

NEWS

LETTER



APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE

Loyal Jones • Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Looking Forward

April 12-14: Southern Quilt Symposium, Hunter Museum of Art, Bluff View, Chattanooga, Tenn. 37403. "Not the largest, not the busiest, not always with the superstar performers, it strives to awaken new and individual responses to quilting..."

April 22-24: Writers' Spring Gathering, John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, N.C. 28902. Workshops in fiction, nonfiction and poetry.

April 30: Spring meeting, Virginia Folklore Society, Ferrum College. Information from Blue Ridge Institute, Ferrum College, Ferrum, Va. 24088.

May 1-June 5: Two two-week sessions and one one-weeker on everything from basketry to blacksmithing. Full details from John C. Campbell Folk School.

May 14: Sacred Harp Singing Convention, Berea College. A brand-new event inspired by the singing school held at the University of Kentucky in February. Information from John M. Ramsay, Director of Recreation Extension, Berea College, Berea, Ky. 40404.

June 5-11: Appalachian Family Folk Week, Hindman Settlement School, Forks of Troublesome Creek, Hindman, Ky. 41822. Music, dance, crafts, storytelling, wood carving, instrument building; separate activities planned for children.

June 13-July 1: Appalachian Literature and Music, Berea College (see following story).

June 19-25: Appalachian Celebration, Morehead State University. A combination of academic courses, workshops and special events, sponsored by the Appalachian Development Center. Details from James M. Gifford, Appalachian Development Center, Morehead State University, Morehead, Ky. 40351.

July 10-16: Appalachian Visual Arts Week, Hindman Settlement School. Painting and drawing, under the eyes of practicing artists.

July 15-16: Festival of Appalachian Humor, Berea College (see story on p. 2).

July 18-24: Appalachian Writers Conference, ETSU. Send your ideas to and get information from Jay Reese, Institute for Appalachian Affairs, ETSU, Johnson City, Tenn. 37614.

July 31-August 6: Appalachian Writers Workshop, Hindman Settlement School. This year the luminaries will include Harriette Arnow, Jim Wayne Miller and James Still. If you wish to attend, you should submit a manuscript in advance; you can find out more from Mike Mullins, executive director of the school.

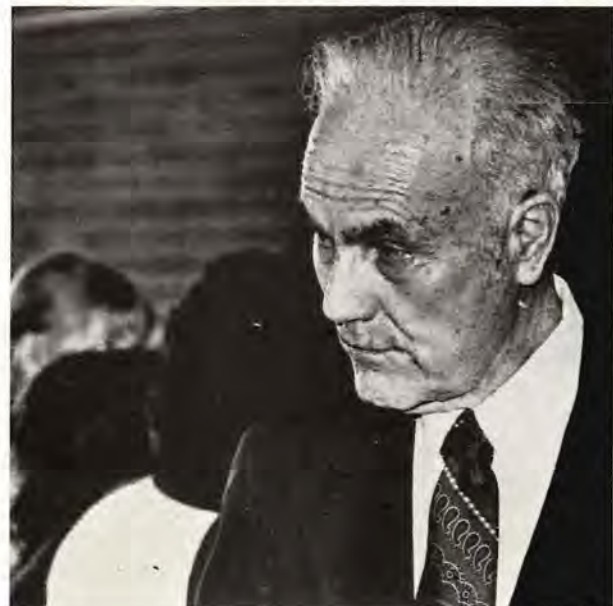
Wilma Dykeman, Charles Wolfe in Summer Special

In a reprise of last summer's program, the Berea College Appalachian Center, in association with the University of Kentucky College of Education, is again offering a three-week course in Appalachian literature and music. These arts will be examined with two of the region's outstanding practitioners and authorities, Wilma Dykeman and Charles Wolfe. Ms. Dykeman will discuss writers, from Mary N. Murphree to those of the present day, who have used the Appalachians as a setting. Wolfe will examine the principal musical traditions of the region—ballads, folk songs and instrumental music—and the rise of commercial music.

The dates of the course are June 13-July 1.

The course is designed primarily for teachers who would like to introduce courses or units in Appalachian literature or music into their schools, though others may attend if space is available; three hours of graduate or undergraduate credit may be earned through the UK Department of Extension Education and the College of Education. The cost, including room and board, tuition and some books, is a bargain-level \$150. For a brochure with full details, write the Appalachian Center, CPO Box 2336, Berea, Ky. 40404.

Recognized: Don West...see p. 2



ARC: Well-Earned Demise?

Under a Congressional continuing resolution, the Appalachian Regional Commission has been funded to continue operating through fiscal 1983 at last year's level—\$155 million. The commission is on what is called its "finish-up program." But efforts continue in Congress to prolong the life of ARC; Appalachian governors trek to Washington to plead its cause before committees; lobbyists work on its behalf.

