THE PLANE TRUTH
A WCU ALUMNA SHARES HER FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT OF ‘THE MIRACLE ON THE HUDSON’
ON THE COVER
WCU alumna Sheila Dail ’73
has the inside scoop on “the Miracle on the Hudson”

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You say you didn’t receive a spring edition of the Magazine of Western Carolina University? That’s because the state’s budget crisis prevented us from being able to print one. So we moved the magazine online, but we couldn’t let everyone know about the change if we didn’t have their current e-mail address. To help us keep you informed about what’s happening at WCU, please direct e-mail addresses to magazineaddress@wcu.edu.
FULL HOUSE

A spike in applications for fall semester and the opening of new dining and residence halls make WCU ‘the place to be’

By TERESA KILLIAN

More than 12,000 people applied for enrollment in the 2009-10 freshman class at Western Carolina — so many that during the spring the approximately 9,000-student university started a waiting list for the first time in its history. “When I spoke to freshmen at orientation, I said, ‘You have good timing,’” said Keith Corzine ’82, director of residential living. "Tremendous efforts by many to make WCU the place to be are truly coming to life this fall. A new dining hall has opened in the heart of campus next to a brand-new residence hall and across from a recreation facility that is not even a year old. Meanwhile, we have renovated classrooms and laboratories, and construction is under way on another residence hall and a state-of-the-art science building.” Together, the initiatives enhance the quality of the student experience inside and outside the classroom and create a vibrant quad, said Corzine.

Students agree. “It’s becoming the heart of campus,” said Amanda Benkau, an Honors College junior from Evansville, Ind., who is excited about living in the new residence hall. “I see a lot of people playing Frisbee and catch on the lawn, and I see a lot of people working out in the new recreation center or hanging out with friends outside of the dining hall.” Freshmen such as Charles Finley of Asheville say the Alumni Tower and new dining hall are where they meet up with friends.

The $17.6 million, 53,000-square-foot Courtyard Dining Hall offers indoor and outdoor seating, arched doorways, tall ceilings and natural light filtering in from about 150 windows. First to open inside was a convenience store, Starbucks Coffee Company and an upstairs all-you-can-eat venue. Food is cooked right in front of diners at themed stations, including a deli; a “home zone” with rotisserie meats and traditional meats, potatoes and vegetables; an international grill; a pasta and pizza center with a fiery, old-world-adobe-style oven; a dessert station with fresh-baked goods; and salad bar and beverage centers. “It feels more like a restaurant,” said Andrew Rogers, a junior from Alpharetta, Ga. Closer to the start of the fall semester, the dining hall also will open a McAlister’s Deli and a food court featuring Zoca, a Mexican-themed restaurant; Grille Works; Panda Express; and Freshens.

Next door, students will move into the new four-story, 426-bed Balsam Hall — the first of a $50.2 million pair of residence halls to replace Helder and Leatherwood. Most of the residents in Balsam’s mix of single and double rooms will have private baths and common living areas and kitchens will be from WCU’s residential Honors College. Architects incorporated features such as columns and balconies that Honors students came to associate with the college in its old home of Reynolds Hall. Also, after a design charrette involving students Jennie V. Dowdle ’08, Michael O’Shea and Maleah Prus ’09, architects added innovations such as basement garage band space and a central arch complete with a study room that will bridge the fourth floor of Balsam Hall with the companion residence hall scheduled to open in fall 2010. Brian Rabbi, dean of the Honors College, said the students were inspired by the arches they saw in France and Spain — and specifically in Barcelona’s Barri Gothic or “Gothic Quarter” — while traveling as part of an Honors class on the post-modern literary American expatriates.

For Shannon Owen, a junior from Shelby and president of the Honors College Board, relocating the Honors College to the center of campus is a big deal. “Some were worried about losing the community we built on the hill by leaving Reynolds, but I hope that translates to Balsam and that the location will make it easier for even more students to get involved in Honors College activities that will be hosted there,” said Owen.

Work also begins this fall on the newest part of campus — 444 acres acquired across N.C. Highway 107 as part of the Millennial Initiative. A comprehensive regional economic development strategy, the initiative involves developing neighborhoods anchored by an academic building and surrounded by related private industry and government partners. Construction has started on a $46 million, 160,000-square-foot health sciences building. The four-story facility will bring under one roof 11 programs from the College of Health and Human Sciences ranging from physical therapy to nursing. Inside will be classrooms, program and research laboratories, specialized clinics, offices, gathering places and a coffeeshop restaurant. Drew Craig, a junior environmental health major from Charlotte, said he is particularly excited about the building’s energy-efficiency features that will be constructed in line with guidelines for national certification in green design. “We have a responsibility to protect our environment, and this building is designed to help WCU do that,” said Craig.

On top of the many exciting openings, projects and events this fall, the Department of Residential Living is preparing for a full house, said Corzine. Although actual enrollment will not be known until after classes start, the freshman class could be one of the biggest in recent years. The record was 1,578 students in 2004. This year, 1,532 freshmen attended full orientation sessions, and an additional session was scheduled for August.

As a result, staff members have been boosting living-learning programs for first-year students such as Western Carolina PEAKS. In the program, students join a community centered on a topic such as cultivating leadership skills and helping the environment, and then participate in activities throughout the year to help them bond and discover their best selves. “It probably sounds pretty cliché, but by far, my favorite part of being a resident director is the students. I have met some incredible students and watched them grow into tremendous adults.”

FALL 2009 BY THE NUMBERS

1 Waiting list to enroll new students
426 Beds in new Balsam Hall
8,000 Pounds the old-world-adobe pizza oven weighs in new Courtyard Dining Hall
12,324 Applications received for 2009-10 freshman class before the cutoff
33,085 Inquiries for the 2010-11 freshman class... so far

Student orientation leader Drew Bishop gives two thumbs-up to the new developments on campus.
HISTORY IN THE MAKING

The Mountain Heritage Center commemorates 30 years

By RANDALL HOLCOMBE

WCU’s Mountain Heritage Center is shining its light brighter than ever on the Southern Appalachians, and it’s not just the new lighting system that was recently installed in the museum’s three exhibition galleries. As the center marks 30 years of interpreting the history and culture of the region, its staff has been busy expanding the scope and impact of its outreach programs across Western North Carolina and beyond.

“The Mountain Heritage Center experienced significant growth and change during the 2008-09 academic year,” said Scott Philyaw ’83, museum director and associate professor in WCU’s department of history. “We have begun a much-needed upgrade to our physical space – both to bring it into compliance with professional standards and to make it more useful to the university community.” Specific improvements include replacing the lighting in all three galleries, adding handrails to make the auditorium more accessible, and installing a wireless network in the galleries, the auditorium, and in the center’s conference room. “Also, our outreach efforts increased in quantity and quality, with partners ranging from local historical organizations and facilities. A good example of the staff’s work with local organizations, Philyaw said, is the exhibit “Haywood County: Portrait of a Mountain Community,” which the Mountain Heritage Center staff produced in cooperation with the Haywood County Historical Society as a companion project for the society’s new Haywood County history book.

Another new center initiative is the Digital Heritage Project, which consists of a series of one-minute radio broadcasts spotlighting the history, culture and traditions of the Southern Appalachians, and a companion Web site. Working with faculty and graduate students from the history department, the museum staff has produced more than 150 “heritage moments” that are heard daily on four Clear Channel Communications Inc. radio stations that broadcast across 50 counties in the region. The Web site www.DigitalHeritage.org includes illustrated essays, video interviews and short documentaries, the majority of which were produced by WCU students.

“Scott Philyaw and the staff of the Mountain Heritage Center have done a remarkable job in recent years of redirecting the center, clarifying its mission and broadening its contributions to the university and the state,” said Clifton Metcalf, WCU vice chancellor of advancement and external affairs.

During the 2008-09 academic year, a total of 4,150 WCU and area K-12 students participated in Mountain Heritage Center programming, and 562 students engaged in significant research or activities at the center. Another 114 WCU students completed class projects, internships and research projects working with museum staff members and using its resources, Philyaw said.

In addition to serving as the organizational headquarters for Mountain Heritage Day, the annual fall festival that is the most highly attended event each year on WCU’s campus, the center offers support to K-12 teachers in the region and regularly provides staff expertise to local historical organizations and facilities. A good example of the staff’s work with local organizations, Philyaw said, is the exhibit “Haywood County: Portrait of a Mountain Community,” which the Mountain Heritage Center staff produced in cooperation with the Haywood County Historical Society as a companion project for the society’s new Haywood County history book.

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KEEPPING UP WITH THE JONES

The new curator dives into the local culture, with a side trip to Australia

By RANDALL HOLCOMBE

Trevor Jones says the best aspect of being a museum curator is that the job is always providing opportunities to learn more history. For example, the new curator at WCU’s Mountain Heritage Center most recently has been digging around for all the information he can find about Haywood County’s Plott hounds in preparation for an upcoming exhibit about the famous hunting dogs.

A native of rural Minnesota, Jones has been immersing himself in all things having to do with Southern Appalachian culture and history since he migrated southward to begin his duties at the WCU museum last December. The veteran curator says that whether you’re working at a Midwest museum, or in one located in the heart of the Southern Appalachians, “There’s always more history to learn.”

Jones earned bachelor’s degrees in history and German at Grinnell College in Iowa and a master’s degree in history and certificate in museum studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He taught artifact digitization processes at the University of Illinois at Chicago-Urbana and held curatorial positions at museums in Illinois and Wisconsin before taking his current job at the Mountain Heritage Center. His duties at the center include writing, designing and building exhibits, overseeing the Mountain Heritage Center’s collection of artifacts, and assisting visitors as they learn about the region.

After heading down South, Jones went “Down Under.” Late last year, he was notified that he had been chosen to be the first American recipient of the Global Curatorial Fellowship, a new exchange program sponsored by the Curators Committee of the American Association of Museums and the Historian’s Special Interest Group of Museums Australia. The fellowship provides an opportunity for an American to travel to Australia and present a research paper at the annual meeting of that country’s museum professionals, and a chance for an Australian curator to do likewise at the AAM annual meeting in the United States.

Jones took a 14-hour airplane ride to Australia in May and delivered his paper “Remembering World War I Soldiers in the U.S.A.” He also attended the AAM meeting in Philadelphia that same month as his Australian counterpart presented a paper for the American group.

Back home in Cullowhee, Jones continues work on the Plott hound exhibit, set to open in October, and on a new version of the museum’s permanent exhibit, “The Migration of the Scotch-Irish People.” Generally speaking, things are hopping at the museum on the ground floor of WCU’s H.F. Robinson Building. “I’m excited to be working at the Mountain Heritage Center during such an exciting time in the museum’s history,” Jones said.
PROUD OF THE PRIDE
Members past and present are invited to attend the presentation of the band world's 'Heisman Trophy'
By BILL STUDENC

For more than a decade, Western Carolina University's marching band has gone by the name "The Pride of the Mountains." An event slated for this fall will provide all the evidence anyone could need that the feeling of pride is justified, as the band will officially receive the highest nation's highest honor in the world of collegiate marching bands.

