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Public History Newsletter

Public History

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Fall 2009

## Public History Newsletter Fall 2009

Public History Concentration

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# Public History Newsletter

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY

## Fall Welcome Reception



Tiffany Knapp explaining her project at ThinkTV.

On September 25, the Public History program hosted a Welcome Reception for all new and returning students. This event gave new students an opportunity to meet faculty, other students and get ideas about possible projects and internships.

Second year students were invited to participate in a poster session to highlight their summer project or internship. Tiffany Knapp is working on her project and internship at ThinkTV. To highlight some of what she's done, Tiffany showed a video of a program she helped edit. Ryan Qualls is interning at the National Park Service at the Wright Bicycle Shop. He brought the NPS display and discussed his role as an interpreter. Jeremy Feador completed his internship with the Western Reserve Historical Society. Jeremy worked as a period interpreter and also took part in a weekend seminar on Cemetery preservation. Sara Boteler worked within the Collections Management Department

at the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum in Las Cruces, NM. Sara did a variety of tasks during her internship including exhibits, registration, collections management, and learned the importance of good storage. Elizabeth Morgan completed her internship at the Kent State University Museum. Elizabeth helped prepare a collection of approximately 90 African American women's hats for an exhibit. Her job included becoming familiar with the cata-

Dalton worked with the Dayton Society of Natural History to complete her capstone project. Melissa acted as Guest Curator to design, plan and mount a new exhibit at the Boonshoft Museum of Discovery. The exhibit, *Earth Movers and Artisans: the Hopewell People of Southern Ohio*, is on display through December.

The Reception was well received and we had a wonderful turnout. We'd like to thank the following for sponsoring the

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Public History students pose for a picture at the Reception.

loguing system, selecting pieces for the exhibit, researching the social significance and history of hats in African American culture, and preparing labels. Melissa

event: Dawne Dewey, Bob Smith and the SAA Student Chapter. Thanks for making it a great event!

## The Day in the Life of... WESLEY HENRY The National Museum of the USAF

As Chief of the National Museum of the United States Air Force's (NMUSAF) Research Division, I oversee and manage a staff of six professionals responsible for the three primary responsibilities of the division – writing and developing exhibits packages, maintaining the museum's manuscript collection, and handling research requests from the public, government organizations and museum staff. Managing these three functions on a daily basis is a challenging yet very rewarding job. One of the things I love most about my job is that each day is different!

Most days involve meetings, both formal and informal, concerning exhibit development. After a new exhibit topic is approved, I determine which of my three exhibit curators should research and write the package. Sometimes, when an exhibit is extremely large and complex, I will assign more than one curator to research and write the exhibit package. That is the case for the museum's current large exhibit project: the complete renovation of the Korean War Gallery. I have assigned two curators to that project, scheduled to be completed by June 2010 on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the Korean War.

To ensure that project and numerous other exhibit projects we have

in development concurrently stay on track and on schedule, I co-chair weekly Exhibit Coordination Meetings. These meetings are attended by the four divisions responsible for interpretive exhibits and restored aircraft: Research, Collections, Exhibits, and Restoration. These meetings have become an essential element to ensure adequate communication and coordination of new exhibits and aircraft restoration projects.

I am in constant communication with the curators as they develop new exhibits and then I edit their work once completed. The packages then go to the Senior Curator and Director for final review and approval before they are sent over to the Exhibits Division for design and fabrication.

Much of my time is spent in meetings with senior staff to coordinate projects and ensure good communication. I also hold staff meetings within the division once a week to disseminate museum information to the division, which also gives us all a chance to sit down in one place together to discuss museum matters.

In addition, I am also the Chair of the museum's Lecture Series Committee which is charged with choosing candidates to speak at the museum on a wide range of

USAF related topics. I get the opportunity to meet some truly fascinating active duty and retired USAF personnel as well as outstanding authors and historians as a result of this responsibility.

Another significant part of my job is to determine whether we should accept archival donations offered to the NMUSAF and to oversee the staff and volunteers who handle the archives side of the Research Division's operation. Two manuscript curators (both WSU Public History grads) ably handle the archives and work with our student hires (three currently) and our excellent contingent of volunteers.

Finally, I work with my reference curator (yet another WSU Public History grad) on a daily basis to handle any issues that may arise in replying to requests for information from the public or museum staff. Disseminating historical and technical information is an important part of our mission and must be timely and accurate.

Much of my time is also spent facilitating issues that sometimes occur within the division or with other divisions in the museum. In a large complex organization like the NMUSAF, there are inevitably moments when different viewpoints can create issues, but nego-



**Wes Henry is a 1981 graduate of the Public History program.**

tiation among the parties usually results in a resolution that is acceptable to all and allows the museum to perform its mission.

When I graduated from WSU many years ago (shortly after the earth cooled), my dream job was to work at the NMUSAF (then known as the Air Force Museum). I am extremely fortunate that not only did my dream come true, but also that I have such a wonderful staff of talented and dedicated professionals that make my job very rewarding. And I owe a lot to WSU for my education in preparing me for where I am today.

## Public History Mentor Program takes Flight!

This fall, the Public History Program implemented a Mentor Program to help prepare the students for a career in public history. To achieve this goal, we sent out a call to all our alumni. The response was wonderful! We've had 28 alumni answer the call to act as a mentor to our current students.

