

# NEWS

APPALACHIAN CENTER  
BEREA COLLEGE

# LETTER



Gordon B. McKinney • Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

Vol. 28 No. 3 Summer 1999

## Looking Forward

**September 29-October 2:** 4th annual Stringbean Memorial Fall Music Festival. Jackson County, Ky. Dedicated to the memory of David "Stringbean" Akemon, the festival this year will present a variety of musicians, including the Goins Brothers, the Dowden Sisters, Brett Howland, Larry Sigmon and Barbara Poole and a raft of others. Phone 606/287-0600.

**October 1-2:** 4th annual Appalachian Heritage Festival, Shepherd College, Shepherdstown, W.Va.: writers, singers, dancers, fiddlers and bands in a weekend of concerts and workshops. Actually, the proceedings will begin on the evening of September 30, with a "literary showcase" featuring Sharyn McCrumb and Betty Smith. The list of musicians who will perform during the festival includes Cari Norris, the Helvetia Swiss dancers, Phil and Ann Case, Diane Jones, Glen Smith and the Samples Brothers String Band. For more information, phone 800/344-5231, ext. 5113, or 304/876-5113.

**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.

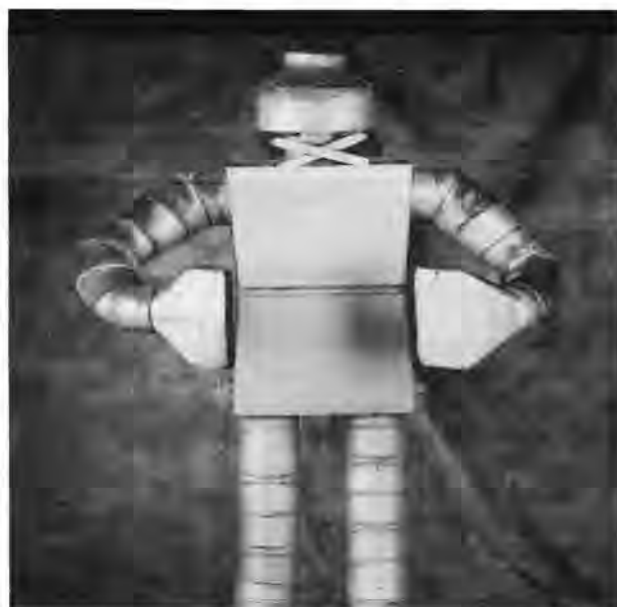
**October 2-3:** 20th annual Autumn Jubilee, Dan Nicholas Park, Salisbury, N.C., with some 130 craftspeople from around the Southeast; as usual, the clogging barn will have two days of Appalachian freestyle, precision and line dancing. To find out more, phone 704/636-2089.

**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 2-3:** 26th 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 2-10:** Mountain State Forest Festival, Elkins, W.Va.; the country music show (October 9) will feature Neal McCoy and Sherrié Austin. For details, phone 304/636-1824.

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Appalachian Tin Man ... page 2

## Not Even a Pointed Hat

Last May 29, the Appalachian Women's Alliance—a six-states grassroots group headquartered over in Floyd, Va.—held an "anti-racism event," as the organizers called it, in Dickenson County. You will not be surprised to learn that this workshop—properly termed "Celebrating Our Diversity, Challenging Racism in Southwest Virginia"—was said by locals to have been the first such event ever held in this deepest Virginia Appalachian area.

In a follow-up report to members, the alliance coordinator, Meredith Dean, took note of threats from Ku Klux Klan members and consequent fears that the meeting might suffer disruption. As things turned out, however, protectors came from all quarters (not least among them six state troopers and several sheriff's deputies), and the only Klansman to appear showed up without the usual distinctive headgear. The meeting ended with the creation of a task force to take follow-up steps, one of which was the arranging of a meeting with the local school board to develop a zero-tolerance racism policy in the public schools.

Heretofore the Appalachian Women's Alliance has operated as a more-or-less informal network in attacking questions of violence against women, racism and economic

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## **NOT EVEN** *from page 1*

justice. During its annual Sister Gathering November 12-14 (to be held near Cherokee, N.C.), the alliance will cap a year of organizational development with the establishment of a full-fledged membership organization, with "core leadership" elected by the members.

(If you'd like to know more about this organization, write to P.O. Box 688, Floyd, Va. 24091, or phone 540/745-5345; the e-mail address is awa@swva.net.)

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## **LOOKING** *from page 1*

**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-anniversary 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. Some 110 artists and artisans will have their works for sale; in this year's special treat, John England of England Family Glass will demonstrate the art of blowing glass. In addition, David Wright will show you how to make a hand-built Windsor chair. 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 a Transylvania University exhibition September 17-October 15 of works by Noah, Charley, and Hazel Kinney, those at the meeting can take in a special Morehead show, "Kentucky Collects Kentucky," drawn from private collections.

