

# NEWS

# LETTER



APPALACHIAN CENTER  
BEREA COLLEGE

Loyal Jones · Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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## “Town Hall” for Mid-Appalachia

Last year President Ford established the White House Office of Public Liaison, which with the idea of bringing the White House to the people has produced a series of “presidential town halls.” The 11th of these regional meetings, called the Mid-Appalachian White House Conference on Domestic and Economic Affairs, was held in Knoxville on October 7. The invitation list included some 1,300 delegates from Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina. Uninvited guests included a small group of pickets from such organizations as the East Tennessee Energy Group, the Church of the People (Dickinson County, Va.) and the Highlander Center of New Market, Tenn. Boycotting the meeting entirely, though invited, were the Black Lung Association, the National Council of Churches and the Southern Appalachian Ministry.

Among the invited guests was Berean Don Graham, who filed these comments with the CENTER NEWS-LETTER:

The themes of the conference were energy and the economy. Presiding was William J. Baroody, chief of the Public Liaison Office, who brought cabinet-level and subcabinet-level officials to answer questions from the assembled delegates.

The highlight of the conference was the participation of President Ford. Before the appearance of the President in the last session of the day-long meeting, the delegates could easily get at the officials with questions. However, the questions put to the President were ones prepared by the co-sponsoring organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Commission on Religion in Appalachia. After these questions were discussed, the President left. There was no opportunity for others to question him. One felt that this was unfortunate for him as well as for would-be questioners and that the meeting might have been more enjoyable for him as well as more enlightening had members of the audience had the chance to put questions directly to him as they had to the other officials earlier in the day.

Nevertheless, a few questions were put to the President which indicated that all is not well in the  
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## Getting Acquainted With the Mountains

This past Columbus Day weekend, a group of new faculty and staff members of Berea College, together with husbands and wives, went on a tour that touched 14 Kentucky mountain counties.

The trip was more than just a few days of autumn sightseeing—though the leaves were indeed at their peak of color. The idea behind the tour, which is an annual event conducted by the Appalachian Center, is that teachers ought to be acquainted with the cultural and social background of the students they teach. Obviously a three-day excursion is not a study in depth, but the “staff tour,” as it is called, gives new faculty members some useful background for their dealings with Appalachian students. Twenty-five persons, including husbands and wives, made the trip.

Stops included visits to Stanton Woodcraft, a furniture factory created by an antipoverty agency, the Kentucky River Foothills Development Council; Mountaintop Industries, a grassroots wood products shop; the Robinson Experiment Substation (at Quicksand) of the University of Kentucky; Citizens for Social and Economic Justice, a group in Hindman, Ky., fighting to save their land from persons claiming to hold colonial charters giving them the ownership of it; Hindman Settlement School; the Environmental Center programs at Pine Mountain Settlement School; Alice Lloyd College’s oral history and publishing projects; Beth-Elkhorn Corporation’s coal mining system at Mine 26 in Pike County; and the Appalachian Film Workshop and related programs at Whitesburg.

Persons who met with the group included Dr. Paul Maddox, who operates a clinic at Campton and is said to be the busiest doctor in the United States (with an average of more than 100 patients a day, every day of the year); James Still, poet and novelist; Albert Stewart, poet and editor of the quarterly journal *Appalachian Heritage*; and a number of Berea alumni who discussed their varied work in the region—in addition to the persons who conduct the projects mentioned above.

Together with additional orientation and follow-up, the annual tour gives staff members a start at understanding the complex culture and economic system from which 80 percent of Berea’s students come. And, those who make the trip report, it’s fun. ■



## OPINION

# The Need for Folk High Schools

*(The author of this article is professor of history at Berea College.)*

"There ought to be a place in the American school system where any youth between the ages of 16 and 26 might spend an intimate, soul-searching, unhurried and creative year free from the pressure of grades and job." These were the words of a retired librarian, Katherine Parke, who has spent much time in Norway with the folk high schools there. "I think the Scandinavian folk high schools," she continued, "offer us the clue as to how we can do this."

