



# Loyal Jones APPALACHIAN CENTER

*Tradition. Diversity. Change.*

## The beating heart of Appalachia

I have been so honored to serve as the interim director of the Loyal Jones Appalachian Center (LJAC) for the last year, and I'm humbled that I was given this opportunity. In August a new director will take the reins and I'm sure that he or she will guide the LJAC into the future with grace and purpose.

I have learned so much in my short time here but perhaps my most profound lesson was that Appalachia is in such good hands with a new generation of students who care for this region in a profound way. They have taught me more than I could have ever dreamed; truly the greatest blessing of being a teacher is the wisdom we gain from our best students.

It has been my great privilege to work with these students, who have fought for this land and its people in a variety of ways: by using art to defend their region, by making signs and marching in the streets to stand up for the place they love, by organizing many different programs to help preserve the ways of Appalachia and also to raise awareness about the music, writing, nature, food, and dialect of their Homeland. Over the past year the active and enthusiastic Appalachian Studies students have done everything from plant trees to attend to rallies to present at conferences at universities. They prove to me everyday that young people don't just sit around

complaining about things. Instead, they act. They invoke the names of Appalachian heroes like Helen Lewis, Mike Mullins, Lee Smith, Bev May, and the Center's namesake, Loyal Jones, in their everyday endeavors.

I like to think that the Loyal Jones Appalachian Center is right at the heart of the movement to keep Appalachian studies alive and well and our students here at Berea College are certainly at the forefront of honoring and preserving that culture in a wide variety of ways both large and small.

If you are reading this newsletter you'll find lots of news of transition and progress in the world of Appalachian Studies here at Berea; you'll learn about the passing of a remarkable Berea alum who was one of the true leaders in the region; you'll find out about changes in Brushy Fork; the accomplishments of *Appalachian Heritage*, *Grow Appalachia*, and our Associate Director and Curator, Christopher Miller; learn lessons from two women who have made amazing impacts on the region; and much more.

All the while, however, I hope you will be reminded of the student leaders who are the real movers and shakers of not only the Loyal Jones Appalachian Center and Appalachian Studies but are also the beating heart of this region itself. ✦

—Silas House, Interim Director



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LOYAL JONES  
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Berea College and the Appalachian Center are committed to the betterment of the peoples of Appalachia. The unique views and perspectives of individual authors in this Newsletter, however, do not necessarily represent the views and policies of Berea College.



# A literary light for the region

**A**ppalachian Heritage plays a vital role in Berea College's daily life and long-term mission. As Berea College's only scholarly journal, *Appalachian Heritage* reflects an unusual and compelling commitment to scholarship on the part of an undergraduate institution.

*Appalachian Heritage* is an outstanding manifestation of the College's commitment to the Appalachian Region. Publication in the magazine has been a landmark in the careers of many of the region's leading writers.

The journal serves as the public face of Berea College to legions of people. In 2011, our website attracted almost 100,000 sessions. Hundreds of libraries and individuals subscribe to *Appalachian Heritage*. Electronically, articles in *Appalachian Heritage* are made available through Project Muse. In 2011 over 10,000 computers accessed and people at over 350 different academic libraries in fifty countries looked at *Appalachian Heritage* articles through Project Muse. At the beginning of 2012 the magazine's Facebook page had over 1200 fans.

By publishing special issues highlighting African-American and Cherokee writing, and by including a diverse group of writers in every issue, *Appalachian Heritage* has drawn attention to the diversity of the region in an inimitable manner. Beginning this year, we plan for each issue to include a conversation with acclaimed author, activist, and cultural commentator bell hooks, further reinforcing this commitment. Our work has placed Berea College in the vanguard of forces celebrating the contributions of ethnic and cultural minorities.

Having featured author readings on campus four times a year helps energize student and faculty coursework. In past years, the magazine's featured authors presented to classes in sociology, women's studies, and education as well as English. They have also given talks to Entrepreneurship for the Public Good. The magazine provides a venue—right here on campus—for the submission of scholarly and creative work, and thus builds awareness of publication as a vital component of scholarly endeavor.

