

NEWS

APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE

LETTER



Loyal Jones – Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Looking Forward

April 5-8: Sue Bennett Folk Festival, Sue Bennett College, London, Ky. 40741. This jamboree will feature participants ranging from J. P. and Annadeene Fraley to a sociologist and a psychologist from the University of Kentucky. More information from Thelma Hedrick at 606/878-9681.

April 5-9: 15th annual conference of the Sonneck Society for American Music, Vanderbilt Plaza hotel, Nashville, Tenn. The host city is home to every kind of music from country to classical, and the Sonneck Society has an equally wide span of interest. Students are specially invited to take part in these discussions and celebrations of every imaginable kind of American music. You can contact the society at the Center for Popular Music, Box 41, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tenn. 37132.

April 7-8: "Migration and Elderly Population Change in Appalachia: The 1980s and Beyond," a symposium sponsored by various departments of the University of Kentucky; essentially, it's an all-day Saturday meeting. You can get full information from the Department of Geography at UK, 1457 Patterson Office Tower, Lexington, Ky. 40506.

April 9-15 and 16-22: Spring craft weeks II and III, John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, N.C. 28902. The opportunities vary here, depending on which week you choose. If you want stripped hickory seat weaving, for instance, you'll have to come for week III—and so on.

April 10-11: "Creation Enslaved—Creation Freed," a conference on the church and the environment, Lutheridge Conference Center outside Asheville, N.C. The sponsors call this meeting "a must for every concerned Christian." More information from the Coalition for Appalachian Ministry, P.O. Box 10208, Knoxville, Tenn. 37939.

April 17-22: Second annual spring dulcimer week, Davis & Elkins College; intensive instruction in hammered and lap dulcimer, together with a weekend festival. For more information, contact the Augusta Heritage Center at the college, Elkins, W.Va. 26241; telephone 304/636-1903.

April 20-22: Eighth annual New River symposium, sponsored by the New River Gorge National River of the National Park Service and a variety of other public institutions in three states; Best Western motel, Radford, Va. Not for the intellectually faint-hearted, the symposium will, as usual, concern itself with archaeology, folklore,
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Above Reproach?

With no fanfare or, indeed, any kind of public display, the Appalachian Regional Commission has managed to have the last laugh on the now-departed Reagan administration. Some weeks after the former President jogged across the Potomac and into the California sunset, the ARC remains in Washington, doing business at the stand it has occupied since the mid-1960s.

Eight years ago, such a scenario appeared unlikely. ARC seemed destined then to undergo a horrendous process consisting first of budget trimming and then of total extinction. Nothing about the commission marked it as the kind of activity likely to find favor in Ronald Reagan's Washington. Nor, in fact, has it succeeded in winning over its enemies. But political resourcefulness and bureaucratic tenacity have combined to overcome even some bad public relations moves on ARC's own part (particularly, the granting of opulent consulting contracts to former commission officials) and keep the organization alive and functioning. Every year it has had to fight for its appropriation, but every year it has come away from the fight with a life-saving infusion of cash.

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geography and all sorts of other scientific and humanistic interests. Direct your questions to park headquarters at 304/465-0508.

April 28-30: "Women Taking Charge: Making a Living and Making Change," a conference sponsored by the Southeast Women's Employment Coalition, Lake Junaluska, N.C. The participants will study and discuss such questions as the economics of sexism, racism and homophobia; improving health and safety in the workplace; and organizing low-income women for self-determination. The sponsoring organization is headquartered at 140 E. Third St., Lexington, Ky. 40508; telephone 606/233-9481.

May 7-13 and 14-20: May craft weeks I and II, John C. Campbell Folk School.

May 12-14: 20th Annual Cincinnati Appalachian festival, at Coney Island, sponsored by the Appalachian Community Development Association; dancing, crafts, music and food. The list of performers scheduled to appear in this large-scale affair includes Anndrena Belcher, Hazel Dickens, David Morris, Betty Smith and Nimrod and Molly Workman. More information from Ron Mason, 933 Wells, Apt. 4, Cincinnati, Ohio 45201; telephone 513/471-7259.

June 1-4: "Seedtime on the Cumberland," a music-and-culture festival celebrating the 20th birthday of Appalshop, the noted mountain media center; Whitesburg, Ky. "World-class" traditional musicians will perform. Other birthday parties are planned for Lexington, Louisville, Washington and New York. Appalshop's address is 306 Madison St., Whitesburg, Ky. 41858.

June 4-10: Work/craft week, John C. Campbell Folk School.

June 4-24: New opportunity school for women, Berea College; selected women will spend three weeks on campus in intensive career exploration, including thorough counseling and practical tips on writing resumes and doing well in job interviews. For information, contact Jane Stephenson, C.P.O. Box 2276, Berea, Ky. 40404; telephone 606/986-9341, ext. 6676 or 6670.

