

NEWS

APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE



LETTER

Gordon B. McKinney • Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Looking Forward

March 15-17: 25th annual Appalachian Studies Conference, Unicoi State Park, Helen, Ga., sponsored by the Appalachian Studies Association. This year's theme: "Voices From the Margins: Living on the Fringe." For full details, contact Pat Beaver at Appalachian State: 828/262-4089; www.appalachianstudies.org.

April 5-7 and May 3-5: If you don't have a week's getaway time, the John C. Campbell Folk School has offerings just for you—weekend classes in a variety of pursuits from dance to tating to woodcarving. But if you can set aside a whole week any time during the spring, you can choose from instruction in an even wider range of subjects. For details of all programs, contact the school at One Folk School Road, Brasstown, N.C. 28902; phone 800/FOLKSCH; www.folkschool.org.

April 10-11: 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 859/985-3023.

April 12-14: Sister Gathering, Appalachian Women's Alliance, Camp Living Waters, Bryson City, N.C. The theme: "Women Rising Up: Finding Strength in Times of Adversity." The alliance address is P.O. Box 688, Floyd, Va. 24091; phone, 540/745-5345; AWA@swva.net.

April 14-20: Spring Dulcimer Week, Augusta Heritage Center, Davis & Elkins College. Anna Duff, Guy George, Patty Looman and Steve Schneider will offer instruction in the hammered dulcimer; the list of mountain-dulcimer teachers includes Phyllis Gaskins, Tull Glazener, Anne Lough and Steve Seifert. You can also receive tutelage on the autoharp from Karen Mueller (international autoharp champion in 1986). For full information, write the Augusta Heritage Center, 100 Campus Drive, Elkins, W. Va. 26241; 304/637-1209; www.augustaheritage.com.

April 20-21: Bear on the Square Mountain Festival, Dahlonega, Ga., guaranteed to provide two days' worth of authentic old-time and bluegrass music, along with an array of traditional mountain crafts, and you can take part in workshops. The list of featured performers includes, for old-time sounds, Ginny Hawker and Tracy Schwarz (with Cari Sickenberger) and, for bluegrass, Sally Jones and the Sidewinders. Music information: 706/864-7817 or pendergn@alltel.net; crafts information: 706/867-8134. Web site: www.dahlonega.org/bear.

April 25-28: 15th annual MerleFest. Wilkes Community

College, Wilkesboro, N.C. The festival is celebrating its 15th anniversary with a tribute to the lives and music of Doc and Merle Watson. Besides Doc and Richard Watson, the list of performers includes Earl Scruggs and Friends, Patty Loveless, Alison Krauss and Union Station, and other notables. For details, phone 800/343/7857; www.merlefest.org.

May 2-4: 12th annual Boxcar Pinion Memorial Bluegrass Festival, Raccoon Mountain Campground (just off I-24), Chattanooga, Tenn. Among the performers on hand will be Norman and Nancy Blake, Rhonda Vincent and the
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Super Library Arrives

Along with the fact that their basketball teams travel to games by bus instead of chartered jet, one of the obvious big differences between small colleges and large universities is in the relative sizes of the libraries. Ferrum and Warren Wilson can hardly compete with the University of Virginia or UNC at Chapel Hill, although interlibrary loan and other developments in recent decades have given the small schools much-needed help.

Now, however, 33 mountain-region colleges—with a state-university-level total enrollment of 35,000—will be able to play with the big kids. They've banded together to create the Appalachian College Association Central Library, which you'll find not on any campus but on your computer monitor. Library services will be offered in and through campus libraries.

The project, which will go into full operation next fall, has a base collection of 10,000 current titles of electronic books, which is scheduled to grow by a thousand a year. More than 200 journals will also be accessible, with images of pages going back, in one case, to the year 1650. Reference service will begin with five major databases in literature, biography, art, music and life sciences.

"Collectively," says Tony Krug, who is library-services dean at Carson-Newman and will assume the full-time directorship of the Central Library in August, "our membership can leverage resource development as one unit of 35,000 rather than as individual colleges of a few hundred students apiece." A grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation provided start-up support, and each member college will keep the library operating through a per-student contribution.

Clearly, this is just the beginning. We'll try to keep you posted. ■

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Rage, Mountain Heart, Lonesome River and Ronnie Reno and the Reno Tradition. You can get all the details from 706/820-2228.

May 4: "Celebrating Scotland's Crafts," a traveling exhibition organized by the National Museums of Scotland and sponsored by the Southern Highland Craft Guild, opens with a ceremony at the guild's Folk Art Center in Asheville; it will be turning up here and there till September 29. For details: shcg@buncombe.main.nc.us; 828/298-7928.

