



# APPALACHIAN CENTER

*Tradition. Diversity. Change.*

## Sad news and good news

by **Chad Berry**  
*Director, Appalachian Center*

With this issue, we share good news and sad news. We were saddened to learn of the recent death of Stuart Faber, longtime patron of mountaineers and those working to improve the quality of life, both in rural areas and in Cincinnati, his home. Stuart built on his father's fortune in Formica and led the Appalachian Fund for many years. His generosity enriched the lives of countless people, and in this issue we pay homage to the vision of Stuart Faber.

On a happier note, we are pleased to announce that at its October 2008 meeting, the Berea College Board of Trustees voted to name the Appalachian Center after Loyal Jones, the founding director. Because Loyal has more friends than Carter has little

pills, this news will bring a smile to many. The College is planning a celebration to honor this name change on May 2, along with the Board's decision to name the Campus Christian Center after Willis D. Weatherford, Jr. A public ceremony and reception are planned for the afternoon. Those interested in attending will want to consult the AC website, which will feature final details:

[www.berea.edu/ac](http://www.berea.edu/ac).

We do hope that readers will check the website to learn more about the semester's worth of programming this spring. One event in particular to take note is the reading by Jayne Anne Phillips on Friday, March 13, at 7:30 in the Appalachian Center Gallery. Phillips is receiving rave reviews of her new work *Lark and Termite* and is the featured author for the Winter 2009 issue of *Appalachian Heritage*. We hope to see you there. ❖



**Faber**



**Jones**



Winter 2009

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**APPALACHIAN CENTER STAFF**

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

**George Brosi**, Editor, *Appalachian Heritage*

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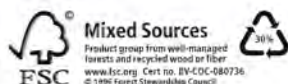
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**Dr. William Turner**, NEH Chair in Appalachian Studies

**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](http://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 authors in this Newsletter, however, do not necessarily represent the views and policies of Berea College.



# Expressing our

## Berea trustees rename Centers to

by **Rodney Wolfenbarger**

*AmeriCorps\*VISTA Volunteer*

The Berea College Board of Trustees recently passed resolutions to name two College Centers after two individuals whose distinguished careers and notable accomplishments have earned such recognition. Willis D. Weatherford, Jr., former Berea College president, and Loyal Jones, renowned Appalachian scholar, will have their names attached to programmatic Centers with which they were closely associated.

On May 2, 2009, public ceremonies will be held during the afternoon at the College to rename the Campus Christian Center to the “Willis D. Weatherford, Jr., Campus Christian Center.” The Appalachian Center will be renamed the “Loyal Jones Appalachian Center.” These Centers reflect two of the College’s eight Great Commitments—to an inclusive Christianity and to the people of Appalachia. In passing the resolutions, the Board of Trustees cited the exceptional accomplishments each individual had made in connection with these Centers.

A native son of Appalachia, Loyal Jones was born and grew up in the mountains of western North Carolina before attending Berea College. After graduating from Berea, Jones devoted his life to serving the Appalachian region through his work with the Council of the Southern Mountains as well as his teaching and scholarship, which has documented the history and culture of the region through such important works as *Appalachian Values*; *Laughter in Appalachia*; *Minstrel of the Appalachians: The Story of Bascom Lamar Lunsford*; *Faith and Meaning in the Southern Uplands*, and many other publications and presentations pertaining to Appalachian culture, humor, music, and religion.

When the Appalachian Center was created by Berea College in 1970, Willis Weatherford hired Loyal Jones as its founding director. The Appalachian Center was the first such center in the southern Appalachian region and prospered under his committed and extraordinary leadership. Jones was central to both the shaping of the Appalachian Center and the Appalachian Studies Program at Berea College. Speaking of the Center’s early direction, Jones said that his primary goal was to pull together and coordinate Berea’s Appalachian relatedness both from getting students from the region and offering some services to the region. “One of the things Willis Weatherford wanted to do was to make sure our convocation programs examined Appalachia. His own father was one of the early Appalachian scholars,” Jones said. “Willis wanted more emphasis on the region and more attention to the region, and I think we achieved a lot of that.”

