Bootleg Tape
Filmmaker Neal Hutcheson turns whiskey into gold
NC State video producer Neal Hutcheson distilled the art of making moonshine into an Emmy-winning documentary. “The Last One,” featuring one-of-a-kind bootlegger Marvin “Popcorn” Sutton, won a golden statuette Saturday in Atlanta as the Southeast region’s best cultural documentary. 

Seeing the finished piece, it’s hard to believe “The Last One” started out as a flop. Viewers glimpse a vanishing world as Popcorn coaxes his Model A into the Great Smoky Mountains to brew a final batch of moonshine the old fashioned way – heated on wood, tempered with fresh stream water – an art passed down by his father and grandfather.

“I’ve made all kinds of liquor in my time,” Popcorn says, tending the still. “I’ve made the fightin’ kind, the lovin’ kind, the cryin’ kind. I even made some one time and sold it to this couple – they was happily married. The next damn week, they was divorced.”

Hutcheson nearly went straight to DVD with the documentary after none of the film festivals he entered accepted it.
Hutcheson, whose previous work was screened at festivals from Asheville and Wilmington to Australia and Berlin, decided to give “The Last One” another chance. He expanded his bare-bones cinema verite, which showed Popcorn and friends as they built an old-fashioned copper still along a secluded creek, adding expert interviews that put moonshine making into context and historical footage that included “Snuffy Smith” cartoons and photos of raided stills.

He noticed the video was now just under an hour, ideal for PBS, which has aired eight of his documentaries with linguistics professor Walt Wolfram for the North Carolina Language and Life Project. Programmers at both UNC-TV and ETV in South Carolina snapped up the revised documentary.

“I was thrilled about getting it on television. The response was strong, so that was enough success for me,” Hutcheson says.

Then ETV forwarded a glowing e-mail from a retired public broadcaster who called it the best show he’d seen in 40 years in the industry. “Every person on the crew deserves an Emmy,” J. Neal Browder wrote.

“I was pleased he said that, especially because there was an assumption we’d had a crew, when I had done it entirely on my own,” Hutcheson notes with a chuckle. He decided to fill out the Emmy submission form that ETV sent along.

‘Thing of the Past’

Although one-man video shoots are demanding, Hutcheson develops comfortable relationship with those he interviews, leading them to recommend other people he should meet.

During his first trips to Appalachia for linguistics projects in 1999 and 2000, he knew no one and originally planned to stay a week in the spring and a week in the fall to shoot the seasonal scenery. But something happened by the time he released “Mountain Talk” three years later. “Appalachia adopted me and laid a lot of responsibility on me,” Hutcheson says. By this time, he had spent enough time in people’s homes, with and without taping, that it would have been considered an insult for him to stay at a hotel. One woman, dying of brain cancer, extracted a promise that he would keep doing the work. “How can you say no to something like that?” he asks.

He felt an urgency to capture a way of life that was disappearing before his eyes. “You want to do your duty to the material. If you’re not recording it, there’s no guarantee it will be done.”

He captured the back-porch family music of 91-year-old Mary Jane Queen, a matriarch who knew hundreds of songs that originated in England, Ireland and Scotland, in “The Queen Family,” released

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in 2006.

And he followed up with Popcorn Sutton, one of the many voices featured in “Mountain Talk,” to produce what became “The Last One,” shot during a blistering summer week in 2004.

At one point in his moonshine-making demonstration, Popcorn pointed out that the still could explode. In 2007, one of his indoor stills elsewhere did, prompting a sting operation targeting Popcorn, who had been sentenced to probation for bootlegging in the ’70s and ’90s.

In poor health and facing prison time, Popcorn committed suicide on March 16. But not before leaving a legacy of materials on moonshine, including a book he wrote to provide for his wife, titled “Me and My Likker.”

By that time, “The Last One” had aired on public television in the Carolinas and found its way into rotation on the Documentary Channel. Although it referred to a final batch of moonshine, “The Last One,” seems apt for Popcorn himself, who often described something as “a thing of the past.”

A slice of his life will live on through the film. Since the start of his documentary work “so many people have died,” Hutcheson says. “It underscores the value of what we do.”

