

NEWS

APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE



LETTER

Helen M. Lewis – Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Looking Forward

April 5-9: 25th Grifton Shad Festival, Grifton, N.C. Information from Janet Hasely, Box 928, Grifton, N.C. 28530; phone, 919/524-4356.

April 6-9: Seventh annual Institute on Women and Economic Development, Chaminade Conference Center, Santa Cruz, Calif. The meeting is sponsored by the Ms. Foundation for Women, 120 Wall St., New York, N.Y. 10005.

April 7-8: New River Symposium, sponsored by the New River Gorge National River (National Park Service) and the West Virginia Division of Culture and History; Glade Springs Resort, Daniels, W. Va. As usual, participants will discuss all kinds of subjects having to do with this unique river and its valley—natural history, human history, folklore, archaeology, geography and others. For more information, contact symposium headquarters at P.O. Box 246, Glen Jean, W. Va. 25846; the phone number is 304/465-0508.

April 7-9: Spring Dance Weekend, John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, N.C. 28902; phone, 800/FOLK-SCH.

April 20-21: Inaugural Festival honoring Dr. Larry D. Shinn, the new president of Berea College; the inauguration itself will take place at 10:00 a.m. Friday the 21st.

April 27-30: Seventh annual Merle Watson Memorial Festival, Wilkesboro, N.C., with Doc Watson, John Hartford, Ricky Skaggs, Alison Krauss and numerous others. Call 800/343-7857.

May 20: Kentuckians For The Commonwealth spring picnic, Levi Jackson State Park, London, Ky. To find out more, phone 606/878-2161.

June 4-10: Fourth annual Blue Ridge Old-Time Music Week, Mars Hill College—fiddle, banjo, guitar and lap dulcimer, plus—for the first time—ballad singing and storytelling, taught by Sheila Adams. For more information, write to the Center for Continuing Education, Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, N.C. 28754. There's an 800 number—582-3047; you may also call 704/689-1166.

June 4-24: Summer session, New Opportunity School for Women, Berea College. Successful applicants to this popular program spend three weeks learning about jobs and how to get them. For full information, call or write Jane Stephenson at C.P.O. Box 2276, Berea, Ky. 40404; phone, 986-9341, ext. 6676.

June 11-30: "Multicultural Heritage of Appalachia: Methods & Resources for Teaching Appalachian Diversity," Berea College. (See separate story.)

June 14-16: "Learning to Serve, Serving to Learn: Community-based Teaching in the Appalachian College," a

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Waste Not . . .

Since the late 1980s a variety of groups have sought to push Congress into adopting legislation that would clamp curbs on the transfer of solid waste from one state to another without the agreement of the ultimate host locality. Late last year success seemed within reach—a strong Senate bill *almost* made it to the floor for what was expected to have been a favorable vote. But in the final hours of the 103rd Congress, as the *CJE News* reports, this "Right to Say No" bill suddenly stopped in its tracks. It seems that Sen. John Chafee (R-R.I.) had a "political problem" with it, and he handled his problem by preventing the bill from reaching the floor. In view of the general attitudes expressed by leaders of the new Congress, solid-waste activists clearly face serious strategic problems.

Interstate shipments have not been the only source of trouble for U.S. localities. A federal court has ordered South Carolina to accept nuclear waste from Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden. Energy Department representatives told the court—apparently very convincingly—that the case involved the credibility of the U.S. nuclear nonproliferation policy. The decision is likely to affect Virginia and North Carolina as well as South Carolina, since the three have an interstate compact concerning hazardous and nuclear waste.

Meet Appalachia's Many Cultures

Since 1973 the Berea College Appalachian Center's summer courses have played a significant part in the growth of Appalachian cultural self-awareness. Secondary school teachers have taken their new knowledge of regional history and literature back home and developed new courses for their students. College teachers have taken part as well.

