

NEWS

APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE

LETTER



Loyal Jones – Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Summer 1990

Looking Forward

September 27: In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the publication of his novel *River of Earth*, James Still will read from the book. This appearance is part of the Mountain Heritage Festival sponsored by Appalshop, Whitesburg, Ky. 41858. Contact Appalshop for more information about this and other festival events.

September 29: Mountain Heritage Day, featuring (does this surprise you?) Appalachian music, dance and crafts; Mountain Heritage Center, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, N.C. 28723; phone 704/227-7129.

October 1-7: Southern Arts Exchange, sponsored by the Southern Arts Federation, 1293 Peachtree St., N.E., Suite 500, Atlanta, Ga. 30309; phone 404/874-7244. This event is billed as the largest arts booking fair in the region, with hundreds of presenters and performers. An added attraction will be the keynote address by the embattled John Frohnmayer, chairman of the embattled National Endowment for the Arts.

October 5-6: Kingdom Come Swappin' Meetin', a folk-arts festival held at Southeast Community College, Cumberland, Ky. 40823. For more information, get in touch with the Office of Continuing Education at the college (phone number is 606/589-2145, ext. 58).

October 7-13, 14-19, 28-November 3: Fall Color Weeks, John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, N.C. 28902. You won't go there just to look at the trees, of course; you'll want to learn basketry or beadwork or another of the many crafts in which instruction is offered, but since subjects and instructors vary somewhat from week to week, you may wish to make sure when your particular need will be met.

October 11-13: 25th anniversary celebration of the Commission on Religion in Appalachia, with the theme "Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters"; Jackson's Mill State 4-H Camp, Weston, W. Va. Information from CORA, P.O. Box 10867, Knoxville, Tenn. 37939.

October 11-14: Tennessee Fall Homecoming, sponsored by and held at the Museum of Appalachia, P.O. Box 359, Norris, Tenn. 37828. Since John Rice Irwin, the creator of the museum, is not known for doing things by halves, you will not be startled to learn that the homecoming will feature hundreds of singers, dancers, writers and craftspersons of all kinds.

October 12-14: Annual fall fair, Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen, Indian Fort Theater, Berea, Ky. 40403.

October 19-21: Fall edition of the 42nd annual fair,
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Tradition!

It's been 16 years now since the Berea College Celebration of Traditional Music made its first appearance on the Appalachian scene, and during all this time the festival has remained devoted to the purpose announced by Appalachian Center Director Loyal Jones—to "feature strictly old-time traditional music." Berea has nothing against the "newer forms, such as bluegrass," Jones said, "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."

Thanks to the continuing encouragement given these "old styles" since that 1974 inaugural celebration, you can hear quite a few of them across Appalachia nowadays. One place in particular to hear them will be the campus of Berea College during the weekend of October 26, when the celebration makes its 17th run.

The main festival begins on Friday evening at 7:30. But take note that the Walker Calhoun family of Cherokee dancers and singers will present a program at a Berea College convocation on the preceding Thursday at 3:00 p.m. The traditionally stellar group of performers will shine from the local stage this year, their number including Grandpa and Ramona Jones and their daughter, Alisa Jones Wall; Porter "Red" Raper; Ron Mullenex; Daron Douglas;
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Shown here in 1978, Grandpa and Ramona Jones and daughter Alisa return to the 1990 celebration.



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Southern Highland Handicraft Guild, Asheville Civic Center. For more information, address the guild at P.O. Box 9545, Asheville, N.C. 28815.

October 22-28: First October Old-Time Week, sponsored by the Augusta Heritage Center, Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, W. Va. 26241; phone 304/636-1903. An intensive series of old-time-music classes, concerts and jam sessions, with individual instrumental workshops and ensemble classes.

October 24-25: Homegrown Economic Development Conference, Knoxville, Tenn., sponsored by the Brushy Fork Institute, MDC, Inc., and TVA; workshops on entrepreneurship, financing and other concerns of those wishing to launch small businesses. You can find out more from the Brushy Fork Institute, C.P.O. Box 35, Berea College, Berea, KY. 40404; phone 606/986-9341, ext. 6838. Or you may phone MDC, Inc., at 919/968-4531.

October 25-26: Literary festival, Emory & Henry College, Emory, Va. 24327. This year's festival will focus on Mary Lee Settle, whose works will be the subject of several papers and who will herself be on hand for a reading and interviews. If you want more information, write to John Lang at the college or phone him—703/944-3121.

October 26-28: Berea College Celebration of Traditional Music. (See separate story.)

November 6-7: "Appalachian Children," the fifth annual University of Kentucky conference on Appalachia. The sessions will look at services for children at three specific developmental levels—preschool, middle child-

hood and adolescence. For further information write the Appalachian Center, 641 South Limestone St., University of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky. 40506, or phone 606/257-4852.