It goes by the formal name of the Sudler Trophy. Awarded by the John Philip Sousa Foundation in recognition of an extended record of excellence, it is known informally as the marching band equivalent of college football's Heisman Trophy. And it is coming to Cullowhee on Saturday, Oct. 24.

That is the day when representatives of the Sudler Trophy Committee and the Sousa Foundation will visit Western Carolina for a presentation ceremony. The event is scheduled to take place during halftime of the Catamounts' football game against Southern Conference rival Wofford. Game time is tentatively set for 4 p.m.

Because the trophy is awarded not for just a year or two of outstanding performances, but to reward important contributions to the advancement of the performance standards of college marching bands over a number of years, leaders of The Pride of the Mountains are inviting all former members of the band to return to campus for the presentation ceremony.

"Everyone who has ever marched as a member of the Western Carolina band has played a part in the university's band program receiving this prestigious national honor," said Bob Buckner '67, director of athletic bands. "Our student-musicians who will march this year stand on the shoulders of giants. Because of the significance of the awarding of the Sudler Trophy to the Pride of the Mountains, the annual Alumni Band Weekend, which is traditionally held as part of the final home football game of the season, is being moved up to Oct. 24 so that as many marching band alumni as possible can attend the presentation ceremony.

Special reduced ticket prices will be available for former marching band members and their families to attend the game. In addition, band leaders are searching for old band uniforms, instruments, photographs and other items to put on display as part of the Sudler Trophy presentation weekend.

Details about the presentation ceremony, the Alumni Band and related activities are being developed this summer. For the latest information, visit www.prideofthemountains.com.

OLYMPIC GOLD
A WCU studio engineer wins an Emmy for his work in Beijing
By TERESA KILLIAN

Western Carolina now has three Emmy Award winners on the payroll, including John E. Wells, studio engineer for the university's School of Music. Wells served as an edit systems maintenance engineer for an NBC team recently honored by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences with a Sports Emmy Award for Outstanding Technical Team Remote in recognition of its coverage of the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing. Team members executed the largest high-definition remote broadcast ever attempted, and the Olympics became the most-watched program in the history of television.

Wells now shares an Emmy bond with Bruce Fraizer, WCU's Carol Grotnes Belk Distinguished Professor of Commercial and Electronic Music, who twice has been recognized by the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Emmy for contributions to dramatic underscore and sound mixing for television programs, and Jack Sholder, director of the university's motion picture and television production program, who won an Emmy for his editing work on "3-2-1 Contact."

"It is a special honor to be recognized on a national level for what I do," said Wells, a resident of Sylva. "I am very fortunate and very, very grateful. I was part of an extraordinary team. Everyone that I worked with in Beijing was incredibly helpful and brought something special to the effort."

Wells, who has experience as a technical consultant for audio and video firms, was invited to work five weeks in China assembling and operating temporary edit suites where camera feeds from Olympic event venues were assembled into five- to 30-minute segments. "Anytime something broke or wasn't working right, they would call me to the edit rooms to fix it," said Wells, who worked 12- to 20-hour shifts. "When it was all over, I broke down the rooms."

Highlights for him included having an up-close view of Olympic moments, such as watching Shawn Johnson win gold on the balance beam, Michael Phelps win his fourth gold, and closing ceremonies. They also included the opportunity to explore China – sampling dumplings and Kung Pao shrimp, and visiting the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square.

Before joining the WCU staff five years ago, Wells served as a technical consultant for firms such as Sony Electronics. He was part of the engineering staff that designed and built the studios in WCU's Center for Applied Technology. As WCU studio engineer, he maintains equipment and functionality and assists faculty and students using the recording studio and edit rooms.
it certainly can be a "wild life" for Western Carolina scientists these days. faculty and students from several different disciplines are conducting a variety of research projects aimed at unlocking some of the mysteries of the natural world around us – from attempting to save an endangered species of amphibian to helping a rare type of squirrel survive the pressures of development, and from controlling disease-carrying mosquitoes to determining the home territory of the box turtle.

HAPPY TRAILS
WCU's outdoor programs director looks to link to a county greenway
By Bessie Dietrich Goggins '06

Josh Whitmore, director of outdoor programs for Western Carolina University, is developing a comprehensive plan for a community multiuse trail network, thanks to a grant of $14,440 from the Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation. The WCU trail system will connect to the Jackson County Greenways Project, an initiative under development in the county parks and recreation department to acquire land for a linear park and greenway along the Tuckaseigee River. Together, the trail systems will provide a network consisting of a variety of trail surfaces to suit a host of activities on both WCU and Jackson County properties.

The idea for the trail network surfaced after the fragmentation of the existing gravel trail on campus due to new construction, which forced users onto public roads without sidewalks, coupled with the university’s acquisition of land as part of the Millennium Initiative, said Whitmore. "Some of the land too steep for development would be perfect for a multiuse trail facility to allow the campus community access to trails from campus," he said.

The grant is funding the creation of a "master plan," which will bring together interested groups of walkers, trail runners, mountain bikers and hikers to plan a network that will meet everyone's needs, said Whitmore. The plan will essentially establish a specific route for the trail, access points and features. It also will outline a further plan for construction," he said. The first objective of the project is to complete a perimeter trail and develop access points with additional side loops and trails added later.

The network of trails will enable WCU to provide its on-campus population, the local community and visitors with easy access to healthful, recreational activities. The project's strategy is to provide a trail system in a convenient location, making healthy recreation habits more accessible to the community. "Our trail project can easily be accessed from the greenways' paved or crushed gravel surfaces through the pedestrian tunnel by WCU’s softball field," said Whitmore. "This offers a contiguous trail network with the option of the more groomed greenway and the more primitive experience of a mountain trail."

Emily Elders, project manager with the Jackson County Parks and Recreation Department, said the partnership with WCU is an exciting opportunity to improve the quality of life for the entire community. "For our county residents, students and visitors, greenways have the potential to provide increased health and wellness, create alternative transportation systems and, perhaps most importantly, preserve and protect the natural mountain landscapes that all of us enjoy," Elders said. "We are fortunate to find partners as supportive and resourceful as Josh and the outdoor programs staff."
Ron Davis uses radio telemetry to track the movements of eastern box turtles. He says the turtles usually retract their heads and legs into their shells, and hope the threat goes away. It turns out that it also takes an eastern box turtle a long time to reach reproductive age. That’s one of the main reasons why the fate of the species is an increasing concern, says Ron Davis, WCU assistant professor of natural resources conservation and management.

Davis is the second year of a study to determine the effects of habitat fragmentation on the turtles and to try to figure out some ways to enhance the turtle’s habitat to improve its chances of co-existing with humans and its activities. To gain some understanding about how the turtles use their home range and their movement patterns, Davis and several WCU students began tracking turtles last summer with the use of radio telemetry, the same tool used in a previous study of timber rattlesnakes. The students also collected data relevant to the natural aspects of the turtle, and to try to figure out some ways to enhance the turtle’s habitat to improve its chances of co-existing with humans and its activities.

In the meantime, Davis recommends that anyone who wants to help a turtle cross a highway should relocate the reptile just off the pavement, pointing in the same slow direction of travel as it was before.

Thinking Outside The Box

Ron Davis toils to improve the chances of a slow-moving reptile

By RANDALL HOLCOMBE

Anyone who has witnessed an eastern box turtle frudging across a highway can vouch for the fact that the turtles never go anywhere at a high rate of speed. Faced with a threat – an oncoming car, barking dog or curious human being – the reptile will usually retract its head and legs into its shell, and hope the threat goes away. It turns out that it also takes an eastern box turtle a long time to reach reproductive age. That’s one of the main reasons why the fate of the species in an increasingly developing landscape is a point of concern, says Ron Davis, WCU assistant professor of natural resources conservation and management.

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As spring rolls into summer at Western Carolina University, with sunshine and flowers, the campus is abuzz with activity. For Brian Byrd, assistant professor of health sciences, one specific buzz has captured his research interest – the buzz of the mosquito.

With a variety of native and invasive mosquito species in Western North Carolina, Byrd is working on two research projects with the help of undergraduates examining in environmental health. “We conduct field investigations to better understand the local ecology of La Crosse encephalitis, a mosquito-borne disease endemic to WNC and the state’s No. 1 arthropod-borne viral disease,” said Byrd. “We are gathering baseline surveillance data to get a feel for the local seasonal abundance and population structure trends.”

The La Crosse virus affects mostly children younger than age 16 and can cause an acute inflammation of the brain. “Although cases of La Crosse encephalitis occur every year in WNC, the transmission of the virus is likely underrecognized,” said Byrd. “This disease is rarely fatal, but a child from Transylvania County died from the virus in 2001.” In addition, the costs of hospitalization, long-term care and time lost from work for family members can be staggering. The social costs from adverse effects on IQ and school performance post-infection also are underreported.

Byrd also runs a molecular research lab with his students, investigating the ability of molecular markers to identify cryptic or similar mosquito species. “We are developing molecular tests to aid in the rapid identification of local disease vectors and studying the validity of previously recognized sister species of the pitcher plant mosquito,” he said.

Buzz Words

A professor and his students work to decrease mosquito-borne diseases

By BESSIE DIETERICH GOGGINS ’06

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Brian Byrd right captures mosquitoes with the assistance of student Alan Goggins.
Sounding His Frog Horn

Joe Pechmann is helping rescue one of the country’s most endangered creatures

By RANDALL HOCOMBE

When it comes to cuteness, dusky gopher frogs can compete with Kermit the Frog of Muppets fame, says Joe Pechmann. That’s good news for the gopher frogs, which are in need of a few good friends, since they are one of the nation’s most endangered species. Pechmann, WCU associate professor of biology, and other scientists are trying to save the frogs from extinction.

As a Boy Scout growing up in Binghamton, N.Y., Pechmann found insects to be nature’s most interesting creatures. Amphibians such as frogs, toads and salamanders didn’t capture his interest until he earned his master’s degree in zoology and began working for a university research laboratory in South Carolina.

After earning a doctoral degree in zoology from Duke University, engaging in postdoctoral studies and teaching at the University of New Orleans, Pechmann joined the WCU faculty in August 2006.

While at New Orleans in 2001, Pechmann became part of the effort to save the gopher frog, which historically bred in temporary ponds found in the longleaf pine forests of Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama. Widespread alteration and destruction of both the breeding ponds and pine forests had a devastating effect on the frogs, and now the only known wild populations, including fewer than 100 mature adults, are found in and around two ponds in southern Mississippi.

During the period 1999 to 2007, the main temporary pond in Mississippi dried up before tadpoles could metamorphose into frogs, and no juvenile frogs were produced, Pechmann said. To try to offset that, Pechmann and his colleagues started raising gopher frog tadpoles in tanks located near a natural breeding pond. That has kept the creatures from becoming extinct, he said.

