

People & Mountains

A Publication of the West Virginia Humanities Council

Fall 2003

Driving Ms. Settle

Mary Lee Settle is the preeminent literary figure to have emerged from West Virginia, with two Guggenheim Fellowships, the National Book Award, and other distinctions too numerous to list. Last spring, the West Virginia Humanities Council, with the support of former governor Gaston Caperton, decided it was time to tour Ms. Settle in the state's colleges and universities, offering students the chance to see and hear a writer of such high caliber. When Mark Payne, the Council's program officer asked me to be Ms. Settle's driver, I readily agreed.

A week before Ms. Settle's April arrival, I ran into



Mary Lee Settle speaking at Fairmont State College during her April 2003 Tour. Photograph by John Piscitelli.

Russ Barbour, a producer and director with West Virginia Public Broadcasting. When I mentioned Ms. Settle's imminent visit, Russ was interested. As it happened, she had time before we left Charleston to sit down at the Humanities Council's historic MacFarland-Hubbard House for an interview with Kate Long, whose recent radio series on West Virginia writers had concluded with a session on Ms. Settle. Russ filmed

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Charles H. Daugherty Award in the Humanities

Author Mary Lee Settle is the 2003 recipient of the Charles H. Daugherty Award in the Humanities. The annual award was established in 1987 to recognize individuals who have significantly contributed to the humanities in West Virginia. The 2003 award was presented at Concord College on September 10.

In addition to being an award-winning novelist, Ms. Settle has been a lecturer, playwright, college professor, actress, and assistant editor of *Harper's Bazaar*. Her latest novel, *I, Roger Williams*, was published in 2001. She is currently working on a new book.

Past winners of the Daugherty Award include Otis Rice, Jim Comstock, Louise McNeil Pease, Armand Singer, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Ancella Bickley, and Senator Robert Byrd.

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No Manatees Here!

The National Endowment for the Humanities is, as the Scriptures say, the rod and staff and strong right arm for those of us working in the humanities field. Not to mention our bread and butter. The NEH is the financial mainstay of our West Virginia Humanities Council, now providing a third of our annual budget and at one time darn near all of it. So when the Endowment speaks, we listen up.

Their latest communication comes from Erik Lokkesmoe of the NEH public affairs office, in the form of a humorous anecdote with a serious underlying question. Erik, it seems, had met a new friend at a party. They chatted for a few minutes. Then the fellow asked what Erik did for a living.

“I work with the humanities,” Erik replied.

“With *manatees*?” his new friend exclaimed.

“No, the hu-man-i-ties,” Erik emphasized.

“Oh,” the new guy said. “What are the humanities?”

Groping for an answer, Erik soon realized that it might be easier to describe manatees — chubby, whiskered marine mammals otherwise known as sea cows — than his own field of work.

His question to us was whether anything similar had ever happened here? And had we found a way to describe the humanities without naming off a dozen individual disciplines?

Well, not exactly. Our work is hard to put into a few words. People don’t intuitively understand the humanities the way they understand the arts, and that can be a problem. Usually I fall into the use of surrogate words, often “history” since history accounts for so much of our Council’s programs and grants.

Sometimes I go into the list of disciplines Erik alluded to, officially archeology, ethics, philosophy, literature, history, etc, etc. I remember going through all that in a talk to the Clarksburg Rotary when one of the members said, “Those are the things we took in college to avoid the math and science.”

That’s about the best definition I’ve heard, Erik: Set aside the math and science (plus the arts) and what remains of a good college education is the humanities — the humanizing, civilizing influences. I’ve used the Clarksburg story on many occasions. It’s good for a chuckle, and it always gets the point across.

And heaven knows it works better than manatees here in landlocked West Virginia!

— Ken Sullivan

People & Mountains is published quarterly by the West Virginia Humanities Council.

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The West Virginia Humanities Council, a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, serves West Virginia through grants and direct programs in the humanities.

The Results Are in for the Program Committee Election

The Program Committee welcomes the new citizen members recently elected by People & Mountains readers. As part of the Committee, they will participate in grantmaking decisions and recommend program policies to the Board of Directors.

School Representatives

Margaret Bennett (Calhoun County) teaches English at Calhoun County High School. In 2002, she traveled to England to participate in a Humanities Council Shakespeare teacher institute.

Dottie McDonald (Berkeley County) has taught English, creative writing, and mythology for 30 years at Musselman High in Berkeley County. She has attended two Humanities Council teacher institutes.

Pam Faulkner (Raleigh County) teaches English at Woodrow Wilson High School in Beckley. In 1991, she traveled to England to participate in a Humanities Council Shakespeare teacher institute.

