

NEWS

APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE

LETTER



Loyal Jones – Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Winter 1990

Looking Forward

April 4-6: Third annual Aquaculture Expo of the Southern Appalachians, Fontana Village Resort, Fontana Dam, N.C. 28733. More information from Mountain Aquaculture Research Center, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, N.C. 28723.

April 7: "Starting Your Own Craft Business: How to Produce and Sell Your Crafts," an all-day workshop sponsored by Berea College's New Opportunity School for Women and the Student Crafts Program and by the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development. Contact (right away) the New Opportunity School, C.P.O. Box 2276, Berea, Ky. 40404.

April 18-22: Annual meeting, Sonneck Society for American Music, Toronto, Ont. This year's theme: "The Great Divide? Studies in American and Canadian Music." For details, contact Carl Morey, Dean, Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ont. M5S 1A1, Canada.

April 23-29: The Augusta Heritage Center will host its third annual Spring Dulcimer Week on the campus of Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, W. Va. 26241. Information from Doug Hill; phone, 304/636-1903.

April 27: "Kentucky Ballads and Fiddle Music," a lecture (4:00 p.m.) and concert (8:00 p.m.) featuring Jeff Todd Titon, ethnomusicologist at Brown University and Goode visiting professor of Appalachian studies at Berea College, with music from Jean Ritchie, Bruce Greene and Clyde Davenport. Berea College, Berea, Ky. 40404.

May 5-6: Tribute to Myles Horton, Highlander Center, Route 3, Box 370, New Market, Tenn. 37820. (See separate story.)

May 6-12 and 13-18: May Craft Weeks, John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, N.C. 28902. The works, from blacksmithing to basketry, weaving to watercolor.

May 18-19: Symposium on Jeff Todd Titon's documentary film *Powerhouse for God*, led by Titon and fellow filmmakers Barry Dornfeld and Tom Rankin; cosponsored by Berea College and the Kentucky Humanities Council. More information from the Appalachian Center, 606/986-9341, ext. 5140.

June 10-16: 13th annual Appalachian Family Folk Week, Hindman Settlement School, Hindman, Ky. 41822 (phone, 606/785-5475). An all-ages outing with music, dance, crafts, storytelling and instrument playing, and special activities for small children. Jean Ritchie, Edna Ritchie Baker, Rich Kirby and other noted performers and craftspeople will be on hand.

June 10-30: New Opportunity School for Women,
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Kentucky Rebuilds

In previous issues (Spring 1989, Summer 1989), we reported on the sweeping action of the Kentucky Supreme Court whereby the state's school system was ruled unconstitutional, and on the opening moves in the push to build a new system.

In agreeing with a lower court ruling that Kentucky's system of funding public education is not "efficient," the Supreme Court was addressing a problem that actually exists across the country. More than half of the state governments have found themselves involved in such litigation.

The difference between the legal situation in Kentucky and that in West Virginia, California and other states is that the Kentucky Supreme Court threw out not only the methods of funding the school system but the entire educational apparatus itself, giving the legislature the challenge of starting anew from scratch.

Demonstrating that it doesn't spend all its time debating such whimsies as bills to legalize cockfighting (it really happened this year, though the bill failed), the legislature in its current session is grappling with the whole matter, which has been presented in a mammoth bill filed by the special Task Force on Education Reform. At this moment we cannot predict just how the package will fare or how it will be funded. But in addressing some old problems, it offers many interesting highlights. Examples:

It calls for reassessment of every piece of property in the state. Tax assessors will be watched to ensure that they do their jobs properly. (Underassessment, particularly in Eastern Kentucky, is currently an extremely sore point with taxpayers in general.)

It introduces the concept of "site-based" management—which means that principals, teachers and parents would play an important part in decision making.

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Loyal Jones (l.),
Billy Edd
Wheeler to
Host Humor
Festival
(see page 3).



LOOKING FORWARD *from page 1*

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; phone, 606/986-9341, ext. 6676 or 6670.

June 11-29: Course in Appalachian literature and history, Berea College. (*See separate story.*)

June 24-30: 14th annual Appalachian Celebration, Morehead State University, Morehead, Ky. 40351. Music and dance, storytelling and poetry, arts and crafts—just the thing, suggest the sponsors, for a summer family frolic.

July 1-7, 8-14, 15-21 and 22-27: Summer Craft Weeks, John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, N.C. 28902.

July 19-22: Summer edition of the 42nd 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.

July 20-21: Third Festival of Appalachian Humor, sponsored by the Berea College Appalachian Center. (*See separate story.*)

July 31-August 4: Ulster-American Heritage Symposium, cosponsored by Appalachian State University, Western Carolina University, East Tennessee State University and the University of Ulster. Information from the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services, Box 19180A, ETSU, Johnson City, Tenn. 37614.

August 5-11: 13th annual Appalachian Writers Workshop for aspiring writers, Hindman Settlement School, Hindman, Ky. 41822. The staff, made up of luminaries who have moved far beyond mere aspiration, will include James Still, George Ella Lyon, Ed McClanahan, Robert Morgan, Jo Carson, Barbara Smith and, of course, Jim Wayne Miller.