**October 16:** Englewood Bluegrass Festival, sponsored by the Tennessee Arts Commission with the Southeast Tennessee Development District. Here's your chance to catch such regional performers as Hiwassee Ridge, the Glorylands, Kentucky Wind, Misty River and Slick Rock. Write the Community Action Group of Englewood, P.O. Box 253, Englewood, Tenn. 37329; phone 423/887-5455.

**October 21-24:** Fall edition of the Craft Fair of the Southern Highlands; Asheville, N.C. Full information from the guild at 828/298-7928.

**October 23:** 26th annual Blue Ridge Folklife Festival, billed as "the largest celebration of authentic folkways in Virginia"; it's one of the top 20 October events in the Southeast, say the event raters at the Southeast Tourism Society; Ferrum College, Ferrum, Va.; phone 540/365-2121.

**October 24-31:** October Old-Time Week, Augusta Heritage Center, with classes in fiddle, banjo and guitar. Included in this package is the October 29-31 fiddlers' reunion, with jam sessions, song swaps and a concert featuring Dwight Diller, Bobby Taylor, Gerry Milnes, the Yahoos, the Reed Island Rounders and other artists. Details from Davis & Elkins College, 100 Campus Drive, Elkins, W.Va. 26241-3996; phone 304/637-1209; www.augustaheritage.com.

**October 29-31:** Fall Dance Weekend, John C. Campbell Folk School; Bob Dalsemer and Brad Foster will be on hand to preside over the proceedings, with all the needed music provided by Steve Hickman, John Devine, Toppy Kramer and Daron Douglas. See contact information for October 2-3.

**November 16-17:** "Unraveling the Health Care Dilemma" will be the theme of the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center's annual conference, which will take place at the University Plaza Hotel and Conference Center in Bowling Green. The keynoter will be Congresswoman Louise Slaughter of New York, a native of Harlan County; also on hand will be recent winners of the Harvard-Ford Foundation Innovations in American Government award in health care. More information from the policy research center at 800/853-2851 or 502/573-2851.

**December 26-January 1:** 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. You'll also have the unusual chance to sing with Jean Ritchie and other family members. Act now—*the deadline for early registration is December 1.* To find out more, call 606/986-9341, ext. 5565.

**January 30-February 19:** Winter session, New Opportunity School for Women. Successful applicants (up to 14 per session) to this popular program for low-income women 30-55 spend three weeks learning about jobs and how to get them. Though the session itself is still months off, *the deadline for applications is November 15;* a high school diploma or GED certificate is required. For full information, contact Caroline Francis at 204 Chestnut Street, Berea, Ky. 40403; phone 606/985-7200.

## **Tin Man and Yard Dog**

From handmade advertising signs to gravestones, Appalachian people through the years have created an imaginative array of art for the edification of audiences passing on foot or horse or in wagon or automobile.

In the first exhibition of its kind, "Roadside Attractions: Folk Art Along the Byways," the Blue Ridge Institute and Museum at Ferrum College, Va., is showcasing a dozen different kinds of this outside art—a 1940s home-cured-meat sign in the outline of a pig, a "yard dog" carved from a tree, elaborate birdhouses and literally fantastic Christmas yard decorations.

Also included is the robotlike figure shown on page 1, built in the 1950s by Robert J. Kirkner, a tinsmith in Pulaski County, Va., to advertise his shop. When "Roadside Attractions" ends in March 2000, the "tin man" will return

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## TIN MAN *from page 2*

to his spot in front of the shop, now operated by Kirkner's grandson.

For more information about the show, call 540/365-4416 or visit [www.blueridgeinstitute.org](http://www.blueridgeinstitute.org).

## After 35 Years . . .

This summer, for the first time since the 1960s, a sitting U.S. president came to Appalachia. Like the earlier visitor, Lyndon B. Johnson, Bill Clinton brought a short list of discussion topics: poverty and economic development.

But all that had happened through the intervening 35 years produced a marked change in emphasis. The White House billed Clinton's trip as a "domestic trade mission" intended to highlight some of the country's untapped business markets. Corporation executives rather than poverty doctors made up the presidential entourage.

Have things fundamentally changed that much since 1964, when LBJ came to see and dramatize the horrors of mountain deprivation and thus declare his War on Poverty? On the whole, reporters covering the trip answered the question with a solid maybe.

"You can still find many of the poorest Americans living in the shadow of rickety coal tipples in Appalachian hollows," noted the *New York Times*, "but Mr. Clinton's visit . . . had as much to do with change as [with] constancy." Appalachia, the reporter observed, is a very different place from what it was in the 1960s, but "what never

seems to change is the mythology of the place as the poster child for American poverty."

In 1960, the paper noted, 219 of the region's official 406 counties were classified as distressed, meaning that poverty and unemployment rates were at least 150 percent higher than the national average and per capita income was at least 67 percent lower than the average. Today, in contrast, that figure has been halved—108 Appalachian counties are now considered distressed.

