BUILDING AN APPETITE

A new 53,000-square-foot dining hall is nearing completion on the site of the old Helder Residence Hall. The $17.2 million replacement for Dodson Cafeteria, scheduled to be open for business during the spring semester, will feature a variety of dining options ranging from a Starbucks coffee shop and Panda Express to a McAlister’s Deli and an all-you-care-to-eat venue. The dining hall is located adjacent to the recently opened Campus Recreation Center and across the lawn from the A.K. Hinds University Center.
Combining Western Carolina’s rising academic reputation with the university’s mountain location, factor in the signature feature of the recently opened Campus Recreation Center (as illustrated by student Bill Wiseman), and it’s a new branding concept – “Climb.”
Anthony Giordano, a senior theater major who has performed more than 30 roles in stage and TV productions, struggled when his grandmother and sister suggested he share his experience by directing a show in his own Bryson City hometown. “I was in the process of signing a summer acting contract, so I had to give it a lot of thought before deciding to do it,” said Giordano. “Forming a new theater company and directing the show was harder and more involved than we expected, but I’m glad we did.”

Giordano’s grandmother Johnnie Roberts took the lead in establishing Smoky Mountain Arts Regional Theatre as a nonprofit organization, rallying community support and raising $3,000 for the license and rights to produce Disney’s “High School Musical.”

Dozens of children and teens from the community showed up night after night wherever rehearsals could be held — often in the un-air-conditioned upstairs of a Swain County firehouse – to rehearse with and under the direction of WCU students. They learned lines, music and choreography for a show about an academic all-star and a basketball standout who discover a shared interest in music. The couple secretly audition for their high school’s musical, and the conflicts that arise reveal lessons about acceptance and teamwork.

They were lessons that surfaced, too, for WCU students as they faced challenges such as recruiting new community volunteers or balancing rehearsals with their work schedules. Giordano served as director and the character of Jason. Tim Stoeckel, a junior theater major from Waynesville, volunteered as music director and for the lead role of Troy Bolton. Cast members also from WCU were Emily Gill, a junior musical theater major from Durham; Sarah Lipham, a junior theater major from Canton; and Mark Hudson, a senior speech and theater major from Huntersville.

“I was really touched to see our students give up other lucrative summer options to give back to the community in this way,” said Melody Huddleston, an administrative assistant for stage and screen at WCU whose two daughters, 5-year-old Hannah and 7-year-old Nyah, were junior cheerleaders in the musical. Huddleston said the girls not only had fun, but also learned about responsibility, working with others and professional behavior. “My daughters had seen shows at WCU and were excited about getting to work with the actors they had watched on stage,” she said.

The show opened to nearly packed houses for all four performances at the Swain County Center for the Arts. “Watching the actors realize they could do something they didn’t know they were capable of was a thrill, and once we put them in front of an audience, they themselves could see the results and how much they were appreciated,” said Giordano. “That made it all worthwhile.”
LIFE LESSONS

Research Program Pilots a University Plan to Help Students Interweave Academic and Community Experiences to Become ‘True Citizens for Life’

By TERESA KILLIAN

Timothy Willis spent his summer researching the isolation of cytotoxic compounds from indigenous plants of Western North Carolina. What made the experience extraordinary for Willis, a senior chemistry major from Maiden, was not only the research opportunity, but also the personal experience of getting to know the faculty and students in WCU’s new Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship total immersion program. Participants lived together on campus and participated in lunch meetings and programs from career workshops to sessions on resume development. Their experiences ranged from making formal research presentations at a summer conference to taking group hikes and attending chemistry department cookouts.

“We talked, and not just about chemistry or school, but also in-depth about the future of the country, politics, all areas of science, books, music and even religion sometimes,” said Willis, who wants to pursue a career in the field of natural products chemistry. “It was refreshing.”

The chemistry and physics faculty proposed the new program as part of their effort to incorporate the university’s Quality Enhancement Plan into their curriculum. The QEP commits the university to helping students weave together their experiences inside and outside the classroom, and then reflect on those experiences in ways that prepare them to be “true citizens for life,” said Carol Burton ’87 MAEd ’89, assistant vice chancellor for undergraduate studies and QEP project director. “It’s one thing to educate someone in an academic sense. It’s another to go beyond and help prepare true citizens for life.”

What particularly set the WCU research program apart from similar programs elsewhere were the comprehensive assessment and reflection components designed to quantify what students learned, and help participants understand the complete experience and how it related to their plans for the future, said William Kwochka, associate professor of chemistry and the QEP coordinator for the chemistry and physics department.

Participant Mickey Yost, a senior clinical laboratory sciences major from Maggie Valley, adapted her reflections into an article urging other students in her field to get research experience. Working with Jack Summers, assistant professor of inorganic biochemistry, Yost studied compounds proposed for anti-cancer treatments and then presented their work to a private biotechnology company in Maryland. Yost wrote about “kicking herself” during the summer for not paying more attention to the dilutions portions of a previous class, and realizing what she missed by not taking an optional chemistry lab. Then she wrote about her success — finally understanding not just how to do a laboratory test, but why. “My mind was able to work differently. Before, I was able to do a test and tell you what the result was. I thought that was all that was needed. Now I’m able to wrap my head around a process and come up with new ideas and possibilities, then think of ways to test them,” said Yost, who wants to pursue a doctorate in microbiology.

The QEP’s community-oriented, holistic approach will be integrated into all programs at Western. Departments piloting the plan this fall include chemistry and physics, recreation therapy, history and health information administration. In fall 2009, the College of Fine and Performing Arts will be the first college on campus to fully pilot the plan in all of its departments and activities — to help students synthesize all of their experiences into a meaningful whole.
In the Aftermath of the Virginia Tech Shooting and Others, 
WCU Initiates Signals, Signs and Sign-Ups for Safety 
By LEILATVEDT

The “WHOOP” of emergency sirens in test mode is just the latest in a series of signals showing Western’s commitment to safety. In a message to the WCU campus on the anniversary of the tragic shootings at Virginia Tech, Chancellor John Bardo said, “We can never become complacent about the safety of Western in our peaceful valley, nor should we become paralyzed by anxiety over what might happen or could happen. Instead, we must all remain vigilant and take precautions that will help us to respond effectively to actual or potential dangers.”

Among the precautions are the new outdoor sirens, strategically situated at three locations around campus to alert members of the campus community, visitors and neighbors in the event of an emergency. The sirens, which are being tested every month, are equipped to send out loud, piercing sounds, as well as spoken messages from campus police. Under the sophisticated system, funded by a $1,000 grant from Duke Energy, police also can break into programming at Western’s student-managed radio station WWCU-FM (Power 90.5) to broadcast information to listeners in Cullowhee and as far away as Sylva and Waynesville.

“Anytime there is an emergency, one of the responsibilities of first responders is to keep the public informed,” said Chief Tom Johnson, head of Western’s police department. “With the radio broadcast and new siren system, we have two very effective tools for accomplishing that responsibility.”

A more noticeable, but noiseless, tool is coming to campus in the form of brightly colored placards placed prominently in classrooms and offices. Johnson is putting up the signs to provide specific instructions about how to respond in dangerous situations such as fires, gas leaks, medical or weather emergencies, and shootings. Those safety tips are posted on the green side of the placard. The red side, on the reverse, is designed for display on windows and doors as a highly visible but quiet call for help when silence is critical.

In addition to the sirens and signs, Johnson is urging students and their parents, university faculty and staff, and neighbors to provide their personal contact information by registering with CatTracker at www.wcu-campus.info. The Web-based system allows university officials to send messages via text, voice and e-mail to anyone who has signed up for emergency notifications. The monthly siren tests should prompt people to sign up, Johnson said. CatTracker will not be used for routine or business messages, advertising or promotional materials. “If you get a message from CatTracker, you’ll know it’s either a test or the real thing,” Johnson said. If you have questions about CatTracker, call the WCU Office of Public Relations at (828) 227-7327.
COLD CASE STUDY

Western Students Spend a Night Under the Stars For a Chance to Learn in the Majestic Teton Mountains

By RANDALL HOLCOMBE

Some Western Carolina students camped out in 35-degree weather last November, but it wasn’t for a chance to score the best tickets for a hot rock concert. Actually, the students slept under the stars just for an opportunity to spend even more nights camping out in cold weather.

The students braved the chilly temperatures in their sleeping bags so they could be among the first to sign up for a 10-day “Teton Steward Course” offered jointly by Western’s Division of Educational Outreach and a national outdoor leadership organization, the Wilderness Education Association. Led by Maurice Phipps, professor in WCU’s department of health, physical education and recreation, and Todd Murdock ’85 MAEd ’93, director of the university’s Talent Search Program, the course took the students to the Teton Mountains along the Idaho-Wyoming border in late spring to learn the technical skills required for traveling and camping in snowy mountainous terrain, and also more generic skills such as leadership, judgment and decision-making.

Sixteen students gathered at the front entrance of WCU’s Camp Building so they could be among the first to sign up for the Teton course, but with only 10 spots available, six students’ names went on a waiting list. The 11th student got lucky when one of the first 10 students who signed up for the course dropped out, Phipps said.

The trip participants, including Mark Sheffler, an emergency room physician in Cherokee who went along as “expedition physician,” gathered in Tetonia, Idaho, on the western slopes of the Teton Mountains on May 26. Phipps, who organizes the course every two years, said he has noticed a significant decrease in the Teton snowpack in recent years. It’s been such a decline, in fact, that Phipps moved the date of this year’s trip to earlier in the spring to make sure there would be enough snow to teach “spring mountaineering techniques.”

Lack of snow wasn’t a problem this year. Because of the avalanche danger brought about by recent heavy snowfall in the region, the group had to delay activities for the first two days. Once the expedition began, the Western contingent found three-foot drifts at the trailhead, and near the top of Table Mountain, the highest point ascended by the group at 11,106 feet, the snow was more than 10 feet deep.

Expedition members rose at 4 a.m. each summit day and were on the trail by 5 a.m. Their packs weighed 60 to 70 pounds on the first day, and slowly got lighter as the trip progressed. The group was pelted by a combination of rain, sleet and snow each day as the students learned snow-climbing techniques such as the ice-ax arrest and sliding middleman.

The Western students who went on the expedition, earning WEA steward certificates, were “a terrific group, with tons of energy, very helpful and self-directed,” Phipps said. “They also were very noisy, which was good because it helped keep the bears and cougars away,” he said.
Before a stroke at age 39 that left him in a coma for three weeks, Boris Younger was a chemical engineer with BASF Corp. After his stroke, it was six or seven months before he spoke a word, and a year before he walked.

Like 1 million Americans, including 25 to 40 percent of stroke survivors, Younger, now 52, of Asheville, is affected by aphasia, a communication problem related to understanding or producing language, or both. Aphasia is the result of a stroke or other brain injury near an individual’s language zone.

More than a decade after his stroke, Younger continues to focus on regaining his language skills. The work, while difficult, is made somewhat easier for Younger and others like him through the efforts of faculty and graduate students from Western Carolina University, who have established a regional support effort.

