

# FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

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**American Folklife Center • The Library of Congress**



The American Folklife Center was created in 1976 by the U.S. Congress to "preserve and present American folklife" through programs of research, documentation, archival preservation, reference service, live performance, exhibition, publication, and training. The Center incorporates the Archive of Folk Culture, which was established in the Music Division of the Library of Congress in 1928 and is now one of the largest collections of ethnographic material from the United States and around the world.

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*Folklife Center News* publishes articles on the programs and activities of the American Folklife Center, as well as other articles on traditional expressive culture. It is available free of charge from the Library of Congress, American Folklife Center, 101 Independence Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20540-4610. *Folklife Center News* does not publish announcements from other institutions or reviews of books from publishers other than the Library of Congress. Readers who would like to comment on Center activities or newsletter articles may address their remarks to the editor.

#### ONLINE INFORMATION RESOURCES

The American Folklife Center's Web site provides full texts of many publications, information about AFC projects, multimedia presentations of selected collections, links to Web resources on ethnography, and announcements of upcoming events. The address for the home page is <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/> An index of the site contents is available at <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/afcindex.html>

The Web site for **The Veterans History Project** provides an overview of the project, an online "kit" for participants recording oral histories of veterans, and a brief presentation of some examples of video- and audio-recordings of veterans' stories. The address is <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/vets>

**The Folklife Information Service** is now a cooperative announcement program of the American Folklore Society and the American Folklife Center. It is available only on the American Folklore Society's server: [www.afsnet.org](http://www.afsnet.org). The service provides timely information on the field of folklore and folklife, including training and professional opportunities, and news items of national interest.

#### EDITOR'S NOTES

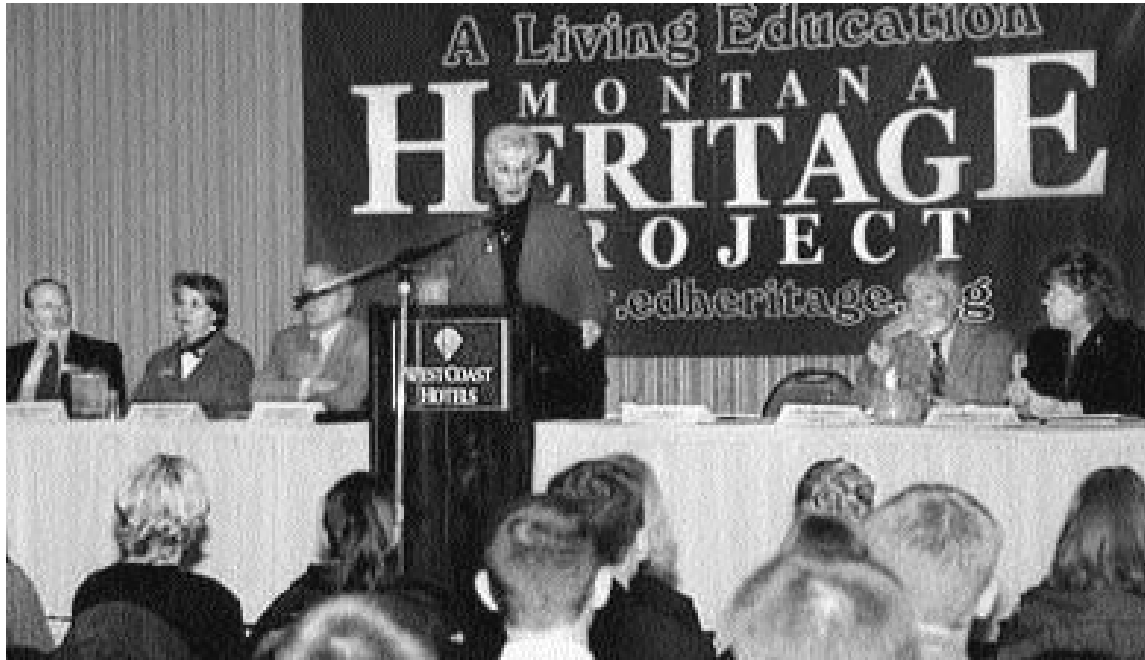
##### Celebrations

David Taylor's cover photograph of Mingo Saldivar captures the spirit of this year's concerts and other programs at the Library of Congress. Performances of traditional music on the Library's Neptune Plaza (sponsored by the American Folklife Center's series "Homegrown 2002: The Music of America" and the Library of Congress's series "I Hear America Singing") have kept audiences tapping their feet, dancing, and singing along from April to

*(Continued on page 19)*

Cover: 2002 National Endowment for the Arts Heritage Fellow Mingo Saldivar on the Library's Neptune Plaza, with Max Bacca (right), in a concert of Tex-Mex conjunto music, September 19, 2002. Photo by David A. Taylor

# *The Power of the Real: The Montana Heritage Project After Seven Years*



Montana Governor Judy Martz addresses the Montana Heritage Project Student Conference, April 9, 2002, where young researchers presented their gifts of scholarship to the state to be preserved in the Montana Historical Society archives for future researchers. Students take their schoolwork seriously because grown-ups take it seriously. At the head table, from the left: Mark Sherouse (director, Montana Committee for the Humanities); Alexandra Swaney (folk arts specialist, Montana Arts Council); Brian Cockhill (consultant, Liz Claiborne and Art Ortenberg Foundation); Governor Martz; Art Ortenberg, Montana Heritage Project founder; and Linda McCulloch (superintendent of public instruction, State of Montana).

Text and Photos by  
Michael Umphrey

*The Montana Heritage Project was established in 1995 through a partnership involving the Library of Congress and a consortium of Montana organizations: the Office of Public Instruction, the University of Montana, Montana State University, the Montana Historical Society, the Montana State Library, the Montana Center for the Book, the Montana Arts Council, and the Montana Committee for the Humanities. It is funded by the Liz Claiborne and Arthur Ortenberg Foundation. This article was adapted from a keynote speech given at the National Rural Educa-*

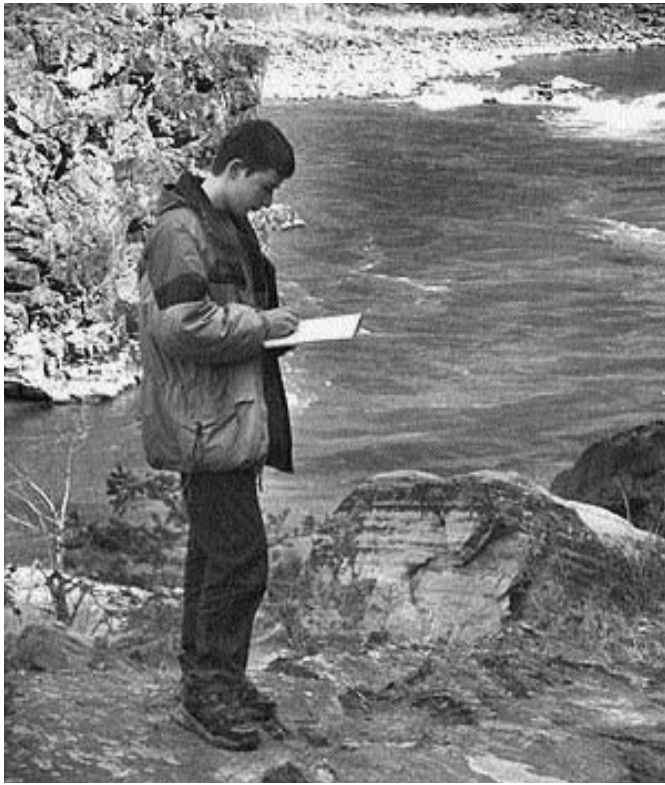
*tion Association's annual conference in Portland, Oregon, October 16, 2002. For more information on the Montana Heritage Project, visit their Web site at: <http://www.edheritage.org>.*

