

NEWS

APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE



LETTER

Gordon B. McKinney • Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Looking Forward

October 3-5: 20th annual Sorghum Makin', John R. Simon's Family Farm, 8721 Pond Creek/Carey's Run Road, Portsmouth, Ohio 45663. If you've ever wanted to play around with a sorghum evaporator or you maybe have a yen for apple butter, this could be the place for you to spend the weekend. All the eating (or, no doubt, eatin') will be accompanied by acoustical music, while butter gets churned and soap gets made. The number to call is 740/259-6337.

October 4-5: Annual Fall Festival, John C. Campbell Folk School, featuring more than 150 crafts creators. Besides the exhibits and demonstrations, the sponsors promise continuous live music and good food. Who could stay away? For particulars, write the school at One Folk School Road, Brasstown, N.C. 28902; phone, 800/FOLKSCHOOL; www.folkschool.org.

October 9-12: 24th 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." Selected by the American Bus Association as one of the top 100 events in North America, the homecoming will feature the long-established bountiful serving of art, crafts and entertainment, with performers Ralph Stanley, Leroy Troy, Rhonda Vincent, Raymond Fairchild (five-time world champion banjo player), Bill Foster, Mac Wiseman, the Dismembered Tennesseans, Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver and a couple of hundred more. Sidebar events include such goings-on as antique-tractor parades and demonstrations of sheep herding with dogs; crafts galore, too, of course. The museum's address is P.O. Box 1189, Norris, Tenn. 37828; phone 865/494-7680.

October 10-12: Annual Fall Fair, Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen, Indian Fort Theater, Berea, Ky., boasting an iconoclastic theme: "It's Not the Same Old Fair!" Living up to its rating by the Kentucky Tourism Council as a Top Ten Festival, the fair will present more than 40 new artisans along with its veteran members. For more details, phone 859/986-3192; e-mail, info@kyguild.org.

October 10-19: Georgia Mountain Fair Fall Festival, Hiawassee, Ga.; phone, 706/896-4191.

October 16-19: Fall edition of the Craft Fair of the Southern Highlands; Asheville Civic Center, Asheville, N.C. Works by 180 members of the Southern Highland Craft Guild will be on display, and there'll also be demonstrations, hands-on experiences, traditional music and special activities for children. Full information from the guild at

828/298-7928.

October 17-19: 17th annual Lake Eden Arts Festival, Black Mountain, N.C., with some 50 folk and broad-gauge groups; Web: www.theLEAF.com.

October 19-26: Old-Time Week with the "unique and heartwarming" Fiddlers' Reunion folded into it—an au-
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Shots and Kicks

The availability of venture capital—money that people with money are willing to put into new or expanding businesses—can be a shot in the arm or, sometimes, a benign kick in the pants. In areas like Appalachia, where access to such risk-taking capital has traditionally been limited, entrepreneurs or would-bes often have special need for a good shot or a swift kick.

In recognition of the need, a number of federal, state and local entities and agencies have just joined in the creation of the Southern Appalachian Fund, which will have a kitty of \$12.5 million to invest in companies in Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia.

"We are ready for the challenges as well as the rewards that lie ahead," said one of the fathers of the idea, Ray Moncrief, chief operating officer of Kentucky Highlands Investment Corp. of London, Ky., which will manage the fund in partnership with Technology 2020 of Oak Ridge, Tenn. In addition to the equity investments to be made by the Southern Appalachian Fund, Technology 2020 and Kentucky Highlands will provide operational assistance to actual or prospective portfolio companies. The aid to be offered will include marketing, accounting, legal, engineering and other technical assistance that can help a small business in its development. These "dual bottom-line" organizations seek to promote economic development and the creation of wealth and job opportunities in low-income areas and at the same time to enhance the fund's return on its investments. In other words, they expect to make the operation profitable for all the parties involved.

Investors and limited partners include the Appalachian Regional Commission; the Small Business Administration; the F. B. Heron Foundation; the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; the Tennessee Valley Authority; the BankOne Neighborhood Development Corporation; National City Bank of Kentucky; Farmers and Merchants Bank of Clarksville, Tenn.; First Bank of Lexington, Tenn.; Tennessee Commerce Bank of Franklin, Tenn.; and Concord EFS, Inc. ■

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tumn standby put on by the busy bees over at Davis & Elkins. The reunion features an informal concert stage with free performances by an array of old-time fiddlers and pickers. During the week a lineup of experienced teachers and guest master artists will be on hand to guide workshop participants toward mastery or at least progress in old-time fiddle, guitar and mountain dulcimer. For full information, write the Augusta Heritage Center, 100 Campus Drive, Elkins, W.Va. 26241; www.augustaheritage.com; phone, 304/637-1209.

