



Drystone Wall Project to be focus of workshop at Black Mountain Center for the Arts

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Joe Dinwiddie is leading a one-day Saturday workshop in traditional drystone masonry at the Black Mountain Center for the Arts in Black Mountain, 225 W. State Street from 9am - 4pm on June 27. The project to be completed is a capped drystone wall that will provide seating and beautification to the area adjacent to the pottery studio. The day-long workshop will cover the fundamentals of drystone masonry for landscape projects - how to design projects and figure the amount of materials needed, tool selection and use, safety, and durable building methodology. In addition to the six hours of hands-on construction of the sitting wall for the non-profit Arts Center, the workshop will have one hour of classroom instruction, and a one-hour lunch break to talk about the participant's own projects. Participants will need to bring safety glasses, a tape measure, a mason's hammer (sometimes called a brick hammer), and snug fit work gloves. The cost of each workshop is \$100. For registration and other information, please contact Joe at (828) 318-4333 or e-mail him at mason@drystonejoe.com

Joe Dinwiddie learned traditional drystone masonry in central Kentucky during a revival of that craft in the 1990s. Richard Tufnell, an international consultant on drystone masonry and a member and instructor of the Drystone Wall Association, came to Kentucky from Scotland to train masons in restoration and new construction.

In 2001, Dinwiddie completed a DSWA drystone masonry instructor's course, and that same year received his master's degree in vocational education from the University of Kentucky. After seven years of working for and with other drystone masons in Kentucky, he started Dinwiddie Drystone Masonry in 2004. In 2006, he earned a DSWA intermediate-level drystone masonry certificate in the Ae Forest of Scotland, home to his Dinwiddie ancestors. He moved to western NC in 2006.

Since moving to NC, he has taught at John C Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, given presentations to the NC Master Gardeners in Henderson County, and the Men's Garden Club of Asheville. He taught a 70-hour course on drystone masonry at A-B Tech in Enka, and a course at Mars Hill College. Dinwiddie led a 2-day drystone masonry workshop at Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, where the student rock crew constructed a curved, stepped retaining and sitting wall, eventually 60' in length. In 2008 he taught a 5-day workshop at Penland School in NC, and at Touchstone Crafts in Farmington, PA.

About his work, Dinwiddie explains, "Drystone masonry structures, when properly built, rely on friction and gravity for long-term structural integrity and account for freezing, thawing, water, and ground movement. Drystone masonry has numerous functional and aesthetic possibilities. There are ecological benefits as well, with many applications such as preventing stream bank erosion." Joe uses globally informed, traditional stone construction methods to provide a wide range of landscape features, and recycles significant amounts of locally salvaged or locally quarried stone into durable projects.

Gale Jackson, Executive Director of BMCA, emphasized, "This is a win-win situation for us. The workshop Joe will teach here will allow participants to have the opportunity of learning this age-old technique for their own properties, while making a more pleasing and functional area for the Center for the Arts. We hope many will take advantage of this opportunity to be a part of the drystone wall construction project."