

NEWS

APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE



LETTER

Gordon B. McKinney • Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Looking Forward

March 24-26: 23rd annual Appalachian Studies Conference, Knoxville Convention Center, sponsored by the Appalachian Studies Association. This year's theme: "Regional Stewardship for the Millennium: Integrating Cultural, Social and Scientific Development in Appalachia." The keynoter will be Robb Turner, executive director of Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere (a cooperative made up of 11 federal agencies and the states of Georgia, Tennessee and North Carolina; SAMAB has recently completed a monumental project, the Southern Appalachian Assessment, an inventory of natural-resource and socioeconomic data designed to provide resource managers with decision-making information).

As an added attraction, the conference coincides with Laurel Theater's Jubilee Festival, which means that there'll be lots of music to go along with all the talk. For full details, write to the Appalachian Studies Association, P.O. Box 6825, West Virginia University, Morgantown, W.Va. 26506. The phone number is 304/293-8541, but e-mail may be the best bet of all: rriasa@wvu.edu.

April 5-6: Berea College Appalachian Fund Affiliates Conference; Alumni Building, Berea College. Representatives of all the organizations helped by the fund will report on their activities, and members of the public are especially invited to attend. If you would like more information, call Brenda Davenport Harris at 606/985-3022.

April 6-8: Annual meeting, Middle Atlantic Folklife Association; George Mason University, Fairfax, Va. (Note the dates and place of the meeting; this notice corrects an earlier announcement based on erroneous information.) For details, contact Polly Stewart, 410/548-4241 or pxstewart@ssu.edu.

April 9-15: Spring Dulcimer Week, Augusta Heritage Center. Neal Walters, Tull Glazener, Janetta Baker and Keith Young will offer instruction in the mountain dulcimer; the list of hammered-dulcimer teachers includes Jody Marshall, Karen Ashbrook, Steve Schneider and Patty Looman. This year's program will include two new workshops—autoharp (Karen Mueller) and songs and stories (Kate Long). For full information, write the center at Davis & Elkins College, 100 Campus Drive, Elkins, W.Va. 26241, or phone 304/637-1209; e-mail, augusta@augustaheritage.com.

April 14-16: Bear on the Square Mountain Festival, Dahlonega, Ga., guaranteed to provide authentic old-time and bluegrass music, along with traditional mountain

to page 2

Still Traditional, Still Celebrating

The first favor we can do for you with respect to the Berea College Celebration of Traditional Music is to remind you that after many years as an October event, last year the big show migrated to May. This year's run will be during the weekend of May 12-14.

The underlying idea of the celebration, said its founder, then-Appalachian Center director Loyal Jones, back in 1974, was 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." Encouragement, preservation—however you want to put it—the celebration has through the years stuck to Jones's proclaimed purpose and in the process has become an Appalachian regional institution.

As is customary, a stellar group of performers will be on hand for this year's jamboree. The list includes (in alphabetical order) Ed Cabbell, Ann and Phil Case, Paul David Smith and Band, Bobby Taylor and Band, Doug Wallin and Band, Larry Webster and the Mule Band and Jamie Wells and Band. These performers will appear in concert in Phelps Stokes Chapel on Friday and Saturday evenings, beginning at 7:30, and the Saturday evening session will be followed by square dancing led by Susan Spalding and Friends, with Larry Webster and the Mule Band providing the music.

The daylight hours of Saturday will be devoted to instrumental workshops and informal performances, highlighted at two o'clock by a workshop, "Creating Traditional Musical Instruments," presented by Homer Ledford of Winchester, Ky., the eminent master of this craft. The farewell event will be a concert of religious music on Sunday morning at nine o'clock.

If you need further details, write to the Berea College Appalachian Center, College Box 2166, Berea, Ky. 40404-2166, or phone 606/985-3140.