The suggestion makes sense to me. With the horror stories from the vast urban blackboard jungles ringing in Congressional hearing rooms; with serious crime of all kinds rising, and most of that committed by juveniles; with youth in revolt against traditional curriculum—we can ill afford to be other than imaginative. Beyond a certain point, a free nation cannot maintain freedom by resorting to more police. . . . Certainly the Land of the Free in its Bicentennial year cannot afford to ignore creative ways to deal with the alienation of youth and the mindless attack on traditional institutions. Educators are concerned by the lack of motivation among the majority in our schools. Many of our high school graduates are functional illiterates—and worse—sometimes organizing into roving bands that tyrannize sections of our cities and suburbs and even the schools themselves. Clearly, we are in a crisis situation. . . .

Ours is a time of exploration, and the school, college and university is perhaps the most crucial place where we must explore the applicability of traditions and societal values. Statesmen from Jefferson to Dewey have realized that citizens must be developed by the

### **"Town Hall" --from page 1**

southern mountains. For example, the spokesman for the Commission on Religion in Appalachia, Rev. Jim Summerville, asked the President why he had vetoed two strip-mining bills when strip-mining is a grassroots issue of great importance to the lives and property of Southern Appalachian people. The President responded by stating that he is against wanton destruction of the land but that the goal of doubling coal production has to be met. Besides, he said, the states can pass good laws to control strip mining. (Apparently he hasn't seen the way laws controlling strip mining are enforced in a state like Kentucky.) On the economy, the President's views were optimistic. Overall, the conference revealed to this observer that this Administration has very few creative ideas for solving the problems the nation faces both in the economy and in energy.

On one point, at least, it would appear that the President and the audience were in near-unanimous agreement. He asked for a show of hands by all those who favored federal aid for New York City in its current fiscal crisis. The response was almost imperceptible. ■

schools in a democracy. Napoleon, however, the first of the modern dictators, quickly realized the possibilities of using the schools to build a uniform and obedient citizenry. In every modern dictatorship, public schools have become an integral part of the development of centralized control. Literacy can be a vehicle for control. The public school idea has remained a two-edged sword as far as freedom is concerned.

Along with James Madison, I feel that a varied system is probably our best guarantee of freedom. Uniformity and freedom are opposed. But variety has been disappearing on the secondary level as the consolidated public high school has developed. Only the rich have secondary options for their children. Parochial schools struggle for existence as publicly supported primary and secondary education, carefully controlled by state boards of education and accrediting agencies, overwhelms the field. With the consolidation of schools and professionalizing of teachers, even the variety formerly present in public education has been alarmingly homogenized. . . .

Rather than dismantle the public school system, perhaps we ought to erect at a cost that is really rather modest another level of education, another set of schools based on the Scandinavian folk high school idea, which would at once mellow and challenge the public school system and develop its own particular style of education.

The folk high school has certain characteristics. Among them are these:

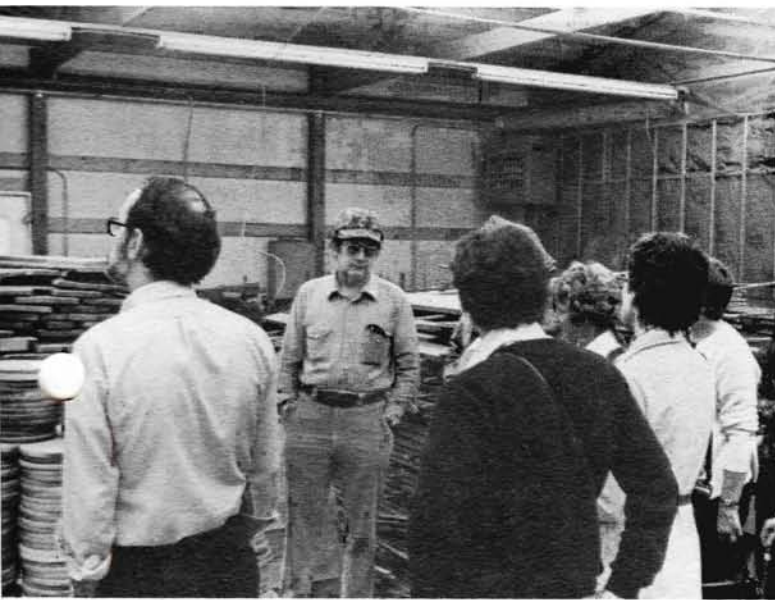
1. A basic concern for the regeneration of the nation and of society.
2. The basic psychology that youth is a time to dream large dreams, when a person is free from physical labor.
3. A curriculum including the traditions of the people, as seen in myth, saga and the like; history and geography; natural sciences related to agriculture and the environment; gymnastic training and recreation.
4. Use of varied teaching materials, with books playing a very subordinate part.
5. Emphasis on persons.
6. A minimum of structure and organizational paraphernalia; no examinations, etc.
7. The providing of a total learning environment, with all pupils boarding at the school.
8. In Denmark, for example, a five-month term for young men and a three-month summer term for women.
9. Complete separation from vocational schools, with focus on the humanities, social sciences and sciences.
10. Concern with basic ideals and values, though not with religion in dogmatic form, and with constitutional principles and the effectiveness of government.