"The Montana Heritage Project is not just a class—it's an adventure!" said Kelsey Miller, high school senior from Harlowton, Montana. She was one of a hundred high school students gathered at the state capitol in Helena to present their gifts of scholarship to Montana governor Judy Martz. She and her fellow seniors in teacher Nancy Widdicombe's English class had made the Bair family ranch in

their hometown the subject of research, tracing across generations the rise of one the largest sheep operations in the nation.

Drawing on interviews, research in bank and museum archives, and documentation of ranching culture today, they published their work in a book that adds significant detail to the history of Montana and of their community. Through a multimedia presentation, they shared the story of their research quest with their community at a special Heritage Evening attended by more than a hundred people.

These students take their schoolwork seriously in part



Student Christian Essenbach, in teacher Rose Goyen's English classes at Libby High School, takes notes at the historic Kootenai River, as part of an "essay of place" research and writing project. Many classes study the natural environment as part of the community.

because adults take it seriously. Though most schoolwork is thrown away as soon as it is graded, the work of Kelsey and her fellow students will be preserved at the Montana State Historical Society archives as a resource for future researchers.

In her excitement about community heritage research, Kelsey seemed to be reading from the same page as the project's founder, Art Ortenberg, who, at the project's September 19, 2002, board meeting, noted that "the Montana Heritage Project is a research- and inquiry-driven adventure for students and teachers." Art and his wife, Liz Claiborne, have fully funded the project since its inception in 1995. For their intellectual and organizational guidance in developing the project, they were awarded a special Governor's Award for Distinguished Educational Leadership in 2001.

It has now been seven years since the American Folklife Center accepted Ortenberg's challenge to initiate the project. Working from a proposal created by former Center director Alan Jabbour and Center folklife specialist Peter Bartis, the Montana Heritage Project developed

a secondary-education project that focuses on local communities. In the Montana model, the community is both a subject of research and a network of resources employed to accomplish that research. Students are guided through a cycle of inquiry, summarized in the ALERT process

I developed during my graduate research into comprehensive learning models:

**Ask** important questions;  
**Listen** to the historical record as it exists in libraries and archives;  
**Explore** beyond the library by conducting interviews, visiting sites and events, and creating a detailed history of the present;  
**Reflect** on what has been learned and how it fits with or changes existing knowledge;  
**Tell** the story of what has been found by creating a scholarly product that can be given back to the community. <<http://www.edheritage.org/tools/alert.htm>>

**T**he model is quite simple and flexible. The real power of heritage projects flows not from a method or a technique but from the faith that, in working together, kids and elders can learn what they need to know, and from a commitment to act on that faith by inviting others to join the work. Former Montana Governor Marc Racicot told students that the Montana Heritage Project is a "modern version of old barn-raising parties," where people came together to share

important work that no one could do alone. The important work we share is that of gathering, documenting, preserving, and presenting the cultural and natural heritage of local places. We will never have enough professional scholars to do this work, and if local people don't do it, it won't get done. This realization is easy to communicate to young people, so they know we aren't being patronizing when we tell them they have real and important work to do.

At each stage in the process, adult community members are invited to become mentors, co-researchers, and guides, so students are engaged in a comprehensive learning model while community members are invited to help document and research their own lives and to tell their stories in their own ways.

Some years ago, Education Secretary Richard Riley said that the nation needed "high educational standards and effective strategies for reaching them." Most states have now developed content and performance standards—lists of things students should know and be able to do—and debate has come to focus on how student learning should be tested. To the chagrin of most people with a passion for teaching, tests have become the main topic of conversation at many schools. It might help to remember at this point what Marie Montessori told us decades ago: "to test is not to teach."

The second half of Riley's statement, that we need "effective strategies" for teaching, often gets overlooked. The Montana Heritage Project is helping teachers take an important step: designing rigorous projects that require deep learning and provide accountability through public exhibitions of mastery. In rigorous research projects, high standards are embedded in every stage of the work. Rigorous projects hold the key to deep learning.

Sandra Bradshaw and Lara Weatherly collect information from a headstone at the Corvallis Cemetery. Students in Phil Leonardi's geography classes used a wide variety of primary sources to explore their personal relationships to the Bitterroot Valley as well as the valley's relationships to Montana, the nation, and the world.



When Secretary Riley spoke at the project's teacher institute in Great Falls, Montana, he said that "every state in the country should follow Montana's lead with its Heritage Project." As director of the Montana Heritage Project since it began, I've watched enthusiasm grow for the Montana model. This past year, for example, educators from Wyoming, Arizona, New Hampshire, and Washington have drawn on our work to begin their own projects. They join others working in Louisiana, Oregon, and Alberta, Canada.

Ken Evans, Director of Community Outreach for the Arizona Salt River Project, attended our annual teacher institute to gather materials and ideas to implement a similar project in Arizona. "The tremendous population growth and somewhat transient community over the last fifty years has made it easy to lose our customs and rituals," he said. "The Arizona Heritage Project will benefit Arizona by enlisting students in recording remaining folkways and in identifying developing rituals."

In New Hampshire, Christa McAuliffe Fellow Kay Morgan

has spent the past year building a team of scholars and educators who will offer the New Hampshire Heritage Project's first summer institute in June 2003, one that will focus on "the theory and the practice of using their community as a basis for studying history, literature, and the environment."

As I've visited rural communities over the past seven years, the reasons people both young and old are drawn to community-centered education have become increasingly clear to me. People everywhere are sensing a loss of community, and amid the troubles that follow such loss are searching for ways to regain what they know they need.

The only way we can meet the long list of adolescent "needs" that researchers have identified for our nation's high schools is

to revitalize our communities. In trying to meet every need by developing a special program dedicated to it, we've inadvertently undermined the power of community. It becomes second nature to think that "they" should do something, when quite often only "we" can get it done. Much of the success of the Montana model derives quite simply from bringing the power of community to bear on teaching.

It may be that the greatest risks to "at risk" adolescents emanate from the absence of strong communities. Adolescents are trying to construct identities on the threshold between family and the larger society, and substantial research indicates that when the various adult groups that surround teenagers—parents, teachers, employers, church leaders, community leaders—send coherent messages about the things worth wanting and the right ways to get them, teens are better able to make the transition from youth to adulthood.