Death of a Pioneer

Way back in 1964, a group calling itself the "Ad Hoc Committee on the Triple Revolution" made quite a splash in the media by calling for a constitutional amendment guar-

to page 3

LOOKING from page 1

crafts. The list of featured performers includes Hazel Dickens and the Lynn Morris Band. Music information: 706/864-7817 or pendergh@alltel.net; crafts information: 706/864-6244 or smithers@alltel.net; accommodations: 800/231-5543.

April 28-30: Annual Folklorists in the South Retreat, Red Top Mountain State Park, Cartersville, Ga., sponsored by the Southern Arts Federation. Donna Onebane, Folklife in Education Coordinator for the Louisiana Voices folklife education project, will present a workshop on developing a technology-based folklife project. A reading and discussion session will examine "Writing About Public Sector Folklore" (of which, one might add, there's a great deal today). If you're interested, contact—right away—the Southern Arts Federation, 1401 Peachtree St., NE, Suite 460, Atlanta, Ga. 30309.

April 28-30 and May 5-7: For those who don't have a week's getaway time, the John C. Campbell Folk School is offering weekend classes in crafts, music, nature study and other diversions. You can get details of all programs from the school at One Folk School Road, Brasstown, N.C. 28902; phone 800/FOLKSCH.

May 12-14: Celebration of Traditional Music, sponsored by the Berea College Appalachian Center. (See separate story.)

May 12-14: 31st 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. The organization also has a snazzy Web address: www.hometothehills.com. (If you're interested in helping out, the sponsors will be doubly glad to hear from you.)

May 18-21: Third Union, a gathering sponsored by the Melungeon Heritage Association and featuring lectures by Melungeon scholars, genealogy workshops and family chat groups; University of Virginia campus at Wise. To find out more, contact the association at P.O. Box 4042, Wise, Va. 24293.

May 19-21: Spring Fair, Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen, Indian Fort Theater, Berea, Ky. More than 100 guild members will be selling their work amid these vernal glades, and there'll be special attractions such as Bob Montgomery's larger-than-life animal armatures for children (and, indeed, others) to cover with papier-mâché; you can also take part in the "woven wishes" project. Homer Ledford and the Cabin Creek Band will be back, too. For more information, phone 606/986-3192.

June 2-4: Seedtime on the Cumberland Festival of Mountain Arts, Whitesburg, Ky., sponsored by Appalshop, 306 Madison St., Whitesburg, Ky. 41858; phone, 606/633-0108.

June 4-24: 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 301 women have now

graduated from the school. For full information, contact Caroline Francis at 204 Chestnut Street, Berea, Ky. 40403; phone, 606/985-7200. (Note: The deadline for applications is April 15.)

June 11-17: 23rd annual Appalachian Family Folk Week, Hindman Settlement School, Forks of Troublesome Creek, Hindman, Ky. 41822. It's a total immersion in music, dance and other aspects of mountain culture, and you can come by yourself or bring the whole family. The woodcarver Minnie Adkins and the chairmaker Terry Ratliff join musicians Jean Ritchie, Rich Kirby, Cari Norris and a raft of other artists, including veteran banjo virtuoso Lee Sexton, whose 65-year career of music-making was recently honored by the Commonwealth of Kentucky with the "Lifetime for the Arts" award.

For full details, write the school at P.O. Box 844, Hindman, Ky. 41822, or call 606/785-5475; e-mail: hss@tgtel.com.

June 17: 10th annual Mountain Arts Festival, Valley of the Winds Art Gallery, Eolia, Ky., with music, storytelling, poetry reading and even food; the artwork is by Sharman, Jeff and Evan Chapman-Crane. For more information call 606/633-8652.

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—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 22: 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 30-August 4: 23rd annual Appalachian Writers' Workshop, Hindman Settlement School. As always, this summer sweat-and-frolic session will be guided by a staff of matchless writing mentors, headed by James Still and this year including Hal Crowther, Chris Holbrook, George Ella Lyon, Lee Smith and many other notables. To find out more about this long-established institution, check the contact information for June 11-17.