The *Herald-Leader* of Lexington, Ky., a city outside of but not a great distance from Appalachia, takes a sour view of these attempts to resuscitate ARC. The commission's record, says the newspaper, "includes a considerable amount of waste: pork-barrel projects that served no useful purpose in Appalachia, lucrative consulting contracts awarded to former commission employees, and the inevitable waste of funneling tax money through several layers of Washington bureaucracy just so a little of it can trickle down to the area it was intended to reach."

Does this mean that the *Herald-Leader* thinks ARC has done nothing with its many hundreds of millions? No, the commission "has some solid accomplishments to show for those 18 years—roads, schools, clinics, water and sewer facilities and the like. All were needed in Appalachia. But could they have been provided with less money and less waste?"

States like Kentucky could finance these activities themselves, says the newspaper. Speaking specifically of Kentucky, it observes that "it wouldn't take much of an increase (maybe .2 percent) in the state's 4.5 percent severance tax to produce as much as the state received from the ARC last year...Federal programs like the ARC exist, and perpetuate themselves indefinitely, because state politicians...find it politically easier to let that far-off and already hated federal government do what should be done at the state level."

In fact, the *Herald-Leader* observes, "two years ago, when the ARC was under strong attack from the Reagan administration, Appalachian governors promised that the agency would do better, if only it was given a little more time and money. They asked for five years to finish ARC's work. They are still asking for five years, but now it's five years from 1983....This litany of 'five more years' could go on forever, with no more to show for it than there is to show for the last 18 years."

Quite a blast! On reading it over, we can't help reflecting on the way a relatively small matter sometimes takes on a life of its own and just keeps growing in importance. Those famous ARC consulting contracts: they were no doubt handed out in blithe and typical bureaucratic innocence—just a standard, insular DC ploy. Why should people out in the mountains, or any taxpayers anywhere, for that matter, be concerned about a cushy little deal or two? Well, as it has turned out they *were* concerned; sometimes now they frown as soon as the word "consultant" is mentioned. It's not merely because of the ARC deal, of course; that's simply one of a long line of maneuvers that have brought the word, if not into disrepute at least into question. It's reminiscent of the fate of the word "appeasement"—a word that was perfectly acceptable until, in its name, Neville Chamberlain turned Czechoslovakia over to Adolf Hitler; now no one would

use it except in profound pejoration. "Consultant" and "consulting" may be on their way to suffering the same fate. And they may help drag the ARC down with them.

Laugh Time!

The Berea College Appalachian Center will host a first-of-its-kind festival of Appalachian Humor July 15-16 on the Berea campus. The festival will be organized and managed by Loyal Jones and Billy Edd Wheeler. Wheeler, songwriter, playwright, tale teller and singer, will also share his humorous material, as will various invited guests. Also a part of the program is a scholarly examination of regional humor by Robert J. Higgs, professor of English at East Tennessee State University and author of *Laurel and Thorn: The Athlete in American Literature*. Humorists of all ages are invited to attend and participate. Prizes of \$100, \$50, and \$25 will be awarded to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners in at least five categories: jokes, traditional tales, true humorous stories, humorous folk songs and humorous original songs.

"The Berea Commitment"

West Virginia Poet Don West gave the principal address at Berea College's 1983 Service Award convocation on March 3. The awards, which recognize the work of persons who "in their daily lives and their service to mankind have exemplified the Berea commitment" went to West; to Irma Gall and Peggy Kemner, founders and co-directors of the Lend-a-Hand Center, Walker, Ky.; and to Mattye G. Knight, a community-restoration leader who is director of the Greater Cumberland Corporation, Cumberland, Ky. West was honored as the founder and director of the Appalachian Folklife Center, Pipestem, W.Va.

EYE on Publications

Mountain Memories, by Granville A. Deitz (Book Crafters, Inc., Chelsea, Mich.; order from J. Dennis Deitz, 216 Sutherland Drive, South Charleston, W. Va. 25303). A collection of "true and folk stories of the West Virginia hills," published as a tribute by the author's widow and children. The greatest compliment ever paid a foreign country, the author says, "was when somebody dubbed West Virginia the little Switzerland of America." The book was "inspired by the nagging fear that amid all this morbidity about Appalachia we might lose sight of our proud and immensely colorful forebears."

Streams of Idealism and Health Care Innovation, by Richard A. Couto (Teachers College Press, Columbia University). This book grew out of the efforts of the Vanderbilt University Center for Health Services to improve health conditions in parts of Appalachia, Nashville and West Tennessee; because "health has been defined within the center as the promotion of

Unto These Hills...



WHERE IN THE WORLD? The CENTER NEWSLETTER challenges its readers to identify these mountains. Western North Carolina? East Tennessee? Southwest Virginia? Where? Send your best guess to the NEWSLETTER at the address on the outside. We may even find a prize—if we have a winner. Let us hear from you!