October 23-25: Fifth annual national conference: "The Women of Appalachia: Their Heritage and Accomplishments," sponsored by Ohio University Zanesville. Participants will talk about three realms—cultural, socioeconomic and, more specifically, Appalachian communities. Attendance is limited to 200, not all of whom, we are told, have to be female. If you would like to submit a paper, note that the deadline for proposals is July 11; check the Website for suggested topics: www.zanesville.ohiou.edu/ce/wac/appalwomen.htm. For further information, write to the Office of Conferences, Ohio University Zanesville, 1425 Newark Road, Zanesville, Ohio 43701; phone, 740/588-1401; e-mail, ouzconted@ohio.edu.

October 24-25: Noccoalula Falls Bluegrass Festival, Gadsden, Ala.; phone, 256/546-4834.

October 25: 30th annual Blue Ridge Folklife Festival, billed, as always, as "the largest celebration of authentic folkways in Virginia." Ferrum College, Ferrum, Va. The festival with its three stages is classed as a top-20 event by the Southeast Tourism Society. This year's anniversary renewal will present performers from the first outing three

decades ago, among them Whit Sizemore, the Shady Mountain Ramblers and the Trinity Gospel Chorus. For more information, contact the Blue Ridge Institute & Museum at 540-365-4416 or by e-mail at bri@ferrum.edu. Additional information and directions to Ferrum are available at www.blueridgeinstitute.org.

October 25-26: Celebration of Traditional Music, presented by the Berea College Appalachian Center. (*See separate story.*)

October 30-November 1: Rocky Top Halloween Bluegrass Festival, Rome, Ga.; phone, 706/235-5529.

December 26-January 1: Christmas Country Dance School, Berea College, directed by Joe Tarter. Participants may take part in a variety of classes, including (but not limited to) English clog, beginning morris dance, beginning and advanced rapper dance (that's with swords), advanced percussive dance, Appalachian clogging and square dance, and contra. Act now—the deadline for early registration is November 1. To find out more, call 859/985-3000, ext. 3431 or 3789.

February 1-21: 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, and also about themselves and what they can do. The school offers career counseling throughout the year and also puts on a number of workshops that are open to anybody; the school recently produced its 400th graduate. Though the winter session itself is still months off, the deadline for applications is December 10; a high school diploma or GED certificate is required. Write to the school at 204 Chestnut Street, Berea, Ky. 40403, or phone 859/985-7200.

Traditional Celebrants

Launched back in 1974, the Berea College Appalachian Center Celebration of Traditional Music will make its 29th renewal appearance during the October 25-26 weekend.

The underlying idea of the celebration, said its founder, Loyal Jones, 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—whatever you want to call it—the celebration has through the years stuck to Jones's proclaimed purpose and in the process it long ago became an Appalachian regional institution.

An added attraction this year is the availability of a series of arts and crafts workshops featured in the Berea Arts Council Folk Arts and Crafts Festival. These Saturday-morning exercises will include sessions on woodcarving, painting floor cloths, basketmaking and cornshuck dolls.

Dedicated to change in the midst of continuity, the celebration managers are offering the usual lively musical lineup, but this year there's a difference in the schedule; the Friday-evening opening concert has been eliminated. The celebration will begin on Saturday morning with workshops in fiddle and banjo, followed in the afternoon by a symposium, "Square Roots: Origins and Evolution of South-

ern Appalachian Square Dance," led by Phil Jamison, with a follow-up square-dance workshop. The evening concert will feature the Berea College String Band, Arthur Johnson, the Reeltime Travelers and Jake Krack. On Sunday morning participants can join in the traditional hymn sing.