June 11-17: 12th annual Appalachian Family Folk Week; Hindman Settlement School, Hindman, Ky. 41822. On hand will be Anndrena Belcher, Jean Ritchie, Randy Wilson and other familiar performers.

June 12-30: Course in Appalachian history and literature, Berea College (*see separate story*).

June 23-25: Appalachian Writers Association annual conference, with speakers, workshops, awards and a writing competition; Cumberland College, Williamsburg, Ky. 40769. For full details, get in touch with Tom Frazier, Department of English, at the college; telephone 606/549-2200, ext. 4414.

July 21-24: Summer edition of the 41st annual fair, Southern Highland Handicraft Guild; Asheville Civic Center, Asheville, N.C. For more information, address the guild at P.O. Box 9545, Asheville, N.C. 28815; telephone 704/298-7928. The fall edition of the fair will be presented October 21-23.

November 2-3: "Environment and Technology," the fourth annual University of Kentucky conference on Appalachia, sponsored by the university's Appalachian Center joined this year by the American Society of Agricultural Engineers. Scientists, policy makers, community leaders and other private citizens, and representatives of industry are all invited to take part. Although the meeting is many months off, the deadline for proposals isn't; they're due by May 1. For further information, call the Appalachian Center at 606/257/4854.

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Yet high ARC officials show a continuing propensity for flirting with trouble. Hard as money has been to come by, they nevertheless manage to spend some of it in eyebrow-raising ways, as the Louisville *Courier-Journal* discovered. Five thousand dollars, for example, went to send Federal Co-Chairman Winifred Pizzano to Beijing, Xian and Hangzhou, China, to study rural health care—a more-instructive trip, perhaps, than the co-chairman's jaunt to Nice to talk about economic development or three days spent in Las Vegas in order to give an address to a development organization.

In defense of these activities, an ARC spokesperson points out that commission officials can hardly be expected to "limit themselves to ARC states." As a principle, that idea no doubt makes sense. But in many areas of activity, present-day Washington is painfully discovering what Plutarch taught long ago: in politics, the appearance of propriety tends to take on greater importance than propriety itself. For no conceivable reason would Caesar's wife ever have had the opportunity to spend two all-expenses-paid nights at Caesar's Palace.

No More Nerds

Two issues back (Summer 1988) we told you that the Appalachian Regional Commission was producing a conference called "Taking Technology Home to Appalachia." Its purpose was explained as exploring "ways to help small and medium-sized businesses in the Appalachian Region modernize through the use of new technologies in order to increase their competitiveness in world markets." The whole thing had sounded interesting to us, particularly since the keynote speaker was to be David Halberstam, whose book *The Reckoning* describes in detail how the Japanese auto industry has done a pretty good job of taking technology home, with spectacular results.

"There's a whole world out there," Halberstam told his audience, "hungry, ambitious" and eager to win the kind of prosperity enjoyed by Americans and the people of other leading industrial nations. The weapon the emerging nations use to get ahead is education—not merely schooling for the young but life-long education giving people the ability to function in a technological society.

This situation poses a challenge to the United States, said Halberstam, because too many American children and parents look on education as nothing more than a necessary evil. "In the average high school," he observed, "an American male child who's 16 years old and who gets good marks . . . is a nerd." If we don't change that attitude, "we're not going to make it."

Even if wariness about education is stronger in areas like Appalachia than in other parts of the country, Halberstam said, Americans overall tend to say "what was good enough for me is, by God, good enough for my kid." But the traditional blue-collar jobs such speakers have in mind no longer exist. The deteriorating U.S. education system contrasts sharply with the strong system and the advanced technologies that have pushed Japan forward. The "easy years" Americans enjoyed following World War II are long gone.

After making numerous specific points about the world economy, the speaker declared that Americans must either adapt to the new, more competitive situation or see themselves relegated to second-class citizenship, living as the colony of countries like Japan.



"Where the Mountain Laurels Bloom"

He started taking pictures around the turn of the century, when he was only 14 years old. For decades, until the coming of the New Deal and rural electrification, he developed his photos in a primitive darkroom featuring a kerosene lamp covered with a red globe and printed them by pulling back a black drape and thus exposing the negative to the right amount of natural light.

This was William Mullins, known as Pictureman, a self-taught professional photographer who roamed the border counties of Kentucky and Virginia on foot, on his bicycle or hitchhiking, staying with people he knew and capturing many of them in memorable pictures. As a professional, he made his living from his work, but he possessed the kind

of sturdy artistic integrity that would not allow him to retouch a negative. "If you have a mole or a wrinkle," he would tell his subjects, "that's what you get." If they didn't like it, he said, they should hire a portrait painter.

Mullins's photos succeed in avoiding the temptations of both sentimentality and quaintness—two lures that often ensnare portrayals of Appalachia. His fascinating work is currently available in "Where the Mountain Laurels Bloom," a traveling show sponsored by the Kentucky Humanities Council and now on display at Berea College. If you would like to schedule it for your institution, contact Bob Henry Baber, Box 398, Whitesburg, Ky. 41858; telephone 606/633-2428.

