

NEWS

APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE

LETTER



Gordon B. McKinney • Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Looking Forward

June 20: Eighth annual Mountain Arts Festival, Valley of the Winds Art Gallery, Eolia, Ky., with wood carving, quilting, music, storytelling, kids' stage and food; the artwork is by Sharman, Jeff and Evan Chapman-Crane. Information from 606/633-8652.

June 27-28: Englewood Celebrates, with food, musicians, dancing and a community-wide church service. Write the Community Action Group of Englewood, P.O. Box 253, Englewood, Tenn. 37329; phone, 423/887-5455.

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. Theme weeks offer a grouping of many related classes around a central theme or ethnic tradition, with all participants getting together for group sessions, visits with master artists and band labs. Aside from instruction related to the theme, you'll find plenty of other activities to keep you busy. Information from Augusta Heritage Center, Davis & Elkins College, 100 Campus Drive, Elkins, W. Va. 26241; phone, 304/637-1209.

July 5-11: Quilting, weaving (with Philis Alvic), "the incredible world of enameling," restoring chair seats—these and many more activities will offer you instruction and diversion at the John C. Campbell Folk School, One Folk School Road, Brasstown, N.C. 28902; phone, 800/FOLKSCH. Sessions during following weeks will take you into still more incredible worlds, full of bark baskets, indigo, marbling, Kimekomi dolls and much more.

July 9-12: Second Union: A Melungeon Gathering; Clinch Valley College, Wise, Va. Last year's conference proved so successful, with more than 600 persons attending, that the organizers have put together a second assemblage of genealogical workshops, scholarly presentations, computer-based research and other approaches to understanding the Melungeon background and heritage. For full information, phone Connie Clark, 540/523-0891.

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 much more, too. If you're interested, get in touch with Wendy S.

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Top of the Mountain

Best-seller, sensation, blockbuster—in the last year Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain* has earned almost any superlative you can think of. Enjoying remarkable acclaim for a first novel, *Cold Mountain* has won the 1997 National Book Award for fiction and the American Booksellers 1998 ABBY Award as the work they've most enjoyed recommending to customers; it was also a finalist for the 1997 National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction.

The story—and saga—of a wounded Confederate veteran making his way back to his mountain home near the end of the Civil War, *Cold Mountain* has now won an award on its home territory. The Berea College Appalachian Center and Hutchins Library have announced the presentation to Frazier of the 26th annual Weatherford Award for the outstanding work on Appalachia produced in 1997.

A native of the North Carolina mountains, Frazier now lives in Raleigh with his wife and daughter. In creating *Cold Mountain*, he drew on his knowledge of local history and on family stories passed down from his great-great-grandfather.

The Weatherford Award honors the work published anywhere that in its year best illuminates the problems, personalities and unique qualities of the Appalachian South.

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Betty Smith: performer (p. 3), author (p. 4)



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Bryant, P.O. Box 5016, Murfreesboro, Tenn. 37133; phone, 615/893-2371; the 800 number is 716-7560.

July 16-18: Master Musicians Festival, Somerset, Ky. During this Thursday-Saturday weekend, this town 75 miles south of Lexington will be the scene of one of the most ambitious and diversified of festivals. It will even have an evening of classical music (Thursday), and it won't be light classics for the picnic-basket crowd either; the renowned young violinist Rachel Barton will join Mark O'Connor in the premiere of portions of his new concerto for two violins. Other performers in the festival will present everything from gospel to "jazzgrass." Call 888-FUN JULY or write the festival at Master Musicians Festival, P.O. Box 1212, Somerset, Ky. 42502.

July 26-31: You might note that the Augusta theme for this week is bluegrass—banjo, bass, dobro, fiddle, guitar, mandolin—with a variety of instructors. Some themes for other weeks: blues, western swing, old-time, Irish. See contact information above.

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, write the school at P.O. Box 844, Hindman, Ky. 41822 or call 606/785-5475.

July 30-August 1: Ulster-American Heritage Symposium, Western Carolina University. The name pretty well tells you about this gathering, which has taken place every two years since 1976, alternating between cosponsoring universities and museums in Ulster and America. 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 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.