Public Representatives

Tom James (Marshall County) is a resident of Moundsville and a professional jeweler. An activist for historic preservation, Tom served as vice president of the Strand Theater Preservation Society.

Betty Sweet Ness (Kanawha County), a longtime Council supporter, is also a gifted sculptor, an avid art collector, a former Rally precision driver, and the first woman to receive an auto mechanics degree from Pierce College in Los Angeles.

Grant Guidelines

Major Grants

Major grants have a budget over \$1,500. Applicants should allow ten weeks between the deadline and the start of the project. Maximum award: \$20,000.

Deadlines: February 1, 2004
and September 1, 2004
Number of Copies: 24

Minigrants

Minigrants have a budget of \$1,500 or less. Proposals in this category generally are for smaller projects, single events, consultation needs, and planning for more complex projects. Applicants should allow six weeks between the deadline and the start of the project. Requests from schools for grants under \$500 will be referred to the West Virginia Education Alliance.

Deadlines: August 1, October 1,
December 1, February 1, April 1,
June 1
Number of Copies: 6

Media Grants

Media grants have a budget over \$1,500 and support the planning, scripting, and production of projects intended to produce electronic or film materials, or a newspaper series. Maximum award: \$20,000.

Deadline: September 1, 2004
Number of Copies: 24

Publication Grants

Publication grants have a budget over \$1,500. This category is available only to nonprofit presses and recognized academic presses and supports only the production

phase of a completed manuscript. Maximum award: \$20,000.

Deadline: September 1, 2004
Number of Copies: 24

Fellowships

Fellowships of \$2,500 are awarded once annually to college faculty and independent scholars to support research and writing projects within a humanities discipline.

Deadline: February 1, 2004
Number of Copies: 12

Teacher Institute Grants

This category is available to college and university faculty and supports a two-week summer teacher seminar on a humanities topic suited to the teaching needs of elementary or secondary teachers. Maximum award: \$20,000.

Deadline: September 1, 2004
Number of Copies: 24

All grants categories have supplemental guidelines and applications. Call the Humanities Council at (304)346-8500 for copies. These materials can also be found online at www.wvhumanities.org.

Humanities Council staff are always available to assist you with your proposal. Call Pam LeRose, Grants Administrator, at the number above or e-mail her at lerose@wvhumanities.org.

What's New in the Humanities

The West Virginia Humanities Council is once again a primary

sponsor of the West Virginia Book Festival, along with Charleston Newspapers and the Kanawha County Public Library. This year's festival will be held October 11-12 at the Charleston Civic Center. Over thirty authors, including Tony Brown, Jayne Ann Phillips, Denise Giardina, Marc Harshman and others, will be on hand for readings, panel discussions and workshops. Plenty of children's activities are planned, as well as the popular Kanawha County Public Library book sale, featuring books, music, movies and more. In addition, there will be opportunities to meet with publishers and rare book appraisers. Visit the festival link on our website at www.wvhumanities.org or call the Kanawha County Public Library at 304-343-4646 for additional information on programs, schedules, and activities.



Yesterday's Tomorrows

The traveling exhibit *Yesterday's Tomorrows: Past Visions of the American Future* is nearing the end of its state tour. The exhibit, a collaboration between the West Virginia Humanities Council and the Smithsonian Institution, presents an historic overview of popular expectations and beliefs about the future from the late 19th through the late 20th centuries.

The exhibit can be viewed at the Mary H. Weir Public Library in Weirton through October 31. After closing in Weirton it travels to the last West Virginia tour site at the Ice House gallery in Berkeley Springs from November 7 to December 29.



Pulitzer Prize Winner David Halberstam to Deliver the 2003 McCreight Lecture

Best-selling author and historian David Halberstam will deliver the 2003 Betsy K. McCreight Lecture in the Humanities. The talk will be on Thursday, October 23, 8:00 p.m. at University of Charleston's Riggleman Hall auditorium. A public reception and book signing will follow. The event is free and open to the public.

Halberstam won the Pulitzer Prize for his reporting during the Vietnam War and was a Pulitzer runner-up for his book *War in a Time of Peace*. His last fourteen books have been national bestsellers, including his

landmark trilogy of books on power in America, *The Best and the Brightest*, *The Powers That Be*, and *The Reckoning*. His new book, *The Teammates*, is currently on the *New York Times Book Review* best-seller list.

The Betsy K. McCreight Lecture in the Humanities is named for Ms. McCreight, a founding board member of the West Virginia Humanities Council, in honor of her dedication to the Council's mission. For more information, or if your company would like to sponsor this event, call 304-346-8500.