On the other hand, when those groups lose faith in one another, many young people become lost, causing tremendous pain to themselves, their families, and their communities.

Kaitlyn England, Tyrell Rucker, and Alicia Long set up their display at the Heritage Project Open House in Libby, April 25, 2002. Such design work is inherently interdisciplinary, pulling together scholarly research and art to communicate essential information to the public.



One of the most vivid signs of failed community is a large population of troubled youth. As our schools have become larger and more distant from their communities, to the extent that teachers and neighborhood adults inhabit different realities, the effectiveness of schools, especially for troubled youth, plummets. Study after study has found that over half of secondary students make no consistent effort to learn anything in school. Student disengagement is epidemic. At bottom, the problem is that many young people do not understand the story of their lives as having any meaningful connection with school. That is, school does not seem real to them.

Sociologist Elijah Anderson has argued that we've left behind a strong sense of community that once brought young and old together, and we now suffer from "cultural amnesia" (Elijah Anderson, *Place on the Corner*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). The young were helped to grow up by wise elders ("old heads," Anderson calls them) who acted as "a kind of guidance counselor and moral cheerleader." Children met these old heads in small jobs, at church, in school, or simply on the street corner. The old head might be a police officer, a scoutmaster, or a grocer. The old heads took interest in the community's young people. For children without available fathers and mothers, the old heads were sources of consolation, advice, occasional help (including financial), and, above all, sources of moral values well laced with doses of real life wisdom.

Among the primary messages of the old head, said Anderson, were those about good manners

Amanda Shotzberger interviews Denis Faris, a worker at the Stimson Plywood Mill in Libby. Students in history teacher Jeff Gruber's class documented the process of making plywood for a brochure and Web site. Many schools have competed studies of the occupational cultures represented in their communities.

and the value of hard work: how to dress for a job interview and deal with a prospective employer, how to work, and how to keep the job. Through stories, jokes, and conversations, the old head would convey his conception of the "tricks of the trade."

For those coming of age, which is largely a process of weaving one's individual story into the larger tapestry of community, a neighborhood's folkways may be more powerful educative forces than the school's formal curricula, for good or ill. This is why serious educators are turning their attention to community-centered teaching, looking for ways to reconnect their schools with their communities.

**T**eachers in the Montana Heritage Project demonstrate ways schools can build or rebuild relationships between young people and their communities simply by establishing projects that get the young and old working together. Such teachers remain true to their academic mission by focusing such projects on inquiry into the community itself: defining events and persons of the past, its relationship to the natural environment, its

place in national and world events, its current challenges and its future prospects.

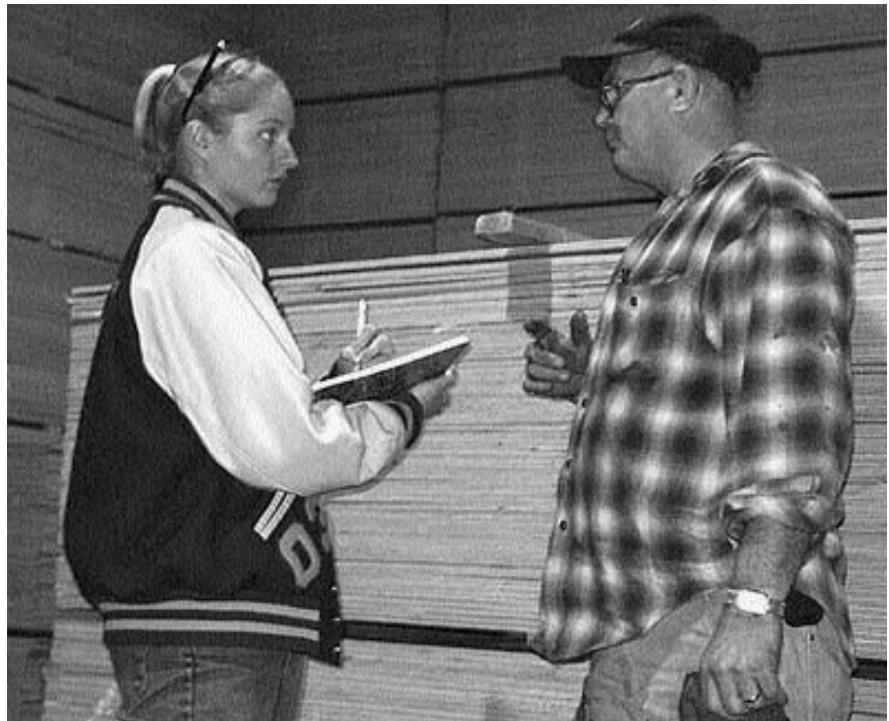
A few of last year's projects illustrate the possibilities:

- Renee Rasmussen's students in Chester wrote a regular local-history column for the community newspaper.

- Phil Leonardi's freshmen geography classes partnered with the U.S. Forest Service to research how the community of Corvallis has been affected through the decades by forest fires.

- In Libby, history teacher Jeff Gruber's classes have developed a close working relationship with the Heritage Museum, and students have completed an extensive set of research projects on various topics for the archives, and also developed interpretive displays for the museum.

- Jerry Girard's Montana history class in Dillon compiled a history of Beaverhead County's rural one- and two-room schools. Students created a map showing the location of each past and present school in the county, as well as a detailed timeline of educational events in the county from 1863 to the present. This was the basis for a





World War II veterans and students in Christa Umphrey's freshmen English class at Ronan High School on the Flathead Indian Reservation pose at the public presentation of their oral history project to the community, March 27, 2002. Narratives and photos from the project were published in a book, *We Remember: 15 Oral Histories of Montana World War Two Veterans*. Back, from left: Whitey Starkel, Kenneth Jolley, George Swim, Roy Mueller, James Sivils, Vila Cheff, Gerald Leighton, Thurman Trosper, Clark Marquart, Greg Hammet, Chris Molenda, Zak Brandon, Brandon Dunkerson, Curtis Acevedo, Justin Cisney. Middle: Aaron Skogen, Nick Harris, RJ Olsen, Cambrie Starkel, Bridget Taylor, Helena Oruste, Jamie Lake, Courtney Zimmerer, Jordon Espinosa, Ashely Phillips, Jennifer Wahl, Chance Remein, Gordon Ahenakew. Front: Tara McCarthy, Elizabeth Krantz

permanent exhibit at the Beaverhead County Museum that features video interviews with students and teachers from the past and present.

- Darlene Beck's English class in Townsend completed an eighty-five-year history of Broadwater High School. Students used local newspaper archives, courthouse records, school yearbooks dating from 1916 to the present, and the archives of the Broadwater Historical Society and Museum for background research. They conducted interviews with former students, teachers, principals, clerks, and board members, and produced a slide show for parent conferences and a book that was placed in the local museum and library.