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 3-4: 19th annual Autumn Jubilee, Dan Nicholas Park, Salisbury, N.C., with 130 craftspeople from around the Southeast; as usual, the clogging barn will have two days of Appalachian freestyle, precision and line dancing. To find out more, phone 704/636-2089.

October 3-4: Celebration of Fine Crafts, Chattanooga. Some 175 craftspersons will display their work "along the river" in the arts section of town, and there'll be activities to beguile any children you may bring along; food, too. Call 615/665-0502.

October 4-5: Seventh 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 740/286-2177.

October 8-11: 19th 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 long-established bountiful serving of art, crafts and entertainment, with headliners John Hartford, Ralph Stanley, Kenny Baker and Josh Graves, Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver. If you're so inclined, you can learn how to fire a Kentucky rifle or spend a while chatting with members of the Tennessee Volunteer Infantry about the "war for southern independence." The museum's address is P.O. Box 1189, Norris, Tenn. 37828; phone 423/494-7680.

October 9-11: Annual Fall Fair, Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen, Indian Fort Theater, Berea, Ky. For details, phone 606/986-3192

October 17: Englewood Bluegrass Festival, sponsored by the Tennessee Arts Commission with the Southeast Tennessee Development District. See contact information for June 27-28.

October 23-25: Celebration of Traditional Music, sponsored by the Berea College Appalachian Center. (*See separate story.*)

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Established, and supported for 17 years, by the late Alfred Perrin, retired publications director of Procter and Gamble in Cincinnati, the award commemorates the life and achievements of W. D. Weatherford, Sr., a pioneer and leading figure for many years in Appalachian development, youth work and race relations, and of his son, Willis D. Weatherford, Jr., late Berea College president.

Welcome to Sarah's Place

"Change," say two Roman Catholic sisters, "happens best within a nurturing environment of peace, quiet reflection and hope."

Not quite a year ago, these sisters launched a new enter-

prise in downtown (two-block-long) Sandy Hook, Ky. Though "enterprise" is indeed a good description of it, "Sarah's Place" is not for profit. The two Baltimore School Sisters of Notre Dame—Sisters Sally Neale and Maritia Smith—in charge generally describe it as a resource center for the women and children of Elliott County, but it has a sharper focus. It's designed to give shelter, support and training to women escaping from abusive situations. The idea is not only to help women get away from "physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual violence" but to help them stay away from it.

Lying in northeastern Kentucky, well away from super-highways, Elliott County is tiny (population 6,500) and completely rural, with almost 40 percent of its families living below the government's poverty level; the official unemployment figure stands at 15.8 percent. Never part of

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The nationally acclaimed bluegrass band Dry Branch Fire Squad will appear on the Berea stage

in next October's 25th version of the Celebration of Traditional Music.

Tradition, Tradition ...

Launched back in 1974, the Berea College Appalachian Center Celebration of Traditional Music will make its 25th appearance this October (23-25).

The festival remains as true as ever to its underlying idea, which was defined by Loyal Jones, the founder, as 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." Through its quarter of a century the celebration has stuck to Jones's proclaimed purpose, with the result that the old styles have been preserved and played for new audiences, who—truth to tell—have also heard a little bluegrass and other styles along the way.

As is customary, a stellar group of performers will be on

hand for this year's run. The list includes (in alphabetical order) the Dry Branch Fire Squad, the Eversole Brothers, Will Keys, Nat Reese, Betty Smith, Paul Smith and Bert Hatfield, and Dora May Wagers and Moses and Evelyn Hamblin. These performers will appear in concert on Friday and Saturday evenings, beginning at 7:30. Saturday's session will be followed by square dancing, led by Susan Spalding, Berea's dance coordinator.

The daylight hours of Saturday will be devoted to instrumental workshops and informal performances, highlighted at 2:00 by a symposium, "Women Banjo Players in Appalachia," presented by Susan and Geoff Eacker of Oxford, Ohio. If you survive all the activity, you can attend, and take part in, a Sunday-morning concert of religious music.

For further details, write to the Appalachian Center at College P.O. Box 2336, Berea, Ky. 40404 or phone 606/986-9341, ext. 5140.