History Alive! and Speakers Bureau Proposals Due Soon

Proposals for new History Alive! characters and new Speakers Bureau presenters are due January 1, 2004. Successful applicants will be on the rosters beginning November 1, 2004. Contact Program Officer Mark Payne (304) 346-8500 for applications and information.

Council Recognized as Innovator in Providing Access for the Disabled at Historic Sites

In the newly published *Design for Accessibility: A Cultural Administrator's Handbook* — produced by the National Endowment for the Arts with the support of the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, and MetLife Foundation — the West Virginia Humanities Council was recognized for its efforts to provide access to the disabled at its historic

MacFarland-Hubbard House.

The book cited the Council's innovative methods of ensuring access without sacrificing the historic integrity of the house, mentioning solutions like raising a back porch and the surrounding yard to create a wheelchair ramp that is effectively invisible. Executive Director Ken Sullivan remarks, "We worked hard to make our old house accessible. It is wonderful to have our efforts recognized in this national publication."



THE West Virginia ENCYCLOPEDIA

The summer months brought progress for the *West Virginia Encyclopedia* project, the Council's largest undertaking. Layout and production for the encyclopedia got underway with early pages for the beginning chapters completed and illustrations including historic images, maps, line drawings, and West Virginia scenes of today located for much of the book. Designer Rich Hendel and editor Ken Sullivan are now turning their thoughts toward front and end matter and a full-color cover for the big book.

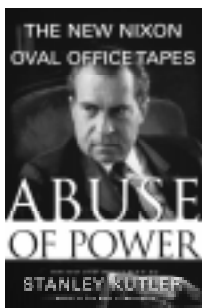
The West Virginia Encyclopedia is a monumental undertaking. The one-volume, 1,000-page West Virginia reference will include the work of nearly 600 writers who have contributed more than 2,000 individual entries on all aspects of the state's history, literature, biography, folklore, flora and fauna, industry, education, geology and geography, and the state's culture.

2003 Food For Thought Dinner



The foods and wines of Provence will be featured at the annual Food For Thought Dinner, which will be held on Sunday, November 16, 2003, at the Tarragon Room in the Charleston Marriott. Executive culinary team William Smith and Chris DeGweck will prepare an elegant menu highlighting the savory herbs and spices unique to Provençal cuisine, and wine expert John Brown will be on hand as we explore the region's fine wines. Tickets are \$125 per person. Invitations and additional information will be mailed in mid-October. However, if you would like to reserve your spot in advance, you may call (304) 346-8500.

Food For Thought is an important annual fundraiser for the West Virginia Humanities Council. The proceeds go to Council programs statewide.



On July 8, Stanley Kutler, legal scholar and author of *Abuse of Power: The New Nixon Oval Office Tapes*, spoke about his book in front of a packed courtroom at the Robert C. Byrd Federal Courthouse in Charleston. The focus of his discussion was the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the role it played in his research for the book. The event was a collaboration between the West Virginia Humanities Council, the Kanawha County Bar Association, and the West Virginia Chapter of the American Inns of Court.

Continued from page 1

their discussion for later broadcast.

The next day, April 8, we set off for Fairmont State College. The drive to Fairmont seemed uncharacteristically short as she talked of topics ranging from the day's news to long past events; her erudition on matters far and wide made the trip both enlightening and pleasurable.

Ms. Settle does not hesitate to assert her opinions emphatically, yet there is not a hint of dogmatism, as she can muster a wealth of information to support her conclusions. At the same time, her questions betray a clear desire to learn more, regardless of with whom she is talking.

The Fairmont event took place in the college's Turley Center ballroom, spacious enough to accommodate the 150 or so in attendance. Aside from students and faculty, there seemed to be a fair number of local residents. An entire row was filled by folks who drove in from Clarksburg, recruited by literary enthusiast Phyllis Moore.

Ms. Settle began by reading a short selection from *Prisons*, the first novel in her "Beulah" series, followed by sections from each of the subsequent novels, which trace the kinship and aspirations of a West Virginia family from 18th century England to the recent past. By the time she got to the fourth novel, *The Scapegoat*, Ms. Settle had created an air of expectation in the audience. From this work, she began to read a speech by Mother Jones, given to the wives and women of men on strike during the West Virginia Mine Wars.

With an actor's skill, Ms. Settle's voice slowly gathered strength, building to a fiery exhortation. By the time the passage was complete, I half expected the listeners to bolt from their seats and storm the courthouse brandishing red flags.

