

# Mountain Promise

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The Newsletter of the Brushy Fork Institute

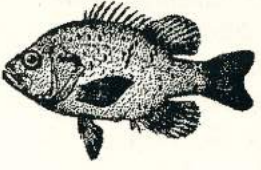
Spring, 1992



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## *Focus on:*

# Wyoming County, West Virginia

by Danny McMillion

Less than a year ago in Wyoming County, the name "Brushy Fork" would have only conjured visions of a laurel-choked hollow from which issues a tinkling tributary to the mighty Guyandotte River. The thought of tourism as an industry would have been a pipe-puffing visionary's dream. Today, using the techniques learned in the Brushy Fork Institute's leadership development program, a community group is working on a project to accentuate the county's beauty and assets.

The origin of the lovely, lyrical name Wyoming is unknown, but legend has it that Wyoming is an Indian word meaning "large plain." Someone with a puckish sense of humor must have decided to call this area Wyoming for the county is characterized by steep hillsides, infrequent valleys and narrow hollows from which one may catch only an occasional glimpse of cloud-dappled skies.

Formed from Logan County in 1850, Wyoming is an area rich in minerals and natural gas. One estimate of Wyoming County's original coal supply indicated three acres of coal for every acre of surface land. King Coal once reigned supreme here. Work was plentiful and no willing worker ever went hungry. As a mute testimony to those former glory days, abandoned mine adits now dot the hillsides. Idle coal processing plants and tipples hang against impossible slopes; and gob piles, some reclaimed and some open, loom suddenly around steep curves.

When mining left the area many businesses boarded up their windows and moved from the hills. Following close behind were those flatlanders who had flocked to the area during the mining boom. Today, on any Saturday morning small groups of senior citizens sit and reminisce along our once bustling streets. Jobs are scarce and youngsters must move outside the county to find work.

Our coal is diminished and our young people are migrating to the cities, but the wild beauty of Wyoming County itself remains. Majestic forests, bountiful wildlife and breathtaking scenery are found in Twin Falls State Park. Encompassing some 4,000 acres, Twin Falls is nestled in a high mountain valley near the county's northeastern border. At practically the opposite end of the county is the R.D. Bailey Lake and Dam Recreation area. The turbulent Guyandotte River, fed by wild creeks cascading from the mountainsides, flows the width of Wyoming County.

This was Wyoming County as it appeared on that bright March morning in 1991 when the local paper proclaimed that something called "Brushy Fork" was coming to town. Interested folks who wanted to improve the community and develop their leadership skills were encouraged to apply immediately.

Wyoming residents, perhaps like most Appalachian people, are ever leery of strangers bearing promises to better our lot. We

continued on next page

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did not snap at what appeared to be a golden opportunity. Instead, over the next few days, phone calls trickled in to the Public Library, County Extension Office and the newspaper. Brushy Fork staff members responded by stepping up their recruiting efforts. Eventually they elicited applications from sixteen residents, eight of whom attended the first workshop at Berea College that following June.

Each of us came to the first Brushy Fork Institute workshop tightly clutching a pet project. Together, we identified various Wyoming County problems including: poor roads, geographic isolation, unemployment, illiteracy, a static economy, mining damage, litter and an isolationist attitude. We then discussed several possible solutions: busing children to the Public Library, working toward a major highway into the county, converting the Itmann Company Store into a tourist attraction, establishing a branch library at Coal Mountain, developing points of interest along the county's roadways and producing a tourist brochure.

Using techniques taught at the workshop, we worked together as a group and eventually settled on a single project. Setting an ultimate goal of promoting county unity and pride, the group elected to develop a brochure to tout the attractions of Wyoming County to be placed at all the points of entry into West Virginia. We further planned to clean up and mark points of interest along the routes outlined in the brochure to make the sites appealing to tourists.

Back home in the county we named our group, "Mountain Magic." We drafted a proclamation which we presented to clubs and organizations in the principal towns of Wyoming County. We selected a logo, launched an intensive publicity campaign, and set about to solicit input from the stakeholders, anyone who would be affected by, or interested in, our project.

We made ourselves available for speaking engagements. Every member of the team was involved in another group somewhere in the county. Conflicting schedules often called for some fancy footwork and resulted in at least one close call. JoAnn Browning was scheduled to speak at Pineville Lioness

Club one night immediately following a Mountain Magic meeting. Fortunately the meetings were only about four miles apart. JoAnn and I left the Magic Meeting with only minutes to get to the Lioness meeting. The car in front of us slowed down, signaled, then pulled off the road to the right. As I sped up to pass, the car immediately pulled back on the road! When I slammed on the brakes to avoid a collision, everything not buckled down went flying. JoAnn's audio-visuals, so carefully arranged and packed, were hopelessly scattered. Ever a trooper, JoAnn gave a brilliant presentation at the Lioness meeting (although we never did find all of her materials).

With the publicity campaign underway, we turned our attention to the tourist brochure. Team member and local historian Jack Feller generously volunteered to work on a rough draft. He outlined the proposed county routes and identified and described points of interest along each. Mountain Magic members weeded and edited and searched for photographs that best depicted the selected sites. The original plan was to develop a nine panel folded brochure with color on one side and black and white on the other. We hoped to have the brochure to the printer by October 15 and the finished product in hand for the November reunion workshop at Brushy Fork.

Unfortunately, it soon became apparent that none of us had lay-out expertise, nor could we make the brochure "printer ready." We then invited Sue Stafford, of Mountaineer Graphics, to one of our meetings. She provided some expert advice; and finally we decided to enlist the aid of Jack Nuckolls, head of the Technical Assistance Bureau at the West Virginia Institute of Technology's printing department. After consulting with Mr. Nuckolls, Jack Feller decided that a small booklet would be just as cost effective as a brochure. The booklet would have the added advantage of being easier for the tourist to use while travelling. When we voted in late October to adopt the booklet format it was obvious that our project would not be finished by our original deadline.

