The Mountain Heritage Center website has a new look. Check it out at http://www.wcu.edu/mhc/

EXHIBITS—2006/2007

Gallery A
Migration of the Scots-Irish People
Traces this group of Appalachian settlers from Ulster to Pennsylvania, the Shenandoah Valley, and into western North Carolina. A permanent exhibit. (A Mountain Heritage Center Exhibit)

On-Line Exhibits
View these exhibits at http://www.wcu.edu/mhc/exhibits
•After the War
•Horace Kephart
•Southern Appalachian Quilts

Gallery B
Cherokee Baskets in the Twentieth Century – Part II
November 7 – January 26
(A Mountain Heritage Center Exhibit)

Gallery C
After the War Conflict and Domestic Change in the North Carolina Mountains
Through 2007
How world wars and their aftermath have shaped the lives of people and communities in western North Carolina. (A Mountain Heritage Center Exhibit with support from the North Carolina Humanities Council)

On-Line Exhibits
Airing of the Coverlets: A Closer Look
February 7 – April 30
(A Mountain Heritage Center Exhibit)

Traveling Programs
The one-hour programs include hands-on components, craft activities, and are adaptable for grades K-8.

A Day in the Life—Pioneer life in southern Appalachian
Reading a Quilt—The diversity and history of quilts

SCOTT PHILYAW NAMED TO LEAD MUSEUM
A historian who ruminated through Appalachian mountain artifacts and archives as an undergraduate student at Western Carolina University has been tapped to lead the museum where he once toiled as an intern. Scott Philyaw, WCU associate professor of history, is the new director of the Mountain Heritage Center, the university’s regional museum that studies, documents and interprets the culture and history of Southern Appalachia. The appointment was effective April 1.

“We have searched far and wide for the right person to move our Mountain Heritage Center forward, and we are delighted that someone who grew up in these very mountains is coming on board to ensure that the fine work of this important cultural resource continues,” said Clifton Merritt, assistant vice chancellor for advancement and external affairs. “Scott Philyaw is no stranger to the Mountain Heritage Center and, in fact, played a key role in developing the center’s inaugural exhibit when he was an undergraduate student at WCU.”

Philyaw, who earned his bachelor’s degree in history from WCU in 1983, traveled to Northern Ireland during his senior year to conduct research and arrange for loans of artifacts for the center’s inaugural exhibition on the migration of the Scots-Irish people. That display, which chronicles the arrival of settlers from Scotland and Ireland in the mountains of Western North Carolina, has evolved to become the museum’s permanent exhibit.

After graduating from WCU in 1983, Philyaw went to earn his master’s degree in history from the College of William and Mary and his doctorate in history from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. A member of WCU’s history faculty since 1996, Philyaw assisted the Mountain Heritage Center with several exhibits. Working with WCU students, he co-authored two pamphlets for the Blue Ridge Parkway, including “The Natural Diversity of Linville Falls,” which won the 2002 Excellence in Interpretation Award for Trail Guides from the National Park Service Cooperating Association.

Although he’ll be directing a museum that focuses on traditions of the past, Philyaw has plans to take its activities into the future. “The Mountain Heritage Center already has a successful record, and one of my goals for the center is to build on its successful outreach efforts by doing more community programming and educational programs for the public schools, from kindergarten through the 12th grade,” he said. “I also wish to continue the outreach work the center has done with other regional museums and historic societies.”

For Philyaw, who was born in Lenoir and grew up in Morganton, the lure of the history of the mountains goes farther back than his undergraduate days. “My interest in the history of this region began when I used to beg my grandmother for stories about her youth in northern Jackson County!” he said. “I loved her stories of her father, John Hips, who worked in the timber business, of her Cherokee neighbors and of Sunday shopping trips in Sylva.”

New Light on Old Times
For exploration of candles, lamps, and lanterns. Experience tallow, beeswax, oil, and electric forms of lighting.

Newspaper of the Mountain Heritage Center, Vol. XII, No. 2  Fall 2006

Programs That Come To You!
Traveling Trunks
Designed to supplement the teaching of North Carolina history, science, and math.
Portable trunks filled with books, touchable samples, and curriculum-based activities. Available for 2-4 week loan periods.

The Appalachian Garden—Natural and cultural aspects of gardening
A Day in the Life—Pioneer life in southern Appalachian
Reading a Quilt—The diversity and history of quilts

A Visit From
A Civil War Soldier
A close look at life in the 1860s.

Appalachian Posttimes
How our ancestors passed the time on the back porch or out in the yard.

Covering Up
An introduction to the rich textile history of the southern Appalachian region.

A Day in the Life—Pioneer life in southern Appalachian
Reading a Quilt—The diversity and history of quilts

Travel Programs
The one-hour programs include hands-on components, craft activities, and are adaptive for grades K-8.

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LUCKY STAR RETURNS HOME

When Andrea Chambers attended WCU in the mid-1970s, she likely never expected to discover a “Lucky Star.” But that is exactly what happened.