May 10-12: 33rd 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 513/251-3378. The organization has a lyrical Web address: www.hometothehills.com.

May 17-19: Spring fair, Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen, Indian Fort Theater, Berea, Ky; some 120 guild members will be displaying and selling their work. In keeping with the theme—"Kentucky's Global Arts Celebration"—the fair will present a special guest exhibitor from Denmark and music from West Africa and China. There'll be an emphasis on younger fairgoers as well, with children's projects and, on Friday, a special menu for kids. For more information you can phone 859/986-3192; info@kyguild.org.

May 24-26: Old-Time Fiddlers' and Bluegrass Festival, Fiddler's Grove Compound, Union Grove, N.C., with such entertainers as the eminent J. P. Fraley, Brian Sutton (special guest performer), Blackgrass: Hal Beaver and Marlin Brackett and the Cockman Family. There'll be dance, too, with the Cane Creek Cloggers and the Spring Valley Smooth Dancers. www.fiddlersgrove.com; e-mail: fiddlersgrove@yadtel.net; phone: 704/539-4417.

June 2-22: 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 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; 362 women have now graduated from the school. For full information, contact Caroline Francis or Kim Short at 204 Chestnut Street, Berea, Ky. 40403; phone, 859/985-7200. (*Note: The deadline for applications is April 10.*)

June 6-8: Appalshop's 30th anniversary Seedtime on the Cumberland Festival of Mountain Arts, Whitesburg, Ky.; appearing will be performing artists from a variety of cultures who took part in the Voices from Home tour. Information from Appalshop, 306 Madison St., Whitesburg, Ky. 41858; phone, 606/633-0108.

June 9-14: Appalachian Family Folk Week at the Hindman Settlement School celebrates its 25th anniversary. As always, this year's session will be a total immersion in traditional music, dance and other aspects of Appalachian culture, and you can come by yourself or bring the whole family. Lee Sexton, Betty Smith, Atwater and Donnelly, Deborah Thompson, Sonny Houston, Rich Kirby, Cari Norris and Paul David Smith will be among those providing entertainment; the woodcarver Minnie

Crossing the Digital Divide

The Appalachian Regional Commission has created "Information Age Appalachia," a project whose first assignment is to complete "a strategic plan to help bridge the digital divide in Appalachia."

The aim, as you might suppose, is to support education and training in new technologies, expand e-commerce and stimulate the development of employment in the high-tech sector of the economy.

If you would like information about the initiative and would like to get on the e-mail list, visit www.arc.gov/programs/distress/distress.htm (not, by the way, the most cheerful site name).

Adkins and the chairmaker Terry Ratliff will return, and you can also watch the work of third-generation basket maker Darvin Messer.

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

June 15: 12th annual Mountain Arts Festival, Valley of the Winds Art Gallery, Eolia, Ky., with original artwork by Sharman, Jeff and Evan Chapman-Crane, plus food, music, storytelling, clogging and games, and maybe even food. For more information contact: chapmancrane@setel.com; 606/633-8652.

July 7-August 11: Music, crafts, dance and folklore, capped by a weekend festival, Augusta Heritage Center, Davis & Elkins College. You may pick your week and pick your pursuit: swing dancing, woods lore, marquetry, Cape Breton dance, Cajun cooking—just to mention a very few possibilities. For full details, consult the contact information for April 14-20.

July 12-14: 25th anniversary 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 45,000 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, notably including a reunion of previous title winners. If you want overall details, get in touch with Wendy S. Bryant, P.O. Box 5016, Murfreesboro, Tenn. 37133; phone, 615/893-6565; the 800 number is 716-7560.

July 18-21: Summer fair, Southern Highland Craft Guild, Asheville Civic Center, Asheville, N.C. The emphasis this year is on Scottish crafts and those who practice them. (The fall fair will be held October 17-20.) See contact information for May 4.

July 28-August 2: 25th annual Appalachian Writers' Workshop, Hindman Settlement School. This summer's session, which celebrates the 25th anniversary of this influential enterprise, will honor the memory of Albert Stewart and James Still (see *Appalachian Center News-*

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REMEMBER THE '70S? Back in those days, a volunteer work crew did all the labor involved in putting together the Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen's fairs at Indian Fort Theater. The group above, from May 1976, is remembered as the largest crew ever. Somewhat recognizable in the middle, under a load of hair, is Garry Barker, then the guild's executive director. This spring's fair dates are May 17-19.

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letter, Spring 2001). The list of mentors includes George Ella Lyon, Lee Smith, Robert Morgan, Katherine Strippling Byer, Silas House, Hal Crowther and numerous others. To find out more, check the contact information for June 9-14.