*Appalachian Heritage* student workers have significantly augmented their workplace skills and experience. Having their names on the copyright page of a beautiful and distinguished magazine has boosted student morale as well as competence and qualifications. After graduation, several former student workers have found full-time employment in the publishing industry.

Overall, *Appalachian Heritage* has become an invaluable resource for the College, the community, and the region as a whole. It is recognized as the single most important subscription for anyone desiring to stay abreast of regional literature. Berea College can be proud that it is making this important contribution and grateful for how it enhances the visibility and prestige of the College.

We hope you will consider subscribing to this fine journal and learning more about the literature and issues of our region. You can find out how to subscribe by visiting us at **community.berea.edu/appalachianheritage/subscribe.html**. ❖



# The Appalachian-Ukrainian Connection

Christopher Miller, our Associate Director and Curator, recently returned from spending fall semester 2011 in Ukraine. Miller won a Fulbright Award that allowed him to teach and research in the Ukrainian Carpathian Mountains. He lived in the city of Ivano-Frankivsk, teaching about museums and tourism at the Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University (PNU).

Much like Berea and Richmond, Kentucky, Ivano-Frankivsk sits on the edge of its adjacent mountain region with a strong connection the people and communities of the mountains. PNU serves a population of students who come streaming in on buses and trains every Sunday evening and Monday morning, primarily from Carpathian villages and towns. Every Friday afternoon the bus stops and trains station stations are full as many return to their villages.

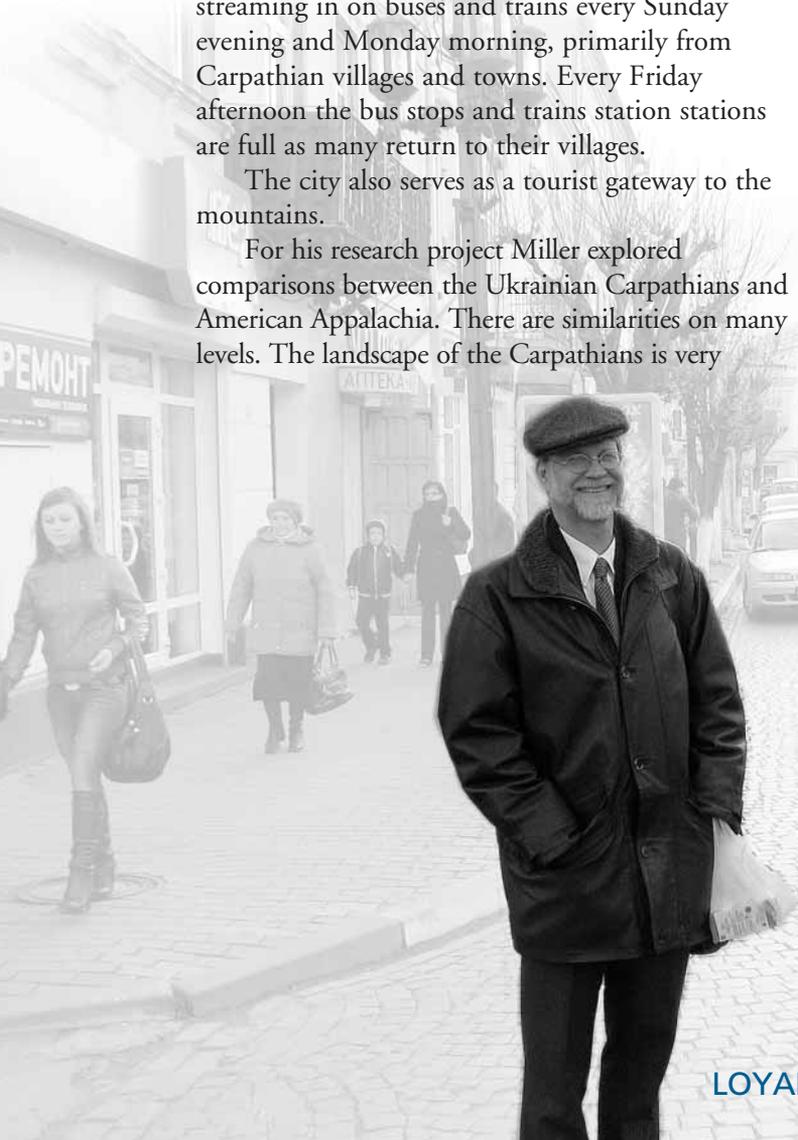
The city also serves as a tourist gateway to the mountains.

