

APPALACHIAN CENTER

Tradition. Diversity. Change.

How was your summer?

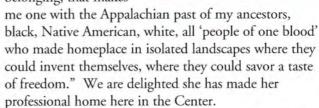
Chad Berry ector, Appalachian Center

t's been a busy six months in the Center. We've completed a renovation to the Appalachian Gallery, and we now have folks stationed in the Gallery to greet people. Campus tours will be ending here in the Gallery, and we have new exhibits in place, including one connecting the natural environment with Appalachian craft traditions. We've also made the Faber Library into a more friendly and accessible place for students. Soon, work will begin on a 15 kilowatt solar array that will provide much of the power needed for the three floors of the Bruce Building that houses the Center.

We are also very pleased to welcome bell hooks into the Center as Distinguished Professor in Residence in Appalachian Studies. A Kentucky native, she is the author of more than thirty books, many of which have focused on social class, race, and gender. Her latest book, to be published in November from Routledge, is titled Belonging: A Culture of Place. In a special issue of Appalachian Heritage (Summer 2008) on African Americans in Appalachia, bell explains that her own

lical critical consciousness" was learned at home in a Kentucky community of African Americans from the backwoods. She concludes: "Living by those values,

living with integrity, I am able to return to my native place, to an Appalachia that is no longer silent about its diversity or about the broad sweep of its influence. While I do not claim an identity as Appalachian, I do claim a solidarity, a sense of belonging, that makes



We are preparing for a busy autumn, and we hope you'll join us for the 35th Celebration of Traditional Music October 16-19, the Appalachian Heritage reading on November 7, and the Kentucky premiere November 21 and 22 of the new four-part documentary, Appalachia: A History of Mountains and People, which will air nationally on PBS in February. Information can be found on our website, www.berea.edu/ac, or by calling 859-985-3257. 🔀



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APPALACHIAN CENTER STAFF

Dr. Chad Berry, Director, Appalachian Center, and Goode Professor of Appalachian Studies

George Brosi, Editor, Appalachian Heritage

David Cooke, Program Coordinator, Entrepreneurship for the Public Good, and Director of Berea College Appalachian Fund

Beth Curlin-Weber, Administrative Assistant, Brushy Fork Institute

Dr. Peter H. Hackbert, Moore Chair in Management and Entrepreneurship, EPG

Jane Higgins, Program Associate, Brushy Fork Institute

Peter Hille, Director, Brushy Fork Institute

bell hooks, Distinguished Professor in Residence in Appalachian Studies

Dr. Daniel Huck, Gruver Chair in Leadership Studies, EPG

Christopher Miller, College Curator and Associate Director, Appalachian Center

Donna Morgan, Associate Director, Brushy Fork Institute

Thomas Parrish, Contributing Editor, AC Newsletter

Genevieve Reynolds, Senior Office Manager

Deborah Thompson, Director of Programming

Dr. William Turner, NEH Chair in Appalachian Studies

Rodney Wolfenbarger, AmeriCorps*VISTA Volunteer

Please address all correspondence to: Appalachian Center Berea College, CPO 2166 Berea, Kentucky 40404 859.985.3140

www.berea.edu/ac

Berea College and the Appalachian Center are committed to the betterment of the peoples of Appalachia. The unique views and perspectives of individual anthors in this Newsletter, however, do not necessarily represent the views and policies of Berea College.

EYE ON PUBLICATIONS

UNEVEN GROUND APPALACHIA SINCE 1945



Uneven Ground: Appalachia since 1945

by Ronald D Eller (University Press of Kentucky). For a number of years now, reading about Appalachia has had the capacity to make at least one or two readers nervous. Does this region actually exist or not?

Beginning to read the present book, a few readers may have an uneasy feeling: Does this author think Appalachia exists, or doesn't he? Has he written this major work about an illusion? It seems at first that this may be the case: Appalachia, he says, was "created by urban journalists in the years following the Civil War." Of course, we've heard that before.

The "idea of Appalachia," Eller continues, served a number of purposes for people of all kinds, from writers to

entrepreneurs. Then, reassuringly, he moves from idea to the world in which actual deeds take place and in which, many years ago, Appalachia became "set off as a social

and economic problem."

And then, when we see that the book is going to pursue a precise theme—the idea and the practice of development over the last half-century plus—we begin to realize that the author is not just playing academic games or indulging in "identity politics" but is going to tell us something out of his 40 years of experience. He may not tell us (or may not be sure) just what Appalachia is, but he knows it's there.

