Cullowhee Revitalization Endeavour Invites Participation Through WCU Service Learning

Todd Henry, a student in Debby Singleton’s parks and recreation management class, presented research at WCU’s 2007 Undergraduate Expo that suggested a river park could boost economic development near campus along Old Cullowhee Road, and the presentation got people talking. What would spark economic development in “Old Cullowhee?” How could WCU faculty, students and staff support business owners and residents interested in revitalizing the area so close to campus?

That was the buzz that brought together a handful of community members, many with ties to WCU, last spring. In meetings at The Music Village and the Mad Batter, discussion turned to action, and an organization was formed called the Cullowhee Revitalization Endeavour, or CuReE.

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Co-chaired by Cullowhee residents

Mary Jean Herzog, professor of educational leadership and foundations, and Christopher Blake, assistant professor of English, CuReE formed around a vision of a vibrant community that reflects the culture, history and natural beauty of the area.

“When you begin talking with Cullowhee residents, you quickly notice that they care deeply about this place,” said Blake. “They’re concerned about issues like litter and traffic accidents along Old Cullowhee Road, and many would love to see that stretch spruced up a little.”

CuReE is working with WCU to invite faculty, staff and students to develop service learning activities that range from surveying business owners and residents about their needs to planning public art and community events. The group already has “adopted the highway” along Old Cullowhee Road. Plans are being developed to landscape the grassy area near the entrance to WCU and Monteith.

The first session focused on the economy of Western North Carolina with remarks from a panel led by Bardo. Panel members from WCU included William “Tibb” Thompson, Jr., senior policy fellow at the Institute for the Economy and the Future; Ronald A. Johnson, dean of the College of Business; Linda Stanford, dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences; and Chris Cooper, assistant professor of political science and director of the master’s degree program in public affairs.

An archived video stream of the panel discussion can be accessed through the chancellor’s Web site from the updates and speeches page at www.wcu.edu/364.asp

Open Meeting
CuReE will meet at the Cullowhee Cafe at 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 26.

Cullowhee Revitalization Endeavour members include (from left) faculty members Maurice Phipps, Mary Jean Herzog, Brian Railwhack and Christopher Blake, and Cullowhee business owner Lori Richards. Pictured at right is the site of what will be CuReE’s first landscaping project outside The Music Village.
FBI Scientist Leads Forensic Program

Longtime FBI special agent Mark R. Wilson, one of the nation’s foremost experts in the use of DNA evidence in criminal investigations, has joined WCU to lead its academic program in forensic science.

Wilson, who worked with the FBI for 23 years before retiring in June, developed and successfully implemented the use of human mitochondrial DNA typing on evidence obtained from criminal casework, especially involving human bones and hair. He was the first person to testify to results of this type of DNA analysis in the United States and Canada.

“Mark is a pioneer in DNA and trace evidence analysis, and his extensive experience as a practitioner of forensic science will provide invaluable insight to our students,” said Wendy Ford, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Wilson most recently helped establish and manage the new chemical biological sciences unit of the FBI laboratory in Quantico, Va. This unit included a new research effort dedicated to integrating traditional forensic examinations with the emerging threats of biological, chemical and radiological agents.

He earned his bachelor’s degree in biology and chemistry from Azusa Pacific College, master’s degree in biology from California State University and doctorate in biosciences from George Mason University.

“The technical capabilities of forensic science are following significant advances in the basic sciences,” said Wilson. “Particularly strong areas for rapid growth are DNA analysis, genomics, high-resolution image processing, and elemental and isotopic chemical analysis. I’m looking forward to working with students and faculty in these and other related areas.”

—By BILL STUDENC

Cullowhee Revitalization continued from cover

Gap Road with help from area Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops.

Cullowhee business owners, such as Lori Richards, owner of The Music Village and Suds Your Duds laundromat, are excited about the efforts. “CuRvE is offering to partner with businesses to enhance the beauty of Cullowhee and encourage people to spend more time here,” said Richards. “That’s good for business.”

CuRvE’s short-term goals include hosting roadside and river clean-up activities, enhancing landscaping, documenting the history of the Cullowhee community along the Tuckaseigee River, and building relationships within the community and with community revitalization partners.

Long-term goals include supporting current businesses and attracting new dining, shopping and entertainment venues; building safe paths that connect the area to campus; and increasing the availability of clean, attractive and affordable housing.

