

## **ALTA AWARDS HONOR PILLARS OF MARYLAND HERITAGE**

*Ceremony and concert link Marylanders to living cultural traditions*

October 7, 2014—(BALTIMORE) [Maryland Traditions](#), the Folklife Program of the [Maryland State Arts Council](#), today announced the ALTA (Achievement in Living Traditions and Arts) Award recipients for 2014. The awards recognize outstanding stewards of living traditions in the State of Maryland and will be presented to three recipients at a December 6 awards ceremony and concert at the Montgomery College Cultural Arts Center on the Montgomery College Takoma Park – Silver Spring campus. The event is offered free to the public.

ALTA awards are presented annually to an individual or group, a place and a tradition that embody outstanding stewardship of living traditions and help to preserve Maryland’s cultural heritage. The 2014 ALTA Award recipients are: fly-fisherman and environmental conservationist **Lefty Kreh**(People), **Bending Water Park** (Place), and **The Painted Screens of Baltimore**(Tradition).

“In this global age, it is important to connect with the cultures that make Maryland a truly distinct place,” said Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development Secretary Dominick Murray. “The ALTA Awards honor and celebrate the deep roots of our past and the people, places and traditions of today that keep our heritage alive.”

In addition to the ceremony, this year’s ALTA Awards includes a headlining performance by R&B/Soul legends **The Holmes Brothers**, recipients of the 2014 National Heritage Fellowship. The ceremony will also feature a performance by **Danny Paisley, Dave Reed, and Hugh Campbell** to highlight their participation in the forthcoming Dust-to-Digital multimedia publication, ***Ola Belle Reed & Southern Mountain Music on the Mason-Dixon Line***. For tickets to the ALTA Awards Ceremony, call the box office at (240) 567-5775. The event is free of charge, but tickets must be reserved.

### **2014 ALTA Award Recipients**

**PEOPLE: Bernard “Lefty” Kreh** (Frederick/Baltimore County) is a master of fly fishing and fly tying, an expert guide, acclaimed journalist, and prominent environmental conservationist. A resident of Cockeysville, Lefty was born and raised in Frederick, where he caught and sold catfish along the Monocacy River. Lefty is considered the foremost expert on fly-casting and salt-water fly fishing in the world. Mr. Kreh is the inventor of “Lefty’s Deceiver,” a saltwater fishing fly developed in Crisfield, Maryland. “Lefty’s Deceiver” was celebrated on a 1991 US Postage Stamp on account of its being among the most effective and popular salt-water fishing flies in the world. Kreh’s development of the “swivel cast” technique has brought him around the globe to teach fly-casting workshops. His work as a journalist for the *Frederick News Post*, the *Montgomery County Sentinel*, the *Winchester Star*, and the *Baltimore Sun* galvanized the region’s interest in fishing and hunting from the 1950s to the present, and his nationally-syndicated *Baltimore Sun* column triggered a renaissance in fly-fishing in the mid-20th Century that continues today. Many credit Lefty with inventing saltwater fly fishing, and his creation of “Lefty’s Deceiver” was a major reason for the sport’s popularization locally and

internationally. Lefty is a dedicated mentor of young anglers through Maryland Trout Unlimited, and is a dynamic advocate for environmental conservation.

**PLACE: Bending Water Park and Indian Water Trails** (Somerset County) comprise indigenous cultural landscapes and waterways on Maryland's Eastern Shore that are deeply connected to the history and heritage of the Accohannock Indian Tribe. Bending Water Park has long been host to the Accohannocks' annual "Healing of All Nations" Pau-wau, and is central to the continuation of traditional and contemporary ways of life of the Accohannock people. The park provides a gathering place, an outdoor museum showcasing traditional dwellings, and a campground available to the public. The adjacent Indian Water Trails—branching from the Pocomoke Sound, at the mouth of the Pocomoke River—have historically been essential to the indigenous people of the Lower Eastern Shore for gathering food and other resources, as well as for transportation. Today, the Accohannock Tribe runs a kayak and canoe touring business on the waterways. The Indian Water Trail experience, made possible through guided activities on the water, evokes indigenous cultural landscapes, allows the Accohannock to illustrate the stories of how their tribe has evolved alongside Eastern Shore development, and provides a sense of place for visitors, who come from as far away as Germany. Bending Water Park and the Indian Water Trails is a significant place for the Accohannock Indian Tribe in sharing the story of their community, while aiding in the conservation of an ecologically diverse and historically evocative landscape on Maryland's Eastern Shore. At the request of the Accohannock Tribal Council, Chief Rudy Hall will accept the ALTA Award on behalf of the Accohannock Indian Tribe.

**TRADITION: The Painted Screens of Baltimore** is one of the most iconic and well-known living traditions unique to Baltimore City, celebrating its 101st birthday this year. Rooted in the vibrant neighborhoods of early 20th century East Baltimore, where they dotted the streets of endless row homes, the screens provided a decorative means of ensuring privacy: the painted exteriors "trapped" the vision of onlookers, preventing them from seeing inside. Such privacy was especially important during the warmer months when open windows provided much-needed ventilation. This clever invention is credited to William Oktavec, a storeowner on the East side from the Czech Republic (as it is known now). While Oktavec painted his first screen in 1913, the tradition continues today through a variety of forms – from window screens to fly swatters and outdoor patio furniture – that reflect an evolution of innovations and tastes. Roughly a dozen screen painters, many of who have learned from the older generation, including John Oktavec, William's grandson, are active in teaching the skills and meanings to younger enthusiasts. In 1985, the Painted Screen Society was founded by folklorist Elaine Eff, co-founder of Maryland Traditions and author of *The Painted Screens of Baltimore: an Urban Folk Art Revealed* (University Press of Mississippi, 2013), and Dee Herget, who has been painting screens since the late 1970s, having learned "the secret" from the "old masters" of the time. The Society is active in promoting the living tradition to the public through demonstration events, classes, and museum and gallery exhibitions, and has helped to keep it alive within the city and beyond.

#### **About the ALTA Award**

The ALTA Award was created in 2007 to honor the legacy of folklorist Dr. Alta Schrock (1911-2001). Dr. Schrock, a native of Garrett County, taught biology at Frostburg State University and was the driving force behind the creation of Spruce Forest Artisan Village, Penn Alps, *The Journal of the Alleghenies* and the Springs Festival, to name a few of her achievements in cultural conservation.

Awards are presented annually to an individual or group, a place and a tradition that embody outstanding stewardship of living traditions and help to sustain Maryland's cultural heritage. **People** are selected based on their demonstration of the highest standards of excellence in such areas as research, documentation, presentation, entrepreneurship, artistry, stewardship and community impact; the **Places** honored serve to keep traditions alive and are meaningful gathering places or sites of enduring memories or endangered traditions; and **Traditions** recognized are those that connect communities to cultural heritage in ways that exemplify the distinctive spirit of Maryland and may include events, occupations, knowledge, cultural scenes, and organizations. Profiles of all ALTA Award recipients can be found [here](#)

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#### **About the Maryland State Arts Council**

The Maryland State Arts Council, an agency of the Maryland Department of Business & Economic Development, Division of Tourism, Film and the Arts, is dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive. The mission of the council is to encourage and invest in the advancement of the arts for the people of Maryland. In Fiscal Year 2010, Maryland State Arts Council grantees' activities support more than 10,600 jobs and generate \$1 billion in local economic activity and \$36.5 million in state and local taxes. For more information, visit [www.msac.org](http://www.msac.org) or call (410) 767-6555 or TTY 1-800-735-2258.