"Americans have an enduring faith in the power of development to improve the quality of our lives," the author begins his tale, and we know that we will be seeing how justified that faith is, in Appalachia and, to some extent, in the country as a whole. What happens is that the author becomes a kind of Dr. Eller, an MD who examines a cluster of regional symptoms and identifies the errors committed by those treating the patient, decade by decade, in the search for the developmental ideal.

In the late 1940s and the 1950s, journalists, educators, and politicians, while agreeing on the economic plight of the region, could not agree on the causes or possible cures. Some favored the creation of highways, industrial parks, and other features of physical infrastructure. Others "sought to uplift mountain residents through education and job training." No good, says Eller: both groups failed to realize that the problems lay in structural inequalities and in the politics of development itself.

In the next decade or so—no doubt the most exciting time, although the author does not make this point—came development efforts that led to two famous entities: the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Office of Economic Opportunity. This was the sixties, the War on Poverty, hardware and human/social-development, maximum feasible participation in community action. Unfortunately, Eller says, the "culture of poverty" model was in political and scholarly vogue, and it featured the poor as more-or-less hapless victims, not as potential doers with a different vision. And, Eller tells us, "the confidence, idealism, and enthusiasm that accompanied the launching of the antipoverty campaign in Appalachia provided fertile ground for the emergence of a regional awareness and reform movement."

Another strand in the story came from the idea of Appalachia as a colony like any other, exploited for its resources, with the great coal companies and their horrendous extraction practices as the chief exploiters. As Eller, MD, judiciously observes, this concept provided an enemy to focus on and implied strategies of attack. Despite defeats at the time, the legacies and many of the combatants remained in the region as activists and, often, academics. But Appalachia continued, as a reporter put it, to be a "forgotten land."

As time moved along, "growth centers" became the mantra of the Appalachian Regional Commission, which searched for an effective conceptual frame for its development efforts. Unfortunately, however, this strategy, while bringing some benefits to the northern and southern extremes of the region, tended to bypass central Appalachia, the needlest area, and in all cases it bypassed outlying areas in favor of the more-or-less urban cores. This had some success as a strategy, but, regrettably, it left many of the people outside looking in. Not acceptable.

Currently, Eller says, Appalachia is a "microcosm of the contradictions confronting modern American life." He seems to hope for a kind of quiet, modest Appalachian culture and economy, though he may be expecting too much from ecotourism, local small business and the like. But it seems that six decades of changing development models have not done the big job. Perhaps one approach, one model, one key can never provide the answer.

And previous models do not die. We now have, for instance, Ruby Payne and her discussion of generational vs. situational poverty. Life goes on.

—Thomas Parrish

Photo: Sanja Gjenero, Stock Xchng

Drugs: at last, part of the solution?

by Thomas Parrish

Contributing Editor

Fe are a long way from finding a solution to the tragic drug problem in Kentucky," notes Shirley Caudill, a journalist from Laurel County, on the state's Appalachian edge. Yes, indeed we are. We're a long way from solving the problem anywhere in Appalachia or anywhere else. But Caudill believes that "throwing government money at the drug problem" won't "make a dent in the nightmare that is overwhelming our county coffers and overcrowding our jails." Methadone clinics, for instance—the particular objects of Caudill's distaste—she sees as nothing but wasteful new bureaucracies.

What, then? Government needs to do something here, doesn't it? But the answers always prove to be elusive. Just recently, a three-state study indicated that laws aimed at putting meth "labs" out of business might be boomeranging, producing a compensating rise in the use of cocaine. Nobody's quite sure. Yet quite apart from any speculation about the causes of the drug problem, locally or nationally, its severity here demands the fastest kind of practical action. Much of the talk about education and many of the dreams of development and change—of any kind—will prove idle as long as abilities and energies are dissipated, lost in the potent culture of drug habituation and addiction.

Government must indeed take direct action, one powerful figure decided a few years ago, and he proceeded to march straight into the arena. Kentucky's Hal Rogers, one of the state's two Appalachian representatives in Congress, has acquired a formidable reputation for taking good financial care of his district, and he stirred up controversies by some of his actions as chairman (before the 2006 elections) of the House subcommittee that controls the Homeland Security budget. Somehow during that time, Somerset, Ky., apparently began to rank as a potential terrorist target alongside New York and Washington. The Washington Post, the New York Times and other metropolitan media developed a strong interest in the congressman's activities, and the Lexington Herald-Leader labeled him the "prince of pork."