While we'd been concentrating so intently on our project, little attention had

been paid to our group dynamics. Appalachian people, particularly southern West Virginians, are very polite. So much so that they will seldom look a person in the eye, deeming this a form of staring, therefore impolite. Up until our mid-term workshop all members of the team remained paragons of etiquette. When Peter Hille assured us it was all right to fight, all Hades tore loose. We became painfully aware that all was not right with the group. Feelings had been unknowingly tropped on. Some members felt left out of the process. Others felt nothing worthwhile had been accomplished.

During the period of re-grouping and re-dedication that followed our midterm meeting, we acknowledged that each of the Mountain Magic members was a strong leader in her or his own right. We each were used to working with groups that enjoyed our leadership. In effect, we realized that we had a group of chiefs, but no Indians.

As a group we were back on track by November, but we did not have the brochure ready for our final Brushy Fork workshop. Nevertheless, our intrepid leader Margaret Shields, with the help of JoAnn and Bill Browning, made a brilliant presentation. She offered our rough draft and presented a slide show featuring the Wyoming County scenes that will appear in the completed booklet.

Back home again discord surfaced once more and some members left the group. Those remaining continue to plug away on the brochure. On January 16, we approved the final revision of the text and made our final selection of photographs. Our new deadlines are: brochure to the printer by March 1, 1992 and final product in hand by April 15—just in time for the tourist season of 1992!

Working with Mountain Magic has been both fun and challenging. Most of us feel we have forged lifelong friendships. We all gained a better understanding of ourselves and of the group process. Many team members believe that they now have a better knowledge of Wyoming County history, thanks to Jack Feller. Artist JoAnn Browning has caused us to see anew the beauty of our area. And an appreciation for the business acumen necessary for a project of this magnitude has been nurtured by Bill Browning, Margaret Shields and Pat Armstrong. We all came to appreciate the absolute necessity of an individual who can keep the group on task as did our recorder, Marie Shaner. Violet Hatfield's sharp editing eye resulted in a much improved brochure text. Though Ben Whelan soon left the group, his youthful enthusiasm remained an inspiration. His is the generation from which Wyoming County's future leaders will come.

## Meet Wyoming County

**Pat Armstrong.** An accountant and the owner of Pat's Fashions, Pat is quite a businesswoman. She is active in many civic organizations in the county.

**Jo Ann Browning.** Jo Ann is a kindergarten teacher and the assistant principal at the Kooperston Grade School. She is also working on her Master's + 45 degree at the College of Graduate Studies in Charleston. An award winning artist, JoAnn's many talents have proven invaluable to the group.

**Bill Browning.** Bill is a banker, former teacher and principal. He is an officer of the Oceana Area Chamber of Commerce, the Oceana Rotary Club and the Wyoming County Convention and Visitors' Bureau. It just seemed natural to make him group treasurer.

**Jack Feller.** A semi-retired insurance agent and Mullens resident, Jack is also a member of various organizations including the Lions, Rotary Club, Wyoming County Convention & Visitor's Bureau, the West Virginia Parkways Economic Development & Tourism Authority.

**Violet Hatfield.** Unable to attend the first workshop because of a death in her family, Violet thereafter became a valuable team member. A mother of three, Violet is a member of Compassionate Friends. She teaches and is the Secretary of her school's Faculty Senate. Violet also designs sweat suits.

**Danny McMillion.** Danny's experience as a writer serves her well in role of publicity coordinator for the team. Danny is the director of the Wyoming County Library System.

**Marie Shaner.** Marie, a school teacher and the founder of Coal Mountain Library, really cares about the education of children in our community. Marie's ability to pull the team back to the topic at hand was much appreciated during her tenure as a recorder/reminder for our group.

**Margaret Shields.** A sales director for Mary Kay Cosmetics, Margaret is involved in just about every civic activity in the community. Margaret serves as the team's undaunted and intrepid facilitator.

**Ben Whelan.** Ben is studying electrical engineering at West Virginia Tech. Ben is no longer with the group, and we miss his company and contributions.

## Looking at the Big Picture

What has the Brushy Fork Institute really accomplished over the past three and a half years? What should Brushy Fork aim to be three years from now? What do we need to do to get there?

These questions have been on the minds of Brushy Fork Institute staff and our new Advisory Board over the past several months as we have begun a strategic planning process. In the midst of our already exciting daily work, we've been looking at the big picture: our mission, new program ideas, our connections to the rest of Berea College, ways to increase our financial stability and ways to make better use of people who volunteer to help.

We're having a good time with this. Already we have come up with some bright new ideas. Strategic planning works!

*What has Brushy Fork accomplished?*

We know Brushy Fork has made a difference in many people's lives, because they have told us so. But just how many people have we touched, and exactly what sort of difference has the Leadership Development Program made? We have some of the answers on evaluation forms and in notes and letters from you, but we need to be more organized about keeping track of results.

The next group of participants will get a pre-workshop questionnaire asking about their level of involvement in community affairs, their use of various participatory organizing methods, how much they are part of a network of other leaders and a dozen more questions. Then we'll survey them afterward to see if

things are different. We're going to be calling more often to find out how Brushy Fork teams are publicizing their work and how they are working with other community groups. We'll survey Associates by phone six months after their final workshop to see whether they are still using what they learned.

*Where are we going?*

Did you know: Those of you who are Brushy Fork Associates received the equivalent of a \$1000 scholarship? That's what it costs, per person, to cover staff time, room and board, transportation, workshop materials and all the other expenses involved in running the Leadership Development Program. So far we've been able to offer the Leadership Development Program at no cost to participants or their communities because of generous support from foundations.

Many foundations like to support the early stages of projects. Then they expect programs like Brushy Fork to find other ways to keep afloat financially. At Brushy Fork, we're hopeful that we will be able to keep the Leadership Development Program going without charging individual participants. To do this, we are going to need all the help that friends and supporters—including Brushy Fork Associates—can provide.

