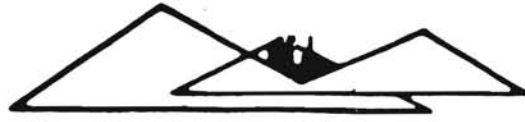


NEWS

LETTER



APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE

Loyal Jones • Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Summer 1985

Looking Forward

October 11-13: Annual fall fair, Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen, Indian Fort Theater, Berea, Ky. 40403.

October 11-13: Sixth annual Tennessee Fall Homecoming at John Rice Irwin's 65-acre Museum of Appalachia near Norris, Tenn. "One of the nation's largest and most authentic old time mountain, craft, and music festivals involving hundreds of musicians and Appalachian Mt. Folk." The address is Box 359, Norris, TN 37828.

October 18-20: Annual fall fair, Southern Highland Handicraft Guild, Asheville Civic Center, Asheville, N.C. The guild's address is P.O. Box 9545, Asheville, N.C. 28815.

October 24-27: Berea College Celebration of Traditional Music (*see following story*).

Celebration Time Again

Coming up October 24-27 is the twelfth annual installment of what we can describe without undue immodesty as one of Appalachia's top musical events, the Celebration of Traditional Music presented by the Berea College Appalachian Center. Through the years since 1974 the Celebration has remained devoted to the

HONOREE: Pioneer radio star Bradley Kincaid



aim announced at the beginning by Appalachian Center Director Loyal Jones—to "feature strictly old-time traditional music." It was not, he said, "that Berea is against the newer forms, such as bluegrass, but we feel that the old styles traditional to the mountains are not heard so much any more, and so we want to encourage them." For the past 11 years the Celebration's programs and its instrumental workshops have done exactly that and have thereby made a prime contribution to the renascent popularity of the traditional styles.

This year's Celebration will pay special tribute to Bradley Kincaid in his 90th year, and the pioneer radio star will be on hand to perform.

The festivities get under way on Thursday, October 24, with a 3:00 p.m. concert and slide show by Jean Ritchie and George Pickow; in the evening there's a street dance. On Friday and Saturday evenings the big old-time, multiperformer sessions will be held, beginning at 7:30. Following each concert everybody present is invited to join in square dancing, led by John Ramsay and Fred Park, with music by the Stillhouse Reelers.

The daylight hours on Saturday will be devoted to instrumental workshops and informal performances, and at 2:00 Loyal Jones will lead a symposium on Bascom Lamar Lunsford and the folk-festival movement. Those who don't frolic too late into the night on Saturday will join festival musicians at 9:00 Sunday morning in a concert of hymns.

The Celebration will of course present its usual galaxy of established favorites, together with performers invited to appear on the local stage for the first time. In addition to Bradley Kincaid and Jean Ritchie and George Pickow, the participants will include the superstar couple Grandpa and Ramona Jones, along with Bruce Green, Bobby McMillon, the Alfred Bailey Band, Charlie Osborne and Tom Bledsoe, Carol Jones and George Reynolds, and Fred Park.

If you need any further information, it's available from the Appalachian Center at the address on page 4 of this NEWSLETTER.

ARC: Not Quite Dead

If the Appalachian Regional Commission is dead—as all the doctors have declared it to be—then the news hasn't yet reached its nerve center. Dead or dying, the
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ARC from page 7

commission continues to hold meetings and workshops and conduct other operations just as though its own head, federal co-chairman Winifred A. Pizzano, hadn't expressed herself in favor of ARC's giving up the ghost.

Earlier this summer the certifiably moribund commission hosted a region-wide workshop concerned with school dropouts, a problem in which it has shown consistent interest. With the purpose being the obvious one of exploring ways to cut down Appalachia's school-dropout rates, which are markedly higher than national figures, the workshop featured the presentation of various dropout-prevention programs that have enjoyed measurable success. Panelists came from all over, within and outside of Appalachia. Berea President John Stephenson moderated a panel on Appalachian state initiatives.

When ARC is really, truly, finally laid to rest, will some other body come along to pay the same kind of systematic attention to problems like the dropout situation? There's little denying that this is an age in which conferences are significant sources of both information and enthusiasm, boondoggles though many no doubt are. On the other hand, there's little denying that ARC has had a tendency to shoot itself in the foot, as they say in Washington, with such public-relations goofs as the creation of cushy deals for involuntarily retired employees. But it may well be that some entity besides the lightly funded Appalachian Foundation will have to take on some of the chores that ARC has performed. One wonders what Ms. Pizzano would suggest.