Called the Aphasia Treatment Group, it offers clients free individual and group therapy to improve their speech. Second-year graduate students in the department of communication sciences and disorders program, part of the College of Health and Human Sciences, serve as clinicians, working one-on-one with clients and at the same time satisfying their degree’s required clinical hours for adult speech and language. Fall 2008 student clinicians are Alicia Faircloth, Ashleigh Gainey, Charlie Lytle and Lauren Techel.

“We provide a service for people affected by aphasia, and they provide a service for us,” said Leigh Odom, an assistant professor in Western’s department of communication sciences and disorders. Odom, in her first semester at Western, assumed group leadership responsibilities from Ruby Drew, a recently retired Western professor specializing in adult language disorders and motor speech disorders. The treatment group is an especially valuable service for participants whose insurance or Medicare coverage related to speech therapy has expired, which for stroke victims typically happens after about six months, Drew said.

Younger’s client participation in the group allows him to practice his language skills. “With me, it’s a chance to work with speech,” Younger said. More than a decade removed from his stroke, his speech continues to improve, said Younger, who also attends private speech therapy.

The Aphasia Treatment Group has approximately 20 members and continues to grow. Members range in age from their mid-40s into their 80s. Each member of the group experienced a stroke, some more than a decade ago and others as recently as the past six months. The diverse group includes people with former professions that include high-ranking federal official, long-distance truck driver, attorney, nurse, professor and marriage counselor.

During their weekly meetings, which take place at CarePartners Health Services in Asheville, group members typically spend one hour working one-on-one with a graduate clinician and one hour in group discussion. Odom encourages participants to share news about their week, including successful or unsuccessful communication encounters. “I might ask, ‘Who went out to dinner and tried to order and the waitress looked at you like you were crazy?’” Odom said.
During one-on-one sessions, the graduate clinicians focus on activities including reading comprehension, writing and articulation. During these exercises, clients might identify synonyms, match images to corresponding words and group related words.

The Aphasia Treatment Group developed from a support group that Arden resident Edna Tipton launched in 2002, after her husband, George, suffered a stroke. Tipton invited Drew to be the group’s first guest speaker. When Drew suggested introducing a treatment aspect into the group, she was overwhelmed with interest.

Since then, it has become a community effort. CarePartners and Mission Hospitals of Asheville provide the aphasia group with both monetary and in-kind support. Those organizations and the V.A. Medical Center in Asheville make referrals to the group. The Chaddick Foundation of Asheville supports the group with money for materials.

Robin Jones, stroke program coordinator at Mission Hospitals, described the progress she’s observed in the clients’ articulation and group interaction as phenomenal. “They feel comfortable with each other,” Jones said. “They know if they stumble and stutter, this group is going to accept that.”

MADISON AVENUE
A Speech-Language Pathologist Wins a New Professorship
By BILL STUDENC

David A. Shapiro, professor of communication sciences and disorders and one of the nation’s top speech-language pathologists, is the first faculty member to hold the newly created title of Madison Professor. Named in honor of the institution’s first president, Robert Lee Madison, the professorship is designed to reward faculty members who have worked at Western for many years and who have achieved outstanding recognition as teachers, scholars or artists.

A prolific researcher, Shapiro is author of the text “Stuttering Intervention: A Collaborative Journey to Fluency Freedom.” Adopted by communication sciences and disorders programs worldwide, the book dispels common myths about stuttering and presents Shapiro’s unique assessment and treatment methods. After overcoming his own stuttering disorder, he developed strategies that actively involve family and friends of those being treated. The University of North Carolina system recognized him with 1999’s Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Bill Ogletree, head of WCU’s department of communication sciences and disorders, called Shapiro “a scholar in every sense of the word” and “a unique individual with a truly caring spirit.” “When I learned he had been selected for the IFA award, I sat down in his office to congratulate him. His response was one of honest humility, saying ‘How can I claim to have made a great contribution to the welfare of the human race?’” Ogletree said. “I told him the human race is made up of individuals, and that he opens the door of opportunity for every child or adult he helps to become fluent. That door leads to discoveries and accomplishments that fundamentally change our world.”
Two Years After Relocating from Duke University, an Acclaimed Coastal Management Program Is Making Waves Worldwide

By BILL STUDENC

When the world-renowned Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines moved to Western from its longtime home at Duke University in the fall of 2006, naysayers questioned the wisdom of relocating a coastal science and policy center to the mountains of Western North Carolina, hundreds of miles away from the nearest shoreline – developed or otherwise.

Two years later, the cynics have fallen silent, while the scientists of PSDS have been anything but. Since its arrival in Cullowhee, the program, directed by geologist Rob Young, has become the worldwide headquarters for an international beach preservation organization. It has established a new beachhead in the South Carolina Lowcountry through a partnership with the University of South Carolina Beaufort. It is making national headlines through its ongoing efforts to use science to influence public policy affecting management of the nation’s shorelines. And, most recently, its associate director, Andy Coburn, conducted aerial reconnaissance of damage caused on the Texas Gulf Coast by Hurricane Ike.

During a 2006 ceremony marking the program’s move to new offices in Cullowhee, Steve Warren ’80, then-chairman of WCU’s board of trustees, predicted that PSDS would play an increasingly significant role in helping the nation’s leaders find economically viable and environmentally sound solutions to coastal problems. “This program is part of a rising tide at Western,” Warren said. “It is a rising tide of environmental consciousness, of environmental ethics and of environmental responsibility. The program provides an incredibly strong anchor for that consciousness, those ethics, and the responsibility that comes from living on this Earth.”

FINDING PARTNERS NEAR AND FAR

PSDS recently received a significant boost in its efforts to help meet its environmental mission in the form of a $112,765 grant from the Santa Aguila Charitable Trust, an organization devoted to the protection and preservation of beaches across the globe. Through the grant, the trust opened offices in Cullowhee and hired Adam Griffith MS ’08 to direct its new Beachcare program, which is working to identify beaches around the world that are in trouble and to provide the scientific basis for improving their management.

Established by Olaf Guerrand-Hermes, a member of the family that founded the Paris-based Hermes fashion house, and wife Eva after the death of 2-year-old daughter Aguila in a car accident in 2005, the Santa Aguila Charitable Trust strives to educate the general public regarding issues that threaten the world’s beaches and coasts. The trust is especially interested in illustrating the negative impacts of sand mining, where sand is removed from beaches, often for construction purposes elsewhere; and shoreline armoring, where hard structures such as seawalls, jetties or groins are used to try to halt the naturally occurring movement of beaches. “The target audience for our charitable trust is an...
international audience,” Hermes said. “We needed a group of scientists with an international perspective and an international reputation. PSDS is the best there is.”

While the grant from Hermes has enabled PSDS to work on beach issues around the world, from Morocco to the Caribbean, another recent development will have the program’s scientists doing business a little closer to home. Through a new partnership with the University of South Carolina Beaufort, PSDS now has a branch office near the Atlantic Ocean.

“Having access to laboratory and office space on the South Carolina coast will assist the program greatly as it continues to use science as a tool toward responsible management of our nation’s vulnerable natural coastal resources,” said Scott Higgins, dean of WCU’s Graduate School and Research, where PSDS is housed administratively. “While Western’s location offers the advantage of being roughly equidistant from both the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, as well as providing shelter from hurricanes and tropical storms, proximity to the shoreline will make it easier for our faculty and student researchers to do their fieldwork.”

Joe Staton, an associate professor of biology and marine science who has been at the forefront of USCB’s efforts to formalize the partnership, called WCU’s coastal program “a natural fit” with his university’s mission to serve the needs of a region where coastal zone development and beach erosion issues are critical to a growing populace. “Through this agreement, USCB will provide a home base away from home for the PSDS, and we get a local presence of a nationally known center where our students can intern and take courses otherwise not available at USCB. Our top students who develop an interest in the PSDS’s work also have a potential graduate destination in Cullowhee,” Staton said.

Continued on Page 12
WADING INTO CONTROVERSY

The agreement with USCB is far from the program’s first excursion into the Lowcountry. Young and Coburn have led WCU students on numerous field trips from Hilton Head to Myrtle Beach to see firsthand the impact of beach erosion, and they have taken very public – and sometimes unpopular – stands against beach renourishment projects at the Isle of Palms, Fripp Island and Hunting Island. They contend that activities such as building groins, seawalls and jetties or dredging sand elsewhere to patch beaches injured by erosion only create future problems for other areas of the coast.

“A natural, undeveloped shoreline may move landward as sea level rises, but it never loses its beach. The beach simply slides landward with the retreating shoreline,” said Coburn. “So, coastal erosion is a natural process that does not cause the beach to disappear. The problem comes when we put buildings – or seawalls or sandbags – in the way of this naturally moving shoreline. When a shoreline is artificially stabilized, the beach has nowhere to go, which increases the rate of erosion.”

Earlier this year, PSDS shined the spotlight on a controversial proposal to remove a portion of Kiawah Island from the Coastal Barrier Resources System, which is intended to prevent the federal government from subsidizing development of undeveloped barrier islands. Legislation introduced by a South Carolina congressman would have removed from federal protection 84 acres adjacent to an inlet – an area scientists say is particularly susceptible to natural changes due to erosion and wave action – in exchange for other land on the island. Young provided background information used by environmental groups to fight the proposal, contacted the press, and was preparing to testify before Congress against the bill when the congressman withdrew the legislation in the face of rampant public opposition.

“It is incredibly valuable to have the well-respected scientific views of the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines in the public debates on shoreline issues in South Carolina,” said Nancy
Vinson, program director for the Coastal Conservation League. “The tactic some development groups take these days is to attack the messenger – often us – instead of honestly debating the issue. Dr. Young makes that tactic useless when he states with great clarity the scientific facts.”

PSDS also is involved in an effort to stop the town of Palm Beach, Fla., from dredging sand to rebuild the beach on a barrier island. Young was the first expert witness called by petitioners fighting the proposal, testifying in an August court hearing that a model used by engineers to predict sand movement on rebuilt beaches is flawed.

“Rob Young and Andy Coburn are a part of our environmental issues team of experts, and they are absolutely vital,” said Ericka D’Avanzo, Florida regional manager for the Surfrider Foundation, an environmental advocacy group devoted to preserving ocean waves and beaches. “The folks in our organization are teachers and lawyers, mother and fathers, and others who want to protect the surfbreak and the beaches, but they don’t have the scientific expertise to effectively argue against irresponsible development.”

REBUILDING ON THE SHIFTING SANDS

Perhaps the most controversial of PSDS’s activities is its effort to convince federal lawmakers to stop rebuilding infrastructure in especially vulnerable coastal areas, and to halt federal disaster and government-subsidized insurance programs that enable property owners to rebuild beachfront communities that wind and waves continue to topple. For Young and Coburn, it’s not just an environmental matter, it’s also an economics issue. They say they are not calling for a wholesale retreat from the shoreline; instead, they advocate a more fiscally responsible approach to rebuilding along the coast.

“Irresponsible development of vulnerable coastal areas is becoming a burden on an already overburdened federal budget, as well as an environmental disaster. It is time to withdraw all federal monies from rebuilding oceanfront communities in areas that have suffered repeated damage,” Young said. “We can easily identify these high-risk areas, using both a well-established scientific understanding of what controls coastal hazard vulnerability and a historical perspective tracking the repeated expenditure of federal disaster funds in particular communities.”