WELCOME *from page 2*

the coal economy, the county has always had farming as its sole economic base.

Incidences of domestic abuse in the county reflect national trends, with 110 cases reported in 1994. Since, as research has demonstrated, only a fraction of such cases ever come to official attention, the actual level of violence is doubtless far higher. Seeing such violence as the consequence of poverty, of social conditioning and of loss of hope, the sisters are attempting to meet the problem in a variety of ways, not only by providing shelter but through developing job-skills training, offering child care and health and wellness services, and conducting such activities as a

series of seminars on micro-industry development (i.e., how to start your own business in Appalachia).

A few months ago the Appalachian Regional Commission recognized Sarah's Place with one of four grants awarded in an Appalachia-wide competition. A good chunk of the money is going into equipping an eight-station computer lab. "We're researching opportunities to do contract data-entry work for worldwide clients," say the forward-looking sisters.

The grant, they say, "promises to bring great employment opportunities and economic independence" to the women of Sarah's Place, where, one departing "graduate" wrote in a farewell poem, "the specialty is love." ●

EYE on Publications

Jane Hicks Gentry: A Singer Among Singers, by Betty N. Smith (University Press of Kentucky). Jane Gentry carried on conversation in simple but colorful language and "showed evidence of a creative mind," says the author of this biography: "I can just hear her saying, 'My heart were floppin' like the wings of a skeered potteridge,' or 'My face got as hot as a smokin' griddle.' There was never any doubt about what she meant even if you were from 'off' ..."

Some 80 years ago, when Cecil Sharp made his famous song-gathering trip through the Appalachians, Jane Gentry gave him more material than anybody else. In the 1960s, Betty Smith—the eminent performer, researcher and teacher of traditional music—began using some of Jane Gentry's songs in her programs and classes. But neither Sharp nor later collectors offered information about Jane herself. So impressed was Betty Smith by the richness of Jane's material, however, that she set about collecting all the information she could find on Jane herself.

"I feel compelled to tell about Jane Gentry," Smith says in her preface, and she proceeds to carry out her purpose in this three-part study, which gives us the story of Jane's life and of her songs, offers a section of Jane's Jack Tales (she was a storyteller, too), and ends with a 60-page section of song transcriptions (done by John Forbes).

In this book, says Loyal Jones, Betty Smith "shows how the folk arts enlivened and delighted a pioneer people in lives of toil. Jane Gentry was one of the great bearers of traditional arts, and lovers of these arts will want to read her story."

Book Notes

Currently appearing is the 15th edition of *Appalachian Voices*, with the work of poets, storytellers and artists from throughout the region. What's different about this year's version of the annual event is that it's a "Best of" collection gleaned from the previous 14 editions. It's being published as a supplement to the July-August issue of the *New River*

Free Press (P.O. Box 846, Blacksburg, Va. 24063; phone, 540/951-7320).

Once again we find on our desk a reissue by the Jesse Stuart Foundation of a book by its eponym. This time it's *Harvest of Youth*, Stuart's first book (1930), a collection of poems he paid a vanity press to publish. Later he so regretted this venture that he called it a literary sin. This judgment was much too harsh—he had been too young to know that publishers themselves commit greater sins every day and think nothing of it. Why should an author berate himself?

In *Appalachian Heritage* ...

Highlights of the Spring 1998 issue of *Appalachian Heritage* include a fascinating firsthand account of the Harlan County coal war of 1932, written by William J. Hutchins, then Berea College president, and a group of Heirloom Memories of life in the mountains.

You can obtain the magazine (\$6.00 a copy, \$18.00 for a year's subscription) from *Appalachian Heritage*, Appalachian Center, College P.O. Box 2336, Berea, Ky. 40404.

Help!

Once again, we make a request: We need your help, both for your benefit and for ours. If you would like to be included in **Looking Forward**—and we do our best to be as inclusive as we can—please send us information on your event or program as early as possible. Because we are a quarterly publication, we need a long lead time; we often receive notices after we've gone to press of events that will take place before publication of the next issue. So please keep us in mind as you do your early planning. We don't need an elegant brochure—the bare facts will do nicely. For the Summer issue we need to hear from you by September 4 for events taking place after about September 20.

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