- In Roundup, art teacher Toni Gies led her advanced photography class to create an exhibit featuring historic barns in the area, including interviews with people who knew the histories of the buildings and how their uses had changed through time as the economic and technological context of farming on the Great Plains changed.

- Also in Roundup, English teacher Tim Schaff and librarian Dale Alger helped English classes create a museum at the school.

Students drew on their grandparents and other community elders as sources of family heirlooms and information for interpretive labels, and served as docents when elementary students toured the museum.

Several Heritage Project classes are participating in the American Folklife Center's Veterans History Project ([www.loc.gov/folklife/vets](http://www.loc.gov/folklife/vets)). The chance to act as partners with the Library has been a powerful motivator for both students and veterans, and the supporting resources provided by the Library have embedded professional standards for research.

Christa Umphrey's freshmen published a book, *We Remember*, featuring photographs and oral histories of fifteen World War II veterans. New print-on-demand technology was used to create 150 high-quality paperbacks, and the book, available through online bookstores such as Amazon, should never go out of print.

Dottie Susag organized her classes at Simms High School into research teams with community mentors and they researched this century's wars. They published their writings,

which were based on library research and interviews, in a literary magazine. Their high schools in the center of the Sun River Valley, a rural community without a town as such, but over two hundred people regularly attend the school's Heritage Festival each spring. This showcase for student research rivals athletics in community popularity.

In Bigfork, Mary Sullivan's juniors gathered vivid stories from World War II, Korean, Vietnam, and Gulf War veterans. They borrowed photographs from the veterans, scanned them, and combined them with narratives drawn from oral histories in order to create a multimedia presentation that was shown to a standing-room-only crowd at the 435-seat Bigfork Center for the Performing Arts.

Since 1995 more than a hundred such projects have been completed throughout Montana. By attempting original research of lasting value, teachers reverse the tendency of schools to allow tedious routines to fill up the days. As poet Marvin Bell put it, in many schools "moments of glory pass into study" (Marvin Bell, *The Escape into You: A*



World War II veteran and member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Thurman Trosper is interviewed by Ronan High School student MacKenzie Tromp, December 12, 2001, as part of a Flathead Indian Reservation veterans oral history project conducted in teacher Christa Umphrey's English classes. Photo by Christa Umphrey

*Sequence*, New York: Atheneum, 1971). This is why "academic" is so often used as a synonym for "unreal." From time to time, every school needs to revitalize itself, returning to the sources of learning, which are first-hand engagements with life in the raw. "I don't like busy work any more than the students do," said Corvallis teacher Annemarie Kanenwisher. "I'd rather do the real work, too."

In attempting real work, some Montana Heritage Project teachers have become important community leaders. They've done this by remaining teachers, practicing a form of "invitation-al leadership." They initiate projects that others can join, and they practice being "personally and professionally inviting," in William Purkey's phrase (see William W. Purkey and John M. Novak, *Inviting School Success: A Self-Concept Approach to Teaching, Learning and Democratic Practice*, third edition, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1996). They demonstrate that any classroom

can be a catalyst for community revitalization. Indeed, they've led me to believe that the art and craft of being inviting and of forming powerful invitations should be part of all teachers' pre-service training. By keeping the focus of their invitations on inquiry, they tend to turn problems into common work that people can share. They give people a chance to join.

The chance to join—this more than anything is what young people are looking for. Gangs, drugs, and promiscuity are symptoms of a hunger to belong. These symptoms are unlikely to diminish because we create harder tests with harsher consequences for failure.

Guests at the Heritage Project student conferences and presentations often comment on the enthusiasm of the young people. In a good high school, real challenges form a good part of the curriculum, and young people meet them with the help of their elders. They build the council fires and think together. When school classes are organized into research teams that work with community members and organizations to form questions and find answers, *community* ceases to be a buzz word in a mission statement and becomes a way of life. Young people are drawn to the adventure. They wake up and join the conversation, excited by the power of the real.

*Michael Umphrey is director of the Montana Heritage Project. He is also the author of two books of poetry, The Lit Window (Cleveland State University Poetry Center, 1987) and The Breaking Edge (University of Montana, 1988), and a former high school principal. He may be contacted at [umphrey@edheritage.org](mailto:umphrey@edheritage.org).*

Students in Jerry Girard's Montana History class at Beaverhead County High School in Dillon interview Fran Schisler, a teacher at the Polaris School, as part of their history of one- and two-room schools in the county. The interviews took place on Halloween, October 31, 2001, with Ms. Schisler dressed as a train conductor. Melissa Harrison conducts the interview, Ross Wells operates the video camera, and Kevin Hammond creates a log of the interview.





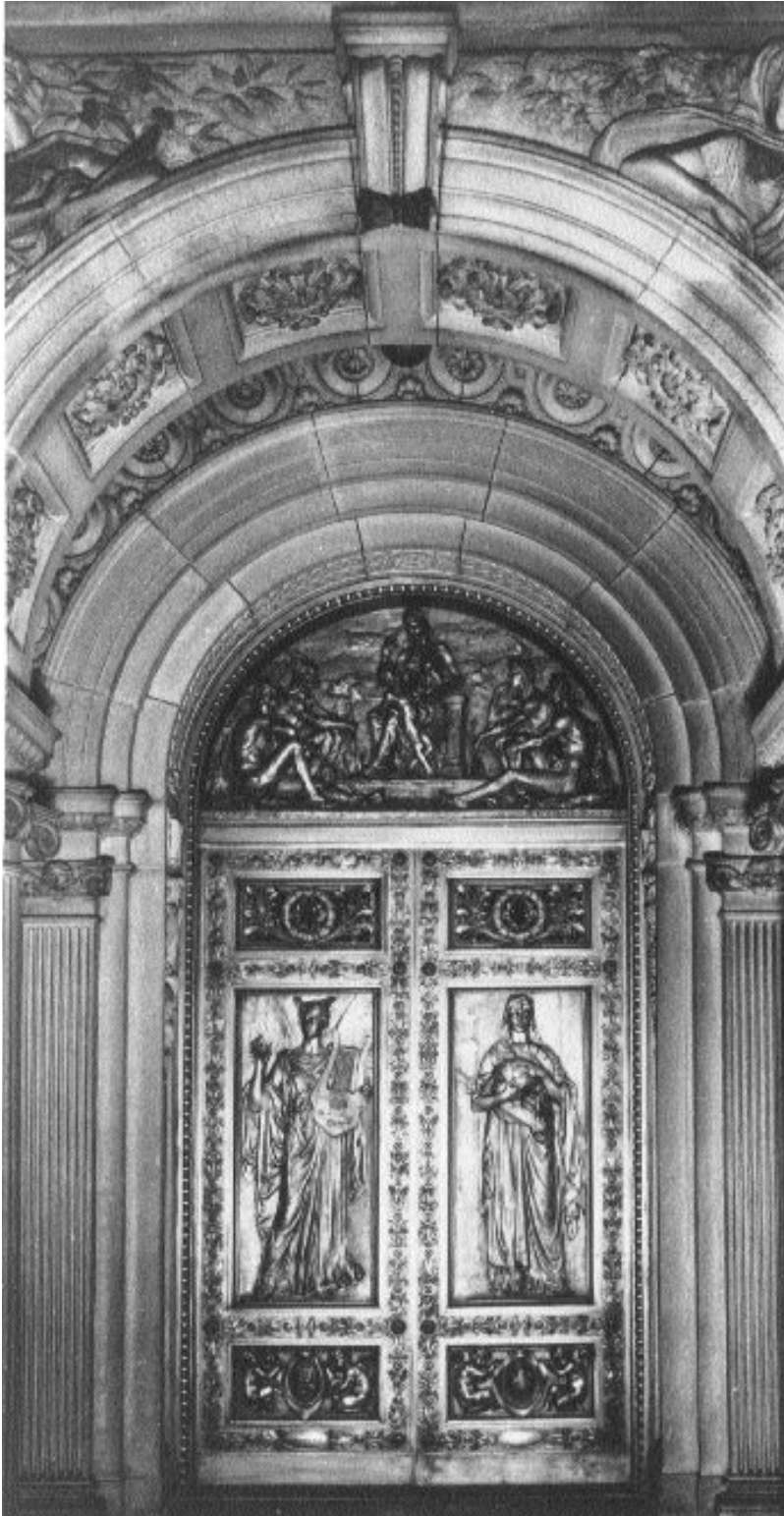
# Oral Tradition and the Library of Congress