The folk schools we create would also not do certain things. They would not teach philosophies that advocate violence, they would not give vocational





In Hindman, Ky., Mart Shepherd (above, center) talks about keeping the land. Below, Foothills director Lynn Frazer takes group through furniture factory



Tom Strickler

**Folk High Schools--from page 2**

training, they would not engage in wild moral experiments at a great variance with the standards of the larger community. Students would receive free tuition for one year, and repeaters would be discouraged by the imposition of a tuition fee.--Richard B. Drake

**Music--Strictly Old-Time And Lots of It**

Back again this October (23-26) was the big Berea College Celebration of Traditional Music, sponsored by the Appalachian Center with the help of a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The program included concerts, a street dance, square dancing, workshops and a symposium on traditional musical instruments. All sounds were "strictly old-time traditional music," as the sponsors promised.

On hand was a galaxy of performers: Jean Ritchie; Betty Smith; Buell Kazee; John Lair; Sparky Rucker; Joan Moser; Earl Barnes; the McLain Family Band; Judy Ritchie Hudson; Clarence Wyatt; Bradley Kincaid; Doc  
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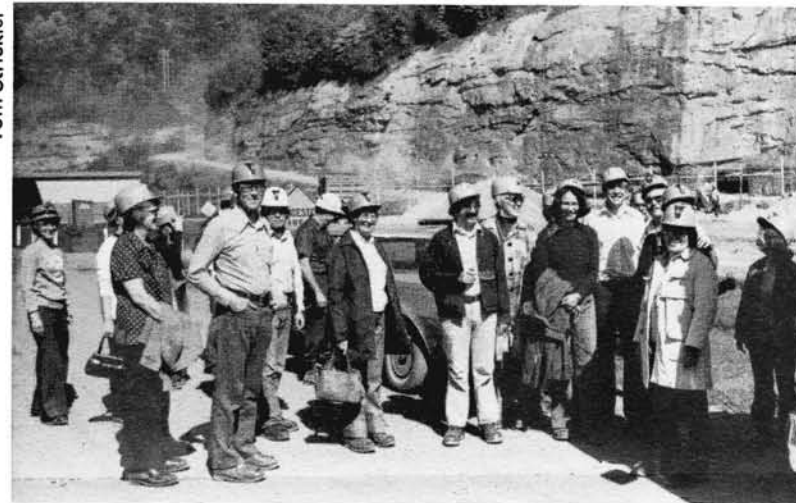


Berea alumna Marlene Ellis Payne discusses her work in child development in Perry County

**THE BERA STAFF TOUR**

**Getting Acquainted With the Mountains**

Hard hats: Group prepares to go underground at Beth-Elkhorn Mine, Pike County



Dr. Paul Maddox takes time out to talk about his clinic





Hopkins; J.P. and Annadeene Fraley; Asa Martin and the Cumberland Rangers; Byard Ray, Lou Therrell and Vivian Hartsoe; Floyd and Edna Ritchie Baker; Tommy Hunter, Mack Snodderly and the Hornpipers; Lewis and Donna Lamb; John McCutcheon; Roscoe Holcomb; Janette Carter; Bruce Green; Bill Livers; W. L. Gregory and Clyde Davenport.