With 40 students in the program, each

mentor will have 1-2 students assigned to them. Students and mentors will be matched according to the student's interest and field of study.

The alumni will not only be there to mentor, encourage and guide the student through their graduate career, but also help the student establish a network of professional contacts to assist in finding employ-

ment after graduation.

As a current student in the program, this is going to be a great opportunity. Having a professional contact, someone who knows what it takes to succeed in the field, will be invaluable. Hopefully all the students will seize this opportunity to learn from our alumni and take full advantage of the Mentor Program.

# Alumni News

**Lynn Simonelli (2002).** Vice President, Collections & Research, Dayton Society of Natural History. Oversees the work of all Collections departments at the DSNH, including Astronomy, Anthropology, Biology, Geology, Live Animals, SunWatch Indian Village/Archaeological Park, and Fort Ancient (we are managing the site for the Ohio Historical Society as of August 1, 2009). Renovations are planned for 2010 in the Astronomy wing of the Boonshoft Museum of Discovery, as well as the Wild Ohio zoo (will open to the public as the Discovery Zoo in late summer 2010). **Jenna Edwards (2009)** became a Park Ranger for the National Park Service in June 2009. She works for the National Capitol Parks East division at the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site. **Pete Unitt (1992)** is

enjoying a second career, thanks to Public History. He has been continuously teaching for 12 years in both world and US history, as well as math, engineering, and physics courses at a community college. Pete has written several articles for aviation publications and in 1997 co-authored a biography of the Wright Brother's mechanic, Charlie Taylor, for which Tom Crouch wrote the foreword. He also participated in the construction of the airplane replica that adorns the Dunbar Library atrium. **Daniel Schlegel (2009)** graduated winter 2009 and has worked for Dayton History as a Lead Interpreter for almost 5 years. He enjoys speaking to current students, fellow alumni, and to Dawne's classes to stay abreast of what is going on within the program. **Catherine Wilson (2008)** is the Executive Director at Greene County Historical

Society. She is currently working with students from Sinclair and the new Dayton Regional STEM School. Also, their log house restoration project is almost completed. Removing the back log (which partially supports the second floor) was quick a trick. See a picture of it the restoration below.



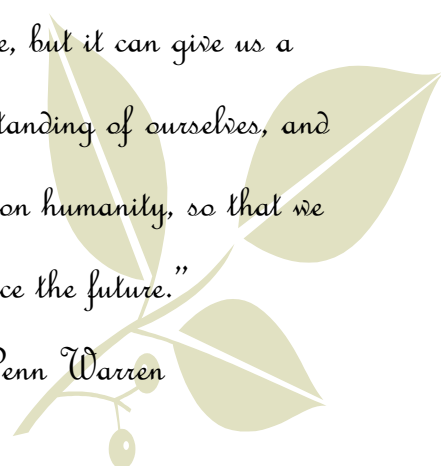
## Welcome New Students!

- David Brownell—Hanover College
- Brittany Guerra—Wright State University
- Elizabeth Haeuptle—Ball State University
- Jeannine Jacobs—Wright State University
- Becky Lindeman—Wright State University
- Susan Richardson—University of Arkansas

**Welcome to the Program!**

*“History cannot give us a program for the future, but it can give us a fuller understanding of ourselves, and of our common humanity, so that we can better face the future.”*

*- Robert Penn Warren*



## Note from the Director: Dawne Dewey

Public History at WSU is very fortunate to have an excellent group of faculty who support the program. I would like to spotlight all of the adjunct faculty who make this program one of the best in the country. Our adjunct faculty are working professionals in the public history field and

dedicate additional time to prepare and teach classes, sponsor internships and guide capstone projects. You deserve to be recognized for the time you devote to teaching and mentoring our students. My sincere thanks to all of you!

*THANK YOU!*

- Vishwam Annam Archives Technology
- John Armstrong Archives
- Edna Diggs Museums
- Glenn Harper Historic Preservation
- Lynda Kachurek Archives
- Mary Anne Kirk Multimedia
- Lynn Simonelli Museums
- Bob Smith Archives
- Toni Vanden Bos Archives
- Virginia Weygandt Museums
- Chris Wydman Records Management



<http://www.wright.edu/cola/Dept/hst/pubhst/index.html>

The mission of the Public History program at Wright State University is to prepare professional who are well-grounded in knowledge of historical content, professional training and hands-on experience.

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**Dawne Dewey**  
Director, Public History Program

**Dr. Henry Limouze**  
Interim Chair, History Department

**Dr. Paul Lockhart**  
Director, History Graduate Program

**Melissa Dalton**  
Public History Graduate Assistant, Newsletter Editor

Doing Public History the "Wright" way  
since 1974.

Congratulations to  
our Summer 2009  
Graduates!

**Aja Ash**

**Veronica Buchanan**

**Jennifer Budzek**

**Valerie Hudson**

**Wendy Wagener**

***We wish you all the best of luck!***

ARMA Scholarship awarded to  
Public History Student

WSU Public History student Ryan Qualls was recently awarded the Waymon Underwood Scholarship from the Greater Dayton Chapter of ARMA International.

**Congratulations Ryan!**

