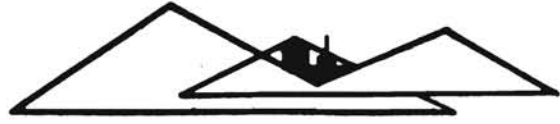


NEWS

LETTER



APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE

Loyal Jones · Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

Vol. 4 No. 2 · Spring 1975

Judges Vote No Weatherford Award

The committee of judges for Berea College's W.D. Weatherford Award has voted not to choose a recipient for this year's award, which would have honored a work published in 1974. The award, given annually since 1971, goes to the work "which, in the opinion of the judges, best illustrates the problems, personalities and unique qualities of the Appalachian South." It is sponsored by the Appalachian Center and Hutchins Library.

The judges say that although a number of fine books and other works were nominated, they were unable to agree on one that met the quoted stipulation and also met another prime criterion, having "impact on readers." They point out that the award is not a purely literary competition.

Since the judges did not choose a winning work, Alfred H. Perrin of Berea, donor of the prize, has announced the gift of the \$500 award money to the Hutchins Library to finance acquisitions for the Weatherford-Hammond Mountain Collection.

The competition sponsors say that they are ready to consider nominations for next year's award, and they remind interested persons that short pieces that appear in newspapers and magazines, either individually or in a series, are eligible along with books.

Fair Time

Spring has increasingly become the season for craftsmen's fairs (not that fall doesn't have its share), and three of the top ones return this year.

Centennial Park in Nashville will be the setting for the fourth annual Tennessee Crafts Fair, May 2-4. It is sponsored by the Tennessee Artist-Craftsmen's Association.

The Appalachian Festival in Cincinnati, sponsored by the Junior League, is May 7-11 at the Convention Center. It will feature crafts from throughout Appalachia, plus folk entertainment.

It's the ninth year for the Kentucky fair, which will be held May 15-18 at Indian Fort Theater near Berea, under the sponsorship of the Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen, Box 291, Berea, Ky. 40403.

While on the subject of craftsmen (craftspersons?

crafties?), we should mention the National Competition for Producing Craftsmen, conducted under the aegis of the Smithsonian Institution. It begins July 4 and runs until February 16, 1976. Entry forms are available from the Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560.

This also seems a good place to inform or remind filmmakers and students of film of the Sinking Creek Film Celebration at Vanderbilt University, June 4-8.