*What can you do?*

1. Refer organizations to us. We offer workshops and consulting in strategic planning, team building, running effective meetings, public speaking, workshop design, economic development strategies . . . you know the list! We have always done some consulting work for other groups, but it has been a side activity

by Carol Lamm, director  
Brushy Fork Institute

and they have had to find us. Now we are gearing up to market our consulting and training services as a way to carry out our mission and earn some income at the same time.

2. Sponsor another team from your county to come to the Leadership Development Program. So far we have never had a second team from a county that has already participated in the Leadership Development Program, but we think it is a good idea. Having a second team from a county would help build the local network and could pay off well for the whole county. If you want to see another team come from your county, think about how you could raise the money to pay their way. We'll be working up the details of this "second team" option over the next few months. Call us if you're thinking about this possibility.

3. Let us know about potential sources of contributions. We're on the lookout for corporate sponsors, new foundation supporters and individual contributions. Do you know of any likely sources? Does your employer have a community contributions program? Let us know.

4. Tell us what you'd like to do. Can you help with recruiting participants in a nearby county? Would you like to review and comment on our new marketing materials as we develop them? How about interviewing Associates by phone for our new evaluation? Have you thought about becoming an Associate Facilitator? Or maybe you have an idea that we haven't come up with. Every time an Associate helps out, we all learn something—and in the process, Brushy Fork is stronger.

### Ferrell runs for office

Neil Ferrell, a Brushy Fork Associate and member of the recently-formed Brushy Fork Advisory Board, has decided to run for the office of County Sheriff of Roane County, West Virginia. Citing recent incidents of drug-related crimes and a marked increase in theft in the county, Ferrell believes, "If ever there was a time for dedicated people to get involved, this is it."

Deeply concerned about what he calls the deterioration of our social structures, Ferrell feels that a "return to Christian values and moral principles" is in order. Running for public office, says Ferrell, "is my way of trying to encourage that return."

Ferrell credits his Brushy Fork experience with renewing his interest in community life. "After I retired from the Air Force I was content to hole up at my farm and basically ignore the world. When I came to Brushy Fork and saw other people working so hard to improve their communities I was motivated to start working for my own."

If Ferrell does well in the May primary he will face a general election in November. Whether or not his bid for election is successful, Ferrell is committed to working for the betterment of Roane County.

### Appalachian Fund grant

The Brushy Fork Institute is pleased to accept a fourth grant from the Berea College Appalachian Fund. The recent grant of \$10,000 brings the total awards from the Appalachian Fund to the Institute to \$28,000. "We so appreciate the Appalachian Fund's continuing interest in Brushy Fork's community leadership development work," says Institute Director Carol Lamm. "The Appalachian Fund has been supportive of this work from the very beginning of Brushy Fork Institute." The first grant from the Appalachian Fund helped launch of the Pilot Project in 1988.

### DuPont funds networking

Thanks to the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, Brushy Fork Institute now has the means to expand its leadership development program to include a state-by-state networking component. The Jessie Ball duPont Fund, a generous supporter of the Institute since 1989, recently awarded a two-year grant totaling \$99,700 specifically for Brushy Fork's networking initiative.

Highlights of the new initiative include:

- The creation of four planning teams, one each in Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. The planning teams will be composed of Brushy Fork Associates in each state.
- An annual networking workshop in each state, to be designed by each respective planning team.
- Follow-up activities to build on the annual workshops, again planned by each state team.
- A sum of \$4,000 for each state team to use for its networking workshop and follow-up plans.
- Allocations of staff time for assistance to the state planning teams.
- Networking tools such as a directory of all Brushy Fork Associates.

Brushy Fork is delighted to be able to offer this second level of leadership development and appreciates the duPont Fund's continuing support. More information on state networking will follow in future issues of *Mountain Promise*.

### It's a girl!

Donna Morgan, the secretary of the Brushy Fork Institute, has a new baby girl. Amy Lee Morgan was born on February 9, weighing in at 7 pounds, 8 ounces. Donna is enjoying some time at home with Amy Lee, husband James and son Sean. Brushy Fork is fortunate to have Cheri Wolfe filling in until Donna returns in late March.

*In the not-so-distant future — active networks of Brushy Fork Associates within each state!*

## Sawyer appointed to Governor's Task Force for service program proposal

David Sawyer, director of Berea College's Students for Appalachia and Brushy Fork's Student Leadership Development Program, is among those preparing the way for new community service programs for Kentucky.

Under the Community and National Service Act of 1990, federal mechanisms were created to fund public service work in specified areas. States were advised to establish committees to draw up comprehensive service plans. In Kentucky an ad hoc planning committee is at work drafting a statewide service plan, "Kentucky Serve". Governor Brereton Jones appointed Sawyer to the Governor's Task Force for the Community and National Service Act, the body which has responsibility for approving the final version of "Kentucky Serve". Sawyer, who has long been active on the national level in advocating service learning programs for institutions of higher education, also serves on the ad hoc committee. Joining David on the planning committee is Dave Crowley, an intern with Berea's Students for Appalachia program and a friend of Brushy Fork who participated in the Logan County mid-term workshop. In addition to serving on the planning committee, Crowley was named Special Assistant to the Governor's Task Force.

On the federal level, the 1990 Act created the Commission on National and Community Service to provide "leadership in strengthening the spirit of community involvement for all citizens, especially the young." The Commission's grant program makes funds available for four categories of service initiatives:

**Serve-America.** Programs sponsored by schools or community-based organizations to involve school-age youth in service to the community, and programs which involve adult volunteers in the schools, are eligible for funds in this category.

**Higher Education Innovative Projects for Community Service.** Eligible for these funds are institutions of higher education or public agencies working in partnership with such

institutions. Grants will support student community service projects or teacher training in service-learning principles and skills.

**American Conservation Corps and Youth Service Corps Program.** Programs involving teenagers and young adults in either year-round conservation corps or summer service corps can apply for funds in this category.

**Full-time and Part-time National and Community Service Programs.** Up to ten states will receive funds for programs engaging volunteers in long-term service commitments. The volunteers would receive housing or education benefits upon completion of their term of service.