On the other hand, an AP reporter pointed out, the hard core remains hard core: 44 of Kentucky's 49 Appalachian counties remain on the distressed list. In essence, said Ron Eller, director of the Appalachian Center at the University of Kentucky, we now have two Appalachias, one that has participated in the expanding national economy, and the other that has weak infrastructure and few jobs.

And what about the persistence of those images of the universally needy and none-too-sharp mountaineer? They've definitely produced results in hard cash, most notably, of course, 7.4 billion Appalachian Regional Commission dollars since 1965. And, certainly, "you have to call attention to the problems to get the proper kind of focus," said West Virginia Governor Cecil Underwood, in pointing to the central catch-22 issue. "But if you overplay it, then it just adds to the morale problems and the loss of hope."

Anyway, it all took place in the region called Appalachia and it produced much talk about that region. Paradoxically, it somehow calls to mind an author's declaration some years ago that Appalachia is merely a figment of the minds of writers, scholars and other such busybodies. Just what, one wonders, was he thinking of?

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## Eye on Publications

*W-Hollow Kitchen Adventure*, by Glennis Stuart Liles and Helen Shultz (Jesse Stuart Foundation, P.O. Box 391, Ashland, Ky. 41114). This big book could well have been called simply "hot stuff," since it's a tribute to the power of herbs and peppers to transform low-fat, low-salt foods into something you really want to eat.

Compiled by Glennis Liles, Jesse Stuart's sister, and her cousin, Helen Shultz, it's the impressive result of a long-standing familial interest in the use of herbs for all kinds of purposes, medicinal and ornamental as well as culinary. Husbands Whitey Liles and Orville Shultz, formidable hands in the greenhouse, played important roles, too.

"Once you've tasted the difference a sprinkling of chives or some chopped jalapeno peppers can make in a simple egg dish or the wonderful warmth some ground fennel seed gives to apple pie," say the authors, "then you're in on the secret!"

For two years the authors experimented with salsas, vinegars, stuffed hot peppers and hot sauces, and, though they suggest uses for herbs of all kinds, you come away with the feeling that, for them, the hotter the better. They even have one sauce that just lies in wait for the guest who says, "They don't make anything too hot for me." Above

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**A family affair: Mary Belle Johnson, Helen Shultz's mother, with Jesse Stuart**



**EYE** from page 3

all, their hearts belong to chilies (see the hotness scale, at right).

Along the way the authors give us as eaters two useful tips: 1) If you happen to set your mouth on fire with a bite, don't try to put that fire out with water or a cold liquid, since that just spreads the heat around; pack in some ice cream or yogurt or take a swallow of milk (the fat will ease the pain). 2) If you soak dried beans in water overnight, discard the water, add fresh water to cover, bring to a boil, lower heat to simmer and then cook until tender—if you do all these things, you will get rid of “the substance in the bean which causes the embarrassing problem called ‘GAS’...”

**Author Note**

At the 10th biennial Conference on Southern Literature, held in Chattanooga in April 1999, the James Still award for the best writing about the Appalachian South was given to Charles Frazier for his novel *Cold Mountain*. Among other honors claimed by this unusually successful first novel is Berea's Weatherford Award, conferred (though, regrettably, not in person) in 1998.

**Internet Note**

Artists who present assemblies and workshops and fill residencies in schools now have a convenient way to connect with institutions that might want their services. SchoolShows.com lists artists by name, state, region, category and topic; hosting is free for the first six months and then becomes \$50 a year. For more information, check the site or write SchoolShows.com, P.O. Box 181, Temple, N.H. 03084.

**In *Appalachian Heritage* ...**

Highlights of the Summer 1999 issue of *Appalachian Heritage* include “A Lesson in Leadership,” in which Bill

**CHILI HOTNESS SCALE**

HOTTEST

- Habanero
- Tabasco
- Thai Dragon
- Bulgarian Carrot
- Cayenne
- Serrano
- Jalepeno
- Ancho
- New Mexico
- Hot Banana

MILDEST

Bishop, a *Lexington Herald-Leader* columnist, studies an overlooked figure of the 1930s coal wars in Harlan County; “Our Contemporary Ancestors’ Discovered (Again),” by Garry Barker; and “These Old Hills,” an unusual reminiscence/meditation by Tony Smith.

There's also important news about the magazine itself. With this issue Sidney Farr, the longtime editor, is retiring; her successor is Jim Gage, a Berea English professor.

You can obtain *Appalachian Heritage* (\$6.00 a copy, \$18.00 for a year's subscription) by writing to the new address: C.P.O. Box 2166, Berea, Ky. 40404.

**Published by**  
**Appalachian Center/Berea College**  
**C.P.O. Box 2166**  
**Berea, Ky. 40404**

**Nonprofit Organization**  
**U.S. Postage Paid**  
**Berea, Ky. 40404**  
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