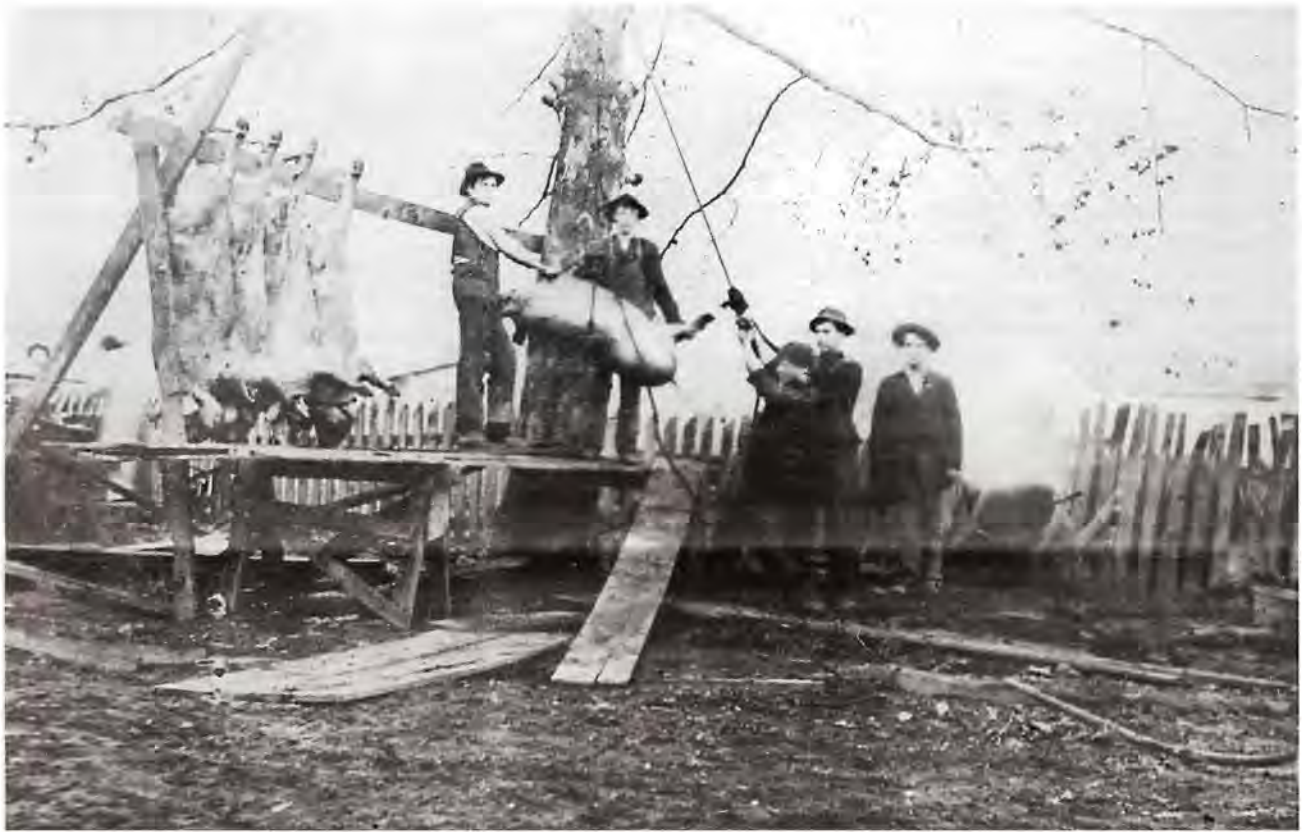
For further details, contact Lori Briscoe at the Appalachian Center, 859/985-3257; e-mail, lori_briscoe@berea.edu.

Feudin' and Litigatin'—II

When we last looked into the doings of the Hatfields and the McCoys, we noted that descendants of the originals were locked in a battle over access to grave sites—a battle being fought, fortunately, with lawyers rather than with the traditional lead. Now, however, the contending parties have agreed not only to a truce but to a permanent end of hostilities "implied, inferred and real between the families now and forevermore."

This rush of reason appears to have been brought on by some remarkably global-level thinking. The families, said Reo Hatfield, of Waynesboro, Va., believe that in these turbulent times Americans should put their differences aside and stand united. "We want the world to know," he declared, "that you can't come over to our country and attack us and it go unnoticed, even by the Hatfields and McCoys." Further, "we want to show that nobody is go-

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KILLING TIME: Our nostalgia series continues with another look at mountain life a century ago.

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ing to mess with America."

No, indeed. So, even though none of the feudists turned out to possess any weapons of mass destruction, the world can nevertheless breathe easier now, and, for their part, all Americans can stand taller, knowing that the Hatfields and the McCoy's are keeping their vigilant eyes off each other and on the oceans and the skies.

"Saddened ... Outraged!"