One experiment Pechmann has been leading since 2005 involves measuring the growth and survival rate of juvenile frogs in a forest subjected to controlled fires, compared to the survival rate in areas where fires have been suppressed. The research frogs are contained in 16 enclosures, each measuring 50 feet by 50 feet. When Hurricane Katrina washed out the Gulf Coast in 2005, the enclosures were damaged, and the frogs hopped away, Pechmann said. Seven WCU students helped Pechmann repair the enclosures during the 2007-08 holiday break, and another three students have participated in the gopher frog project over the past three years. Pechmann said the research is having an impact in that land and pond management practices are being adjusted to help the frogs survive.

“We have an ethical duty to share the Earth with other animals, and if we assess the threats that threaten their existence, we should do our best to help them out,” he said.

Pechmann’s frogs do have some other endearing characteristics, aside from cuteness. When calling for a mate, the males sound exactly like a person snoring, and if you pick one up, it covers its eyes with its front feet.

Crossing Guard

A rare species of squirrel gets an assist traversing a mountain highway

By BESSIE DIETRICH GOGGINS ’06

Why did the squirrel cross the road? To get to the other side, of course. But in the case of the endangered Carolina northern flying squirrel, living in Western North Carolina’s Unicoi Mountains, they need a little help to cross the Cherohala Skyway.

A 36-mile-long national scenic byway that connects the Cherohala and Nantahala national forests, the Cherohala Skyway bisects the habitat of an isolated population of squirrels, making them vulnerable to disease and predators. Although they are known as flying squirrels, these small creatures actually slide from tree to tree using as paratrochutes of skin running from their front to back legs. To help the squirrels find new areas to live and forage, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and Duke Energy created three sets of artificial trees that incorporate wooden planks with launching pads, hoping the squirrels will use them to glide across the road.

Nicole Allman, a biology graduate student who won the inaugural N.C. Research Award at WCU’s Graduate Research Symposium, decided to help the endangered squirrels, as well. Allman has explored the small population of the squirrel along the skyway, with help from WCU’s Southern Appalachian Biodiversity and Ecology Center and funding from the NCWRC. “The Cherohala Skyway creates a partial barrier for access to other possible suitable habitats,” said Allman. “The connectedness, quality and size of the remaining habitat available to the squirrels is important to sustain — if not increase — their population.” If the squirrel population continues to decline, it could affect the health of their habitat. By depositing undigested fungus in the soil, the squirrels help tree roots take up water and nutrients throughout WNC’s high-elevation forests.

Using a multi-step process, Allman is analyzing the squirrel habitat from these research directions to gain information that will aid in the proper management of the forest and help prevent further loss of the species: “First, I have documented the vegetation at points where squirrels have either been trapped or have denned and also at random points where there is no squirrel activity,” she said. “Second, I have a geographic information systems component where I will compare the three known squirrel habitats to other areas along the Cherohala. Finally, there is an analysis component where DNA from squirrel scat will be studied to determine the food items the squirrels are consuming.”

By conducting field-based research from the molecular to the landscape level, Allman will provide direct observations and analyses of the squirrel habitat that can be used by the NCWRC, said Beverly Collins, Allman’s faculty advisor, WCU associate professor of biology and director of SABEC. “Her work will benefit Western North Carolina by helping to maintain the region’s biodiversity and by calling attention to one of our at-risk ecosystems,” said Collins. “We must understand and manage these systems and species well to maintain the diversity of the region. Otherwise, at-risk species such as the Carolina northern flying squirrel will shrink in population.”
THE GOAL’S IN SIGHT

The university will pause this fall to celebrate its first comprehensive fundraising campaign as part of Homecoming Week activities

By BILL STUDENC

As Western Carolina prepares to mark its 120th anniversary this year, the university is gearing up for one of the busiest fall semesters in recent memory, with opening ceremonies planned for a new residence hall and a new dining facility, an official groundbreaking celebration to mark the beginning of construction on a health sciences building, and the presentation of a national honor to the Prude of the Mountains Marching Band (see related stories elsewhere in this issue). As if that wasn’t enough to keep campus event planners scrambling this summer, WCU also is gearing up to celebrate the conclusion of a successful fundraising effort. The Campaign for Western Carolina, with its theme of “Creating Extraordinary Opportunities” and a goal of $40 million in contributions to the university, will come to a close this year.

Several public events are being planned to commemorate the completion of the campaign, with activities scheduled Oct. 15-17 to coincide with Homecoming 2009. “We want as many members of the Western Carolina family as possible to join in celebrating this major milestone in the life of the university,” said Clifton Metcalf, vice chancellor for advancement and external affairs. “Homecoming Week seems to be the perfect time, because it brings together the students, our faculty and staff who are teaching and providing services to students,” Metcalf said. “The students really enjoyed having a chance to personally thank the people who established scholarships to meet and thank their benefactors. “Our inaugural scholarship lunch last fall was a tremendous hit,” Metcalf said. “The students really enjoyed having a chance to personally thank the people who established endowed professorships and programmatic support.

A campus campaign celebration will be held from 3 until 5 p.m. on the University Center lawn, leading up to the annual float-building party as student groups and campus organizations create their entries for the Homecoming parade. The celebration is scheduled to include a free concert by country music performer Matt Stell, a Sylva native and former Catamount baseball player.

The second annual Scholarship Lunch is set for noon Oct. 16 in the Grandroom of the University Center, providing an opportunity for many recipients of scholarships to meet and thank their benefactors. “Our inaugural scholarship lunch last fall was a tremendous hit,” Metcalf said. “The students really enjoyed having a chance to personally thank the people who established the endowed scholarship funds that made it possible for them to come to WCU, and the benefactors who have so graciously given their philanthropic support to the university really appreciated getting to know the students they are helping.”

Ronald A. Johnson (left), dean of the College of Business, thanks Wesley Elingburg ’78, former interim chancellor at WCU, for a $500,000 gift for creating the elingburg distinguished Professorship in Business innovation, a position held by former Executive officer of BB&T, John A. Allison iv, then-creation of an endowed professorship for a $500,000 gift for professorship in business.

Giving levels can climb higher through the elingburg Challenge

Friends of Western Carolina will have a chance to take their gifts to a higher level in 2009-10, thanks to the Elingburg Challenge. Wesley Elingburg ’78 says he understands the importance of the Loyalty Fund and wants to promote its mission of providing merit-based scholarships to WCU students. That’s why he has issued a challenge, offering to match new and increased gifts to the Loyalty Fund totaling $1,000.

“His need for leadership giving to the Loyalty Fund is increasingly vital as students struggle to pay for their educations while facing new challenges created by the current economic downturn,” said Natalie Clark, director of annual giving. “Gifts totaling $1,000 or more are not only eligible to be matched through the Elingburg Challenge, but also will qualify donors for an invitation to the Annual Scholarship Luncheon, where they can meet students who have benefited from their generosity.”

Elingburg is no stranger to giving to WCU. He has been a strong supporter of the Loyalty Fund for more than 17 years. His 2006 gift of $250,000 enabled the university to obtain state matching funds and create the Elingburg Distinguished Professorship in Business Innovation, a position held by former corporate finance executive Louis Buik Jr.

For more information, contact the Office of Development at (828) 227-7024 or visit campaign.wcu.edu for more information, including an up-to-date listing of events.
SUMMIT MEETING
An adventurous alumnus donates his collection of mountaineering books to Hunter Library

By CHRISTY McCARLEY ’71 MA ’78

A few weeks after his 80th birthday, Dr. Robert Mayo Failing ’51 left Southern California for a road trip. Travelling solo, he was driving more than 2,300 miles to attend a meeting of the Western Carolina University Foundation board of directors and to deliver a book collection to Hunter Library.

It was late November, five days before the fall session of the board. Since becoming a member in 1990, Failing has rarely missed a meeting. Fellow board members know him as a widely respected forensic pathologist and part-time adventurer. In midlife, he began a quest to climb the world’s tallest mountains, reaching the highest points of six continents and all 50 states before he finally retired.

Now, he says, his favorite expression is a famous mountaineering adage: “There are bold climbers, and there are old climbers. But there are no old, bold climbers.”

But mountains – Rockies, Andes, Himalayas and Smokies – still hold that special allure. And mountains and the world-class climbers who challenge them were in the titles of nearly every one of the 376 books travelling cross-country with him.

As Failing was driving to Cullowhee, George Frizzell ’77 MA ’81, head of Special Collections, was busy clearing shelves at Hunter Library, getting ready to receive what he knew would be a unique addition. “Dr. Failing had e-mailed a list of his books, and I realized this was a collection that had taken several decades to compile, and it was going to be significant for us,” Frizzell said. “Given our location in one of the great mountain areas of the world, there will be a lot of people with an affinity for these books.”

The collection, with an appraised value of $15,640, includes a special leather-bound edition of “View from the Summit” signed by Sir Edmund Hillary and a first edition of “Alone” signed by Adm. Richard Byrd. Virtually all of the world’s famous climbers and mountaineering authors are represented, including Maurice Herzog of France, Antoli Boukreev of Russia, the British climber Chris Bonington, Australia’s Lincoln Hall, and Dick Bass, Bradford Washington, Jon Krakauer and David Breashears of the United States. Many books include notes written to Failing by authors and climbers he knows personally.

Failing is a recipient of WCU’s Distinguished Alumni Award, and he received an honorary doctorate from the university in 2007. In 1956, he finished medical school at Duke University and began his professional career in California, retiring in 1994. With wife Nancycyan, Failing is a longstanding benefactor of the university. Through the years, they have made substantial contributions in cash and equipment to academics, athletics, student recreation and the arts.

“Dr. Failing is a thoughtful, consummate giver. He has said that he felt he had a good experience here and got a jumpstart that took his life in many directions,” said Jim Manning ’74 MBA ’76, senior director of development. “He has a sincere affection for this place and its people, and he knows that his support really means something here.”

Western Carolina’s Kimmel School of Construction Management and Technology recently established a materials microscopy research laboratory made possible by a donation from the US Conec Corporation in Hickory. The centerpiece for the microscopy laboratory is an advanced scanning electron microscope that views objects at a higher magnification than other types of microscopes. By shooting electrons at the surface of an object, which is in an airless vacuum, the microscope can show viewers the object’s surface at a closer level, as well as provide three-dimensional features using scattered electrons and gamma rays bounced off the surface. The microscope is valued at $55,700.

“With this microscope, we can look at submicroscopic features of metals, plastics or anything else,” said Phillip A. Sanger, director of WCU’s Center for Rapid Product Realization and associate professor of engineering technology. “Typically, an optical microscope can only provide two-dimensional views and at much less magnification. The Rapid Center has served more than 200 companies in the region by helping create needed products. “We see the engagement arm of the Kimmel School,” said Sanger. "We work with the outside community, building relationships with companies to help them create the new products they need to grow.”

