

NEWS

APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE



LETTER

Gordon B. McKinney • Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

Vol. 28 No. 2

Spring 1999

Looking Forward

July 9-11: 22nd 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—is expected to draw more than 40,000 people and offers \$5,400 in prizes; it's 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 11-16: 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 11-August 15: Dance Augusta '99 begins five weeks of intensive instruction with Cajun/Creole week (July 11-16); swing, Irish step dance, clogging and everything else you ever heard of will follow in succeeding weeks. See contact information for July 11-16.

July 15-17: 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, and it won't be light classics for the picnic-basket crowd either; a special mystery guest will be featured. The festival will mark the Kentucky premiere of the Laura Love band of Seattle; the list of other performers includes Vassar Clements and the spectacular Nova Scotia fiddler Natalie MacMaster. Still 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 15-18: Summer edition of the 52nd annual Craft Fair of the Southern Highlands, showcasing work by mem-

to page 2

Rocket Boys Wins Weatherford Award

It's already a movie (*October Sky*), and now it's the winner of Berea's Weatherford Award for the most effective writing about Appalachia published in 1998. As most people presumably know, *Rocket Boys* is a memoir by a rocket scientist—Homer H. Hickam, Jr.—who was a West Virginia high school student in 1957, when the Soviet Union seized the attention of the world by putting the first artificial earth satellite into orbit.

As we said in our review of the book (Winter 1999), the appearance of Sputnik I and the launching of Explorer I, the U.S. riposte, "attracted great attention across the country, and nowhere did they arouse more interest than among a group of adolescent boys in Coalwood, W.Va., a McDowell County town where nothing much really mattered besides mining and high school football." This "rich and rewarding" book tells how these boys put their interest to work.

Plans for the award luncheon will be announced later by the Berea College Appalachian Center, which cosponsors the award with Hutchins Library. For almost three decades the Weatherford Award has honored the work published anywhere that in that year best illuminates the problems, personalities and unique qualities of the Appalachian South. Established, and supported for 17 years, by the late Alfred Perrin, retired publications director of Procter and Gamble in Cincinnati, the award originally commemorated the life and achievements of W. D. Weatherford, Sr., a pioneer and for many years leading figure in Appalachian development, youth work and race relations. Since 1997 the award has also honored the memory of Willis D. Weatherford, Jr., longtime president of Berea College.

The Rest of the Story ... for Now

In the Winter 1999 issue of the *Appalachian Center Newsletter*, we publicly asked the question: Are the mountains going topless? The particular mountain in question was Black Mountain, Kentucky's highest, but the issue of coal mining by mountaintop removal pertains to other mountains and other states as well.

to page 3

LOOKING *from page 1*

bers of the Southern Highland Craft Guild; Asheville Civic Center, Asheville, N.C. Though all media will receive ample attention, this year's focus is on wood, with extensive woodworking demonstrations, including chairmaking. Full information from the guild at 828/298-7928.

July 16-18: Appalachian Writers' Association Conference, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tenn. "We want this to be a major literary event for Appalachian writers," say the organizers, who have created a varied program, including the awarding of fiction, poetry, essay and playwriting prizes. More information from Alan Holmes at the Department of English, ETSU, P.O. Box 70683, Johnson City, Tenn. 27614 (holmes@etsu.edu).

July 24: Annual Blue Ridge Draft Horse and Mule Show, Ferrum College, Ferrum, Va.; a showcase of old-time draft animals and a demonstration of the skills involved in working them. For details, call 540/365-4416.

July 25-30: 22nd annual Appalachian Writers' Workshop, Hindman Settlement School. The cast of mentors will include a veritable galaxy of writing favorites: James Still, George Ella Lyon, Chris Holbrook, Michael McFee, Jo Carson, Robert Morgan, Gurney Norman and still others. To find out more about this established institution, write the school at P.O. Box 844, Hindman, Ky. 41822, or call 606/785-5475.

August 1-6: You might note that the Augusta themes for this week are bluegrass—banjo, bass, dobro, fiddle, guitar, mandolin—and French Canadian, with a variety of instructors. Some themes for other weeks: blues, swing, Cajun/Creole, old-time, Irish. See contact information for July 11-16.

August 13-15: 27th annual Augusta Festival, capping the summer's activities; workshops, dances and concerts, together with a juried craft fair. See July 11-16 contact information.