Wolfram’s grants from the National Science Foundation and National Endowment for the Humanities fund linguistic research, related video work and a portion of Hutcheson’s salary. “The video work unites research with ongoing outreach in a way that’s very appropriate for a land-grant university,” Wolfram says.

In Production

When he’s not in the field, Hutcheson is holed up in an editing bay/office tucked into Tompkins Hall, part of the same complex of buildings where the Raleigh native attended college classes. As a student assistant, he worked on video ancillaries for a new North Carolina social studies textbook.

After graduating from the film studies program in 1992, he worked as a freelance producer/director in Research Triangle Park, picking up occasional video projects with his alma mater. After hearing that Wolfram needed some video work done, he stopped by for a meeting that proved to be a turning point in his career.

“I asked him, ‘Are you any good?’” Wolfram recalls. “It’s a good question to ask a person. You want them to be confident but with a sense of humility.”

Hutcheson’s response: “I think I do good work.”

These days, so does the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

Hutcheson and Wolfram’s latest project is a coastal documentary “down east” in Carteret County, focusing on tension between commercial fishing communities and developers. “‘Atlantic’ is the working title because it’s the name of a town and a big grand-sounding name,” Hutcheson says.

And he may enter the NC State documentary “Carolina Brogue” in Emmy competition. Stay tuned.
The G.I. Bill may not be enough to cover tuition for military veterans from out of state or those pursuing advanced degrees such as an MBA or DVM.

That’s why NC State is participating in the Yellow Ribbon Program, a dollar-for-dollar matching program that will supplement the existing G.I. Bill and give veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan the opportunity to join the Wolfpack family this fall.

“Last year, we had a small number of student veterans who had to pay tuition and fees that the G.I. Bill didn’t cover, so the yellow ribbon program will provide them with some immediate financial relief,” says Dr. Duane Larick, dean of the Graduate School. “We wanted to get this program started quickly, and this first year will be important in helping us ascertain demand.”

Dr. Jose Picart, interim dean of the College of Education and a veteran, sees the yellow ribbon program as another way that NC State is reaching out to veterans. Picart led the university’s 2009 military veterans task force, focused on making NC State a welcoming place for returning soldiers.

The university offers an orientation course for student veterans and gives some academic credits for military education and experiences Veterans can receive credit for required P.E. courses and some leadership credits transfer.

To help soldiers with combat experience connect and find support at NC State, there’s a campus chapter of Student Veterans of America, accredited in April. It was founded by senior Jason Lindsay, who worked in convoy operations while deployed with the 4th Infantry Division in Iraq.

“The chapter hopes to serve as a portal to link together student veterans, and for the university to have a platform of resources available for them,” says Lindsay, who plans a publicity drive in the fall.

“NC State’s mission is to serve the people of this state, and North Carolina has a large military population,” Picart says. “We want to make sure that the men and women who serve this country feel welcome here.”
Motorcycle/Car Permits

Employees who drive both a car and a motorcycle and participate in monthly payroll deduction for permits need to come to the Transportation Office at 2721 Sullivan Drive beginning July 6 to purchase a 2009-2010 motorcycle permit for $5.

Motorcycle riding employees who do not participate in payroll deduction for permits also need to come to the Transportation Office to purchase a $60 permit for the upcoming academic year.

Questions? Contact David Gregory, parking services manager, at david_gregory@ncsu.edu.

Carolina Mudcats Tickets

NC State faculty and staff can receive $5 tickets for all Friday, Saturday and Sunday games when purchased online at carolinamudcats.com (excluding the July 4 game). The WolfPerks offer is good for box seats (200 level seats). A seating chart and schedule are available online. To access discounted tickets, enter the password: PERK!

NC State employees, alumni and students will receive $5 box seats and food and beverage discounts from the Carolina Mudcats during Pack the Park Night on Thursday, July 30. Tickets can be purchased online by using the special password PACK!