This year those who sign up will find a new kind of summer workshop experience. With the theme "Multicultural Heritage of Appalachia," the three-week institute will present and discuss methods and resources for teaching Appalachian diversity—Scotch-Irish, African-American, Cherokee, Asian, Mexican, Jewish. The eminent Appalachian writer Wilma Dykeman, who has been a regular workshop lecturer, will present the keynote address, "Unity Through Diversity." Moving beyond the classroom,

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faculty-development conference sponsored by the Appalachian College Association; Carson-Newman College. Full details from Larry Osborne (615/471-3431) or Sharon Teets (615/471-3462) at the college, Jefferson City, Tenn. 37760.

June 18-24: 19th annual Appalachian Celebration & Dulcimer Camp in the Mountains, Morehead State University—featuring instruction on lap and hammer dulcimer, afternoon and evening concerts, storytelling, music presented by old-time musicians, dancing and demonstrations. Write to Continuing Education, Morehead State University, Morehead, Ky. 40351, or call 606/783-2077.

June 19-30: 18th annual Highland Summer Conference, Radford University. The focus here will be on writing and culture; the scheduled mentors include Jim Wayne Miller (perhaps not surprisingly) and Anndrena Belcher. Contact Grace Toney Edwards or Jo Ann Asbury at P.O. Box 7014, Radford University, Radford, Va. 24142; phone, 703/831-5366.

July 9-15: Celtic Week, sponsored by the Swannanoa Gathering Folk Arts Workshops, will explore the Scottish

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and Irish traditions. For details write to P.O. Box 9000, Warren Wilson College, Asheville, N.C. 28815.

July 9-August 13: Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops, Elkins, W.Va. The workshops are week-long classes in mountain-rifle construction, wild herbs and mushrooms, autoharp and just about anything else you can think of. There's also a series of musical theme weeks, from blues to Balkan and Yiddish. For detailed information, write the Augusta Heritage Center, Davis & Elkins College, 100 Campus Drive, Elkins, W.Va. 26241; phone, 304/636-1903.

July 16-22: Old-Time Music and Dance Week, sponsored by the Swannanoa Gathering Folk Arts Workshops. Details from P.O. Box 9000, Warren Wilson College, Asheville, N.C. 28815. If you'd rather concentrate on dulcimer doings, you can do so during Dulcimer Week—same time, same place.

July 30-August 5: 18th annual Appalachian Writers Workshop, Hindman Settlement School. Will this year's collection of role-model luminaries include Jim Wayne Miller? You bet it will! And among the others on hand will be James Still, George Ella Lyon, Bobbie Ann Mason and Sharyn McCrumb. Information from the school at Hindman, Ky. 41822; phone, 606/785-5475.

October 6-8: "Old-fashioned Sorghum Makin'," John Simon Farm, Pond Creek, Ohio. You can find out more from Simon himself at 614/259-6337. Anyway, Simon says, "Come on up!"

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participants will have a week of field experience in Eastern Kentucky and Cherokee, N.C.

As has been customary, students can obtain three hours' graduate or undergraduate credit through the University of

Kentucky. Total costs for the entire three weeks are about \$850, with some scholarship aid available. For full particulars, write the Appalachian Center at College P.O. Box 2336, Berea, Ky. 40404 or call 606/986-9341, ext. 5140.

EYE on Publications

Colored People, by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Alfred A. Knopf). In this "memoir," as he terms it, the author—who teaches English and chairs Afro-American studies at Harvard—takes the reader back with him to a tiny hill town on the bank of the upper Potomac River in West Virginia. The book is indeed about "colored people," and in an exceptionally vivid and insightful way, but it is also about Piedmont and towns like it and about life in the 1950s.

Even nonblack readers who believe themselves well-informed on the life of minorities in the mountains will find themselves looking at the region from a fresh point of view. Gates enriches his account with a lively group of characters—relatives and friends. The book is not a novel, but if it were—and as you read it you feel that it certainly could be—it would constitute a notable example of what has been called the pedagogical or coming-of-age novel. And it was a coming of age at a particularly fateful time for the "colored" community in which the Gates family lived; the author was beginning public school just as the United States was beginning integration.

Appalachia's Path to Dependency, by Paul Salstrom (University Press of Kentucky). Subtitled "Rethinking a Region's Economic History 1730-1940," this book not only delivers on this promise but offers a number of important insights into overall U.S. economic history as well.