November 15: Showing of *Fat Monroe*, an Appalshop movie based on a Gurney Norman story and starring Ned Beatty and William Johnson, an 11-year-old native of Carbon Glow, Ky.; Whitesburg, Ky. Though this will be the film's Appalachian premiere, it will be shown during October at the New York Film Festival at Lincoln Center.

December 2-4: 48th annual Professional Agricultural Workers conference, Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, Ala. 36088. The theme this year: "Public and Private Partnership for Rural Development." More information from Ntam Baharanyi, program coordinator, at the preceding address; the phone number is 205/727-8454.

December 26-January 1: Christmas Country Dance School, Berea College. Country dancing isn't just dancing, say the sponsors; it's also a "practical means of teaching or learning history, social skills, geometry, music and much more." But even if you don't want to learn any of these subjects, you can still enjoy this famous course. For more information write to C.P.O. Box 287, Berea, Ky. 40404 or phone 606/986-9341, ext. 5143.

December 26-January 1: Winter Dance Week, John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, N.C. 28902. Another opportunity to dance away Christmas week, part of it at the bidding of a caller whose last name is—really—Dalsemer. His colleagues, however, have less figurative names like Sutton and DuBose.

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Michael Kline; Nat Reese; the Calhoun family; Emma Smith; and Bob Douglas and Jim Adkins.

The daylight hours of Saturday, October 27, will be devoted to instrumental workshops and concerts, high-lighted at two o'clock by a symposium on Cherokee music and dance, led by Walker Calhoun, winner of the 1989 North Carolina Folk Heritage Award, and introduced by Michael Kline, public sector folklorist at Western Carolina University.

That evening all the festival performers will come together again for another big music-making session, which will be topped off by a square dance that may go on into the wee hours. This latter diversion will be led by Joe Tarter, with music by the popular Lewis and Donna Lamb. If you survive all that activity, you can take part in a 9:00 Sunday morning hymn sing with festival musicians.

For any further information you can get in touch with the Appalachian Center at the address on page 4 of the NEWSLETTER. The telephone number is 606/986-9341, extension 5140.

Silver Jubilee

Having survived all the challenges and put-downs of the Reagan years, the Appalachian Regional Commission, in the Bush era, finds itself a fixture in the government, like the Marine Corps or the TVA. But, like these and all other agencies and entities, it also finds itself caught in the never ending White House-Capitol Hill, Democratic-Republican battle of the budget. The Senate has voted to fund it at the \$180 million level, the House has opted for

\$150 million—and, at the moment we write, nobody knows what will happen with the deficit, the budget or any other federal fiscal question.

Undaunted, however, the ARC is planning a gala observance of a notable anniversary, its 25th birthday. Not simply a social occasion, the big party—to be held in Pittsburgh October 18-20—will concern itself with the outlook for Appalachian children and young people. As part of its 25th anniversary celebration, the ARC earlier funded a Community Youth Demonstration Program, whose purpose was to encourage young people to become involved in community-service activities.

Under this program, 16 youth-leadership projects conducted a wide range of activities intended, as the ARC puts it, "to build leadership skills, including opportunities to plan and design community projects that propose solutions to problems impacting youth and their communities." These pilot projects will be "showcased" at the Pittsburgh conference, and the Thursday session will be directed toward the participants in these projects.

Speakers at the conference will include Senator Jay Rockefeller, who came to West Virginia back in 1964 as a VISTA volunteer; Dr. Hanoch McCarty, who specializes in a notably promising field, self-esteem; and a variety of other educators and project workers. The proceedings will be supervised by Pennsylvania Governor Robert P. Casey, the States' Co-Chairman of the ARC, and Jacqueline L. Phillips, the Federal Co-Chairman. A long-time associate of the commission, Ms. Phillips has succeeded Winifred A. Pizzano in the top federal slot. (If memory serves, Ms. Pizzano once advocated the abolition of the ARC—a move that, had it been made, would have put her out of her own job;

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Berea College Public Relations

LOVERS OF JOKES AND WILD TALES gathered in Berea in July for the third festival of Appalachian humor, presented by the Appalachian Center with Loyal Jones and Billy Edd Wheeler as hosts. Bill Foster (above), an English teacher-musician-humorist from Florence, Ala., was among those who kept the audiences in good spirits during the two evenings of the festival. Among the other featured performers were Joe Bly, Bonnie Collins, Bob Hannah, Ramona Jones and Alisa Jones Wall, Paul Lepp and Al White. Members of the audience won cash prizes for best jokes, tales and other bits.

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perhaps she was simply expressing loyalty to then-President Reagan, who disapproved of the commission. In any case, Ms. Pizzano has now moved on, into the world of private business. She has opened, of all things, a "bath boutique" in downtown D.C. We refrain from drawing any conclusions, serious or otherwise, from this remarkable development.)

Rich Schools, Poor Schools: Ohio's Turn

Over the past couple of years we've taken frequent note of the movement toward school reform in Kentucky—a course of events that culminated this past spring in the passage of the Kentucky Education Reform Act, a comprehensive package complete with a \$1.27 billion price tag for the next two years.

