

# NEWS

APPALACHIAN CENTER  
BEREA COLLEGE



# LETTER

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## Looking Forward

**October 3-5:** 15th annual Sorghum Makin', John R. Simon's Family Farm, 8721 Pond Creek/Carey's Run Road, Portsmouth, Ohio 45663. If you have a yen for sorghum suckers and popcorn balls and apple butter, this may be the place for you to spend the weekend. All the eating (or, perhaps, eatin') will be accompanied by acoustical music, while butter gets churned and soap gets made. The number to call is 614/259-6337.

**October 4-5:** Southern Folk Festival and Celebration of Fine Crafts, Chattanooga. This major affair presents a wide variety of multiethnic entertainment; along with such staples as bluegrass and gospel, festival goers will have the chance to hear music of Irish, Ghanaian, South American, Mexican, Cajun and Andean origin. Among the crafts demonstrations (which are new this year) will be Mary and Jessie Bennett making Lowcountry Gullah sweet-grass baskets; food will include everything from strudel to peanut brittle. For more information, call Douglas Day at 540/943-9901 (musicians) or the Tennessee Association of Craft Artists, 615/665-0502.

**October 4-5:** 18th annual Autumn Jubilee, Dan Nicholas Park, Salisbury, N.C., with 130 crafts people from around the Southeast; the clogging barn will have two days of Appalachian free style, precision and line dancing. To find out more, phone 704/636-2089.

**October 4-5:** 24th annual Fall Festival, John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, N.C. See contact information for October 24-26.

**October 5-6:** Sixth annual Ohio Appalachian Conference, sponsored by Ohio State University Extension; Canter's Cave 4-H Camp Lodge, Jackson, Ohio. For more information, contact Deanna L. Tribe at 614/286-2177.

**October 9-12:** 18th annual Tennessee Fall Homecoming, sponsored by and held at John Rice Irwin's Museum of Appalachia, which has been accurately described as "the most authentic and complete replica of pioneer Appalachian life in the world." The event will feature the customary bountiful serving of art, crafts and entertainment, with headliners John Hartford, Ralph Stanley, Mac Wiseman and Grandpa and Ramona Jones. If you feel like it, you can even learn how to fire a Kentucky rifle or make sassafras tea. The museum's address is P.O. Box 1189, Norris, Tenn. 37828; phone 423/494-7680 or 423/494-0514.

**October 10-12:** Annual Fall Fair, Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen, Indian Fort Theater, Berea, Ky. You'll have the chance to see a shoemaker at work; music

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## ARC: Leverage Is the Game But Where's the Capital?

You don't hear a great deal about the Appalachian Regional Commission these days, but the people who run it tell us that, despite all the threats it has had to combat, it's holding up pretty well.

In fact, the ARC reports that for the fiscal year 1996 it created or retained about 35,000 jobs in the region while leveraging more than \$1 billion in private investment. Looking toward funding for 1998, ARC representatives also told congressmen that "the interests of the nation as a whole are served by bringing Appalachia into the economic mainstream," which the commission is attempting to do by creating jobs and stressing economic self-reliance in the region.

The ARC states' cochairman, Mississippi Governor Kirk Fordice, declared that while he doesn't support most federal programs, "the Appalachian Regional Commission is different," because it "is a real partnership." A key element in attaining the desired economic self-sufficiency, said Fordice, is completion of the remaining 25 percent of the Appalachian Development Highway System.

### Local Leaders

In another context, Fordice, who patently speaks as no fan of big government, praised the commission's "structure of maximum commitment and decision making by local leaders" and applauded its "minimum of federal bureaucracy." He could also applaud its remarkable three decades of consistent tenacity.

One example of local initiative came from Kentucky Governor Paul Patton, who last year won ARC endorsement for his idea of targeting a few centers with money and other resources, concentrating on solving all their problems, instead of sprinkling aid across the whole region. Fifteen Kentucky towns have applied for funding under the new Kentucky Appalachian Community Development Initiative.