For his research project Miller explored comparisons between the Ukrainian Carpathians and American Appalachia. There are similarities on many levels. The landscape of the Carpathians is very

similar to Appalachia. The tallest mountain, Goverla, is about 6,000 feet. Villages are tucked in green valleys. Remote homesteads dot hillsides and are tucked in hollows. Spring floods are often a challenge. There is no coal in the Carpathians, but there are tensions over the extraction of timber and the development of ski resorts, with land use and jobs at the center. Subsistence and small farms struggle with the forces of globalization, but are also being lifted up by a strong local foods movement.

Miller's research focused specifically on the material culture of the Carpathians. Like Appalachia, the Carpathians are rich in traditional crafts, some long preserved by dedicated practitioners. Hand weaving is alive and well, but the forms and patterns look little like our Appalachian forms. Woodworking too is practiced. Carpathian woodworkers are known around the country for wonderful furniture and quality wood building construction, but the small pieces often chip-carving and inlay techniques that we don't see much in our region. Quilting is virtually unknown in the Carpathians, but heavy woolen "Hutsul" blankets are an icon. Beyond crafts there can also be found a material culture related to subsistence households, a material culture of resistance to outside cultures trying to assert dominance, and a material culture of religion. Each of these is both similar and different from our Appalachian forms. The function and meaning of these things is also complex. Like in Appalachia, symbolism, nostalgia, stereotyping, economic development, and slippery ideas like tradition all come into play. Miller's research is still progressing. Over the next few years the LJAC plans for interesting exhibitions and written results to come from this experience.

Miller's Fulbright is just the latest chapter of the LJAC's connections to the Carpathians and PNU. The Center hosted visitors from Ukraine in 2006, 2009, and 2011. Additional visits by PNU faculty are planned for this spring. A delegation from the Center attended PNU's mountain school conference in 2008. 



# Playing the winning hand



## WHAT I'VE LEARNED

Carolyn Sundy

I have learned that where you are born and to whom you are born does not define you. The truth of the matter is that first your heart must be filled with love and you must love yourself first to genuinely love others. My grandmother and other women in the community were strong role models. What they lacked in education, they made it up in having wisdom. The ability to share it with me and others was the blessing.

I was raised to respect all adults and that respect and good manners would always open doors of opportunities. I passed this information on to my sons and I must say it has paid off for us. It's always important to me to value people and be honest in communicating with them. The greatest joy of being raised in the mountain is that you never meet a stranger because you share a kindred spirit with everyone.

I was born and raised in a mining camp and with the community and church being caregivers along with the parents. The saying "It takes a village to raise a child was true." The school teachers had to walk up the street each day from school, and if you had any problems that day, she would inform your parents on the way home. I loved the winter because if the roads were bad the teacher would bum a ride and bypass my house. However, on Sunday morning she would still give your mother a report on your behavior at church.

I was taught that you never got a second chance to make a first impression. I had to dress in my best on Sunday and on special occasions. My clothes had to be ironed, pressed and shoes had to be polished before leaving the house. I learned that blood was thicker than water—the family would always be there in trials and tribulations long after the friends are gone. I learned that I was *somebody* down in grade school and that if I could conceive it, then I could achieve it. The highest form of praise is that you did your best, but work on perfection. I learned that wishing things were different is a great way to torture yourself. So don't be so hard on yourself—the world will do that for you. Life is like card game: you have to play the hand you were dealt and make it a winning hand. ✦

*Carolyn Sundy was born and raised in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky and received her education at the University of Kentucky and Mississippi State University. She has been a professor and administrator for 35 years.*

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Grow Appalachia**, funded by the generosity of John Paul Dejoria, co-founder and CEO of John Paul Mitchell Systems, has expanded greatly in 2012. Grow Appalachia will be serving over 500 Appalachian families at 15 sites in four states—Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia and Tennessee. In its first two years Grow Appalachia assisted 300 families in the production of over 250,000 of fresh produce. At least half of this

food was preserved—canned, frozen or dried—allowing the participating families to benefit from their hard work year round. The program stays true to its original mission: helping as many families as possible to grow as much food as they can. Grow Appalachia in 2012 will also feature an increased emphasis on organic production, season extension techniques and helping participants grow for the market.

