

NEWS

APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE

LETTER



Loyal Jones – Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Looking Forward

October 2-3: "Weaving Together Our Cultures for a New Justice"—this year's assembly of the Appalachian Development Projects Committee of the Commission on Religion in Appalachia; Cedar Lakes Conference Center, Ripley, W.Va. Information from CORA, P.O. Box 10867, Knoxville, Tenn. 37939.

October 3: Second annual Appalachian Teachers' Network Conference, Radford University, Radford, Va. Workshops for all teachers in literature, local history, nature study, etc. Telephone Jim Minick at 703/831-6154.

October 3-4: Fall festival, John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, N.C. 28902. Crafts for sale, demonstrations and music, with activities for children, plus the famous Folk School barbecue. Early arrivals can attend a kickoff concert on October 2.

October 7-11: 13th annual Tennessee Fall Homecoming, sponsored by and held at John Rice Irwin's Museum of Appalachia, which has been validly described as "the most authentic and complete replica of pioneer Appalachian life in the world." The event will feature more than 175 varied activities, with artists and stars in all fields. The museum's address is P.O. Box 0318, Norris, Tenn. 37828.

October 9-11: Annual Fall Fair, Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen, Indian Fort Theater, Berea, Ky. More than 120 exhibitors will be on hand, and there'll also be music and food. The guild's address is P.O. Box 291, Berea, Ky. 40403.

October 9-11 and 16-18: Black Mountain Festival, Black Mountain, N.C., featuring a wide variety of regional musicians. Telephone: 704/669-4546.

October 11: Fourth annual Appalachia World Championship Fiddling Contest, Noccoalula Falls Park, Gadsden, Ala., with \$2,000 in prizes; amplified instruments are not welcome. Telephone 205/543-2787.

October 23-25: Berea College Celebration of Traditional Music. (See separate story.)

October 24-25, 31-November 1: Annual Fall Color Cruise and Folk Festival, Chattanooga. Autumn colors in the Grand Canyon of the Tennessee River, plus musicians of renown. Telephone: 800/322-3344 or, in-state, 800/338-3999.

October 31: Blacksmith auction, John C. Campbell Folk School. No, they're not actually getting rid of their blacksmith, they're just trying to raise money to improve the farrier's facilities.

November 5-7: Seventh annual University of Kentucky

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Strategies for the '90s

Though many people don't realize it, Appalachia overall depends more heavily on manufacturing jobs than does the U.S. as a whole. Hence economists see the competitiveness of Appalachian industry as a key to the region's future.

So does the Appalachian Regional Commission, whose forthcoming 1992 annual conference is titled "Enhancing Manufacturing Competitiveness: Strategies for Appalachia in the '90s." The meeting, to be hosted by Maryland Governor William Donald Schaefer, will take place November 11-13 in Baltimore (which is, of course, a pretty good stone's throw from Appalachian Maryland, but never mind that).

Those at the conference will discuss case studies of successful strategies used by manufacturers both within and outside of Appalachia, with attention focused on technology adoption, management change, access to capital, market expansion (including exports) and skills development.

ARC has also made available the results of two recent studies. *Access to Health Insurance for Small Businesses* to page 2

"Strength From the Hills": New version of Jesse Stuart's tribute to his father (p. 4)



Berea College Special Collections

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in *Kentucky and Appalachia* and *Impact of Migration of the Elderly* can be obtained from National Technical Information Services, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, Va. 22161. (For more on elderly migrants, see the article "Blessing or Problem" that begins below.)

Kids and Writers

Literature that reflects a young reader's own culture can have a positive effect on that reader's attitude toward reading and writing. That was the assumption—a perfectly logical one—underlying a summer project that saw four writers—George Ella Lyon, Herb Karl, Gloria Houston and the tireless Jim Wayne Miller—conduct public discussions on the theme of literacy as it relates to the preschooler, the kindergartner and the adolescent.

Using their own poetry, short fiction, novels and picture books, the writers introduced groups of parents, teachers and children to Appalachian literature as a resource in the fight against illiteracy. The project also produced a comprehensive bibliography of Appalachian literature for children and young adults.

Despite being based in Abingdon, Va., the Appalachian Center for Poets and Writers managed in a neat bit of grantsmanship to get the project funded by the Tennessee Humanities Council. If you'd like to find out more about the whole thing, contact Judy K. Miller, Route 4, Box 958, Abingdon, Va. 24210; phone, 703/628-3760.

Educational Reform: Confidence Up

Education financing and school restructuring are issues being debated in states across the country. As readers of the APPALACHIAN CENTER NEWSLETTER are well aware, these questions came to a head in Kentucky in 1990, resulting in the passage of a bold and sweeping education-reform act. Other states whose financing methods have been challenged may well have to follow Kentucky's lead.