The center has collaborated with US Conec on several occasions. “We have worked with the Kimmel School successfully for several years and watched the school’s capability grow, so we naturally thought of them first when we decided to donate the microscope,” said Bill Blubaugh, president of US Conec. “The microscope is very versatile in design projects and in developing manufacturing processes.”

WCU faculty, staff and mentored students will work with the microscope to examine the end results of their projects. The recently installed Oxford Laser machining system creates submircoscale features that can only be seen with the new scanning electron microscope. “Our goal is to move an idea into a product quickly,” said Sanger. “With access to the scanning electron microscope, we now can evaluate our products at a higher magnification.”

In addition to benefits in the classroom, the scanning electron microscope will help students once they graduate from WCU. “Having experience using a scanning electron microscope provides a broader base of skills to students and makes them more attractive to manufacturing companies that require engineers,” said Blubaugh.

Sanger agrees. “In many industries, a scanning electron microscope is like a wrench or a screwdriver, because it’s an integral part of the engineering process,” he said. “It’s an opportunity for WCU students to get acquainted with a state-of-the-art tool to prepare them for their careers, and it lets them see objects at a level the naked eye never will.”

For more information about WCU’s microscopy laboratory or the Center for Rapid Product Realization, contact Sanger by telephone at (828) 227-7368 or via e-mail at sanger@wcu.edu.

For more information about WCU’s microscopy laboratory or the Center for Rapid Product Realization, contact Sanger by telephone at (828) 227-7368 or via e-mail at sanger@wcu.edu.
A cancer survivor applies her whitewater lessons to help inspire others

By TERESA KILLIAN

When a rising river in Ecuador swept kayaker Katie Hilleke MAT ’09 under a house-sized boulder in March 2001, everyone thought the bubbly Alabama native was a goner. “I ended up in a cave under the rock no one could see. My brother was able to hear my voice coming through a crack in the rocks about 20 feet away from the river bank and crawl through to rescue me,” said Hilleke.

Some would have sold their gear and given up the sport, but not Hilleke. Rather, she credits extreme whitewater paddling with preparing her to combat what would stop her in her tracks in 2006–cancer. Hilleke was sleeping in netted hammocks, sampling banana and pineapple smoothies, and practicing her Spanish during the first all-women’s kayaking expedition to Honduras when relentless abdominal pain and vomiting seized her. “No one at the hospital spoke English, so we were communicating in Spanish. This was great under normal circumstances, but I happened to be in severe pain,” she said.

Frightened by plans for exploratory surgery, her friends finagled an emergency medical evacuation to the United States, where Hilleke was diagnosed with colon cancer. Determined to stay positive, she approached treatment decisions as a dangerous rapid that she could not portage. She would visualize a route and paddle in, knowing it would challenge everything in her and require her to experience its power without being overturned or engulfed by it. “The plan was to pick a line, deal with whatever happened in the middle and be in the right place at the end of the rapid,” said Hilleke. “I could do this.”

She could and she did—getting so sick during Friday chemotherapy treatments in Alabama that she didn’t feel well enough to watch TV, yet recovering in time to attend Wednesday WCU graduate courses in teaching English to speakers of other languages. There, her enthusiasm for life and learning inspired fellow students and instructors, said Chandrika Balasubramanian, program director. Christopher Blake, assistant professor of English, praised Hilleke’s can-do attitude and Patsy Miller MAED ’82, director of WCU Programs in Asheville, noted the adventurous spirit that led Hilleke to spend a semester teaching English in Japan.

Ready to get back in her boat after her last chemotherapy in February 2007, Hilleke set out to paddle 300 miles in two months to support the Lance Armstrong Foundation, which unites people to fight cancer, and First Descents, a kayaking and outdoor adventure experience for young adults with cancer. “I needed to put some miles between me and cancer,” said Hilleke. When she finished, she had logged 363.3 miles in Colorado, California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Alaska, and SELF magazine featured her in a multi-page spread titled “Fighting back with fun and fitness.”

“Maybe when this is all over, I will have the same feeling that I have had at the take-out of those same beautiful rivers,” wrote Hilleke in her journal. “Maybe I will be so glad that I accomplished something so difficult to visualize myself doing. Hopefully, I will look back and see that no matter how hard it was, it was a beautiful thing.”
HOMECOMING 2009

OCTOBER 16 – 18

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16

Times and locations to be announced:

Kimmel School of Construction Management and Technology Open House.
College of Health and Human Sciences Alumni Lecture Series.
9-11:30 a.m. – School of Art and Design Open House. Fine and Performing Arts Center art wing.
Noon – Alumni Scholarship Golf Tournament, a Homecoming tradition, tees off at Laurel Ridge Country Club in Waynesville. Shotgun start.
Cost: $80 per person, includes fees and cart. Four-person “captains choice” format. Refreshments available during play. Social following the tournament. RSVP is required by Friday, Oct. 9.

HOMECOMING WEEK TO INCLUDE VISIT BY VIETNAM MOVING WALL

The Moving Wall, a half-size replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., will be on display near the Western Carolina University campus during the week of Homecoming 2009.

Visitors will be able to view the wall at Montée Park in Dillsboro beginning at 6 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 15, through noon Monday, Oct. 19. A memorial service is set for noon Saturday, Oct. 17. The event is sponsored by the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce.

“The Vietnam Moving Wall is a significant part of history, and we feel blessed and privileged to be able to offer this experience in Jackson County,” said Julie Spen’98, executive director of the chamber. “We expect as many as 40,000 people to visit during the four-day period, and we encourage all WCU alumni and fans who plan to attend Homecoming to take advantage of this opportunity.”

For information on the wall, call the chamber at (800) 962-1911.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17

10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. – College of Business Homecoming Welcome. Fouryrth Building.
Noon-2 p.m. – College of Health and Human Services Open House. Moore Hall.
1-3 p.m. – College of Education and Allied Professions Open House. Killian Building.
1-3 p.m. – College of Fine and Performing Arts Reception. The Star Lobby of Fine and Performing Arts Center.
1-3 p.m. – WCU Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Alumni Cookout. Judaculla House at The Village. RSVP by Oct. 9. (877) 440-9990, (828) 227-7335, or e-mail magill@wcu.edu.
1:30 p.m.-3 p.m. – Tailgating. Prior to kickoff of the WCU vs. The Citadel football game.
4 p.m. – Football. The Catamounts do battle against The Citadel Bulldogs in the cozy confines of Whitmire Stadium and Bob Waters Field. For tickets, contact the WCU Ticket Office at (800) 344-6928.
7:30-8:30 p.m. – WCU African-American Alumni Postgame Reception. Ramsey Center Hospitality Room. RSVP by Oct. 9. (877) 440-9990, (828) 227-7335 or e-mail magill@wcu.edu.
8:30 p.m. – Stompfest 2009, a step show competition featuring African-American fraternities and sororities in the Ramsey Regional Activity Center. Tickets are $8 in advance and $10 at the door. For tickets or information, contact the Office of Multicultural Affairs at (828) 227-2276.
11 p.m.-2 a.m. – Stompfest Afterparty, A.K. Hinds University Center Grandroom. Admission to the party is $4 with a Stompfest ticket stub and $5 without. For more information, contact the Office of Multicultural Affairs at (828) 227-2276.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18

2 p.m. – SoCon. The defending SoCon champion Catamounts take on The Citadel at the Catamount Athletic Complex.
3 p.m. – Inspirational Choir Concert. This crowd-pleasing event will bring Homecoming Weekend to a close with a performance in the A.K. Hinds University Center Grandroom.

For more information about Homecoming activities, including an updated schedule of events, visit www.wcu-alumni.com.
TEAM BUILDING FROM TRAGEDY
The loss of a fellow Catamount is bringing the football team closer together

By BRANDON DEMERY

Less than two months before the football Catamounts were to kick off their season with a game against Vanderbilt, the entire athletic department of Western Carolina was dealt a crippling blow. On the afternoon of July 8, Ja’Quayvin Smalls, defensive back for the football team, passed away at Harris Regional Hospital in Sylva after collapsing during a voluntary off-season workout session at E.J. Whitmire Stadium/Bob Waters Field. Smalls, a junior transfer from Georgia Military College, was enrolled in the second session of summer courses that began the previous day.

“Any loss of life is a tragedy, but it is especially tragic when someone is taken from us at such a young age,” said Chip Smith, WCU director of athletics. While the sudden loss of Smalls remains on the minds of those within the campus community, the WCU football program is moving forward with true resilience by keeping alive the spirit of a fallen Catamount, said Smith.

Although Smalls was only with his new teammates for a brief amount of time, it was enough for them to see Smalls was someone who would not let being a newcomer hold him back. “Ja’Quayvin was a real hard worker. He had a real passion for the game and he was a fighter,” said Gene Singletary, a senior defensive lineman. Singletary said he especially noticed Smalls’ poise as a transfer player, and recognized that he had come to Cullowhee determined to make a difference – a determination that continues to inspire his teammates. “Players are pushing themselves more during practice,” he said. “Some of the guys are even dedicating the season to him in respect for his passion for the game.”

Equipment manager Mike Taylor said that Smalls’ locker will be encased and kept in game-day condition, and that no other player will wear Smalls’ number 3 for the entire season. The Catamounts also will be donning “JS” decals on their helmets this year out of respect for their fallen teammate. “In the short time we knew him, Ja’Quayvin touched the hearts of a lot of our players,” said Head Coach Dennis Wagner. “We’re doing everything we can to keep his memory alive and let everyone know that Ja’Quayvin will always be a part of the Catamount family.”

Losing a friend and teammate is creating a new sense of camaraderie among players. “This is the closest we’ve ever been as a team. We’re all reaching out to try and be there for one another,” said third-year tight end Chris Everett. “There is usually tension among the team between newcomers and the veteran players, but this tragedy has gotten rid of it all,” Everett said.

“Losing a player with Smalls’ intensity has unified us and showed us the true importance of developing strong relationships on and off the field,” he said. “We witnessed someone push himself until he couldn’t fit anymore, and we’re on a mission this year. We intend on giving our all in every game. We’re all playing for Ja’Quayvin and his memory.”

Smalls was laid to rest in his hometown of Mount Pleasant, S.C., on July 13 with 45 WCU student-athletes and five members of the coaching staff in attendance. Hospital personnel are awaiting the result of medical tests to determine the cause of death.

Brandon Demery is a senior at Western Carolina University from Raleigh. He is majoring in English/professional writing with a minor in social work and communication.
Mark DiFelice of the Milwaukee Brewers shows off the tools of his trade – barber chair and a baseball glove.

Shear Relief

A former Catamount adds to his Major League résumé – as team barber

By TOM HAUDRICOURT

Ken Macha has become accustomed to calling on dependable relief pitcher Mark DiFelice to help get out of jams this season. But the Milwaukee Brewers' manager recently summoned DiFelice to escape a different kind of mess: a bad haircut.