Of course, not everyone sees eye to eye with the PSDS scientists. Among the program’s staunchest opponents is the American Shore & Beach Preservation Association, which supports the use of federal dollars for beach restoration. ASBPA president Harry Simmons, who also is mayor of Caswell Beach, once debated Young about beach restoration live on CNBC.

“Travel and tourism make up America’s largest industry, largest employer and largest earner of foreign exchange,” Simmons said. “Within that industry, beaches are America’s top tourist destination. There are seven times more visits to America’s beaches than to all National Park Service properties combined. However, the annual federal investment in restoration and maintenance of beaches is only 4 percent of the amount the federal government budgets for the National Park Service. ASBPA believes that the federal investment in beach restoration should be more like $280 million, closer to 11 percent of the amount budgeted for the National Park Service.”

The PSDS scientists disagree, pointing to communities such as Dauphin Island, Ala., and Waveland, Miss., which have been flattened time and again by hurricanes and tropical storms. Young and Coburn say they aren’t necessarily opposed to those communities rebuilding; they just don’t think taxpayers should be shouldering the financial burden.

“Communities like Dauphin Island have come to the federal trough too many times,” Young said. “The eagerness to rebuild should be matched by a strong personal responsibility ethic. If you want to live in the highest risk areas, and if your community thinks the economic benefits are too great to abandon a storm-impacted beachfront, great. But from now on, you pay. You pay for the infrastructure, the buildings and the beach replenishment.”

With every storm that hits the coast, the debate about where and how to rebuild continues to rage. Young and Coburn recently flew over the Texas coastline to record damage caused by Hurricane Ike – photographs that, along with images from Katrina and other storms, may one day lead to new policies guiding the future development of the U.S. coastline.

Rob Young (top left, pointing) and Andy Coburn (top left, second from right) talk with students about beach erosion problems at Wild Dunes on Isle of Palms, S.C. (far left). Above, Adam Griffith MS ’08 (left), newly appointed director of the Beachcare program housed at WCU, and Santa Aguila Charitable Trust founder Olaf Guerrand-Hermes (foreground) examine sand mining photographs on the coast of Morocco with geologists Orrin Pilkey (center) and Joseph Kelly.

FALL 2008 THE MAGAZINE OF WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY 13
CLEVELAND ROCKS!
At the beginning of the 1960s, the United States was experiencing a significant identity transition. A surge of consumer production, mass media technological developments, Hollywood aesthetics, adventures into outer space, and the automotive industry contributed to a celebration of popular culture. On the “flip side”, our country felt the devastation of major political and social leaders falling to assassins’ bullets, the emerging crises in the Vietnam War, civil rights questions, the friction of the Cold War, and the generational schism between parents and their children. It was a time of profound contradictions, and at the center of this was art in all its forms. The Madison Avenue portrait of America was wholesome, ethical and moral—projecting the image of a great country whose self-proclaimed mission was to save the world and make it a better place for all. However, the image of the real world was not as harmonious.

Music mirrored this dichotomy, and radio and television expanded the cultural divide. The birth of the rock and roll “beat” grew from the amazing traditional African rhythms of blues, gospel, pop, classical and Broadway expressions. The words came from poets, newspaper headlines, civil and political slogans, and advertising. The anthropological definition of our culture in which all types of human activity were the subjects of attention motivated not only the bands, but also the radio stations, promoters and media. To live within this period was equally confusing and exhilarating. Few were fortunate to be in the right place at the right time to document this powerful energy. The photographs of George Shuba are alive with this spirit, demonstrating a keen aesthetic sense for both time and place.

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An exhibition of the photographs of George Shuba, whose black-and-white images chronicled the dawn of a new chapter in American pop culture, enjoyed its world premiere at Western Carolina University’s Fine Art Museum in 2007. Curated by Western Carolina professor of art Jon Jicha, a native of Cleveland, the exhibit “Cleveland Rocks: The Birthplace of Rock and Roll/Photographs by George Shuba” is on display through Jan. 4 at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland. Jicha, who teaches graphic design in the School of Art and Design at Western, shared his thoughts about this significant photographer’s images that encapsulated an era – and that were first shown as a collection in WCU’s Fine Art Museum.

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Jon Jicha
Center of Attention

Campus Community Gets Moving in Newly Opened Recreation Center

By TERESA KILLIAN

Nearly three years after the university broke ground on the 73,000-square-foot Campus Recreation Center, the $16.7 million facility is open and receiving rave reviews. “Almost everywhere inside, there’s a sense of space, and also curiosity, because you can see from one area to another – from the treadmills to the climbing wall, or from the indoor track to the basketball courts,” said Meredith Morgan, a senior parks and recreation management major from Gastonia. “The facility offers as many fun fitness activities as you can think of.”

Features include two multipurpose courts, strength training and cardiovascular equipment, mirror-lined group exercise studios, fitness assessment rooms and a three-lane indoor track. The highlight for Philip Johnson, a freshman from Salisbury, is the custom-made climbing wall, which rises 50 feet into a pyramid-shaped skylight. Although his only previous climbing experience was limited to trees, Johnson was among the first WCU students to reach the top on opening day. “It was fun and a good workout,” he said.

Seeing the quality of the completed center made it worth the wait for upperclassmen such as Dominique Keaton, a senior geology major from Jacksonville. “I’m really in awe,” said Keaton. “I’m glad to see my student fees went to something this awesome.”

Kellie Angelo Monteith, assistant vice chancellor for student affairs, said an added benefit is the location overlooking the lawn of A.K. Hinds University Center. “You can socialize in the outside quad area and walk on the track at the recreation center before getting a cup of coffee and going to a meeting at the University Center,” said Monteith. “We’re also close to the bookstore, and near the dining hall and residence halls that are under construction now.”

A new 53,000-square-foot, $17.2 million dining hall is scheduled for completion this winter. It will house an “all-you-care-to-eat” venue and include space for a Starbucks Coffee, McAlister’s Deli and other themed restaurants. The first of a $50.2 million pair of residence halls under construction nearby is scheduled for completion in July 2009.

For more recreation center information, including membership rates for alumni, staff, faculty and retired WCU employees, check out the Web site http://reccenter.wcu.edu or call (828) 227-7069.
Western Carolina University's academic reputation continues to climb. The university experienced significant increases in the SAT scores and grade-point averages of members of this fall’s freshman class over last year’s crop of entering students. Western once again rose in the rankings compiled by U.S. News and World Report for its annual “America’s Best Colleges” edition, for the first time earning a spot among the top master’s degree-granting public institutions in the South. Academic programs ranging from teacher education and entrepreneurship to applied criminology and project management are racking up national awards and accolades from outside accrediting agencies and independent reviewers.

Combine all that upward motion with WCU’s location in the mountains of Western North Carolina, factor in the signature feature of the recently opened Campus Recreation Center (see story Page 16), and it’s easy to see the thinking behind the university’s newly launched branding concept – “Climb.”

“We believe that Western Carolina University is offering opportunities for our students to move upward in their education and their personal growth. We believe we are challenging our students to raise and expand their horizons more than ever before,” Chancellor John W. Bardo said. “At Western, we encourage our students – as well as our faculty, our staff and our alumni – to always strive to keep climbing, because we all know the best view is from the top.”

The university officially unveiled its new brand, including a new logo and themes for institutional marketing and promotions, as part of Employee Appreciation Day on Oct. 1. The brand launch comes after a year of market research and analysis conducted by Stamats, one of the nation’s leading higher education marketing companies, and after the unveiling of the university’s new athletics program logo.

“The focus groups, the interviews and the surveys have been completed. Stamats has asked all the hard questions of our faculty, staff, alumni, benefactors, community members, opinion leaders, current and prospective students, and parents and guardians so that we have a clear understanding of perceptions about our heritage, who we are today, what we hope to be in the future, and how we get there,” said Clifton Metcalf, vice chancellor for advancement and external affairs.

Continued on Page 20
The Higher You Climb, the Better the View

Showing off the new university logo and colors are, from left, Jessica Williams, assistant softball coach; Jon Harper, assistant women’s basketball coach; and Anquell McCollum ’00, assistant men’s basketball coach.
Continued from Page 18

“Stamats has crunched the numbers and analyzed the data. Now it’s time for the fun stuff – crafting the messages that tell the story about Western Carolina University,” said Metcalf, who helped guide a group of university faculty and staff members that worked with the consultants throughout the process.

The first wave of new messages revolves around the concept of “Climb,” a theme that surfaced time and again throughout the yearlong research process, said Eric Sickler, principal consultant for Stamats. “As a concept or creative wrap, ‘Climb’ reminds us that, for everyone, the route to real achievement is not a horizontal straight line, but always an ascent, one that requires focus and determination, with no shortage of challenges, rewards and revelations along the way,” Sickler said. “ ‘Climb’ tells Western Carolina’s target audiences that here is a place where you can roll up your sleeves, engage, and work toward a better future and a desirable career. It declares to the world that at WCU you can raise yourself to a higher level.”

The theme is built upon the foundation of the university’s newly developed brand promise – WCU offers opportunities for those who aspire to make a difference in their world. “This simple statement is absolutely jam-packed with significance for anyone who associates himself or herself with this great university,” Sickler said. “It simultaneously extends a helping hand and offers a challenge. It invites all to seek to improve not only themselves, but also their world. It describes the essence of what is happening at Western Carolina.”

With the internal and external branding and marketing campaign now under way, the university’s various constituencies will begin to see and hear messages designed to build broader recognition of the value of a WCU education, differentiate the university from its public and private competitors, and continue to raise the institution’s profile regionally and nationally. As part of the branding initiative, Western also has adopted institutional identity guidelines to ensure that university communications have a similar look, feel and tone that remain consistent across the wide range of departments and disciplines. The university also has reverted to original shades of its school colors of purple and gold, with a deeper purple and traditional gold replacing bright hues of purple and yellow used in recent years.

Climb to New Heights

Among those responsible for the recruitment of freshmen with climbing SAT scores are, from the Office of Admission, from left, Heather Bradshaw ’06, Beau Busby ’03 and Rebecca Manring ’06.
There’s a whole new breed of cat on the prowl at Western Carolina these days after the university unveiled a fresh look for Catamount athletics – just in time for the 75th anniversary of the selection of the Catamount as the official mascot of Western’s intercollegiate sports teams. The “big reveal” of the 2008 version of the Catamount, which included a video showing highlights of 75 years of Catamount sports and a fashion show of apparel adorned with the new Catamount logo, is part of a multiyear branding initiative to better define the university’s image and message. Western also has returned to a deep purple and “old gold” as its official colors, the university’s traditional shades.

The 2008 evolution of the Catamount logo was designed by Rickabaugh Graphics in Gahanna, Ohio, as part of an overall university branding project led by Stamats, one of the nation’s premier firms specializing in the field of higher education marketing. “Eric Rickabaugh and Rickabaugh Graphics have done an outstanding job with the logo,” said Chip Smith, director of athletics. “We have been able to use elements and colors from the early years of the Catamount image and blend them into something new. It is aggressive enough to send a message and is a very distinctive look. That it is introduced on the 75th anniversary of the Catamount name and the 25th anniversary of the 1983 football team that played for the national championship is a perfect opportunity to highlight our heritage and our future.”