But how well have the Kentucky reforms done thus far? Researchers looking into the question have come up with some interesting information. A study conducted just a year ago showed that Kentuckians were full of doubts. They readily acknowledged the need for better schools, but at the same time they feared that reform wouldn't survive long enough to create the necessary changes.

A new study, however, has produced some strikingly different results. Events during the past year have brought about a truly big change. Kentuckians now speak of their belief that reform is here to stay, sometimes simply by talking about "when" a particular reform program will take effect rather than "whether" it will take effect at all. Overall, those who have had direct contact with activities that are part of the reforms—preschool programs, family resource centers, school councils—show the most confidence in the future.

There are doubts, of course. But, according to the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence and the

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conference on Appalachia, this one to discuss "The State of the Arts in Appalachia." In connection with the conference, UK's Center for Contemporary Art and Transylvania University's Morlan Gallery are joining forces to create a major exhibition of contemporary Appalachian art called "The Appalachian Spirit." If you want to see it all, you'll have to go to both galleries, since there's no overlap. The dates are a bit different too; the Morlan Gallery show will be up from October 18 to November 13, the UK show from November 5 to November 30. For information about the conference, write to UK's Appalachian Center, 641 S. Limestone St., Lexington, Ky. 40506 or phone 606/257-4852. The Morlan Gallery number is 606/233-8210.

November 8-13: "Doing It Right," a workshop for executive directors of activist groups, Oaks Retreat Center, Black Mountain, N.C. Produced by the Northern Rockies Action Group in association with the Institute for Conservation Leadership, this training session is sponsored in the Southeast by an organization called Grassroots Leadership. "The leaders," we are told, "have years of experience with nontraditional groups." For information, write to the Northern Rockies Action Group, 9 Placer Ave., Helena, Mont. 59601 or phone 406/442-3280.

November 13-14: Annual Fall Education Conference, Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence; Lexington, Ky. All—principals, teachers, lay persons—are welcome at this meeting sponsored by the organization that spearheaded Kentucky's dramatic educational reform. Telephone: 800/928-2111.

December 1: Deadline for papers for the 1993 New River Symposium; the conference itself will, as usual, be held in April. For details phone 304/465-0508.

December 6: Fireside sale, with crafts displays. John C. Campbell Folk School.

December 26-January 1: Christmas Country Dance School, Berea College. This landmark event has been around so long that it has become almost as much of an institution as the college itself. Besides dancing, you get folk drama, storytelling, singing and crafts, plus a wholesome New Year's Eve. Write to Berea College Recreation Extension, C.P.O. Box 287, Berea, Ky. 40404 or phone 606/986-9341, ext. 5143.

Partnership for Kentucky School Reform, Kentuckians now believe that educational reform looks reasonable and workable. People have confidence in the legislature's long-term commitment to education, and they realize the effectiveness of citizens' and teachers' groups that support reform.

In a state in which skepticism about the deeds and intentions of politicians knows no limits, that's truly a giant step forward.

Blessing or Problem?

So-called elderly migrants to Appalachia have lately been attracting the attention of researchers, particularly those associated with the Sanders-Brown Center on Aging at

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“Old Styles” Back Again



The first celebration, 1974: Floyd and Edna Ritchie Baker and Jean Ritchie led a dulcimer workshop

Back in 1974 the Berea College Appalachian Center launched a new venture intended, in the words of Director Loyal Jones, to “feature strictly old-time traditional music.” Nothing wrong with bluegrass and other newer forms, 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.”

That encouragement has continued ever since, and so has the spread of old-time music, as you can tell for yourself during the weekend of October 23, when the Celebration of Traditional Music makes its 19th run.

Festivities begin at 7:30 on Friday evening, with a big concert by festival musicians. As usual, a stellar group of performers will be on hand, including the Burky Brothers, Homer Ledford and Cabin Creek, John and Mary Lozier, Bobby McMillon and Marina Trivette, Walter McNew,

Phoeba Parsons, Shorty VanWinkle and the Pearly Gate Singers, and Doug Wallin and Jack Wallin.

Saturday evening will see another gala session with all the headliners, and both big concerts will be followed by square dancing. The daylight hours of Saturday, October 24, will be devoted to instrumental workshops and concerts, highlighted by a symposium, “In Search of ‘The Lost Hornpipe’: Adventures with Kentucky Traditional Music,” led by John Harrod, a collector, teacher and musician from Owenton, Ky.

If you feel like making some music of your own (or you just want to listen), you can attend a 9:00 Sunday morning hymn sing with festival musicians.

For any further information you can write to the Appalachian Center at C.P.O. Box 2336, Berea, Ky. 40404. Or call 606/986-9341, ext. 5140.

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University of Kentucky. Should communities make an effort to entice such newcomers to move in?

One study of elderly migrants in western North Carolina showed that direct spending by retirees created 943 jobs at an average annual wage of \$14,900. In addition, such retirees are far less harmful to the environment than factories, and their spending tends to be stable because it doesn't fluctuate with economic changes. Besides, retirees don't flood local school systems with new kids.