By James Hardin

Storytellers were an integral part of the Library of Congress's National Book Festival, on October 12, holding forth in a pavilion very near several others where authors were celebrating history and literature. The stories they told were entertaining, engaging, and instructive, and audiences responded with appreciative applause and laughter. But there was also an underlying appropriateness to this inclusion in a festival of the book. The importance of oral tradition is acknowledged in the symbolism at the very entrance to the Library of Congress.

The three deep arches that form the main entrance to the Thomas Jefferson Building frame three massive bronze doors, fourteen feet high, seven and a half feet wide, and weighing a total of three and a half tons. The three doors are richly decorated in sculptural relief to represent tradition, writing, and printing (with printing in the center), "the successive and more gradually perfect ways in which mankind has preserved its religion, history, literature, and science" (Herbert Small, *Handbook of the New Library of Congress in Washington*, Boston: Curtis & Cameron, 1901, p. 18).

In the tympanum above the first door, which was designed by Olin L. Warner, a female figure, instructing a young boy in the ways and deeds of his elders, embodies the theme of oral tradition. Seated on the ground, two on either side, and listening intently to her words, are an American Indian, a Norseman, a



The North Door of the Library of Congress's Thomas Jefferson Building. Library of Congress photo, July 1961



Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce. Photo by Edward S. Curtis. Prints and Photographs Division

prehistoric man, and a shepherd. Herbert Small's *Handbook* reports that "the face of the Indian is understood to be a portrait of Chief Joseph, of the Nez Percés tribe, from a sketch made from life by Mr. Warner in 1889."

**C**hief Joseph (1840–1904) was one of the most famous Native Americans of his day. In 1877 the U.S. government attempted to force the Nez Perce people to move from their traditional homeland in northeastern Oregon to a reservation in Idaho. Joseph, who took the name that had been bestowed upon his father by a missionary, at first agreed peacefully but then determined to resist when the orderly process was disrupted by clashes with the settlers and

the army. He led his small band of followers on a thousand-mile journey to Canada, making it to within thirty miles of the border before he was surrounded and captured. Along the way, his humane behavior and fighting tactics won him the praise and respect of U.S. Army generals and others, and he became known as the "Red Napoleon." He is further remembered for the eloquence of

his surrender speech: "I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed. . . . I want to look for my children, and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs! I am tired. My heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever" (from [www.the-oldwestwebride.com](http://www.the-oldwestwebride.com)).

Chief Joseph ended his days at the Colville Indian Reservation in the state of Washington. He visited Washington, D.C., several times, and on one occasion met with President Theodore Roosevelt. On one of his trips to Washington, he was recorded by Alice Cunningham Fletcher, probably at her home on First Street, S.E., where the Library's Madison Building now stands. The cylinder recordings, on which he performed several war and war dance songs, are in the collections of the American Folklife Center. They are among some ten thousand wax-cylinder recordings, as well as many others, of Native American song and spoken word, from the 1890s to the present day, one of the pre-eminent collections in the Archive of Folk Culture.

At the National Book Festival, Chuna McIntyre, from Olympia, Washington, tells stories and describes the traditional ways of the Yup'ik Eskimo people of Southwestern Alaska.



# Book Festival Features Storytelling

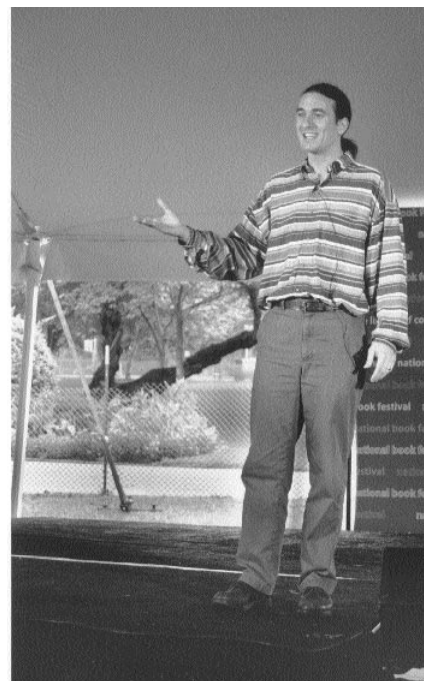
Photos by James Hardin

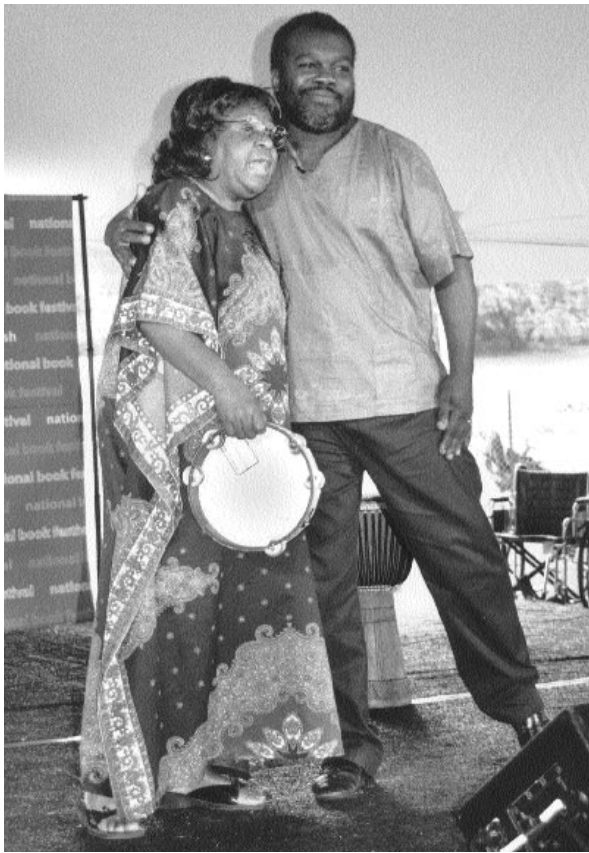
American Folklife Center archivist Nora Yeh (left) chats with members of the Cambodian American Heritage dance troupe from Fort Washington, Maryland. The dancers must prepare for a performance many hours in advance and are actually sewn into their elaborate and beautiful costumes. The traditional dances they performed told stories of love, blessing, and the origins of thunder and lightning. The American Folklife Center's Storytelling Pavilion was part of the Library of Congress's second annual National Book Festival, held on the west-front grounds of the U.S. Capitol on October 12, 2002. This year the festival attracted more than forty thousand enthusiastic book-lovers.