Letters

TO THE EDITORS:

It's high time I renewed my free subscription to the NEWSLETTER as well as commended you editors for the fine statement about and pictures of Cratis Williams (CENTER NEWSLETTER, Spring 1985). Anybody who had any association with this unique and splendid man was enriched by it.

JAMES STILL

Mallie, Ky.

TO THE EDITORS:

During this summer the Kentucky General Assembly, called to Frankfort in special session by Governor Martha Layne Collins, rewarded the governor by giving her an affirmative answer to her plea for more money for education. Weary of hearing about progress in Tennessee and reform in Mississippi, the legislators voted to go along with many of Mrs. Collins's requests. Lawmakers from the Bluegrass and the westerly counties, embarrassed by the perpetual downward statistical tug exerted by the state's Appalachian school systems, seemed to have had enough.

But have they? Well, more money for education is a good thing, isn't it? There isn't any choice nowadays, is there? With every state doing the same thing—increasing teachers' pay, buying computers and all the rest of it, working furiously to create the kind of labor force that will attract high- and medium-tech industries

—the answer would indeed seem perfectly clear.

And for much of the Bluegrass state, the answer is not only clear but probably right. But now, when you get to the mountains...well, this correspondent has some questions. In the mountains you're not talking just about school *systems*, you're talking about school *superintendents*. Even in flatter central Kentucky there was—as every watcher of the CBS program "Sixty Minutes" knows—a superintendent who treated his schools as if they were as much his personal property as his dog and his barbecue grill. The man retired just recently. Who got the job? The superintendent's nephew. A specially hired consultant said that well, the nephew was qualified for the post. But still, a nephew is a nephew. Even in south central Kentucky, it seems, Caesar's wife is not a universally emulated role model.

And in the mountain East, as your correspondent has had some occasion to see firsthand, that western superintendent's conduct wouldn't even attract any attention—except, perhaps, from members of a rival clan who'd like to get *their* man in so they'd have a crack at some of those jobs. That's the way it seems to be when the superintendent is both a political chieftain and the biggest employer in the area. What good's a man if he doesn't give the spoils of office to his own people?

Dollars for education may produce the hoped-for results in many parts of Kentucky. But when the money reaches the mountains, will it be put to work as the governor hopes or will it simply give the superintendents a huge shot of fresh power? A sophisticated international development expert once observed that it is folly to supply advanced agricultural implements to Hindu peasants before the people have acquired the culture, the mental outlook, to make proper use of them. To this correspondent, at least, the parallel is haunting.

NAME WITHHELD

(The APPALACHIAN CENTER NEWSLETTER welcomes correspondence and other contributions from readers—in fact, we strongly encourage such participation—and it will preserve your anonymity if you so request; you don't have to give us a reason for desiring it. But the editors must know who you are, though they pledge themselves to keep your secret. If you have something to say but are afraid of what might happen if you make waves, write us and let those waves be of anonymous origin.)

EYE on Publications

Only When They're Little, by Kate Pickens Day (Appalachian Consortium Press). In 1980 Mrs. Day, then 86 years old, was forced by heart trouble to become permanently bedridden. Having led an active life outside the home as well as serving as wife and mother (one of her projects was the writing of a column in the local Easley, S.C., newspaper), she saw no reason to quit working just because she had lost her mobility. Although she was somewhat concerned that her family might think her "a fool to try such a thing" at her age,

On an October Morning ...

Earl Palmer



MOLASSES-MAKING TIME. "When maples fringing the forests flame crimson in the nip of an October morning," says Virginia photographer Earl Palmer, "it's time to get out your cane-grinding press and hitch your mare to grind the succulent cane into juice." Such mornings will soon be with us.

EYE *continued*

she decided to undertake a novel—a work that would be largely autobiographical, the story of an Appalachian family like her own. The result is this present book, which has been edited by Mrs. Day's niece, Nancy Carol Joyner of Western Carolina University. The story covers the four decades from 1904, when the fictional family moves to the Asheville area, to the post-World War II years.

