New River Presents Karen Vuranch as Pearl S. Buck

[LEWISBURG, WV] Storyteller and actress Karen Vuranch brings Pearl S. Buck to life in a living history performance on Monday, July 27, beginning at 6 p.m. at the New River Community and Technical College Greenbrier Valley Campus, 101 Church Street in Lewisburg.

The program is presented free of charge in partnership with the West Virginia Humanities Council. Please pre-register by July 22 by calling New River at (304) 647-6570 or (304)793-6101.

Pearl Buck was born in Hillsboro, WV. Her parents were missionaries, and Buck had the unique experience of living in China during its years of turbulent change. As a child, she immersed herself in Chinese culture and was able to understand it, as few
Westerners can. But, her parents raised her as an American as well. This resulted in Pearl’s profound insight into the conflicts of culture between East and West. Many of the books, articles and stories she wrote dealt with the situations that occur when Eastern and Western cultures meet.

Buck was a prolific writer. She published 100 novels, 73 short stories and more than 200 articles. She also wrote plays and produced 16 films. She received the Pulitzer Prize for her memorable novel, *The Good Earth*, that captured the experience of the Chinese peasant. And, in 1938, she was the first American woman to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature. Until recently, she was the only woman to hold both distinctions.

In addition to her work as a writer, Buck was a humanitarian and social activist. Throughout the 1930’s and into the early 1970’s when she died, she remained a constant force for positive change in the United States and the world. She is most well-known for her unflagging efforts to improve conditions for children throughout the world. She founded several agencies that helped children of mixed ancestry in Asia and was a leading force in education about mental retardation.

She was active in many other causes as well, such as civil rights, anti-war issues and women’s rights. In fact, she dedicated her life to promoting global understanding and personal freedom. As Pearl Buck once said, “We must continue to fight for personal freedom. Every soul must struggle, must have the freedom to struggle for its own truth. I’d fight, I’d die, I’d go to prison to preserve that liberty for you, for me, for everybody. It is my only creed.”

Karen Vuranch brings Pearl Buck to life and relates the story of her life and gives audiences a glimpse of this amazing woman and the Asian culture she knew so well. It is a moving portrayal of one of the most important women of the twentieth century.

In addition to the performance of Pearl Buck, Vuranch is well-known for other portrayals of women in history. She also presents Clara Barton, Mother Jones, Mary Draper Ingles, Irish pirate Grace O’Malley and Wild West outlaw Belle Starr. Vuranch has written two plays about women in history, *Coal Camp Memories* about life in the West Virginia coalfields and *Homefront* about women in World War II. She is also an acclaimed storyteller and performs for over 200 schools, colleges, libraries and
conferences each year. She is scheduled to bring a presentation on Julia Child to New River in October.

For more information about Vuranch, visit wventerprises.com.

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