

NEWS

APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE

LETTER



Gordon B. McKinney • Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Looking Forward

April 4: 22nd annual Peach Blossom Bluegrass Festival; Marietta, Ga., featuring the Nashville Bluegrass Band and an array of other entertainers. For information, write P.O. Box 130, Jenkinsburg, Ga. 30234 or phone 770/957-1710.

April 5-11: Blacksmithing, clay (handbuilding with coils—"a Zen experience"), making thimbles or felt or buckets—take your pick from these and other crafts offerings at the John C. Campbell Folk School, Route 1, Box 14A, Brasstown, N.C. 28902-9603; phone 800/FOLKSCH. Sessions during succeeding weeks will teach you to make everything from a kaleidoscope to a rocking chair; or if you'd rather dance or hammer on a dulcimer, there's plenty of that, too.

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, W. 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.

April 23-26: 11th annual Merle Fest; Wilkesboro, N.C. A very big affair featuring Doc Watson and more than a hundred other artists, performing on 11 stages. For details, phone 910/838-6292.

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.

May 15-17: Spring fair, Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen, Indian Fort Theater, Berea, Ky.; if your kids

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Old Joe Clark with son Terry

Farewell to Old Masters

With the recent deaths of Country Music Hall of Famer Grandpa Jones (February 19) and Old Joe Clark (February 20), country music fans lost two talented entertainers. Both men were greatly influenced by the comedy of 19th-century minstrel, vaudeville and medicine shows, and both were radio pioneers. They delighted country audiences by acting out the country-rube stereotype and throwing it in the face of those who tended to look down on such people.

Louis Marshall "Grandpa" Jones was born in Henderson County, Ky., in 1913. In Akron, Ohio, to which his family had migrated, he won a talent contest that landed him a job in local radio and later a spot on the *Lum and Abner* show. By 1935 he had joined Kentucky balladeer Bradley Kincaid on WBZ in Boston and on NBC; Kincaid gave him his trademark boots and "Grandpa" moniker. Later Jones moved on to Wheeling's WWVA and Cincinnati's WLW.

In 1946, after Jones finished Army service, WSM invited him to Nashville to perform on the Grand Ole Opry. He recorded for more than 20 record labels, including RCA, Columbia, Decca, King, MCA and Warner. The list of his biggest hits included "Mountain Dew," "Old Rattler," "Eight More Miles to Louisville" (his own composition) and

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have never seen a dragon frame (seven-foot, no less), here's their chance to confront one and to fill it out, thanks to Bob Montgomery. For more information, phone 606/986-3192.

May 28-June 1: Seedtime on the Cumberland Festival of Mountain Arts, Whitesburg, Ky.; sponsored by Appalshop, 306 Madison St., Whitesburg, Ky. 41858; phone 606/633-0108.

June 2-4: 3rd biennial Old-Time Music and Radio Conference, Mt. Airy, N.C., bringing together radio people, musicians and supporters of traditional music. The sessions will segue into the Mt. Airy Fiddlers Convention. Sponsors of the conference are the Old-Time Music Group (P.O. Box 292414, Dayton, Ohio 45429) and the Surry Arts Council of Mt. Airy.

June 7-13: 21st annual Appalachian Family Folk Week, Hindman Settlement School, Forks of Troublesome Creek, Hindman, Ky. 41822. It's a full-time immersion in music, dance and other aspects of mountain culture, featuring Jean Ritchie, Lee Sexton, Randy Wilson and many other performers. For more information, write the school at P.O. Box 844, Hindman, Ky. 41822 or call 606/785-5475.

June 7-27: Summer 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. The school is designed for low-income women (age 30-55) who have high school diplomas or GED certificates but who have not completed college. The program includes classes in computer basics, leadership development, Appalachian literature and writing, along with field trips and—all-important—workshops on building self-confidence. Some 250 women have now graduated from the school. For full information, contact Jane Stephenson at 213 Chestnut Street, Berea, Ky. 40403; phone, 606/985-7200.

July 5-10: Crafts, dance, folklore and music characterize Cajun/creole and guitar week, the first of the five weeks of the Augusta summer schedule; during the following weeks

areas and themes will vary. Information from Davis & Elkins College at the address and number given above.

