

# NEWS

# LETTER



APPALACHIAN CENTER  
BEREA COLLEGE

Loyal Jones • Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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## Looking Forward

*January 16-29:* Winter Crafts, John C. Campbell Folk School, Route 1, Brasstown, N.C. 28902. Woodworking, weaving, pottery, basketry, blacksmithing.

*February 5, 12, 19, 26:* Appalachian Humanities Series: "Native American Heritage and Ideals," John C. Campbell Folk School.

*February 24-25:* Kentucky Conference on Oral History, Seelbach Hotel, Louisville, Ky., sponsored by the Kentucky Oral History Commission and the Kentucky Folklore Society. Saturday dinner guest speaker: Studs Terkel. Information from Kim Lady, P.O. Box H, Frankfort, Ky. 40602.

*March 18-20:* Annual Meeting, Appalachian Studies Conference, Pipestem Resort State Park, Pipestem, W.Va. Papers will "reflect the complexity of life and work in the region, the region's ethnic diversity, and dimensions of regional social change and cultural continuity."

*March 24-26:* Annual Convention, Philological Association of the Carolinas, The Citadel, Charleston, S.C. For the first time, a special session will be devoted to Appalachian folklore and literature. Information from Parks Lanier, Jr., Department of English, Radford University Box 5917, Radford, Va. 24142.

## Reading: "It Works"

The highest percentage of failure in schools across the country is in the first grade. The principal cause of this failure: inability to learn to read. As many as 20 percent of first-grade children encounter reading, and therefore learning, problems. Anybody who's ever worked with a nonreader, either formally or informally, knows that it can be a complex and baffling job.

But down in Miami, a new approach is offering a measure of hope; in fact, the program's director, Nathan Farber, characterizes it as "a quiet revolution in education." It's a federally funded program called the Early Childhood Preventive Curriculum; its stated aims are 1) to enable the failure-prone student to be successful; 2) to enable the teacher to identify student "learning needs and learning styles"; 3) to help teachers manage a classroom in such a way as to enable children to learn to read, to be happy and to be turned on to learning.

It's difficult to describe the program without plung-

ing into a thicket of jargon, but it sounds as if it were based on putting the teacher together with some up-to-date programmed-learning materials, the whole thing made palatable to the kids—and effective with them—by being applied in the form of specially devised games. "The teacher is trained to choose appropriate curricular learning materials to enable the child to learn before s/he evidences any signs of failure and distress. . . . In order to facilitate the classroom-management component, the teacher develops self-direction and independent work habits in children."

The important thing is that children who have experienced the program have continued to do well. Teachers are quoted as saying that time spent in the program workshop was "more wisely spent than in many a college education course." Perhaps everyone will not consider that comment as an overwhelming endorsement, but the teachers also sum up the program by saying that "it's easy, practical and it works." For information, write to Farber at 9240 S.W. 124 St., Miami, Fla. 33176.

## The New Foundation: What Role for Citizens?

In the Summer issue of the CENTER NEWSLETTER, we pointed to the creation of the new Appalachian Development Foundation, which, said Albert P. Smith, Jr., retiring federal cochairman of the Appalachian Regional Commission, will "bridge the gap between the old efforts and new approaches." At the request of the Appalachian governors, Smith has become the leading force in the planning of the new foundation.

But around the region numerous questions are being posed about the ADF. Who will control it? Who will run it? What will it do? What resources will it have? One such questioner is Bill Horton, coordinator of a grassroots group called the Appalachian Alliance. Taking note of the foundation's enabling resolution, which calls for a board of directors made up of the 13 Appalachian governors plus representatives of the federal government and business, labor and other "interests of Appalachia," Horton observes that "there's not any clear evidence that citizen participation will be built into the foundation's structure." The time to press for citizen input is now, he says, not after ADF is set up

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## NEW FOUNDATION *from page 1*

and in operation. "I would suggest that one of the things people could do if they want input is to let Michael Wenger know"; Wenger is the Appalachian states' Washington representative in the Appalachian Regional Commission setup (1666 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20235). Or interested persons can contact their state governors. If something doesn't change, Horton says, "you're going to end up with three-fourths or more of the board made up of people who are *usually* in control of things."