August 7-12: Great Smokies Song Chase No. 2, presented by Warren Wilson College and Billy Edd Wheeler. A camp for songwriters of all levels, offering individual critiques, on-the-spot feedback and seminars on all phases of the music business by professionals in folk, country, pop and gospel; a special guest will be Sheila Davis, author of the top-selling *The Craft of Lyric Writing*. You can find out more from Holly Gage, Warren Wilson College, 701 Warren Wilson Road, Swannanoa, N.C. 28778.

September 15-30: Mountain Heritage Festival, sponsored by Appalshop, Whitesburg, Ky. 41858.

November 6-7: "Appalachian Children," the fifth annual University of Kentucky conference on Appalachia. Although the meeting is many months off, the deadline for proposals isn't; they're due by May 7, and the sponsors are eager to hear from parents, community leaders, teachers, health-care workers and other knowledgeable parties, even including academics. For further information, call the UK Appalachian Center, 606/257-4852.

Avenues to Leadership

The good news recently arrived in Berea and Lexington: the W. K. Kellogg Foundation has granted \$1.2 million to the fledgling Appalachian Civic Leadership Project, a

joint venture of the University of Kentucky and Berea College.

The program will be coordinated by UK's Appalachian Center and Berea's Brushy Fork Institute. The latter, established in 1988 on the initiative of the college president, John B. Stephenson, promotes education and economic development in central Appalachia through the training and support of leaders in Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. The UK center, which Stephenson formerly directed, is now presided over by Ron Eller, who will serve as director of the leadership project.

The new venture will involve fellowships for emerging leaders in the area, seminars, publications and other activities, said Eller. The aim is to "contribute to the building of the civic infrastructure essential to effective problem-solving."

Youth as Well

The Appalachian Regional Commission is likewise concerning itself with leadership. Recently, after adopting a notably noncontroversial resolution declaring that young people are important to the future of Appalachia, the ARC established a youth leadership program that in 1990 will fund one pilot leadership demonstration project in each of the 13 states making up the Congressionally mandated Appalachia with which the commission works. These projects will "involve young people in the planning and design of projects impacting youth and their communities." These designs will be "showcased" at a conference to be held next fall, and the most promising will be eligible for funding that will turn them from ideas into actual working programs.

Learn and Laugh

Although Appalachian arts, crafts and literature are popular across the country, most students and teachers within the region have never paid much critical attention to their history and literature. For a number of 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 history and literature with outstanding writers and teachers.

In this year's course, to be held June 11-29, Richard B. Drake, professor of history at Berea, will present a comprehensive history of the region and will relate this history to national and state histories, paying special attention to 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 Mary N. Murfree, Thomas Wolfe, James Agee, Harriette Simpson Arnow and James Still. Gurney Norman, writer-in-residence at the University of Kentucky, will discuss Appalachian poetry and the growth of all the arts in the region. Alan DeYoung, 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 total cost (including room and board) is \$250 for educators and students, \$450 for others. Three hours' graduate credit is available through the University of Kentucky. For more information, write to the address on the outside of this

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Myles Horton

1905-1990



In December 1955 Rosa Parks, a seamstress in Montgomery, Ala., refused to move to the back of a city bus to make room up front for white riders. No doubt many elements were involved in her resistance to established custom, but certainly one important factor was that a few months earlier she had attended a workshop at the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee. Her arrest, and the bus boycott that followed it, were the opening waves in the civil rights movement that crested in the 1960s.

In drawing on her Highlander experience to fight for social change, Mrs. Parks was exemplifying the purposes of the school, which was founded in 1932 by Myles Horton, a remarkable young man who wanted to help

southern workers and farmers learn "how to take their place intelligently in the changing world." From then on, all sorts of movements for social change studied and organized at Highlander.

On January 19, 1990, Myles Horton died at the age of 85. He will be remembered not simply for his usefulness, great as it was, but for his personality—zestful, forward-looking, overflowing with words and ideas. To celebrate his life, Highlander is devoting the weekend of May 5-6 to memorial activities—workshops, a cultural celebration, a tribute. For more details, contact the center—Route 3, Box 370, New Market, Tenn. 37820.

LEARN AND LAUGH *from page 2*

NEWSLETTER or phone 606/986-9341, ext. 5140.

The Appalachian Center also has something else up its sleeve for next summer. During the past several years the center has sponsored two festivals of Appalachian humor, both of which have been extraordinarily popular. Lovers of jokes and wild tales will be happy to hear that a third humor festival will take place July 20-21, the featured performers including Joe Bly, Bonnie Collins, Bob Hannah, Ramona Jones and Alisa Jones Wall, Paul Lepp and Al White.

