

Cox to become new dean of Libraries

Christopher Cox will become the new dean of Libraries at Western Washington University by the end of the academic year.

"Wilson Library has been a source of pride to the University for many years," said WWU Provost Dennis Murphy. "We are looking forward to the arrival of Dean Cox and his leadership of the very experienced and able faculty and staff in the Western Washington University Libraries."

As Western's new dean of Libraries, Cox will be responsible for the overall leadership, management and direction of the libraries and their programs. The dean of Libraries leads a staff of 65 full-time employees and 58 part-time student employees at Western Libraries.



Cox

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—Christopher Cox

"I am excited at the prospect of leading the libraries of such a well respected institution," Cox said. "I look forward to working with a very talented staff to provide high-quality products, services and learning spaces in support of the University's educational and research missions."

Current dean of Libraries Béla Foltin Jr. is retiring and will be on administrative leave until March 31, at which time he will formally leave the University. While on administrative leave he will finish work on some special projects and

will assist the new dean in the transition of leadership of the Libraries.

Jerry Boles, special assistant to the Provost, has been asked to serve as acting dean until the arrival of Cox.

Cox was hired following a nationwide search. He currently serves as assistant director of Libraries and was previously interim director of McIntyre Library at the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire.

Under his leadership, McIntyre Library co-sponsored the UW-Eau Claire Authors Celebration, presented poetry readings in the library in partnership with the English Department and Chipewewa Valley Book Festival, and now provides digital access to Student Research Day

posters through Wisconsin's MINDS@UW institutional repository and catalog access to the College of Nursing's Learning Resource Center Collection.

Previous to Eau Claire, Cox served as the Reference/Instruction librarian for the George C. Gordon Library, Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, Mass. He has a master's degree in Library Science from the State University of New York and a master's degree in English from the University of Connecticut.

Local band aims for Argentina

by Matthew Anderson | WWU

Millie and the Mentshn, a self-described "chamber klezmer" band comprising five area musicians—three of whom are Western Washington University professors—is trying to capitalize on a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

The local quintet is one of just five bands from the United States—and only 20 worldwide—to capture an invitation to the inaugural KlezFiesta music festival in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The nine-day festival takes place this fall, meaning Millie Johnson and her four mentshn (sounds like "mention" and is the plural for "mentsh," which in Yiddish means "a person of good character") have only a few months to raise the \$6,000 they think it'll take to fly them the 13,930 miles to Buenos Aires and back.

Among the ways the band is trying to amass the necessary plane-ticket funds is by playing self-benefit shows. They have one—a dual concert with fellow klezmer band What the Chelm, which includes several of the same members—lined up for March 8 in the Fairhaven Auditorium.

Band members also plan to hawk their latest cd, which is selling for \$15. The album, "Mentshn It!," is the group's second, after "Homeland to Heartland: The Journey," a live recording that was released in 2004. That album tells the story of Johnson's relative Morris Tenenbaum, born in 1896, who wrote and illustrated a journal that included stories of his life in Russian Lithuania, his family's immigration to America and his early life in the United States.

"The album is the journal of my ancestors and the music that matches it from the area," Johnson said after a recent performance at the Spring Creek Retirement & Assisted Living Community.

Johnson, the group's vocalist, is an associate professor of mathematics at Western. Louis Lippman, a WWU professor of psychology, plays piano, and Kenneth Bronstein, a WWU accounting lecturer, plays the oboe. Other band members are



Photos by Matthew Anderson | WWU

Above: Millie Johnson, right, the vocalist for Bellingham klezmer band Millie and the Mentshn, holds the microphone for drummer Warren Palken during a recent performance at the Spring Creek Retirement & Assisted Living Community in Bellingham.



Left: Ken Bronstein, right, plays the oboe while Lou Lippman plays the piano and Warren Palken plays the drums. The trio are part of the klezmer band Millie and the Mentshn, which has received an invitation to play at the upcoming KlezFiesta in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Phil Heaven, who plays viola and violin, and percussionist Warren Palken.

Like Johnson, KlezFiesta founder Pedro Banchik is a klezmer musician with an interest in history.

"He found us," Johnson said. "He's really interested in the historical aspect and makeup of our band."

For a family reunion, Banchik created a documentary of his family history that eventually turned into a multiple-award-winning masterpiece.

Millie and the Mentshn are hoping to be able to show the film locally as part of its fundraising efforts.

"He's very interested, as many people are, in his history," Johnson said.

Tickets for the March 8 show at the Fairhaven College Auditorium may be reserved in advance at Village Books in Fairhaven. Seating is limited.

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

8 p.m. Jan. 30, Wild Buffalo House of Music: Millie and the Mentshn will perform at this BIMA/Songsalve showcase.

7 p.m. March 8, Fairhaven Auditorium: Benefit concert to help the

band raise funds for the trip to Argentina. The suggested donation is \$12, and the music starts at 8 p.m.

TBA: Other events will be announced on FAST Online at <http://fast.wvu.edu> as they are scheduled.

As is the case with many stories, space constraints have required a shorter article for print. More on this story, including color photographs, is available on FAST Online at <http://fast.wvu.edu>.

WWU students boost commitment to peace, service

Western Washington University ranks third among the top medium-sized colleges and universities with alumni serving as Peace Corps volunteers in 2007.

Western moved up from fourth among medium-sized schools in 2006. In 2004, WWU was ranked seventh.

"Western has a strong tradition of service by its students and alumni, and this Peace Corps ranking reflects that commitment to others," said Western President Karen W. Morse.

Fifty-three Western alumni currently are serving as volunteers. Since the Peace Corps' inception in 1961, 732 Western alumni have served.

Western Peace Corps representative Brent Arbes said a large number of Peace Corps volunteers from Western are graduates of Woodring College of Education and Huxley College of the Environment, as well as students studying English as a second language and foreign languages.

The University of Virginia tops the rankings for medium-sized schools, followed by George Washington University then Western Washington University, Cornell University, and The College of William and Mary.

Colleges and universities are ranked according to size of the student body. Small schools are those with fewer than 5,000 undergraduates, medium-sized schools are those with between 5,001 and 15,000 students and large schools are those with more than 15,000 students. To view the entire list, visit the Peace Corps Web site at <http://www.peacecorps.gov>.

Other highly ranked schools in Washington include the University of Washington, ranked first among large schools, and Gonzaga University, second among small schools.