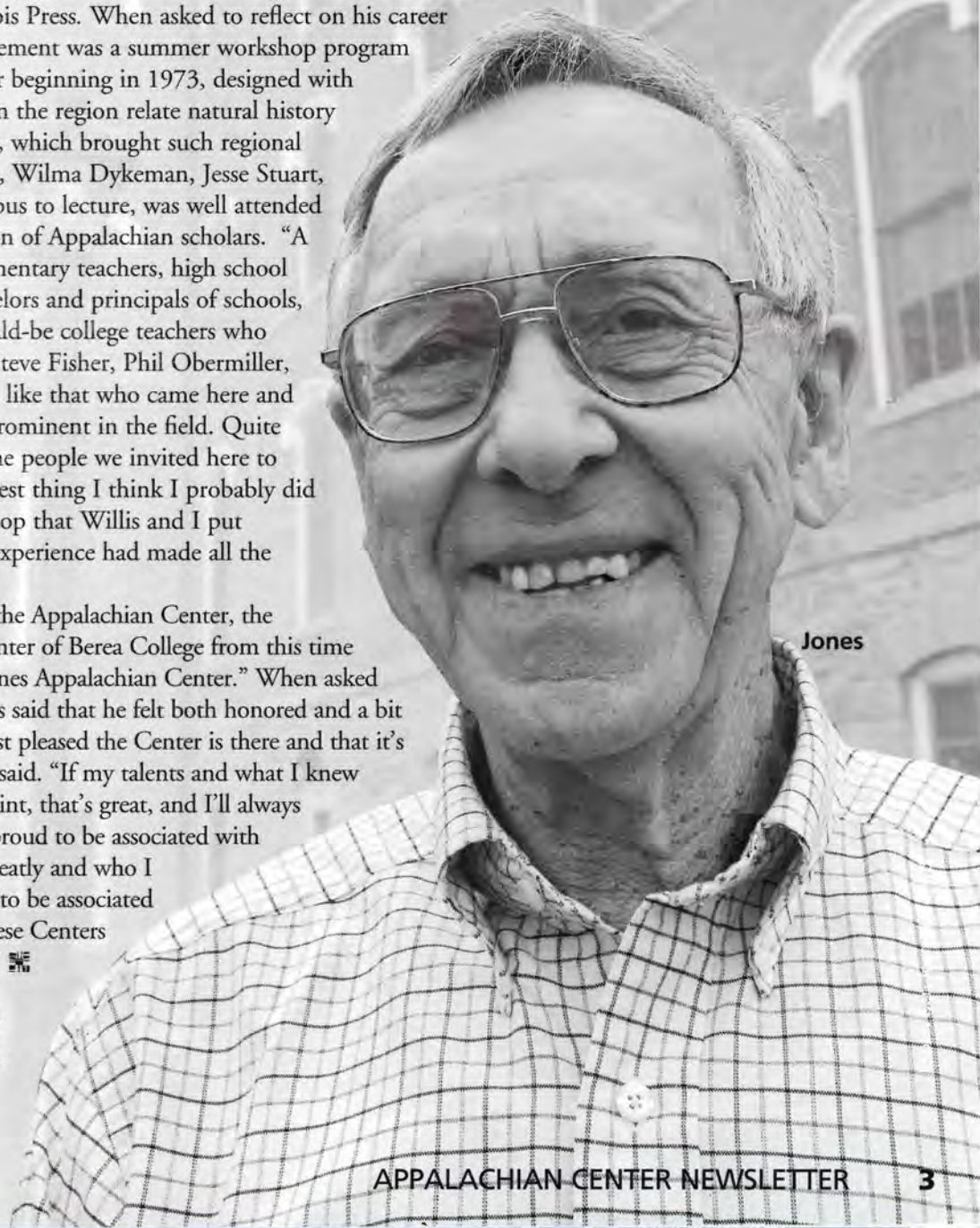
# Loyal'-ty

## honor Loyal Jones, Willis Weatherford, Jr.

After serving as Director of the Appalachian Center for 23 years, Loyal Jones retired from Berea College in 1993 but continues to be a well-recognized speaker and champion of Appalachian humor and values. His just-published book is *Country Music Humorists and Comedians* from the University of Illinois Press. When asked to reflect on his career at Berea, Jones said his proudest achievement was a summer workshop program he and Willis Weatherford put together beginning in 1973, designed with the original intent of helping teachers in the region relate natural history to local history. Jones said the program, which brought such regional scholars and authors as Cratis Williams, Wilma Dykeman, Jesse Stuart, James Still, and Harriet Arnow to campus to lecture, was well attended and assisted in creating a new generation of Appalachian scholars. "A lot of those people who came were elementary teachers, high school teachers, librarians, Appalachian counselors and principals of schools, but also a lot of college teachers or would-be college teachers who wanted to teach Appalachian Studies. Steve Fisher, Phil Obermiller, and Grace Edwards, all kinds of people like that who came here and went on and got degrees and became prominent in the field. Quite often they were as good a resource as the people we invited here to speak," Jones said. "And that was the best thing I think I probably did for the region was that summer workshop that Willis and I put together. Some had later told me that experience had made all the difference in the world."

In passing the resolution regarding the Appalachian Center, the Trustees stated that the Appalachian Center of Berea College from this time forward shall be known as the "Loyal Jones Appalachian Center." When asked what this resolution meant to him, Jones said that he felt both honored and a bit surprised. "I did the best I could. I'm just pleased the Center is there and that it's going on under good leadership," Jones said. "If my talents and what I knew and my abilities helped us get to that point, that's great, and I'll always be grateful for that. And I'm especially proud to be associated with Willis Weatherford, whom I admired greatly and who I worked for and who hired me. I'm glad to be associated with him and being named to one of these Centers along with him, I'm grateful, of course." ❧

*Roufney Wolfenbarger is an AmeriCorps\*  
no-VA volunteer currently serving at the  
Appalachian Center at Berea College.*