A cloak of academic respectability will be thrown over the whole affair by John Combs, professor of English at Kentucky Wesleyan College, who will speak on "Humor in Healing," and Michael Nichols, director of the University of Kentucky Counseling Center, who will talk about "The Healing Power of Humor." (If you're looking for something to think about between now and July, you might see what philosophical differences you can find between those two subjects, although no prizes will be awarded for the best answers. At the festival itself, however, the best jokes, tales and other bits will win cash on the spot, the top prize in each of five categories being \$50.)

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For teacher-training programs, it prescribes more emphasis on subject matter, less on technique.

Through an "alternative" certification program, it opens the way into the classroom for knowledgeable persons who do not have teaching degrees.

But it also creates a new standards board to supervise certification and training programs; this board will

be made up mostly of teachers. (Do these two proposals present a contradiction in the realm of certification? Traditionally, professionals have used credentials as a device to regulate entry into a field.)

It prohibits school boards, superintendents and principals from hiring any of their relatives, and it places limits on political contributions in school board races. (For Appalachian Kentucky, these "political" provisos are in some ways the most revolutionary of all.)

These are only a few examples from a great number of detailed points. Clearly the Task Force on Education Reform took its mandate with great seriousness; now the legislature has its turn. The whole spectacle is important not only for Kentucky but for all states facing reform in education.

EYE on Publications

Mountain Homespun, by Frances Louisa Goodrich (University of Tennessee Press). A "facsimile" of a book originally published in 1931 by the Yale University Press, *Mountain Homespun* gives us a first-hand look at life—social, economic, religious, aesthetic—in rural Appalachia at the turn of the century. A pioneer of what has been called "northern Protestant ameliorative work" in Appalachia, Frances Goodrich came to western North Carolina in 1890, first as a visitor, then as a volunteer Presbyterian social worker.

A graduate of the Yale Art School, she had perfect timing and she produced remarkable results. That era of
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John Ruskin and William Morris, of the Social Gospel and Jane Addams and home missions to "exceptional" populations, almost seemed to be awaiting the revival of mountain crafts. Frances Goodrich played a pioneering part in a movement that, through the years, would lead to the establishment of such institutions as the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild.

But, we are told in a 1989 essay accompanying the original text, Miss Goodrich's work initially aimed not at preserving mountain crafts but at using them for social and economic purposes, the idea being to "uplift" the mountain people. This essay, written by Jan Davidson, curator of the Mountain Heritage Center at Western Carolina University, makes plain the sharp differences between what right-thinking people believed a hundred years ago and what their right-thinking successors believe today. One wonders, for example, how Miss Goodrich would have responded to the charge that she was an urban intellectual intervening in the folk process. In her photos, at least, she seems quite capable of defending herself against any kind of accusation. Certainly it would be interesting to linger around for another century and see what sort of balance sheet would then be drawn up on her life and work, when today's official views will no doubt seem as quaint as those of the earnest 1890 Presbyterians appear to us in 1990.

In any case, *Mountain Homespun* is much more than a memoir. It offers unrivaled specific information on the processes of mountain crafts—not only on weaving, spinning and dyeing, the author's primary interests, but also on basketry, quilting and other pursuits. All in all, the book is an important publishing event.

The Old Regular Baptists of Central Appalachia: Brothers and Sisters in Hope, by Howard Dorgan (University of Tennessee Press). The author, a professor of "communication arts" at Appalachian State University, came to the study of religious groups from an interest in verbal expression and rhetoric. But, as we told you in our note on his 1988 book *Giving Glory to God in Appalachia*

(APPALACHIAN CENTER NEWSLETTER, Spring 1989), he soon saw the limits of that perspective and began immersing himself in the history and theology of not-so-well-known "subdenominations."

The present book examines one of the most interesting of these groups, the Old Regular Baptists, who view themselves as a special people, a "peculiar" people (from Paul's words in 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people..."). Priding themselves on hanging on to the "old-time way," Old Regulars have found a path somewhere between the extreme Calvinism of the Primitive Baptists, who stress election and limited atonement, and the Missionary Baptists, who preach free will and universal atonement. Though stressing repentance and salvation, Old Regulars reject Sunday schools and evangelistic revivals.

Dorgan describes their worship practices and their singing, preaching and praying styles, as well as the problems in theology and practice that have arisen within or between churches and associations. Altogether he presents the picture of a hospitable and devout people for whom the Old Regular Baptist Church forms the center of life. Thus he performs the important service of showing us an interesting aspect of American religious variety.

Mary Pearl Kline by Patricia Shirley (Seven Buffaloes Press, Box 249, Big Timber, Mont. 59011). In these narrative poems, the author traces the history of 11 generations of the Fleming family from Ulster through Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee and into the mountains of Letcher County, Ky. Gurney Norman, who has done time in Letcher County, has this to say about the book: "The poems are finely crafted as written verse, but the illusion of oral delivery is so perfect we have the double satisfaction of reading good writing and hearing good talking at the same time." These poems present members of a family that has remembered its history and the many stories that come out of living through many generations. They can stand for most of us who have not bothered to remember much of our own family history.

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