September 14: Annual conference, Appalachian Teachers' Network. This event, going back 11 years, was, say the sponsors, "created for any educator, K-college, in any discipline, interested in incorporating Appalachian studies or other cultural topics into his or her classroom." This year's discussions will focus on the theme, both metaphoric and literal, "Reflections on the River." For details or a presentation proposal form, contact Jim Minick, Box 6935, Radford University, Radford, Va. 24142; 540/831-5366; jminick@runet.edu.

EYE on Publications

After the Backcountry, edited by Kenneth E. Koons and Warren R. Hofstra (University of Tennessee Press). Everybody who knows anything about the Civil War is familiar with Stonewall Jackson's domination of the fighting in the Great Valley of Virginia, the productive and scenic region stretching southwest to northeast along the state's western mountain barrier.

During the 18th century the valley was frontier—"backcountry"—that drew settlers who found no room in

the well-settled eastern part of the state (see, for example, Richard Drake's *History of Appalachia*). But the editors of the present book, who teach at VMI and Shenandoah University respectively, decided to take a look in depth at what they considered a neglected patch of history, the next chapter of the story—what happened in the region after the frontier had moved on westward. Thus the book earned its subtitle, "Rural Life in the Great Valley of Virginia 1800-1900."

The editors convened a conference that was held at VMI in March 1995, and the result is now this book, which, in general, considers the consequences of social and economic processes put into motion by the 18th-century pioneers. The first section, focusing on economic growth, demonstrates both the early and continuing importance of the cultivation of wheat, which, surprisingly to many, maintained its economic importance well into the 20th century.

Other sections discuss material culture, with acknowledgment of the importance of Pennsylvania habits and styles on what, in many ways, was a southern extension of the state; race, antislavery efforts, reconstruction and redemption; and questions of the political culture.

An epilogue points out that rural history is currently undergoing a strong expansion, partly because the accelerating disappearance of farming as a way of life points up the need to capture and preserve the historical record of the rural experience. We are also told that the development of new farming techniques has made the beautiful Great Valley one of the country's most-threatened regions.

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That's reason enough to take a look at the whole picture.

From the Mountain, From the Valley, by James Still; edited by Ted Olson (University Press of Kentucky). In this collection, subtitled "New and Collected Poems," the editor, who teaches at East Tennessee State, has produced the definitive edition of the poetry of the late mountain master. The book collects all of Still's poems, including several that have never before been published. Olson has also corrected various editorial errors that had made their way into earlier collections.

The organization of the book, which is strictly chronological, allows you to listen to Still's poetic voice from its earliest days to its last. There's also a 20-page autobiographical essay, "A Man Singing to Himself," which gives us many lively and amusing details about Still's earlier days and his taking up his long residence in Knott County, Ky.

If you didn't know it before, you are now informed that Still as a writer had seven dwarfs producing poems and stories for him. At least, that's what he replied to a lady who asked him, "Do you do your own writing?"



Book Notes

•The West Virginia novelist Davis Grubb (1919-1980) belongs to the large company of writers who are known primarily for one book. In his case it's the gripping, terror-inducing *Night of the Hunter*, which became a famous movie starring Robert Mitchum; a new movie version has recently appeared, too.

But Grubb also wrote nine other novels, one of which, *Fools' Parade* (1969), also made it onto film. Set in the depth of the Depression, it's a chase novel involving three ex-cons, a crooked banker and a corrupt sheriff. In its re-

view, *Time* called it "a fine book, written for the hell of it, which is a splendid reason."

Fools' Parade has just been reissued, in softcover, by the University of Tennessee Press as part of its Appalachian Echoes series.

•You don't have to be a Kentuckian to find much to ponder in *Financing State and Local Government*, a new book produced by the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center with the collaboration of the Martin School of Public Policy and Administration at the University of Kentucky. How to design a tax system that is efficient and fair and produces adequate revenue is a question that all governments ought to face, even if they often opt for something much less than ideal.

The contributing writers took part in a November 2001 conference on the subject; their thoughts appear here in this well-designed and -produced softcover book. You can get copies from the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center, 111 St. James Court, Frankfort, Ky. 40601-8486.



In Appalachian Heritage ...

The Winter 2002 *Appalachian Heritage* features Charles May's interview with fiction writer Chris Offutt, Loyal Jones's lecture on Jim Wayne Miller (from last summer's Appalachian Writers' Workshop), essays by G. C. Compton and Leigh Ann Roman, fiction by Ali O'Rourke, Ralph Price, Jimmy Carl Harris and Chris Wood, new poems from Joseph Bathanti, Julie Dunlop, Holly Farris and others, and, of course, notes and reviews regarding new Appalachian books.

Appalachian Heritage is available (\$6 a copy, \$18 for a year's subscription) from the Appalachian Center, C.P.O. Box 2166, Berea, Ky. 40404.

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