Jones

# Community

## W. Va. county overwhelmed by



### THE VIEW FROM HERE

**Tom  
Hatcher**

I grew up in McDowell County, West Virginia, once called the “Coal Bin” of the United States. Bituminous coal was mined here by the millions of tons by large corporations from the early 1900s until the last big mine closed its doors in 1986. We still mine coal here, more than ever in any one given year, but we do so with fewer miners employed in small non-union mines, compared to the “boom” years when perhaps more than 30,000 men were employed. Today, big machinery produces most of the coal, with less than 2,000 miners employed in McDowell County. In 1960, approximately 100,000 people populated this

county; today there are only about 22,000 of us.

From about 1960, when mechanization in the mines began, until I returned here in the early 1990s, the McDowell County that I knew had changed drastically. The beautiful and pristine mountains were still here, along with the wild flowers, the glorious fall foliage, and the wonderful swells of the blossoming spring with its many shades of green. And, of course, there were still many of the delightful, friendly, religious, generous, accommodating people that I had known prior to my leaving in 1958 to attend West Virginia University.

But change had occurred rapidly during this period. As the large mines closed, jobs were lost, and because McDowell County employment relied almost solely on coal production, people who still needed to work left. Many miners chose to stay here and retired. Many of those who could not leave, for one reason or another, chose to go on a “check” (assistance) from the State of West Virginia, or else applied to Social Security for an SSI payment each month,

## LOOKING FORWARD

**February 1-21:** Winter session, New Opportunity School for Women, Berea. [www.nosw.org](http://www.nosw.org).

**February 14-15:** Annual Appalachian Culture Fest, Cincinnati, Ohio. 800-733-2077 or 513-251-3378.

**February 19-22:** “Kentucky Crafted: The Market,” Louisville. website: [kyarts@ky.gov](mailto:kyarts@ky.gov).

**March 27-29:** Appalachian Studies Conference, Portsmouth, Ohio. [mthomas@marshall.edu](mailto:mthomas@marshall.edu).

**April 19-24:** Spring Dulcimer Week, Augusta Heritage Center, Elkins, W.Va. website: [www.augustaheritage.com](http://www.augustaheritage.com). e-mail: [augusta@augustaheritage.com](mailto:augusta@augustaheritage.com).

**April 23-26:** Annual MerleFest, Wilkes Community College, Wilkesboro, N.C. [www.merlefest.org](http://www.merlefest.org).