In the short period of time since the new Catamount athletic identity was revealed, workers at Catamount Clothing and Gifts in A.K. Hinds University Center say items with the new logo are flying off the shelves in record time. “We are already on our third order of T-shirts, and are re-ordering another shipment of sweatshirts and jackets,” said Sandra Seiler ’99, assistant director. “Almost everyone really likes the new look, especially the change from yellow to old gold.”

The new athletics logo adorns “thundersticks.”

The CAT ON THE HAT

August 14, 2008

To the WCU community:

As the designer who created the new Catamount athletic identity, I was thrilled to hear of the overwhelmingly enthusiastic response to the new logos from more than 500 people who attended “The Big Reveal” on Wednesday, August 13th. Their joy and excitement at seeing the new athletic logos unveiled is truly rewarding to my design staff and myself. At the same time, I would ask the WCU community to also make this an opportunity to celebrate their own accomplishments.

When I arrived four months ago for my initial meetings with WCU, I was only aware of the Catmounts through their athletic accomplishments. One of my first experiences at Western Carolina was a personal tour of the campus guided by your Chancellor, John Bardo. Not only was his pride in this university tremendously infectious, his vision for the future of this institution is also quite impressive. Along with the clear and intelligent guidance of Vice Chancellor, Clifton Metcalf, and the passion for athletic success being created by athletic director, Chip Smith, this university is clearly becoming a treasure.

This dedication to excellence at Western Carolina certainly had a positive effect on the athletic branding project. The commitment to including the entire WCU community in the process is unparalleled at any other university with which I have worked. It was a careful and conscientious undertaking led by the WCU administration and as a result the final athletic brand is without a doubt one of the best we have created.

I would suggest that all of the WCU stakeholders (alumni, staff, administrators, students and fans) have had much to do with building such a wonderful university. In my nearly twenty years of working in collegiate branding I have never been so impressed with an institution and where it is heading. I thank all of you for allowing Rickabaugh Graphics to be just a small part of creating what is truly “the pride of the mountains!”

Take pride in all you are doing at WCU and... “Go Catamounts!”

Sincerely,

Eric Rickabaugh
Owner and Creative Director
The adventure racing partnership of Tom Baker and Peter Gallo ’07 started as talk between buddies over beer. Five years since, the men endure freezing weather, sleepless nights and disorienting circumstances together in the name of fun.

Adventures races require outdoor enthusiasts, in teams of two to five, to paddle, bike and trek through rivers and forests in all sorts of weather for durations ranging from several hours to several days. Navigation often is performed with a map and compass, and sleep is at the discretion of competitors. The races are not relays, as team members complete all legs together.

Gallo, 34, and Baker, 59, met when their wives both worked in Western’s English department. Baker’s wife, Marsha Lee Baker, is an English professor, and Gallo’s wife, Elisabeth Aiken MA ’00, was an instructor. Aiken recalled that the men hit it off immediately the first time they met. “The two of them are like brothers separated by a generation,” she said.

Baker grew up in the Jackson County community of Webster and is evening equipment supervisor in WCU’s Reid Gymnasium. A former paratrooper with the Army’s 101st Airborne Division, Baker commonly spends all night hiking and biking through area forests, on trails or off, with company or alone. He has participated in adventure races for a decade and already has worn out several
partners. His friends, affectionately and reverentially, call him a maniac.

Gallo is a world-class paddler (he and Aiken met as employees at the Nantahala Outdoor Center) who was lured into racing by the Venus flytrap of Baker’s training routine. “Tom talked me into training with him, and then training turned into racing,” Gallo said. During their first competition together, a 24-hour race in Virginia in 2004, the men took first place in their division.

In March, the men participated in the Checkpoint Zero Adventure Race in Hiawassee, Ga. Their support team was Will Dulaney, WCU assistant professor of communication; Al Laster, WCU construction management student and WCU facilities management employee; and Baker’s son, Craig. The race was especially significant because, like the majority of competitors, Baker and Gallo take their victory in completing the course, and they had unsuccessfully attempted winter races in the Hiawassee area twice before.

The race began at 5 a.m. and the weather immediately proved challenging. Snow started falling early in the first leg, a three-hour canoe paddle across Lake Chatuge and then up the Hiawassee River. By the race’s third leg, a paddle across Lake Burton, the wind churned up whitecaps and blew the men into the middle of the lake as they tried to register at one of the race’s dozens of checkpoints. “We got really, really nervous,” Gallo recalled. During biking segments, freezing temperatures caused gears and brakes to malfunction. The men capped the approximately 100-mile race with a nine-hour, 20-mile orienteering trek through the woods. Dulaney recalled watching competitors manage the race’s final 2-mile stretch. “It was along a rolling road, but people were walking against each other, leaning on each other, and if one misstepped and fell, they both fell,” he said. Thirty hours after they started, the pair slogged past the finish line. “I cried and Pete cried,” Baker said. “And we hugged each other and drank a beer.”

The men offer different motivations to explain their attraction to adventure racing. “Racing makes you more focused and more dedicated to the things you do,” Gallo said. “You have a different perspective on things, about how hard you can actually push yourself.” Baker likes the physical accomplishment while aiming to “not let the young dogs get too far in front of me.”

The friends also appreciate the time the races allow them to spend together. In 2005, Gallo and Aiken moved to Spring Hill, Fla., where Aiken teaches at St. Leo University and Gallo is a manager for a commercial stucco company. The couple has a son, Jack, 2. Now, Gallo and Baker train independently and meet at the races. There’s a chance they will participate in a January race in Florida, but if not, they plan to meet in March in Hiawassee.

“I love adventure racing,” Gallo said. “I enjoy doing the races with Tom. We don’t talk a lot when we race. We just put our heads down and go.”
Brittany Haskett (above, right) and Logan Link, construction management students, practice sieve analysis, a method used to determine the distribution of the size of grains in soil. Haskett is among the recipients of scholarships made possible when Joe Kimmel (left) pledged nearly $7 million, a gift worth more than $10.4 million with matching money from the state, to support WCU's construction management program.
The Gift that Established the Kimmel School Is Yielding New Scholarships, Professorships and Program Support

By TERESA KILLIAN

A $10.4 million investment in Western Carolina University’s construction management program sparked three years ago by a pledge of nearly $7 million by Joe and Cynthia Kimmel is already making a difference. Seven students have received nearly $60,000 in scholarships. Two $1 million endowed distinguished professorships have been fully funded. Students and faculty have been able to expand participation in academic competitions, national conferences and industry meetings. In addition, the gift was the catalyst for the creation of The Kimmel School of Construction Management and Technology, consisting of programs in construction management, engineering and technology that formerly were part of the College of Applied Sciences.

Robert McMahan, dean of the Kimmel School, called its creation “a major milestone” in university history. “The school was designed from the beginning to be a nationally distinctive, multidisciplinary college focused on two things: preparing students to excel in the high-demand fields of construction management, engineering and engineering technology, and acting as a bridge between the academy and the economy,” McMahan said.

“We build relationships that give companies across the region and state access to extensive resources and the professional expertise of our faculty while providing opportunities for our students to engage in complex, real-world projects and exchanges with these companies. That means they graduate with marketable skills they can use on the job on day one,” he said. “The tremendous demand for our majors speaks to the value of this approach – everyone wins: the student, employers and businesses, the region and the state. The Kimmel gift was truly an investment in the future of Western North Carolina.”

What began in 2005 with an interest in helping Western’s construction management students afford to enter collegiate academic competitions grew into a $6.9 million pledge from the Kimmels on behalf of Kimmel & Associates. A founder of the Asheville-based Kimmel & Associates national executive search firm specializing in the construction, solid waste, freight forwarding and supply chain industries, Joe Kimmel knew firsthand about the global shortage of construction managers. He saw a gift to Western’s fledgling construction management program as a way to give back to the industry and help meet the need. When fulfilled, the Kimmel gift, along with state matching money, will represent a $10.4 million net investment at WCU – $9 million of it in permanent endowments that provide annual scholarships and program funds to hire and retain top faculty. Ultimately, four new $1 million endowed professorships will be created. The fifth will be a $2 million endowed professorship.

Among the first scholarship recipients are construction management students such as McKenzie Dillingham, a junior from Weaverville, who received a $5,000 scholarship for the fall semester. Dillingham chose the field as a way to mix her passion for the artistic aspects of architecture and the chance to have a hands-on career. “I also hope to integrate my love for the environment by incorporating sustainability into my future projects,” said Dillingham. “I believe the construction industry provides many opportunities to make the changes needed in today’s growing environmental crisis.” Another recipient, Mark Ross, a senior from Waynesville, said the $5,000 scholarship is helping him continue the education that he needs to someday own the kind of business where he currently enjoys working – Haywood Crane Service. Yet another recipient, Brittany Haskett, a freshman from Sylva, said she chose to pursue a career in construction management after volunteering with Habitat for Humanity and helping rebuild homes in Gulfport, Miss. “The combination of helping out people in need and feeling the satisfaction of a job well done was inspiring to me,” said Haskett.

Meanwhile, the gift has helped support the construction management program, which started with 26 students in 2002 and today serves about 350 students. The gift has not only funded trips for student teams to compete annually at construction management competitions, but also enabled students and faculty to represent WCU at national conferences and industry meetings, said Bradford Sims, head of the construction management department. The contributions also have helped pay expenses incurred for student internships and field trips to construction sites off campus.

“The Kimmel gift has provided money for opportunities for our students, and we wouldn’t be able to teach on the level we do without that support,” said Sims. “The ability for us to participate in competitions or national conferences enables our students to be noticed more quickly by national and international firms. Our program is young, but we have a national reputation as a good construction management program, and this gift has helped us continue to build that reputation.”
The Western Carolina University Foundation board of directors recently welcomed six new members to its class of 2011 following approval of the slate of nominees by the university's board of trustees at its summer quarterly meeting.

Joining the foundation board for three-year terms are:

Robert Bradshaw '76 of Brentwood, Tenn., former vice president and general manager of the Nissan division for Nissan North America Inc. A former executive with the Ford Motor Co. and with Subaru of America, Bradshaw now is a key member of JVK Development, a full-service commercial space provider.

Geraldine Wright Garrett '71 of Charlotte, who established the Gerri Wright Garrett Scholarship Fund at Western in 1999. The scholarship is designed to assist students from Swain, Graham and Macon counties attending WCU.

Pat Kaemmerling '71 of Norcross, Ga., co-owner and chief financial officer of Access Computers Inc. The company, founded in 1989, specializes in computer-integrated systems design. Kaemmerling and husband David recently committed to an estate gift to Western to create endowed professorships, scholarships and program support.

Charlie Kimmel of Asheville, president and chief operations officer of Kimmel and Associates. The construction industry executive search firm pledged gifts of nearly $7 million to WCU in 2005 for support for its construction management program, housed in what is now the Kimmel School of Construction Management and Technology. (See story on Page 24)

Kevin Vasquez ’79 of Dublin, Ohio, chairman, president and chief executive officer of Butler Animal Health Supply, the largest veterinary distribution company in the United States. Under Vasquez’s leadership, the company’s total sales grew from $245 million to more than $1 billion in eight years.