August 11-13: Augusta Festival, Elkins, W.Va., sponsored by the Augusta Heritage Center of Davis & Elkins College. This celebration, which draws thousands of people, is the capstone of the summer's activities. For details of all these varied events—crafts, music, dance, folklore—see the contact information for April 9-15.

September 9: Annual conference, Appalachian Teachers' Network and the Southwest Virginia Association for Multicultural Education. This event, say the sponsors, is "created for any educator, K-college, in any discipline, interested in incorporating Appalachian studies or other cultural topics into his or her classroom." For details or a presentation proposal form, contact Jim Minick, Box 6935, Radford University, Radford, Va. 24142; 540/831-5366; jminick@runet.edu.

Veteran musician and instrument maker Homer Ledford will conduct a workshop at the Berea Celebration of Traditional Music and will also appear with the Cabin Creek Band at the spring fair of the Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen.



DEATH *from page 1*

anteeing every American an income "sufficient to enable him to live in dignity" whether he had a job or not.

Shortly after the committee made this startling proposal, one of its leading figures, an economic consultant and visionary named Robert Theobald, attracted much attention across Appalachia with his keynote address to the annual conference of the Berea-based Council of the Southern Mountains. Adoption of the guaranteed annual wage would become necessary, Theobald said, because machines, not people, were already becoming the producers—machines were smarter, quicker and cheaper; they were also more predictable. In the middle of potential abundance, he said, "cybernation," as he called it, was producing a permanent poverty-stricken class. His message seemed to hold particular meaning for Appalachia.

Though history has not—yet—followed the overall timetable Theobald anticipated, he kept his faith. In his latest book he wrote: "If we do not change direction, the impact of technology will deprive many people of the possibility of earning a living and lead to despair and disruption. In addition, rampant technology will leach the meaning out of life."

This pioneer futurist, as such commentators came to be called, died on November 27 at the age of 70 in Spokane, Wash.

Pay Up, Clean Up

Five times in less than a two-week period last fall, hidden video cameras at an illegal garbage dump in Lee County, Ky., recorded Linville Tutt's truck arriving loaded with trash and departing very much lighter. For this flagrant offense Tutt has just been fined \$5,000 and ordered to pick up 20 tons of trash from the dump. It's the biggest penalty yet in Kentucky's current war on illegal dumping, and it was administered despite Tutt's claim that he

had driven to the dump just once; relatives, he said, had been the offenders on those other occasions.

Some 25 inspectors tackling the same problem for the Kentucky Natural Resources and Environmental Cabinet a little farther east, in Floyd County, can certainly take pride in the results of their labors. After digging through a mile-long ridge of unimaginable trash and garbage dumped along a hillside, these zealous public servants managed to identify 27 different illegal dumpers, who have been forced to collect almost 50 tons of toys, tires, appliances and ill-assorted household garbage.

Such dumping is a painful fact of life in Central Appalachia, but this kind of forced labor should teach miscreants a strong lesson, according to James E. Bickford, secretary of the Natural Resources Cabinet. "Once you pick up several tons of trash, including dirty diapers and other unpleasant items," he declared with admirable understatement, "you won't dispose of your garbage illegally again." Or, as Linville Tutt put it, "A man can't run off from a video camera." (A man may not be able to run from the Internet, either; the cabinet has created a page on its Web site showing people caught in the act of dumping. Anybody recognizing such wrongdoers can go to www.nr.state.ky.us/nrepc/dumpphotos.htm.)

