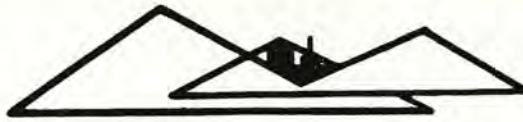


NEWS

LETTER



APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE

Loyal Jones • Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Slicing the Mellon

On the principle that you can't hear too much about a good thing, we remind readers of scholarly bent that the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded Berea College a \$100,000 grant, to be expended over a five-year period, to help scholars involved in Appalachian research. The aim of the program is to make numerous enabling grants, covering such expenses as travel, lodging, meals and supplies. Recipients have full access to the Berea College Library's extensive Weatherford-Hammond Mountain Collection and various other campus resources. The folks in charge are particularly interested in supporting projects that might produce results genuinely worthy of publication. For more information, contact Loyal Jones, C.P.O. Box 2336, Berea, Ky. 40404.

Mellon largesse is not confined to Berea. The University of Kentucky, some 40 miles away, announces Mellon-funded James Still fellowships in Appalachian studies and in the humanities and social sciences. These fellowships are "intended to provide incentives and opportunities to college faculty to make use of University of Kentucky resources in predoctoral and postdoctoral studies pertaining to Appalachia, particularly central Appalachia." For full information, write the Faculty Development Project, Appalachian Center, University of Kentucky, 641 South Limestone Street, Lexington, Ky. 40506. Since there's a deadline coming up, you may want to telephone; the number is 606/257-3746

This Little Piggy

You may have your own candidate for most unusual TV program of the year, but the National Video Clearinghouse in New York has made the official choice, and we're inclined to think they're right. The clearinghouse, a computerized information network for videotaped programs, has given the award to the Center for Southern Folklore for its four-minute production *Hush Hoggies Hush: Tom Johnson's Praying Pigs*. Tom Johnson, it seems, is a Mississippian who spent 35 years training litters of pigs to pray (or act as though they were praying, at least) before eating. This documentary record of Johnson's...well, hobby, we guess...has won several other awards and was made with financial support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the

National Endowment for the Humanities, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the former U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

You wonder who paid for what parts. But, in any case, if you want to see some pious porkers on film or tape, get in touch with the Center for Southern Folklore, 1216 Peabody Avenue, Box 40105, Memphis, Tenn. 38104.

From Volk to Folk

Erling Duus, a minister and author, has been chosen president of the Folk School Association of America as it moves from infancy to the toddling stage. Duus was the organizer of the group's 1979 conference and was a leading participant in the second meeting, held this July at the John C. Campbell Folk School at Brasstown, N.C.

Very well, you may say, what is this to me? What does this Folk School Association of America do, or intend to do? The organization, Duus says, is "committed to the notion that we should be involved in creating folk-school experiences for the restless and frustrated youth of America. For the time being, we are talking about one- to three-week summer schools. At the present time there seems a strong likelihood that next summer there will be folk schools in North Carolina, Nebraska, New York, South Dakota [and] Minnesota, as well as our annual meeting, which will be held in Kentucky in June. After next summer, we may be able to assess whether or not the summer concentration is an adequate focus for the organization, or whether we should be involved in creating longer term, full-time programs."

The meeting at Brasstown was billed as a "mini-folk school experience." Folk schools are defined by the organization as "alternate educational forms," based on recognition of the fact that "much education alienates one from [one's] cultural roots and the needs and conditions of the community." The folk-school experience therefore includes crafts, singing and dancing, physical labor and other activities as well as lectures and discussions.

Folk-school activities in America have tended to have a Scandinavian flavor (at Brasstown, as a tiny example, Danish gymnastics was part of the program) because the

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movement traces its origins to the work of N.F.S. Grundtvig in Denmark in the 19th century. Naturalization has not come easily.