Brenda Wellmon of Charlotte, acting president of General Bonded Warehouse Inc. Widow of the late Curtis Lee Wellmon ’58, Wellmon and her children have established a scholarship fund designed to help students from high schools in Burke County attend Western.

The newest additions to the board are serving alongside three members reappointed to three-year-terms this summer: James Beaty Jr. ’71 of Winston-Salem, a U.S. District Court judge; Rocky Johnson ’66 of Advance, recently retired regional president with SunTrust Bank; and Jim Moore of Sylva, retired banking executive with Wachovia and former chair of the foundation and board of trustees.

“These ambassadors for Western are coming on board at a very important time in the history of the institution,” said Jim Miller, associate vice chancellor for development. “They are providing critical leadership as we continue our $40 million Campaign for Western and as we plan for the important next phase of the campaign, which will focus on significantly increasing private support for merit-based scholarship assistance for students.”

Newly elected officers for the foundation board are chair Phillip D. Walker ’71 of Hickory, a senior vice president for BB&T; first vice chair Joe Grooms ’69 of Davidson, a real estate developer; and second vice chair Linda Gilbert ’70 of Greenville, owner of Pintech USA Inc.

The Western Carolina University Foundation was established in 1971 to promote and support the university in its educational mission. Since its inception, the foundation has provided scholarship funds and assistance for special university activities and projects.
To borrow a phrase from the U.S. Navy, for junior Kelli Baer, finding employment as a student caller for the Loyalty Fund Phonathon is more than just a job. It’s an adventure. “I love getting to speak with alumni and hearing about their experiences while they were at WCU,” said Baer, an elementary education major from Cashiers. “I have worked on this job for three semesters now, and I learn something new every night.”

Baer said that being among “the Chatty Cats” also allows her to give something back to a program that has assisted her over the years through scholarship dollars that enable her to continue toward her degree. “I am so grateful for the scholarship assistance I have received,” she said. “By making these phone calls and raising money for the university, I know I am helping make a difference in the lives of other students.”

Baer and the Chatty Cats play a vital role in soliciting contributions for Western’s annual Loyalty Fund, said Natalie Clark, newly appointed director of annual giving. “Making an annual contribution to the Loyalty Fund is the primary way for all alumni, parents and friends to show support for WCU,” said Clark. “The fund helps provide more than 200 merit-based scholarships every year. Every dollar contributed makes it possible for the best and most capable students to benefit from the academic environment of the university.”

The Loyalty Fund Phonathon is under way, and will continue through Dec. 4. The Chatty Cats are working the phone lines Monday through Thursdays between 6 and 9 p.m. “We’ll be contacting alumni and friends during that block of time in the hopes we aren’t catching anyone while they are cooking dinner or watching ‘Grey’s Anatomy,’” Clark said.

Although new to the position of director of annual giving, Clark is no newcomer to the university. She grew up in Waynesville as daughter of Western alumnus Darrell Clark ’75 and granddaughter of alumnus R.L. Clark ’53. “I can remember coming to WCU for science fairs, band competitions and sporting events throughout my childhood,” she said. “It’s amazing to come back and see all of the dramatic change that has happened on campus, and it’s great to hear our callers talk with alumni about those changes.”

Clark is the latest addition to a growing team of advancement professionals responsible for administering the Campaign for Western, the first comprehensive fundraising effort in the university’s history. The campaign, launched in February 2007, has a goal of at least $40 million in private support for Western by 2010. Also recently joining the Office of Advancement is Chris Mueller, a former member of the Stamats consulting firm, as director of resource development. Brett Woods, former director of annual and special gifts, is now senior director of development for colleges and schools. Jim Manring ’74 MBA ’78 is senior director of development and Jim Miller is associate vice chancellor for development.
ALL GEARED UP
Ladies Learn the Rules of Football with Catamount Players and Coaches
By JILL INGRAM MA ’08

About 40 women gathered earlier this year at Western’s E.J. Whitmire Stadium for a preseason football tutorial titled “Catamount Football 101.” The “ladies only” event was meant to provide a closer understanding of the game’s rules and strategy. Head Coach Dennis Wagner, his staff and his players served as clinic teachers.

The event’s “students” included female members (or spouses of members) of the local business community, Catamount Club, Alumni Association and university leadership groups. They were young professionals, coaches’ wives, moms, moms-to-be, grandmothers, fiancées – and this writer. Throughout the evening, when not discussing plays involving cowboys and zebras, or how defense wins games, talk turned to shoes, engagement rings and children’s birthday parties.

The evening began with Coach Wagner breaking up the coterie of women mingling outside the classroom where we were to receive lessons in the basics of football. “Let’s take this inside,” growled someone who was either Wagner or a grizzly bear in coach’s clothing. He punctuated the directive with a sharp blast from his whistle.

Later, after donning team jerseys, we visited the locker room, where participants quickly gained 25 pounds by dressing in full player padding. Cameras flashed and cries of “You’re so cute!” went up as we all tried on helmets.

Then we hit the field to run plays – always running, because under Coach Wagner’s orders there is never, ever any walking on the Catamount gridiron. To the delight of the football players we were shadowing, the coach continued to blast us women with his tin mouthpiece, ordering us to again run the length of the field when our initial effort failed to impress.

“He’s not gruff at home. He kind of leaves it at work, he really does,” insisted Wagner’s wife of 23 years, Cyndi, a former softball player at the University of Iowa whose sandals proved inappropriate footwear on the field. (They did, however, nicely showcase her newly painted purple toenails.)

At the event’s conclusion, we ladies were dismissed onto the patio for heavy hors d’oeuvres, where we consumed approximately the weight of one tight end (typically larger than a wide receiver) in shrimp cocktail and stuffed mushrooms.
As for the ladies, Coach Wagner said he was impressed with how much some participants already knew about the game, and how eager the rest of us were to learn. More surprising, Wagner said, was the response of his football players, many of whom told him, “Coach, this is great!”

Team members charmed Sarah Carter, wife of Provost Kyle Carter. “They were open and helpful and they took it seriously,” she said. “They had great personality and a sense of fun.”

Zeta Smith, who coordinates special events for Western, said that after hearing so much enthusiastic participant response, she hopes to establish “Catamount Football 101” as an annual event.
Four Western Carolina All-America selections and a veteran of the National Football League make up a five-person class to be inducted into the university’s Athletic Hall of Fame during festivities set for Saturday, Nov. 1. Three former football players, a highly honored baseball player and a record-setting track and field standout constitute the star-studded induction class.

The 2008 class includes former football players John Ruta ’66, Alonzo Carmichael and Brad Hoover ’00, along with track and field star Tony McKennie ’97 and baseball standout Jason Beverlin ’01. They will be honored during the 19th annual induction ceremony prior to the Western Carolina home football game against the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

The three former Catamount football players were all-stars in three very different eras. Ruta, a defensive back on Western’s All-20th Century Football Team, began his playing career as a quarterback in 1962 and led the Catamounts to a stunning upset of East Carolina. He also was the starting signal-caller in 1963, but moved to the defensive secondary in 1964 despite passing for more 1,000 yards as a freshman and sophomore. The Plant City, Fla., product responded with a banner season as he led the ’64 Catamounts in tackles and set single-season records for interceptions and pass breakups, returning two picks for touchdowns. His amazing transition season was noticed throughout the nation; he was named NAIA All-America, the first defensive back in WCU history to be so honored. He currently is a partner with KRG&G Certified Public Accountants in Orlando.

Carmichael is one of only five WCU football players to be named All-America in multiple seasons, and was selected as the tight end on Western’s All-20th Century Football Team. A native of Lake View, S.C., he was a first-team Associated Press All-America selection in 1985 when he caught 55 passes for 587 yards, a school record for tight ends. During that season, he caught 11 passes against Furman and had 130 yards in receptions at Georgia Tech. Carmichael followed up in 1986 with 31 receptions for nearly 400 yards and was named to the AP’s second-team All-America squad. He captained the 1985 and ’86 Catamounts, and was a two-time first-team All-Southern Conference selection. Carmichael currently is an information specialist for Telamon Corp. in Martinsburg, W.Va.

Thomasville native Hoover arrived in Cullowhee in 1996 from Ledford High School as an overlooked running back. He left four seasons later as one of the most heralded players in Catamount football history. He currently is in his ninth season with the NFL’s Carolina Panthers, where he has become a fan favorite. As a Catamount, Hoover rushed for 3,616 career yards – second-most in school history – which included a WCU single-season record 1,663 yards in 1998. His 251 rushing yards and then-Southern Conference record-tying five touchdowns against VMI in ’98 are also school records. “Hoov,” as he is affectionately known, was a two-time All-SoCon selection, led his teams in rushing for three seasons and is listed in WCU’s all-time top 10 in game, season and career rushing yards, as well as game, season and career scoring.

McKennie became the first WCU track and field athlete to be named an NCAA All-American when he finished fourth in the 400-meter hurdle event at the 1989 NCAA Division I Track and Field Championships in Provo, Utah. The Riverdale, Ga., product was named All-SoCon a combined 21 times during his collegiate career from 1986-89, and placed in four indoor events (55-meter hurdles, 400-meter hurdles, 800-meter run and 4x100-meter relay) and four outdoor events (110-meter hurdles, 400-meter hurdles, 4x100-meter relay and 4x400-meter relay). McKennie was the SoCon champion for four consecutive years in the outdoor 400-meter hurdles, also winning three other events. He was ranked 38th in the world in the 400-meter hurdles in 1989-90, and participated in two United States Olympic Festivals.

Beverlin, who helped lead WCU to three straight NCAA regional meets between 1992-94, is the most-honored pitcher in WCU baseball history. He was a consensus All-America selection, SoCon Pitcher and Male Athlete of the Year and two-time All-Atlantic Region All-Star: He was named to the SoCon’s 75th Anniversary Baseball Team as one of the six best pitchers in the conference between 1921 and 1996. Pitching for the Catamounts for only three seasons, Beverlin won 27 games and was the all-time, single-season leader in wins (12) and led the nation with a school and conference season strikeout record of 154. Taken in the fourth round of the 1994 Major League Baseball draft by the Oakland Athletics, Beverlin pitched for the Cleveland Indians and Detroit Tigers. He is pitching coach at Georgia Southern University, on staff with former Catamounts Rodney Hennon ’93 and Mike Tidick ’95.
A Steady Pipeline of Former Catamount Athletes Is Flowing into the College Coaching Ranks
By DANIEL HOOKER ’01

Three former Western Carolina student-athletes and recent graduates recently joined a long line of Catamounts among the ranks of collegiate coaches. Men’s basketball player Josh Dees ’07 was hired at the College of Southern Idaho in May; former women’s soccer standout Heather Dittmer ’08 joined the staff at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte in mid-June; and most recently, women’s basketball star Monique Dawson ’08 signed on at Presbyterian College in July.

Dees, son of former WCU men’s hoops skipper Benny Dees, was hired as an assistant men’s basketball coach at the College of Southern Idaho by head coach Steve Gosar, who coincidentally played for the elder Dees at the University of Wyoming. “Josh brings energy, a great knowledge of the game and an incredible work ethic,” Gosar said. “He comes from a great basketball family and he has a bright future in coaching.”