### Where the Coal Money Went

The fact remains, however, that all the standard economic-development policies have thus far failed to produce significant results in the region. Most of the rise in per capita income since the 1960s has come from government payments—Social Security, medical benefits, "welfare." A continuing problem, says Bill Bishop of the *Lexington*

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by the Bluebird Special. For more information, phone 606/986-3192.

**October 10-12:** Black Mountain Folk Festival, Black Mountain, N.C. For more information, call 704/281-3382.

**October 17-19:** Fiddle workshop by Bruce Molsky; the Lodge at Copperhill. For details write Taproot, P.O. Box 247, Copperhill TN 37317, or phone 423/496-9020.

**October 17-19:** Bluegrass Fan Fest; Galt House, Louisville; phone 888/GET-IBMA or 502/684-9025.

**October 19-26:** October Old-Time Week, Augusta Heritage Center, incorporating the October 24-26 fiddlers' reunion; Wilson Douglas (fiddle), Dwight Diller (banjo) and Robin Kessinger (guitar) will be among those teaching; the guest artists' list includes Melvin Wine and Lester McCumber. There'll also be an Elderhostel session during the same week. Davis & Elkins College, 100 Campus Drive, Elkins, WVA 26241-3996; phone 304/637-1209.

**October 24-26:** 24th annual Celebration of Traditional Music, sponsored by the Berea College Appalachian Center and featuring a variety of top performers. (See separate story.)

**October 24-26:** If you can't find a whole week to spend at the John C. Campbell Folk School, perhaps you can use this late October weekend to pick up enameling or wheat weaving or maybe just to enjoy yourself dancing. You can get details from the school at One Folk School Road, Brasstown NC 28902-9603; phone 800/FOLK SCH.

**October 25:** Old-Time Banjo Day, Whitesburg, Ky., sponsored by Appalshop—a full day of workshops and an evening concert, all featuring Will Keyes, George Gibson, Emily Spencer and others. For information, call 606/633-0108.

**November 2-8:** Now, for at least once in your life, you can respond to your felt needs. At the John C. Campbell Folk School, under the tutelage of Dale Liles, learn how to make your own felt from actual fleece; the process, we are challengingly told, involves heat, moisture and agitation. Other offerings during this same week include Seminole-style quilting, photography and woodcarving. To find out more about classes during this and other weeks, use the contact information above.

**November 20:** "Measures and Milestones: Charting Our Path to Prosperity" will be the theme of the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center's annual conference, which will take place at the new Center for Rural Development, Somerset, Ky. Gov. Paul Patton has been invited to serve as one of the keynoters; the other will be Carolyn J. Lukensmeyer, founder and director of the citizen group America Speaks. More information from the policy research center at 800/853-2851 or 502/573-2851.

**November 22:** Fiddle Day, Whitesburg, Ky., sponsored by Appalshop—a full day of workshops and concerts, featuring Roger Cooper, Betty Vornbrock, Jenny Allinder and J. P. Fraley. For information, call 606/633-0108.

**December 26-January 1:** Christmas Country Dance School, Berea College, directed by Susan Spalding, Berea's coordinator of dance. Participants may participate in a variety of classes—English clog, country and morris dance, rapper, Danish, Appalachian clogging and square dance, and contra. There's also singing, and would it be Berea without crafts? Deadline for early registration is December 1. To find out more, call 606/986-9341, ext. 5565.

**January 11-17:** You can start the New Year off with something a bit different. During this week the John C. Campbell Folk School is offering advanced classes in a variety of crafts and skills—blacksmithing, raku, knitting, marbling and others (dulcimer, too). See contact information for October 24-26.

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## ARC from page 1

*Herald-Leader*, is the lack of philanthropic capital. The coal barons of Kentucky and West Virginia shipped their fortunes out of the region along with the coal that made them.