September 17-October 15: Exhibition of works by Kentucky folk artists Noah, Charlie and Hazel Kinney; Morlan Gallery, Transylvania University, Lexington, Ky. For more information phone 606/233-8210. This show has been planned in connection with the annual conference of the Folk Art Society of America (see contact information for October 8-10).

September 25: Regional joint conference of the Appalachian Teachers' Network and the Southwest Virginia Association for Multicultural Education; Radford University, Radford, Va. Highlight of this one-day meeting devoted to cultural diversity will be the keynote address by Marcos McPeck Villatoro, writer and musician whose Tennessean and Salvadoran background neatly symbolizes the theme of the meeting. Details from Jim Minick at Radford—540/831-5366 or jminick@runet.edu.

September 25: 25th annual Mountain Heritage Day—an all-day affair produced by the Mountain Heritage Center at Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, N.C. You can get details from the center at 828/227-7129.

September 20-26: 22nd annual Southern Arts Exchange Performing Arts Booking Conference and Training Institute; Tampa, Fla. If your organization is looking for performing artists, this is the place to be; produced by the Southern Arts Federation and the Southern Arts Exchange Planning Committee, with the local host committee, and sponsored by the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs and

the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center, the SAE is the biggest booking conference in the South. For detailed information, call 404/874-7244.

October 1-3: 17th 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 740/259-6337.

October 2-3: 20th annual Autumn Jubilee, Dan Nicholas Park, Salisbury, N.C., with some 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 2-3: Celebration of Fine Crafts, Chattanooga, produced by the Tennessee Association of Craft Artists. Some 100 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 3-4: Eighth 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 7-10: 20th 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 Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder, John Hartford, Ralph Stanley, Kenny Baker and Josh Graves, and Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver. You can even watch members of the Tennessee Volunteer Infantry load and fire their cannon and chat with them about the "war for southern independence." The museum's address is P.O. Box 1189, Norris, Tenn. 37828; phone 423/494-7680.

October 8-10: Annual Fall Fair, Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen, Indian Fort Theater, Berea, Ky. This time around, the fair will feature an overall Celtic theme. For details, phone 606/986-3192.

October 8-10: Annual conference, Folk Art Society of America; Lexington and Morehead, Ky. For more information call the Kentucky Folk Art Center at Morehead State University—606/783-2204. In addition to the Transylvania University exhibition September 17-October 15, those at the meeting can take in a special Morehead show, "Kentucky Collects Kentucky," drawn from private collections.

October 21-24: Fall edition of the Craft Fair of the Southern Highlands; Asheville, N.C. For contact information, see July 15-18.

October 23: 26th annual Blue Ridge Folklife Festival, billed as "the largest celebration of authentic folkways in Virginia." Ferrum College, Ferrum, Va. Phone 540/365-2121.

October 24-29: October Old-Time Week, Davis & Elkins College. Combine fun and learning (fiddle, banjo, guitar) at the feet of experienced teachers and old-master guest artists (one of the latter is Melvin Wine). See contact information for July 11.

Millennial Buildings

Characteristic and still-popular feature of mountain folk architecture is the fieldrock chimney, here shown on a 1950s old-time house in Patrick County, Va.



Across Appalachia, thousands of old houses and barns live on as demonstrations of people's ideas about buildings in the years before architects and blueprints. In the exhibition "The Old Homeplace: Folk Architecture of the Blue Ridge" at Ferrum College in Virginia, you can see photographs, floor plans and scale models illustrating more than a dozen principal styles of buildings going back to the pre-historic era and culminating in the Georgian mansions that flavor much of the Southern landscape.

Since thousands of examples of folk architecture are still in use, says Vaughan Webb, assistant director of the Blue Ridge Institute and Museum at Ferrum, the exhibition "gives viewers a greater appreciation for the buildings they pass as they drive down any country road in the region."

You'll have plenty of time to take in this show; it runs until March 2000. You can get full information by phoning 540/365-4416.

THE REST *from page 1*

For Black Mountain, anyway, the question pitted a coal company against environmentalists and school children and an accompanying whirlwind of publicity. The issue found resolution in May when the company agreed to forgo mining on the peak and its opponents conceded it the right to continue mining "Big Black" underground.

An executive of the Kentucky Coal Association greeted the compromise with something less than warm approval. "Now that they've got one issue resolved, they will just go after another cause," said Bill Caylor, association vice president. "They'll never be satisfied until coal mining is totally eliminated."

A fan of the mountain argued that removal opponents must indeed stay focused. "If the issue now goes away," said Dee Davis of Appalshop, strip miners "are just going to go ahead and take the tops off other mountains for the next 10 years—and there won't be anybody to stop them."