Another concern Horton expresses is that in its search for funds the new ADF might compete with grassroots groups like his own Appalachian Alliance for the favors of foundations. But that seems a much less likely danger than the possibility that the ADF will overlook or bypass the need for participation from persons who are not governors or executives. And the more the latter groups are in control of ADF, the bigger the bucks it will naturally pursue—a paradoxical point, perhaps, but paradox is nothing new in Appalachia.

## Two from Appalshop

Appalshop, the movie-and-other-media people in Whitesburg, Ky., has announced the release of two new films with an Appalachian focus.

*The Big Lever: Party Politics in Leslie County, Kentucky* (53 minutes) treats this mountain county as an American political microcosm; at least, this is the producers' declared intention. What the film does is to follow events in the career of one C. Allen Muncy, the county judge who acquired a measure of national notoriety by inviting Former President Nixon to the county's centennial celebration. Other events in Muncy's life and in the film include his indictment and conviction on charges of hanky-panky with absentee ballots. The producers regard neither Muncy nor Nixon as Lincolnesque.

*Coalmining Women* (40 minutes) follows women into the mines in Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, West Virginia and Colorado. The story, say the producers, captures the feelings of the women about "what they've accomplished and the advantages and disadvantages of their chosen occupation, including the compromise they face between their health and safety and the benefits of high wages."

To rent or buy either of these films, you may contact Betty Hammock at Box 743, Whitesburg, Ky. 41858. The telephone number is 606/633-0108.

## New Head for ARC

Speaking of the Appalachian Regional Commission, as we do nearby, we ought to point out that a new Federal Cochairman has been named and is now on the job. She's Winifred Ann Pizzano, a native of Harrisburg, Pa., who comes to ARC from ACTION, the federal volunteer-program umbrella agency (VISTA—yes, there's still something called that—Foster Grandparents, etc.).

Even though ARC is ticketed for oblivion, being ap-

pointed as the federal head of it isn't exactly the same as being named recreation director of the *Titanic*. For one thing, federal programs have been known to be resuscitated even when all the vital signs are zero. For another, the commission will have about \$150 million to spend in the next fiscal year to fill in critical gaps in its highway and health-care systems; to continue basic services, like providing clean drinking water; and to conduct job programs. You can imagine how much the new Appalachian Development Foundation would like to get its hands on \$150 million. They're talking, at present, in the range of \$3 million to \$5 million, and thus providing a quietly eloquent sermon on the difference between federal and private funding.

## Wanted—Director

Eastern Kentucky's Pine Mountain Settlement School, which in recent years has developed a rural environmental-education and community-service program, is in search of a director. If you're interested in the job and you feel that your personal qualities include "educational or rural community-development experience, knowledge of Appalachia, imaginative program initiatives, administrative and property-management capacities, Christian commitment and a devotion to service," then you should write to Search Committee: Willis D. Weatherford, Berea College, CPO Box 2317, Berea, Ky. 40404. The salary is modest, says the committee; the appointment will be effective on or before next June 1.

## Letters

TO THE EDITOR:

In your summer issue you say [in an EYE on Publications note about a novel], "In this novel. . . one of the men registers surprise in this fashion: 'His left eyebrow went all the way up and the right eye narrowed to a slit.' That may sound more or less all right when you're sitting at the typewriter, but we'll bet you can't do it without scaring the kids."

I didn't appreciate this particular bit of elite criticism. A cousin of my late husband's was named Vincent Martin; he had a perpetual slit in one of his eyes, when he was interested in what he was saying; and talking about Vince, people would say, "Vince squinched up his left eye, and his right eye opened wide." He would usually be whittling while he talked. When Vince was bored, both eyes had the same depth and width, and both of them were blue, and they could stare a hole right through a pretty girl with a slit up her skirt.

And this morning on the *Today* show, Jane Pauley's left eyebrow went all the way up and the right eye narrowed to a slit! But maybe your critic doesn't get the chance to watch much TV.

