

NEWS

APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE



LETTER

Gordon B. McKinney • Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Looking Forward

October 1-4: Mountain State Forest Festival, Elkins, W.Va.; for details, phone 304/636-1824.

October 1-3: 3rd annual Appalachian Heritage Festival, Shepherd College, Shepherdstown, W.Va.: writers, singers, dancers, fiddlers and bands in a weekend of concerts and workshops. Participants will include Lee Smith, Hazel Dickens, Carol Elizabeth Jones, Melvin Wine and many more bearers of mountain culture. For more information, phone 800/344-5231, ext. 5113.

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 2-4: Black Mountain Folk Festival, Black Mountain, N.C., with Keb Mo, the Lynn Morris band and other artists. For more information, call 704/281-3382.

October 3-4: 25th annual Fall Festival, John C. Campbell Folk School, with music, dance, food, crafts—to be sure—and activities for children. You can get details from the school at One Folk School Road, Brasstown, N.C. 28902-9603; phone 800/FOLK SCH.

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 entertain-

to page 2

How High the Bar?

"We live in an amazing era," President Clinton declared the other day, without a visible trace of irony; he was talking, to be sure, not about his own problems but about all the remarkable developments in science and technology that continually dramatize the importance of education in these fields.

Although just back from visits to schools that have developed promising programs in these areas, the president spoke in a disturbing overall context. In the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, which tested high school seniors, American students scored below their counterparts in Western Europe, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Russia and Slovenia. In math, the Americans scored lower than students in 14 other countries; in science, the figure was 11. Fortunately for the national self-esteem, Asian nations did not take part in the study.

Some 15 years after the famous report titled *A Nation at Risk* pointed to low U.S. educational standards, many observers assert that "dumbing down" has continued unabated. Even top-ranking American students who take calculus and physics score below those of all the other countries that participated in the study. If U.S. youngsters in general are being poorly prepared to compete in the global economy, the implications for Appalachia are clear and ominous.

Calculus I?

In Kentucky, for example, more than 40 percent of college math majors seeking high school teaching jobs flunked a national math teaching exam. According to a state consultant, the problem traces back to the high schools, which produce few students ready for the relative rigors of Calculus I.

Some college officials reacted to the results with what might be called the Massachusetts approach: if lots of people can't make the cut, solve the problem by lowering the bar so many more candidates can jump over it. (After taking a drubbing from press and public earlier this year, however, Massachusetts authorities reversed themselves and abandoned this approach.) An assistant superintendent in Paintsville, Kentucky, argued against lowering the passing mark, pointing out that, as things stand now, the minimum acceptable score barely exceeds what a student could do by sheer guesswork.

to page 3

LOOKING from page 1

ment, with headliners John Hartford, Ralph Stanley, Kenny Baker and Josh Graves, Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver, Mac Wiseman, Sherman Wooton, Robert Spicer, Sally Scruggs and Nellie Coxé, and many others. 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. Among the attractions: Else Jorgensen, visiting from Denmark, will show you how to make bobbin-woven lace, and on Sunday, for the first time in several years, Homer Ledford and the Cabin Creek band will be on hand. For details, phone 606/986-3192.

October 17: Englewood Bluegrass Festival, sponsored by the Tennessee Arts Commission with the Southeast Tennessee Development District. Write the Community Action Group of Englewood, P.O. Box 253, Englewood, Tenn. 37329; phone, 423/887-5455.

October 23-25: 25th annual Celebration of Traditional Music, sponsored by the Berea College Appalachian Center. The list of guest stars for this year's version of this classic event, which opens at 7:30 on Friday evening, includes Nat Reese, the Eversole Brothers, the Dry Branch Fire Squad, Paul Smith and Bert Hatfield, Will Keys, Carol Elizabeth Jones and James Leva, and Betty Smith. For full details, see the Spring 1998 issue of this newsletter or phone 606/986-9341, ext. 5140.

October 24: Old-Time Banjo Day, Whitesburg, Ky., sponsored by Appalshop—a full day of workshops and an evening concert, featuring Hobart Crabtree and Dave Dougherty. For information, call 606/633-0108.

