

# VIVE LA GRANDFATHER

**Staff Reports | Posted: Tuesday, April 15, 2014 12:00 am**

Grandfather Mountain celebrated the legacy of Andre Michaux on Sunday by welcoming a sixth-generation descendant of the famed French botanist and explorer.

Regis Pluchet of Le Mans, France, a great-great-great-nephew of Michaux, visited the mountain as part of an eight-day tour of historic sites in North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

Michaux, who lived from 1746 to 1802, traveled extensively in eastern North America in the late 1700s, discovering and naming hundreds of new plant species familiar today. Flora attributed to him includes the Catawba rhododendron, flame azalea, crabapple, muscadine and the rare Oconee bells.

After climbing to the peak of Grandfather Mountain on Aug. 30, 1794, Michaux wrote a jubilant, but exaggerated account, of the summit in his journal. He declared: "Reached the summit of the highest mountain of all North America, and, with my companion and guide sang the Marseillaise and shouted, 'Long live America and the Republic of France! Long live liberty!'" of all North America, and, with my companion and guide sang the Marseillaise and shouted, 'Long live America and the Republic of France! Long live liberty!'"

Grandfather Mountain recreated that mountaintop moment Sunday, with members of Appalachian State University's Le Cercle Franais and adviser Lynn McNeil present to sing "La Marseillaise," the French national anthem, at Linville Peak.

Flanked by volunteers from the Southern Appalachian Historical Association dressed in 1700s-style attire, Pluchet accepted a certificate of recognition from Catherine Morton, secretary of the Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation board of directors.

SAHA representatives Dave Davis, Al Ernest, Brian Fannon and Travis Souther delighted visitors with



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Volunteers from the Southern Appalachian Historical Association, clad in 1700s-style attire, help to welcome guests to Grandfather Mountain on Sunday to celebrate the noted French botanist André Michaux and welcome a sixth-generation descendant. From left, Al Ernest, Michaux descendant Régis Pluchet, Travis Souther, interpreter Eliane Norman, Brian Fannon, Dave Davis, Randy Johnson and Michaux scholar Charlie Williams help celebrate the occasion. Photo BY ROB MOORE

a musket firing from the peak to end the celebration.

Pluchet was accompanied by Michaux scholar Charlie Williams of Charlotte, interpreter Eliane Norman and Randy Johnson, a local author who orchestrated the event.

Through his interpreter, Pluchet noted his happiness to visit the mountain where his ancestor walked 220 years ago.

"It's a type of scenery that he loves the most, high in the mountains," Norman said.

Jesse Pope, director of education and natural resources for Grandfather Mountain, led a guided hike earlier in the day on the Black Rock Trail to examine some of the unique plants that excited Michaux generations ago.

He said it was thrilling to walk with Pluchet along Linville Peak. While they didn't speak the same language, they found common ground in the Latin scientific names of plants they observed along the way.

"It's as close as I'll ever get to walking with Andre Michaux, and Michaux is one of my heroes," Pope said.