The younger Dees spent last season as a graduate assistant at Colorado State University after his graduation from Western. He had transferred as a point guard from the University of Wyoming to WCU, where he earned All-Southern Conference academic team honors and was named Western’s Scholar Athlete of the Year in 2006-07. He graduated summa cum laude from WCU with a bachelor’s degree in political science/pre-law in spring 2007 and, in 2008, he received the WCU Political Science Distinguished Graduate Award.

On the soccer field, Dittmer finished her playing career at Western with 15 goals, tied for the fourth-highest in the program’s nine-year history. As a junior, the Marietta, Ga., native earned first-team All-Southern Conference and North Carolina Collegiate Sports Information Association All-State honors. That came one year after she became the first player in WCU history to earn Soccer Buzz “National Elite Team of the Week” honors as a sophomore. That same season, 2005, she netted the game-winning goal on a header that delivered Western its first-ever SoCon women’s soccer title.

“I am excited about having Heather Dittmer join our coaching staff,” said Jon Lipsitz, head women’s soccer coach at UNC-Charlotte. “During our pregame preparation for our game against Western Carolina last season, I remember telling our players about her, that she was a player that played with a great deal of intensity and passion. I really like the qualities that she possesses as a player and a person. To be able to watch her have an opportunity to take what she has learned as a player and continue to grow as a young coach is exciting for me.”

Here are former Catamount student-athletes coaching at institutions other than WCU:

David Abernethy ’99
Strength and conditioning, Clemson
Jayne Arledge ’79
Head, women’s basketball, North Greenville
Jason Beverlin ’01
Assistant, baseball, Georgia Southern
Johnny Bomar ’02 MAEd ’05
Head, track and field, King College
Geoff Collins ’94
Assistant, football, Central Florida
Quiletta Dunston ’03
Assistant, women’s basketball, Barton College

Lonnie Galloway ’94
Assistant, football, West Virginia
KiKi Glass ’05
Assistant, women’s basketball, USC Upstate
Judy Green ’84 MAEd ’85
Head, volleyball, Alabama
Rodney Hennon ’93
Head, baseball, Georgia Southern
Les Herrin ’72 MAEd ’73
Assistant head, football, Middle Tennessee
Josh Langley ’03
Assistant, track and field, Clemson

Chris Moore ’99
Head, baseball, Lander University
Ernest Moss ’00
Assistant, track and field, Davidson
Jesse Norman ’03 MAEd ’07
Head, track and field, UNC Asheville
David Price ’57 MAEd ’60
Assistant, track and field, East Carolina
Todd Raleigh ’91 MAEd ’94
Head, baseball, Tennessee
Brian Rucker ’04
Assistant, football, Lenoir-Rhyne
A familiar face will be prowling the home dugout of Childress Field at Hennon Stadium this spring as former baseball standout and ex-graduate assistant Alan Beck ’04 MAEd ’06 returns to Western in the role of assistant coach. Beck, a three-time All Southern Conference selection, will work primarily with Catamount hitters and serve as recruiting coordinator.

“Alan was a great player during his playing days in Cullowhee and has a great coaching background. He has a tireless work ethic. I heard nothing but great things from everyone I talked to about him,” said Bobby Moranda, entering his second season as WCU head coach. “He is a perfect fit to be our recruiting coordinator. As an alumnus who got it done while at Western, Alan knows what it takes to play here, and will help us raise the bar for Catamount baseball both in the classroom and on the field.”

Beck replaces Nick Mingione, who took a position with Mississippi State in mid-June after one season on staff at WCU. He comes to Western after serving as director of baseball operations under former Catamount skipper Todd Raleigh ’91 MAEd ’94 at the University of Tennessee. There, his primary responsibilities included managing all baseball camps, oversight of student managers, serving as an academic liaison and assistance with on-campus recruiting. Prior to joining the staff at UT, Beck spent the 2007 season as an assistant coach at Young Harris (Ga.) College, and his lone season there was highlighted by the school’s first appearance in the Junior College World Series.

Beck ended his four-year career as one of the most outstanding players in both Western Carolina and Southern Conference history, ranking on both the school and league career top-10 lists in several statistical categories and earning SoCon Player of the Year honors in 2003. The Baltimore Orioles selected Beck in the 16th round of the 2003 Major League Baseball draft, and he played for the Bluefield Orioles and Class A short-season Aberdeen IronBirds in 2003 before attending spring training in 2004. His professional career was cut short, however, after he suffered a severe wrist injury. He and Catamount cheerleading coach Kim Cherry ’01 were married in August.
alumni Achievements

Gary Carden ’58 MA ’64 shows off the barn at his Sylva home.
Western presented an honorary doctorate to Sylva native Gary N. Carden ’58 MA ’64 in August in recognition of his four decades of written works and storytelling performances that showcase Southern Appalachian culture, but this son of the mountains hasn’t always wanted to call the mountains “home.”

Carden was raised by grandparents during the 1940s in the isolated Rhodes Cove community, with formative years that included hoeing corn, listening to his great-grandmother tell stories, and, as Carden says, “acquiring the dialect and traditions of a Southern highlander.”

Carden enrolled at Western Carolina College, now WCU, in 1953 as an English major with a minor in drama and speech. As a student, he acted in theatrical productions and started WCU’s first literary magazine, Catastrophe. When Carden graduated with a bachelor’s degree, an elderly aunt admonished him, “Don’t you forget where you came from,” but the man novelist Lee Smith now calls “a national treasure, an Appalachian Garrison Keillor” tried anyway.

“I couldn’t get out of the mountains quick enough,” Carden told the Ramsey Center audience as he accepted his honorary doctorate of humane letters. “For 15 years, I taught, always near a city – Atlanta or Charlotte or Raleigh. I wanted to be near theaters, bookstores and nice restaurants. I wanted to get a little culture – all that culture I had been missing all those years.”

Carden taught high school English and drama outside the mountains for five years, returned to WCU to earn his master’s degree in English in 1964, and left the region again to resume his teaching career in colleges. “Eventually, I discovered I wasn’t all that thrilled,” he said. “I could never find the place I wanted to live, and I was homesick.”

On a summer day in 1972, Carden came back to Sylva for a visit and stopped by WCU’s Mountain Heritage Center to hear a presentation by mountain poet Jim Wayne Miller. “He didn’t read poetry like any poet I had ever heard,” Carden said. “He exhorted the audience, and talked to them like an old-timey preacher.” Miller kept repeating particular phrases, and one of those phrases was “come home.”

Carden took Miller’s words literally and metaphorically, coming back to Sylva to live in his grandparents’ house, and also embracing his native culture as a teacher, storyteller, novelist, historian, playwright and screenwriter. The extensive body of work he has produced since then includes the book “Mason Jars in the Flood and Other Stories,” the Appalachian Writers Association 2001 “Book of the Year”; his storytelling video “Blow the Tannery Whistle,” which has been shown numerous times on public television across North Carolina; and a play, “The Raindrop Waltz,” which has been staged more than 300 times.

In addition to the honorary doctorate from Western, Carden has received the North Carolina Folklore Society’s Brown-Hudson Award, and a children’s film for which he wrote the screenplay won the American Library Association’s 1998 Carnegie Medal for excellence in children’s video.
GRAND OLE OPERA
How a Small-Town Girl from Western North Carolina Wound up Performing in Concert Halls Around the World

By BILL STUDENC

For internationally acclaimed lyrical soprano Jacquelyn Culpepper '79, a recent performance at Lake Junaluska was more than just another concert stop in a storied career that took her to recital halls across the globe. It also was a homecoming for a professional vocalist who got her start in the mountains of Western North Carolina.

Culpepper, featured guest artist at the Breckenridge Music Festival in Colorado for the past 13 years, took center stage at Lake Junaluska's Stuart Auditorium in August. Former artist-in-residence at Haywood Community College, she now is a member of the music faculty at Davidson College. But it was at Western where her career took off. “One morning in the early 1970s, my mom took me to the home of Dr. Joyce Farwell in Cullowhee and said, ‘I don’t know if she has any talent, but she will sing on a park bench,’” Culpepper said. “Years later, I’m still singing, and have found park benches all over the world.”

Richard Trevarthan, who taught music theory at Western, said he recognized Culpepper’s talent early on. “I conducted, she sang and, oh heavens, she did a beautiful job,” said Trevarthan. “Of course, that was small potatoes compared to what she has done since, but she was already a star when she was in college.”

Culpepper earned her master’s degree in musical performance and literature at Baylor University, then moved to New York to begin a career that has included national PBS broadcasts of “An Evening with Cole Porter” and “Salute to Masterpiece Theatre.” She has performed solo concert tours worldwide and 85 roles in opera and oratorio during her quarter-of-a-century career. Highlights include a recital in Belgium to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Europe and performances in such prestigious venues as the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Atlanta’s Symphony Hall.

Culpepper said she is often asked during her travels what led to a career in lyrical performance for a young woman hailing from a rural place that many folks might suspect would lead not to the opera, but to the Grand Ole Opry. She considers it merely a matter of graduation of form. “The mountains are full of culture, and the people in the mountains appreciate and are proud of their land, their way of life and their art. My grandparents sang by shaped notes, and my parents were in a gospel quartet. There was always music in our home, our church and our schools,” she said. “To let that music graduate to more complex forms such as opera and classical music felt very natural.”

After her concert at Lake Junaluska, Culpepper continued her world-traveling ways, appearing again at the Breckenridge Music Festival before journeying to Taipei in Taiwan to perform, teach and direct in the American Performing Arts Academy.
A Western alumnus and current employee are among three former members of a local airport authority who took their case to court to prove Jackson County’s commissioners violated the Open Meetings Law, winning an annual statewide award recognizing nonjournalists who demonstrate a commitment to open government. Jim Rowell ’71, retired director of public information at WCU; Tom McClure, WCU’s director of regional affairs; and Sylva resident Eldridge Painter received the Lassiter Award during the N.C. Press Association’s annual meeting in July.

Sylva Herald Editor Lynn Hotaling ’72 MAEd ’80 nominated the three for the honor. “When the NCPA put out a call for Lassiter nominees, I thought immediately of McClure, Rowell and Painter,” Hotaling said. “They risked their own money to challenge the county, and they forced the release of closed session minutes that showed the validity of their claims.”

After commissioners decided during a 2005 closed session to remove McClure from the airport authority, he, Rowell and Painter invested more than $50,000 of their own money in attorney fees during a three-year legal battle. The men – angered by the secret vote – sued and, a few months later, won McClure’s reinstatement. “Just this past February, a federal court judge awarded the entire $50,000 in legal fees to them,” NCPA President Tim Dearman said. “At a time when judges rarely do this – despite the fact that our law allows it – and at a time when we are fighting for legislation to make such awards of legal fees automatic, this is truly the happiest of endings.”

Dearman called the Lassiter Award one of the most important the NCPA gives every year. Named in honor of William Lassiter, general counsel to the NCPA for nearly 50 years, it honors nonjournalists who demonstrate extra-strong commitment to open government and the defense of the First Amendment.

Rowell, who spent 30 years as a WCU spokesman, found an additional positive spin on the ordeal. “The real gain may be that some folks may realize that government must be open and accountable for its actions, and that due process, fairness and truth are important enough to some people to stand up and fight back,” he said. “The N.C. Press Association’s First Amendment Award really means something, and I’m proud to be a part in helping underscore the public’s right to know.”