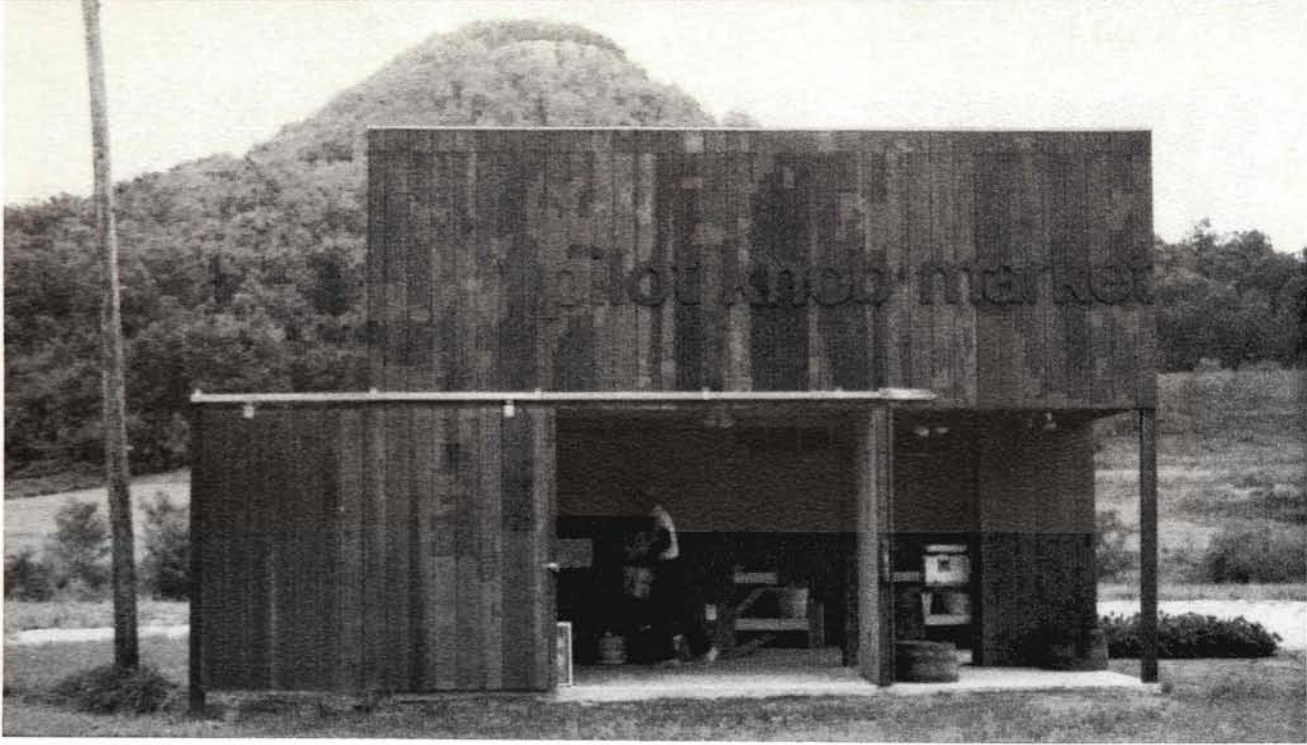
SEA Fair

Craftsmen and artists no longer have the Appalachian fair picture to themselves. Scheduled for April 18-19 in Oak Ridge, Tenn., was the Appalachian Inventors Fair, cosponsored by Scientists and Engineers for Appalachia and the Oak Ridge Associated Universities. The fair, say the sponsors, "provides the inventor an opportunity to display his creation to the public and to potential manufacturers or licensees, and for industrial organizations to display their new products. By this means, it is hoped that the Appalachian region will derive economic and employment benefits."

The public is involved in the fair in more ways than just looking. A special award goes to the invention liked best by fairgoers.

HEAD Corp. works with Breathitt Co. (Ky.) rabbit producers (p.3)





Save the Children Federation worked with local farmers to create the Pilot Knob Market

OPINION

A business magazine looks at embattled TVA

Time was when TVA was regarded as a very creation of the devil by conservative Americans, and many private power executives felt threatened by the TVA's role as a "yardstick" to measure their own rates. But TVA has mellowed over the decades, and so have its traditional enemies . . .

These days, TVA and the private companies share the same enemies and many of the same problems. Congress is investigating both TVA's rates and its widely publicized proposal to buy giant Peabody Coal. The environmentalists have been after it as a polluter of the air, a despoiler of the landscape--"a national obstacle," is how one puts it, "to the enforcement of the Clean Air and Mine Safety Acts."

Even TVA's long-standing commitment to low-cost power and to industrial development is no longer the unmitigated good it once seemed to be. For the first time, TVA is coming under attack from liberals as well as conservatives, as a monster and a monolith, as unresponsive as any 19th century monopolist to the needs and aspirations of the people . . .

Much of TVA's past success in keeping its costs low has stemmed from its ability to browbeat the coal industry, its principal raw materials supplier. With more than 75% of its power now dependent on coal, TVA alone consumes nearly 10% of the U.S.'s total utility coal output. . .

As a federal agency, TVA is required by law to buy all its supplies under competitive bidding, and during the buyer's market that lasted until the late Sixties, that often produced ruinously low prices. By choosing only the lowest bids offered to it, TVA tended to encourage not only strip-mining, which is generally lower cost than deep mining, but often the least responsible of

the strip miners in the business-fly-by-night operators who stripped the coal and all too often felt no obligation to attempt to reclaim the land.

"Mountain by mountain, valley by valley," says Tom Gish, editor of Whitesburg, Ky.'s crusading *Mountain Eagle*, which this year forced TVA to open its board meetings to the public, "TVA has been turning the Tennessee Valley into an uninhabited and uninhabitable wasteland.

But the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries has taken the coal industry's economics out of TVA's hands. Almost overnight, the industry's surplus was wiped out. Coal was called upon to supplant oil and natural gas as a boiler fuel, and TVA found itself for the first time at the mercy of its suppliers. In September it had to renegotiate a contract it had signed in 1966 at \$3.45 a ton for \$28.50 a ton. . .

Like other utilitymen, TVA Chairman Aubrey J. Wagner long ago recognized that the solution to TVA's supply problem was to acquire its own coal reserves and so get its coal at little more than mining cost. . .

Last fall TVA made its boldest move of all. It put in a reported \$1.2 billion bid to acquire Peabody Coal, the U.S.'s largest coal operator, which Kennecott Copper is being forced to divest under a Federal Trade Commission order. Peabody already mines TVA's reserves under contract and supplies a third of its present coal needs. . .

Wagner still sees TVA's principal purpose as producing power at "the lowest possible cost," and General Manager Lynn Seeber says, "You do things on the basis of engineering and cost and environmental considerations, not on whether this community wants you or doesn't want you." Tom Gish of the *Mountain Eagle* thinks that's the whole trouble. "TVA has forgotten the humane purposes that went into its creation. It's no longer concerned with the general welfare of the area and the people."

Gish may be overstating the case. But whatever TVA was supposed to be, it certainly wasn't supposed to end
to page 4



A striking before-and-after: Thanks to Kentucky Mountain Housing Development Corp., a family in Clay Co. (Ky.) was able to move from their old house to the new one below, built on land they owned, at a cost of less than \$400 a year. In first year, eight such houses have been built. FHA helps with low-interest loans.



