

## **THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 2023**

### **DAY I. LAKE GUNTERSVILLE STATE PARK, ALABAMA**

All locations for the FITS 2023 gathering June 8-10 will be at The Lodge & Convention Center in the Goldenrod Room in Lake Guntersville State Park in Guntersville, Alabama, unless otherwise noted.

12-2:00pm **Registration Open**

1-2:45pm **Alabama Textile Traditions**

This panel explores Alabama's long history of women working within both the formal and informal economies to provide for their families through sewing. Fiber arts have long been a source of creativity, a declaration of self-determination, and a cornerstone of care. This panel will highlight Alabama women's historic contributions and engage with present-day women-led organizations who infuse this legacy into their own activism, scholarship, and economic pursuits.

**Olivia Ware Terenzio**, *Project Threadways (moderator)*

**Viola Ratcliffe**, *Bib and Tucker Sew-Op*

**Kristin Law**, *Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center*

**Loretta Pettway Bennett**, *Artist*

3-3:45pm **Foodways in Alabama Presented by the Southern Foodways Alliance**

Sponsored by the Southern Foodways Alliance, this panel features Sarah Rodriguez, SFA's lead oral historian, in conversation with three women who teach, preserve, and document diverse and changing foodways in Alabama.

**Mary Beth Lasseter**, *Southern Foodways Alliance (moderator)*

**Sarah I. Rodriguez**, *Southern Foodways Alliance*

**Jai Williams**, *Southern Foodways Alliance*

**Lauren Murphy**, *seed saver, Hillfolk Pharmacy*

**Lauren Richards**, *Albertville High School Culinary Arts Program*

4-4:45pm **South Indian Traditional Dance Performance**

BharathaNaatyam (bha-ra-tha-naat-yum) is a 2,000-year-old performing art form from South India. The vocabulary of this dance is extremely technical, and the outcome divine in nature. However, in recent years, performers have experimented with the language of the dance to convey various messages. Sushma Mohan uses this dance form that she has practiced and performed for over 30 years to present a new project, AMMA, meaning mother.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, work-from-home moms struggled between computer jobs and motherly duties. Sushma uses a traditional piece to depict how, in Puranic times, the divine mother battled demons and won, while in the contemporary world, every woman fights in her daily life to make her family and the world a better place.

**Sushma Mohan**, *Soorya Foundation for Performing Arts*

**Krishna Mohan**, *Soorya Foundation for Performing Arts*

**Ajit Mohan**, *Soorya Foundation for Performing Arts*

**Annemarie Anderson**, *Alabama State Council for the Arts (introduction)*

4:45-6pm **Break**

6-7pm **Dinner**

7-7:30pm

**Welcome and Updates**

**Elliot Knight**, Executive Director, Alabama State Council on the Arts

**Joy Young**, Vice President of Programs, South Arts

**Teresa Hollingsworth**, Director, Traditional Arts, South Arts

**Jessica Anderson Turner**, Executive Director, American Folklore Society

**Emily Blejwas**, Alabama Folklife Association

**Bill Mansfield**, National Endowment for the Arts

*Additional updates from national programs*

7:30-8pm

**Break**

8-10pm

**Appalachian Documentary Short Film Series**

Following the films, the filmmakers will hold a Q&A with attendees with Teresa Hollingsworth as discussant.

**THE MOUNTAIN FIESTA: BRIDGING THE GAP AND BUILDING COMMUNITY IN RURAL APPALACHIA**

The Mountain Fiesta: Bridging the Gap and Building Community in Rural Appalachia is an engaging 17-minute mini-documentary that showcases and explores The Mountain Fiesta, a seven-year-old festival in Cumberland Gap, TN. Created by Zachary Greene and his high school Spanish students at Lincoln Memorial University, the project aims to build and maintain cultural bridges through arts and music. The annual festival was documented by Iximche Media, whose work has been featured by Rolling Stone. Iximche Media is Roderico Y. Diaz, an indigenous Mayan Kaqchikel independent photojournalist and documentarian, and Emily Rhyne, a Latin Americanist and international human rights advocate.