But hope springs eternal, indeed. The Ford Foundation is backing one of its officers to the tune of an initial \$500,000 to establish the Central Highlands Community Foundation, based in Knoxville. The director, Tom Miller, looks to the creation of a "critical mass" of \$40 million, the amount he believes his effort will have to have in order to be effective. One thing Miller hopes to do is to build community organizations. Development, he maintains, must come from inside the region. The recruit-a-factory era, in this thinking (and, it must be said, not only in this thinking), is dead. Perhaps Miller and Governor Fordice can become allies, since the governor also calls for self-sufficiency.

Anyway, the Ford Foundation is already supporting regional rural foundations in New Hampshire, Montana and New Mexico. Miller now hopes for the same kind of backing as he tackles the seemingly intractable mountains.

## "Liberals Under One Roof"?

At a recent meeting in Eastern Kentucky's Letcher County, a state representative expressed a curious idea. "I thought maybe," he said, "this was a ploy to get all us liberals under one roof and turn on the gas through the vents."

The occasion itself was a curious one. As part of his national tour to put a "human face" on poverty, Minnesota's Sen. Paul Wellstone had come to take a look at the situation in Appalachia. Inevitably, his appearance called up memories of Robert Kennedy's 1968 visit to the region.

"With audience references to the glory days of Kennedy and Franklin Roosevelt," noted a reporter, "it was hard to believe that 'liberal' has become something of a dirty word in contemporary politics." All the liberal language apparently gave the state representative much to think about as well.

## Blackening the Image?

In 1968, as reported in *Mountain Life & Work*, Kennedy pledged to continue working for emergency governmental job programs and special tax programs for industry locating in impoverished areas. His visit did not win universal approval, with some Kentucky legislators charging that it was one-sided, especially as far as strip mining was concerned, and thus "blackened" the state's image.

This time it was deep mining that claimed the visiting senator's attention, as miners described unsafe present-day

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Cari Norris



Jean Ritchie

## Celebrating in Traditional Style

Launched back in 1974, the Berea College Appalachian Center Celebration of Traditional Music returns October 24-26 in its 24th appearance. The customary group of star performers will be headed this year by Jean Ritchie.

The underlying idea of the celebration, said its founder, Loyal Jones, was to "feature strictly old-time traditional music." Bluegrass and other newer forms were fine, 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." Encouragement, preservation—whatever you want to call it—the celebration has through the years stuck to Jones's proclaimed purpose and in the pro-

cess has become an Appalachian regional institution.

Besides Jean Ritchie, the list of performers includes Molly Andrews, the Beargrass Creek Boys Band, Everett Lilly & Clear Creek Crossin, Cari Norris, the Mighty Gospel Harmonizers, and the Stamper-Thomas Band & Friends. These performers will appear in concert on Friday and Saturday evenings, beginning at 7:30. Each of these gala sessions will be followed by square dancing led by Berea's Susan Spalding.

The daylight hours of Saturday will be devoted to instrumental workshops and informal performances, highlighted at two o'clock by a workshop on Lily May Ledford, presented by Cari Norris. If you survive all the activity, you can take part in a Sunday-morning hymn sing with festival musicians.

If you would like further details, write to College P.O. Box 2336, Berea, Ky. 40404 or phone 606/986-9341, ext. 5140.

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conditions. "I'm absolutely convinced," Wellstone said, "that most people in this country—and I'm absolutely convinced that most people in Congress—think that what you're describing is something that took place 50 years ago. They don't have a clue."

Reporters accompanying Bobby Kennedy three decades ago decided that his concern was sincere—he hadn't come just to shake hands. When Wellstone returned to Washington, he made good on a promise of his own. One of the miners he had met had described how the dust in the mine was so thick that it would coat his sandwich before it reached his mouth. The senator had plainly gotten the message. He immediately began advocating the hiring of 24 new inspectors to measure the amount of coal dust in underground mines. That was only one item on his agenda, but it was a beginning.