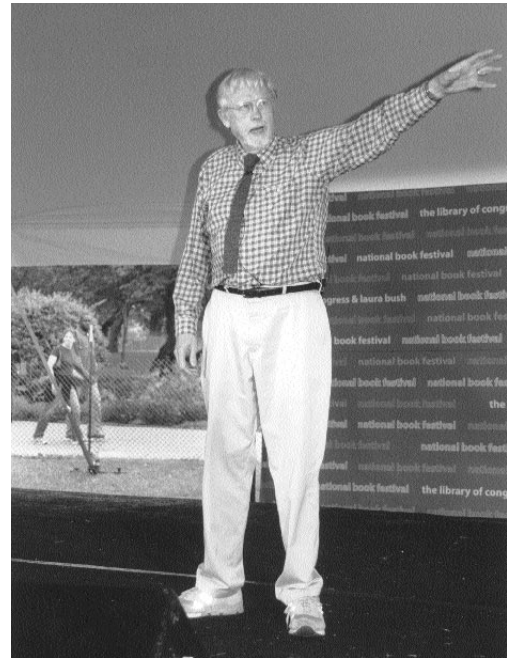
Russian immigrant and "Jewish grandmother" Roslyn Bresnick-Perry, from New York City, tells bittersweet real-life stories of immigration, acculturation, acceptance, success and failure, love, sex, and growing old.

Antonio Sacre, Cuban-Irish storyteller from Boston, now living in Los Angeles, tells stories of growing up Latino in a white world and white in a Latino world. One of his stories concerns a mouse that is able to protect her children from a cat by barking, because the cat fears the barking will attract real dogs. The lesson of the story: "You see, it pays to speak another language."

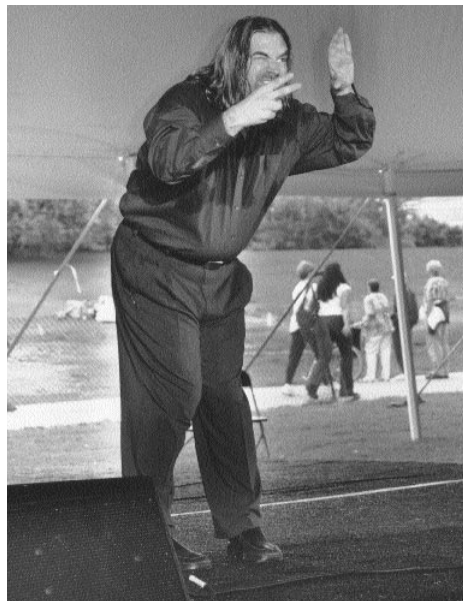




Frankie Quimby and her son-in-law Thomas Merrell, of the Georgia Sea Island Singers, from Brunswick, Georgia. The group sang, danced, and told traditional Gullah stories for an audience that included first ladies Laura Bush and Ludmila Putin of Russia.



Tom Weakley, from Arlington, Vermont, captivated the audience with stories of how a typical Vermonter gives directions; betrayal and retribution in a Vermont valley town; and a Confederate raid on the Vermont city of St. Albans during the Civil War.



Deaf performance artist Peter Cook, from Chicago, Illinois, presents a combination of sign and acting he calls "visual poetry" that is a "group experience."



Nevada cowboy poet and musician Waddie Mitchell, who got his start as a storyteller at the first Elko [Nevada] Cowboy Poetry Gathering, recites an old favorite called "Tying a Knot in the Devil's Tail."

# *A Brief History of Chinese Puppetry*



The New Acadia Puppet Troupe, Taiwanese hand-puppet theater based in Downer's Grove, Illinois, at the Story-telling Pavilion of the Library of Congress's 2001 National Book Festival. Photo by James Hardin

By Nora Yeh

Puppets and puppetry have existed in China for more than two thousand years. Written records in China prior to the sixth century are vague, and therefore the exact beginnings of Chinese puppetry are uncertain. But the close relationship between puppet figures and religious practices suggest one possible origin.

Of the many funereal figures excavated from ancient tomb sites, some have puppet-like moveable parts. Such figures, made with metal, clay, or wood, were fitted with mechanisms and fashioned in the form of servants, instrumentalists, dancers, guards, and animals. They replaced human sacrificial

victims once used at exorcisms performed by shamen during purification rituals held to ensure that the dead would enjoy a good life in the "next world." The figures were very likely the prototypes of Chinese puppets.

During the Shang dynasty, from the sixteenth to the tenth century B.C., Chinese buried their dead with their personal and household possessions. Slaves or captives of war were also buried with their masters to serve them in death. Later on, these human sacrifices were replaced by effigies, or *yong*, of the servants and attendants. Some *yong* had moving parts, at least by the time of Confucius, around the fifth century B.C. Today, the most famous *yong* are

the thousands of terra cotta soldiers found in the underground palatial tomb of the Qinshi Huangdi (221 to 210 B.C.), known to the West as the "First Emperor."

The earliest extant Chinese puppet—a six-foot wooden figure with moveable knees, shoulders, and waist, which allowed the figure to sit, kneel, or stand—was found in a tomb dated to 107 B.C. There is a story about a famous craftsman who lived three thousand years ago, whose puppet was condemned to death because it danced and winked like a real human being.

Beautiful female puppets were supposed to have been mentioned as one of the thirty-six strategies in Sun Wu's book *Art of War* in the Zhou dynasty,



Chinese puppetry in the United States today is exemplified by the Dragon Arts Studio of Portland, Oregon, consisting of Yuqin Wang, Zhengli “Rocky” Xu, and their daughter Ke “Brenda” Xu, shown here. They performed rod puppetry on the Library’s Neptune Plaza on May 15, 2002, presenting a wonderful assortment of programs: Tortoise and the Crane; Old Man and the Monkeys; The Pet Donkey (shown here); The Dancer, and Ping-Pong Galactic. Photo by James Hardin

before the second century B.C. One legend tells that the leaders of the besieged city, Pinchen, ordered a puppet made to look like an exquisite woman. It was then displayed on the city wall. The invading general was so captivated by the figure that his wife, who accompanied him, became jealous and persuaded him to lift the siege and return home. Chinese puppet theater probably originated from these various uses and contexts.