As the unofficial team barber, DiFelice did his best to correct some questionable work on Macha by a would-be Edward Scissorhands. "They just cut one side too short and kind of got the 'power alleys' going," DiFelice recalled with a laugh. "I just evened it out for him on the front."

On any given day, DiFelice can be found in front of a sink and mirror on the outskirts of the clubhouse bathroom, giving a teammate a trim. He keeps a set of professional clippers with him at all times, home and away.

How exactly did DiFelice become the Brewers' version of Floyd the Barber? "My grandmother was a hairdresser and my aunt told me she was going to put a chair for me in the back of her salon in Newtown Square because she has a lot of families to thank for his career in professional baseball – his family at home that introduced him to the game, and his on-campus family that nurtured his skills. Holland, of Marion, said he discovered his interest in America’s pastime when he was young. "My dad always played weekend softball," he said, adding that he and his brother Chase tagged along for many of those games. "And I got into it as soon as possible."

After receiving no significant offers to play elsewhere, Holland decided to walk on at Western Carolina. "I wanted to stay in the state and close to home," he said. WCU fit the bill because it was only about a 90-minute drive from home.

While playing under then-WCU coach Todd Raleigh '91 MAAE '94, Holland said he learned much about the game – and about life in general.

"He really helped build us up," Holland said. Raleigh had a knack for getting more out of the players than they thought they could produce, he said. "He took a team of good old country boys and wanted to prove that we could play." Under Raleigh’s leadership, the Catamounts earned the Southern Conference championship in 2007, Holland’s last season in Cullowhee.

Holland said that as far as baseball goes, "Coach Raleigh was probably the focal point. He saw a lot in me and helped me reach my potential." Holland also received instruction and inspiration from players and coaches who had been part of the Western Carolina community, including Paul Menhart '94, Jason Bevill '91, the late Keith LeClaire '89 and former WCU skipper Jack Leggett (now Clemson’s head coach).

After signing with the Kansas City Royals in 2007, he spent time in Idaho Falls, Idaho, before going to Wilmington, Del., for the 2008 season. After a stint as a relief pitcher with the Texas League’s Northwest Arkansas Naturals, Holland was promoted to 3-A Omaha (Neb.) of the Pacific Coast League in late July. In his three years as a minor league player, Holland has had an opportunity to see much of America – from experiencing snow still on the ground during baseball seasons in Idaho and Montana to the 100-degree temperatures on a recent Naturals’ visit to San Antonio.

Holland said he’s adjusted to the daily routine during the season. With most games going late into the evenings, his day usually gets started around 11 a.m. when he wakes up, showers, then heads down for a meal. On game days, he goes to the field for mid-afternoon exercising, which includes a healthy dose of stretching. When the Naturals are at home, he tries to get to the stadium earlier for weightlifting and conditioning drills.

But for Holland, the goal of making the major leagues is well worth the cold and the heat he has to endure. He wants to make his families proud as his baseball skills that both family units helped him develop.

"I’m a writer and photographer for the Fredericksburg Standard-Audubon Post newspaper in Fredericksburg, Texas, where he’s been employed for the past 10 years."

Former Western Carolina pitcher Greg Holland has two families to thank for his career in professional baseball – his family at home that introduced him to the game, and his on-campus family that nurtured his skills. Holland, of Marion, said he discovered his interest in America’s pastime when he was young. "My dad always played weekend softball," he said, adding that he and his brother Chase tagged along for many of those games. "And I got into it as soon as possible."

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But for Holland, the goal of making the major leagues is well worth the cold and the heat he has to endure. He wants to make his families proud as his baseball skills that both family units helped him develop.

"You know what they say the difference is between a good haircut and a bad haircut?" he asks. "Two weeks."
Four Catamounts join the professional ranks after Major League draft day

By DANIEL HOOKER ’01

Four Western Carolina Catamount baseball players taken in the 2009 Major League Baseball first-year player draft have signed with the MLB clubs and begun reporting for summer training and rookie-league play in late June. Currently, WCU has two players in the majors, and nine playing at varying stages in the minor league system, including the four newest members.

Junior Nick Liles was taken in the seventh round of the ’09 draft with the 226th pick by the San Francisco Giants, making him Western Carolina’s highest draft pick since Johnson ’04 was selected in the third round of the 1999 draft making him Western Carolina’s highest draft pick since ‘09 draft with the 207th pick by the San Francisco Giants.

Currently, WCU has two players in the majors, and nine joining on the Danville Braves by former SoCon competitors Harrilchak (outfielder from Elon).

Four Catamounts join the professional ranks after major league draft day

By mark DiFelice

The Catamounts selected in the recent Major League baseball draft are taking the first steps in a professional journey that they hope leads to the ultimate dream of any baseball player – making it to “the show.” WCU currently has two former Bat Cats who have advanced to play in the big leagues – pitchers Mark DiFelice of the Milwaukee Brewers and Jared Burton of the Cincinnati Reds. In addition, four Catamounts are active in baseball’s minor leagues. Here’s an update:

GREG HOLLAND – Selected in the 10th round (306th pick) by the Kansas City Royals in 2007, Hollander was playing for the Royals’ AA affiliate, the Northwest Arkansas Naturals of the Texas League before being promoted to the 3-A team in Omaha, Neb. (See related story on page 27.)

TYLER SEXTON – Drafted in the 31st round (926th pick) by the Baltimore Orioles in 2008, Sexton recently received his assignment to the Aberdeen (Md.) Ironbirds of the Class A-Short Season New York-Penn League.

JONATHAN GREENE – An eighth-round (260th) pick by the Texas Rangers in 2007, Greene is playing for the Bakersfield ( Calif.) Blaze of the Class A-Advanced California League.

BLAKE MURPHY – Selected by the St. Louis Cardinals in the 42nd round (1,265th pick) in 2008, Murphy started out with the Batavia (N.Y.) Muckdogs, low Class-A affiliate last season, advancing to open the season with the Quad City (Iowa) River Bandits, single-A squad before being called up to the Palm Beach Cardinals of the Class A-Advanced Florida State League.

Western Carolina football fans unable to make it to every single Saturday match-up in the upcoming season can take solace in the fact that four games are scheduled to be televised this year. The season-opening Sept. 5 road game at Vanderbilt will be broadcast by Comcast/Charter Sports Southeast at 6:30 p.m. Central Time (7:30 p.m. Eastern Time).

Three WCU home games are set for broadcast by the Asheville-based station WMYA (MY 40 Sports), beginning with the Mountain Heritage Day battle with Furman at 6 p.m. Sept. 26, followed by the Homecoming showdown pitting Western Carolina against the Citadel at 4 p.m. Oct. 17. Also on the WMYA fall sports schedule is the Catamounts’ Oct. 24 contest against Wofford, when the Pride of the Mountains Marching Band will receive the Sudler Trophy, the Heisman Trophy of collegiate marching bands.

Kickoff is set for 4 p.m.

All game times are tentative. Consult your local listings for details, or visit catamountsports.com for a complete look at the WCU fall sports schedule.
THE PLANE TRUTH
A WCU alumna shares her first-hand account of ‘The Miracle on the Hudson’
By SARAH KUCHARSKI

Passengers on US Airways Flight 1549 were chatting casually as the plane climbed on departure from New York City’s LaGuardia Airport bound for Charlotte on Thursday, Jan. 15, when a minute and 2,800 feet into the air, something went wrong. “You felt the whole plane shake and heard a bump. It was pretty loud,” said passenger Bill Elkin. “Something went wrong. ‘You felt the whole plane shake and heard a bump. It was pretty loud,’ said passenger Bill Elkin.”

Within seconds the plane slammed into the frigid Hudson River. “The next thing I remember is a hard hit and seeing water shooting past the windows,” Elkin said. “Just thought, well that was a pretty hard landing,” Dail said. “I thought he must not have put the landing gear down.”

None of the attendants knew that the plane had ditched in the river until they opened the emergency exits and water began filling the aisles. Dail and the other flight attendants called out for passengers to don their life vests as the plane’s life rafts automatically deployed. “We just kicked in to what we were trained to do,” Dail said.

All 150 passengers aboard survived. The five-member crew had pulled off a heroic landing and escape. And Dail hopes that the successful splash landing teaches all airline passengers a lesson – safety saves. “Good Morning America.” The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee took its testimony at a hearing on Capitol Hill. The crew was honored at award ceremonies with the mayors of New York and Charlotte and as guests of honor at Super Bowl XLIII, which Dail called “just the experience of a lifetime.”

Dail, set to resume work in September, will take to the air with a new sense of purpose. “I’m sure it’s going to change the way I think about things,” she said. “I’ll probably be more likely to say something when passengers are not following safety rules, such as not buckling up or walking through the cabin right before take off.” Dail also is developing a proposal for a critical incident response training program for flight attendants.

“We just kicked in to what we were trained to do.”

—Sheila Dail ’73

Dail joined on with Northwest Airlines and was based out of Minneapolis. Wanting to return to North Carolina, she accepted a job with Piedmont based out of Wilmington and then joined US Airways in 1980, later moving to the Charlotte hub. Today she lives in Weaverville with her husband, Bill.

That day in January, Dail had been in service for four days and was looking forward to going home that evening after the plane touched down in Charlotte. When she heard a loud thump, her 29 years of experience told her that something had happened with Flight 1549, but initially she thought it was a routine mechanical problem. From where she was seated near the front of the plane, Dail expected nothing more than for the plane to head back to the terminal. A female passenger sitting next to Elkin looked out her window and cursed. “She said, ‘The engine just exploded, and there’s flames and smoke shooting out of it,’” Elkin said. “Soon came the creeping realization that the plane was totally quiet. ‘The only noise that I heard was a child behind me crying a bit,’” he said.

Sullenberger’s voice came over the plane’s loudspeaker: “Brace for impact.”

Dail and her fellow flight attendants immediately began yelling instructions to the plane’s 150 passengers. “We just kicked in to what we were trained to do,” Dail said.

“They just kept repeating it almost like a chant,” Elkin said.

“Passengers should pay attention to the safety information and give that your focus, and pull out the safety card,” Dail said. “It sounded like something that would be a good way to see different parts of the country and the world while not having the money,” Dail said.

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—Sheila Dail ’73

Dail, set to resume work in September, will take to the air with a new sense of purpose. “I’m sure it’s going to change the way I think about things,” she said. “I’ll probably be more likely to say something when passengers are not following safety rules, such as not buckling up or walking through the cabin right before take off.” Dail also is developing a proposal for a critical incident response training program for flight attendants.

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“Sheila’s presence just has a really calming influence,” said Joe Briceley, a study abroad program student adviser at WCU and Dail’s friend of six years. “She’s a very strong woman.”