Neither rainstorms nor mechanical difficulties nor even the failure of some important participants to show up as promised could interfere with the success of one of the summer's most unusual events—the "Flyover Festival" staged on June 14 by the organization called Kentuckians For The Commonwealth (which started life some years ago as the Kentucky Fair Tax Coalition and, as its interests expanded, changed its name but kept its initials).

The idea, said KFTC chairperson Teri Blanton, was "to get as many people in the air to see how horrible mountaintop removal is and to let people know that if we allow this to continue, we are destroying any type of future that's left for the people of the coalfields."

Some 500 people showed up at the airport outside of Hazard, and, although two of the expected pilots and their planes didn't appear, a hundred or more of the crowd got to take a short flight over nearby mined-out areas. "It's the saddest thing I had seen for a long time," said one passen-

ger. "You have no idea of the vastness of it. It's not just one hill but as far as you can see all around has been decapitated."

The first view from up above startled and shocked many others, too. "What we witnessed was so sickening that, at first, we didn't know if we were feeling ill from the motion of the small plane or strictly from what we were viewing right below us," said another visitor. "Before we had seen the last of the stripped, scarred and decapitated peaks, had witnessed the murky, gloomy slurry ponds, had gazed upon the diseased hollers and had looked down on the valley fills, we were in a state of shock and depression."

Most of his passengers were emotionally affected by what they saw, said the commercial pilot who donated his services. Though they had seen the area from the ground, "you don't realize how big it is until you see it from the air."

"It's not just a Kentucky or West Virginia problem," added one of the shocked witnesses. "It's in the whole U.S."

While on the general subject of coal, we might note that a federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission judge just recently dropped one of two major safety violations issued to a subsidiary of Massey Energy after the great October 2000 slurry spill (much commented on in these pages). Why did the judge do that? Well, he declared that the corrective plan drawn up by the company after an earlier spill and duly approved by federal regulators was simply too complex and confusing to be understood by "prudent mining engineers." That may well be one for the books. ■

EYE on Publications

A Kentucky Christmas, edited by George Ella Lyon (University Press of Kentucky). This book could accurately be called "A Kentucky Christmas Tree," since it's a structure with various good-sized branches, all hung or draped with bits of holiday cheer (or, occasionally, gloom) from various sources—from John Fox, Jr., through Harriette Simpson Arnow and Janice Holt Giles to Chris Holbrook and Linda Scott DeRosier. There are ornaments from old Appalachia hands like Loyal Jones and Jean Ritchie and from flatlanders like Bobbie Ann Mason and David Dick.

Rather than seeing the book as a tree, however, the editor calls it a box of gifts from Kentucky writers—poems, songs, essays, memoirs, stories, even recipes, some free-standing, some from longer works. After all, she says, "not everyone who shows up on Christmas morning wants roller blades or a Palm Pilot, shimmering earrings or musical socks."



Book Notes

Ever tireless, the prolific publishers at the Jesse Stuart Foundation have continued their outpouring of soft-cover reprints with a reissue of Billy C. Clark's 1966 novel *The Champion of Sourwood Mountain*. You can get the book

from the foundation at P.O. Box 669, Ashland, Ky. 41105.

Also available is the fourth volume in Allan W. Eckert's well-known series of meticulous narrative histories, *The Winning of America*. The new volume, *The Wilderness War*, originally appeared in 1978 (Little, Brown). It takes the story from the end of the French and Indian War in 1763 through the crisis years of the American Revolution.



In *Appalachian Heritage* ...

From Editor George Brosi: The Fall 2003 issue of *Appalachian Heritage* promises in its early stages to be another delightful magazine. We plan to feature the photographs of the great 20th century photographer Doris Ulmann, along with commentary from Leatha Kendrick, who has recently written the script of a documentary on Ulmann's life and work. Our author feature, edited by Marianne Worthington of Cumberland College, is on Jeff Daniel Marion, whose poetry has celebrated the Holston River valley of Tennessee for the last several decades. The issue will also include stories by David Huddle, a native of Ivanhoe, Va., who teaches at the University of Vermont, and Susan Lefler of North Carolina, as well as poetry by Parks Lanier, Jeff Mann and other fine poets.

Appalachian Heritage is available (\$6 a copy, \$18 for one year, \$34 for two years, \$50 for three years) from the Appalachian Center, C.P.O. Box 2166, Berea, Ky. 40404.

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