Duus observes that "we need to be guided by a sense that the folk school is a historical movement... but at the same time we need not be intimidated by the past. Our job is to create a folk-school dynamic for today... We need to develop personal visions of an American folk school and then act upon them." And he adds a provocative warning: "We need to be aware of our very American and modern capacity to get lost in rhetoric, narcissism, and the anarchy of opinion. There is a discipline involved in the folk school to which those who want to take the idea seriously are responsible. ... [I]f we start confusing folk school with the concerns of folklore, or the human-potential movement, or with the Christian faith, or with certain political dogmas, etc., we will wade in an endless morass of paralyzing confusion."

Duus speaks like a man with some experience of the many morasses that lie waiting to suck in contemporary pioneers with programs. It will be interesting to see how he and his associates fare as they go to work in an age in which "discipline" is about as popular a notion as "authority." Perhaps narcissists will opt out on their own.

Sanford and Satellite

If you're a television enterprise of some kind and you're lucky enough to have Terry Sanford on your board, you can expect to produce results. Sanford, president of Duke University and former governor of North Carolina, is a public TV hand from way back. In the 1960s he served on the Carnegie Commission on Public Television, one of whose recommendations led to the creation of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the force behind *Masterpiece Theatre* and other video delights. Sanford was also a board member of the Children's Television Workshop, the outfit that produced *Sesame Street*.

So when we learn that he has been appointed board chairman of the Appalachian Community Service Network, which has just been spun off by the Appalachian Regional Commission, we naturally begin expecting this satellite network to zoom into educational and community-service prominence. ACSN programs, transmitted on RCA SATCOM I satellite, can reach a nationwide audience, but the mountain region is the prime target area.

If you have ideas about what you'd like to see the newly independent network use the satellite for, you can send them — at least for the present — to the Appalachian Regional Commission, 1666 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20235. We might mention, as a final note, that Governor Sanford was also a founding member of the commission.

MARS Landing

Persons having a technical turn of mind have apparently been wondering of late whether it would be possible

— and if possible, desirable — to use microcomputers in the management of manuscript collections and the overall administration of archives. Soon, thanks to a new project being undertaken by Richard M. Kesner, archivist at East Tennessee State, and Don Hurst of the University of Colorado, we may have the answer.

After we tell you that the project is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, we are honor-bound to confess that we don't understand anything else about it. But it seems that Kesner and Hurst will devote their efforts to the development of MARS (Microcomputer Archives and Records Management Systems). When they began their research, the experimenters were employing a Radio Shack TRS-80 configuration. The grant from the NEH enabled them to expand things a bit by adding an APPLE II Plus system.

Their aim, they say, is to develop a software system (that's what MARS will be) that will be independent of any particular machine and will "serve as a prototype for various archival activities, including accessioning, collection description and guide generation, user services, and routine administrative tasks." MARS was scheduled to make its first public appearance at an archivists' meeting at the end of September. If you know about things like "guide generation," you may want more information about MARS. Contact Richard M. Kesner at the Sherrod Library, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tenn. 37601.

Tennessee Topics

Down at Knoxville, two members of the University of Tennessee English Department are putting together what they describe as a "comprehensive annotated
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Stars Over Berea

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Shown here are a few of the galaxy of stars who will be in Berea October 30-November 2 for the seventh annual installment of the Celebration of Traditional Music. The festivities begin on October 30 with James and Doug Trantham in concert at 3:00 p.m.; in the evening there's a street dance. On Friday and Saturday evenings the plenary sessions will be held; the daylight hours on Saturday will be devoted to workshops and a symposium, "Early Recording Companies and Old-Time Music," led by Charles Wolfe, author and professor of English at Middle Tennessee. Those who don't dance too late on Saturday night, after the concert, will be up at 9:00 on Sunday, joining Betty Smith in traditional religious music.

Performers on hand for the Celebration will include the Dutch Cove Old-Time String Band; David Holt; Bradley Kincaid; Lily May Ledford; Wade and Julia Mainer; John Masters; Nat Reese, Sr.; Drink Small; Byard Ray and the Appalachian Folks; James Roberts; Mike Seeger and Alice Gerrard; Betty Smith; James and Doug Trantham; Doug Wallin, Berzilla Wallin, and Delle Norton. To find out more, contact the Appalachia Center at the address on the outside of this NEWSLETTER.

From Past Celebrations...