## EYE on Publications

*Murder by Contract--The People v. "Tough Tony" Boyle*, by Arthur H. Lewis (Macmillan). The title pretty much tells the story of this chronicle of the investigation of one of the labor crimes of the century, and the resulting trial. Arthur Lewis is a veteran reporter.

*Toward 1984: The Future of Appalachia* (Appalachia Consortium Press). Last May a conference with this title was held at Appalachian State University (Boone, N.C.). This book contains the papers that were presented. The conference had three themes--energy, land use and the human spirit.

*Country Music, U.S.A.*, by Bill C. Malone (American Folklore Society--University of Texas Press). This noted study of the music and the performers, first published in 1968, is now issued in paperback. It has earned such encomia as "the most accurate, complete and serious study of country music ever published."

*Dams and Other Disasters*, by Arthur E. Morgan (Porter Sargent). The first chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority sums up "a century of the Army Corps of Engineers in civil works." The tone of this dissent is suggested by a quote from Franklin D. Roosevelt: "Why do they do it that way? Do they do it on purpose or are they just dumb?"

*The Saint of the Wilderness*, by Jess Carr (Commonwealth Press). A biographical novel based on the career of Robert Sayers Sheffey, a famous nineteenth-century circuit-riding preacher in Virginia and West Virginia--an unusual charismatic figure revered by his followers.

*TVA and the Power Fight 1933-1939*, by Thomas K. McCraw (Lippincott). The Tennessee Valley Authority, younger readers may be interested in knowing, was not always the bad giant being attacked by all the liberal Jacks and Harrys; in its formative decade, in fact, it was the realization of a liberal dream. This book is the detailed story of the fight between the youthful TVA and Commonwealth and Southern, the huge utility holding company ably headed by Wendell Willkie. The author is a historian at the University of Texas.

*A Day for Remembrance*, by Mary W. Toynebee

(Vantage). A novel about a Kentucky mountain boy whom the tides of war deposit in Vietnam. For some years the author was, as Mary W. Wright, a social worker in Appalachia, where she revealed in her occasional writings a poetic sensitivity to the people with whom she worked.

*Making an Appalachian Dulcimer*, by John Bailey (Cecil Sharp House). A British publication, this is said to be one of the best books available--perhaps the best one--on the making of this mountain instrument. You can order it through the Council of the Southern Mountains Bookstore, CPO Box 2307, Berea, Ky. 40403 (in fact, this store can supply you with any of the books mentioned in this column).

*Dark and Bloodied Ground*. Photographs by Mary Eastman, text by Mary Bolté (Chatham Press). "Devilish tales" from Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky--complete with pictures of the places and things told about.

*Fragments and Splinters*, by Edgar S. Fraley (Commonwealth Press). Essays, poetry and epigrams, clustered around the life of the author, a retired farmer, businessman and full-time thinker from southwest Virginia.

### Magazines

*The Plow*, a brand-new "monthly news magazine," is announced for current publication. Based in Glade Spring, Va., it promises to take "a different perspective on happenings in Washington County . . . and the surrounding area." A free copy of Issue No. 1 is obtainable from *The Plow*, P.O. Box 728, Glade Spring (ZIP 24340).

*The Appalachian Journal's* Volume 3 (beginning with November 1975) is presenting in four installments *The Southern Mountaineer in Fact and Fiction* by Cratis Williams, acting chancellor of Appalachian State University. Dr. Williams's dissertation, this book is a prime source in Appalachian literary studies. It has been specially edited for publication in the *Appalachian Journal*.

## Appalachian Poetry 1813-1975

If you're a student of Appalachian poetry, you might be interested in acquiring a copy of the new list of books of poetry in the Weatherford-Hammond collection at Berea's Hutchins Library. It includes 185 volumes either written by natives of Appalachia or written about the region. The list can be obtained by writing A. H. Perrin, Hutchins Library, Berea College, Berea, Ky. 40403.

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