

Missouri Folk Arts Program

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Missouri Folk Arts Program (MFAP) staff members are relieved, and excited, to have wrapped up the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program (TAAP). Over the course of the last fiscal year, we collaborated with International Institute, an immigrant resettlement organization in St. Louis, and the West Plains Council on the Arts to present showcases at the 2009 Festival of Nations and the 2010 Old-time Music, Ozark Heritage Festival in St. Louis and West Plains, respectively. At Festival of Nations eighteen traditional artists performed and demonstrated under the "Culture Corner" tent. Conservatively, we estimate over 5,000 audience members attended. A second anniversary celebration was coordinated ten months later at the festival in south central Missouri. In West Plains, another twenty traditional artists performed and demonstrated on the Main Stage, under the Brush Arbor and in the "Rendezvous Encampment" for over 2,000 spectators.

Sandwiched between these two events, MFAP staff gave presentations at the American Folklore Society annual meeting, MU's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, and meetings of the Missouri Association of Community Arts Agencies—a member organization of local arts councils around the state. Most importantly, MFAP hosted eight new teams in the Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program, in art forms such as blacksmithing, dulcimer music, Bosnian sevdah (a vocal music tradition), dance fiddling, twining rag rugs, johnboat building, long rifles building, and African-American storytelling. These eight teams bring the grand total of apprenticeships over the last twenty-five years to 351; 177 master artists have participated in the project since 1985.

Looking to the future, MFAP received an Access to Artistic Excellence grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to fund the twenty-sixth year of TAAP, and



TAAP master Van Colbert leads a claw hammer banjo workshop under the Brush Arbor at the Old-time Music, Ozark Heritage Festival in West Plains, June 19, 2010. Van is a featured musician on the soundtrack of the critically-acclaimed new film *Winter's Bone*, filmed entirely in Missouri's Ozarks. Photo by Darcy Holtgrave.



TAAP master Fardin Karamkhani (left) and Geoff Seitz demonstrated instrument making under the "Culture Corner" tent at the Festival of Nations on August 30, 2009. During this Q&A, Geoff, a fiddler and luthier, grabbed a *zarb* to accompany Fardin who is playing a *saz*, a string instrument that he also made. Photo by Darcy Holtgrave.



TAAP master German lacemaker Linda Hickman shows a Festival of Nations audience member some basic *kloppelei* stitches in St. Louis' Tower Grove Park, August 30, 2009. Linda also participated in a Q&A stage with Mandingo *gara* artist Mahmoud Conteh. Photo by Darcy Holtgrave.



TAAP master Cecil Murray and apprentice Nate Gordon built this johnboat over the last year. After the final coats of traditional blue paint, they dubbed the boat "Noah's Ark," in honor of Gordon's grandson. They also exhibited the boat at Ozark Heritage Days at the Ozark Scenic Riverways National Park near Van Buren. Photo by Deborah Bailey.

the Missouri Arts Council has generously awarded MFAP an Arts Services grant to support the program's operating budget for the year. Additionally, MFAP will host the Community Scholars Workshop Series, regional gatherings in West Plains, St. Louis, and Springfield to teach lay people the skills necessary to identify traditional arts and artists locally and to create public events that showcase those artists. The project is a collaboration with the Missouri Arts Council and funded through a Partnership Grant from the NEA. In addition to stable, even slightly increased, funding, MFAP staff is also excited about a new addition—the College of Arts and Science has created a graduate research

assistant position, and we have hired graduate student intern Darcy Holtgrave, a doctoral candidate in the Department of English, to fill the position.

Finally, MFAP staff looks forward to the collaboration between the Museum of Art and Archaeology and Mizzou Advantage to produce the "Food and Society Series," several upcoming events designed to "draw attention to the complex issues at play whenever (and wherever) food and society intersect." In twenty-five years of TAAP, MFAP has hosted just a few apprenticeships in foodways—a term folklorists and other scholars use to describe customs, rituals, and beliefs about food. In the 1990s,

master artists led apprenticeships in African-American cooking, Ozark plantlore, and Jalisco foodways. More recently, MFAP funded the increasingly rare tradition of home hog butchering in 2009, which included making sausage and smoking hams.

We look forward to twenty-five more years of opportunities to celebrate the apprenticeship program, to teach others about Missouri's rich traditions, to collaborate with more partners, and to examine the ways that traditions and society intersect.