According to Sawyer, the state's proposal will include elements in all four service categories. The Task Force plans to present its final version of "Kentucky Serve" to Governor Jones by March 16. The federal deadline for state proposals is March 23. Sawyer feels that the timing of the Commission's grant program creates an opportune moment for Kentucky. "The combination of Kentucky's Education Reform Act and funds we might receive from the Commission could propel Kentucky right into the forefront of the national service movement. KERA calls for citizenship education and the National and Community Service Act promises the mechanisms for implementing just that. Students who have not been well-served by our present education system, teachers who want to embrace the service-learning concept, and our communities which receive volunteer labor would all benefit immeasurably."

"But first," he continued, "we have to put together a good proposal. That's our focus right now."

For more information call either David Sawyer or Dave Crowley at Berea College: (606) 986-9341 Ext. 6561.

*Kentucky hopes to receive federal funding for four different types of service programs.*

*Sawyer thinks that the timing of federal opportunity and KERA holds great potential.*

## New Brushy Fork Advisory Board convenes

*Economic development, financial self-sufficiency and program evaluation on first agenda*

The twenty-one individuals who comprise the new Advisory Board of the Brushy Fork Institute include community organizers, scholars, economic developers and graduates of Brushy Fork's leadership development program.

As Dr. John Stephenson, Brushy Fork founder and Berea College president, pointed out in his letter of invitation, Brushy Fork's programs have always benefitted from the assistance of informal advisors at the college and throughout the region. The creation of an advisory board recognizes the value of such input and ensures continued guidance for the Institute as it matures.

Six of the board members are Brushy Fork Associates. They are: from West Virginia, Vondelere Scott of McDowell County and Neil Ferrell of Roane County; from Virginia, Ralph Miner of Lee County and Phyllis Deel of Dickenson County; Kathy Lewis of Fentress County, Tennessee, and Betty Jo McKinney of Rockcastle County, Kentucky.

Convened by chairwoman Helen Lewis on December 12, the board discussed three major topics at their first meeting.

**Economic Development.** The board recommended that the Institute concentrate on supporting existing economic development organizations. Brushy Fork could offer board training, workshops on economic development options and consultation in organizational development. As Anne Leibig put it, "What is needed is a marriage between technical assistance for economic development and Brushy Fork's process."

**Financial self-sufficiency for the Institute.** Suggestions included: expanding Brushy Fork's contract work with other organizations; contracting with colleges and universities to design social change curriculum; charging counties part of the cost of the leadership development program; expanding and marketing our publications; and developing a transferrable model of Brushy Fork's regional leadership program.

**Program evaluation.** While testimonials to the value of Brushy Fork's programs flowed freely, the board stressed the need for numbers, measurable indicators and pre- and post-program questionnaires for a sharper picture of the Institute's effectiveness.

Ideas for further program development cropped up throughout the day. Richard Couto suggested that a session on policy might be a logical addition to the current program: how policy is made, how citizens can participate in the policy-making process and how to work with local and state governments. Other board members agreed.

Director Carol Lamm was gratified with the outcome of the meeting. "I was very pleased with the suggestions and ideas the Advisory Board members shared. They provided the broad, fresh perspective I was hoping for, and I came away with an unexpected renewal of energy."

An introduction to the board members follows on the next two pages.



The board meeting doubles as a networking opportunity. Here, Ralph Miner (seated, center) pockets a check given to him by Armand Opitz (standing) to support economic development efforts in southwest Virginia. Ron Eller is on the left and Caroline Carpenter is on the right.

Kentucky

**Joyce Bickerstaff**, currently the project director of the Black Mountain Youth Leadership Program at Berea College, is a visiting professor from Vassar College. In addition to leadership development for African-American youth, Joyce's work entails health education for youth and elderly and community development. She seeks better integration of black and white communities and feels that Brushy Fork's work contributes to this goal.

**Ronald D Eller** is the director of the University of Kentucky Appalachian Center and the program director of the Appalachian Civic Leadership Project. A historian and educator, Ron is interested in economic development, leadership development and public policy relating to Appalachia. He seeks to further cooperation between institutions and groups working to build a brighter future for the mountains.

**Linda G. Gayheart** is the executive director of the Kentucky River Area Development District and has served the district for 20 years. She works with local community leaders on all aspects of development including water and sewer, housing, economic development, transportation, recreation, youth leadership, and services for the elderly. Linda sees many possibilities for collaboration between ADDs and Brushy Fork Institute.

**Loyal Jones**, educator, author and humorist, is the director of the Berea College Appalachian Center. A renowned speaker and expert on the region, Loyal offers summer courses for teachers on Appalachian history and literature. Loyal oversees many of Berea College's

outreach programs and gives generously of his time and talents to the work of Brushy Fork Institute.

**Kris W. Kimel** is the executive director of the Kentucky Science and Technology Council, Inc., an organization which strives toward economic development through better science education. Kris was one of the prime movers who brought Brushy Fork into being. He also served as the director of the Pilot Program and later as a program consultant to the Institute.

**Betty Jo McKinney**, an area program consultant for the Special Education Cooperatives, serves as a liaison between state and local education agencies providing technical assistance and training for teachers and administrators. Betty Jo is a Brushy Fork Associate from Rockcastle County who strongly believes in the empowering effect of learning leadership skills and hopes to help others achieve the same satisfaction.

**William Stolte** is a professor of economics at Berea College where he specializes in the areas of regional and international economic development. Because of his expertise and long-standing interest in Berea College's role in supporting the

growth of people in the region, Brushy Fork is very pleased to have Bill on the Advisory Board.

Tennessee

**Helen M. Lewis** of the Highlander Research and Education Center in New Market works on economic education and community development issues. She is also on the faculty of the Appalachian Ministries Resource Center's summer session for seminary students held each year in Berea. Helen's interests include community building, community development and Appalachian Studies.

**Kathy Lewis** directs the Tennessee Center for Rural Education located at the Alvin C. York Institute in Jamestown. Drawing on her experience as a classroom teacher, vocational director and supervisor of instruction, Kathy serves as resource person to facilitate positive change in schools and communities across the state. A Brushy Fork Associate from Fentress County, Kathy feels that Brushy Fork's mission parallels her own.