# Mike Mullins: a tribute

*Appalachia lost one of its truest and most devoted sons on February 19, when Mike Mullins, Berea class of 1971, passed away after suffering a massive heart attack. Mullins had been the executive director of the Hindman Settlement School since 1977, making it one of the most respected and beloved centers of Appalachian culture and learning. He is survived by his wife, Frieda Smothers Mullins, his children, grandchildren, and a host of family and friends. We asked some of those friends to share their thoughts about Mike with us.*

“Mike Mullins was in the first class that I taught at Berea College, and I am proudest of him and his accomplishments. I joined the Hindman board when he was appointed its executive director, and thus I was able to observe his work over many years. I never met anyone who was more committed to a cause than Mike, and that cause was the Hindman Settlement School and how it might best serve the needs of Eastern Kentucky and Appalachia. While many of such boarding schools went out of business when public education became available, Hindman, under Mike, found new ways to serve and was and is vital to the region.”  
—Loyal Jones

“Mike lived the values Berea College teaches. He was a servant-leader who dedicated his life to improving the community and region he called home. He believed in the dignity of every person and was never above doing what needed to be done. He celebrated Appalachia’s best qualities and brought together people with wide-ranging backgrounds and interests to address her problems and opportunities. His impact will be felt for generations by those who were inspired by him and by those who never knew him.”

—Jeanne Marie Hibberd

“I had the privilege of being on the Hindman Settlement School Board for a quarter of a century. The best decision I ever made was when I had the opportunity to help choose Mike Mullins as the director. We had the bonus of also having his lovely family to be part of the Hindman Settlement School family of ‘greats.’”

—Marlene Payne

“There may never be another Mike Mullins. He had the rare combination of passion, persistence, and place-devotion. He was also incredibly supportive and kind; I will never forget the welcome he extended me when I moved to Kentucky. He loved Hindman Settlement School, he loved Berea, he loved Eastern Kentucky, and most of all, he loved his family. And of course, we all loved him.”  
—Chad Berry



**The late Mike Mullins, '71, in a recent photo with his wife, Frieda.**

“At Mike’s funeral, I was blessed to sit three rows behind his mother, as though I was inside the hollow of an aged oak, every sound magnified. As I thought about and listened to others talk about all Mike had done in his short life, my mind drifted to appropriate words spoken by another great American visionary, Martin Luther King, Jr, in April 1968:

“We’ve got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn’t matter with me now. Because I’ve been to the mountaintop. And I don’t mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I’m not concerned about that now. I just want to do God’s will. And He’s allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I’ve looked over. And I’ve seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land.

“I imagined Mike, at that very moment, talking to Martin, saying, ‘nobody’ll ever say I was a ‘possum or a white line; I was never a middle of the road guy!’”

—William Turner

# Three lessons



## WHAT I'VE LEARNED

Mary  
McLaughlin

I have been blessed to spend most of my adult life with Berea College Upward Bound and have the opportunity to do important, life-altering work with these young people. I am always challenged to learn and to find better ways to meet their needs, and I am never bored.

Three lessons I can share as a result of my history with Upward Bound are pretty simple, but they aren't taught in a classroom.

First, never underestimate your impact on a child, positive or negative, as you intersect with their lives. Upward Bound alumni will come to visit and tell me about a discussion we had on the library steps 10 years ago that influenced their lives in some way. Often I don't recall that conversation, but they remember it clearly. Use your voice wisely—you have more power and influence on students' lives than you can know.

Second, never underestimate a child's ability. Eddie was the Upward Bound student who first taught me this lesson. At 15, Eddie entered Upward Bound with very basic math skills, but he persevered to a college degree in Physics. Students can achieve far greater goals than they—or we, as their mentors—believe possible.

Third, we have to believe in our students before they are able to believe in themselves. And we have to tell them so in a multitude of ways, by challenging them to achieve, by persisting with them when they fail and celebrating their successes, and through unwavering love.