**April 30-May 2:** Annual Boxcar Pinion Memorial Bluegrass Festival, Chattanooga, Tenn. [www.boxcarforeverbluegrass.com](http://www.boxcarforeverbluegrass.com)

**May 8-10:** Annual Appalachian Festival, Coney Island, Cincinnati, Ohio. 513-251-3378.

**May 22-24:** Old-Time Fiddlers and Bluegrass Festival, Union Grove, N.C. website: [www.fiddlersgrove.com](http://www.fiddlersgrove.com); e-mail: [info@fiddlersgrove.com](mailto:info@fiddlersgrove.com).

**June 7-13:** Blue Ridge Old-Time Music Week, Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, N.C. [www.mhc.edu/oldtimemusic](http://www.mhc.edu/oldtimemusic).

# in crisis

## unemployment, drugs

claiming some type of disability. Some chose to work small jobs until something better came along. When SSI changed its regulations to include "disabled children," many parents somehow got each of their children on an SSI check, so in some families, you might find a mother, father, and each child receiving a monthly stipend. In many ways, the SSI situation has backfired, creating people who do not want to work—because they receive SSI—and who, consequently, live on minimal income.

In 1995, I became a member of the War City Council, and, subsequently, Mayor in 1997. In the last four years, we have attempted to tackle the most devastating of problems: the arrival of "drug abuse" among the people who live in Big Creek District (6,000 people), which includes [redacted] (1,000). Those of us in town government know who are sellers, users, or both. We have at least 50-60 sellers in the area, who peddle, primarily, prescription drugs (hydrocodone, Xanax, OxyContin) or other derivatives of these three. All of these people have been reported to

the County Sheriff's Office, but many arrests have not occurred.

People here are dying from overdosing on drugs. Soon after a person begins taking drugs, one becomes addicted and, if one wants to become free of drugs, there is no place to go. The County does not have a treatment facility. A nearby county has a 12-bed facility, but available beds are few and far between, with long waiting lists. A person can be detoxified at a local hospital, but after three days, one is released to go back to the community where friends are still abusing drugs and where he or she, most likely, will begin again. Those dying among us are adult children of very responsible parents, who absolutely do not know what to do or how to stop their abuse. Even when an overdose occurs, parents and friends are at a loss for what will help. And when it happens, there is little time to act. Depending on "how much" and "what" a person has taken, immediate care is needed. In most cases of death by overdose, the person loses consciousness, the breathing rate

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**June 10-13:** Seedtime on the Cumberland Festival of Mountain Arts, Whitesburg. website: [www.appalshop.org](http://www.appalshop.org); email: [seedtime@appalshop.org](mailto:seedtime@appalshop.org).

**June 8-14:** Appalachian Family Folk Week, Hindman Settlement School. Hindman. website: [hindmansettlement.org](http://hindmansettlement.org); email: [info@hindmansettlement.org](mailto:info@hindmansettlement.org).

**June 16-July 25:** Annual Hindman Settlement School summer tutorial program for "children with learning differences/dyslexia." See contact information immediately above.

**June 21-26:** Annual Mountain Dulcimer Week, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, N.C. [Hensley@email.wcu.edu](mailto:Hensley@email.wcu.edu).

**July 5-August 8:** Swannanoa Gathering, Warren Wilson College, outside Asheville, N.C. [gathering@warren-wilson.edu](mailto:gathering@warren-wilson.edu); [www.swangathering.org](http://www.swangathering.org).

**July 12-August 1:** Summer session, New Opportunity School for Women, Berea, Ky. [www.lmc.edu/NOSW](http://www.lmc.edu/NOSW). **The deadline for applications is April 1.**

**July 26-31:** Augusta workshops, Augusta Heritage Center, Davis & Elkins College. [www.augustaheritage.com](http://www.augustaheritage.com); [augusta@augustaheritage.com](mailto:augusta@augustaheritage.com).