**Jim Sessions**, with a long history of community organizing and rural community development, is the executive director of the Commis-

Dr. Joyce Bickerstaff, director of the Black Mountain Youth Leadership Development Program and Vondelere Scott, Brushy Fork Associate from McDowell County, West Virginia.



sion on Religion in Appalachia (CORA). Jim's activities in the region are many and varied; he has written on topics such as organizing, strip mining, community education, poverty in America and community development.

Virginia

**Richard A. Couto** is a professor at the new Jepson School of Leadership Studies at the University of Richmond in Virginia. He previously directed the Center for Health Services at Vanderbilt University. In that position Richard assisted local leaders in community development efforts, most often health-related. He is also at work revising a major study on social and economic trends and issues in Appalachia.

**Phyllis Deel**, an Extension Agent in home economics, is a graduate of Berea College and a Brushy Fork Associate from Dickenson County. She is active in a community center project, tourism development, historic preservation and crafts marketing. Phyllis notes that every experience she has had with Berea College has been positive and believes that nothing but good can come out of serving on this Advisory Board.

**Anne Leibig** is a social worker, therapist and member of several civic organizations in the Dungannon area. Last year Anne helped organize a regional celebration of women in the mountains. Anne likes to keep in touch with creative community development efforts in Appalachia.

**Ralph B. Miner** is a general manager at Powell Valley Electric Cooperative where he began working as a laborer in 1949. Ralph is active in development efforts and is very interested in job creation. One of the

Pilot Project participants, Ralph is a Brushy Fork Associate from Lee County.

**Armand M. Opitz** is an educator and dean of Student Development at Southwest Virginia Community College. Armand also works in regional economic development and writes a weekly column on career topics. He hopes to "transfer the Brushy Fork process to our college and community settings as a way to facilitate effective change in our region."

West Virginia

**Diane L. Browning**, a community economic developer for the non-profit organization Women and Employment, works to increase economic opportunities for women in rural Appalachia. She hopes to strengthen Women and Employment's efforts through collaboration with Brushy Fork and Brushy Fork Associates and notes that her organization can provide ongoing assistance for Associates' projects in the state.

**Neil Ferrell** retired from the U.S. Air Force and now works as a corporate pilot, construction supervisor, photographer and safety engineer. Neil is a Brushy Fork Associate from Roane County where he shares his love of aviation as a volunteer at the high school. Much of his motivation comes from a strong desire to leave a better world for his young daughter. Neil is currently running for the office of County Sheriff.

**Vondelere A. Scott** is a very active community worker and a Brushy Fork Associate from McDowell County. Among Vondelere's many endeavors, she is a work site coordinator for Black Mountain Youth Leadership Pro-

gram, a youth worker for Whittico Presbyterian Church, a volunteer at an after-school tutoring program which she helped create, the president of a homemakers club and a member of several boards. One of Vondelere's primary concerns is to provide more opportunities for the youth of her community.

**Rachel B. Tompkins** is the associate provost for Extension and Economic Development at West Virginia University. Responsible for university outreach, her work includes directing Cooperative Extension and programming continuing labor education, especially health and safety training for labor groups. Rachel is committed to developing community leadership, believing as Brushy Fork does that people in the region have the capacity to solve their own problems.

Other States

**Caroline M. Carpenter** is a program officer with the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation. Caroline concentrates on the program area of community economic development in the state of West Virginia. Caroline has participated in a couple of Brushy Fork workshops as an observer and is familiar with many of the team projects of Associates in West Virginia.

**David Dodson** is the executive vice president of MDC, Inc., a regional research organization dedicated to helping states and communities develop policies and programs to strengthen rural economies, improve the work force and reduce poverty. David has been involved with the Institute from its inception and helped design the core workshops. He believes the Brushy Fork process helps to revitalize communities.

Excerpts from a recent letter from Neil Ferrell

## Making use of Brushy Fork resources

I don't think you will ever be able to even partially quantify the results of the Brushy Fork program. I believe the effects will be more wide-spread and valuable than you've ever imagined. In my own instance, association with BFI got me interested again in the world around me. Although I may have had the ability to serve, unless one has the incentive to put it to use, ability is useless. BFI got me going again.

... BFI gave me access to *Mountain Promise* and *Across The Ridge*. I study each issue carefully. Every organization, every publication, and every concept expressed is weighed on the scale of "Can this be applied to my area?". I recently called the Appalachian Center at UK and talked with Bill Keesler. He sent me a copy of *Jobs and Economic Development, Meeting the Needs of Appalachian People*. I intend to use it as a basis for initiating some community discussion groups. ... Had I not attended BFI, I never would have had access to this information.

Last fall I went to Peter's public speaking class at Twin Falls State Park. Last week I put it to good use. I am on the county solid waste authority. Many of the county's farmers resent us because we represent the state's interference in their way of life. The big point of disagreement is cleaning up private farm dumps. I was scheduled to speak for ten minutes at a local Farm Bureau meeting along with the State Commissioner of Agriculture who also happens to be a candidate for governor. My goal was to convince the farm group that we were really on their side. There were other speakers from county and state government and the West Virginia University Extension Service. When it was over, several people came to me and said they felt that I was the only one "who really communicated" with them. I owe it to the fact I dug out my speech class notes and reviewed before I started my preparation.

And, even in failure there can be a degree of success. I suppose you remember that Susan Beard, one of our original Roane County group, became disenchanted with the rest of us and dropped out of our project. Susan is more of a visionary than a detailist and I think that was the difference. Anyway, as a result of the group attempt, Susan and I have become better acquainted and now consult each other frequently on community issues. Although we may have disagreed on one subject we at least recognized that we had a common goal — bettering our community.

... Also, I did not know Faye Cox prior to BFI. Faye and I now communicate regularly and her research has really been beneficial to our county solid waste efforts.

While the results of our efforts may never filter back to you, I hope you can see there are many indirect results of your program. Some you may never see or hear of. Some may take years to manifest themselves. Meanwhile, I only hope my lengthy letter does invoke a degree of encouragement.

