

# NEWS

APPALACHIAN CENTER  
BEREA COLLEGE

# LETTER

Loyal Jones – Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

Vol. 18 No. 3

Summer 1989

## Looking Forward

**October 5-7:** Housing Now! Washington rally and march for affordable housing. Information from Paul Winther, 606/268-6012.

**October 6-8:** 17th annual national storytelling festival, sponsored by the National Association for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Storytelling, Jonesborough, Tenn. For information telephone 615/753-2171.

**October 7-8:** Fall festival, John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, N.C. 28902.

**October 12:** "Speech and Language: Appalachian Dialect and Standard English," a symposium in the Thursday evening seminars on Appalachian culture and school curriculum at East Tennessee State University. For information about the entire series, call Robert J. Higgs at 615/929-4339.

**October 12-15:** 10th annual Tennessee fall homecoming, Museum of Appalachia, Norris, Tenn. Hundreds of musicians and craftspersons of all kinds will be on hand at this remarkable replica of the pioneer Appalachian world. Information from the entrepreneur, John Rice Irwin, Box 359, Norris, Tenn. 37828; phone, 615/494-0514.

**October 13-15:** Annual fall fair, Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen, Indian Fort Theater, Berea, Ky. 40403. Special attractions for this outing include the Buzzard Rock string band (6 p.m. Saturday) and weavers and knitters from Ecuador, with Andean rugs and sweaters.

**October 20-22:** Fall edition of the 42nd annual 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 27-29:** Berea College Celebration of Traditional Music (*see separate story*).

**October 29-November 4:** Fall craft week, John C. Campbell Folk School.

**November 2-3:** "Environment and Technology in Appalachia," the fourth annual University of Kentucky conference on Appalachia, sponsored by the university's Appalachian Center, joined this year by the Canadian government and the American Society of Agricultural Engineers. Why the Canadian involvement? Well, it may have to do with the fact that the Ontario minister of the environment has been invited to offer remarks on acid rain—or, perhaps, acid remarks on rain. Other issues to be discussed include solid and hazardous waste and reclamation and environmental health. More than 30 speakers will take part. For details write the Appalachian Center, 641

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## "Old Styles" Again

When it made its first appearance in 1974, the Berea College Celebration of Traditional Music was devoted to one clear aim. As it was expressed by Appalachian Center Director Loyal Jones: "We feel that the old styles traditional to the mountains are not heard so much any more, and we want to encourage them."

During the years since then, thanks in good part to the celebration's programs and instrumental workshops, those "old styles" have become increasingly prominent sounds across Appalachia. Now it's time again for the annual treat, as the celebration returns to the Berea campus October 27-29 for its 16th run.

The big weekend begins at 7:30 on Friday evening, with a concert by festival musicians. As usual, a stellar group of performers will be on hand, including Billy Edd Wheeler, the Clint Howard Band, Betty Smith, Moses

Moses Rascoe:  
Among  
Celebration stars



Rascoe, Morgan Sexton and Lee Sexton, Michael Kline, Ballard "Pappy" Taylor and Tommy Taylor, Ginny Hawker and Kay Justice, Walker Calhoun, Melvin Wine, and Roy Harper and Johnny Bellar.

Saturday evening will see another big, multi-performer session, and each of these festive occasions will be followed by square dancing led by John M. Ramsay, with music by Lewis and Donna Lamb.

The daylight hours on Saturday will be devoted to instrumental workshops and concerts, with a special event at 2:00 p.m. Michael Kline, who sports the wonderful title of "public sector folklorist" at Western Carolina University, will lead a symposium on "A Visit with Walker Calhoun, Cherokee Singer."

Those who're still alert after dancing late into the night on Saturday will join festival musicians at 9 o'clock on Sunday morning for a concert of hymns.

If you need any further information, contact the Appalachian Center at the address on page 4 of the NEWSLETTER. The telephone number is 606/986-9341, extension 5140. ■

## Of Committees and Consultants

In our most recent issue (Spring 1989), we reported on the sweeping action of the Kentucky Supreme Court whereby the state's school system was ruled unconstitutional—not only the methods of funding but the entire educational apparatus.

Such a decision obviously demanded that the state government take drastic action. In theory, at least, Kentucky can start all over and build a new school system from the ground up. And, in fact, these past weeks have seen a good bit of action—not moves of the concrete, program-planning variety but steps to sweep the ground and prepare the way for the foundations. Essentially, these moves have involved two familiar phenomena—the creation of a committee (called a task force) and the hiring of consultants.

Since the task force is stuffed with legislators, it came in for immediate attack from observers who felt that other Kentuckians might have valuable contributions to make. But in a state that has long borne the burden of what might be called politicism (an addiction to politics for its own sake), the legislative leaders may have decided that the way to bring about action as well as talk was to put politicians at the heart of the process of developing the new system.