But some of this maligned pork has served to provide nourishment in a striking way unrelated to the world of suicide bombers and other alien threats to the nation. The congressman has consistently displayed his strong interest in the realities and the image of his district, and in 2003 he directly went to war with drugs, establishing Operation UNITE, a regional program for the 29 counties of the district, intended to involve community leaders and citizen groups and, to be sure, some federal dollars (although not many, as such things go nowadays).

"The region is home to some of America's highest rates of drug abuse," Rogers declared, with no exaggeration. "The scourge of illegal drugs is by far the most devastating thing I have seen in my more than thirty-five years of public service."

Not relying on a simple law-and-order approach, UNITE (Unlawful Narcotics Investigations, Treatment and Education) has developed with the three basic components suggested by its name. By the beginning of this year, Investigation had built up three task forces—on drug interdiction, confiscation, and under-cover operations; 36 team officers, working with local officials, had collared some 2,500 drug suspects, ranging from street dealers to corrupt health-care officials, and pulled millions of dollars in drugs off the illicit market, including some 75,000 prescription pills supplied by unethical MDs.

Focusing also on treatment, UNITE backed the creation of two centers, with a voucher program for people who cannot pay, and the establishment of drug courts for nonviolent offenders. On the practical liceducational level, UNITE has funded as many as 31 substance-abuse counselors who work in schools throughout the region. Beyond that, the organization, through community groups, seeks to foster a new public attitude of refusal to tolerate the drug culture.

turn to page 5

Northern Appalachia's changing eco

ast October, the Wal-Mart distribution center in Clearfield County, Pennsylvania, announced it was laying off 77 of its part-time employees. In a seemingly unrelated story, the 84 Lumber Company later revealed it closed 12 stores in nine states across the country. This came on the heels of a late-November decision by the company to cut 40 to 45 positions at its headquarters in Washington County, Pennsylvania. Most analysts agree both announcements are signs that the region is in the midst of an economic crisis, especially in the consumer and housing sectors. All of this is taking place in an area that has already lost over 20,000 jobs since 2002.

The major forces responsible for shaping the socioeconomic landscape of today's Northern Appalachia are rooted in the development of the so-called "new global economy" that first revealed itself in the mid-to-late 1970s and continues to grow. In the beginning, this process was characterized by plant closings, mine closings, and the relocation of businesses outside the United States and/or investment in other economic sectors outside the Appalachian region. In place of its industrial base, a digital, high-tech world has emerged with consumer culture at its heart.

One way local and state authorities in Northern Appalachia are seeking to adapt to these changes is to become more "business friendly" by using public sector resources to facilitate the development of malls and franchised fast food restaurants outside of their traditional downtown business districts.

The globalization process has affected the region in many ways. Over the past twenty-five years we've seen its population decline, leaving behind a graying citizenry who are either retired or on the verge of retirement within the context of declining social services. These demographic changes have forced some local municipalities to impose tax hikes; close public schools; downgrade their schools' status; cut back, eliminate, or merge police services and fire protection; and (in the case of Philipsburg, Pennsylvania) close their public hospital due to a declining tax base and populace.

One way the state has responded economically is with the creation of "Keystone

Opportunity Zones" (K state and local taxes has Pennsylvania, 107 KO

Another plan for he Pennsylvania State Gam Majestic Star Casino the It is projected that a 5,0 day, or \$483.6 million earmarked the tax rever

Prisons are also be five years ago there we prisons; 24 are located rose 15 percent between Florida and North Care

In light of all of the toward embracing the properties outhwestern Pennsylva anniversary of Pittsburg featuring a year-long se building, local citizens appropriate the are part of major industrial centers first step we must take forthcoming generation

Dr. Jim Dougherty is an He also serves as director

LOOKING FORWARD

If you know of an upcoming event that you feel may be of interest, please contact the editor at the mailing address on page 2, or phone 859-985-3140.

October 3-5: 24th annual Sorghum Makin', John R. Simon's Family Farm, 8721 Pond Creek/Carey's Run Road, Portsmouth, Ohio 45663. "Lots of good music and fun all day," Simon says, and lots of apple butter and, to be sure, sorghum; also soap making, butter churning and corn pickling, plus dancing and hayrides. The number to call is 740-259-6337.