Betty Smith, Byard Ray



Wade and Julia Mainer

James Roberts



Doug Trantham



The Dutch Cove Old-Time String Band Leads a Finale



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bibliography of Southern Mountain English, encompassing both Southern Appalachian and Ozark English." You can help, if you have information worth passing on in any of these categories: general and historical studies, lexicon, phonology, phonetics, morphology, syntax, place names, personal names, figurative language, word play, literary dialect, and narrative and other styles.

Send your information to Bethany K. Dumas and Jereial Fletcher; the ZIP is 37916.

If you've ever yearned to write about Andrew Johnson, Cas Walker, the TVA, and other East Tennessee topics, your chance has arrived. You can research your subject and have the fun of seeing the results in print in *An Encyclopedia of East Tennessee* (due out in 1981), a current project of the Children's Museum of Oak Ridge's Appalachian Experience. If you write to the museum at P.O. Box 3066, Oak Ridge, Tenn. 37830, the editors will send you a list of topics yet to be dealt with. An Appalachian Experience is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Refuting the Rover

The CENTER NEWSLETTER's correspondent who covered the 1980 Appalachian Studies Conference ("Roving Correspondent Meets Appalachia/America," Spring 1980) expressed various opinions about the conference which, though they were admired by some readers, were not universally applauded. Martha McKinney, the program coordinator for the conference, forwards a number of comments that, she says, ought to be published here "to give a more balanced view" of the conference.

A participant from North Carolina notes that "the quality of papers read (those I was able to hear) was of a high order."

An Ohio participant says that the meeting was "well organized and relevant" (relevant to what, he or she does not say).

A Kentuckian says that the conference was "enjoyable and profitable," and there are other comments in the same vein.

Well, what about it? we asked our roving correspondent, when we caught up with him. Have you been slanting the news again? No, he said, he didn't think so. He'd enjoyed the conference more than anything he'd been to in a long time. He just hoped that in the

future the meetings could aspire higher; he didn't feel that pointing out areas for improvement was at all the same thing as panning the conference.

"Besides," he said, "I'll agree to anything if you won't make me sit through *The Electric Nightmare* again." He was no doubt referring to the dramatic production called *Horsepower: An Electric Fable*; in fairness, it should be pointed out that a conference participant from Illinois described *Horsepower* as "outstanding!" So it goes.

EYE on Publications

The Mountains Have Come Closer, by Jim Wayne Miller (Appalachian Consortium Press). In a laudatory review of this book in the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, Wade Hall says that the poet is "writing himself a persona — a mask through which he speaks his poetry like an Old Testament Jeremiah, an Anglo-Saxon bard and a 20th-century displaced person. This recent collection should enhance his growing reputation." The "prevailing mood of these poems," Hall observes, "is alienation." And he concludes by saying, "Miller's poems hurt and they hurt deeply. But they hurt like a dentist working on an abscessed tooth before the blessed deliverance of extraction. In *The Mountains Have Come Closer* he has brought together poems of mature technique and vision. His is an important voice in contemporary American poetry."

Guns and Gunmaking Tools of Southern Appalachia, by John Rice Irwin (Museum of Appalachia Press, Norris, Tenn.). A companion book to Irwin's *Musical Instruments of the Southern Appalachian Mountains* (see CENTER NEWSLETTER, Summer 1979). The author's collection of guns, handsomely displayed here, is as remarkable as his collection of musical instruments. Both are housed in his fabulous museum, the closest thing to a time capsule we know of.

Old Greasybeard: Tales from the Cumberland Gap, collected and annotated by Leonard Roberts (Pikeville College Press). If you've ever heard Leonard Roberts tell a tale or two, you can listen to him in your mind as you read this collection, a welcome reissue. And if you haven't heard him, a reading of these tales might well inspire you to seek him out.

Mountain Singer: The Life and Legacy of Byron Herbert Reece, by Raymond A. Cook (Cherokee Publishing Co.). Not only a well-researched biography of the north Georgia farmer-poet, hailed by fellow writers and critics as a genius, this significant book reprints most of his now hard-to-find poems.

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