**I**t is not clear which was the earliest form of puppetry in China. The first documentation of puppetry, from the sixth century A.D., described

many types of puppets. Emperor Tang Xuanzong, in the eighth century, promoted the performing arts: singing, music, dance, drama, and theater, which included puppetry. During this period, a talented young man by the name of Tian, from Quanzhou of the Fujian province, was made leader of actors in the

Yuqin Wang with one of the heavenly dancers from Buddhist tradition, similar to those represented in sculpture and painting in the famous Dunhuang Caves, on the Silk Road in China. Yuqin Wang, who was brought up in a theatrical family, entered Chinese opera school at the age of ten and performed Peking opera until the age of eighteen, when she was recruited for training in the Puppet Art Troupe of China. Yuqin found that she was able to transfer and apply the techniques she had learned at the Peking Opera Company to rod puppetry. Photo by James Hardin

famous royal Pear Garden Theater. He was also the theater’s chief string puppeteer. Later he became known as “Marshal Tian,” and a puppet made in his likeness became the theater’s principal puppet.

Puppetry and other theatrical arts flourished in the next dynasty, the Song period, from the tenth to the thirteenth century, because urban centers with a growing middle class could afford entertainment throughout the year. Puppetry in one form or another was often performed at temples, in marketplaces, at the households of wealthy merchants, and in the imperial courts. From its funere-





A lion shadow puppet from the Hwa Chou Yuan Shadow Puppet Theater Troupe of Taiwan. Photo by Jiang Wu-Tsang

al and ritual origins, puppetry developed to become popular among both commoners and royalty, especially at festivities. As puppets came to be used in secular entertainments, they were often categorized by four theatrical roles, similar to that of all Chinese theaters: *sheng* or males, *dan* or females, *bei* or painted face, and *za* or miscellaneous character types, such as clowns.

Currently, four types of puppets are popular in China. Rod puppets can be found in almost all regions; shadow puppets mostly in northern and inland areas; string puppets in the southeastern region; and hand puppets in the coastal provinces of Fujian and Taiwan.

(1) Rod puppets, or *zhang-tou mu-ou*, literally “rod-head puppets,” appear most often in the countryside. Led by state-sponsored troupes in Beijing and Shanghai, rod-puppet theater is being modernized by lighting, special effects, and Western plays and music, in order to satisfy contemporary audiences. Control mechanisms, made of

twigs or bamboo in the past and wire and metal rods nowadays, used to be concealed inside the puppet. Today they are often controlled from the outside, allowing the puppeteers to simulate more expansive movements.

China’s rod puppet theaters have been divided into three types, according to the size of the puppets used. The smallest are eleven to eighteen inches, and a puppeteer can hold one in each hand for the performance. Medium-sized puppets measure about thirty-six inches, and a puppeteer can manipulate only one puppet at a time. In some theaters, a single puppeteer in costume performs on stage with one rod puppet. Life-size rod figures are held by a central rod strapped around the performer’s waist. The performer manipulates the two hands of the puppet with his own two hands.

(2) Shadow puppets are called *pi-ying xi* or “leather-shadow theater.” Shadow-puppet theater is the most versatile in employing scenery, action, and sound effects. Originating either in India or China, Chinese shadow puppetry figures in a

legend dated 121 B.C., during the reign of the Emperor Han Wudi (140 to 101 B.C.). The emperor missed his consort, Lady Li, when she died and, to help him find consolation, a puppeteer displayed her image behind a lit curtain. The first documentation of shadow puppets is a description, from the Tang dynasty (618–907 A.D.), that details how Buddhist monks used shadow figures to teach Buddhism.

By the time of Mongolian rule, Chinese shadow plays were brought with armies to Turkey, Arabia, and Egypt, and then later on to France, England, Germany, and the rest of Europe. In China the shadow plays were

popular for nine hundred years, but by the end of the nineteenth century internal strife and foreign aggression led to their near extinction. Characterized by its two- rather than three-dimensional puppets, beginning in the 1930s, shadow theater became an educational and political tool as well as an entertainment. All forms of puppetry were encouraged by the government after the Communist take-over in 1949. Like all other traditional arts, however, puppetry faced yet another near extinction during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76).

A master shadow puppeteer can control up to four figures in each hand by holding the rods that control the shadow puppets. Extra rods are often used temporarily. In some complicated fight scenes, it may be necessary to have two players hold a single figure. Shadow figures can be shown to drink wine, smoke a pipe, juggle, mount and dismount a horse, use a bow and arrow, and suddenly appear and disappear. Wind, mist, clouds, and water and waves can be represented by smoke. In complex plays, figures of different sizes are used to create the illusion of

depth, so that, for example, five characters may be represented by more than two hundred figures, in various shapes, outfits, sizes, and transformations.

(3) String puppets, *ti-xian kui-lei* or marionettes, are probably among the oldest of the puppet figures in China. In the Southeast it has been the custom to stage string-puppet theater presentations to drive away evil forces at events such as weddings, birthdays, and the openings of new buildings, as well as after fires, disasters, or funerals.

Originally, at least five strings were used to control each figure. Today, the average number of fifteen-foot strings is sixteen, although sometimes there are as many as thirty-two. They are manipulated by two or three puppeteers, which allows for more complicated actions. The artistic quality of performance is often judged on the basis of the simulated walk, which is used to convey character and personality. For example, a female character "floats" with a gentle sway, while an official moves slowly and with dignity.

For special effects, puppets may have movable earlobes, hinged jaws, enlarged heads, and eyes that can be opened and closed. Such elaborate marionettes come from professional or a few private troupes, mostly in the Fujian province, although small-scale troupes with simpler figures are active in other parts of China.

(4) Hand puppets, *bu-dai xi*, literally "cloth-bag theater," are associated mostly with southern Fujian province, where they supposedly appeared in the sixteenth century. The early stage had two levels, with windows on the upper and doors on the lower level. Sizes of the puppets

varied from period to period. The master was seated with an assistant, and each frequently manipulated two puppets simultaneously. While the master performed the major roles, sang and spoke, the assistant performed only minor roles and did not sing or speak. While other puppet actions are controlled indirectly, through rods or strings, hand puppets require direct contact with the puppeteer. Certain actions, such as the spinning of plates, fighting with weapons, and performing

include "The Monkey King" from *The Journey to the West*, *The Legend of the White Snake*, and *The Eight Immortals Cross the Ocean*. Classics of puppetry also include "Lei Wanchun Fights the Tiger," "The Tortoise and the Crane," *The Story of Three Kingdoms*, and many others. The programs for children often provide instruction and entertainment, and employ animals, acrobatics, and musical accompaniment.

Today, both government-supported professionals and privately organized troupes can be found performing in cities and rural areas throughout China. National-level troupes are obligated to perform for two months, municipal troupes have to perform for four months in villages, and amateur or private troupes can go anywhere they find financial support.