*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.*

# Meeting—and remembering— Stuart Faber

by David Cooke, '82

Director, Berea College Appalachian Fund

Since being hired in December 2005 to serve as the director of the Berea College Appalachian Fund, I have heard many wonderful stories about the very real impact of the countless grants spread across Appalachian hill country by the Appalachian Fund in its fifty-nine-year history. Hospitals, clinics, settlement schools, missions, and so many more effective organizations dedicated to the genuine welfare of the people of the hills were all the recipients of these modest but strategically powerful grants designed to “improve the health, education, and general welfare of people living in the Appalachian Mountains and surrounding areas.” Founded in 1950 by Herbert and Ruth Faber, the Appalachian Fund was guided for over 30 years—from 1956 until 1987—by Stuart and Shirley Faber, Herbert’s son and daughter-in-law. In 1987 the Fund’s endowment, some \$5 million, was given to Berea College to administer, and by 2009, the total grants of the Appalachian Fund now exceed \$15 million. Their value in human terms is incalculable.

My intent from the beginning was to visit the Fabers in Cincinnati and learn from them all I could of the inspiring history of the Appalachian

Fund, but I could never quite shake free from that slow avalanche of work. Purely by chance, I ran into Phil Obermiller this past October in the Appalachian Center and asked him to send me the contact information for Stuart. He did so with the admonition that I should go sooner rather than later. I called that day to make arrangements.

As I sat in the living room a few days later and videotaped a two-hour interview with this gentle, intelligent man, I began to understand why everyone I spoke with had such positive feelings toward him. Thoughtful, unassuming, and constantly seeking to give credit to others who had been a part of this tale of quiet, egoless philanthropy, Stuart demonstrated a sharp mind, clear memory, and gentle sense of humor. I was reluctant to leave, but when he obviously tired I knew it was time to go. We spoke of a second meeting in January, and I was about to contact him when I heard he had passed. As sorry as I am that I will not be able to sit and listen to more of his stories, I am deeply thankful that I had that one morning to spend with him. ❧

*In addition to his duties with the Appalachian Fund, David Cooke is also program coordinator of the Entrepreneurship for the Public Good program.*



**“Everything considered the Appalachian Fund has been a sometimes frustrating experience because the problems we face loom so large. The fund has been great in the constant barrage of inhumanity to man with a long list of v**

## Stuart Faber 1921

For Stuart Faber, a prominent developer who died on January 19, 1991, from Appalachia was a family tradition. Faber, co-developer of Formica, used his wealth to create a foundation which became famous for the support it provided to health workers and other people in “the hill country.”

After Herbert Faber’s death, Shirley Faber took over as head of the fund but moved it to Berea College. In Appalachian-related activities, the board of the Council of the Cincinnati Area, in particular, he helped create programs in Cincinnati itself, not only with his own involvement, devoting many hours to the organizations as an adviser and

The late Ernie Mynatt, a sort of mentor to those working with mountains, said of Stuart: “He would come down through the neighborhoods and visit the heads of foundations or corporations and ask, ‘What will do that?’”



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Stuart Faber

## Faber 2009

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—Thomas Parrish

# Remembering the work of Stuart Faber

by Irma Gall

*Contributing Writer*

**W**e first met Stuart Faber in 1961 at an Appalachian Fund Conference at Berea College, where we learned about the Faber family and the Appalachian Fund, which has been such a benefit to programs like ours at Lend-A-Hand Center.

Stuart's father, Herbert, had a factory along the Ohio River called the Formica Company. He had workers both there and on his farm, and spent time with his employees every day. He became interested in a particular group of workers from the Appalachian South. Although they were good and loyal employees, they seemed to suffer from a variety of health problems. After the war, his company was booming, and Herbert resolved to do something for his Appalachian friends. The Appalachian Fund from Formica was established.

It was the connection with Berea College—president Francis Hutchins, Raymond Drukker, P. F. Ayer, and Judy Drukker Stammer—that brought the Faber family to southeastern Kentucky. After Herbert died, it was Stuart's turn to become involved. By 1961, when Lend-A-Hand became involved, the fund was firmly established to help with the social and health problems of Appalachia. One of the projects was to gather the affiliates together to report what we were doing and would like to be doing. Judy Stammer was the major force about the gathering, but Stuart, Shirley, and other family members were present with Stuart conducting the meetings. Although Stuart was not the most eloquent speaker, his sincerity and interest won us over. He seemed almost shy, but as he spoke and listened to our reports he made us feel that our projects were not only important to our community but were also part of the Faber dream. It was a real sharing time for us and gave us the inspiration to continue on. Sometimes we felt he was a bit overwhelmed with what the Fund was accomplishing; it was even better than he had dreamed it could be.