As a student, Andrea made the acquaintance of a local lady who presented her with a quilt. While Andrea does not remember much about the circumstances of the gift, or the name of the individual who made the quilt, it became a treasured gift from her university days. The Western alum, who now lives in Connecticut, was glad to find that her alma mater maintained a museum dedicated to regional heritage. Ms. Chambers felt that the quilt should be returned to the Jackson County area and recently repositioned it here.

The quilt pattern is called Lucky Star. The star has a yellow center, pink and printed fabric diamonds, and white triangles. The quilt is in good condition and measures approximately 78” long by 69” wide. We are pleased to add this wonderful donation to the Center’s growing quilt collection.

DEITZ FAMILY WINS WCU’S MOUNTAIN HERITAGE AWARD

The 2006 Mountain Heritage Award goes to a family whose roots run deep into the musical heritage of Western North Carolina - the Deitz Family of Jackson County’s Tahman’s Creek community.

Members of the family have been performing string band music across Western North Carolina for more than 30 years, keeping alive the traditional fiddle and banjo tunes passed down to them by a well-known Jackson County musician, the late Harry Cagle, who had learned the songs from Samantha Bungarner, the legendary Jackson County performer who made some of the first recorded country music in the nation.

The Deitz Family band - including brothers Joe and Bill Deitz; Bill’s wife, Delores; and the couple’s daughter, Chrysalis - shares a family lineage that dates back to some of the earliest settlers of Jackson County’s Tahman’s Creek area. Raised in a musical family, Joe and Bill Deitz grew up listening to their parents play music by the light of a kerosene lamp. In 1972, Bill Deitz joined Cagle in the reformation of a group called Harry Cagle and the Country Cousins.

From 1972 through 1990, Harry Cagle and the Country Cousins performed all across Western North Carolina. Over the years, the group grew as Joe, Delores and Chrysalis Deitz joined Cagle, Bill Deitz and Phil Nevell on stage. The Deitz’s have performed as a family since Harry Cagle’s passing in 1990.

The family’s relationship with Mountain Heritage Day goes back to the festival’s origins. The university held a “Founders Day” exhibition on the last Saturday in September in 1974, and one of the music groups performing at that event was a trio that included Harry Cagle and Bill Deitz. That event became Mountain Heritage Day the following year, and Harry Cagle and the Country Cousins, including members of the Deitz Family, performed at every edition of the festival from 1975 through 1990. The family has appeared at every Mountain Heritage Day since then.

The Deitz’s also have taken the stage at the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival, Asheville’s Shindig on the Green, and at the 1982 World’s Fair in Knoxville, Tennessee. Many performances have been in the Jackson/Macon areas at benefits, family reunions, nursing homes and school festivals. Some of the family’s work has been as a group and some has been as individuals or pairs. The Mountain Heritage Center, for example, has often hosted just Bill and Joe for youth programs that particularly need their educational skills, musical ability, and charm.

Ted Coyle, a member of WCU’s anthropology faculty and editor of the North Carolina Folklore Journal, said this about today’s honorees: “The Deitz Family makes mountain music in the best sense of the term. It is the music that gets us off of our couches and down to our church or community center, where we once again come face-to-face with the people who make this place special. The family’s music is rooted in the good taste of generations of musicians who have been more interested in making the kinds of music that suited them than in sticking to one particular style or tradition.”

DEITZ FAMILY of Tahman’s Creek perform at the Mountain Heritage Center.
Meet Christie Fulcher...

Sitting through hundred-year-old maps with a local librarian was Christie Fulcher’s introduction to original historical research. She was eight years old.

In the twenty-some-old years since then, Christie earned a BA in history from Mills College in Oakland, California and worked in a small historical museum in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Currently, Christie is a history graduate student at Western Carolina University and is serving as a graduate assistant at the Mountain Heritage Center.

Having spent most of her life in mountain tourist towns, Christie has a deep and abiding interest in the history of mountain tourism and is working to continue to hone her skills as a historian and prepare for doctoral work.

Winter Gatherings
Old Time & Bluegrass Music
Returns to the Center

Add a little warmth to your winter evenings and join us December through March for our Old Time Music and Bluegrass gatherings. The first Thursday of the month features a concert from 7:00-8:00 p.m. by a regional band. Following the concert there is an opportunity to “jam” with the featured band. Musicians of all ages and experience are welcome to join. Open jams are held the 3rd Thursday of the month from 7:00-9:00 p.m. So come pick a bit or just sit and listen to the rich musical traditions of western North Carolina.

Book A Traveling Trunk
The Appalachian Garden traveling trunk, designed for 3rd grade curriculum, is the latest addition to the Center’s traveling trunk series. Other trunks, designed for 4th grade curriculum, include Arti-Facts! “Party Foods: 1950s Style.” 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. Reservations required.

For the latest information about Mountain Heritage Center exhibits and programs, call (828) 227-7129 or visit www.wcu.edu/mhc/

Meet Christie Fulcher...

Christie Fulcher working with Horace Kephart artifacts at the Mountain Heritage Center.