As any observer knows, poor old Appalachia has been subjected through the years to analysis and interpretation by means of a variety of intellectual constructs—"models," scholars like to call them—some of them long-lived, others waxing and waning like fads in diet and clothing. For the last generation, as Paul Salstrom observes, many Appalachian scholars have stressed the colonial model, emphasizing economic similarities between the region and former colonial states in the Third World. While accepting the importance of this colony-within-a-country idea, Salstrom moves on to look at the region's disadvantaged position as the result of market forces that have discriminated against it and other "financially peripheral" regions of the United States; thus *peripheral* rather than *colonial* becomes his key term.

Similarly, the author, who teaches history at West Virginia University, acknowledges the usefulness of the "new rural history," which is currently enjoying a vogue, but declares that old-fashioned political economy has its importance too. Considerations like banking regulations and credit policies play a much larger part in his story than any peculiarly mountain economic behavior—economic goals tended to develop in response to conditions. Even so, the author carefully draws the distinction between the local "subsistence-barter-and-borrow" systems—which were both complex and successful—and the capitalist money system into which mountain people were inevitably drawn during the latter 19th century.

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Alfred H. Perrin 1908-1995

THE FIRST WEATHERFORD AWARD: Alfred Perrin (r.), donor of the award, holds the check representing the first Weatherford prize, given in 1971 to Ben A. Franklin of the *New York Times* (l.) for 1970 writing that best illustrated “the problems, personalities and unique qualities of the Appalachian South.” In center is writer Wilma Dykeman, a member of the award committee.



Brunner Studio

Some years ago, speaking at a retirement dinner honoring a Berea College library director, Al Perrin offered a characteristic description of his own relationship to the library. Commenting that Santa Claus traditionally pays very brief visits to houses, entering and leaving by way of the chimney, Perrin described himself as a different kind of Santa Claus—one who “came down the chimney and then stayed.”

Nobody was surprised at the tone and candor of the remark. It merely acknowledged what everybody knew—that he was not only a leading donor of money and books to the library but also, as a volunteer bibliographer, spent a great deal of time at his desk in the special-collections area of the building. The remark was typical of Perrin because it had *nothing either boastful or falsely modest* about it; it simply represented, with a humorous twist, an objective fact.

A native of Michigan, Perrin graduated from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern in 1929. With time out for U.S. Navy service in World War II, he spent his working life at Procter and Gamble in Cincinnati, where for some years he served as director of publications. A true “book man,” as he liked to call it, he devoted much of his spare time to collecting rare editions; his Max Beerbohm collection, in particular, ranked as one of the world’s best.

On retiring from P&G in 1968, he moved to Berea and began his second career, not simply through his involvement with the library or even as a supporter of various good causes. A true idea man as well as book man, he devised many of the activities to which he and his wife Jean gave financial and personal support. The publication you’re reading at this moment resulted from his inspiration and for some years received his donations. Beyond that, he was one of the original donors to the Berea College Appalachian

Center itself, and through the years he continued to make gifts to it. One of his most prominent activities was the establishment and support of the W. D. Weatherford Award for outstanding writing about Appalachia, given annually since 1971 by the Appalachian Center and the Hutchins Library.

Sidney Farr of the library staff recalls Perrin’s saying that he liked to spend his money in two ways—for people and for books, with people coming first. Essentially, indeed, he picked people he respected and supported them in their activities. “Al Perrin was an ideal donor,” says Loyal Jones, the first director of the Appalachian Center. “He gave you money, along with ideas and opinions, but he didn’t try to tell you how to spend it.”

As a donor, Perrin—as anyone who knew him can testify—had other notably appealing characteristics. He had no trace of the pious or the do-gooderish and never seemed to expect his financial contributions to win him any special consideration; that was the reason he could joke about himself as a Santa Claus. As a person, Perrin was always thoroughly himself, never in ideas or expression or even in clothing changing his ways to fit the trend of the moment. In an often outer-directed world, he acted from a solid inner core of selfhood. And he undoubtedly would have expressed sardonic surprise if he had heard you call him anything so fancy as a philanthropist.