The crew of US Airways Flight 1549 made safety procedures part of their message as their heroism resulted in several public appearances in the weeks following the incident. Dail and her fellow crew members spent the first two days in debriefings with the National Transportation Safety Board. On Jan. 20, they were among those seated at President Barack Obama’s inauguration. The television interviews spanned from “Larry King Live” to CBS’s “Late Show with David Letterman” and “60 Minutes” to ABC’s “Good Morning America.” The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee took its testimony at a hearing on Capitol Hill. The crew was honored at award ceremonies with the mayors of New York and Charlotte and as guests of honor at Super Bowl XLIII, which Dail called “just the experience of a lifetime.”

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**POLITICAL AMBITION**

A lifelong passion for politics leads to a career as an award-winning professor

By TERESA KILLIAN

Classmates of Lee Cheek '83 MPA '88 knew he was destined for a career in politics, and he was, although not in the way they might have expected. As an undergraduate, Cheek was vice president of the student body, organized a political science speaker series, helped charter WCU's chapter of Pi Gamma Mu International honor society and lured numerous student political activist groups. He was such a charismatic, high-energy student leader that the 1982 April Fools' Day edition of the Western Carolinian joked Cheek had taken over campus in a coup. Cheek was and is known as a powerful public speaker, an enthusiastic self-starter and the kind of leader who inspires others to get involved. These qualities helped Cheek in jobs from congressional aide to church pastor, and led to a career that enabled him to marry lifelong interests in politics, religion and helping others.

Cheek is an award-winning political science professor and scholar at Brewton-Parker College in Mount Vernon, Ga. His publications have been described as groundbreaking and definitive, and scholars worldwide seek him for consultation. "From an early age, I was fascinated by politics because of its centrality to all decision-making," said Cheek, professor of political science and vice president for college advancement at Brewton-Parker. "Granted, the process is most imperfect, but my interest has always been on how to make the process better."

His first brush with politics was at age 4 when he noticed the commercials and shiny "Goldwater" buttons from the 1964 presidential race. A few years later, he joined his dad in distributing flers and campaigning for a legislative candidate. His participation increased in the regular conversations about political issues around the Cheek dinner table. By the time he enrolled at WCU, he knew he wanted to major in political science and history, and the quality and creativity of his work made an impression on his professors. "Even as an undergraduate, you could see his potential developing in academia," said Gordon Mercer, WCU professor of political science.

After earning his bachelor's degree from WCU, Cheek went on to graduate from Duke Divinity School and study at Christian Albrechts Universitat in Germany. He returned to WCU for a master's degree in public administration, then earned his doctorate in political theory from The Catholic University of America.

Cheek has authored what Don Livingston, another WCU professor, describes as an impressive quantity of high-quality published work — six books and dozens of articles on topics from Methodist history to the political philosophy of southern statesman John C. Calhoun. His accolades include winning the "Professor of the Year" award three times at Brewton-Parker and the 2008 Jordan Excellence in Teaching Award, the college's most prestigious teaching honor. He also recently received the WCU Alumni Association Academic and Professional Achievement Award — a recognition his classmates say is well-deserved. "Lee Cheek has always been a man of character who has selflessly dedicated himself to serving the betterment of society and individuals," said the retired Lt. Col. Edward M. Levy '82. "He has inspired his peers, students and all those around him."

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**HE'S HISTORY**

A teacher returns to the classroom to pursue fellowship-supported studies

By JILL INGRAM MA '08

Three times proved the charm for Evan Daniel Clapsaddle '02, winner of a 2009 James Madison Fellowship, an award he tried for twice before without success. The James Madison Fellowship is a national award and supports graduate study for teachers of secondary school American history, American government and social studies. Clapsaddle graduated with bachelor's degrees in history and social sciences education and now teaches 11th-grade U.S. history at Swain County High School. He plans to begin graduate studies in history at WCU in fall 2009. Clapsaddle is the first alumnus in the university's history to win the fellowship and the first fellowship winner to apply it toward study at Western Carolina.

"I am so proud to choose Western Carolina's program over any others," Clapsaddle said. "The professors at WCU have gone out of their way to make this happen, and they have really inspired me to do something with my degree. I don't just teach history. I love it, and I love it.

Clapsaddle was one of 55 fellowships awarded this year, each worth $24,000. He and his wife, Annette Saunders Clapsaddle, and their infant son live in Whittier. Clapsaddle has been at Swain High four years and also is an assistant football coach.

Elizabeth McRae MA '96, WCU associate professor of history and director of the social sciences education program, worked closely with Clapsaddle during his undergraduate years and calls him "an exceptional teacher." Along with providing him a letter of recommendation, she helped Clapsaddle fine-tune his winning application. "Evan could choose any university for this fellowship. It's a credit to us that he has chosen to do it here, and it's a credit to us that he is one of our undergraduates," McRae said. "It also points to the strength of our regional public schools that one of their teachers is a James Madison Fellow."

Swain High has an especially strong history program. Billie Clemens MAED '91 teaches 10th- and 11th-grade history at the school and also wrote Clapsaddle a recommendation. Clemens sits on the editorial board of the Magazine of History, a publication of the Organization of American Historians.

Brian Railsback, dean of the Honors College, is WCU's James Madison Fellowship representative and selected Clapsaddle for nomination several years ago after conferring with other faculty members. "Evan's name just kept coming up over and over again," Railsback said.

Clapsaddle had determined to stop applying if he failed again to secure a fellowship. This year's acceptance package sat unopened on Clapsaddle's desk at Swan High for a week before he discovered it. "I was trying to clean off the clutter, and there it was," he said.

Income from a U.S. Treasury trust fund, corporate contributions, private gifts and foundation grants fund the James Madison fellowships. A committee of professors and past fellows selects recipients, the number of which varies but roughly represents a winner from each of the 50 states.
Amy Clifton ’98 works nights and weekends building a photography business that documents weddings, new babies and other key moments in people’s lives. But it’s her day job that really consumes her. Clifton is the after-school programs director for Communities in Schools of Greenville in South Carolina. Part of a national nonprofit, the program helps students who need support with academics and behavioral and social skills to achieve success in school and life.

Clifton, of Greer, S.C., her hometown, has been with the organization since shortly after graduation from Western Carolina with a degree in psychology. She began as a case manager and then became a site coordinator, moving into the supervisory position in summer 2007. “Before I graduated, I described to my adviser what I wanted to be doing, but I didn’t really have a name for it,” Clifton said. When she began with Communities in Schools, she recalled, “It was a perfect fit.”

As director, Clifton oversees five full-time employees and five after-school programs serving about 225 kindergartners through middle-school students in Greenville County. She also has the opportunity to continue working directly with the program’s children; recently she taught a photography class to a group of middle-school girls.

Clifton’s devotion to children is evident in her actions since joining Communities in Schools. She has achieved national training certification, developed a student behavior modification program, served on a school-improvement council, been active on many levels for a statewide after-school initiative and helped raise more than $500,000 for Communities in Schools. In 2007, she won one of seven “Unsung Hero Awards,” given by the national Communities in Schools organization only every five years.

Clifton plans to continue developing her photography business. She recently launched a new Web site and has studied with one of the premier wedding photographers in the world. She draws a parallel between her devotion to children and photography. “The goals are kind of the same,” she said. “Helping people to appreciate the world around them and the moment that they’re in.”

“I was very blessed to have a wonderful childhood and a wonderful, supportive family. It’s important for me to be able to provide that for children who may not have it.”

– Amy Clifton ’98

CHILDHOOD FRIEND
South Carolina students find an advocate in a young after-school director
By JILL INGRAM MA ’08

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Clifton’s efforts did not go unnoticed at Western Carolina, either. In fall 2008, the WCU Alumni Association presented Clifton, 33, with its Young Alumna Award. Gwyn Goble Smith ’70, Clifton’s seventh-grade language arts and literature teacher, nominated her for the award. The two remained close after Clifton passed through seventh grade; it was Smith who encouraged Clifton to visit Western Carolina when she was deciding on a college. “Amy had the same feeling that I had when I walked on campus. She looked around and knew she wanted to be there,” Smith said.

Clifton’s former adviser, WCU psychology professor Bruce Henderson, said Clifton was a model student. “She always knew what she was doing and what she wanted to do. She came in organized and was an excellent student – thoughtful and well-prepared,” Henderson said.

An only child, Clifton comes from “a family of givers.” Her father, the Rev. Larry Clifton, is a retired substance abuse counselor and retired Methodist minister who often worked with children and school youth groups. Her mother, Gail, works in Greenville County School’s 4-K program. His daughter has “always showed an interest in working with others,” said Larry Clifton.

“I guess it’s something that she picked up by observation and conversations, hearing her mom and I talk about kids. Her mom and I both love kids, and we both gravitate to them.”

Family and community are integral to Clifton’s personal and job satisfaction. She is happy to be home and enjoys working in the community where she grew up; it’s not unusual for her to encounter one of her mother’s former students or the child of a former classmate. The helping fields can draw individuals with unhappy pasts who want to help others avoid unhappy futures. In Clifton’s case, a happy past inspires her work. “I was very blessed to have a wonderful childhood and a wonderful, supportive family,” she said. “It’s important for me to be able to provide that for children who may not have it.”

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SUPER SUNDAY

Three Catamounts work behind the scenes at the NFL’s biggest event

By JOHN KENYON

When the Pittsburgh Steelers narrowly defeated the Arizona Cardinals at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Fla., at Super Bowl XLIII, three Catamounts were there making sure that the audio was set up properly, and that everyone on the field and sidelines was safe.

Bill Clarke ’78 ME ’80, director of WCU’s Ramsey Regional Activity Center, and his son Tyler Clarke, then a WCU sophomore, provided audio support for the various performances and ceremonies. David Rayburn ’68, chief of the Florida Highway Patrol Auxiliary in Tampa Bay, supervised nine troopers providing security on the field during the game. “We were responsible for anything that required sound, except for the stadium public address,” said Clarke. “That included the pregame performances by Jennifer Hudson and Faith Hill, the halftime show with Bruce Springsteen and the postgame awards ceremony. It almost was to the point that it was a TV special with a football game thrown in.”

Rayburn and Clarke knew each other long before Super Bowl Sunday. “Bill and I are fraternity brothers, and I have known him since he was a freshman,” said Rayburn. Clarke’s years of managing the Ramsey Center and the entertainment stages at the annual Biltmore Festival in Asheville helped prepare him for a project on the scale of the Super Bowl. “My associations, contacts and networking with Asheville helped prepare him for a project on the scale of the Super Bowl,” said Clarke. “I was on my feet for 11 ½ hours. That was tough,” said Rayburn. “Our primary responsibility was to provide sideline security on the field during the game, which included checking field passes, apprehending trespassers and coordinating the evacuation of the field in the case of an emergency situation.”

This was the third Super Bowl that Rayburn has worked during his 21 years of service in security for the Tampa Sports Authority. “I have missed only four Buccaneer games in that time,” he said.

