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LETTER

APPALACHIAN CENTER

BEREA COLLEGE

Loyal Jones • Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Summer--Season for Study

For those of you who'd like to do some studying this summer and need to know what's on tap, we offer a few suggestions. No doubt a number of other workshops and seminars could be mentioned--if we knew about them. (Perhaps this will serve as a suggestion to all special-events directors to include the CENTER NEWSLETTER on your mailing lists.)

Berea College--Workshop in Appalachian Studies. This six-week program offers two courses for which six hours of graduate extension credit will be given through the University of Kentucky College of Education. The courses (participants are supposed to take both) are *Educational Sociology: History and Culture of Appalachia* and *Education and Culture: Literature and the Arts in Appalachia*. Last year's workshop seemed to be a great success with the participants, and this one follows the same format; it's designed for teachers and curriculum specialists who are interested in establishing Appalachian Studies courses in their local schools. The premise is that the national emphasis on Appalachian problems has obscured one of America's richest cultural traditions. The workshop is sponsored by the Appalachian Center (for information write College Box 2336, Berea) and is directed by Richard B. Drake. Dates: June 10-July 19.

East Tennessee State University--Film Workshop: Appalachia--Myth and Reality. As in the two previous productions, students will look at movies, listen to lectures and participate in adjunct courses (with the departments of art, education, English, music and sociology). Up to six hours of credit can be earned by those eligible, and auditors are welcome, too. The movies are Hollywood feature films (for instance, *Sergeant York*, *A Walk in the Spring Rain*) having Appalachian themes. This year's participants include a variety of writers about aspects of Appalachia: Borden Deal, Rachael Maddux, Billy Edd Wheeler, Neil Isaacs, Rena Gazaway, David Harrel. The project director is Ambrose N. Manning, ETSU, Johnson City, Tenn. Dates: July 22-August 2.

Alice Lloyd College--Appalachian Term. This new open-end enterprise is not only for summer but for other times of the year as well. Its purpose is to give groups of all kinds--educational, church, other--the chance to become acquainted with Appalachia at times of their own choosing; there's no fixed agenda--the program is worked out to fit the needs and purposes of each particular group. If you're interested, get in touch with Bill Weinberg, director of the Appalachian Learning Laboratory, Alice Lloyd College, Pippa Passes, Ky. 41844.

Highlander Center--Summer Residential Program. This is designed for Appalachian natives or migrants "who are interested in exploring in depth the problems and potentials of an Appalachian social and political move-

ment." Information can be obtained from Highlander Center, New Market, Tenn. Dates: June 9-29.

Courier-Journal, Wilma Dykeman Weatherford Winners

The Louisville *Courier-Journal*, a newspaper perennially ranked among the country's best by students of journalism, has been chosen as the winner of Berea College's fourth annual W.D. Weatherford Award for outstanding and effective published writing about Appalachia. The newspaper is being honored for its "thorough, persistent and influential" coverage of Appalachian news, issues and problems, not only from the vantage point of Eastern Kentucky and neighboring areas but from Washington, where agencies specializing in Appalachian matters are regularly and rigorously probed by *Courier-Journal* bureau members.

Sharing Weatherford Award honors for 1973 work is Wilma Dykeman, a prolific writer in a variety of forms--fiction, journalism, biography--in all of which she deals eloquently with Appalachian values and issues. In 1973 these concerns were expressed in the novel *Return the Innocent Earth* and in her regular column in the Knoxville *News-Sentinel*. She is being honored with the second Special Weatherford Award to be given in the four-year history of the awards, which are sponsored jointly by Berea's Appalachian Center and Hutchins Library. Donor of the prizes is Alfred H. Perrin of Berea.

The awards are to be presented to *Courier-Journal* editor and publisher Barry Bingham, Jr., and Ms. Dykeman in a ceremony to be held in Berea on April 25. A highlight of the program will be discussion by three *Courier-Journal* reporters of their experiences in covering Appalachian affairs locally and in Washington.