**Filmmaker: Zachary Greene**, Lincoln Memorial University

**APPALSHOP SHORT FILM SERIES:**

Appalshop recently completed four short films documenting regional Appalachian traditional artists. This series captures, archives, and amplifies the stories behind the craft. Our focus was on the following mediums: traditional music, storytelling, crafts, woodworking, and foodways. Appalshop's documentary work has from the beginning told authentic stories of Appalachia, working from within the community to banish stereotypes and misrepresentations. The short films in this series are:

**Bright Morning Stars: The Johnsons of Hemphill**

**That Tree Lives On: A Film About Terry Ratliff**

**Lady D**

**Full of Wonder: The Art of Angie DeBord**

**Filmmaker: Ethan Payne**

**Appalshop Curatorial Team: Kathleen Byrne, Willa Johnson**

## **FRIDAY, JUNE 9, 2023**

### **DAY 2. LAKE GUNTERSVILLE STATE PARK, ALABAMA**

All locations for the FITS 2023 gathering June 8-10 will be at The Lodge & Convention Center in the Goldenrod Room in Lake Guntersville State Park in Guntersville, Alabama, unless otherwise noted.

- 7:30-9am **Early Coffee Roundtable**  
Succession planning is vital to ensure organizational continuity in leadership, operations, and programs. Whether planning to retire, making a job change, serving on a board, or just interested in learning more, join us to discuss strategies for planning for the future.  
**Jessica Turner**, *American Folklore Society (discussant)*  
**Teresa Hollingsworth**, *South Arts (discussant)*
- 8-9am **Registration Open**
- 8-9am **Breakfast**
- 9-9:45am **Folklife and the Future**  
While tradition is often positioned as a remaking of the past in the present, how might our collaborative work with cultural communities benefit from a future-focused approach? How can adopting a visionary outlook benefit our work in the present, helping us better address community needs and cultural self-determination?  
Alabama artists and activists Sehoj Thrower, Mary Godfrey, and Susan Walker will engage in conversation around how their present work is shaped by a dynamic vision of their community's future. Attendees are invited to envision alternative futures and will leave with strategies for how to be more creative collaborators and allies for collective liberation.  
**Emily Blejwas**, *Alabama Folklife Association (moderator)*  
**Sehoj Thrower**, *Poarch Band of Creek Indians*  
**Mary Godfrey**, *Lowndes County Community Life Center*  
**Susan Walker**, *Sew Their Names Project*
- 10-10:45am **Greek Fiddle Music of the Gulf Coast**  
This performance explores the fiddle music brought to the Gulf Coast by Greek sponge divers and merchants from the Aegean islands in the early twentieth century. Focusing on the communities of Tarpon Springs, Florida, Mobile, Alabama, and New Orleans, Louisiana, it will discuss and demonstrate various styles and techniques and explain the music's connections to the sponging and fishing industries that these islanders founded and have maintained over the last century.  
**Panayotis League**, *fiddler*  
**Emily Blejwas**, *Alabama Folklife Association (introduction)*
- 11-11:45am **Training Folklorists and Culture Workers**  
How do we train the next generation of folklorists and culture workers? This panel explores two sites of education beyond dedicated folklore or folk studies academic departments.  
For 21 years, Arkansas State University has hosted the Heritage Studies Doctoral Program and six Arkansas State Heritage Sites. Activities at these sites include research and interpretation of local history and culture. The university's approach to

heritage includes the management of broadly-based cultural and historical resources. In both programs, folklore and oral history are integral to various projects. The presentation will demonstrate ways that public folklore can support Heritage Studies in other regions and other communities.

Throughout the United States, Community Scholars programs have been an important part of the outreach and education practiced by public folklorists for over 40 years. This session presents an overview of the Kentucky Folklife Program's recent re-evaluation of the Community Scholars model they have used since 1999.

**Ellie Dassler**, *South Arts (moderator)*

**Situating Public Folklore Projects within Heritage Studies Departments**

**Gregory Hansen**, *Arkansas State University*

**Re-envisioning Community Scholars Programs**

**Brent Bjorkman**, *Kentucky Folklife Program*

**Ann K. Ferrell**, *Western Kentucky University*

**Mark Brown**, *Kentucky Arts Council*

12-1pm

**Lunch**

1-2:45pm

**The Real Meaning of Día de Muertos**

The Day of the Dead, known as Día de Muertos in Spanish, is a beautiful cultural tradition that has been celebrated in Mexico since before the arrival of Spaniards. On this Mexican holiday, people remember and honor their deceased loved ones; this is a celebration of life.

This workshop will teach about the real meaning of Día de Muertos. We will teach the elements of this celebration, what an altar is, how to build an altar, and the history of the Day of the Dead. Participants will learn about the traditions and meanings surrounding Día de Muertos and how to do Catrina face painting and make paper flowers for their own altars.