It was so encouraging to us who were trying to accomplish better social and health care in our communities. We were located on the "wrong side" of the creek. It was often difficult for us to drive in the branch and cross Stinking Creek to deliver health services such as delivering babies in the home. It was an even greater barrier for people to get to the Center. A failure seemed in the making, so we built a bridge over Stinking Creek, a high road to the Center, and moved Stinking Creek out of our way. The success of this project far exceeded the expectations and has indeed become a blessing. Not a blessing in disguise, as the first trip over here usually makes quite an impression.

And who was there ready to help us turn this liability into a blessing? The Appalachian Fund and Stuart were able to see that it could definitely help with the social and health needs of the people on Stinking Creek. In fact it has become a landmark not only physically but also psychologically. We continue to drive over the bridge in appreciation, not only for the financial help, but also for the inspiration that they believed in us and trusted in us. ❖

*Irma Gall co-directs the Lend-A-Hand Center in Walker, Kentucky, with Peggy Kemner. They have been residents of Stinking Creek for 50 years.*

# Change we *must*

**M**any non-Europeans and Americans have probably heard about Ukraine, but just as many, if not more, may not know where Ukraine is. Many people still associate Ukraine, an independent country since 1991, with the Soviet Union or Russia. I live in the city of Ivano-Frankivsk, which is in the west of Ukraine. The region I am originally from is called Precarpathia, as it is the “gate” to the Carpathian Mountains. Though my region is called “Precarpathia,” most of it lies in the Carpathians.

I have been fortunate to visit the United States twice so far. During both of my trips, I was also fortunate to see Appalachia. During my first trip, Dr. Donald Davis, Professor of Sociology at Dalton State College, took me and Yuriy Moskalenko, Vice President of the Precarpathian National University, on a field trip to Berea. While driving from Georgia to Kentucky, I was impressed by the striking similarities in the landscape of the Ukrainian Carpathians and the Appalachian Mountains, much the same except for the better mountain highways in America. On our way to Berea we visited the Museum of Appalachia in Norris, Tennessee. I felt much at home there because many artifacts I saw were strikingly similar to the items peculiar to my home region. I was also told about a number of social and environmental problems with which Appalachians struggle, similar to those we face in Ukraine.

Precarpathia is a distinct region in terms of its rich traditions, customs, rites, and native dialects. It possesses valuable natural resources. It is also a region that has its share of social and environmental problems, including deforestation, flooding, a high rate of unemployment, problems in education, and poor infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, which hampers economic development in the region. Highland schools have poor heating conditions and

**This grazhda, a mountain home in western Ukraine constructed in 1925, shares many similarities with 19th-century log structures in Appalachia.**





# believe in



## THE VIEW FROM HERE

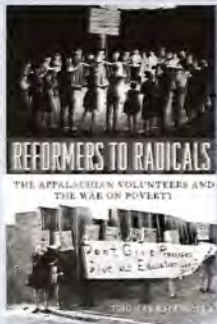
Roman  
Poznanskyy

Roman Kumlyk, instrumentalist and curator of a regional museum in Verkhovyna, Ukraine, displays his collection of Carpathian musical instruments. Fiddles, as seen here, are important folk instruments in both Appalachia and Ukraine.

lack up-to-date manuals and computers. Many young people are leaving the highland areas either to continue their education or to seek out jobs. Because of the high rate of unemployment, many others have left for work abroad.

But there is positive change. We only have to see it and believe in it. We're beginning to see fewer and fewer people leaving Precarpathia for work abroad. More and more young people have begun to return to their small towns and villages. Many adults who had gone abroad many years ago in search of work have since realized that "East or West, home is best." They are now returning and investing their money in the local economy and thus contributing to the development of the area. They are beginning to understand what a privilege it is to live in this region and the value of developing their own region and country. Some have opened their own small family hotels, inns, guesthouses, lodges, restaurants, and other businesses, creating new jobs for locals and building an infrastructure to support tourism. Tourists come not only to see the wonderful landscape of the Carpathians and to participate in winter sports, but they also come to study and explore the local culture and traditions. My region has great potential for the development of an economy built around agriculture, forestry, and tourism. While developing our region, we must remember the importance of preserving local culture—it must not be lost or forgotten in the process of economic development, particularly during this age of globalization.