A Master to Remember

In many minds, one of the most appealing sides of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal was its recognition that artists of all kinds are workers like everybody else. As FDR's associate Harry Hopkins once put it, "Poets have to eat, too."

So, too, did painters. During the lean 1930s an army of government-employed muralists gave life and color to the new post offices and other federal buildings that rose across the country. One of the most notable of these painters was

Frank Long, a Knoxville native who maintained a studio in Berea from the early '30s to the early '40s and later, for a time, returned to the area.

A thoroughly schooled artist, Long studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia and the Academie Julien in Paris.

Murals by Long decorated buildings in Kentucky (including the Berea post office), Illinois, Indiana, Oklahoma, Maryland and South Carolina, thus giving him a place among the leading creators of a national style that marks a period in art as well as in politics.

This cosmopolitan but very American artist died on January 22 at the age of 92.

Not (Yet) in Appalachia

The Appalachian Regional Commission came into the world dreaming of highways. Since those days in the 1960s the ARC has overseen the building of some 2,400 miles of developmental roadways across the region and has only about 800 miles to go to fulfill the plan.

But, in some eyes at least, big transportation problems remain. A recent "summit" on the subject had to be held in Lexington instead of somewhere in Appalachia because of what Kentucky Governor Paul Patton termed logistical problems. And, said the governor, who is from Eastern Kentucky, "it grates on me."

Part of the problem, said Jesse L. White, Jr., ARC fed-
to page 4

NOT (YET) from page 3

eral co-chairman, is simply the fact that highways by themselves do not constitute the whole answer; the region must have an integrated transportation system. As West Virginia Governor Cecil Underwood said, "This conference represents the first time ARC has viewed transportation as more than just a highway system."

But Patton is not giving up on highways. He argued for funding for the proposed I-66, an east-west transcontinental highway. It would "take Appalachia off the back porch of the nation," said the governor, "and put it on the front porch."

EYE on Publications

Valuing Our Past, Creating Our Future, by Thomas E. Wagner and Phillip J. Obermiller (Berea College Press). To the Cincinnati police, they were SAMs—Southern Appalachian Migrants. To themselves, they were the "invisible minority"—people who shared with other minorities the classic needs for opportunity, education and respect from others but lacked group identification in their own eyes and in those of the society around them.

After much preparatory work in the 1960s, the invisible minority found its voice in 1974, with the creation of the Urban Appalachian Council (UAC), which for the past quarter-century in Cincinnati has led an organized fight for equality in employment and housing, for better health care and for job training. "Sometimes," says Phillip Obermiller, "you have to band together just to say, 'This is who we are.'"

The council has just celebrated its 25th anniversary with the creation of *Valuing Our Past, Creating Our Future*; the authors are both longtime members of the UAC's research committee. The book traces the story of the migrants from the early large-scale migrations at the turn of the century through the clashes and advances of the 1960s toward a full Appalachian consciousness and the estab-

lishment of the UAC in early 1974.

The book has many heroes—community members, academics, politicians, both Appalachian and, as one might say, native Buckeye. In telling their story, it shows us how all these Cincinnatians created a movement and an organization unique in the American urban world.

Valuing Our Past, Creating Our Future is available from the UAC, 2115 West Eighth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45204; phone, 513/251-0202.

Video Note

The lively entrepreneurs over at Appalshop have announced the release of *Girls' Hoops*, a 27-minute exploration of the history of girls' high school basketball in Kentucky. The video is directed by Justine Amata Richardson. It's available for lease or purchase; call Appalshop at 800/545-7467.

Poetry Note

The editors of *Red Crow Review* are looking for poems; the only criterion, they say, is quality, which means "poetry that sings, dances or in some way moves the reader." For information, write (enclosing SASE) to Red Crow Guidelines, 835 Columbia Road, Hamilton, Ohio 45013 (or, if you have a patient finger, you can tap into their Website: <http://hometown.aol.com/redcrowrev/page/index.htm>).



In *Appalachian Heritage* ...

The Spring 1999 number of *Appalachian Heritage* is a special oversize issue covering last fall's Berea conference, sponsored by the Appalachian Center and supported by the Appalachian Regional Commission: "Issues in Higher Education in Appalachia." In addition, the magazine has two short stories and the usual complement of poetry.

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.

Published by
Appalachian Center/Berea College
C.P.O. Box 2336
Berea, Ky. 40404

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Berea, Ky. 40404
Permit No. 19

Address Correction Requested