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**We’re Reunited**

Western Carolina alumni spanning the decades returned to campus over the summer to take part in the fourth annual Purple and Gold Reunion Series, sponsored by the WCU Alumni Association. At top left, Fannie Ashley Smith ’41 shares her memories of being the institution’s first Homecoming queen in 1939; Marion Cole ’58 MAE ’60 entertains classmates with his critically acclaimed one-man show “An Evening with Mark Twain”; and June Wright ’67, the first woman to earn an athletics letter at Western Carolina, shows off her varsity sweater. Plans already are underway for the 2010 summer reunions. For information, visit www.wcu-alumni.com.

**Notes**

**1938** The Asheville chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy awarded membership in June to Margaret Lane, a daughter of Confederate veteran Preston Lane. Preston was 60 years old when he married Margaret’s mother and died when Margaret was 20 years old. Margaret Lane attended WCU in 1937-38 and took graduate-level courses as late as 1965. She taught 43 years at Danta Elementary School and, this year, lives in Hendersonville’s Carolina Village.

**1939** Born Jan. 27, 1909, Samuel P. Hyatt MAE ’58 of Arden is Western Carolina’s oldest living alumnus, according to available alumni records. Hyatt spent his career as an administrator at Cherokee High School, retiring in the 1960s, and earned both his degrees while working full time, said daughter Theresa Hyatt Cotton. “As far as I know, all of his education was at Western Carolina,” Cotton said. Hyatt began a teaching career before he turned 20, and met his wife, Mursetis Young Hyatt, when they both taught in one-room schoolhouses in Swain County. The couple had three children and were married for 75 years before Mursetis Hyatt died in 2007. Hyatt, who is in good health, now resides in an assisted-living home in Arden, but is original of Jackson County’s Shoal Creek community.

**1968** Richard Shaw has qualified for membership in the 2008 Million Dollar Round Table, an association of financial professionals. Shaw of Sunterm S.C., has represented Allstate insurance since 2002.

**1969** Brian Bennett MAE ’72, a retired professor who spent 15 years in the natural resource conservation and management program, will soon celebrate 40 years of marriage to his wife, Margaret. Sплаyн Bennett, who is retired from Haywood County Schools.


**1971** Ted Luckadoo, former Catamount running back, was head football coach for the South Carolina team in the 72nd annual Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas last December at Wofford College in Spartanburg. South Carolina defeated North Carolina 24-16. Luckadoo has a nearly four-decade coaching career, with 25 years of Westside High School in Anderson, S.C., where he is head football coach and athletic director.

**1973** Dorothy Denny Smith MAE ’02, Jill Fisher DeMarco MS ’90 MAE ’10, and Martha Worley have authored a book titled “Literacy Beyond Picture Books,” published in June by Coral Press. The textbook focuses on teaching secondary students with moderate to severe disabilities. Smith and DeMarco work in special education with Buncombe County Schools. Kaiera Cooper-Duffy, an assistant professor of special education in WCU’s department of human services, wrote the book’s foreword.

**1973** Dot Reid Case MAE ’51 was named Henderson County Public Schools 2000-10 Teacher of the Year, receiving a plaque and $1,000 from SunTrust Bank during a May ceremony. A Henderson County native, Case has taught in the county for 40 years, including teaching history at North Henderson for the past 15 years.

**1975** Jon Wiggins MIE ’76 has just completed 31 years as a professor at Missouri State University, in Springfield, Mo., where he has taught classes in construction management and technology, and agriculture teacher education. His wife, Kenna Wike Wiggins ’73, a native of Waynesville, is a reading specialist with the Springfield school system. The couple have two grown daughters.

**1981** Jeff Gray of Raleigh is the 2009 recipient of the Outstanding Government and Public Sector Attorney Award from the N.C. Bar Association. The award honors North Carolina’s governmental and public sector attorneys for excellence, dedication and passion for justice. Gray served in the N.C. Attorney General’s Office for more than a decade and currently manages the Raleigh office of Rose Rand Wallace Attorneys P.A. He received his law degree from Campbell University in 1985.

**Lesson learned**

**WCU steered generations on a mission of helping others**

By JILL INGRAM MA ’08

Dana Tucker ’58 MSW ’59 spent two years working full time and taking night classes to complete her master’s degree, an immensely rewarding experience in itself. During a department of social work graduation ceremony in May, Tucker enjoyed the additional reward of having her great-aunt, Jimmie Tucker Sutton ’49, a woman Tucker calls “her hero” – place the ceremonial hood around her neck and shoulders.

Sutton attended the university when it still was Western Carolina Teachers College, earning a diploma in 1938 and then a bachelor’s degree in education. She went on to spend more than 40 years teaching in WNC public schools, including those in Jackson, Macon, Haywood and Graham counties. Her first job was teaching in a one-room schoolhouse up Cullowhee’s Cane Creek Road, on weekends walking and hitchhiking to her family’s home (close to what is now WCU’s Hennon Stadium and Childress baseball field). Later, she grew to love teaching the primary grades.

Sutton will turn 100 in November. She and Tucker, 43, have been close for – from Tucker’s perspective – what seems like a long time. Recently, Tucker said to her great-aunt, “Aunt Jimmie, we’ve been friends for 26 years.” Sutton turned to her great-aunt and said, “That’s not long, is it?”

Sutton never stopped learning, continuing to take university and community college courses after graduation. She often contributed toward the tuition expenses of others who expressed a desire for education, Tucker said.

“Shes a phenomenal lady,” Tucker said. “I will never measure up to what she does; but she’s a wonderful mentor, so I’m trying.”
The magazine of Western Carolina University | Fall 2009

Three for Three in Book Publishing

Master’s Program Graduates Go Historical Record

Kevin T. Barksdale MA ‘99 started as a student in the history department’s graduate program and developed into three research projects. His work on “The Lost State of Franklin: America’s First Secession,” published by the University Press of Kentucky, was an assistant professor at Appalachian State University. Barksdale is an assistant professor at Appalachian State University. This indicates the high level of work that our graduate students are doing and recognizes the quality of the training they received at WCU,” said Richard Barnes ’92 MA ’94, head of the department.

Kevin T. Barksdale MA ’99

Bruce E. Stewart MA ’91 edited “King of the Moonshiners: Lewis R. Redmond in Fact and Fiction,” published by the University of Georgia Press. Stewart is an assistant professor at Appalachian State University. “This indicates the high level of work that our graduate students are doing and recognizes the quality of the training they received at WCU,” said Richard Barnes ’92 MA ’94, head of the department.

Bruce E. Stewart MA ’91

Good Reception: A Cullowhee couple keeps it local with a University Center wedding

By Jill Ingram MA ’08

Meagan Yopps ’93 MBA ’04 and Onifer Wilmoth ’93 MBA ’97 met as graduate students at Western Carolina. After they fell in love and decided to marry, an on-campus reception seemed the obvious choice.

Meagan Yopps ’93 MBA ’04 and Onifer Wilmoth ’93 MBA ’97

Tony Johnson, an Edward Jones financial advisor in Orlando, Fla., since 1990, has been named a principal with the firm’s holding company, Jones Financial Co. LLC. Johnson was one of 25 individuals chosen from more than 36,000 associates across the globe to join the firm’s 310 principals.

Tony Johnson

Phil McManus MBA ’91, an associate professor and head of the culinary arts program at Dabney S. Lancaster Community College, was named 2008-09 Educator of the Year by the Albright Highlands Chamber of Commerce. McManus also is a member of WCU’s Alumni Association board of directors.

Phil McManus MBA ’91

For information about reserving a space in the University Center, contact Lindsay at (828) 237-2706 or lindsay@wcu.edu.
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**NEW LUNCHEON SERIES WILL HIGHLIGHT WCU'S PEOPLE AND PROGRAMS**

A new luncheon series being launched this fall by Western Carolina is designed to give current and former students, and those interested in the Asheville and Hendersonville areas an opportunity to hear about the latest developments at the university straight from the people who are directly involved.

The Greater Asheville Luncheon Series, which hosts a midday luncheon at the new Asheville Hilton Biltmore Park on the third Wednesday of every month, will begin in September. The venue was specifically selected to allow alumni from both the Asheville and Hendersonville areas to attend, said Marty Ramsey ’85, director of alumni affairs.

“We have more than 6,000 WCU alumni in the greater Asheville area, easily our highest concentration of alumni,” Ramsey said. “It is important that we connect and reconnect with our alumni and friends there, and share with them information about the many exciting things that are happening at Western Carolina.”

Each event in the series will highlight a college, program or initiative. Deans, faculty, staff and students will be the primary presenters at each luncheon, which will begin at 11:45 a.m. with a gathering and reception, followed by noon with a buffet lunch. Programs will begin at 12:15 p.m. and adjour at 1:15 p.m., and lunches cost $30 per person.

The opening program on Sept. 16 will showcase the university’s Graduate School and Research programs and the College of Arts and Sciences by highlighting a pair of environmentally themed initiatives – the Program for the Study of Environmental Issues, presented by director Bob Young, and the Highlands Biological Station, presented by director Jim Costa.

The second program, slated for Oct. 21, will feature the university’s Honors College in a program titled “The Honors Path: Developing Intellectual Talent for U.S. Success in a Flat World.” It will be led by Brian Rubash, dean of the Honors College.

The schedule for the remainder of the year has presentations by the College of Health and Human Sciences on Nov. 19; College of Fine Arts and Sciences, Jan. 20; College of Business, Feb. 17; Kimmel School of Construction Management and Technology, March 17; department of Liberal Arts, April 21; Mount Mitchell Heritage Center, May 19; and College of Education and Allied Professions, June 16. No series event will be presented after June 1, 2010. The series is sponsored by Dixon-Hughes, PLLC; the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines; and the Asheville Hilton Biltmore Park.

**PLANS UNDER WAY FOR 2010 EDITION OF WCU ALUMNI DIRECTORY**

Plans are under way for the 2010 edition of the Western Carolina University Alumni Directory, and representatives of the Harris publishing company soon will be contacting WCU alumni seeking updated information for the popular resource book.

“The directory will enable alumni to reconnect with their classmates, locate fellow alumni who live within their own communities and keep up-to-date with some of the latest happenings at their alma mater,” said Marty Ramsey ’85, alumni affairs director. “When the folks from Harris get in touch with you, by phone or by e-mail, we strongly encourage all alumni to take the time to respond so that the 2010 directory will be the most useful as possible.”

A questionnaire is scheduled to go online in October, followed by home mailings to more than 40,000 alumni, and phone calls in December. In past directories, alumni have shared information that includes e-mail address, mailing address, employer and family. Listings have been presented alphabetically and by class year, geographical residence and career.

“When I was contacted for information concerning the last edition, it got me reminiscing about my time on campus and brought back many memories,” said David Andrew ’83, president of the WCU Alumni Association. “I am looking forward to this new directory to be able to keep in touch with old and new friends I have made while in service to the university.”

Andrew said the comprehensive directory also will be a great accessory to, and could help invite participation in, online communities such as WCU’s controlled-access alumni network, which can be accessed from the university’s Web site at www.wcu-alumni.com.