Berea-Based Catalysts

One of the most popular ideas back in War on Poverty days was the notion of the catalyst—the person, agency or organization that would bring together an area's people and resources in a new way and thus create beneficial change out of wholly native possibilities. Sometimes this proved better theory than practice,

sometimes such efforts collapsed under their own grandiosity, but sometimes they worked, leaving a still-functioning legacy of survivals and spinoffs which, whether in the public or the private sector, drew form and inspiration from War on Poverty ideas. Berea today is home to two of these catalytic agencies—the HEAD Corporation, a relatively new enterprise, and Save the Children Federation's Appalachian headquarters.

HEAD (Human/Economic Appalachian Development)

Corporation describes itself as a technical-service agency for Central Appalachian church-related self-help groups. What this means is suggested by the groups making up its charter membership: Appalachia Community Development Corp., Appalachia, Va.; Frakes Feeder Pig Co-op, Wofford, Ky.; Grass Roots Economic Development Corp., Jackson, Ky.; Henderson Settlement, Frakes, Ky.; Kentucky Mountain Housing Development Corp., Manchester, Ky.; Model Valley Industrial Development Corp., Clairfield, Tenn.; Red Bird Mission, Beverly, Ky.; Rugby Restoration Association, Rugby, Tenn.; Scott-Morgan Community Development Corp., Deer Lodge, Tenn.

Besides aiding its affiliated organizations through training, marketing assistance and so on, HEAD Corp. tries to help new groups get going. By a self-help group, it means one that is "publicly organized for community economic development or self-help service such as housing, transportation, credit, retail sales, etc., which is controlled by its members, organized for their benefit and returns its profits to the members or the community."

HEAD Corp., which is directed by Rev. Ben Poage, is sort of a spinoff of a spinoff, tracing its ancestry to the Self-Help Task Force of the Commission on Religion in Appalachia. Since last July it has been an independent agency; its address is Box 68, Berea, Ky. 40403. Aside from its assistance to affiliated agencies, HEAD is conducting a project called MATCH (Marketing Appalachia Through the Church). MATCH has produced a unified catalogue of crafts produced in nine Appalachian states, the aim being to make direct sales possible. If you're interested, you might write HEAD Corp. for the catalogue (\$2).

Save the Children Federation is a broader-gauge agency, but in recent years it has worked in a catalytic role with various local self-help groups in Eastern Kentucky. The best-known product resulting from their efforts is probably the Christmas wreaths made from pine and hemlock cones, hickory nuts, buckeyes and various seed pods. This project grew out of a crafts workshop held in Wolfe County, Ky., in 1968, which became the basis for Appalachian Fireside Crafts, now headquartered in Booneville, Ky. For a catalogue featuring quilting, basketry, shuckery and woodcrafts, send \$1 to Appalachian Fireside Crafts, Box 276, Dept. ACN, Booneville, Ky. 41214.

The theory behind SCF involvement in such projects is simply that the needy children who are their prime concern benefit when the families are able to make more money. Another project created a "common market" for farmers in Rockcastle, Jackson and Madison Counties, Ky. It opened last July 4, selling vegetables the farmers had contracted to grow in February.

Published by
Appalachian Center/Berea College
C.P.O. Box 2336
Berea, Kentucky 40403

A catalyst, of course, is supposed to bring about a reaction without being changed itself. But it's doubtful that the persons who help crafts groups, marketing co-ops and the like come into being are able to maintain such detachment when they see such tangible results.

TVA - from page 2

up the U.S.'s biggest and lowest-cost power company; the vision was wider than that. As a producer of low-cost power, TVA certainly wins high marks. But as a living demonstration of the moral and economic superiority of public--as opposed to stockholder-owned--utilities, TVA most certainly has *not* proved its case. - *Forbes*

Footnote to the Foregoing

As the *Forbes* article notes, the *Mountain Eagle* "forced TVA to open its board meetings to the public." End of battle between the *Eagle* and the agency? Hardly. The paper's account of the first open board meeting indicates that TVA will have to do more than go through the motions if it wants the *Eagle* to fly elsewhere. Reporter James Branscome observes, "As the TVA board and its top 20 staffers nervously but methodically marched through a 41-item agenda, the press counted a total of 21 items that the agency said the board had already dispensed with behind closed doors." Further, in the question period that followed, "TVA General Manager Lynn Seeber vigorously defended the practice of charging the *Mountain Eagle* \$6.50 an hour for the time TVA employees spend supplying information to the newspaper. Seeber acknowledged the charges were 'unprecedented' but claimed they were justified. . . . The newspaper paid TVA \$108 for information last year and has another major bill pending for information relating to TVA's secret bid for Peabody Coal Co." According to the *Eagle*, "observers of TVA's first public board meeting seemed unanimous in agreeing . . . that the new policy will not deter the agency's critics from continuing their battles against the utility giant." That's probably putting it mildly.

West Virginia Course

Interest in Appalachian studies appears to be continuing at a high level. West Virginia University has announced that in the fall semester 1975 it will begin offering a course entitled "The Appalachian Experience in Literature," to be taught by Jack Welch, associate professor of English.

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