October 4-5: Fall Festival, John C. Campbell Folk School. One of the biggest festivals in the region, this annual extravaganza brings together some 200 craftspersons in celebration of "our rich Appalachian heritage." You'll find craft demonstrations and crafts for sale; the crafts will be accompanied by

continuous live music and dance on two stages. Contact the school at One Folk School Road, Brasstown, NC 28902; phone: 828-837-2775 or 800-365-5724; or visit: www.folkschool.org.

October 10-19: Georgia Mountain Fair Fall Festival, Hiawassee, Ga. "Ten great days" of endless music galore. You can also enjoy boating, camping (RV, tent), and classy pastimes like tennis, and there's a permanent exhibition of old-time machines and devices of all kinds. Phone: 706-896-4191; e-mail: gamtfair@alltel.net; or visit: http://www.georgia-mountain-fair.com/fallfestival.php.

October 11-12: Annual Fall Fair, Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen, Berea, Ky. (at Memorial Park on West Jefferson 5. More than 120 artists and artisans, including guests from ac. the United States, will display their work (including 2D fine

nomic landscape

OZ)—commercial, industrial, and residential sites where most e been eliminated. In the nine-county southwestern corner of is have already been developed.

ping the region's ailing economy is casinos. In 2006 the ing Control Board awarded developer Don Barden of Detroit's license to build the first western Pennsylvania casino in Pittsburgh. 00-machine operation would bring in more than \$1.3 million per year, according to a state Gaming Board report. The governor has ue from the casinos as property tax relief for Pennsylvania residents. The viewed as sources of jobs and economic development. Twenty-e only eight facilities in Pennsylvania. Currently there are 27 state in Appalachian counties. Overall the state's prisoner population 2000 and 2005, the third-fastest growth in the country behind thing.

see issues and changes, regional leaders are currently moving last in hopes of bringing forth a sustainable future. Ten counties in nia are participating in a larger effort to celebrate the 250th (2008) and the surrounding area. Their hopes are that by lies of events that focus on the region's contribution to nation and those from throughout the country will transform how they

of America. A change in perception—the organizers argue—is the norder to make the region solvent for the present and

assistant professor of sociology at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. of the IUP Center for Northern Appalachian Studies.



THE VIEW

Jim Dougherty



In short, UNITE is an acrossthe-board approach—the only kind of approach that has any chance of producing real results, and it has already done so. The frequently maligned congressman would appear to have some justification for singing "Let It Begin with Me."

But it could end, too. In 2007, after the Democrats took control of Congress, UNITE received no new money, making do with funds on hand. It faces budget stringencies this year, though Rogers recently won House committee approval for \$4.45 million (about half the peak of two years ago). The president's 2009 budget in fact called for cuts in all anti-drug programs. None of this is really related to the change in congressional control, says a spokesman for Rogers: "It's a different fiscal reality this year."

The whole program sounds like a great experiment where we need great experiments.

A little pork, please!

art). To reserve a booth or to find out more in general, phone 859-986-3192 or e-mail: info@kyguild.org.

October 16-19: 35th annual Celebration of Traditional Music, sponsored and produced by the Berea College Appalachian Center. From one year to the next, the celebration mixes continuity and change in ever fresh and interesting ways, and this year's offering will definitely continue the tradition, from its opening with a convocation concert on Wednesday evening (with David Holt and the Lightning Bolts—Laura Boosinger, Josh Goforth, Zeb Holt, David Cohen) to its Sunday-morning hymn-singing conclusion. The Lightning Bolts will also present a children's concert on Friday evening and will provide the

ric for the Saturday afternoon dance. Also performing will nandolin-player and singer Gloria Belle, in a duet with her luthier husband, Mike Long, and old-time fiddler Paul David Smith. In the Friday afternoon symposium, Cecelia Conway will share her research on black banjo songsters and the history of the banjo. The busy schedule also includes a lunchtime concert on Friday and Saturday workshops and concerts, topped off by the big concert of festival musicians on Saturday evening. For details, you can get in touch with the Appalachian Center at 859-985-3140 or e-mail: Deborah_Thompson@berea.edu.

October 16-19: Fall edition of the 61st annual fairs, Southern Highland Craft Guild, Asheville Civic Center, Asheville, N.C. These exhibitions present the best work of some 200 of the organization's 900 members, accompanied by music, demonstrations and entertainment for adults and youngsters alike. You can find out more by calling 828-298-7928, visiting: www.southernhighlandguild.org, or emailing: info@craftguild.org.