In addition, CuRvE members will explore the possibility of a park along the Tuckaseigee River that features fishing spots, picnic tables, trails and a whitewater recreation area.

Duke Energy already plans, as a result of relocation and lease agreements, to improve canoeing and kayaking access to the river in Cullowhee, enhance the entrance, construct additional parking and add landscaping.

“This part of Cullowhee, if more vibrant, could give students another reason to want to spend more time on campus and here in our community,” said Maurice Phipps, a member of the CuRvE steering committee and professor of health, physical education and recreation.

Brian Railback, CuRvE’s WCU liaison and dean of the Honors College, said there are many opportunities for WCU students, faculty and staff to put their knowledge to work along Old Cullowhee Road.

“Participating with CuRvE ties in to the university’s QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan) in some major engagement areas,” said Railback. “The Cullowhee area presents a wonderful environment for sustainable economic development.”

Norman West, owner of Cullowhee Real Estate, remembers when the section of Old Cullowhee Road at WCU’s northeastern entrance hosted a range of restaurants and about 45 businesses. “I think CuRvE can help individual business owners work together,” said West. “I hope it will do some good.”

For more information about CuRvE, the Cullowhee Revitalization Endeavour, check out www.gocullowhee.org or e-mail cullowheerestoration@gmail.com.

To contact the Center for Service Learning, call 227-7184.

—By TERESA KILLIAN

Trumpet Festival Set for Jan. 18-20

Legendary trumpet virtuoso Allen Vizzutti will be the featured performer at the sixth annual Western Carolina University Trumpet Festival, the largest event of its kind in the United States, taking place Jan. 18-20.

The festival brings trumpeters from more than a dozen states to campus every year to attend clinics, concerts and exhibits. The festival includes a performance by a mass ensemble expected to encompass 150 musicians on stage at one time. This year’s festival concert is set for 5 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 19, in the recital hall of the Coulter Building.

Vizzutti, the headline performer, has shared the stage with Chick Corea, Doc Severinsen, the NBC Tonight Show Band, Chuck Mangione, Woody Herman and many others. He will perform a classical trumpet recital at 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 18, in the recital hall of the Coulter Building.

During a jazz trumpet concert at 8 p.m. Jan. 19 in the WCU Fine and Performing Arts Center, Vizzutti will be joined by the Pavel Wolosok Trio, consisting of WCU music faculty members Pavel Wolosok on piano and Eliot Wadopian on bass, and Byron Hedgepeth on drums.

All concerts are open to the public free of charge.

—By TERESA KILLIAN

Editor’s Note: Teresa Killian is a CuRvE Member
Civil Rights Activist Benjamin Chavis
To Keynote MLK Celebration

Benjamin Chavis, president and chief executive officer of the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network, will deliver the keynote address Tuesday, Jan. 22, for WCU’s celebration of the life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

Chavis will speak on “Today’s Struggle... Tomorrow’s Success” as part of a program sponsored by the Office of the Chancellor. The program, to begin at 7 p.m. in the A.K. Hind University Center Grandroom, is open to the public and free of charge.

Through the nonprofit Hip-Hop Summit Action Network, Chavis works to unite musicians, entertainment industry leaders, education advocates, civil rights proponents and youth leaders in the belief that hip-hop can be an agent for social change—that it can empower youth and help combat poverty and injustice.

Chavis began his career as a civil rights activist in 1965 as a North Carolina youth coordinator for King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In 1969, he was appointed southern regional program director of the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice. By 1985, he was executive director and CEO. In 1988, Chavis was elected vice president of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. Then in 1993, Chavis became the youngest person ever to be the executive director and CEO of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

For more information, contact the Office of Multicultural Affairs at 227-2276.

WCU Announces Associate Dean,
Department Head Appointments

Three deans who took leadership of colleges at WCU as part of the university’s academic reorganization in July have announced new appointments within their offices.

Wendy Ford, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, announced the expansion of the number of associate deans in the college from one to two, and appointed Niall Michelsen to the new position. Michelsen has been head of the political science and public affairs department for six years.

Taking his place as head of the department is Gibbs Knotts, who was previously associate dean of the Graduate School and Research. Knotts had planned to return to full-time faculty status in the department at the beginning of the 2008 spring semester.