July 10-12: 21st annual Uncle Dave Macon Days Old-Time Music and Dance Festival, Cannonsburgh Pioneer Village, Murfreesboro, Tenn. Heralded by the people who devise such ratings as one of the top 20 July events in the Southeast, this family-oriented jamboree—named for the first person to be featured on the Grand Ole Opry as an individual performer—offers \$5,400 in prizes and is the home of three national championships—old-time banjo, old-time buckdancing and old-time clogging. There's lots more, too. If you're interested, get in touch with Wendy S. Bryant, P.O. Box 5016, Murfreesboro, Tenn. 37133; phone, 615/893-2371; the 800 number is 716-7560.

July 26-August 1: 21st annual Appalachian Writers' Workshop, Hindman Settlement School. The cast of mentors will include James Still, George Ella Lyon and a variety of other scribbling favorites. To find out more about this established institution, see the contact information above.

July 30-August 1: Ulster-American Heritage Symposium, Western Carolina University. The name pretty well tells you what this gathering is about, but it's worth mentioning that all aspects of these migrants—culture, economics, religion, you name it—are considered. More information from Tyler Blethen, Mountain Heritage Center, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, N.C. 28723; phone 704/227-7129.

October 3-4: 25th annual Fall Festival, John C. Campbell Folk School, with music, dance, food, crafts—to be sure—and activities for children.

October 2-4: 16th 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.

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"Tragic Romance." In 1969 the CBS-TV show *Hee Haw* made Grandpa a household personality, with his banjo, his jokes and his "What's for Dinner, Grandpa?" routine.

At his funeral in the Grand Old Opry House, his colleagues gave him high praise as humorist, musician and friend. "He brought something original to the table," said fellow Opry star Marty Stuart. "He was a keg of dynamite.... When we lose someone of this magnitude in country music, the very foundation of country music is challenged, and it makes us really take a look at what we're made of." Numerous Grandpa stories lightened the tone of the service. George Lindsey told of receiving a wooden leg in the mail from Grandpa as part of a series of practical jokes. "I could never top that," he said. At the end of the service, *Hee Haw* producer Sam Lovullo led the audience in a last Sal-ute! to a great entertainer.

Manuel Dewey "Old Joe" Clark was born in Erwin,
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Louis Marshall "Grandpa" Jones





MACED president Don Harker (l.), Gaynell Begley, Joe Begley and Helen Lewis.

For Leadership—and Staying Power

Gaynell and Joe Begley have engaged in many causes and fought in many battles during their years together. The Letcher County, Ky., couple helped preserve their community from the ravages of strip mining, worked to end the misuse of the broad-form deed, and played important parts in the creation of a local library, a senior citizens' center and a public water system.

In recognition of the Begleys' devotion and achievement, MACED (Mountain Association for Community

Economic Development) of Berea has presented them the Helen Lewis Leadership Award, named for the widely known Appalachian scholar and activist (and former interim director of the Berea College Appalachian Center).

The Begleys, said MACED, "have helped rewrite history in the kind of quiet, unassuming way you would expect from a shopkeeper and a former teacher."

Fittingly, the ceremony—which included the presentation of a \$1,000 check—took place at the C. B. Caudill Store, which for many years the Begleys have operated in the town of Blackey. Though not much cash and merchandise are exchanged in the store nowadays, it has served as an informal community center and base of operations for the Begleys and those who have worked with them in their community campaigns.

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Tenn., in 1922. After playing in local bands, he joined the Middy Merry-Go-Round on Knoxville's WNOX. He did a stint at the Grand Old Opry as one of Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys and performed on CBS, NBC and Mutual radio. After serving in World War II, he became a regular at John Lair's Renfro Valley Barn Dance, where he performed for the rest of his life, with time out for a couple of movies, recordings, and many road shows that took him all over the country.

At Clark's funeral, fellow performers extolled him as one of the great comedians in country music. Jim Gaskin said, "He was so strong as an entertainer, he could easily go on stage with regulars or with people he'd never seen before, and you'd never know the difference. He'd pull it off."

Both Grandpa Jones and Old Joe Clark loved the music and the humor of the rural South, and both could entertain with the best of them.