## Pate into fish farming

Robert N. Pate, a Brushy Fork Associate from Roane County, West Virginia, has been involved with a fish farming demonstrating project in his county. The local chapter of the Future Farmers of America (FFA) began the aquaculture project last May. Supported by a Resource Conservation and Development Council grant, the project was intended to publicize fish farming as a source of income and provide accurate information about start-up costs and potential profits.

In choosing a pond site, the FFA members carefully considered watershed pollutants, water quality and access. Next, they stocked two cylindrical plastic mesh cages with some 300-400 fry and lowered the cages into the pond. Rob says cylindrical, rather than rectangular, cages must be used to keep fish from staking out a corner of the cage and fighting for the territory. Once or twice a day the fish are fed Purina Trout Chow.

FFA members chose hybrid striped bass and catfish for their aquaculture project. Striped bass, also known as rockfish or stripers, are in big demand on the East Coast where overfishing and pollution have decreased supplies. Although the striped bass is native to salt water, it can be grown in freshwater ponds. The FFA chapter expects to get \$3.00 per lb. (or a gross income of more than \$1,000.00 per cage) for the bass. Catfish, while not fetching as high a price as the bass, can still be profitable.

According to Rob, the FFA aquaculture demonstration project has succeeded in getting rural landowners interested in the money-making potential of aquaculture. Readers who would like to know more about the project can contact Rob Pate at 129 Dodd Dr., Spencer, WV 25276; (304) 927-1023. Rob also recommends these resources:

Aggie Vanderpool, Aquaculture Specialist  
WV University Extension Service Office  
201 Henry Avenue  
Elkins, WV 26241-0130

American Fish Society  
5410 Grosvenor Lane, Suite 110  
Bethesda, MD 20814

Ask for "Culture and Propagation of Striped Bass and Its Hybrids," by Harrel, Kerby and Minton.

## Rockcastle County, Kentucky

by Betty Jo McKinney

While Leadership Rockcastle has completed its project and no longer meets regularly, our members are active as individuals and still feel a commitment to the group. We fully intend to work together again when the need and the right project presents itself. Since our Brushy Fork experience, we feel a keen sense of connection, and we draw strength from that connection, even as we pursue the following projects individually. Here's what we've been up to:

John Parsons is active as a parent member of Rockcastle County High School's school-based management council. Pam Chaliff holds that same position on the Mt. Vernon Elementary School's council.

Shirley Cox is enrolled in an honors program at Eastern Ky. University (EKU), and is participating in their honors program.

Tammy Cox is also at Eastern, majoring in Education. Tammy also coaches the girls' track team at Rockcastle County High School.

Karen King has established her own construction company.

Howard Haddix is now the manager of a local grocery store.

Jim Rickles is a city supervisor for Mt. Vernon.

Molly Hamm is now a full-time guidance counselor at Brodhead Elementary School. Rebecca Hammond organized and directed a Bittersweet Festival for Rockcastle County in Mt. Vernon in October. She also coordinated the first annual Charity Ball, sponsored by the Kiwanis Club and held on New Year's Eve at the new Mt. Vernon Elementary School.

I, Betty Jo McKinney, helped write the grant proposals for Family and Youth Resource Centers in Rockcastle County, all of which were fully funded this year. I spend much of my time conducting in-service programs on interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution and I am a member of Brushy Fork's new Advisory Board.



## Jackson County, Tennessee

by Hal Flinsch

The Jackson County, Tennessee team is still on the move, although progress on our second effort has not been as swift as that of our community calendar. The calendar has become an effective, automatic feature of the newspaper each week.

Our original intent was to encourage community unity. We decided our next effort toward this goal would be to rebuild the failing and nearly-abandoned county fair.

The situation had gotten so bad that the Fair Board could not get a quorum to meet and make decisions. Except for the Fair Board chairman and the ever reliable county Extension Agent (and fellow team member) Jack McDaniel, no one had been willing to take responsibility for the fair.

Now that our team has gotten involved, we've shifted the focus of the fair toward an old-style community fair. A substantial number of local and regional organizations, businesses, agencies and the area utilities have agreed to set up displays, booths and concessions. There will also be several outside attractions: military displays, motorcycle competitions and a rodeo (in addition to the traditional horse show) are some of the possibilities. We're lining up a lot of music and maybe a square dance and some buck dancing competition. We decided to forego the mediocre midway/carnival that has been viewed as an essential ingredient in the years past. The fair will be in mid-September—Y'all come!



## Overton County, Tennessee

by Bill Needham

Since receiving the Governor's A+ Award in Nashville on December 3rd, the Overton County team has been in the limelight. We made local award presentations to the school board, the county commission and the city council, all of which were shown on local cable TV. The school superintendent and three of our team members were guests on a radio program, "Community Spotlight." The local newspapers have given us excellent front page coverage.



Overton County received the award at a banquet in December.

A+ signs are being erected at the county lines along eight major highways and on each school campus. We're also presenting an A+ Award plaque to each school, the school board, county commission and city council for display. A Seedling Grant is enabling us to pay for the plaques and signs.

We'll also use Seedling Grant money to establish a high school tutorial program. A computer-based program will provide students an opportunity to improve test-taking skills in preparation for ACT and SAT exams. We think the after school program may also strengthen our bid for A+ recertification next year.

One of our team members, Gene Snowden, recently underwent heart surgery. Gene is recuperating at home and is doing well. Team member Kathleen Lander's husband suffered a broken leg in early January. He is also doing well.

The future of the Overton County team appears bright. We continue to meet regularly each month and are discussing several possible new projects. We hope to keep our energy up as we expand our efforts in the community!

## Scott County, Virginia

by Linda Matthews

After returning to Brushy Fork in October, the Scott County team decided to continue with our Volunteer Awareness Program, or VAP, as an ad hoc committee of the Community Alliance & Resource Team (CART).