Beth Allen ’90, director of alumni affairs, said the directory has been a valuable tool for reaching out to reconnect with sorority sisters and planning events for Western Carolina alums in her home community in Lincoln County. “The directories have been great to look up friends that I didn’t keep in close touch with and didn’t know where they are now,” said Allen. “It has really been worth the money to me over the years.”

The most recent alumni directory was published in 2000. The new directory is set for delivery in June 2010. For more information about the directory project, contact the Office of Alumni Affairs toll-free at (877) 440-9990 or e-mail mramsey@wcu.edu.
2007

Kyle McCurry is program director at classic rock station WINGZ-FM in upstate Elmira, N.Y. Since arriving in Elmira, McCurry has served as associate director during the Elmira College women’s and men’s lacrosse and basketball games and hosted a sports show on WINGZ called “Elmira College Corner.” Elmira College athletics recently promoted McCurry for his support. “Elmira is a purple and gold school too,” McCurry said. Before taking his new position, McCurry, formerly of Waynesville, headed the millwork shift and served as station manager at WCCU-FM, WCU’s student-run radio station.

An essay by Jennifer Veilleux MA ’08 won first place in creative nonfiction at the annual convention of the Sigma Tau Delta International English Honor Society in March in Minneapolis. The essay, which carried a $500 prize, was titled “Becoming My Mother” and was about eye surgery that Veilleux’s mother underwent. Veilleux wrote the piece while she was a student in a nonfiction writing class with Daides Elliot, an associate professor in the English department. Veilleux also presented a critical essay about Ian Eyre. She was the second year running that two of her essays were accepted for presentation at the convention.

2008

Ponca Terese MAE ’07, a teacher at St. Alphonsus Primary, earned an award for most outstanding teacher in her region of six (from the Ministry of Education and LASCO), a group of companies involved in manufacturing, packaging and distribution of food, beverages, personal care items, household products and pharmaceuticals. Ferron, honored during a ceremony held in Kingston, Jamaica, was also a candidate for overall teacher of the year.

A LOSS FOR WORDS

Bob Terrell ’31, a Sylva native and beloved regional writer, died May 31 in Arizona, where he had moved weeks earlier to be closer to family.

Terrell, who was 80, wrote about Western North Carolina people, places and happenings for more than 60 years. He authored more than 75 books – many on the shelves in WCU’s Hunter Library – on a range of topics, including sports. Baseball in particular was his passion.

Terrell began his career in 1945 at the Sylva Herald. While a student at Western Carolina (then called Western Carolina Teacher’s College), Terrell served as sports editor both for the Western Carolinian student newspaper and for the yearbook.

In 1949, while still a student at WCU, Terrell began working as a sports reporter for the Asheville Citizen (it later merged with the city’s other daily to become the Asheville Citizen-Times). "He would go to school, then get on the bus, be at the newspaper at 4 p.m., stay until the paper was out, get home by 9, and be up at 4 a.m. and do it all again," his son Bob Terrell Jr. said in a newspaper interview. Terrell became the Citizen’s sports editor in 1956, and in 1967 launched the human interest column for which he was best known. Steve White ’67, WCU sports historian and retired sports information director, began reading Terrell as a child in the 1950s. “As much as anything else, I became a Catamount fan … from reading Bob, because he covered everything that Western did,” said White, who later came to know Terrell personally and considered him a mentor.

Terrell helped shape WNC sports. He was behind the scenes to bring Minor League Baseball’s Tourists back personally and considered him a mentor. They have a daughter and live in Rutherfordton.

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ALUMNI DEATHS

Don C. Baucum II ’89, April 23; Moncure.
Adam Cony Becker ’04, March 20; Watauga, S.C.
Charles B. Black Jr. ’60, March 6; Charlotte.
William J. Briggs MAE ’66, April 4; Savannah, Ga.
Mary Strain Byrd ’59, May 12; Franklin.
Nita Louise Davis-Caballers ’75, May 1; Raleigh.
Carolyn Stillwell Harwood ’42, May 7; Charlotte.
Anna Mae Dunlap Hendrix ‘46, May 27; Charlotte.
Irene E. James ’65, May 2; Highlands.
Herbert Ray Kluttz ’57, May 25; Sylva.
Christopher Andrew Lover ’08, April 20; Waddington.
James Thomas Medvec MA ’07, June 10; Waynesville.
Emily Palmer Neubilt ’37, May 7; Mills River.
Marvin A. Neckow MA ’54, May 29; Asheville.
Timothy Harold Parris ’89, Jan. 19; Franklinville.
David Edward Perkins, July 25; High Point.
Frank Emmanuel Ross ’58, May 1; Sylva.
Keith A. Robinson ‘82 MAE ’83, Oct. 5; Nacoxco, Ga.
Robert Martin Staley ’94, April 18; Mocksville.

Nita Louise Davis-Caballers ’75, May 1; Raleigh.
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UNIVERSITY DEATHS

Dixie Ealy Brown, supporter of the university and wife of the late Frank H. Brown Jr., activing president in 1972 and acting chancellor in 1974, March 27; Raleigh.
Donald C. Gladis, university friend and benefactor, June 9; Hendersonville.
Claud N. Holland, former employee at Dodson Cafeteria, May 14; Sylva.
Dixie Lavina Davis McGiffin, professor in the department of educational leadership and foundations, and instrumental in starting WCU’s doctoral program in educational leadership, March 25; Sylva.
Earl R. Young, former adjunct professor in the department of social work, May 2; Sylville, Fla.

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Share Your News!

Are you newly married?
Did you just land that new job?
Have you received an award?
We want to know about it.

To update your personal information, change your address or add a classnote, drop us a line at:
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or visit www.wcu-alumni.com.

Please send story ideas and suggestions to:
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Western Carolina University
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SEPTEMBER 2009
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3
Ceremonial groundbreaking – For a 160,000-square-foot facility to house the College of Health and Human Sciences, the first of WCU’s Millennial Initiative buildings. 1 p.m. Little Savannah Road, across N.C. Highway 107 from the main campus. RSVP by Aug. 21. (828) 227-2293

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5
Ceremonial groundbreaking – For a 160,000-square-foot facility to house the College of Health and Human Sciences, the first of WCU’s Millennial Initiative buildings. 1 p.m. Little Savannah Road, across N.C. Highway 107 from the main campus. RSVP by Aug. 21. (828) 227-2293

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12
Catamount football home opener – vs. Gardner-Webb. 6 p.m. E.J. Whitmire Stadium/ Bob Waters Field. (828) 227-7338

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16
Greater Asheville Luncheon Series – Featuring the Highlands Biological Station and Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines. Reservations required. 11:45 a.m. Hilton Asheville, Biltmore Park, Asheville. (877) 440-9990

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20
Barags – Fado’s-foot featuring eclectic mix of music, song and dance. Part of the Galaxy of Stars Series. 3 p.m. Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-2479

WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23-27
“Manuscript” – A contemporary thriller/romedy work for the theater. Part of the department of stage and screen’s “Manuscript” season. 7:30 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday; 3 p.m. Sunday. Hoey Auditorium. (828) 227-2479

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25
Pre-Mountain Heritage Day concert – Featuring bluegrass duo the Crowe Brothers. 7 p.m. Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-3193

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26
Mountain Heritage Day – Doycing celebration of mountain culture with music, dance and food; arts and crafts; contests and demonstrations; antique auto show; and 5-K footrace. (828) 227-3193

Catamount football – vs. Furman. 6 p.m. E.J. Whitmire Stadium/ Bob Waters Field. (828) 227-7338

OCTOBER 2009
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4
“Feelin’ Groovy” – A salute to Simon and Garfunkel by Jim Witter. Part of the Galaxy of Stars Series. 3 p.m. Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-2479

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10
Tournament of Champions – Marching Band competition. All day.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15-17
Campaign for Western Celebration – In honor of successful fund drive. Includes receptions, entertainments and more. (828) 227-7024

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23-25
Family Weekend – Food and fun. Catamount football vs. Wofford College at 4 p.m. (tentative) Saturday at E.J. Whitmire Stadium/Bob Waters Field. (828) 227-7335 or (877) 440-9990

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24
Catamount football – vs. Wofford. Family Weekend and Suzuki Trophy presentation. 4 p.m. E.J. Whitmire Stadium/Bob Waters Field. (828) 227-7338

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28
“North Carolina Rising” – Town hall meeting on rural economic development issues, hosted by the University of North Carolina Center for Public Television. 8 p.m. Hoey Auditorium. (919) 549-7089 or sicker@unc.edu

NOVEMBER 2009
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5
Indian Music – Performance by Shan Manickam. 7:30 p.m. Part of the Lectures, Concerts and Exhibitions Series. Ewest Recital Hall. (828) 227-7206

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7
Catamount football – vs. Elon. Hall of Fame Weekend. 1 p.m. E.J. Whitmire Stadium/Bob Waters Field. (828) 227-7338

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11
“When the Home Front” – New creation of a live Armed Forces Radio Service broadcast of a Command Performance radio show. 7:30 p.m. Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-2479

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15
“Dorothy the Dinosaur: A Glow-in-Dark Adventure” – A dinosaur discovers the true meaning of love in this combination of dance and electro-luminescent creatures and characters. Part of the Galaxy of Stars Series. 3 p.m. Fine and Performing Arts Center (828) 227-2479

STAYING LOCAL, THINKING GLOBAL
Three exhibits mark the Fine Art Museum’s new season
The Fine Art Museum launches its 2009-10 season with three exhibits that, while grounded in Western North Carolina, demonstrate a wide geographical and philosophical scope. The exhibits run through Friday, Sept. 18.

“New Gifts: Selections from the Collection of Professor Emeritus Perry Kelly”

The exhibit features a selection of work in a variety of media donated to the museum from the personal collection of Kelly, formerly of the School of Art and Design.

“George Maas: A Photographic Vision of the Mountains”

This exhibit, in recognition of the 75th anniversary of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, features the photographs and field notes of George Maas, a native of Japan who explored the mountains of Western North Carolina and lobbied for the establishment of the national park.

“Dean and Nancy Cramer Lettenstrom: Delicate Balance: Painting + Drawing”

Painter Dean Lettenstrom’s imagery offers a visual statement about the fragility of the human condition. Nancy Lettenstrom’s mixed media drawings, on handmade paper, often depict animals as representations of the natural world.

In Addition, “Soul’s Journey: Inside the Creative Process” will run Thursday, Oct. 1, through Saturday, Dec. 12, with work by more than 20 contemporary Southeastern artists in a variety of media.

For information, contact the museum at (828) 227-3591 or visit online at finartmuseum.wcu.edu.
Demonstrations of the ancient and rowdy Cherokee game of Indian ball (also known as “stickball”) will be on the agenda Saturday, Sept. 26, at Mountain Heritage Day, WCU’s annual celebration of Appalachian culture. For more information about Mountain Heritage Weekend at WCU, including a Sept. 25 concert by bluegrass favorites the Crowe Brothers, visit MountainHeritageDay.com or call (828) 227-3193.