October 25-November 1: October Old-Time Week, Augusta Heritage Center, incorporating the October 30-November 1 fiddlers' reunion: Dave Bing, Kenny Jackson, Melvin Wine, Jimmy Triplett and Woody Simmons will be among those teaching and performing. There'll also be an Elderhostel session during the same week. Davis & Elkins College, 100 Campus Drive, Elkins, W.Va. 26241-3996; phone 304/637-1209.

October 30-November 1: Fall Dance Weekend, John C. Campbell Folk School; Gene Murrow and Bob Dalsemer will be on hand to preside over the proceedings. See contact

information for October 3-4.

November 14: Fiddle Day, Whitesburg, Ky., sponsored by Appalshop—a full day of workshops and concerts, featuring Jamie Wells, John Harrod and Paul Smith. For information, call 606/633-0108.

November 16-17: "The Leadership Challenge Ahead" will be the theme of the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center's annual conference, which will take place at the Radisson Hotel in Lexington; the 16th will be devoted to a workshop on civic entrepreneurship, led by Douglas Henton, coauthor of the book *Grassroots Leaders for a New Economy*, with the conference itself taking place the following day. Keynoters will include Wilmer Cody, Kentucky education commissioner, and Robert Sexton, executive director of the Prichard Committee, which spearheaded the movement for educational reform in Kentucky. More information from the policy research center at 800/853-2851 or 502/573-2851.

December 1: The much-to-be-welcomed New River Symposium returns for its biennial visit on April 15-17, 1999, but much closer at hand is the deadline for proposals—December 1. This time participants will celebrate President Clinton's recent designation of the entire 250-mile length of the river as an American Heritage River (one of 14). As is traditional with this remarkable symposium, papers and media presentations may deal with any kind of subject having to do with the New River—cultural history, folklore, archaeology, geography, geology, you name it—and may come from anybody with a professional or avocational interest in the river. The 1999 meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn Express in Boone, N.C., near the headwaters of the New River.

For information about submitting a proposal, contact the Chief of Interpretation, National Park Service, New River Gorge National River, P.O. Box 246, Glen Jean, W. Va. 25846, or phone 304/465-6509. The symposium is sponsored jointly by the New River Gorge National River and the West Virginia Division of Culture and History.

December 26-31: 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.

ARC: The Beat Goes On

Highways loom large in the proposed Appalachian Regional Commission budget for fiscal year 1999—and it's funding with a difference. For the first time, the president has called for getting the dollars for the highway program entirely from the Highway Trust Fund. Overall, the administration requested \$357 million for the ARC—\$67 million for nonhighway programs and \$290 million from the trust fund for roads. Actually, the proposed budget calls for total funding of \$2.19 billion for the highway system over a six-year period.

Thus far, though Congress has taken no final action, pending the decisions of a conference committee, the administration's request has fared well. The Senate accepted the \$67 million nonhighway figure, while the House cut it only to \$65.9 million. As for highways, Congress seems fully on board; \$450 million is the likely figure for this year—an increase over the request of \$160 million—though the six-year total will remain about the same.

It's of special significance, says ARC Federal Co-Chairman Jesse L. White, Jr., that the president "has reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to finishing the

GETTING ACQUAINTED: In August, 12 Berea College faculty and staff members made the traditional introductory tour to Eastern Kentucky sponsored by the Appalachian Center. Based at Pine Mountain Settlement School (where, as shown, they kicked up their heels in the evenings), the travelers visited the Mud Creek Clinic, Hindman Settlement School, an Old Regular Baptist Church service, a surface coal mine and, in Whitesburg, Appalshop and the still-screaming *Mountain Eagle*.



ARC from page 2

Appalachian highway system by proposing to fund it out of the highway trust fund. This will provide a steady and reliable source of funding."

At present, the 3,025-mile Appalachian Development Highway System, as it's formally known, is about 80 percent either open to traffic or under construction.

Nonhighway dollars go for a variety of activities—education, promotion of business and entrepreneurship, water and sewerage systems, training of people in the workforce, health services and similar programs.