This unprecedented legislation, with its unprecedented funding, came as the end result of a 1988 judicial decision that Kentucky's established method of financing the public schools was unconstitutional. In upholding this ruling, the state's Supreme Court actually extended it, discarding not only the financing but the school system itself. Hence the legislature and the governor had little choice but to take strong action of some kind.

In Montana, New Jersey and Texas, school funding has likewise been tossed out by supreme courts, and lawsuits seeking the same end are pending in 12 other states. In every case the complaint has been based on obvious disparities between rich and poor school districts. Often the aggrieved schools are those serving inner-city areas, but in Kentucky, Appalachian-area schools played a promi-

nent role in the coalition that brought the original suit.

This point has not gone unnoticed across the river in Ohio, which, for all its essential midwesternness, also includes a substantial slice of Appalachia. Certainly Ohio presents some startling funding disparities, with per pupil spending varying between suburban and rural schools by as much as \$8,000 a year. One school may have no indoor toilets while another boasts an indoor Olympic-sized swimming pool. Not fair, says an officer of the Ohio Coalition of Rural and Appalachian Schools; "every youngster in the state ought to have an equal opportunity for education."

To help them build their case, the members of the coalition have turned to Kern Alexander, a school-financing expert and former president of Western Kentucky University, who played a prominent part in bringing about the changes in Kentucky. It seems likely that the Ohio state government will soon find itself making similar changes.

For Entrepreneurs

The Appalachian Regional Commission, the Brushy Fork Institute and other enterprises concerned with business development in Appalachia were joined this summer by a new Kentucky entity, the East Kentucky Economic Development and Job Creation Corp., established by the legislature with a start-up grant of \$250,000. The EKEDJCC, which was created specifically to work in the state's 49 Appalachian counties, will have wide authority to choose the kinds of programs it will operate and projects it will sponsor. But it has one mandate going into the game: during the next five years it is supposed to raise up to \$10 million from public and private sources. That task alone should keep it pretty busy.

A national search is under way for a chief executive. ■

EYE on Publications

Political Parties and Primaries in Kentucky, by Penny M. Miller and Malcolm E. Jewell (University Press of Kentucky). Among the many paradoxes that characterize the Bluegrass state is the fact that Kentuckians nowadays vote Republican in national political races but remain staunchly Democratic in state races. The GOP, in fact, hasn't produced a governor since 1967, and of late has encountered trouble in simply finding somebody willing to run for the job. In view of Republican successes in presidential and senatorial contests, what's the problem here?

This is only one of the kinds of questions the authors deal with in this detailed study of the organization and workings of political parties in Kentucky. Actually, since Democrats dominate the state—whatever their failings in national elections—the book concentrates on the Democratic primary, looking closely at candidates, techniques, funding, voting patterns and, of course, on the great financial and other changes wrought by television, which seems to be expressly designed to further the political careers of more or less photogenic millionaires.

In one sense, Kentucky for many years had a de facto two-party system, because the Democrats were split into two enduring factions, with the primary serving as the real general election. But now the factions have faded away, their work being done by elaborate campaign organizations and TV appearances. Even so, the fun hasn't altogether disappeared. In the 1987 general election, for instance, the Republican candidate denied that he had called his Democratic opponent "a Nazi," apologized for having called him "a little weasel," but reiterated his previously expressed opinion of his rival as "sleazy." He also assured the voters that the Democrat, if victorious, would prove to be a

"wild card" who would "pluck the state clean like a chicken." But alas for these heroics—the Democrat won with 65 percent of the vote. And money talked: the winner, a multimillionaire, outspent the loser by more than 10 to 1.

Communities in Economic Crisis: Appalachia and the South, edited by John Gaventa, Barbara Ellen Smith and Alex Willingham (Temple University Press). During the past 20 years the South has enjoyed a new kind of prominence as a major component of the Sun Belt, whose economic boom has shone in sharp contrast to the plight of the industrialized northern Rust Belt. Cities like Pittsburgh and Detroit have seen their basic industries decline, while Atlanta, New Orleans and other southern cities have won acclaim as economic success stories.

The essays in this book, however, point to a different story—to the "closings of mines in Appalachia and textile mills in the rural South, the debt-ridden farmer in the Kentucky Tobacco Belt, and marginalized communities in the Georgia Black Belt." But the authors cite these and other situations not in order to deplore and weep but to show how grassroots communities have faced up to economic change. These experiences, they suggest, hold lessons for other Americans concerned with problems of economic organization.

The book grew out of a series of workshops held at Highlander Center and devoted to ways of dealing with economic change so as to bring about economic justice. Although economic restructuring has received a great deal of academic and political attention, the editors observe that this discussion has lacked the voices of the people who feel the direct impact of change and have to struggle with its consequences. The Highlander meetings and the resulting book, with all the varied voices that take part, are an interesting and important step toward redressing the balance.

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