Was the senator launching a campaign for president? The

miners didn't know and they didn't seem to care. Dust, safety, black lung—those were their concerns.

## EYE on Publications

*The Brier Poems*, by Jim Wayne Miller (Gnomon Press, P.O. Box 475, Frankfort, Ky. 40602. Published just a year after Miller's death, this book brings together the poems that appeared in the earlier collections *The Mountains Have Come Closer* (1980) and *Brier, His Book* (1988). In addition, a final section presents later work.

Many of the poems use the persona of the Brier (short for "brier hopper" or "brier jumper"), a nickname Ohioans are said to be fond of applying to migrants from Appalachia.

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Miller's Brier, however, is certainly no stereotyped regional transplant but more a country-slicker, mountain-trickster type. And as time goes on, he rises early to do "important Brier business in Washington," carrying "Brier documents and papers," and he thinks about Thoreau and Whitman and muses on such arcana as the fact that Hart Crane's father invented Life Savers. He even studies the Bhagavad-Gita. To the poet the Brier is simply "the quintessential Appalachian."

For Fred Chappell, the Brier is a "shrewd, well-informed, fearlessly outspoken figure." For Robert Morgan, Miller himself was "both bard and prophet."

*The Quare Women's Journals*, edited by Jess Stoddart (Jesse Stuart Foundation, P.O. Box 391, Ashland, Ky. 41114). The Hindman Settlement School, in Knott County, Ky., was one of the first rural social settlement institutions in the United States. Such institutions, as Loyal Jones explains in the introduction to this book, constituted the legacy of well-educated and progressive- (and Progressive-) minded turn-of-the-century women inspired by the work of Jane Addams at Hull House and "bent on making the world a better place."

Two of these women, Katherine Pettit and May Stone, set forth in August 1899 on what became a lifetime adventure in the Eastern Kentucky mountains. For three years they held summer settlement camps—Camp Cedar Grove, Camp Industrial, the Sassafras Social Settlement—before settling permanently in Hindman in 1902.

Katherine Pettit maintained a written account of these three summers. The first two are cast as reports, summarizing the women's activities, probably for the benefit of such sponsors as the Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs. The third, however, is a genuine diary 150 pages long in which the reader gets a close-up view of disparate cultures in amiable collision. We see the truly intrepid ladies trudging as many as twelve miles a day through creeks and over rocks to teach, to visit families, sometimes to help with a burial. And we also see the eagerness with which local

people sought and responded to assistance and training.

The women came to the mountains with the aim of improving the locals, of course, and subsequent critics have not always dealt kindly with such aims and efforts. No matter what they did or didn't do, to be sure, the women would have earned a measure of criticism from later generations, because that is the way history works. Nevertheless, their work continues today, in the Hindman Settlement School, at Pine Mountain and elsewhere.

And why "quare women"? Well, these earnest urban newcomers struck the locals as pretty odd folk. In fact, people would come from miles around just to get a look at them, with their funny dresses and their odd hair styles. People came to look and stayed to learn.

**Book Notes**

Richard Couto's 1994 book *An American Challenge: Economic Trends and Social Issues in Appalachia* is now available at the discounted price of \$13 a copy (including postage and handling). Order from CORA, P.O. Box 52910, Knoxville TN 37950-2910.

The Jesse Stuart Foundation just keeps the reissues coming. Among the latest offerings is *Riverboy*, a 1958 Billy C. Clark novel about a boy and an old man, both of whom claim the Ohio and Big Sandy Rivers as their home. The cover price is \$9.95.



**In Appalachian Heritage ...**

Highlights of the Summer 1997 issue of *Appalachian Heritage* include a look back by Bill Best to the 1960s and the founding of Berea's Project Torchlight, a look at Appalachian health concerns by Jack Rutherford, and a bonus basket of summer poetry.

You may obtain the magazine (\$6.00 a copy, \$18.00 for a year's subscription) from *Appalachian Heritage*, Hutchins Library, Berea KY 40404.

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