

**FOLKLORE
WEEK
PROGRAM
GUIDE**

OCTOBER 26 – 31, 2026

FIRESIDE FOLKLORE, TALES AFTER DARK



MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2026

THE STORIES WE TELL: THE HISTORY AND MYSTERY OF URBAN LEGENDS

Urban Legends reflect the beliefs, fears, humor, and history of a society. Join us for an interdisciplinary panel exploring the fascinating world of urban legends from historical, sociological, anthropological, and folkloric perspectives.

The discussion will explore familiar legends along with the enduring appeal of collections such as Alvin Schwartz's *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark*. The panel will also discuss local Arkansas and ASU-Beebe legends, including stories surrounding the Beebe Blackbirds, Princess Hall, and the Owen Center Theatre.

SPEAKERS

Dr. Amber Bramlett, Associate Professor of Education, , Arkansas State University Beebe

Dr. Lisa Floryshak, Associate Professor of Art, , Arkansas State University Beebe

Professor Korey Davis, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Psychology, , Arkansas State University Beebe

Professor Blake Bell, Assistant Professor of History, , Arkansas State University Beebe

LOCATION

Abington Library Main Room

TIME

10:00am



TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2026

HISTORY, LEGENDS, AND BALLADS OF BELLE GUNNESS -- SERIAL KILLER

Belle Gunness is one of the first known female serial killers. She immigrated from Norway to Chicago, before living near LaPorte, Indiana. Within a span of seven years, various missing people reports became associated with her farmstead. Suspicions of nefarious actions developed, and tensions grew as authorities began to investigate reports of murder. When it became apparent that Gunness likely was associated with the violence, Gunness likely attempted to flee, but she likely died in a suspicious fire that engulfed her home in 1908. Her own body was never found, but numerous bodies were soon recovered on the site. Legends, stories, and ballads about Belle Gunness soon emerged, and she remains a figure of Indiana folklore. Scholarship on her shows that she has been labeled the Lady Bluebeard, Hell's Belle, and the Black Widow.

SPEAKER

Dr. Gregory Hansen, Professor of Folklore
Arkansas State University

LOCATION

Abington Library Main Room

TIME

9:00am



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2026

**SWALLOWED GUM, BATMAN
SMELLS, AND BLOODY MARY:
THE FOLKLORE WE DIDN'T
KNOW WE KNEW...**

How did we all “know” what happens when you swallow gum, that Batman smells, or what might happen if you said “Bloody Mary” into a mirror? This interactive, nostalgic session explores the strange beliefs, rituals, and legends we passed from kid to kid and what they can teach us about how folklore is created, changed, and shared.

SPEAKER

Professor Cindy Beck, Associate Professor of English, Arkansas State University Beebe

LOCATION

Abington Library Main Room

TIME

10:00am



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2026

HEADLESS HORSEMAN OF BOOGER HOLLER AND OTHER DOVER TALES

From exciting local mysteries to the details of everyday life, *The Headless Horseman of Booger Holler and Other Dover Tales* is a collection of firsthand interviews that explores life in and around Dover, Arkansas. In this special presentation of her work, Mindy Campbell Hudson brings the Dover area to life through its legends, lore, and local stories.

Mindy Hudson taught English at Arkansas Tech University for nearly thirty years. In 2016, her book *The Headless Horseman of Booger Holler and Other Dover Tales* was published, exploring the local stories of Dover, Arkansas, and the connections between the community's unique legends and broader folklore traditions.

SPEAKER

Author Mindy Campbell Hudson

LOCATION

Abington Library Main Room

TIME

10:00am



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2026

THE PHANTOM HITCHHIKER: ONE STORY, MANY ROADS...

For over a century, the lore of the "Vanishing Hitchhiker" has traveled along roads across the country. As one of America's first and most famous "urban legends," versions of this story blend superstition, oral tradition, local history, and the supernatural to create a truly terrifying tale.

In this presentation, Dr. Amber Bramlett will discuss the research of folklorist Jan Harold Brunvand and his influential book, *The Vanishing Hitchhiker: American Urban Legends & Their Meanings*. From its origins in the days of horse-drawn carriages to the modern-day retellings, Bramlett will discuss several haunting versions, including those that have emerged from the state of Arkansas.

SPEAKER

Dr. Amber Bramlett, Associate Professor of Education

LOCATION

Abington Library Main Room

TIME

10:00am



FOLKLORE WEEK
BREAKOUT ACTIVITIES

**FOLKLORE-THEMED
JUNK JOURNALING**

MONDAY, OCT. 26

DROP-IN ACTIVITY SESSION:

11:30 A.M.–2:30 P.M.

Create your own folklore-inspired junk journal page using vintage papers, images, ephemera, and other materials.



**URBAN LEGEND
POSTCARD STATION**

TUESDAY, OCT. 27

DROP-IN ACTIVITY SESSION:

11:30 A.M.–2:30 P.M.

Participants choose a local or classic urban legend and create a vintage-style postcard.



LOCATION

Abington Library Main Room



FOLKLORE WEEK **BREAKOUT** ACTIVITIES

DESIGN A CRYPTID

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28

DROP-IN ACTIVITY SESSION:

11:30 A.M. – 2:30 P.M.

Draw and name an original Arkansas cryptid, then describe where it lives and what witnesses claim to have seen.

LEARN THE “THRILLER” DANCE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29

DROP-IN ACTIVITY SESSION:

1:00 P.M. – 2:30 P.M.

It's close to midnight! Learn the iconic choreography from Michael Jackson's "Thriller." No dance experience required.

LOCATION

Abington Library Main Room



FOLKLORE WEEK BREAKOUT ACTIVITIES

COSTUMES & COFFEE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30

DROP-IN ACTIVITY SESSION:

9:00 A.M. – 9:50 A.M.

End Folklore Week with costumes and coffee! Come dressed for the occasion, grab a cup of coffee, and celebrate a week of legends, lore, and spooky stories.

Prizes will be awarded!
Costume Contest judging begins at 9:00 a.m., so come dressed to impress!



LOCATION

Abington Library Main Room