Currently we're working toward three major goals:

**New Members.** Betty Purkey (left) and Patty Collier (right) have joined the Scott County team's Volunteer Awareness Program.



**Hiring a part-time coordinator** with organizational and interpersonal skills as well as a knowledge of the community. Our team will serve as an advisory board for the coordinator.

**Establishing a permanent office.** We've contacted the Scott County Administrator regarding office space in the courthouse.

**Launching a publicity campaign.** We're enlisting other organizations to help raise appreciation and awareness for volunteers as important resources.

The commitment shown by individuals and organizations in the county is the most important aspect of our project. New people have joined our team and we are actively seeking others. Now is the time to promote volunteerism and forge ahead for a progressive Scott County. Our Volunteer Awareness Program will benefit the community as well as the individuals who provide useful services.

## Tazewell County, Virginia

by Mary Lawson

Tazewell County Side TRACked.

Time marches on and is moving so fast that we in Tazewell County, Virginia, didn't realize how long it had been since we last met. The departure of our chair person, Bobbi Jo Peters, to Clinch Valley College left us without a leader and in limbo. Then Lisa's call for a newsletter article on the progress of our recycling project prompted some action and we regrouped.

At our recent TRAC (Tazewell Recycling Action Committee) meeting we reviewed our progress since our closing workshop. TRACASAURUS REX and friend (Ginger and Mary) have visited several elementary schools, library programs and preschools to present recycling awareness programs. Johnny designed and printed a brochure. Laura and Jean talked with Extension homemakers, womens' clubs and church groups on ways to recycle. Thanks to Bob's efforts, our committee was made the official recycling advisory committee for Tazewell County. Also, we have placed copies of the *Recycling Handbook* in area schools, thanks to the funds Jim obtained from Tazewell County and Brushy Fork's Seedling Grants program.

County-wide recycling efforts have accelerated, we have collection bins in nine locations. Businesses, industries, local schools and South-

west Virginia Community College have become aware of the urgency of recycling and are cooperating in our effort.

Public awareness of the litter problem is placing more pressure on the court system to enforce anti-litter and illegal dumping laws. We still face the challenge of finding markets for the recyclable material once it is collected.

We plan to place a Reynolds Aluminum truck at one school and make more recycling educational materials available to all of our schools and libraries. Public service announcements will be aired on area radio stations.

"A Wonderful World," a theatrical production will be presented by a professional theater company to our elementary and middle school students. This particular musical entertains while educating young people about the dire need to recycle — or else!

As time keeps rolling along we continue to make TRACs and feel that our project has indeed helped begin a serious recycling program in Tazewell County.



## Logan County, West Virginia

*Brushy Fork recently received the following letter signed by four Logan County team members: Judy Sansom, Judy Browning, Allen Cooper and Patricia Bowen.*

We regret to inform you that on February 19, the members of Logan County ESTEEM met and decided to dissolve their organization. Projects undertaken by the ESTEEM group have been repeatedly thwarted, by chance or conspiracy. We returned from Berea with plans to organize a self-esteem and leadership development program for young people, only to learn that a similar project was already underway. In a later meeting, we decided to assist this project by assembling a speakers bureau for them to use,

only to learn a few weeks later that the local community college had already assembled a speakers bureau.

Given such unforeseen circumstances, not to mention a significant drop in our own self-esteem, we decided to dissolve ESTEEM while we still remain friends. At our February 19 meeting, we agreed that this dissolution should be like a no-fault divorce; we would refrain from blaming each other for our difficulties. We agreed to reconvene in a few months and discuss the possibility of starting again with some other community project.

We all want to thank you for allowing us to participate in the Brushy Fork program. We all feel that we have learned a lot from the program,

continued on next page

which has helped us in our personal lives and in other community projects. Sometimes failure can be as instructive as success.

Since our group has dissolved, we realize there is no need for us to return to Berea in March, but some of us thought that it might be helpful to the Brushy Fork staff and the other

program participants if some members of our group returned and performed a skit showing why our project met such a sorry fate. Let us know what you think of this proposal.

*Yes, indeed! Carol Lamm assured the team members that she hoped they would attend the closing workshop. -Ed.*

### Monroe County, West Virginia

by Judy Azulay

Our project was to produce and broadcast a series of weekly, one-hour radio shows to involve and inform the community. So far, we've produced seven "Focus on Monroe," programs. In early December, the shows began airing on the county-owned radio station at the Monroe County Vocational School. We've featured discussions about Jefferson Place (the county's center for drug rehabilitation and care for the elderly), high school drop outs, literacy and adult education, economic development and housing; we've also interviewed our new superintendent of schools. In addition, we've run two Christmas cantadas and other shows based on children's stories and music.

In late January, we reevaluated our project. Several concerns were raised:

- **Size of Audience.** Because the radio station signs off earlier in the day and comes back on just for our show, we wondered how many listeners tune in.
- **Amount of time involved.** In addition to the actual time in the control room broadcasting each show, several hours of preparation are necessary for each discussion.
- **Length of program.** Is a full hour too long?
- **Size of team.** Three team members have decided not to continue.

With these concerns in mind, we quickly added a new member, Dixie West, the communications teacher at the vocational school. We decided to switch to a half-hour show at noon. The new shows will air every week day and will feature a county calendar, a seven-to-ten minute segment from a discussion of a local issue, a

livestock market report and news items from county agencies, organizations, and schools. During the past eight months, the team has uncovered a wealth of potential events and activities to broadcast. Our problem is finding time to track stories down and do the actual taping.

One of the most exciting facets of the new format is that the shows will be produced by students at the vocational school, in cooperation with the Focus on Monroe team. Team members will be responsible for supplying information to the students and for the production of the five discussion segments.

Some of our members still have a vision of hour-long discussion shows concentrated on one issue, but for now, we are all committed to getting the new format up and running. We are planning one special, longer show, as part of a candidates forum for the upcoming county elections. This show will probably air in the 4:30 to 5:30 time slot (we decided that we couldn't compete with "The Cosby Show!"). We hope to be able to catch listeners as they drive home from work or are preparing dinner.