—Loyal Jones

EYE on Publications

Two Worlds in the Tennessee Mountains, by David C. Hsiung (University Press of Kentucky). Scholars who speculate about Appalachian matters seem to be divided into four principal groups: *a*) those who believe that characteristics considered distinctly or strongly Appalachian result from the isolation of the people; *b*) those who say, on the contrary, that the people were not isolated and some were not; *d*) those who believe that there really is not and never was any Appalachia anyway. (The world at large also holds a fifth group, those who don't care about any of these points, but we need not concern ourselves with them right now.)

As the title of his book suggests, David Hsiung, in this exploration of the origins of Appalachian stereotypes, places himself firmly in Group *c*). This stance may not seem

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earthshaking, but—remember—it represents only one of the four commonly contending points of view.

Looking at the working of such factors as topography, transportation networks, economic patterns, and the movement of populations in Upper East Tennessee, Hsiung concludes that, indeed, “two worlds existed in the Tennessee mountains: one centered on the larger towns and more open valleys, where the people frequently interacted with the rest of the United States, and the other focused on the steep mountains and narrow hollows of the Unaka Range, where the inhabitants dealt primarily with their immediate neighbors.” In the dissertation that preceded this book, Hsiung spoke of “isolation and integration.”

In the late 18th century, Hsiung observes, the two worlds had not yet separated; the inhabitants of Upper East Tennessee, wherever they lived, did not see themselves as different from each other or from people outside the region. But socioeconomic developments during the next hundred years caused the two societies to diverge so sharply that, by the late 1800s, residents of Johnson City could unhesitatingly characterize nearby mountaineers as backward. This kind of perception, says Hsiung, made its way into fiction, thus playing a large part in fashioning the popular images of Appalachia that have predominated for the past century.

In manuscript, this book won the 1996 Appalachian Studies Award. The author teaches at Juniata College.

War at Every Door, by Noel C. Fisher (University of North Carolina Press). In this study, subtitled “Partisan Politics and Guerrilla Violence in East Tennessee, 1860-1869,” the author takes a look at two other kinds of worlds in East Tennessee. One of the most divided regions of the Confederacy, this area saw fierce Unionist resistance to secession, with the consequent and unrelenting “irregular” war between Northern and Southern supporters.

In beginning his look at East Tennessee, Fisher seems to place himself in Group *a* (see review above), as he comments that in the area the mountains “created a sense of isolation” and “produced a set of distinct economic and cultural characteristics.” But as he examines patterns of political loyalty in the antebellum years, differences emerge between towns and rural areas, in East Tennessee as well as in the rest of the state. Whigs were strong in Central East Tennessee, but the northeastern—and, as one might say,

most isolated—counties favored Andrew Johnson. (A synthesis of Hsiung and Fisher might prove interesting here.)

“The most thorough studies of voter behavior in antebellum Tennessee,” says Fisher, “have found no correlation between party affiliation and either slaveholding or wealth.” Residence and occupation seem to have held the greatest importance. Hence East Tennessee was no Unionist monolith, with the result that the war years saw the ruthlessness and brutality that marked the region forever after.

Video/Film Note

In the past two decades, as everybody knows, many mining companies and factories have pulled out of the mountains, leaving behind rural communities with crumbling infrastructures, unemployment and limited experience in self-government. *Rough Side of the Mountain* (new from Appalshop) documents the rebuilding efforts of citizens in two company towns in southwest Virginia, Ivanhoe and Trammel. For information on buying or renting, phone 606/633-0108.

CD Note

More than six decades after John Lomax made his celebrated tour to capture folksong, the Library of Congress has produced a compact disc with 30 of the greatest performances recorded between 1933 and 1946—digitally remastered, of course. Fiddle tunes, miners’ laments, gospel songs, blues, washboard bands—*A Treasury of Library of Congress Field Recordings* has all these and much more. To order a copy, phone 1/800/443-4727.



In Appalachian Heritage...

Highlights of the Winter 1998 issue of *Appalachian Heritage* include a profound analysis of heirloom beans by Bill Best, a discussion of place by Michael Branch and Daniel Philippon, and the announcement of the winners of the Denny C. Plattner/*Appalachian Heritage* awards for 1997, for the best articles, fiction and poetry appearing in the magazine.

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