**Mónica S. Sánchez**, *Cazateatro Bilingual Theatre Group*

**Gerardo Rivillas**, *Cazateatro Bilingual Theatre Group*

**Ellie Dassler**, *South Arts (introduction)*

3-3:45pm

**Meet Me at the Fair: Building Community Through a Collaborative Festival**

Since 2017, the University of South Carolina's McKissick Museum has partnered with the South Carolina State Fair, the Eastern Cherokee, Southern Iroquois, and United Tribes of South Carolina, and the Wassamassaw Tribe of Varnertown Indians to host FOLKFabulous, a 12-day celebration of Southern folklife. Together, partners in this project will discuss the festival's origins and their collaboration's future, with first-hand experiences of how this event can bring together communities and wide audiences to promote folklife in the South.

**Amanda Malloy**, *University of South Carolina's McKissick Museum (moderator)*

**Laura Marcus Green**, *South Carolina Arts Commission*

**Nancy Smith**, *South Carolina State Fair*

**Peggie Hartwell-Hackmer**, *Voices on Cloth*

**Lisa Collins**, *Wassamassaw Tribe of Varnertown Indians*

**FOLKLIFE IN THE SOUTH 2023**  
**Folklife in a Textured World**

- 4-4:45pm **Opportunities from the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress**  
In this information session, staff from the Library of Congress will provide overviews of various opportunities for funding, participatory projects, and public engagement such as the Veteran's History Project, Community Collections Grant, and Teaching with Primary Sources.  
**John Fenn**, Director of Research and Programs, American Folklife Center  
**Monica Mohindra**, Director of the Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center
- 4:45-6pm **Break**
- 5-6pm **South Arts Emerging Traditional Artists Program Group Discussion**  
Members of South Arts' Emerging Traditional Artists Program cohort are invited to gather informally to share their work, discuss the FITS gathering so far, and discover opportunities for collaboration.
- 6-7pm **Dinner**
- 7-7:30pm **Break**
- 7:30-8:30pm **Bluegrass Performance**  
The Gary Waldrep Band will perform an hour of traditional bluegrass music. Gary Waldrep, the founder, is from Kilpatrick, Alabama. He has participated in the Alabama State Council on the Arts apprenticeship program and touring arts program.  
**Gary Waldrep Band**  
**Annemarie Anderson**, Alabama State Council for the Arts (introduction)
- 9-10:30pm **Alabama Blues Artists Preserving the Tradition**  
For years, blues artists have not only performed the traditional art of African American Roots music but also utilized the methods of folklorists to preserve and share the Blues People's narrative. This panel features Alabama's traditional Blues artists who have participated in apprenticeships, created nonprofit organizations, and more to ensure preservation. Panelists will discuss their experience, outcome, and plan for blues sustainability, culminating in a Blues performance.  
**Lamont Pearley, Sr.**, Jack Dappa Blues Heritage Preservation Foundation (moderator)  
**Jock Webb**  
**DieDra Hurdle-Ruff**  
**Keithen Ruff**

## SATURDAY, JUNE 10, 2023 DAY 3. LAKE GUNTERSVILLE STATE PARK, ALABAMA

All locations for the FITS 2023 gathering June 8-10 will be at The Lodge & Convention Center in the Goldenrod Room in Lake Guntersville State Park in Guntersville, Alabama, unless otherwise noted.

8-9am **Registration Open**

8-9am **Breakfast**

9-10:30am **Veterans History Program Workshop Presented by the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress**

The Veterans History Project of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress will offer a workshop that covers:

- Basic community documentation project planning skills
- How to share stories of veterans in your life or community with the Library of Congress
- How to engage your community with existing Veterans History Project collections
- Discussion of workshop facilitation for those skilled in ethnography and oral history interested in leading VHP workshops

**Sarah Milligan**, Head of the Oklahoma Oral History Research Program, Oklahoma State University

**Monica Mohindra**, Director of the Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center

10:45-12:15pm **North Alabama Artists Demonstrations**

Two Alabama traditional artists will talk about their experiences and give a hands-on demonstration of their crafts for participants. Gwen Chafin is a white oak basket maker and chair caner from Arab, Alabama. Jason Russell is a duck decoy carver from Gadsden, Alabama.

**Gwen Chafin**, basketweaving and chair caning

**Jason Russell**, duck decoy carving

**Annemarie Anderson**, Alabama State Council for the Arts (introduction)

## POST-GATHERING SELF-GUIDED FIELD TRIPS AND SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

12-4pm **Summer Latino Festival at Northeast Alabama Community College**

Come enjoy Northeast Alabama Community College's 18th Latino Festival with a mariachi band, dancers, children's activities, a climbing wall, pony rides, a dunking booth, and jump houses. Latino vendors will sell delicious foods and beverages. Admission is free!