The China Art Puppet Troupe in Beijing, the national troupe of China, with more than 100 puppeteers and musicians, was established in 1953. The troupe spends about half the year performing throughout China in theaters, schools, and children's centers. Similarly, the Shanghai Puppet Troupe, which had more than 150 staff members and about 50 students as of 1982, performs more than five hundred shows a year in kindergartens, schools, and theaters in Shanghai and elsewhere in the country.

These national and provincial-level troupes provide training to young people and the opportunities for experimentation, such as using new techniques and mixing two or more types and styles of puppetry. They also set the standards for all puppet theaters, both in their domestic performances and in their travel abroad to perform at international events and as part of cultural exchange programs.



Nora Yeh holds a hand-held puppet representing the "Good Mother" character in the play "Grandaunt Tiger." The character was created by Alan Chen for the New Acadia Puppet Troupe, which employs delicate, life-like, beautifully costumed figurines. Photo by James Hardin

somersaults, are among the specialties of the Fujian hand puppeteers. Demonstration of such technical expertise while on international tours brought them worldwide recognition.

In all forms of Chinese puppet theater, traditional stories from mythology, history, and literature are performed, as well as many pieces produced just for children. The most representative stories from mythologies



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# Mary Hufford Accepts New Academic Position

After nearly twenty years as a folklife specialist at the American Folklife Center, Mary Hufford has accepted a new position on the graduate faculty at the University of Pennsylvania, where she has served for a year, while on a leave of absence from the Library of Congress. She is planning and developing the university's new Center for Folklore and Ethnography.

During Mary's tenure at the American Folklife Center, she specialized in issues of folk culture and land use, beginning with work on the Pinelands Folklife Project (1983) and culminating with her work on the Coal River [West Virginia] Folklife Project. In 1990 she coordinated the highly successful conference "Cultural Conservation: Reconfiguring the Cultural Mission." She has



Mary Hufford interviews bluegrass musician Everett Lilly during a 1996 Fourth of July celebration on Kayford Mountain, in West Virginia, as part of the American Folklife Center's Coal River Folklife Project. Photo by Terry Eiler

written articles for scholarly journals and the popular press, as well as for *Folklife Center News*, and was curator for the

Center's online presentation "Tending the Commons: Folklife and Landscape in Southern West Virginia." Her books include *Conserving Culture: A New Discourse on Heritage* (editor), Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994; *Chaseworld: Foxhunting and Storytelling in New Jersey's Pine Barrens*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992; and *One Space, Many Places: Folklife and Land Use in New Jersey's Pinelands National Reserve*, Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1986.

Mary has had a distinguished career both at the American Folklife Center and in the profession of folklore. She has ably balanced the interests and demands of academic and public sector folklore, and is widely recognized for both her scholarly publications and her fieldwork.

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Tracy Rush, Don Steck, Bob Cage, and Larry Walker in the Folklife Reading Room, October 4, 2002. Rush, Steck, and Walker are musicians and songwriters who have produced a new CD for their "BACCAWRAP" project, which they donated to the Center. The CD includes music about the decline of small farms and the folkways that are part of farm life, in particular the dying tradition of tobacco auctions. Their music incorporates the auction chants of world champion tobacco auctioneer Bob Cage, whose work had been previously documented for inclusion in the Archive of Folk Culture.



## People and Events



"Old New England," with 2002 National Heritage Fellow Bob McQuillen, contradance caller Mary DesRosiers, and musicians Deanna Stiles and Jane Orzechowski, performed on the Neptune Plaza of the Thomas Jefferson Building, October 8, 2002. The New Hampshire contradance group had the audience on their feet, literally, for an hour of dancing and clapping, as DesRosier coaxed willing and reluctant alike from the building steps and put them through their paces. Contradancing, a two-hundred-fifty-year-old New England tradition, is a lineal dance form characterized by opposing lines of dancers performing elaborate figures based on English country dances. Photo by James Hardin



Folklife Specialist Ann Hoog and American Folklife Center intern Ines Klinger review some of the materials from the September 11, 2001, Collection. Approximately six hundred taped interviews and more than two hundred photographs of spontaneous memorials from twenty-two states were sent to the Library in response to the Center's request for audio-taped interviews documenting the immediate reactions of people around the country to the tragic events of September 11 (see *Folklife Center News*, fall 2001). Photo by James Hardin

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## AFC Board of Trustees Meets in Omaha



The American Folklife Center Board of Trustees held its fall meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, September 26–27, 2002. The meeting was coordinated by Charles Trimble, president of the Red Willow Institute of Omaha, Nebraska, and former member of the American Folklife Center's board. The hosts for the meeting included the Nebraska Arts Council, the Nebraska Humanities Council,

the Nebraska State Historical Society, the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs, the Red Willow Institute, and the John G. Neihardt Foundation. The very full schedule of meetings and other activities included a reception at Joslyn Castle, hosted by the Nebraska Arts Council; a tour of the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center; and visits to the El Museo Latino facility, the Joslyn Art Museum, and the

work of the laboratory. Pictured here are board member Norma Cantú (left); Ellen Lovell, director of the Veterans History Project; Bill Brough, representing the Department of Veterans Affairs at the meeting; and board member Fran Mainella (right). The serpentine fume-extraction ducts provide outlets for vapors from the solvent used in the conservation process. Photo by James Hardin

VA Medical Center (to discuss the Veterans History Project with local tribal leaders). The warmth of the welcome extended by our Nebraska hosts was deeply felt and much appreciated by all who attended the meeting.

In this photograph at the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center, director Julie Reilly (center left) and Objects Conservation Laboratory head Deborah Long (center right) describe

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### EDITOR'S NOTES *from page 2*

November. The Library's National Book Festival, held on the U.S. Capitol grounds October 12, attracted an estimated forty thousand people, despite the threat of rain and a widely publicized series of sniper attacks in the greater Washington area. Security was especially tight because festival host Laura Bush paid a visit to the site, bringing with her Ludmila Putin, of Russia. The two first ladies spent much of their time at the Center's Storytelling

Pavilion, enjoying the songs and stories of Doug and Frankie Quimby and the Georgia Sea Island Singers, who cleverly worked Mrs. Bush's name into the lyrics of several songs (see page 11).

### Montana Heritage Project

Hard to believe it's been nearly eight years since the start of the Montana Heritage Project (see "Montana Heritage Education Project Brings Schools Back into Community," by Michael Umphrey, *Folklife Center News*, summer–fall 1997, page 3).

Accolades to project director Mike Umphrey and his administrative assistant Katherine Mitchell for their fine work building and managing this great project, and to its founders, funders, and guiding spirits Art Ortenberg and Liz Claiborne. As Mike notes in his article for this issue, many of the chronic problems facing schools today might be alleviated by a stronger sense of community involvement and identification and a better working relationship between adults and young people.



Contradancing on the Neptune Plaza, with "Old New England," October 8, 2002. See page 18.  
Photo by James Hardin

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