“Pearl S. Buck” Visits New River’s Greenbrier Valley Campus

Pearl Sydenstricker Buck, the world famous Nobel and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, visited the Greenbrier Valley Campus of New River Community and Technical College on Monday, July 26, through the talents of West Virginia History Alive re-enactor Karen Vuranch.

Vuranch presented Buck’s life story from her birth in Hillsboro, Pocahontas County, to her career as a publisher and advisor to the President of the United States. In between, she described her experience growing up as a daughter of a Presbyterian missionary and his wife. Noting that her father was from Greenbrier County and her mother from Pocahontas County, she told of Buck’s return to West Virginia as a nine-year-old, when she attended Hillsboro Academy.

Pearl S. Buck visited the Greenbrier Valley as part of her final tour of West Virginia on Nov. 18, 1970. At that time she addressed the student bodies of Greenbrier Military School, Greenbrier East High School, Greenbrier College for Women (where the Greenbrier Valley Campus is now located), and a public luncheon at Old Stone Presbyterian Church.

Just prior to the public presentation, Vuranch visited the New River Library, where there is a collection of 41 volumes of Buck’s works. The collection came about through the efforts of the late Jim Comstock of Richwood, an early supporter of the Pearl S. Buck Birthplace Foundation Inc., and the late Veta Lee Williams Smith, a professor at Shepherd University, who was a Pocahontas County native.

Vuranch announced her next West Virginia History Alive performance at the Greenbrier Valley Campus will be Oct. 10 at 3 p.m., when she will portray Julia Child, the famous chef and television personality.

Fifty-five people attended the Pearl Buck program, which was presented by New River’s Department of Workforce Education in partnership with the West Virginia Humanities Council.

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Photo Caption: Karen Vuranch, portraying the West Virginia-Born author Pearl S. Buck, visited the library on the Greenbrier Valley Campus of New River Community and Technical College during her visit to the campus on July 26.