Special panelists hear miners' wives (see inside)



Coal: Union Pressure vs. Duke Power

In 1931 there was no such thing as a "multipurpose center" in the Harlan County, Ky., coal community of Everts, and the high sheriff of that day, John Henry Blair, bossed a crew of gun thugs (as they are locally known) who fought a pitched battle with miners trying to organize a union. That "Battle of Everts" brought Theodore Dreiser and other writers to the county and made Harlan famous. And a few years later, unionism was established in the coal country.

The year 1974 appears to be a gentler era, though certainly not free of violence. In March a citizen board of inquiry held two days of hearings at the Everts multipurpose center, a rural Housing and Urban Development project from War on Poverty days, with the aim of exploring the issues dividing the local miners and the Eastover Mining Company (a subsidiary of North Carolina's Duke Power Company). The board of inquiry did not, of course, drop magically from the sky; it was formed at the suggestion of Arnold Miller, president of the UMW, and funded by the Field Foundation.

"Ever since I can remember, huge outside companies

Voices

As they spoke to the panel during the hearings, the women here and there provided tones for a portrait or materials for a history. Their voices:

"The sheriff's here with warrants to serve us, but I hope he will let us talk to you-all first. Then we can go, after we talk to you-all."

"The state police have been here all the time we've been picketing. Sometimes two carloads, sometimes more, sometimes less. But they never got out of the cars, and we gave them no trouble whatsoever. But they were always there. In fact, we felt safer with them there . . . But the following morning, when I got there, they were lined up in the entranceway that goes up to the mine . . . When the scabs came, the crowd had grown so big that the state police were getting a little bit worried, I suppose. But, anyhow, they started moving around a little bit, and by the time the scab cars got there to come in, we had time to get around them and to get in the road. That's the only way, is lay down in the road, fight the police or let the scabs go to work, so we chose to lay down."

"I'm not in jail today simply because you people are



As the voices spoke . . .

like Duke Power have come into Appalachia looking for coal and fast profits," says Miller. "But all they've ever left behind are crippled miners dying of black lung, slag heaps and abandoned mines."

Duke and Eastover officials declared, not surprisingly, that such attitudes governed the selection of the panel, and declined to appear, even though panel members included Dan Pollitt, a University of North Carolina law professor; former U.S. Senator Fred Harris, and former Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz. There were no novelists. Panel members talked with Eastover and Duke officials, and a report is promised in the near future.

Testimony at the hearings was inevitably pro-union, since the company did not participate, and a significant part of it involved the participation of women (see following story), who took an active part in picketing—and in testifying. The union states frankly that it is bringing all guns to bear on the confrontation—but these weapons are to be anti-Duke publicity campaigns, not 1931-style artillery.

There's another difference, too. The present sheriff, Billy G. Williams, is a union sympathizer and former miner (though college students in the room appeared unaware of this). Rather apologetically he served summonses on three of the women and he remarked optimistically, "This will get them some more good publicity."

here . . . You people come back down if you will the first day of April. That's when they set the trial up for us."

"I sound like the President, saying we're law-abiding citizens, but we are."

"We went to stop the scabs and sometimes, you know, things get carried away. But we have been successful in stopping them. There's no point in picketing if you're going to let them work. We went to keep them from working, and you can't go empty-handed if you're going to stop a bunch of scabs. . . . This strike means better things for all parts of the county, not just Brookside. Everybody's watching this . . ."

"There was some children throwing rocks. I never threw not one rock . . . I said to one of the other women, 'I don't see what anybody wants to throw a rock for. If I can't get hold of a scab and do something to him, it don't give me no satisfaction to throw a rock.' And that's just the way I felt."

"When we lay down on the picket line, they can't drag us all off."

"Some of the police are vicious. Some of them are so anti-union that they are dangerous, and then some of them—they can't get them to be that way. . . . I can't

imagine anybody being anti-union, but I do know there are people that are anti-union."