The group processes learned at Brushy Fork and practiced by our team have been valuable in bringing people in the county together in closer communication. As the team members have had to confront problems, realistically evaluate their time commitments, and modify the project, we have learned to work together more effectively. We have developed strong friendships and already see how our appreciation of each other's strengths overflows into other community projects.

## Hooray for leadership development!

by Donald Stansberry, III

*Don Stansberry is Mayor of Huntsville, Tennessee, and Chairman of the Big South Fork Regional Association's economic and community development effort. An associate attorney with the Baker, Worthington, Crossley, Stansberry and Wolf law firm, Don writes a weekly column carried by a number of newspapers in the Big South Fork Region. The article below is one he wrote earlier this year when Brushy Fork selected Pickett County for a cycle of the leadership development program to begin in April.*

Hooray for Pickett County! This week the spotlight is on them as they prepare to participate in the Berea College/Brushy Fork Institute leadership seminar, beginning on April 30. Twelve applicants, chosen for their demonstrated or potential leadership abilities will participate in this three day, expense paid program in Berea. Upon returning, they will apply their skills toward a six month Pickett County development project to be chosen at the seminar. Applications are being accepted for the class, and with several seats still available this is a real opportunity for Pickett countians to take charge of their future.

So, what does that mean to the rest of us? From what I have seen, the importance of organized leadership cannot be overemphasized for any area. Often the single biggest factor in the effective development of an area is the quality of its leadership effort. Lasting anywhere from one day to nine months or more, each leadership development program has its own curriculum, but the common vision is to create a knowledgeable and effective local network to address community development from the ground up. As Carol Lamm of the Brushy Fork Institute said in last week's *Pickett County Press*, "Our leadership program serves as a catalyst to bring people together, get ideas flowing and to help people get organized to get a job done."

Alumni from such courses are scattered throughout the Big South Fork region, which is good, but just having alumni is not enough; leadership training must be an ongoing process.

The effort must change constantly with the community and must account for new alliances and opportunities as they develop. While individual countywide programs are certainly the first step, I think it is inevitable that we will see more regional leadership efforts here in the not too distant future. Unless each county adequately prepares its local leadership now, we can't possibly expect to reap the full benefit of regional efforts later.

So for now, the bottom line has four points. First, foster and encourage efforts at organized leadership wherever you can throughout the five-county region. I would urge present leaders and those with a growing interest in leadership to recognize these classes as the important events that they are and to offer their full support and participation. Any occasion for leaders, including potential adversaries, to get together and work on common problems, holds great potential for community advancement.

Second, please understand that the word "leader" is by no means synonymous with the phrase "elected official." Leaders come from all walks of life and from a wide variety of businesses and professions. Leadership is a personality and attitude rather than a position, and we are all eligible to cultivate it.

Third, if your county isn't hosting regular periodic leadership events, encourage your Chamber of Commerce or a similar group to renew their efforts in this regard so that we can all progress at the same time. The only way that we can speak and act intelligently as a region is to develop a common understanding of our similarities, differences and our respective strategies for improvement.

Finally, and most immediately, those with a stake in the future of Pickett County need to make a personal commitment to full participation in the Brushy Fork project. Taken seriously it will require tremendous work, but there is no other single program that can do as much for a community in the long run as a well received leadership effort. It provides the organization and guidance needed to turn hard work into productive work.

Leaders come from all walks of life and from a wide variety of businesses and professions. Leadership is a personality and attitude rather than a position, and we are all eligible to cultivate it.



## Education and Social Change

The Highlander Research and Education Center in New Market, Tennessee will hold a second Institute for Education and Social Change on May 11-15, 1992. The Institute is designed to bring together a cross-section of people who are engaged in the process of using education for social change in their community, institutional or work setting. We invite community educators, literacy workers, organizers and academics seeking to change educational practices to link their work to the community, labor educators, social service providers, students and activists.

The Institute will be limited to about 25 participants, who will be selected on the basis of their interests, commitment to use what they learn, and their diversity of experience, culture and background. The fee of \$400 includes transportation to and from the airport, room and board, a collection of written and video materials, resource persons, and field trips. A limited number of scholarships are available for low-income participants.

To apply call or write the Highlander Center at:

Highlander Center  
1959 Highlander Way  
New Market, Tennessee 37820  
(615) 933-3443

## SALT Fellowships

The Highlander Center is also looking for applicants for a social change fellowship program. Below is an excerpt from a recent memo.

We are currently recruiting applicants for Southern and Appalachian Leadership Training (SALT) fellowships. We seek members of groups throughout the region working on the problems faced by their community. We are looking for people who would like to improve their leadership skills by meeting other people like themselves from new communities, participating in a series of Highlander workshops and continuing their community work at home. The program is open to all persons native to the South or Appalachia and to non-native residents who have demonstrated long-term commitment to the region. It is open to all persons without regard to occupation or educational experience. We actively seek diversity in race, gender, age and region. Each applicant must be endorsed by a community group, club or association.

The fellowships will be for a nine month period beginning in May. Each fellow will receive a small monthly stipend which is meant mainly to cover expenses. There will be six workshops, most of them at High-

lander, some in the region. We will also encourage travel and visits between the communities selected.

To apply for a fellowship, please call Joyce Dukes at Highlander (same address and phone as in first column, this page). The application deadline is March 31, 1992.

## Research Skills

Want to expand your research skills? A workshop for doing just that is offered, free of charge, to rural nonprofit organizations in the Southeast involved in economic development and human service issues. To be held May 27-29, 1992, in Rougemont, North Carolina, the training will cover skills such as designing useful research projects, conducting surveys, finding published data and using research consultants. With funding from the Ford Foundation and the Aspen Institute, the workshop is cosponsored by MDC, Inc. and the Research Capacity Initiative. Transportation and lodging expenses will be covered by the Research Capacity Initiative. Applications are due April 10, 1992. For more information or an application contact Sarah Rubin at:

MDC, Inc.  
P.O. Box 2226  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514  
(919)968-4531

## Mountain Promise

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