Here and there, a candid view

ppalachia is and will always be my home. My family, both slave and free-born, left southwestern Virginia following either the Midland or Mayo Trails and eventually settled on the Kentucky and West Virginia banks of the Big Sandy River. I was born in Kentucky and raised in the Appalachian tradition in West Virginia, even though I didn't realize how much those traditions affected my life until I had graduated from Berea College and moved on into the "big world."

I left Kentucky, like many of my generation, because good jobs were not plentiful here in the 1960s. The cultural gap between Appalachia and places where I found job opportunities-Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis, and Washington, D.C.—was enormous. In D.C., I spent two years teaching in an inner-city high school and two years teaching in a near-suburban D.C. high school. In the first school, one of the most important lessons I learned was that being African American gave me a certain level of cultural acceptance, but being Appalachian set me apart. In the second school, my being Appalachian was more culturally understood than my being African American. During the riots after the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., one of my coworkers begged me to come home with her to Virginia where I would be "safe." She could not understand that I would be perfectly safe in my inner-city neighborhood because I was black.

After moving from D.C., I found myself in Ohio happily surrounded by friends who shared my Black Appalachian heritage. All of us had discovered that being Appalachian was our foundation and our security. We understood one another: neither our speech nor our customs were foreign. After school on Friday, our vehicles often headed HOME to the mountains.

Being Black and being Appalachian has been and is a continuing adventure. I value and honor both sides of my cultural heritage. I do not separate them, and I am not especially tolerant of those who do. My children share the pride of being who we are, a pride that has had some interesting results. When my daughter attended a northeastern Ohio college, a professor of

African American Studies made the statement that there were no black people in Appalachia. She raised her hand and asked, "If there are no black people in Appalachia, what am I?" The blustering conversation that followed was ended when she stood up and detailed the generations of our family, their origin in Appalachia, and where they eventually settled.

Our traditions are important, the history of our elders is important, and survival knowledge passed from previous generations is important because this is the framework of how we define ourselves. That is why home for me is and always has been Appalachia.

A 1965 graduate of Berea College, Jane Powell retired three years ago after a 35-year classroom career and many years as a freelance writer. Although she's no longer teaching, she is still writing.



THE VIEW

Jane Poweli

LOOKING FORWARD

Please check www.berea.edu/ac for more updates.

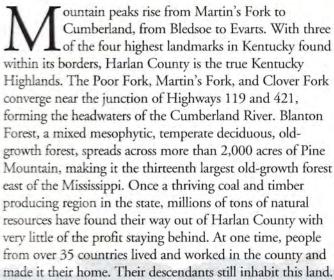
October 17-18: Tenth annual national conference: "The Women of Appalachia: Their Heritage and Accomplishments," sponsored by Ohio University—Zanesville. Topics of papers will include everything imaginable, from the domestic to the global, food to folk music, politics to ethnology. There'll also be a young Appalachian writers' competition, a juried art exhibition and a showcase of the work of local artisans and craftspersons. For general information, including instructions for submitting abstracts of papers, you may phone 740-588-1401; e-mail: ouzconted@ohio.edu; or visit: www.zanesville.ohiou.edu/ce/wac.

October 25: 35th annual Blue Ridge Folklife Festival, Ferrum College, Ferrum, Va., billed, as always, as "the largest celebration of authentic folkways in Virginia" and twice named one of the

"Top 20 Events in the Southeast" by the Southeast Tourism Society. The show brings together folk culture and modern technology. Nobody should miss the Virginia coon-mule jumping championship and the coon-dog water races. There's also a major quilt show, and much music. Further information from Ferrum College, Ferrum, Va.; phone: 540-365-4416; email: bri@ferrum.edu.

October 26-November 2: Old-Time Week in West Virginia, when traditional music fills the air, is put on every autumn by the very active Augustans over at Davis & Elkins. The days are filled with intensive small-group instruction, workshops with guest master artists and, in the evenings, square dancing, shape-note singing, flatfooting and other such fun. The whole affair ends with the weekend Fiddlers' Reunion, which brings together dozens of t musicians and will feature a Halloween masquerade dance. For specific details, write the Augusta Heritage Center, 100 Campus

The fortunes and misfortunes of Harlan County



Few people unrelated to the county remember the glory days when there was plenty of work and the promise of a decent future for those who chose to stay. More notable in the recent press are the statistics of unemployment, health issues, and addiction.