Thus, many years after the Reagan Revolution threatened to send ARC to the fiscal guillotine, the agency continues on its way. Not only that, in fact, but President Clinton is seeking to clone it. The budget calls for \$26 million for a proposed Delta Regional Commission, modeled on the ARC with its federal-state partnership structure. The delta in question is that of the lower Mississippi, including parts of Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee.

EYE on Publications

Adventures of a Nineteenth-Century Medic, by Alice Hunt Lynn Howell (Hillsboro Press, 238 Seaboard Lane, Franklin, Tennessee 37067). One of the hottest trends among historians today is the search for, and use of, materials from and about people who were not celebrated and powerful. But a problem with such materials, as the late historian Bruce Catton once observed, is that their authors

HOW from page 1

As the journal *Foresight* observes, "a solid math and science foundation is key in today's work world"; hence, "the quality and quantity of education continue to drive our future." Since our economic position will relate directly to the standards we hold, lowering these markers will hardly make the world go away.

or subjects often possessed little in the way of perception and insight. In other words, living amid great events did not guarantee great or even very useful contributions to the historical record.

Dr. William Hunt, an East Tennessee physician, store owner and hotel proprietor, took part in quite a few notable events during his 72 years (1810-1882), on his own and through his association with his brother-in-law, the famous Whig newspaper editor and publisher William G. Brownlow. Hunt accompanied a Tennessee regiment to Mexico during that war, took part in the gold rush and served as an inspector in the San Francisco customhouse, and in 1861 was flung into a Confederate prison as a Union "bridgeburner"; after being released during the following year, he served as a doctor under the Union general Ambrose E. Burnside.

Drawing on Hunt's diaries and journals and on many articles from Brownlow's newspapers, Alice Howell gives us a close-up view of 19th-century life as lived by a man not illustrious, certainly, but not ordinary, either—a solid citi-

to page 4

EYE from page 3

zen with a taste for adventure and a way of finding it in a colorful time. Fortunately, Hunt and Brownlow left the kind of written record that made such a book possible.

A *Wild Kentucky Garden*, by Rebecca Bailey (Jesse Stuart Foundation, P.O. Box 391, Ashland, Ky. 41114). "Yarrow is the wild herb with which I most identify myself," writes Rebecca Bailey in this collection of poems and essays. "I used to wish my name were 'Rose,' I think because I wanted the characteristics of the rose: to be violently, dangerously, exotically beautiful, to be intoxicating, to be noticed and extolled. But yarrow is a safer identity. Yarrow is just as beautiful as the rose but you have to come close to see it."

In these writings the author puts us in close company with the yarrow in her soul. "In its combination of traditional and contemporary values," says Edwina Pendarvis of Marshall University, "this is a good companion to two earlier poetry collections about farming in Kentucky: Jesse Stuart's *Man With a Bull-Tongue Plow*, first published in 1934, and Wendell Berry's *Farming: A Handbook*, first published in 1967." Though having much in common with these two predecessors, says Pendarvis, *A Wild Kentucky Garden* also adds a "new dimension to the pastoral tradition in Appalachian poetry."

Appalachian Christmas Stories, edited by James M. Gifford, Owen B. Nance and Patricia A. Hall (Jesse Stuart Foundation). It's certainly not too early to think about stocking stuffers, a department in which this little (\$9.95

book) should prove very useful. The editors have collected stories, essays and poems from quite a list of luminaries—Jesse Stuart, of course, and James B. Goode, Loyal Jones, Billy C. Clark, Harry M. Caudill, Jim Wayne Miller, Marlin W. Blaine and Thomas D. Clark.

Book Note

As seems to be the case every time we think about Book Notes, we find on our desk still another reissue by the industrious folks over at the Jesse Stuart Foundation of a book by its eponym. This time it's *Tales From the Plum Grove Hills*, a 1946 collection of 20 short stories (\$22.00 plus \$3.00 postage from the address above).



In *Appalachian Heritage* ...

Highlights of the Summer 1998 issue of *Appalachian Heritage* include a thoughtful and thorough account by Richard Drake of the history of Berea College's commitment to the Appalachian region—a subject that has been the object of much recent study and discussion. On the lighter side, you'll find a group of short stories with some special twists.

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. 40404-2336.

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