Abiding by the rules of COVID protection and school guidelines about political action, students in the fall APST 358/558 Appalachian Literature class engaged in voter registration on September 29. Others in the class participated in a range of activities this fall through community service components. These included Jennifer Gerholdt’s "SkyTruth: Scaling Impact through Strategic Corporate Partnerships" project; author Karen Spears Zacharias’s project "Raise Your Voice: Blogging Activism"; Renee Ritenour’s genealogy project “West Virginia, My Home”; Sophia Conrad’s "Service Learning at Morgan Academy in Shepherdstown"; Jason Savage’s “Faith Feeding Freedom” project; Leanner Basye’s “Giving Back to those who Serve, the Mathias-Baker Volunteer Fire Department,” and other research and creative projects by Elana Gutman, Ellen Wade, Erik Minyard, and Brian McCoy. The campus and community were invited to the project presentations, November 30, December 2, and December 7. State Senator John Unger, who attended the December presentations, praised Shepherd students for their social awareness and giving back to their communities.

Social Studies Teaching Major Leanna Bayse Receives the First Sue Stewart and Hansel Bailey Appalachian Studies Scholarship

A $1,000 scholarship for a student in the Appalachian Studies minor program, the first interdisciplinary award of its kind at Shepherd for a student in a minor program, has been awarded to Leanne Basye. Leanna is studying to be a history teacher in West Virginia and became enthusiastic for the region through the West Virginia History Bowl when she was in the eighth grade. She was nominated for the scholarship by APST Board member Rachael Meads, and credits both her Shepherd APST culture course and her Appalachian history course with Dr. Bankhurst as inspiring her work at Shepherd. To read about the scholarship and about Leanna, see www.shepherd.edu/news/first-sue-stewart-and-hansel-bailey-appalachian-studies-scholarship-awarded-to-social-studies-major.
Dr. Shurbutt Invited to Contribute to Special Edition of Appalachian Heritage Journal

Dr. Sylvia Bailey Shurbutt was invited to contribute to the Appalachian Heritage Journal’s Wiley Cash edition. Her essay titled “Wiley Cash and the Ties that Bind” explores Cash’s attachment to place and his writing about the social issues that have impacted the region. Cash was the 2017 Appalachian Heritage Writer-in-Residence (AHWIR) and One Book One West Virginia Common Read Author. The Appalachian Heritage Journal volume will explore all facets of Wiley Cash’s work as one of the leading writers in the region. To read about Cash, see www.shepherd.edu/ahwirweb/cash.

Dr. Benjamin Bankhurst Receives David Center Fellowship

History professor and APST Board member Dr. Benjamin Bankhurst has been awarded a research fellowship from the American Philosophical Society to conduct research in Philadelphia at the Philosophical Society’s library. The research has evolved from Bankhurst’s classes as he has explored the history of loyalism in Maryland. This research is part of Bankhurst class’s partnership with Loyala University as they have worked to create an online repository to provide scholars and the public with access to rare manuscripts of Loyalist records held in the National Archives at Kew, England. To read about the fellowship and Dr. Bankhurst’s work see www.shepherd.edu/news/dr-benjamin-bankhurst-receives-david-center-for-the-american-revolution-research-fellowship.

Andrew Finn Magill Shares His Knowledge of Scots-Irish Roots Music in a November 5 Lecture

The center hosted a lecture about the roots of Appalachian music brought to the University and community by North Carolina teacher and fiddle play Andrew Finn Magill. Magill talked about Celtic influences on Appalachian music and the distinctions between Scots and Irish musical traditions in his lecture/demonstration. Magill is a Fulbright Fellow and NC Arts Council Fellow, and he has been featured on the BBC and NPR talking about Appalachian musical traditions. He will return April 7, 2021, to present a full concert of Celtic music at the University. To read about the lecture, see www.shepherd.edu/news/scots-irish-music-to-be-featured-in-virtual-program-november-5.

Wilkinson Volume of Anthology of Appalachian Writers Announces Pushcart Nominations

Six writers from the Crystal Wilkinson volume of the Anthology of Appalachian Writers have been nominated for Pushcart Prizes. This was the Affrilachian volume of the anthology, and the work of Frank X Walker, Crystal Wilkinson, Ron Davis, Jessica Salfia, E. J. Wade, and Omaria Sanchez Pratt were honored by the nominations from this extraordinary volume of the anthology. Read about the anthology and these award winning writers at www.shepherd.edu/news/anthology-of-appalachian-writers-editors-nominate-six-writers-for-pushcart-prize.

Rachael Meads One of Two Finalists for the Stephen Fisher Award for Excellence in Teaching

Rachael Meads, member of the APST Board and teacher of the APST 256/556 Appalachian Culture and APST 343/543 Appalachian Music courses, has been shortlisted for the Stephen Fisher Award for Teaching Excellence. The award represents national recognition for excellence in higher education teaching by the Appalachian Studies Association. Rachael is a member of the Student Affairs team, a member of the APST Board, and involved in the Alternative Spring Break community service course. She is noted for her supportive approach to teaching, her inclusive classes, and her profound understanding and enthusiasm for the Appalachian region. Congratulations, Rachael!