Ronald A. Johnson, dean of the College of Business, has appointed Steve W. Henson, assistant professor of marketing, associate dean for administration and academic affairs.

Philip Little, professor of accounting, has been named associate dean for College of Business advancement.

The new head of the department of accounting, finance and economics is N. Leroy Kaufman, associate professor of accounting and previously business dean.

Linda Stanford, dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences, has named Marie Huff associate dean for academic affairs. Huff, who began teaching at WCU in 1998, has been head of the social work department since 2006. A search has begun for a new department head.

The college also appointed Jay Scifers part-time associate dean for College of Health and Human Sciences advancement and special projects.

Scifers is the founding director of the Athletic Training Education Program and an associate professor of health sciences and physical therapy.

Robert Kehrberg, dean of the new College of Fine and Performing Arts, had previously appointed John West, director of bands and professor of music, associate dean.

Newsfile

- Bob Buckner, director of athletic bands, recently received the Music Education Advocate Award at the 2007 North Carolina Music Educators Association conference.

- James Contratto, assistant director for programs at A.K. Hind University Center, won a regional New Professional Award for 2007 from the Association of College Unions International.

- Jim Costa, professor of biology and executive director of Highlands Biological Station, delivered a talk titled “Forms and functions of social networks in larval societies” as part of a symposium offered at the Entomological Society of America’s national meeting in San Diego in December.

- Dr. Claire DeCristofaro, visiting associate professor of nursing, recently presented the new online course assessment tool developed by the e-learning faculty fellows of the Coulter Faculty Center, at the 13th Annual Sloan C International Conference on Online Learning.

- Jeanne Dulworth, visiting assistant professor of social work, and Marie Huff, assistant professor of social work, presented “Implementing Social Work Values and Ethics through the Use of Service Learning: Fulfilling the Promise” at the 35th annual fall conference of the North Carolina School Social Workers’ Association in Asheville.

- Ronald Mau, assistant professor of construction management, recently presented the paper “CEO Compensation: Does Performance Matter?” at the Southern Finance Association Annual Meetings in Charleston, S.C.

Other community events planned to honor King:

Sunday, Jan. 20 — The Town of Sylva Unity March will begin at God’s Holy Tabernacle Church at 5 p.m. and end at Bridge Park.

Monday, Jan. 21 — A Unity Breakfast will be held in the A.K. Hind University Center Grandroom at 9 a.m. Historian Darin J. Waters will deliver a speech titled “African Americans in the Appalachian Mountains of WNC.” The cost is $9 for faculty, staff and community members; $5 for youth who are 18 years old and younger, and free to WCU students with ID. Reservations can be made through Thursday, Jan. 17, via e-mail at siler@wcu.edu or by phone at 227-7450. Then, “A Day of Service” will be held from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. with Western students volunteering to help youth-focused community agencies. The event will conclude with a reception and time for reflection in the University Center’s multipurpose room at 5 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 23 — Students will lead a round-table discussion centered on “Real Talk about Race and Ethnic Tensions” in the multipurpose room of the University Center.

Thursday, Jan. 24 — An “Evening of Arts” will be held in Room 130 of the Fine and Performing Arts Center at 6 p.m. Winners of the Youth Art and Essay Contest will be honored.

Friday, Jan. 25 — The WCU celebration will close with a “Unity Prayer” at noon on the lawn of the University Center.

Events are sponsored by the MLK Jr. Planning Committee, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Chancellor’s Office, Center for Service Learning, Sylva Bridgehampton Community Foundation, Residential Student Association, Organizations of Honors Students and the Student Government Association.
Monday, Jan. 14
Spring semester classes begin. (227-7495)
Lady Catamount basketball — vs. Elon; $. 12 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

Tuesday, Jan. 15
Living with the Land Folklife Series — “Sustainable Forestry: Looking Forward or Looking Back?” Peter Bates, forester and WCU faculty member; 5:30 p.m. Auditorium, MHC. (227-7129)
Catamount Concert Series — “Songs Without Words,” Dan Cheery, trombone; 8 p.m. RH. (227-7242)

Thursday, Jan. 17
Concert — Old-time music and bluegrass, open jam; 7-9 p.m. Auditorium, MHC. (227-7129)