For a long time coal production dwindled, then became so mechanized that bigger machines now extract far more coal more efficiently with less miners. The best timber was hauled out long ago, and the second growth of primal forest snakes its way in truckloads out of the county daily. Rivers that once ran deep and pure are largely polluted or filled in with sediment from extraction industries. But perhaps the greatest loss is the exodus of young people who seek higher education and a brighter

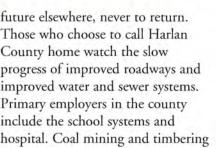
future elsewhere, never to return. Those who choose to call Harlan County home watch the slow progress of improved roadways and improved water and sewer systems. Primary employers in the county include the school systems and hospital. Coal mining and timbering continue, but employ fewer people.

Drug abuse, specifically the misuse of OxyContin and other prescription pain medication, has surged. A recent drug bust resulted

in more than 100 warrants issued with 50 arrests made in a single day. In a place where jobs are limited, dealing drugs appears to have grown into an occupation. The direct correlation between unemployment and drug abuse may not have been established, but the depression and hopelessness that comes to a region where there are no jobs has.

Work validates a person as a human being and gives one a reason to get up in the morning. Work supplies hope and provides a setting where people can develop a sense of belonging. Work puts money in the pocket and self-respect in the heart. The single most important element missing from Harlan County is available jobs with decent wages.

Judith Hensley was born in Harlan, grew up in a Chicago suburb, and returned to Harlan County as a public school teacher 25 years ago. She is a writer, photographer, and singer.





Judith Victoria

Hensley

Drive, Elkins, W.Va. 26241, or phone: 304-637-1209; e-mail: augusta@augustaheritage.com; or visit: www.augustaheritage.

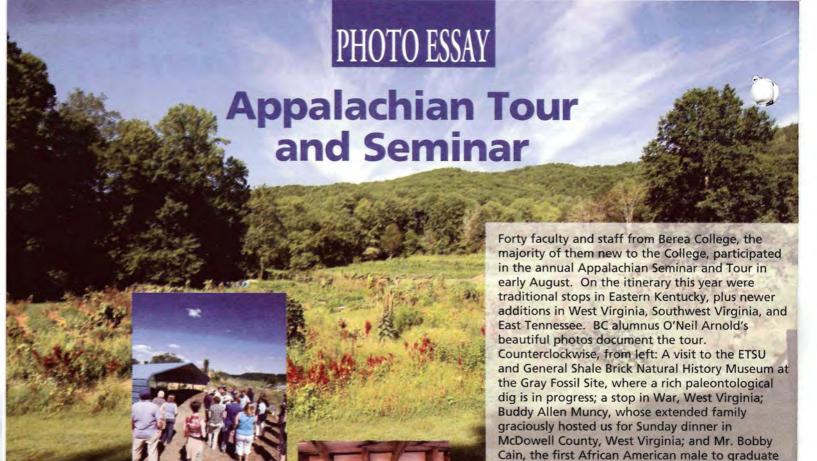
November 20: 15th annual conference, Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center. This year the conference is "piggybacking" on the annual meeting of Idea Kentucky (in Covington), with this one-day session of its own. Full information from the sponsors at 800-853-2851; or e-mail: info@kltprc.net.

December 26-January 1: Christmas Country Dance School, Berea College, directed by Joe Tarter. Devoted to the practice and enjoyment of authentic folk material, this famous school, which goes back to 1938, helps everyone find usable materials for

liation programs, teaching situations or personal benefit, and ontinued to produce fresh generations of young teachers. You can participate in a variety of classes offering "English,

American, Irish and Scandinavian dance, music, song and craft traditions"; newcomers receive special attention. If you're interested, act now-registration with deposit is due by November 1. To find out more, call 859-985-3431; or e-mail: ccds@berea.edu.

February 1-21: Winter session, New Opportunity School for Women, Berea, Ky. Successful applicants 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 also offers career counseling throughout the year. There's no tuition fee, and room and meals are provided. Deadline for applications is December 1. You may apply if you're a high school graduate, have a GED certificate or are actively working on a GED. For full information, contact 204 Chestnut Street, Berea, Ky. 40403; phone: 859-985-7200; or visit: www.nosw.org.



Carly the instrument and in

from an integrated public school in the South—one o "Clinton 12" outside the Green McAdoo Cultural Center in Clinton, Tennessee. The background shows the gardens of Blackberry Farm in

Walland, Tennessee. For more images of the Tour, see www.berea.edu/ac/acsemntour.asp.



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