"I think we've got the dirtiest deal of the working people--of anybody in America. We pay the highest taxes of anybody, so I don't think we get a fair share, because I don't think we get the proper representation for the amount of taxes we pay."

"The general condition of the houses? Very poor. . . . Of course, I can only speak for my house. It's pretty run down. It had been dynamited at one time, and no amount of painting or anything else you can do can cover up the scars of the dynamite where it's been blasted and burned."

Church Leaders Take Hard Look at Strip Mining

On April 16, leaders of 12 Christian denominations are scheduled to meet in Washington and issue a report that most likely will call on churches to mobilize money and moral authority against the excesses of strip mining. In fact, according to one member of the group, the report

George Orwell on Mining

Watching coal-miners at work, you realize momentarily what different universes different people inhabit. Down there where coal is dug it is a sort of world apart which one can quite easily go through life without ever hearing about. Probably a majority of people would even prefer not to hear about it. Yet it is the absolutely necessary counterpart of our world above. . . .

It is not long since conditions in the mines were worse than they are now. There are still living a few very old women who in their youth have worked underground, with a harness round their waists and a chain that passed between their legs, crawling on all fours and dragging tubs of coal. They used to go on doing this even when they were pregnant. And even now, if coal could not be produced without pregnant women dragging it to and fro, I fancy we should let them do it rather than deprive ourselves of coal. But most of the time, of course, we should prefer to forget that they were doing it.

from *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937)



may well call for the complete abolition of surface mining in Appalachia and possibly even nationwide.

The report is the result of a three-day meeting on strip mining held at Clinch Valley College in Wise, Va., in March. The panelists, who were selected by their own denominational authorities, listened to testimony and toured the area. The meeting was sponsored by the Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA), the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) and local groups. As was the case with the Brookside hearings, foes of the owners were out in force and coal operators were sparsely represented. One of the participants, Rev. Larry Baldrige of Pippa Passes, Ky., said that the operators doubtless assumed that the panel was stacked against them--a natural enough assumption, whether justified or not. There was even some excitement--slashed tires and a bomb threat.

In touring stripping sites near Wise, said Baldrige, who represented the Southern Baptist Convention, "almost all the panel members were appalled at the devastation," and they were not impressed by such efforts at reclamation as they saw.

Declaring that Pennsylvania's 1964 law makes genuine reclamation possible, W.E. Guckert--who is in charge of enforcing it--advised the panel not to recommend the abolition of strip mining. Baldrige observed, however,

that central Appalachian hills are much steeper than those in Pennsylvania and, further, that Guckert is a "strong reclamation chief not tied down by politics." The implication appeared to be that this state of affairs is not likely to be repeated elsewhere.

The report is expected to contain more than moral exhortation. The panel will probably recommend that churches owning stock in coal companies or coal-related companies use their stockholder clout in efforts to see that the recommendations are carried out.

I. E. Buff

These pages devoted to coal miners and coal-mining would be incomplete if we did not take notice of the recent death of one of the area's most remarkable crusaders, Dr. I.E. Buff. A controversial figure this West Virginia practitioner assuredly was, and all the evidence suggests that he would have been disappointed if it had been otherwise. With zeal, imagination and flamboyance he brought the message about the dangers of black lung to the attention of the unconcerned and the unwilling, and they as well as the miners themselves are the better for it.

Conference: Toward 1984

The most symbolic date in modern literature is now only a decade away, and the Appalachian Consortium is facing up to the fact. On May 13-16, the Consortium, together with Appalachian State University, is hosting "Toward 1984: The Future of Appalachia?", a conference that will consider the "nature of life in the mountains and how plans for the future can be made for the utilization of the human as well as the natural resources available."

Governor James Holshouser of North Carolina will serve as director of the conference, and nine other governors have been invited to join him as co-hosts. The conference will include about 300 invited persons from a variety of fields and interest groups and will be held in Appalachian State's Center for Continuing Education, an opulent palazzo that is described, uniquely, as the "highest conference center east of the Rockies." Dr. Terry Epperson of Appalachian State is in charge of arrangements.