Aside from the time and effort invested in the three-year battle, the three still owe thousands in legal fees not provided for in the judgment, Rowell said. They have established a fund to help retire the debt. Donations can be made to the Open Government Defense Fund, P.O. Box 261, Cullowhee, NC 28723.

Reprinted in edited format with the permission of the Sylva Herald.
In the weeks after she received her degree in social work, Sarah Hipp '07 found herself chatting on the phone with Angelina Jolie while weaving through traffic, deciphering Robert DeNiro’s thick accent in another call, and drawing a blank when Jackie Chan introduced himself in New York City. Hipp has made the acquaintance of Desmond Tutu, Mia Farrow and Cherie Booth. She traveled in North America and Africa with African pop and traditional music star Jean-Paul Samputu, and in Central America with Western North Carolina folk icon David LaMotte.

Hipp admits that it may seem like heady, name-droppy stuff for a quiet, longtime Jackson County resident with little interest in pop culture. In fact, after the challenges Hipp has faced, you’d think she’d like some peace and quiet.

Her teenage years were far more tumultuous than most. Then, in 2002, while a student at Southwestern Community College, she was involved in a head-on collision. The wreck could’ve taken her life, but instead cost her 11 surgeries on her face, jaw and knees, with more to come.

As she recovered, she transferred to the University of North Carolina Asheville and began work as a counselor at the Swannanoa 4H Education Center and at the offices of Black Mountain’s Lake Eden Arts Festival. But reverse-serendipity wasn’t done with her yet, and the Black Mountain house she shared with several other counselors burned to the ground, taking all of her belongings.

Back to Sylva she came, to the support of friends and family and the furthering of her education at WCU. She kept working at LEAF, a nonprofit organization that aims to build community and enrich lives through the arts, and, in the summer of 2006, things broke in a different direction. LaMotte, a performer Hipp had known before, began work with LEAF on an outreach program to Guatemala. Hipp assisted, and has since traveled to that country twice for the organization.

At a LEAF concert in 2006, Hipp met Samputu, and she traveled to Rwanda to meet a group of orphans of the Rwandan genocide. Samputu supported the orphans through his work with...
the Mizero organization. She and Samputu hit it off. “We have the same vision to help the children, so we stayed in touch,” Hipp said.

So when a touring Mizero performance troupe needed a manager, Hipp, who had helped organize their visit in a volunteer capacity, stepped into the role as part of a WCU internship at LEAF. Most of the young musicians – all children left orphaned by the genocide – had never left their rural village. Nearly everything the children saw was a first for them, from jetliners to ice cream to the ocean. Most hadn’t seen television. The tour stretched from coast to coast and into Canada, and included performances at the United Nations Millennium Celebration in New York. The group drew crowds and inspired financial support for outreach work for the orphans of Rwanda, and, once things are up and running, Hipp has a standing offer to manage the group’s international programs.

“I’ve always had a desire to work with kids, but I can certainly sympathize and empathize with these children more because of my background,” said Hipp. “I understand what it feels like to be displaced, or to not know how things are going to work out. A lot of these kids are going through that – they don’t know how they’re going to make it from day to day.”

And what about all the star power? The experience with the U.N. Millennium Project led Hipp to help with an effort to create a documentary featuring eight development goals toward the elimination of extreme poverty. The U.N. hopes to recruit eight film stars – one for each goal – to help make the film. The responsibility fell to Hipp to give candidates an overview of the program.

And Chan? Her meeting with the star of the “Rush Hour” films and other action-comedies was by chance, at a Mizero performance in New York. She was helping the kids get ready when he walked up to introduce himself. They said their hellos, but when it was obvious that Hipp had drawn a blank, he said, “I was in ‘Rush Hour.’”

“Oh me, too,” she answered. “Traffic here is awful. Nothing like it is at home.”

Reprinted in edited form from the Southern Highland Reader, an online journal based in Sylva. Publisher Bill Graham was a writer with the Western Carolinian during his college days.
Western often is a starting point for long-lasting relationships between students and faculty and staff. That collegiate connection holds strong for Julian Rance ’01 MPA ’03 and Robert Caruso, former vice chancellor for student affairs, both now living in near Charlotte.

“At Western, Dr. Caruso was instrumental in mentoring me in my development as a campus leader,” said Rance, who held leadership roles such as co-coordinator of Project CARE, which seeks to improve the academic performance and retention of African-American students.

It was through Project CARE that Rance and Caruso began their mentor-mentee relationship. “I valued Julian’s ideas that were incorporated into the program, so I included him on different committees and groups that related directly to student life. We grew to know and respect each other,” said Caruso.

After graduation, Rance often listed Caruso as a reference in job searches. “When I was hired as campus director for Citizen Schools in Charlotte, Dr. Caruso was contacted to share his insight about my experience and skills. He offered a glowing report, but he also took interest in the program,” said Rance. “Soon after I accepted the job, Dr. Caruso and I began to visit each other. He expressed the desire to get involved with the program. Throughout the fall, he visited my staff and students. Before long, my kids knew ‘Dr. Bob!’”

A national nonprofit organization that generally works with low-income middle school students, Citizen Schools identifies volunteers to work with afterschool students in 10-week apprenticeships focusing on a craft, hobby or skill. “We want students to learn 21st-century skills, developing critical and analytical thinking, oral communication, and business and computer skills,” said Rance.

Caruso, who thought he could “lend a hand” to the program, became a Citizen Teacher last spring. “My professional life didn’t allow me much time to volunteer, although I always wanted to help the community. Now that I’m retired, I have the time to do so, and I developed a career-planning apprenticeship, largely because this important area is often overlooked in middle school,” said Caruso. His students explored career paths and prepared themselves for their futures in the work force, visiting a career fair, preparing resumes, taking career assessment tests and conducting mock job interviews.

At semester’s end, Caruso attended a Citizen Schools “WOW! Celebration,” a student-led showcase of the apprenticeships. “It was very rewarding to see my students giving their final presentations with polish and confidence. They discussed online career resources, professional dress, interview skills, career interest testing and college planning,” said Caruso. “I look forward to teaching another apprenticeship next spring.”

So does Rance. “As I continue to grow into my role and take on new challenges, it’s great to know Dr. Caruso is nearby to lend the same support and encouragement that allowed me to be successful as a student and a leader. He’s still reaching out,” Rance said. “The only difference now is that roles are reversed, and my goal is to help him be successful working with middle school students.”
President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Works Progress Administration is the star of a nonfiction book by Nick Taylor ’67, who studied on a campus graced with architecture resulting from a historic New Deal construction boom.

Taylor spent more than five years researching “American-Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA.” The 600-plus page book – Taylor’s 11th – was published by Bantam in March to positive reviews. The Chicago Sun-Times called it a “fair and balanced,” “well-written” and thorough account of the WPA.

FDR created the WPA by executive order in 1935. Its purpose was to provide relief for employable people who, in the midst of the Great Depression, simply could not find jobs. “Any skill that people had, if they were out of work, the WPA would try to find a job that used that skill,” Taylor said.

Between 1935 and 1943, the WPA employed 8.5 million men and women – including 3.3 million people at its peak. Its workers performed an amazing array of functions, from laying waterlines and digging up arrowheads to refurbishing toys and sewing clothing. The WPA is best known for producing works of art and impressive construction projects. Writers and artists including Saul Bellow, Richard Wright and Jackson Pollock were employees; LaGuardia Airport and Camp David were among the WPA’s many works of architecture.

Like many of its proponents, Taylor credits the WPA with alleviating the effects of the Depression, developing the country’s infrastructure and helping it prepare for World War II. He argues that the WPA changed the nation, with most parts of America in some way continuing to bear its marks.

Western today enjoys the benefits of a WPA project, Breese Gymnasium. Construction began in 1937, and the gym was ready to use by September 1939. According to an October 1938 school newspaper, the building’s stone “was quarried near the college, each stone being cut by hand before being laid.” (Five buildings on the WCU campus, including Madison Residence Hall, McKee Building and Hoey Auditorium, came about through another New Deal construction program, the Public Works Administration.)

Taylor, who lives in New York with his wife, Barbara, a television news reporter, was born in Asheville, grew up in Waynesville and maintains connections to WCU and Western North Carolina. On a weekend in mid-July that coincided with a 1960s alumni reunion at Western, Taylor read from “American-Made” during an appearance at City Lights Bookstore in Sylva.

The reading was “standing room only,” reported Chris Wilcox ’95, City Lights assistant manager. “We were sure tickled with the response. It dovetailed nicely with the ’60s reunion. A lot of his former classmates were here,” Wilcox said.

Taylor is a former newspaper reporter – he launched his career on the staff of WCU’s student publication, the Western Carolinian – whose work has appeared in magazines such as The New York Times Magazine, Esquire, Conde Nast Traveler and The New Yorker.
1963
Jerry Douglas McKinney has returned to Great Falls, Mont., where he is active in politics and various community groups. McKinney retired in 2001 from Western Carolina, where he was a professor in the criminal justice program.

1965
Lt. Col. Willard F. Lochridge IV recently participated in a change-of-command ceremony in Verplanck, N.Y., in connection with his new position as director of naval operations for the New York Naval Militia, with which he has been employed since 2001. During the change-of-command ceremony, Lochridge, a retired Marine Corps member, was presented with the following citations: a Life saving Medal, the New York State Conspicuous Service Medal and the Coast Guard Commendation Medal. The Life Saving Medal came after he led a crew of men in the rescue of two downed sailors in stormy waters in the Long Island Sound.

1968
Richard E. Shaw was recently named Sumter (S.C.) Rotarian of the year. Shaw was honored for his service to the Sumter Rotary Club; his service as lay Eucharistic minister and adult Sunday school teacher at his church; and his participation in organizations, including the Historical Commission, Light of...
By Peggy Manning

**CONDITION: IMPROVING**

A Recent Graduate Tackles the Task of Helping Re-staff a Local Hospital

Hope Crisis Pregnancy Center, Kairos Prison Ministry, Sumter Merchants Association and the Central South Carolina chapter of the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors. Shaw has been a Rotarian for 34 years, and has served as Rotary Club president in Bryson City, West Asheville and Sumter. Shaw is currently a personal financial representative for Allstate Financial Services LLC. Shaw and his wife, Marilyn Haddock Shaw, have two daughters and six grandchildren.

Zach Railey, son of Ann and Danny Railey, won a silver medal for the United States in the Finn series sailing competition at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Zach started sailing at 8 years old. The Raileys live in Clearwater, Fla.

Western Carolina University Hall of Fame member Nora Lynn Finch MAEd ’71 has been named the associate commissioner for women’s basketball operations and senior woman administrator for the Atlantic Coast Conference. Finch spent the previous 31 years with N.C. State University, most recently as the athletic department’s senior associate director and senior woman administrator. A four-sport athlete for WCU from 1967 to 1970, she was a member of the 1967-68 women’s undefeated basketball team. Finch was awarded Western’s 1997-98 Alumni Association Professional Achievement Award and a Peak Performer Award for Outstanding Graduate in the College of Education.