*Roman Poznanskyy is an instructor of English at Precarpathian National Vasyl Kylyk University, located in Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine. He is employed within both the Division of Foreign Languages and the Institute of Tourism.*



**Reformers to Radicals: The Appalachian Volunteers and the War on Poverty**, by Thomas Kiffmeyer (University Press of Kentucky, 2008).

Just three days before he was assassinated, President John F. Kennedy told Walter Heller, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, that he wanted to include a poverty-relief measure on his legislative agenda for 1964. When Heller duly raised the

question with the new president, Lyndon Johnson, he received the order to go ahead “full tilt,” and in his State of the Union address a month and a half later Johnson declared “unconditional war on poverty in America.” The war became official on August 20, 1964, when Congress passed the Economic Opportunity Act to mobilize the troops and resources for the conflict. (It didn’t involve much new money, said Senator Daniel Moynihan of New York: “We did it with mirrors.”)

President Johnson not only declared war on poverty, he also identified one specific fighting front: “We will launch a special effort in the chronically distressed areas of Appalachia.”

All this, of course, attracted the full attention of the Berea-based organization called the Council of the Southern Mountains (CSM). But council executives and staff members were not mere bystanders; they had made important contributions to the national dialogue, particularly with respect to organizing Appalachia to work as a regional partner with the federal government.

And, on a different level, CSM staff members, supported by a grant from the Area Redevelopment Administration, had organized a modest effort that involved college students

painting schools and winterizing houses. The participants were volunteers and came from local colleges—so began the Appalachian Volunteers, the organization whose rise and provides the subject of this book.

Although the Council’s writ ran in seven states, covering about 250 counties, which made it the leading social-philanthropic enterprise in the region, it had achieved this status only during the previous decade. It had risen from the last stages of moribundity through the efforts of a charismatic Berea College professor, P. F. Ayer, a popular and effective speaker who developed a range of important contacts, notably including executives of the Ford Foundation; nevertheless the organization operated on a shoestring as it pursued its varied objectives. The important point here is that the Council philosophy, as Ayer described it, rested on the principle of cooperation—bringing together all the “interests” in an area to work for the common good.

The same principle underlay the essential component of the War on Poverty, community action, which required each local program (community action agency) to involve political officials, leading citizens and—the innovative feature of this as a government activity—representatives of the “target group.” The key phrase here was “maximum feasible participation” of the poor, and the idea genuinely excited some of Johnson’s entourage and associated intellectuals.

But a clash of cultures lay almost immediately ahead. The fledgling poverty warriors were carrying the banner of cooperation into a decade that would live by the watchword *confrontation*. As the AVs along with all the others moved through the next years, they engaged in internal and external struggles over ideas, definitions and purposes: Who was the real enemy in this war—the coal companies, the school superintendents? Who were true allies? And the big question: What was the cause of Appalachian poverty—the coal companies, the school superintendents? *The cause? Workers*

## Crisis

continued from page 5

decreases, and the person lies down to die of complications from the overdose.

I know of one family in which a daughter, a son-in-law, and a mother all died from overdoses. In another family, a son and a daughter-in-law passed away from drug overdoses, while a second son and the mother soon followed. The father is selling drugs and is living with another woman, who is so “drugged-up” most days that she does not know where she is.

I have a list of individuals in my office who have died in Big Creek District from a drug overdose. We have

had seven people to pass on in the last several weeks. There are 43 on my list who have died in the last three years. They range from young adults to those in their 50s and 60s. They died in the homes of people they knew—parents, grandparents, or friends. Many were on SSI. Most did not have a job. Most had poor self concepts. Most did not have help from anyone. I knew all of them or their parents.

Several of us in War have been asking: What can we do? What is the answer? How can we stop physicians who prescribe too liberally? What should be the response of our church communities? Where do we go for help? Most of us have stuck our heads in the ground and ignored the situation, but

we cannot continue to let these deaths happen without intervention. We have not found solutions, although we are meeting to work on some possibilities, which I will discuss in another article.