Hillsborough Street Roundabout Project

Construction work on Pullen Road approaching Hillsborough Street may require temporary detours around the Belltower along Watauga Club Drive. Construction crews are working on the following:

- installation of the duct bank for underground utilities on the south side of Hillsborough Street between Gardner and Pogue Streets and between Pullen Road and Enterprise Street
- installation of water lines, sewer lines, and the utility duct bank on the south side of Hillsborough Street starting at Tompkins Hall and heading west
- installation of water line on the south side of Hillsborough Street starting at Oberlin Road and heading west towards Enterprise Street and Tompkins Hall
- installation of storm drains for the parking lot adjacent to the Hillsborough/Pullen intersection
- construction of new curbs on east side of existing Pullen Road
- construction of the brick walls at the Hillsborough entrance to Pullen Park and near Wardlaw Building
- grading and preparation of various sites for future construction activities

Hillsborough Street will remain open throughout the project, which has an estimated completion date of September 2010. Although Hillsborough Street will remain open, you may want to explore alternate routes. Wolfline buses will continue to service Hillsborough Street, but may encounter detours and delays during utility work.

For more information visit http://www.hillsboroughstreet.org or http://www.raleigh-nc.org (search Hillsborough Roundabout). This is a city of Raleigh project; NC State’s construction liaison is Cameron Smith, cameron_smith@ncsu.edu.

Transportation-related questions? Contact Ryan Givens, ryan_givens@ncsu.edu.

Parking Updates

The Dan Allen Deck, which closed Monday, June 8, for construction on the first level, will reopen Monday, July 20. Paid parking in the Coliseum Deck will be available during the project. For more info, contact Gary Bridges, transportation facilities manager, at gary_bridges@ncsu.edu.

Now through Friday, Aug. 7, B, C and U permit-holders may flow into student parking areas (DE, DW zones). Sign changes will be taking place in late July or early August renaming student parking areas RE/RW. Note: DW parking in the Bragaw lot and DE parking in the North Hall lot will not be available due to the Hillsborough Street Roundabout project.

A limited number of summer B permits are available for sale to full-time, permanent current C/D/C permit-holders for $25. Come to the transportation office, 2721 Sullivan Drive, to purchase a summer B permit. No gate cards will be issued; access via the Stinson Road visitor information booth.

Depending on space availability after the final SAS Hall move-in, some B permits may be offered from the B waiting list. Permanent B permits are not likely to be offered until fall parking trends are established in mid-September. Contact David Gregory, parking services manager, david_gregory@ncsu.edu to have your name placed on the B waiting list.

Become a Greek Advisor

If you have ever wanted to become more involved with students across campus and support their academic success, here is where you can help. Greek Life will be hosting an informational meeting/ training for faculty or staff members who may be interested in serving as a faculty advisor to one of NC State’s fraternities or sororities. The meeting will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 3, at the ES King Village Commons. Lunch will be provided. Attending the meeting does not commit you to volunteering.

Faculty advisors of Greek organizations provide a vital link between the students and faculty, and their relationship often bridges the gap between classroom and out-of-classroom activities.

Space is limited so please RSVP to Mitzi Horton at Mitzi_Horton@ncsu.edu or 513-2910.

Faculty and Staff Notes

Three Selected for Fulbright Study

Three NC State faculty members will teach and study abroad as Fulbright scholars during the 2009-10 academic year.

Dr. Bronson Bullock, associate professor in the Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources, will perform research and lecture at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Umeå. He will collaborate on forest biometrics research and work on refining current forest growth models used to estimate growth in Swedish forests and make natural resource management decisions. Bullock will also co-teach two graduate level courses and one undergraduate course.

Dr. Nora Haenn, associate professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, will research the effects of international migration alongside Mexican colleagues at El Colegio de la Frontera Sur. She will study how women in rural, tropical southern communities take on full household responsibility once their husbands migrate. Haenn will document farm families’ spending to determine whether it becomes an investment in new kinds of land use that change tropical ecologies. She will also examine how local governments plan for social and economic changes associated with migration.