Nevertheless, some negatives have also been noted. Relatively affluent retirees tend to raise local housing costs, which can actually lower the standard of living of younger families that can't match their elders' ability to pay. Some public officials have noted, as well, that becoming a retirement community could jeopardize a town's efforts to attract industry, because corporations might see the area as suffering from a labor shortage.

But retirees often bring with them talent and experience that makes them valuable volunteers for community projects. Some locals may not be too happy with that aspect of things, however. Those same eager volunteers also like to take part in local politics, thus shaking up a community's

long-established political folkways and decision-making structure.

Thus, depending on your point of view, retirees can represent a blessing or a problem. If you'd like to take a deeper look at the question, you can get in touch with the Sanders-Brown Center on Aging, 101 Sanders-Brown Building, Lexington, Ky. 40536-0230; phone, 606/233-6040. One publication resulting from the center's research, *Impact of Migration of the Elderly*, is available from National Technical Information Services, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, Va. 22161.

EYE on Publications

Snakehunter, by Chuck Kinder (Gnomon Press, P.O. Box 475, Frankfort, Ky. 40602). Along with producing new works, Gnomon Press regularly makes available previously published books that deserve a second look. *Snakehunter*, which originally appeared in 1973 (and to considerable acclaim) is a coming-of-age novel about a

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West Virginia lad and three generations of his colorful family. Sounds familiar? True, but you may be encouraged to pick up the book by one reviewer's comment that these fascinating characters enable the reader to "savor the bitter-sweet taste of West Virginia."

Managing Smallness: Promising Fiscal Practices for Rural School District Administrators, by Deborah Inman Freitas (ERIC/CRESS—Appalachia Educational Laboratory, P.O. Box 1348, Charleston, W.Va. 25325). Although the entire educational world faces intensive challenges of all kinds, rural schools have some special problems. The need to come up with the funds to meet statewide mandated reforms often clashes with the shrinking tax base resulting from the economic decline of many rural counties. The trick, say the people at CRESS (this acronym stands for Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools), is to create "strategies for managing the limited means of schooling in rural areas for best effect"—or, as politicians used to say in speaking of nuclear-war economies, to get more bang for a buck.

In this 74-page handbook, the author pulls together the results of a nationwide survey of rural superintendents and business managers she undertook in cooperation with the American Association of School Administrators. Overall, she found that despite their unhappiness with current state funding formulas, some administrators have created various effective make-do approaches (for instance, a district can increase its average daily attendance—the philosophers' stone that transmutes kids on school buses into hard cash—by providing a full-day kindergarten or developing a perfect-attendance incentive program).

Managing Smallness takes a practical approach to these and a variety of other concerns—the influence of state politics, personnel management, cost-reduction programs and so on—that rural administrators must face. For just \$10 postpaid, this book ought to be a pretty good buy.

Strength From the Hills, by Jesse Stuart (Jesse Stuart Foundation, P.O. Box 391, Ashland, Ky. 41114.) This book has a curious history, going back to 1960, when Jesse

Stuart published *God's Oddling*, a biography of Mick Stuart, the author's father. In 1968 an abridged version, *Strength From the Hills*, appeared in simplified English in a series designed for adults learning the language. Now the Stuart Foundation has created its own book for new readers, closer in language and tone to the 1960 original.

"We had to do substantial editing in order to inject the original spirit of Stuart's powerful, evocative tribute to his father," says the book's chief editor, James M. Gifford. "But the result is a book that will provide great benefit to adult new readers, who will thrill to Stuart's story of an earlier time in Kentucky's history."

Mick Stuart could not read and write, but he taught his son to love education. Now, in a different way, the father is teaching other people.

New: Appalachian Center Tapes

For some years now, bystanders have watched in awe as Appalachian Center staff members assembled, combed through and classified a seemingly limitless mass of tapes from mountain musicians both famous and near-forgotten. Now some of the treasures making up this sound archive are being made available to the public, beginning with *Punchon Camps*, featuring Clyde Davenport, one of America's finest old-time fiddlers and banjo players. Davenport recently won a National Heritage Award from the National Endowment for the Arts for his musicianship and his contributions to the preservation of traditional arts in America.

This cassette (AC002) contains 29 tunes, including "Jenny in the Cotton Patch," "Sugar in My Coffee," "Old Cow Died in the Forks of the Branch," and the title tune. The price is \$7.00 plus \$1.25 postage (Kentucky residents add 6% sales tax).

Forthcoming cassettes in this series will include *1941-42 Home Recordings of Legendary Eastern Kentucky Fiddler John M. Salyer*; *Raglif Jaglif Tetartilif Pole* (tall tales told by Leonard Roberts); and *Blackjack Grove* (fiddle tunes played by Walter McNew, Rockcastle County, Ky.).

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