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well-being, not merely the absence of disease, some projects have addressed other social issues such as the need for legal counsel, better markets for small farmers, and land ownership and land use." This is surely a propitious time for an analysis of a specific kind of voluntarism in a specific place—what its problems were, what good it did, what it taught its practitioners.

In a Land of Plenty, by Don West (West End Press, Box 7232, Minneapolis, Minn. 55407). A reader of the Appalachian poet's work from 1932 to the present; the title poem puts the point of view clearly: "Up, up

mountain toilers/And hear what I tell/In a land of plenty/There's hunger and hell!" The poet, says West, "can never be neutral. In a hungry world, the struggle between oppressor and oppressed is unending." Along with the poems is a selection of prose pieces.

The Killing Ground, by Mary Lee Settle (Farrar, Straus, Giroux). The author presents herewith the coda of her Beulah quintet, providing a present-day ending to her multigenerational story, the immediately preceding volume of which was *The Scapegoat*. West Virginia is the place to which Hannah McKarkle returns

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in an attempt to find out why her brother Johnny died in jail—a shocking, unexpected kind of fate; “every word of *The Killing Ground* rings true,” says Anne Tyler, with the past “richly evident in the present.”

Voices from the Mountains, collected and recorded by Guy and Candie Carawan (University of Illinois Press). A reissue of the collection of songs originally published in 1975 by Knopf. It's a handsome book, made up not only of the songs but of separate comments and observations by Appalachian people, highlighted by a variety of first-rate photographs.

The Hanging Stones, by Manly Wade Wellman (Doubleday). Devil worshipers, ghouls, seventh sons of seventh sons—all these combine to create strange doings in Appalachia, of all places. This is one of a series of stories about a roving balladeer called Silver John.

A Mother and Two Daughters, by Gail Godwin (Viking Press; Avon paperback). It would be stretching things a bit to call this an Appalachian novel, since it's more generally North Carolinian and even more generally mainstream American, but one could use as an excuse for doing so the fact that Asheville (called here Mountain City—that sounds pretty Appalachian) appears both as an influence and as a location for some of the action. Feminists might want to claim the book too, since, as the title suggests, it's deeply concerned with women. But any interest group would be wrong to assert proprietary rights: it's a novel first and foremost, and anything else quite secondarily; and men as well as women should find it of interest.

The Great Smoky Mountains, by Laura Thornborough (University of Tennessee Press). The author was born and reared in sight of the Great Smokies, and she witnessed the development of the great regional park from the launching of the idea in 1925. This book, originally published in 1937 by the Thomas Y. Crowell Co., has been revised and reprinted many times, because “no other book covers so many facets of the Smokies” and “it answers about 90% of all the questions asked about this National Park.” Those two judgments were made by earlier reviewers, and there seems no reason to question them. The present edition appeared in 1979.

Step Around the Mountain, edited by Art Cuelho (Seven Buffaloes Press, P.O. Box 249, Big Timber, Mont. 59011; \$4.35). One of a series of regional anthologies of poetry and prose, this one is identified as Black Jack #12. Contributors come from throughout Appalachia, and they're numerous indeed; we started to count them, then gave up; they include some widely known regional figures and some who are new to us, at least. What the editor seeks to do in this small, densely packed book is to build up “a solid picture of a region,” producing “one rich vein of humanity.” Grandmothers polish silver, drummers come with their packs, miners toil in the darkness...and *Schlitz* comes to the mountains.

Records

From the University of North Carolina Press come two important albums in a series of well-documented “recordings of Traditional American verbal and music performances” under the general editorship of Daniel W. Patterson, chairman of the curriculum in folklore at Chapel Hill. They are *Powerhouse for God: Sacred Speech, Chant, and Song in an Appalachian Baptist Church*, recorded and supplied with notes by Jeff Todd Tison (\$20.00) and *Primitive Baptist Hymns of the Blue Ridge*, recorded by Brett Sutton and Pete Hartman, with notes by Sutton (\$15.00). The first album has two discs, the second one. The notes to each are practically book-length—some 75 album-sized pages. Tison, who teaches English and music at Tufts, has broken new ground in the study of the language of worship in the Fellowship Independent Baptist Church of Stanley, Va. Sutton, a doctoral candidate in anthropology, examines the cultural setting and the meaning of a type of music that has survived from precolonial days.

The Library of Congress has released a similar set of recordings, called *Children of the Heavenly King: Religious Expression in the Central Blue Ridge* (AFC L69-L70). A result of the Blue Ridge Parkway Folklife Project of 1979, conducted by the American Folklife Center and the National Park Service, the album documents not only hymn singing but also prayer, preaching, baptizing and other services in various black and white churches. The music ranges from lined-out Primitive Baptist hymns to modern gospel.

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