### The Consultants

What the task force proceeded to do, to no one's great surprise, was to line up consultants in such areas as curriculum and finance. Here, as might have been expected, came trouble. The task force hired nationally eminent persons—figures like David W. Hornbeck, the former Maryland state superintendent who is now chairman of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and John G. Augenblick, a finance expert who has worked for the Education Committee of the States.

In a field as doctrinally fought over as education, are these the right advisers for Kentucky? Who knows? Hornbeck's organization, for example, recently produced a report on school organization that advocates what one critic calls "shortchanging gifted children." And one must always be mindful of such melancholy examples as that furnished by the British committee to seek the causes of leprosy, an organization established by Edward VII when he was Prince of Wales. Loaded with doctors, each holding his own pet theory, the commission produced little more than a clash of egos and

collapsed amid a rain of rumors concerning sexual misconduct among some of the hapless lepers. The prince gave up in disgust.

### Whose Input?

Kentucky need not go that far, but the precedents are not all encouraging. In addition, Kentucky teachers have complained that "we are not asked to contribute and our input is not wanted." They're "right there in the classroom," they say. "Who knows better what needs to be done?" Other observers have pointed to the size of the consultants' fees. Three days' worth of one consultant's time will cost as much as the state's richest districts spend on one child in a whole year. A critical newspaper conceded, however, that the money will be well spent if the consultants help the legislature produce a sound and effective set of educational reforms.

One well-known observer doesn't see that happening. Speaking from his stronghold in Whitesburg, Ky., Harry M. Caudill declares that "if the legislators want to break

**Caudill:  
"deserve  
no credence"**



out of the old rut of educational ineffectiveness, they will turn to hard-headed, competent and successful people for counsel"—persons like Texas billionaire Ross Perot, who has worked with the public schools in his state, and Terrel Bell, former U.S. secretary of education, who described contemporary American education in a memorable phrase: "dumbing down." In Caudill's view, the shortcomings of public education have been produced by professional educators, and "these school men deserve no credence."

In any case, observes former Governor (and former classroom teacher) Martha Layne Collins, the governor and the legislature must develop a plan that is clear and specific enough to convince voters that they'll get their money's worth.

What will the politicians in Frankfort do? To whom will they really listen? The story is only beginning.

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## Dear Commander:

Paul Grondahl, a reporter for the Albany (N.Y.) *Times-Union*, is a fellow who enjoys sailing on the broad Hudson River on anything from old tall ships to the most modern U.S. Navy vessels. Taking part recently in an Albany celebration called the Portfest, Grondahl joined the crew of a minesweeper for a cruise upriver.

While aboard the vessel, Grondahl fell into conversation with Comdr. Marty Torrey, a former minesweeper skipper who is currently based in Albany as a Navy recruiter. Describing the target practice taken by crews of minesweepers, Torrey told the reporter that the Navy has no problem finding young men who can shoot a mine at 2,000 yards with an M-14 rifle.

Really?

Yes, indeed, said Torrey, who went on to unburden himself as follows: "You get these Kentucky kids who've been shootin' coons since they were five, and they might not be able to walk and chew gum at the same time and they don't like to wear shoes, but they can shoot the eyes out at 2,000 yards."

Well . . . perhaps there's nothing much to be said about comments like those. But we wonder whether Torrey is aware that one particular Kentuckian in the Navy has risen far above the minesweeper and recruiter levels. We're speaking of Adm. William J. Crowe, Jr., the current chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Since we're humane, we hope for Torrey's sake that the



Buddy Presley

BY ITS SECOND YEAR, the Celebration of Traditional Music had already become an Appalachian institution. Taking part in the 1975 finale were, front row, Buzz Brazeale, Jim Gaskin, Raymond McLain, Earl Barnes, Asa Martin, Byard Ray; back row (some not clearly shown): Roscoe Holcomb, Bruce Greene, Bill Livers, Sparky Rucker, Alice McLain, Ruth McLain, Jean Ritchie.

**DEAR** from page 2

top brass never hear about his little indiscretion. But if you have any thoughts of your own you'd like to send him, you can reach him at the U.S. Navy Recruiting Station, Leo O'Brien Federal Building, Albany, N.Y. 12212.

Certainly he deserves the courtesy of a reply.

## Money for ARC

Every year since the Ronald Reagan team first rode into Washington, we've regarded it as our special duty to keep

you up to date on the funding situation of the Appalachian Regional Commission. The ARC, you will recall, was marked by the newcomers for an early death—but now they've gone, while the commission continues to do business at the same old stand.

It will continue to do so during Fiscal Year 1990. A House and Senate conference committee have just agreed to fund the ARC at its current level—\$110 million, with another \$40 million going toward the completion of Appalachian corridor highways. By the time you read this, the bill may well have become law. The ARC, indeed, seems to have made itself into a standard component of the Washington structure.

**LOOKING** from page 1

South Limestone St., University of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky. 40506.

**November 19:** Knoxville's Laurel Theatre presents John McCutcheon, a master of the hammer dulcimer and top performer on a dozen other instruments. For information about this and other programs, call Jubilee Community Arts at 615/522-5851 or write to this organization at 1538 Laurel Ave., Knoxville, Tenn. 37916.