A few summers ago one of my students, David, gave me a refresher course in this lesson when we spent a whole night together in the emergency room at the University of Kentucky Medical Center. He had broken both bones in his lower left leg and was being evaluated for possible nerve damage. He was scared and hurting, and I was a little scared too—and trying not to show it. We built a relationship over the course of that night, and one thing I learned was how good he is in basketball and track. I asked him if he was hoping for an athletic scholarship and afraid that this accident might make him lose that chance. He nodded and then gave me a little smile. "But I'm not really worried," he said. "I have a back-up plan." "What is that," I asked. "I am very smart," he said. "I'm at the top of my class. I'll get an academic scholarship."

David is African American, male, urban, poor and from a single parent home, and his father is in prison—all earmarks of a child our society expects to fail. Instead, David has learned to believe in himself and his capabilities.

Like David, many of our Upward Bound students are expected to fail. When these young people enroll in Upward Bound, they bring their dreams, big and small, along with them. Often they come with no real belief that they can make those dreams happen. Upward Bound plays an important role in helping them develop their plan—and their back-up plan—and giving them the confidence to pursue their dreams.

Ralph Abernathy said, "I don't know what the future may hold, but I know who holds the future." I can echo that statement. Every day I see the future through my students' eyes, and I am encouraged daily by their vision. I cannot think of a job I'd rather have. ❖

*Since writing this article, Mary McLaughlin has moved to the leadership team of Berea College's Externally Sponsored Programs, as director of grants development.*

# Handing over the reigns at the Brushy Fork Institute

*Peter Hille, director of Brushy Fork Institute (BFI), has taken a new position at the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (MACED) in Berea. Donna Morgan, who has served as associate director for the past ten years, has stepped into the role of director and shares her thoughts below.*

**by Donna Morgan**

*Associate Director, Brushy Fork Institute*

Peter kept in his office a picture that shows the two of us at our best—when we partnering on planning and implementing programs that have made Brushy Fork a driving development force in the region and beyond. The photo, which accompanies this article, was taken as we were practicing an icebreaker activity for a project we did with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The image depicts the ease and joy we shared as colleagues.

People often commented on the way Peter and I worked so well together, blending our talent and skill like harmony in a song. We've co-planned hundreds of programs and workshops. We have piloted Brushy Fork through drastic programmatic changes, with the help of our able staff. We have burned the midnight oil on proposals, rejoiced when they were funded and celebrated the resulting impacts of Brushy Fork's work in the region.

During these years, I have been the quiet voice behind Peter's leadership. But as I carried out my supporting role as associate director, I also was learning and growing in ways that have prepared me to step to the fore and lift my voice. And the time has arrived for my turn to lead the song at Brushy Fork.

As I move into leadership, a common question has been "What is *your* vision for Brushy Fork?" Somewhat in jest, I have replied: "I just want to keep things running smoothly this first year!" I've reminded myself that vision is about both steadiness and change. And the underlying mission of Brushy Fork remains to effectively serve the leaders, organizations and communities striving to make the region a better place for all.

And so I hope to maintain and improve the high quality programming that Brushy Fork has offered under Peter's leadership. I commit to lifting my voice for the mountain communities we know and love. And with the help of our dedicated staff, I commit to leading Brushy Fork with a sense of responsiveness to the real issues facing Central Appalachia today.

Look to the coming year with us, as we plan an exciting new Annual Institute for September and as we make the old new again and roll out the Brushy Fork Leadership Development Program Curriculum for communities to implement. Share with us the successes of the communities that build their capacity with Flex-E-Grants and that explore ways to capture and leverage local resources through local philanthropy.

And please join me as I thank Peter for his years of service to Brushy Fork and to the Appalachian region. You will be missed, my friend, and we are glad you'll still be close enough to occasionally enjoy a shared song. 🎵



**Peter Hille, long-time BFI director, left, with Donna Morgan, who will become his successor in July.**



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Megan Jones, '13, of Clay County, Kentucky, presents on behalf of the Loyal Jones Appalachian Center at the Appalachian Studies Association Conference in Indiana, Pennsylvania in March 2012. The LJAC took a contingent of 15 people to the annual conference.