Friday, Jan. 18
Fine and Performing Arts Center Special Event — “The Finest Man in America,” James Gregory. Comedic storytelling; 7:30 p.m. FAPAC. (227-2479)

Saturday, Jan. 19
6th Annual Trumpet Festival concert — Classical trumpet recital, Allen Vizzuti; 8 p.m. RH. (227-3274)

Sunday, Jan. 20
Martin Luther King Jr. celebration — Unity March, from God’s Holy Tabernacle in Sylva to Bridge Park; 5 p.m. (227-2226)

Monday, Jan. 21
Martin Luther King Jr. holiday — No classes; offices closed. (227-7495)

Martin Luther King Jr. celebration — Unity breakfast and presentation, “African-Americans in the Appalachian Mountains of Western North Carolina,” historian Darin J. Watters. Reservations needed by Jan. 17. $. 9 a.m. Grandroom, UC. (227-7450)

Tuesday, Jan. 22
Martin Luther King Jr. celebration — Chancellor’s guest speaker, “Today’s Struggle... Tomorrow’s Success,” Benjamin Chavis, civil rights activist; 7 p.m. Grandroom, UC. (227-2276)
Catamount Concert Series — “Messiaen Centenary,” School of Music faculty; 8 p.m. RH. (227-7242)

Wednesday, Jan. 23
Martin Luther King Jr. celebration — Racial and Ethnic Tensions: What Should We Do? Round-table discussion; 7 p.m. Multipurpose Room, UC. (227-2276)

Thursday, Jan. 24
Martin Luther King Jr. celebration — Evening of arts; 6 p.m. Room T30, FAPAC. (227-2276)
Catamount basketball — vs. Elon; $. 7:03 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

Friday, Jan. 25
Martin Luther King Jr. celebration — Unity prayer; 12 p.m. Lawn, UC. (227-2226)

Sunday, Jan. 27
Concert — Western Carolina Civic Orchestra; 4 p.m. RH. (227-7242)

Exhibits

Fine Art Museum, Fine and Performing Arts Center
ONGOING EXHIBIT: “Worldviews” Selections from Western Carolina University’s permanent collection in all media by local, regional, national and international artists.
School of Art and Design Biennial Faculty Exhibition. Jan. 23 – March 15.
Fine Art Museum hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Thursdays 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Saturdays 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Donations appreciated.
(227-3591 or http://fapac.wcu.edu)

Mountain Heritage Center
SLIDESHOW SPOTLIGHT FOR JANUARY: “In the Wind.”
Lobby:
“People of the Land: River cane Series.” Ongoing.

Gallery A:
“Migration of the Scotch-Irish People.” Includes text panels, illustrations, artifacts and vibrant murals that trace the Scotch-Irish Appalachian settlers from Ulster to Pennsylvania, through the Shenandoah Valley, and into Western North Carolina. Permanent exhibit.

Gallery B:
“Southern Stews: Traditions of One-Pot Cooking,” a national, travelling exhibition organized by the McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina.
Through March.

Online Exhibits
(http://www.wcu.edu/2397.asp):
“After the War”
“Horace Kephart: Revealing an Enigma”
“Southern Appalachian Quilts”
“Watts in the Mountains: Rural Electrification in Western North Carolina”
“Craft Revival: Shaping Western North Carolina Past and Present”

Mountain Heritage Center hours:
8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday – Friday. (227-7129 or http://www.wcu.edu/2389.asp)

KEY: $. Admission fee, BB/Bilk building: CAC—Catamount Athletic Center; CAC—Center for Applied Technology; CCB—Carolinas Camp building; CCA—Catamount softball Complex; FAPAC—Fine and Performing Arts Center; HA—Hay Auditorium; HNB—H.F. Robinson Administration Building; H—Hunter Library; HSCF—Henderson Children’s Field; MHC—Mountain Heritage Center; MSA—Natural Science Auditorium; RH—Ritchie Hall; South Building; RRAC—Ramsey Regional Activity Center; UC—A.K. Hufnagel University Center; WS/BW—Whitehorse Stadium/Bob Waters Field.

Submissions: Send news items, calendar notices and address changes to WCU Calendar, 420 H.F. Robinson Bldg, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC, 28723 or e-mail to: Reporter@email.wcu.edu. Submit items for the university’s online calendar at least one week prior to the event.