12:30-1:30pm **Georgia Council for the Arts Networking Roundtable**

Calling all Georgia FITS participants! Please plan to attend the Georgia Council for the Arts Networking Roundtable on Saturday, 12:30-1:30 PM. Join us for networking and to be part of the Council's ongoing work in the folk and traditional arts.



## **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**

### **GETTING THERE**

#### **Flights:**

The closest major airport to Lake Guntersville State Park is [Huntsville International Airport in Huntsville, AL](#) (54 miles). Other nearby airports include the [Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport in Birmingham, AL](#) (73 miles) and the Chattanooga Airport in Chattanooga, TN (96 miles).

#### **Driving:**

By car, [Lake Guntersville State Park](#) is within 200 miles of Huntsville, AL (42 miles), Birmingham, AL (73 miles), Chattanooga, TN (79 miles), Atlanta, GA (151 miles), Nashville, TN (162 miles), Tupelo, MS (162 miles), Montgomery, AL (167 miles), Columbus, GA (175 miles), and Knoxville, TN (196 miles).

#### **Ground Transportation**

For flights out of Huntsville, you may find information for rental cars and ride sharing services [here](#). For flights out of Birmingham Shuttlesworth International Airport, you may find options for rental cars and shuttle services [here](#). For flights out of Chattanooga, you may find information for rental cars and ride sharing services [here](#).

**For participants staying at the Wyndham Garden Lake Guntersville hotel**, there will be a sign-up sheet at the FITS registration desk for those needing transportation between the Wyndham and the Lake Guntersville State Park Lodge.

### **WHAT TO WEAR:**

FITS is not a typical, formal conference, but a collaborative, interactive gathering. We encourage you to wear casual comfortable clothes and shoes, take breaks when needed, and come prepared to meet with other attendees for workshops and presentations as a group.

Jeans, t-shirts, and tennis shoes are welcome! If you are inclined to swim, hike/walk, bike, fish, etc., please bring the appropriate clothing and gear.

### **ACCESSING THE AGENDA**

The FITS agenda is available now on the [South Arts website](#). Printed agendas (including large print copies) will be available at the registration/check-in desk.

### **LODGING CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT**

#### **Lake Guntersville State Park Lodge:**

- Check-in is 4:00 PM CT
- Check-out is 11:00 AM CT
  - Park guests may store their luggage in the business office until their Saturday departure.

#### **Wyndham Garden Lake Guntersville:**

- Check-in is 3:00 PM CT
- Check-out is 11:00 AM CT

## **REGISTRATION AND QUESTIONS**

Staff will be available at the registration desk outside the Goldenrod meeting room 1:00 pm–6:00 pm Thursday; 8:00–9:00 am Friday and Saturday. The registration desk will also serve as the meeting's lost and found center.

For questions and non-emergency needs outside these hours, please call or text:

If staying in the Lake Guntersville State Park Lodge or chalets:

- Roz Rini Larson: 219-242-0420
- Ellie Dassler: 757-254-3250

If staying at the Wyndham Garden Lake Guntersville:

- Teresa Hollingsworth: 404-808-1015

## **FOOD AND BEVERAGE**

The FITS agenda includes five buffet meals in the Pinecrest Dining Room of the Lake Guntersville State Park Lodge:

- Thursday, June 8 - Dinner: 6:00-7:00 PM CT
- Friday, June 9 - Breakfast: 8:00-9:00 AM CT
- Friday, June 9 - Lunch: 12:00-1:00 PM CT
- Friday, June 9 - Dinner: 6:00-7:00 PM CT
- Saturday, June 10 - Breakfast: 8:00-9:00 AM CT

Depending on your registration rate, these meals are included. Complementary coffee will also be available Friday and Saturday mornings, sponsored by the [Southern Foodways Alliance](#).

Participants are responsible for additional meals. Please contact South Arts staff immediately if you have any dietary needs/restrictions that you have not already communicated.

Alcohol and other beverages are available for purchase at the Hickory Lounge at Lake Guntersville State Park Lodge during the following hours:

- Thursday 4:00-10:00 pm
- Friday 2:00-10:00 pm
- Saturday 12:00-10:00 pm.

No outside food or beverage is permitted in the FITS meeting space or main Lodge facility.

## **INTERNET ACCESS**

Free Wifi is available throughout the Lake Guntersville State Park Lodge and in our meeting room, the Goldenrod Room. Wifi is currently not available in chalets and cabins within the park.