Joe D’Alessandris MA ’79 is in his first season as assistant offensive line coach with the Kansas City Chiefs. D’Alessandris (pronounced dal-uh-SAN-dris) has a 30-year coaching career, including 26 years in the collegiate ranks, having most recently served six seasons as the offensive line coach at Georgia Tech. While D’Alessandris spent time with three professional teams in the Canadian Football League and the World League of American Football, this is his first position with the NFL. At Western, D’Alessandris was a three-year starting offensive

The husband-and-wife photography/cinematography/ videography team of Deni and Will McIntyre can add award-winners to the list of all they do. “Teaching the Holocaust,” a McIntyre-produced documentary for the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching, recently won silver Telly Awards in the categories of social issues, education-academic use and charitable/not-for-profit use. The film was directed by Deni McIntyre, who attended Western before graduating from Wake Forest University, with cinematography by Will McIntyre. NCCAT’s Holocaust Education Program helps teachers more effectively teach the lessons of the Holocaust. Will McIntyre is a board member of the NCCAT Development Foundation.

Haywood Regional Medical Center’s new employment coordinator has a huge task — recruiting and hiring the staff necessary for the hospital to become fully operational after recently regaining the federal certification it lost in February. Since June 16, Julia Queen ’08 has been diligently processing hundreds of applications for job openings at the hospital.

“As we hire and train additional staff, we can bring the patients in and provide safe and effective health care.” Queen said. “If we don’t have patients, we don’t have revenue. It takes team effort to expedite and implement a thorough and complete hiring process, and this is the approach that HRMC is taking.”

Every day since Queen began her new job, she spends hours reading stacks of applications and completes the follow-up tasks of scheduling background checks, drug screenings and physicals, and orientation for the new employees. She said she realizes the urgency of fully staffing the hospital, which has led to changes to improve and expedite the hiring process while making sure adequate orientation and on-the-job training standards are sustained. “The changes implemented have made a big difference in the turnaround time,” Queen said. “It’s exciting when managers thank you for being able to expedite the hiring process and have the employees start working for their departments.”

Queen received her associate degree as a registered nurse 17 years ago. The single mother of four returned to Western, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in nursing in May, graduating with honors. “A couple of years ago, when I was getting ready to begin my clinical rotation in management at WCU, I chose Haywood Regional as the medical facility to complete this rotation. Usually, a nursing student can pick one mentor, but I wanted to shadow multiple mentors. I was very, very impressed with the managers, house supervisors and nurses that I shadowed at Haywood Regional,” Queen said. “That’s when I knew I wanted to work at this hospital.”
1978
Kevin Hegel investigates cases of fraud, kickbacks, financial misconduct, embezzlement and conflicts of interest as a senior investigator with the Ethics and Compliance Office of U.S. Foodservice, his employer since 1992. His wife, Darlene, is an instructor at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, S.C.; his son, Francis, is in the Marines; and his daughter, Kristen, attends high school and is a figure skater.

1981
In July, Tim Hubbs MBA ’81 became chief executive officer of Angel Medical Center in Franklin, his hometown. Hubbs previously was president and CEO of Drake Enterprises. He served on the board of trustees of Angel Medical from 1996 to 2004. From 1984 to 1991, he was employed with East Tennessee Children’s Hospital. He and his wife, Michele, live in Franklin.

1987
Michael Crawford, originally of Sylva, has been appointed to the top regional management position with the accounting firm Dixon Hughes. Crawford will oversee the operations of Dixon Hughes offices in Greenville and Spartanburg, S.C., and Asheville, Hendersonville and Boone. Crawford serves on the boards of Crossfire Ministries and Asheville Christian Academy, and has an active leadership role in Biltmore Baptist Church.

1988
Gerald W. Neal MA is an adjunct professor of education at Pfeiffer University in Misenheimer. An article Neal wrote about school competition was on the January cover of an international journal based in Russia, and his book, “Quiet Desperation,” was released in May. He is scheduled to present on the topic of the reluctant learner at a statewide education conference in October in Raleigh.

1989
Marty Clark is assistant athletic director in charge of team purchasing and licensing at Indiana University. Clark is responsible for purchasing, inventory and storage of all apparel and equipment for the athletic department’s 24 sports, and is in his 19th year with IU. While at WCU, he spent four seasons as a student equipment manager with the Catamounts football team. Clark, originally of Waynesville, lives in Bloomington with his wife, Marianne, and their daughters, Ashley and Brittany.

recently moved to the Charlotte area and are producing a Christian television program.

1994
Haywood Community College welcomed Chad Bledsoe as the vice president of academic and workforce development in August. Prior to this, Bledsoe was dean of career technologies at Surry Community College, a faculty member in computer technologies at Wake Technical Community College and division chair at Wilkes Community College.

In December, Gregory Miles Moore MAEd ‘98 (above) was awarded a law degree from the Sturm College of Law at the University of Denver. Moore earned a master’s degree in international studies from the University of Denver in March. He is an attorney with the law firm of Ryley Carlock & Applewhite in Denver.

1996
Elizabeth Gillespie McRae MA was elected to membership in the Historical Society of North Carolina. McRae is an associate professor of history at Western Carolina University. The Historical Society is limited to 75 members and is the oldest organization of professional historians in the state.

1997

2000
Elaine Barnes MAEd has been named director of Student Success Services at Haywood Community College. Prior to this appointment, Barnes, a 25-year veteran of higher education, served as Haywood Community College’s coordinator of the Teaching and Learning Center; coordinator of Haywood’s peer tutor program and lead reading instructor for the college. Barnes has taught developmental reading, English, math and study skills. During her service at HCC, Barnes has been recognized in Who’s Who Among College Teachers six times and received the Haywood Community College Excellence in Teaching Award in 2000, 2005 and 2007. Barnes received her graduate degree after 20 years of teaching and credited WCU professors Barbara Bell and Kevin Pennington with helping her achieve post-degree success.

“The classes I took with them provided practical strategies that I applied directly to my own classes,” she said.

Matthew E. Chadwick MPM ‘05 is the new director of enrollment services at Regent University in Virginia Beach, Va., a small, private liberal arts Christian University with a student population of approximately 4,500. Chadwick directs the group that manages enrollment for each of Regent’s eight schools, implementing strategic processes for communications management and student enrollment. He also will help develop the new recruitment and marketing strategy for the university.

After working for leading marketing agencies in New York, Greenville, S.C., and Atlanta, Mike Crisp recently founded Crisp Public Relations, an independent business communication practice in McDowell County. Working with clients worldwide, Crisp helps companies and organizations maintain relationships with international trade media, customers and other key audiences. He celebrated his first year in business in June.

Steve Melton, who graduated with a degree in environmental health sciences, is an ecological services manager, field biologist and vice president and business partner with Equinox Environmental Consultation & Design Inc. in Asheville. Melton lives in Fairview.

Joseph Turner has joined Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College to instruct the real estate appraisal certificate program. Turner also works in his family’s real estate appraisal business, and has been appraising real estate in the area for the past seven years.

2003
Darwin Brandis (with “Saturday Night Live” performer Will Forte, right) works as a lighting technician in the film and television business. Brandis recently finished work on two comedy films: “Nailed,” starring Jessica Biel and Jake Gyllenhaal; and “Port City,” starring Jodie Sweetin and Barbara Alyn Woods. He is currently at work on a comedy with “Saturday Night Live” players Jason Sudeikis and Will Forte. Brandis and his wife, Kathryn Maynard ’02, live in Wilmington.

2004
The town of Waynesville named Alison Melnikova MPA ’07 assistant town manager in July. Melnikova joined the town as a management intern in July 2006, while attending Western Carolina. She has been active with the watershed advisory committee and the public art commission, and has helped coordinate the temporary relocation of Waynesville’s Police Department while a new station is built. In April, she graduated from a municipal administration course offered by the School of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She and her husband, Oleg Melnikova, live in Waynesville.

2005

2006
Suzanne Dancy Holtzclaw (above) is the new volunteer coordinator for the North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher. In that role, Holtzclaw is responsible for recruiting, retaining and managing more than 150 volunteers in every aspect of aquarium operations. Holtzclaw and her husband, Shane Holtzclaw, reside at Kure Beach.

Phillip Aaron Vassey graduated from East Carolina University in May with a graduate degree in criminal justice. He and his wife, M. Elizabeth Adams, who also is pursuing her master’s degree in criminal justice from ECU, live in Rutherfordton and have a daughter, Katie.
The Magazine of Western Carolina University
Suite 420, H.F. Robinson Building
Western Carolina University
Cullowhee, NC 28723

Please send story ideas and suggestions to
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**OCTOBER 2008**

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30**
Theater – “The War of the Worlds,” based on the novel by H.G. Wells and directed by Steve Carlisle, Honors College associate dean and humanities program director. Scholarships fundraiser. 7:30 p.m. Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-2479

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12**

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16**
Theater – “Othello,” by William Shakespeare and directed by Claire Eye of the stage and screen department. 7:30 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday, 3 p.m. Sunday. Hoey Auditorium. (828) 227-2479

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13**

Lectures, Concerts and Exhibitions Series – Adam Pascal’s “Broadway State of Mind,” featuring classic rock and Broadway compositions. 7:30 p.m. Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-2479

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22**

Catamount football – vs. Appalachian State. Battle for the Old Mountain Jug. 3 p.m. E.J. Whitmire Stadium/Bob Waters Field. (828) 227-7338

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31**

Galaxy of Stars Series – “The Blues Brothers Revival,” a musical that follows Jake, who is stuck in purgatory, and Elwood’s efforts to get him into heaven. 7:30 p.m. Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-2479

**NOVEMBER 2008**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1**

Catamount football – vs. Chattanooga. Hall of Fame Day. 1 p.m. E.J. Whitmire Stadium/ Bob Waters Field. (828) 227-7338

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9**

Catamount volleyball – vs. Chattanooga. 2 p.m. Ramsey Regional Activity Center. (828) 227-7338

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18**

Chancellor’s Speaker Series – Forensic anthropologist Kathy Reichs, best-selling author of the mystery novels that inspired the Fox television series “Bones.” 7:30 p.m. Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-2479

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19**

The Smothers Brothers – One of the most successful comedy teams in history. 7:30 p.m. Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-2479

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21**

Galaxy of Stars Series – “It’s a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play,” a N.C. Stage Company production set in a radio station circa 1946. 7:30 p.m. Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-2479

**DECEMBER 2008**

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3**

WCU board of trustees meeting – 9:30 a.m. Room 510, H.F. Robinson Administration Building. (828) 227-7100

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12**

Galaxy of Stars Series – “A Red, Hot … & Blue! White Christmas!,” song-and-dance revue that includes ragtime, jazz, big band, swing, rock and disco. 7:30 p.m. Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-2479

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13**

Fall commencement – 2 p.m. Ramsey Regional Activity Center. (828) 227-7495

**JANUARY 2009**

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 16**

Lectures, Concerts and Exhibitions Series – WCU Trumpet Festival, featuring jazz and bop trumpeter Bobby Shew. 7:30 p.m. Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-2479

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28**

Lectures, Concerts and Exhibitions Series – African Children’s Choir, African song and dance. 7:30 p.m. Fine and Performing Arts Center. (828) 227-2479