Alfred Perrin died in North Carolina on March 12; a memorial service is scheduled in the Cowan Chapel of Berea’s Union Church on May 7 at 4:30 p.m. Memorial contributions may be sent to the Hutchins Library or the Appalachian Center, Berea College.

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Having begun life as a dissertation, *Appalachia's Path to Dependency* is thoroughly scholarly in every way, but it is nevertheless quite accessible to a nonspecialist reader. It does, however, present density enough to require—and reward—careful reading and rereading.

If you're interested in general economic history—especially if you have a well-developed sense of irony—you'll find Salstrom's analysis of the New Deal's impact on Appalachia particularly provocative. Whether their actions concerned corn and hogs, coal or tobacco, President Roosevelt's generally well-meaning associates, as the author sees it, developed and carried out policies that favored large (hence non-Appalachian) farms over small ones and led mining companies to step up their mechanization and thus cut their payrolls; the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) in this telling appears to have conducted a virtual war on Appalachian smallholders.

Overall, Salstrom has written a stimulating book that offers a fresh look at the U.S. economic pie and how the size of Appalachia's slice has been determined. To read the book once, however, is certainly not to master it.

Putting Folklore to Use, edited by Michael Owen Jones (University Press of Kentucky). This book, the editor tells us, is the first one ever devoted to describing ways of applying the knowledge gained from folklore studies to general situations and social questions; that is, folklore as discussed here is not merely something for college courses or museums or a charming amalgam of antiquarianisms intended to keep state folklorists busy.

The authors show the reader how folklore can be used to promote learning and problem solving (a teacher, for example, can act like a folklore fieldworker and in so doing combat stereotyping among her pupils). Some of the contributors discuss the use of folkloristic approaches in improving the quality of life; a doctor, for instance, can do more with and for his patients if he makes himself aware of the different ways in which people think about the causes and cures of disease, as if he, like the teacher mentioned above, were a fieldworker in folklore studies.

The fruits of folklore research can also enhance people's identity and sense of community. One writer connected

with a state department on aging describes how folklore programming promoted a sense of self-worth among older adults. (A pioneer here, to be sure, was Georgia's *Foxfire*, with its staff of high schoolers incessantly interviewing older people—though, strangely, this famous project isn't mentioned in this book.)

Putting Folklore to Use is no collection of pieces gathered from here and there; all the essays were written specially for this book. The editor is professor of folklore and history at UCLA.

Book Notes

•The industrious people at the Jesse Stuart Foundation have republished Billy C. Clark's 1964 novel for children, *Goodbye Kate*, which recounts the adventures of a lonely country boy and a friend he acquires—a mule he names Kate. Recommended for readers in grades 5-9, the book won a broader endorsement from the *Buffalo Evening News*, which declared that it "is for you, whether you are 7 or 70." You can reach the foundation at P.O. Box 391, Ashland, Ky. 41114.

•Dexter Collett's *Bibliography of Theses and Dissertations Pertaining to Southern Appalachian Literature: 1912-1991* includes listings of 1,185 studies, arranged in six categories: early narratives and travel sketches; general studies; individual authors; creative writing; folklore; and drama, theater and film. It looks to be a handy book, indeed. Certainly admirers of Thomas Wolfe will not be disappointed with it; a quick survey shows Wolfe, with 17 pages out of the 85 devoted to individual authors, to be the most-graduate-studied Appalachian writer; second place goes to the early-19th-century South Carolinian William Gilmore Simms, with eight pages. We also learn such interesting facts as that the first dissertation ever written on Appalachian literature was produced at the University of Leipzig in 1912. This hard-cover bibliography is available for \$29.95 from Appalachian Imprints, Berea, Ky. 40403.

•*A Picture From Life's Other Side* is a new collection of Bob Henry Baber's poems, self-published by the author. You may get a copy by sending \$12.00 (postpaid) to the author at Box 413, Richwood, W.Va. 26261.

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