"Mary Lee Settle, born July 29, 1918, in Charleston, is a daughter of West Virginia steeped in the state's history and her southern mountain heritage....Her remarkable historical fiction includes five novels referred to as the Beulah quintet. The quintet recounts the founding of West Virginia and the

struggle for freedom in the 'new world.' The results are that her fictional town, Canona (modeled after Charleston) located in the Endless Mountains of Beulah Land, is now a literary landmark."

From "A Traditions Salute"
Fairmont State College Folklife Center

The reading concluded with another shift in pace, the final section from *The Killing Ground*, where the present-day descendent of the characters who have gone before watches the retreating West Virginia landscape from an airliner window and returns, in her mind, to the opening scene of *Prisons*.

Ms. Settle's voice caught as she read the final line, and the crowd was obviously moved as well. The applause was long, and people stood for her. Checking my watch, I was surprised to find it lasted an entire hour. Dr. Judy Byers of the West Virginia Folklife Center ended the program by presenting Ms. Settle with the Center's Achievement Award, the first such honor ever bestowed. The next evening, Ms. Settle repeated her performance at WVU Tech, this time in a packed classroom evenly divided among students, faculty and townies. This was home turf, a few miles from where Ms. Settle's ancestors had settled in Revolutionary times. After her reading, one after another, the local residents used the question and answer period to tell the visiting author that they grew up knowing some relative of hers, sometimes her grandmother, Addie, sometimes her cousin, Roger Tompkins. It had the air of churchgoers testifying, and there was emotion in their voices. On the way to Montgomery, joined by Kate Long, we had left the main road to drive by the now-restored house in Cedar Grove where Addie

lived, and then traveled on beyond the Tech campus to drive through Deepwater, where Ms. Settle's father had lived. It was unquestionably a visit home. The trip back to Charleston that night was punctuated by reflective silence.

The next day we made the long trip to Shepherd College, this appearance in a roomy and comfortable theater. Ms. Settle fine-tuned her presentation, changing one part of her reading to a humorous election scene which gets knowing laughter anywhere in West Virginia. As after the previous appearances, a long line of people patiently waited to get books autographed and to speak for a moment with her.

Ms. Settle stayed over in the Eastern Panhandle the next day to have dinner with Governor Caperton and friend Bill Drennen, before returning to her current home in Virginia. I asked her to sign a few books before I started my trip home to Charleston. Going back seemed to take much longer.

— C. Gordon Simmons

West Virginia Division of Culture
and History

Mary Lee Settle completed an additional tour of the state in early September 2003, with visits to Concord College, West Virginia State College, and Marshall University. In a special ceremony at Concord College, she was awarded the Charles H. Daugherty Award in the Humanities.

Thank You, New and Renewing Members!

This list represents new and renewed memberships from May 16, 2003 to August 7, 2003. A complete list of members and donors is published each year in the Humanities Council's annual report.

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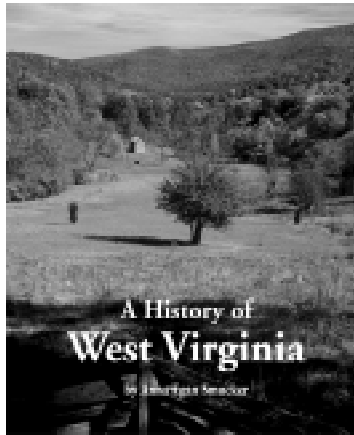
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Verizon Foundation Funds Reprint of West Virginia History Book for New Adult Readers

In the Spring 2003 edition of *People & Mountains*, we published a letter from Ronald R. Marino, lead teacher of adult literacy at Pruntytown Correctional Center, asking the West Virginia Humanities Council to consider reprinting *A History of West Virginia*, its book for new adult readers. We've received similar requests from other adult literacy teachers, and are pleased to announce that the Verizon Foundation has generously contributed funds for a reprint of the history book and its accompanying workbook. The materials, bearing a colorful new cover, will be available in late



September 2003. They are free to adult literacy volunteers, instructors, and all adult new readers. To request copies, please call Mark Payne at (304) 346-8500. The West Virginia Humanities Council is grateful to Verizon for its gift, which has made a valued literacy resource accessible once more to educators and students. Speaking of the book, Mr. Marino remarked, "The text is interesting and relevant for our new adult readers, and they take great pride in reading about West Virginia.

Please consider making this text available again." Thanks to Verizon, we're proud to oblige.

The West Virginia Humanities Council gratefully acknowledges support from the National Endowment for the Humanities; the Office of the West Virginia Secretary for Education and the Arts; and foundations, corporations, and individuals throughout the Mountain State and beyond.

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