Brogans, Clothespins, and a Twist of Tobacco, by K. Maynard Head (Caroline House, Inc., Aurora, Ill. 60506). The author, who lives in Cumberland Gap, Tenn., writes a syndicated newspaper column called "Mountain Moments," from which the chapters in this

book come. *Brogans*, which has not been seen by the editors of the NEWSLETTER, is described by the author as "NOSTALGIA at its best; the yesteryears of which we reminisce; the good ol' days" we long for when life was easy (or hard), and we 'lived' at a different pace." If this description attracts you, you can order *Brogans* from the author at P.O. Box 196, Cumberland Gap, Tenn. 37724.

West Virginia: A History, by Otis K. Rice (University Press of Kentucky). On picking up this book, the first thing we did was turn to the index to see how much Professor Rice has to say about that spectacular political

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freebooter of the 1960s, former Gov. W.W. Barron, whose dazzling doings with a jury made many headlines in those days; we were hoping for some good stories. But Rice, who seems determined to be utterly fair, credits Barron with various "solid achievements," although he is forced to concede that "scandal eventually obscured accomplishments"—as was witnessed by the conviction of 13 high officials (the attorney general, the head of the finance department, the governor's executive assistant among them) and five of their buddies on such charges as bribery and conspiracy; the governor himself got five years for jury tampering.

Unfortunately, the scope of this book is so great—West Virginia from paleozoic times to the era of Jay Rockefeller—that an episode like the Barron administration can receive only a single page. Similarly, the poignant story of Gov. William Marland (elected in 1952 at the age of 34) is briefly told. The young governor had hardly finished taking the oath when he called on the legislature to enact a severance tax on minerals. It was an idea whose time had definitely not come in the wild, wonderful state, and Marland was savaged by the *Charleston Gazette*, regarded with horror by the lawmakers, and crushed by the coal industry. Some years later, having contracted and then recovered from alcoholism, he turned up in Chicago as a cab driver, and shortly thereafter he died of cancer. Far be it indeed from us to complain about a writer for not producing the book we have in mind (it's perhaps the sleaziest form of criticism), but as admirers of Rice's work ever since we read *The Allegheny Frontier*, we'd love to see him do a political history of modern West Virginia: he knows the subject and he certainly has wonderful as well as wild material. In the meantime, the book at hand holds much of interest about West Virginia's general cultural and political background.

Voice of the New West, by Stephen W. Brown (Mercer University Press). The "voice" referred to was that of John George Jackson (1777-1825), an early western Virginia politician and entrepreneur who, as

the author observes, "is among those American leaders of secondary rank whose lives and careers elucidate the nation's history and add depth and dimension to the broad outlines shaped by the great figures who towered above them." Every state, of course, has produced such persons, and Brown—who teaches history at West Virginia Tech—has devoted himself to "John G." through an M.A. thesis, a doctoral dissertation, and now this published version of his subject's life and work. He has, as Otis K. Rice remarks in a foreword, "done much to rescue a deserving but not Olympian American from an undeserved obscurity."

Common Ground: An Anthology of Contemporary Appalachian Poetry, edited by Bob Henry Baber, George Ella Lyon and Gurney Norman (Jalamap Publications, 601 D Street, South Charleston, W.Va. 25303). Unfortunately, we do not have a copy of this book at press time, and we therefore can't tell you whose work it contains. But the publishers tell us that "over eighty voices from Appalachia have joined in a mighty chorus, singing the songs of love, hope, good times and bad." The voices come from Alabama, West Virginia, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky, Virginia, Ohio and Tennessee, and they "represent the best that Appalachia has produced."

Emerging Patterns in the Southern Highlands: A Reference Atlas, by Paul E. Lovingood, Jr., and Robert E. Reiman (Appalachian Consortium Press). Sponsored by the Committee for Regional Cooperation and Development of the Appalachian Consortium, this atlas is the first fruit of the committee's decision to produce a series of such books using easily retrievable census data "that could be displayed readily by the use of the mechanized procedure known as Geographic Information Management and Mapping System." County by county, the maps describe population, housing, income and education, employment, and agriculture. The aim of the series is to provide constantly up-to-date information for individuals, businesses and government agencies. We are, however, told that the data are "discreet." Too bad—but perhaps the facts can speak for themselves anyway.

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