"Foxfire" vs. "Deliverance"

It has, says *Foxfire* magazine's adviser Eliot Wigginton, come time to "say the hell with fears about tinkering with a winning magazine format and push on to make whatever changes in that format must be made to let people know where we stand." This declaration, which appears in the current (Winter 1973) issue of the magazine, is made to explain the disappearance of *Foxfire*'s traditional section devoted to poetry. In place of the student verse is a 16-page signature devoted to the film *Deliverance*.

The movie, which presented Appalachian people in a way that has appalled many other observers besides the *Foxfire* group, was made in Rabun County, Ga., the home of *Foxfire*. It has, says Wigginton, "had an effect on our area that is incalculable. . . . There comes a time when a group like ours must choose up sides instead of sitting idly by watching those people it is supposed to represent get hurt."

The section includes conversations with some of the local persons who were involved in the making of *Deliverance*. It also includes a grim statistic: attracted by the movie's vivid depiction of canoeing on the Chattooga River, canoeists and rafters have come by the hundreds--and 11 of them have been killed. "I can't patrol the river," says James Dickey, who wrote both the novel and the screenplay, "but it just makes me feel awful."

Footnote--Chicago Center

In the Winter 1974 CENTER NEWSLETTER, we reported that the Southern Cultural Exchange Center had just opened in the Uptown area of Chicago. We can now furnish a more precise address. It is 1222 Wilson Avenue.

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EYE on Publications

The Memory of Old Jack, by Wendell Berry (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich). Standing on the porch of an old hotel in the Kentucky town of Port William, Old Jack hears the early-morning sounds on the nearby farm-sounds that release him into the world of remembrance. He is, says reviewer Wilma Dykeman, "vital, imperfect, excellent and unforgettable."

O Mountaineers! by Don West (Appalachian Press). Poems spanning more than 40 years of the author's writing career, a career that has consistently seen him engage.

The Senator from Slaughter County, by Harry M. Caudill (Atlantic-Little, Brown). In this novel, rumored to be a *roman à clef*, it doesn't take much to convince Tom Bonham that reforming mountain politics is not his game; looking out for No. 1 is much more rewarding. The author, who wrote *Night Comes to the Cumberlands*, offers something of a conspectus of the Appalachian political scene.

Too Many People, Too Little Love, by Wilma Dykeman (Holt, Rinehart and Winston). In a career that took her to different parts of the world from Tennessee to Tonga, Edna Rankin MacKinnon fought to popularize birth control and to establish field clinics. As her biographer shows, much of her work was done in Appalachia.

The Court-Martial of Daniel Boone, by Allan W. Eckert (Little, Brown). It seems that in 1778 Daniel Boone was court-martialed at Boonesborough for conspiring to surrender the fort, betraying his command to the Indians, consorting with the British and so forth. On this situation the author builds an unusual courtroom novel.

Magazine

Numbers 3 and 4 of *Appalachian Notes* have now appeared. These two issues of this scholarly quarterly contain a two-part "Appalachian Resource Survey" listing a total of 48 libraries having important Appalachian materials. Number 4 also includes a call by the University of Kentucky's Thomas R. Ford for a "decennial profile" of Appalachia, based on the 1970 census and other surveys and findings. Ford was editor of the landmark 1962 study *The Southern Appalachian Region: A Survey*. *Appalachian Notes* may be ordered from Erasmus Press, 225 Culpepper, Lexington, Ky. 40502.

Film

Admirers of *Foxfire* as a teaching and learning technique will be interested to know that the *Foxfire Books* (1 and 2) have been succeeded by a film called, appropriately, the *Foxfire Film*. It shows students interviewing and researching, working on magazine production and participating in workshops held to spread the *Foxfire* idea. The film, which is in color, is distributed by McGraw-Hill, Dept. BF, 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10020. You can rent it for \$35 or buy it for \$345.

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