

NEWS

APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE



LETTER

Gordon B. McKinney • Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Looking Forward

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). You can get details from the school at One Folk School Road, Brasstown NC 28902-9603; phone 800/FOLK SCH.

January 18-24: “Put a little Fibonacci in your baskets” suggests the John C. Campbell Folk School. Why on earth would you want to do something like that? To make those baskets visually exciting in new ways, of course, by using the proportions first presented in Leonardo Fibonacci’s 13th-century number series. During the week of **February 1-7**, traditional Appalachian shapes will be the basketry focus (not an advanced course). For these and all other courses, see contact information for January 11-17.

February 1-21: Winter session, New Opportunity School for Women. Successful applicants (up to 14 per session) to this popular program spend three weeks learning about jobs and how to get them. For full information about the school, contact Jane Stephenson at 213 Chestnut Street, Berea, Ky. 40403; phone, 606/985-7200.

February 26-27: 17th annual GROW Conference for Kentucky’s women researchers; Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Ky. You’re likely to encounter just about anything here, because the field’s wide open: participants may be faculty members, students or even persons untainted by academe, and the original study may have been conducted in any subject-matter area. For more information, get in touch with K. Ann Stebbins, 323 Keith Hall, EKV, Richmond, Ky. 40475; phone, 606/622-1375.

March 2: Deadline for submissions to the poetry contest conducted by *Now & Then*, the Appalachian magazine published by East Tennessee State University. If you’re a poet, or think you are, you may enter your work, provided that it pertains to Appalachia and has never previously been published. Final judging will be in the hands of Fred Chappell, and winning works will appear in the Summer 1998 issue of *Now & Then*. (There are some nice cash prizes, too.) For full information, write to *Now & Then* Poetry Contest, Center for Appalachian Studies and Services, ETSU, Box 70556, Johnson City, Tenn. 37614; phone, 423/439-5348.

March 7: Heritage Festival V, a one-day occasion devoted to the arts and other aspects of the cultures of African-

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Virtual Education?

Beginning right now, college students in 15 Southern states can register on the Internet for new kinds of classes on a new kind of campus. And by next fall, 50 participating colleges will be offering more than 100 classes—from introductory to graduate—through the new Southern Regional Electronic Campus.

Mark Musick, president of the Southern Regional Education Board, says that credits earned in these classes will transfer from the electronic campus to the more familiar kind with trees and buildings. “All of the offerings,” he says, “are reviewed against a quality standard that the universities have pledged to maintain.”

For information on classes and costs, consult the project’s Web site: www.srec.sreb.org.

By next fall, Musick says, the virtual campus should be offering full degree programs. Does that mean a student will be able to get a degree without ever setting foot on a campus walkway or talking face to face with a professor?

Not likely, according to Musick, who says he “can’t imagine that universities wouldn’t require some sort of experience on campus as part of a degree program.”

Unless, of course, you only get a virtual diploma.

More About Stereotypes

Why do we begin an article by saying “more” when we haven’t yet said anything? Well, the words “Appalachian” and “stereotypes” appear together so often that anything in an Appalachian publication about stereotypes automatically seems to be part of an ongoing conversation.

This particular part of the conversation concerns Marshall University’s new Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Gender in Appalachia, which has just received an establishing grant of \$250,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation.

“This center,” says Ronald L. Lewis of West Virginia University, “will challenge stereotypes of the gaunt, hollow-eyed Madonna in the cabin door, or that of the buxom, blonde and bodacious female.” The center will also attack the myth of the “homogeneous Scots-Irish population of Appalachia.”

“Beneath the stereotypes of Appalachia as homogeneous and isolated,” notes Carl Burrowes, co-director of the center, “lies a rich tapestry of interwoven cultures.”

In its focus on the roles of women and minorities—a

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focus that, however commendable, has itself become something of a stereotype in the world of 1990s research—the project will note such diversifying Appalachian factors as the huge influx of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe and of blacks into the coalfields in the first and second decades of the century.

Such diversity, Lewis says, will probably represent the scholarly emphasis of the new center. If we pursue real history, he observes, “the stereotypes will take care of themselves.”

Challenge for a Chair and More

If looks as if Appalachian studies might be around for quite a while at Berea College, The National Endowment for the Humanities and the college have announced the awarding of a \$500,000 challenge grant to Berea to support the establishment of a chair in Appalachian studies and an endowed archivist position.

What, exactly, is the challenge? Just that in the next three and a half years Berea must raise \$1.5 million in new contributions for this project from nonfederal sources in order to receive the full amount of federal money.

As you might imagine, Berea officials have delightedly welcomed the endowment’s response to their plan for putting Appalachian studies at the college on a permanent basis.

Donors?

Poverty \$

Just in case you’ve been wondering about them, we thought we ought to list the official 1997 government poverty guidelines. As adjusted to reflect changes in consumer prices, the guidelines say that you’re poor if you’re a family of

one and your income is less than	\$7,890;
two	\$10,610;
three	\$13,330;
four	\$16,050;
five	\$18,770;
six	\$21,490;
seven	\$24,210;
eight	\$26,930.