Summer Stars Again

Americans have become acquainted with Appalachian people chiefly through their arts and literature, yet most students and teachers within the region rarely take a critical look at Appalachian literature and history. For some years now, the Berea College Appalachian Center has sought to rectify this situation through an annual summer course offering high school teachers and others the opportunity to examine regional literature and history with outstanding writers and teachers.

In this year's course, to be held June 12-30, Richard B. Drake, professor of history at Berea, will present a comprehensive history of Appalachia and will discuss current political and economic issues. Novelist Wilma Dykeman will discuss her own work and that of other influential writers who have used the Appalachians as a setting, including John Fox, Jr., Thomas Wolfe, James Agee and James Still. Gurney Norman, of the University of Kentucky, will discuss Appalachian poetry and the growth of all the arts in the region. Richard Angelo, also of the University of Kentucky, will lecture on culture and achievement.

Although the course is designed primarily for teachers who wish to create Appalachian studies courses or units,

other persons will be accepted as space permits. The cost (total) to educators and students is \$250, for others \$450. Three hours of graduate or undergraduate credit will be available through the University of Kentucky. For more information, write to the address on the outside of this NEWSLETTER or call 606/986-9341, ext. 5140.

EYE on Publications

Appalachian Mental Health, edited by Susan Emley Keefe (University Press of Kentucky). Aside from the pioneering work of David Loeff and Robert Coles almost 20 years ago, says the editor, not much concentrated attention has been given to the field of Appalachian mental health. Hence this volume, the outgrowth of a 1981 symposium and a follow-up 1982 workshop, the latter organized by the editor, who teaches anthropology at Appalachian State. Some of the contributors examine therapeutic approaches in relation to the cultural context. Others explore the impact of Appalachian culture on the

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development of mental-health problems and consider the possibilities of conflict between Appalachian clients and non-Appalachian providers of care, and still others look at cultural considerations in therapeutic encounters and in the delivery of mental-health services.

Although the book is much too varied to be summarized in a neat fashion, it has the virtue of aiming beyond discussion toward practical results. Throughout, the authors concern themselves with ways to improve mental-health services in the mountains.

Sense of Place in Appalachia, edited by S. Mont Whitson (Office of Regional Development Services, Morehead State University, Ky.). Another volume resulting from a symposium, this meeting having taken place at Morehead in October 1987. "Belonging to a place is multidimensional," says the editor, and hence the presenters whose papers appear here come from a variety of fields—history, literature, religion, art, music, sociology, psychology, geography and communications. The authors include such familiar figures as Ruel Foster, Jim Wayne Miller, Loyal Jones, John Stephenson and Thomas D. Clark. Overall, they address themselves to the tension between a sense of place, on the one hand, and, on the other, the modernization and pluralization of the world.

The contributors do not lend themselves to any facile nostalgia; one writer points out, for example, that the revered and symbolic "home place" often served a family for only one generation. And another contributor stoutly rejects Wendell Berry's oft-stated view that a decent life—and the survival of our civilization—is possible only if one has "a way of life based upon long-term devotion to a particular place and to the land." Instead, says Sara Ebenreck of *American Land Forum*, we must begin to "articulate some way of 'being in place on the land' that is possible within this present civilization." Certainly very few people can become mountaineers or small farmers today.

Altogether, this anthology abounds in interesting and provocative thoughts relating to its core subject. And Stephenson offers a valuable caveat: the subject, he observes, is more complex than many writers have wanted to believe.

Feud: Hatfields, McCoys, and Social Change in Appalachia, 1860-1900, by Altina L. Waller (University of North Carolina Press). What? Roseanna McCoy was no 16-year-old maiden but a mature and probably serious young woman of 21—three years older than Johnse Hatfield? And the celebrated couple's failure to marry was caused not by Devil Anse Hatfield but most likely represented Johnse's own decision? And there were Hatfields who liked and trusted McCoys, and vice versa?

As you can see, revisionism has come to the Tug Valley; indeed, the appearance of this book means that the famous feud will never be the same again. Instead of regarding the feud as a myth or a legend, the author, who teaches history in the New York state university system, brings to it a historian's methods of research and analysis, analyzing it, she says, "within the framework of recent literature on social and cultural history." Thus her purpose is only incidentally to correct factual errors in the commonly accepted story; her real aim is to try to see how the feud fits into general American history. As she sees it, the feudists were not, as they're usually portrayed, simple people exemplifying a static culture. Instead, they were struggling with "the same historical forces of capitalist transformation that had been changing America since before the American Revolution." Hence they weren't markedly different from other Americans living in other small 19th-century communities, but in the national press they suffered from the power of the mountain stereotype. Essentially, then, the author presents the feud as an event entirely different in nature from the way it has traditionally been regarded. But, happily, she nevertheless leaves us with Devil Anse, Old Ranel and the other characters who people the legend.

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