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West Chester University: Philadelphia spotlighted in exhibition

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WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY

Philadelphia history spotlighted in exhibition

By Bill Rettew
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WEST CHESTER » A dozen West Chester University students are learning how to curate a museum exhibit from start to finish.

As part of the "Beyond the Bell" exhibit, which is free and open to the public, museum-goers can view seats from the Vet and Spectrum, learn about Baldwin locomotive trains, view a pair of slave shackles and even check out a horse radish grinder. And don't miss those costumes worn by Mummies on New Year's Day.

The exhibit marks the 50th anniversary of UNESCO's World Heritage Convention, in which Philadelphia's Independence Hall was named the U.S.'s second World Heritage site.

A highlight of the exhibit is an Ukrainian bandura. What looks like a large mandolin was smuggled out of the Soviet Union during the Seventies.

"It's been through a lot, a lot of history," Alden Ritchey, sophomore Environmental Planning major, with a minor in Museum Studies, said about the instrument that required its own passport to travel.

"We wanted to represent the Ukrainian Community," said Michael Di Giovine, Director of the Museum of Anthropology, Professor of Anthropology and director of the Museum Studies Program.

Students worked with other museums to borrow artifacts, including the slave shackles. Senior Jackie Armao is a History major, with a minor in Museum Studies and worked with the Lest We Forget Museum in Philadelphia.

"People turn away from some of the history of Philadelphia," Armao said.

"It's important to learn that not everyone came here



BILL RETTEW — MEdIANEWS GROUP

WCU student museum curators and their professor. Kathleen Dick, left, Harrison Warren, Alden Ritchey, and Jackie Armao, along with professor Michael A. Di Giovine.

willingly," Di Giovine said. A German beer stein is part of the display.

"It shows the way German people brought traditions with food and drink and it's very artistic," said Armao.

One of 500 pushcarts from the early 20th Century are part of South Street history and underscore the importance of textile sales in the Jewish Community.

"It's a great way to show how that community impacted the commerce of Philadelphia," Armao said.

Senior Harrison Warren is studying Urban Environmental Planning, with a minor in Museum Studies. The train exhibit, culled from Warren's private collection, shows railroad artifacts from when Philadelphia was a transportation hub and steam transportation was a major cog in the Industrial Revolution.

Ritchey appreciates the exhibit spotlight put on the Negro League Baseball collection, featuring the Hilldale Athletic Club, from the 1920s.

"It shows that baseball wasn't just a white person sport and was for every-

body," Ritchey said. So what did the students get out of curating the exhibition?

"We get a lot of professional experience," Ritchey said. "We had to work with people for the first time, but we also leaned on old connections."

Armao grew up in the historic town of Bethlehem and loved learning about history through museums.

"Learning in a classroom is great but learning with physical objects is an exciting way to learn history," Armao said.

Di Giovine said the students worked hard to find relevant objects. He is proud of his students.

"Finding artifacts is all about working with partners and building partnerships in Philadelphia" the professor said.

Main partners were the Global Philadelphia Association, the National Park Service, and the PA Historical Commission. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia also loaned several second class relics of Saint Katharine Drexel.

"It's really a collaborative process," Ritchey said.

Di Giovine said the magic

all starts with a "big idea."

For those earning a Museum Studies minor, students take three core classes. Introduction to Museum Studies, Collection Care Management and a four credit curation class are offered at WCU.

The museum is working with the Office of Digital Learning and Innovation to create an online 3D virtual exhibition.

"This will allow for people from far away to learn about Philadelphia's global heritage, even if they can't make it to the museum," Di Giovine said. "It will be available on the museum's website starting in November."

Kathleen Dick is a senior Anthropology major and is earning a minor degree in museum studies.

"I'm proud to be a part of this," she said. "It's such an important part of history."

"This is the real thing."

The museum is at 775 S. Church St., in the Old Library. More information can be found at www.wcupa.edu/museum. The exhibit runs into May and is open Monday's, Tuesday's and Thursday's from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

CORONAVIRUS

Hospitalizations, cases rising in Delaware County

First print of flu numbers not good, either

MediaNews Group

Delaware County and Pennsylvania are starting to go the wrong way in terms of COVID-19 statistics: Cases up, hospitalizations up and deaths up as colder weather settles in and people are inside more where it is easier to catch the virus.

Plus, there is now an explosion of variants. Each week there are more new strains listed at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention variant proportions web page. These new strains complicate vaccine effectiveness. Just as the new bivalent vaccines have been gaining steam for certain strains, those strains are being pushed aside.

These are the latest statistics from the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- 605 new cases in the county and 13,256 across Pennsylvania, up a few percentage points for both. Those are only the reported cases.

- 12.5% and 11.7%, positivity rates in the county and the state, respectively, up significantly in the county and down somewhat across Pa.

- 29 hospitalized with COVID in the county, up three weeks in a row.

- 1,183 hospitalized with COVID in the state, up again, and still not far off the high of about 1,300 for the second omicron surge.

- 5 deaths in past week of county residents directly from COVID or with COVID as a contributing factor, up from two a week earlier and more in line with recent months. Since March 2020 there have been 1,951 deaths.

- 119 deaths statewide in the past week directly from COVID or with COVID as a contributing fac-

tor. It has been over 100 weekly for two months.

- 1,314 more county residents "fully vaccinated" for a total of 422,558 over the entire 22-month episode of inoculation opportunities.

- 6,965 more county residents receiving the new bivalent boosters for a total of 34,250.

- 580,000 is the county population.

- Moderate: the CDC's risk factor assessment for the county. Most of Pennsylvania is low risk, even places that have higher rates of cases per capita.

- 68%: Cases attributed to the BA.5 spinoff of the omicron variant, down 11 points in a week.

- 12%: cases attributed to a recent spinoff known as BA.4.6, down 3 points in a week.

- BQ.1, BQ.1.1, BA.2.75 and BF.7 are among the new strains emerging across the country, with all combined at nearly 20% of the cases.
- 37,808, daily case average nationally in the past week, about a third of the second omicron peak of 129,889 on July 16.

Flu data

And now there's flu season. The state health department has begun tracking those numbers as well.

The state starts with this cautionary statement: "Seasonal influenza activity in Pennsylvania and the United States is low, however, it is higher than the same time of the year during the past five flu seasons."

Looking more closely at the statistics, Delaware County has the second highest county total, 31, of the 280 state cases documented through the week ending Oct. 8. It is second to 37 in Allegheny County, which contains Pittsburgh and has a little more than double the Delco population. Philadelphia recorded 30 cases.

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