- **Wifi Username:** State Parks Guest
- **Wifi Password:** 1800ALAPARK

## **ACCESSIBILITY REQUESTS**

We collected requests for accessibility accommodations during the registration process. To request additional accommodations such as large print materials, listening aids, or physical access



needs, please reach out to South Arts staff. Any requests for accommodation should be submitted at least two weeks in advance of the gathering.

A limited number of large print agendas will be available at the registration desk.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY**

Personal digital cameras are welcome at FITS, provided photography is not disruptive. For all sessions, registrants may take photos from their seats, if they are silent, not obstructing views, and not using a flash.

No professional photography or videography is permitted during the FITS gathering without press credentials. To obtain press credentials, please contact Ivan Schustak, Director of Communications for South Arts, at least two weeks in advance of FITS: [ischustak@southarts.org](mailto:ischustak@southarts.org) or 404-874-7244 x829.

If gathering staff deem any photography or videography to be disruptive, you may be asked to discontinue or leave.

Please be advised that any participants may be photographed and/or videotaped as part of the gathering. By entering the facility and participating in this event, you are giving your permission for your photo or video image to be included in the Organizers' advertising and media products.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Photography and videography for social media, such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, are welcome, provided that workshop or speech materials are not shared in full, and the artist or speaker is referenced. We encourage you to share using the hashtag **#FITS2023**.

We also encourage you to tag the FITS planning partners in your social media posts.

- **South Arts:**
  - [facebook.com/southarts](https://facebook.com/southarts)
  - Instagram: @southartstradarts and @southartsorg
  - Twitter: @southarts
- **Alabama Folklife Association:**
  - [facebook.com/AlabamaFolklife](https://facebook.com/AlabamaFolklife)
  - Instagram: @alabamafolklife
  - Twitter: @AlabamaFolklife
- **Alabama State Council on the Arts:**
  - [facebook.com/AlabamaStateCouncilontheArts](https://facebook.com/AlabamaStateCouncilontheArts)
  - Instagram: @alabama\_arts
  - Twitter: @Alabama\_Arts
- **American Folklore Society:**
  - [facebook.com/AmericanFolkloreSociety](https://facebook.com/AmericanFolkloreSociety)
  - Instagram: @americanfolkloresociety
  - Twitter: @afsfolklorists
- **National Endowment for the Arts:**
  - [facebook.com/NationalEndowmentfortheArts](https://facebook.com/NationalEndowmentfortheArts)
  - Instagram: @neaarts
  - Twitter: @NEAarts

## **IN CASE OF EMERGENCY**

If you have an urgent issue, please call or text Jessica Turner at 423-274-4668 ([jturner@afsnet.org](mailto:jturner@afsnet.org)) or Teresa Hollingsworth at 404-808-1015 ([thollingsworth@southarts.org](mailto:thollingsworth@southarts.org)).

In an emergency, or if you have immediate concerns about safety, get help from park security or the police first. Call the Park Rangers office at 256-571-5444, ask for help from any available Park staff, or call the police at 911. When you are safe, report the incident to FITS staff.

## **OFF-SITE DINING**

For participants arriving early or staying late, there are a number of restaurants in the area.

### **Local Dining Favorites:**

- [Wintzell's Oyster House](#)
- [Homecoming and Company](#)
- [Rock House Eatery](#)
- [City Harbor](#)
- [Fire By The Lake](#)
- [Top 'O the River](#)
- [Crawmama's](#)

### **Local Brew:**

- [The Brewers Cooperative](#)
- [Main Channel Brewing Company](#)

### **Chain Restaurants:**

- [Dairy Queen](#) - 14471 US Hwy 431 S, Guntersville, AL
- [Waffle House](#) - 2053 Gunter Ave, Guntersville, AL
- [Subway](#) - 2033 Gunter Ave, Guntersville, AL
- [Wendy's](#) - 1701 Gunter Ave, Guntersville, AL
- [McDonald's](#) - 1745 Gunter Ave, Guntersville, AL

### **In case you forgot to pack something...**

- [Publix](#) - 2300 Gunter Ave, Guntersville, AL 35976
- [Dollar General Store](#) - 1901 Henry St, Guntersville, AL 35976
  - There are several in the area.
- [Walgreens](#) - 1400 Gunter Ave, Guntersville, AL 35976

## **CONTACT US**

Questions? Please contact Teresa Hollingsworth at [thollingsworth@southarts.org](mailto:thollingsworth@southarts.org) or 404-874-7244 x814. During FITS, please call or text Teresa at **404-808-1015**.