Acting Faith

Among the more interesting—and, perhaps, more promising—one-on-one programs are the Faith in Action projects funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The Faith in Action grant just received by the Kentucky

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American and other ethnic groups; Danville, Ky. The sponsors are interested in giving performers a showcase, and if you have items to sell, you may bring them along. Information on all points from the sponsoring group, Citizens Concerned for Human Relations, c/o J. H. Atkins, 1200 Glenellen Court, Danville, Ky. 40422.

March 20-22: 21st annual Appalachian Studies Conference, Appalachian State University, Boone, N.C. Theme: “Building Sustainable Mountain Communities: Tradition and Change.” For full details, write to the Appalachian Studies Association, P.O. Box 6825, West Virginia University, Morgantown, W. Va. 26506; phone, 304/213-8541.

April 19-25: Spring dulcimer week, Augusta Heritage Center. Last year’s installation featured Janita Baker, Lorraine Lee Hammond, Keith Young and Betty Smith; this year should see that fine tradition maintained. For full information, write the center at Davis & Elkins College, 100 Campus Drive, Elkins, West Va. 26241, or phone 304/637-1209.

April 22-23: Berea College Appalachian Fund Affiliates Conference; Alumni Building, Berea College. Representatives of all the organizations helped by the fund will give progress reports; members of the public are especially invited to attend. If you would like more information, call the fund office at 606/986-9341, ext. 5022.

May 8-10: 29th annual Appalachian Festival, Coney Island, Cincinnati, sponsored by the Appalachian Community Development Association. ACDA’s mailing address is P.O. Box 996, Cincinnati, Ohio 45201; phone 800/450-3070 or 513/251-3378. (If you’re interested in helping out, the sponsors will be doubly glad to hear from you.)

May 15-17: Annual meeting, Middle Atlantic Folklife Association; Davis & Elkins College. This year’s theme is cultural tourism, with a focus on the development of “responsible and respectful” tourism programs related to traditional arts and folklife. See contact information for April 19-25 or write to Rita Moonsammy, New Jersey Council on the Arts, 20 West State St., P.O. Box 206, Trenton, N.J. 08625.

River Foothills Development Council (based in Richmond, Ky.) will enable the council to provide supportive services to children with disabilities and chronic illnesses and their families through the Interfaith Caregiver Program. A coalition of churches and social agencies will provide supervision.

Volunteers from church congregations will visit Madison County families each week, serving as role models for the parents and playing with the children or teaching “self-help skills.”

The need for such a program is indicated by the fact that some 6 percent of the children in the county have a diagnosed disability or learning impairment. Normally, the families of these children would have no chance of receiving any supportive services. As Beverly Potter, the project director, says, “Specialized needs for children often come in last, as survival needs are a priority.”

If you’re interested in learning more about the working of such projects, you may phone the director at 606/624-2046.

Service Honored



**Appalachian Center
founding director
Loyal Jones**

Some two decades ago, on the initiative of then-President Willis D. Weatherford, Jr., Berea College established a new kind of honor for persons from the broad Appalachian community. Conceived as counterparts of the honorary degrees long and fruitfully dispensed by Berea and many hundreds of other colleges and universities, these Appalachian Service Awards were intended to bestow special recognition on the efforts of men and women working in the tradition of settlement school founders and others who spent their lives not necessarily in the public eye but always in the public service.

This year's medals, presented on November 13, went

to two persons long associated with Berea College (although such association is not one of the requirements). The recipients were Dorothy Chrisman, creator of the nationally famous Body Recall program, and Loyal Jones, founding director of the Berea College Appalachian Center and for twenty-five years co-editor of this newsletter.

The criteria for the award draw their inspiration from what are known at Berea as the Great Commitments. As listed on the medal, they are 1) promoting the cause of Christ; 2) promoting liberal education; 3) advancing the kinship of all peoples; 4) promoting service to Appalachia; 5) emphasizing the dignity of work.

EYE on Publications

Ancient Sunshine, by James B. Goode (Jesse Stuart Foundation, P.O. Box 391, Ashland, Ky. 41114). When a teacher told the people at the Jesse Stuart Foundation that school children needed a book that would tell "what coal is, and how it is mined, and how it is used," the foundation editors unhesitatingly turned to James B. Goode, who had written earlier books about coal and agreed to write the text and gather the pictures.

A native of Benham, a coal town in Harlan County, Ky., Goode, the son and grandson of miners, certainly had the right background for the project. In his childhood, as he recalls, the town lay under a cloud of sulfuric acid smoke produced when sulfur dioxide from coal fires combined with moisture in the air. Coal, indeed, was everywhere; Goode's father even fed it to the hogs.