Dr. William J. Kinsella, associate professor in the Department of Communication, will study in Germany at the University of Stuttgart from March to June of 2010. His research project is titled “Nuclear Energy in Germany: Institutional, Political, and Public Communication in a Changing Social Context.” He will also lecture on communication perspectives on energy and environmental issues.
Ramsey and Tolson Appointed to BOT
Randall C. “Randy” Ramsey of Beaufort, N.C., founder, president and CEO of Jarrett Bay Yacht Sales, has been appointed to the NC State Board of Trustees by Gov. Bev Perdue. Perdue also reappointed Norris Tolson to the board. An active member of numerous local and regional boards, Ramsey has served on the Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament’s Board since 1983, serving as president in 2003 and 2004. He also serves on the board of the North Carolina Manufacturer’s Association. Ramsey serves as vice president of the NC State Student Aid Association, is a current member of the NC State Alumni Association, the State Club and the NC State Council on Athletics.

Plant Breeder Honored
Dr. Tom Ranney, horticultural science professor at the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center near Asheville, won the American Horticulture Society’s Marc Cathey Award for outstanding scientific research. Ranney has released hybrids such as the flowering shrub Calycanthus ‘Venus’ and created two new bigeneric genera xSchimlinia floribunda (Schima x Franklinia) and xGordlinia (Gordonia x Franklinia).

Libraries Receive Grant for Plantation Home Movies
The Special Collections Research Center at NC State libraries received a grant from the National Film Preservation Foundation (NFPF) to restore and share home movies created in the early 20th century by the owners of the Chinqua-Penn Plantation.

Built beginning in 1923 and featured on A&E’s “America’s Castles,” the Chinqua-Penn Plantation in Rockingham County is a 27-room mansion. Owners Thomas Jefferson “Jeff” Penn and Betsy Penn amassed a now-famous collection of paintings, furniture, and other decorative arts. The mansion is now a museum open to the public.

At a time when motion picture technology was rare and far too costly for most citizens, the Penns used it to document their world travels, their family and social life in rural Reidsville. Katherine Charron, assistant professor of history, says the films provide a glimpse of what daily life was like in a rural southern community during the 1930s.

The restored movies will enhance NC State’s Chinqua-Penn Collection. Clips will be available on the libraries’ Web site once restoration is completed.

Ross Named Smithsonian Collaborator
Dr. Ann Ross, associate professor of sociology and anthropology, has been named a research collaborator at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History. The title is awarded to individuals who maintain a formal scholarly affiliation and research relationship with the museum. The appointment will be effective for three years.

Employees Compete for Award
Five employees won University Awards for Excellence for outstanding state government service, innovations, public service, human relations, and safety and heroism. They will represent NC State at the Governor’s Award for Excellence program later this year.

Honorees were:
- Earnest Yaeger, facilities maintenance supervisor, Center for Marine Science and Technology
- Sheila Hayes, environmental health and safety technician, Chemical and Bimolecular Engineering
- Mary Lee Marazick, pharmacist, Student Health Services
- Dick Parham, executive assistant, Department of Sociology and Anthropology
- Barbara C. Hegarty, research associate, Center for Comparative Medicine and Translational Research

Perdue Supports United We Serve
Gov. Beverly Perdue invites state employees to participate in United We Serve, a national effort launched by President Obama to engage more Americans in serving their communities this summer.

Perdue noted that state employees receive 24 hours of paid community service leave, which many use to volunteer at their children’s schools, a church or a community organization. Another way to find local volunteer opportunities is to search at http://www.serve.gov.

Perdue, a former teacher, will focus on mentoring in education and literacy. The North Carolina kickoff June 22 featured Bob Perdue reading to children and discussing volunteerism with them at Heritage Park Community Center.

Xie Honored
Dr. Tao Xie has been awarded a prestigious Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Award by the National Science Foundation, valued at $425,000. He becomes the 19th NSF CAREER Award winner for the Department of Computer Science at NC State.

Golf Tour This Summer
Campus Recreation hosts the Summer Golf Tour at 4 p.m. every Tuesday from July 21 through Aug. 11 at the Lonnie Poole Golf Course on Centennial Campus. The tour is open to all NC State students, faculty and staff at a cost of $25 per round (includes green fees and cart).

Register online on the Campus Recreation site: http://www.ncsu.edu/campus_rec.

The Bulletin is published weekly, except during the summer and holidays, by North Carolina State University News Services. To subscribe to the online version, visit www.ncsu.edu/bulletin.

Please submit news and announcements one week in advance of publication.

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