I know that War and Big Creek District are not unique in facing the drug problems we have. We are a community of proud people who have worked hard all of our lives to be where we are today. But our sons and daughters and grandchildren are dying around us. If we value life, we will find solutions. We cannot do otherwise.

*Although Tom Hatcher has served several terms as Mayor, he has not decided whether he will place his name on the ballot when his current term expires on June 30.*

## Celebration of Traditional Music

The 35th annual Celebration of Traditional Music (CTM), October 16-19, 2008, kicked off with a Stephenson Memorial Concert featuring Grammy Award-winner David Holt and the Lightning Bolts. Other performers included Virgil Bowlin and Peerless Mountain, Paul David Smith, Lou Maiuri, Karly Dawn Higgins, and Sarah Wood. Dr. Cecelia Conway presented the afternoon symposium on "African Roots of the Mountain Banjo and Fiddle."

Conway's presentation was representative of a special effort begun by Programming Director Deborah Thompson during the summer of 2008. A folk arts project grant from the Kentucky Arts Council and a Folk Arts Internship sponsored by the Anne Ray Charitable Trust allowed Thompson to work with student intern and Appalachian Studies major Darrin Hacquard to travel to parts of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia. They met with and interviewed African American Appalachian musicians and scholars to gain a better understanding of their traditional music, collect oral histories, and build relationships, with the possibility of inviting traditional performers to future festivals.

Recordings of approximately 24 hours of interviews from 20 African American regional musicians and scholars are now housed in the Sound Archives in the Hutchins Library, where they are available for listening by the public.

Thompson's commitment to accurately representing the musical traditions of the region has led to ongoing discussions with a number of Black gospel groups about performing at the 36th annual CTM in 2009, along with internationally recognized African American folklorist, musician, storyteller, and author, Sparky Rucker. For more info., see [www.berea.edu/ac/ctm](http://www.berea.edu/ac/ctm).



Sparky and Rhonda Rucker.

of the time (and now Kiffmeyer himself) seemed to believe that one such mighty opponent existed. They could have benefited from careful study of the decade-by-decade taxonomy of causes offered by Ron Eller in his recent book *Uneven Ground* (*Appalachian Center Newsletter*, Summer 2007). One prominent victim of the changing styles was the "culture of poverty" model, which shaped early AV activities and much of the overall thinking of the time.

Kiffmeyer describes in considerable detail and in objective fashion the major event of 1966 in the AV story, the split with the parent CSM. What does not come through—perhaps because documents simply couldn't provide it—was the feel of clashing personalities and even intrigue and a bit of plotting. Some personal descriptions of the principals would also have been welcome, not only here but in accounts of workers in the field. The very interesting story of Carol Irons, a volunteer in Mill Creek, Clay County, Kentucky, struggling to carry out the mysterious task of "developing a community," made this particular reader, at least, wonder what she was like as a person.

In his focus on the AV organization, the author passes over an important point about the CSM: the AVs were not the organization's only field activity in the War on Poverty. The Council also operated a program for community action technicians, who had the job of helping develop boards that would truly involve the maximum feasible participation of the official poor. This effort often involved struggles against the local power structure, not unlike some of those in which the AVs became involved. And, though the warriors, AVs and others, are long gone, the legacy of change in attitudes remains. It's not as easy to shove a dam down somebody's throat as it used to be. And if you want to see more about how things used to be, you'll find Kiffmeyer an honest guide.

—Thomas Parrish

## BOOK NOTE

*The African-American Music of Appalachia*, edited by Fred Hay (Black Music Research Journal).

A collection of articles from the journal, addressing the major genres of African-American music in the region, the musical interaction between African-American and non-black Appalachians, black banjo songsters, and a variety of other pieces.

The price is \$50, and ordering information can be obtained from the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago: [colum.edu/cbmr](http://colum.edu/cbmr).



—Thomas Parrish



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The Winter 2009 issue features a pre-publication excerpt from *Lark and Termite* by Jayne Anne Phillips, a novel that the *New York Times* called "incandescent and utterly original." Filling out our featured author section is a paper on Phillips by a scholar from France, a biographical sketch of Phillips, and an essay by another West Virginia novelist, Meredith Sue Willis. The issue also includes a memoir by Patricia Harman, fiction by Gurney Norman, and a poem celebrating the November election by Silas House.

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