With its calm, instructional style, this little (96 pp.) book does just what the teacher asked for, as it covers everything from geology and geography to companies and unions and mining methods to music and mining lore. But one oddity stands out: you would not know, from reading *Ancient Sunshine*, that coal has been the center of some of the most intense and violent domestic battles of the past century.

The Civil War in Appalachia, edited by Kenneth W. Noe and Shannon H. Wilson (University of Tennessee Press). An old story has it that an author in search of a title for his book consulted a friend. "Does it have drums in it?" asked the friend. No, it didn't. Did it have trumpets? No, no

trumpets, either. "Well, then," said the friend, "call it *No Drums, No Trumpets*."

The editors and their publisher didn't go quite that far in titling this anthology, though they certainly could have done so. As Noe and Wilson explicitly say—and, in the 1990s, hardly surprisingly—in putting the book together they rejected the "drums and trumpets" approach in favor of the "new social history." Hence these 11 essays deal not with strategy and command but with such subjects as the social origins of officers and common soldiers, fugitives, slaves and the working and local significance of the Asheville armory.

Until relatively recently, the editors point out, the Civil War as a subject of Appalachian study received little respect among the scholars who were busily attacking the accepted wisdom on every other front. Even now, this book marks the first attempt to bring together the work of the "new" Appalachian history and thus represents "the closest thing historians have to a comprehensive history of the Southern Mountains at war ..."

Most previous works, say Noe and Wilson, perpetuate two stereotypes, competing yet, at the same time, paradoxically compatible—the myth of the fervently Unionist Appalachia and the myth of savage Appalachia, with Lincoln and the Hatfields/McCoys serving as the respective icons.

But weren't the mountaineers by and large Union supporters, as most people have always believed? Certainly many were (in western Maryland, East Tennessee), but even in those areas Unionism was not universal. In the

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mountain parts of some of the other states, sentiment was more divided, and in Southwest Virginia and western North Carolina the beginning of the war saw secessionism in favor. No one will be amazed to hear that in Kentucky "local divisions were so numerous and varied that no clear sectional pattern" emerges. (The reader having a particular interest in Berea College or Lincoln Memorial University will no doubt take particular note of Wilson's essay dealing with the two schools and "the Myth of Unionist Appalachia.")

Why, instead of the long-accepted monolith, do we now see all these differences from state to state? Perhaps, say the editors, we shall have to reject the concept of an overall Appalachian response and consider the unique history of each different region. In so saying, they have erected an unmistakable signboard for scholars: MONOGRAPHS WANTED.

Book Notes

David Madden's *Remembering James Agee*, first published in 1972, has recently appeared in a new edition, with new material and a new introduction by the co-editor, Jeffrey Folks. Madden is director of the Civil War Center at Louisiana State University, where he teaches Civil War literature and creative writing. The book is published by the University of Georgia Press.

Many of today's banjo techniques were learned from slaves a century and a half ago and then developed by the first generation of minstrel banjoists, performers such as Dan D. Emmett (composer of "Dixie") and Tom Briggs. Now Joseph Weidlich has produced *Minstrel Banjo*, a tablature edition—the first ever—of Briggs's *Banjo Instructor*, which first appeared in 1855 and was billed as "a rare collection of quaint old dances." You can order the book (\$12.95) from Centerstream Publishing, Anaheim Hills, Calif.

Hamilton Stone Editions (P.O. Box 43, Maplewood, N.J.)

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Address Correction Requested

07040) has republished Meredith Sue Willis's Blair Morgan trilogy—three Bildungsromane that together "create a portrait of the nineteen sixties that ranges from small town homecoming queens to careless sex and anti-war demonstrations." The books are *Higher Ground*, *Only Great Changes* and *Trespassers*. If you don't find these titles in your bookstore, the publisher will be delighted to oblige you.

The Senator from Slaughter County, Harry M. Caudill's 1973 novel, is among the latest reprint offerings of the ever busy Jesse Stuart Foundation (P.O. Box 391, Ashland, Ky. 41114). Margaret Ripley Wolfe, who provided the introduction for this edition, calls the book a rural counterpart to *The Last Hurrah*, Edwin O'Connor's famous fictional picture of Boston's boss James M. Curley. That, we note, is high praise, indeed.

Video Note

In music and talk, *Mountain Shadow*, produced by TV Image, Inc. (187 Greendale Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio 45220), tells the stories of four artists who as young people moved from Appalachia to the city. Featured are musician Katie Laur, storyteller Omope Carter Daboiku, photographer Dee Smart and poet Brenda Saylor. The producers call *Mountain Shadow* both entertaining and educational, offering urbanites insights into the city's "invisible minority."

In Appalachian Heritage ...

The Fall 1997 issue of *Appalachian Heritage* is essentially one big highlight—the presence of Jim Wayne Miller as rendered in 12 memorial and memorable articles and a chronological bibliography. You'll also find fiction by Sharyn McCrumb, poetry and reviews.

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

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