Even with TV cameras on them, however, the members of the Kentucky legislature have shown only limited interest in any clean-up efforts. A bill to require refundable deposits on soft-drink bottles and other such containers expired in committee, and the bill's sponsor—a mountain legislator plainly fed up with trash—switched to advocacy of a broad-based fee on retail sales to fund clean-up of litter. But the president of the state retail federation didn't like that idea, either. His organization advocated no action at all, beyond vague talk about education, and seemed unembarrassed at publicly parading its unsavory belief that the profits of its members depend significantly on all those miles of roadside litter. So they helped kill the second bill, too. ■

EYE on Publications

If You Return Home with Food, by Mary Crockett Hill (Bluestem Press, Emporia State University, Emporia, Kans.) To put it very simply, you will like these poems—that is, if you like poetry very much at all. There are bluntness and struggle here, imagination and a fine dry irony. It would be pretty hard to resist lines like these: *Roy jimmies his wallet out of his jeans/ and shows me the picture:/ their father in his coffin, pasty-faced, stretched,/ a broad tan suit/ but really not bad for a man/ who was hit by a train.*

In awarding the poet a literary prize, one of the judges said, with what seems to us commendable accuracy: "There is a characteristic mixture of hope and dread in these observations. These poems are aware of life's dangers—the loneliness and estrangement we face—and thereby both celebrate and mourn our 'knuckles' bare facts,' our all too mortal bodies." Besides that, there's verbal ability at work.

Mary Crockett Hill teaches writing at Roanoke College and lives not far away in tiny Shawsville: "We have bears here, the boys tell me, and panthers and ghosts."

Confronting Appalachian Stereotypes, edited by Dwight B. Billings, Gurney Norman and Katherine Ledford (University Press of Kentucky). When any kind of sector or level of society begins to regard itself as a definable minority, it enters upon a course in which, it seems, it will be vexed by two questions, related but different, that will continually call for answers: What kind of group is it, really, and what kind of group do other people think it is?

The subtitle of this collection of essays and studies indicates pretty clearly which of these questions engaged the editors: "Back Talk from an American Region." The specific stimulus for the book was the much-talked-about 1992 play *The Kentucky Cycle*, which started out on the West Coast, did well there, won the Pulitzer Prize, flopped on Broadway and infuriated Appalachians of intellectual bent (who, however, found great delight in the play's failure when it got to New York. "Good news at last," commented one Loyal Jones).

Six and a half hours long, involving more than 70 char-

acters, *The Kentucky Cycle* stretches over two hundred years of Appalachian Kentucky history. The author, an actor named Robert Schenkkan, had more or less chanced on his subject, with which he had no previous acquaintance. We're told that he decided to use Appalachia as a metaphor for the deficiencies of 1980s America after spending just one day in the area, back in 1981.

The Broadway critics naturally had little concern for the play as history, one way or the other; looking at it purely as theater, they dismissed it with such judgments as "melodramatic pageant." Appalachian observers, of course, took quite a different view. Whatever its shortcomings as drama, it was its content—the history it purported to offer—that set them afire. Nor were they thrilled by dialogue with sentences like "It don't make me no nevermind."

The same is true with respect to many of the other authors and works discussed in the essays gathered here—John Fox, Jr., James Lane Allen, *The Beverly Hillbillies*, *The Dukes of Hazzard* (but isn't this one really a general Southern take-off rather than anything having much to do with Appalachia?), Harry M. Caudill (who is both admired and deplored) and others well and lesser known.

But Schenkkan and his play, with its stereotypes and shallowness, constitute the psychological centerpiece here. Not good drama, we're told, not good history. Good intentions, maybe—even probably. But we know where good intentions lead.



In *Appalachian Heritage* ...

The Winter 2000 issue of *Appalachian Heritage* features new stories by Joe Edward Morris, Ann Hickman Skidmore and Ralph Price; poems by Mary Ellen Miller, Nancy King, Taylor Hagood and John Quinnett; a photo essay of Kentucky Phantoms by William Morningstar; and articles concerning sustainable mountain agriculture and the Jack-tale tradition.

You can obtain *Appalachian Heritage* (\$6.00 a copy, \$18 for a year's subscription) by writing to C.P.O. Box 2166, Berea, Ky. 40404.

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