**November 26-December 2 and December 3-9:** Holiday crafts weeks, John C. Campbell Folk School. Dulcimer building, smocking and other seasonally appropriate activities.

**December 3-5:** 47th annual Professional Agricultural Workers conference, Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, Ala. 36088. The conference theme: "1890-1990, A First Century of Outreach to the Rural Disadvantaged: Moving Into the 21st Century." More information from N. Baharanyi, program coordinator, at 205/727-8454 or Milbank

Hall at the university.

**December 26-January 1:** Christmas Country Dance School, Berea College. Woodcarving, fiddling, dollmaking—with these and other activities you could keep busy during this week without ever dancing at all. But why would you want to? Information about this famous course from John M. Ramsay, College Box 287, Berea, Ky. 40404; phone, 606/986-9341, ext. 5143.

**October 3-5, 1991:** Yes, that's right, 1991! The occasion will be the 13th Gulf Coast history and humanities conference, and the long lead time is due to the importance of this special event: it will commemorate the 500th anniversary of the arrival in this hemisphere of Christopher Columbus; the sponsors plan to publish selected papers in the Spring 1992 *Gulf Coast Historical Review*. If you'd like yours to be among them, contact the history department at the University of West Florida, Pensacola, Fla. 32514 or Pensacola Junior College (ZIP 32504).

## EYE on Publications

*Appalachian Patterns*, by Bo Ball (Independence Publishers Inc., P.O. Box 29905, Atlanta, Ga. 30359). As late as 1950, Buchanan County, in the western tip of Virginia, had no electricity. What the area did have was the country's highest illiteracy rate, the highest percentage of volunteers for the U.S. Army, and a pervasive supply of fundamentalist religion.

In these short stories, Bo Ball captures this world as it existed during the 1930s and '40s. Clearly destined for great things by his parents (who named him Bonaparte Washington Ball), the author is a native Buchanan Countian who graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Virginia and went on to become a college teacher. But his later sophistication has not blurred his perceptions of fundamentalist attitudes and language. A father instructs his twin daughters: "'Don't paint,' he said. 'Don't smoke. Stay 'way from stranged instruments.'" And further: "'Keep ye drawers on. Ye legs crossed. And don't go car-ridin'." Radio, which plays a prominent part in many of the stories, is dismissed by this father as "satanish."

Not all of this advice was necessarily unsound, to be sure—especially if one knew these particular daughters. But no "stranged instruments"?

"The strength of these stories," observes one reviewer, "lies in their language, refreshing to readers whose ears are dulled by nightclub jargon and restaurant patter." In fact, "the reader is barely aware of reading rather than listening."

What the reader hears is the talk of people gripped by poverty and superstition, who "knowed only hymns until 'at radio come to Copperhead." 'At radio, of course, was battery powered.

*Trail of Tears*, by John Ehle (Doubleday). "The earth is flat," the author learned as a boy in North Carolina, and it is "suspended from its four corners by great ropes, and in the center of the earth live the Principal People, the Cherokee." Ehle's instructors were, naturally, Cherokees, who were just as complacently ethnocentric as anybody

else in the world, East or West.

Geographical information was not the only kind of knowledge Ehle picked up from his Cherokee neighbors. He learned much about the tribe's past, and now he has produced a book focusing on the infamous expulsion of these people from their homeland in the Southeast but also giving us a portrayal of the Cherokee Nation rich in history and legend.

Proud of their copper color, the Cherokees spoke of Europeans as "ugly whites," and they were far cleaner than the English, German, and Scotch-Irish who moved into their territory in the 18th century. Though their favorite sport was warfare, they could not resist the federal troops who, in 1838, drove them into exile across the Mississippi. Cherokee graves stretch from the foothills of the Smokies to the new territory in the West.

In *Trail of Tears*, Ehle reminds readers that the Cherokees produced several of the important figures of American history—Sequoyah, the inventor of the Cherokee alphabet; Chief John Ross, statesman and entrepreneur; and Chief Ridge, fiery warrior and visionary leader of his people. But in the end, the Cherokee Nation could only succumb to a greater power.

*Virginia's Blues, Country, & Gospel Records, 1902-1943*, by Kip Lornell (University Press of Kentucky). For many years Virginia was home to scores of performers who were sought out by commercial companies for recordings to be sold as "hillbilly" (Anglo-American) or "race" (Afro-American) music. The best-known of these performers were probably the Carter Family, Charlie Poole, the Golden Gate Quartet, and the Stoneman Family, but dozens of other groups and individuals enjoyed devoted local and regional followings.

Kip Lornell has produced an annotated discography, complete with biographical sketches, for all of this music over a 40-year span. A number of the photos are published here for the first time. Lornell, a folklorist and ethnomusicologist, is a fellow at the Smithsonian Institution and teaches at William and Mary.

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