MABEL W. MARTIN  
Corbin, Ky.

(Mrs. Martin is not the first observer to point out to us that we often don't know what we're missing.—ED.)



## Appalachian Close-ups

For some years now, Kenneth Murray's faces and people we've seen throughout the Appalachian region and in national magazines. These photos come from a recent exhibition of his work, "Down to Earth—People of Appalachia," which was seen by visitors to the Berea College Appalachian Museum. Murray is a Tennessee photojournalist who is currently photo editor of the Johnson City *Press-Chronicle*. If you'd like a whole book of his work, you can get it—the title is the same as that of the exhibition—from the Appalachian Consortium Press, Boone, N.C.



## EYE on Publications

*Twice Out of Sight*, by Roscoe E. Plowman (Kentucky Imprints, Berea, Ky.). As the Rev. Ed Ehresman observes in the foreword to this book, "many interesting stories have been written about the people of southern Appalachia. Not all have come from a deep love and appreciation of the people." You can't level this charge against the memoirs of "Preacher Plowman," an EUB minister who was summoned to the Jacks Creek Center of Red Bird Mission, in southeastern Kentucky, in 1936. Plowman paints an amusing and affectionate picture of a time that, as you read his anecdotes, seems much longer ago—a time when, for instance, you could spend three days in carrying out a fifteen-mile errand.

*Berea's First 125 Years*, by Elisabeth S. Peck, with a final chapter by Emily Ann Smith (University Press of Kentucky). This book originally appeared in 1955 as *Berea's First Century*; the new final chapter brings the story up to 1980. Since it may justly be said that Berea is famous around the world as a distinctive and innovative college, this story holds greater meaning and is of greater general interest than is usually the case with institutional histories. More striking now, probably, than it was in 1955 is the account of Berea's resistance to Kentucky's segregationist 1904 Day Law and of President Frost's attempts to deal with the resulting problems; the college, which had pioneered unsegregated education in the South, had been struck a low blow, but it had to straighten up and do its best to stay in the fight. There are numerous other episodes of genuine historical interest. You won't find much criticism of Berea College in this chronicle, but then you wouldn't expect to.

*Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers*, by Ronald D. Eller (University of Tennessee Press). Appalachia, says Ron Eller, is not a backwater left idle by the mainstream of American industrial development; on the contrary, the region we know today was in fact produced by industrialization. His book is the arguing-out of this rather unorthodox thesis; it examines the social and economic history of the Appalachian South from 1880

to 1930, a half-century that ended with the mountaineer suspended halfway between the old order and the new.

*Kentucky Country: Folk and Country Music of Kentucky*, by Charles K. Wolfe (University Press of Kentucky). A few years ago, Bill C. Malone, author of *Country Music U.S.A.* and *Southern Music American Music*, said that someone ought to do a book on Kentucky folk and country musicians because in his opinion Kentucky had produced more than any other state except Texas. It did not take Charles Wolfe long to do the job. Having recently produced *Tennessee Strings*, about Volunteer State musicians, and *The Grand Ole Opry: the Early Years*, he was in practice. His book is a succinct chronicle of events and persons who were and are involved in a *genre* of music that has moved onto the national stages and airwaves. The list of musicians is impressive: Bradley Kincaid, Jean Ritchie, Grandpa Jones, Bill Monroe, John Lair, Buell Kazee, Lily May Ledford, Red Foley, Blind Bill Day, Asa Martin, Molly O'Day, and that's just the beginning. Wolfe also does a good job of telling us why Kentucky has produced so many musicians and why their music is so popular elsewhere.

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A chapbook used to be a collection of ballads or tales sold by an itinerant dealer, but now you can get chapbooks at home. The Richard Montgomery Foundation—a Virginia organization concerned with Appalachian culture, history and historical preservation—in association with the Appalachian Writers Association is publishing a series of little (about 20 pages) books containing poetry, fiction and essays. They are to be issued six a year at a cover price of \$1 apiece. The executive director of the Montgomery Foundation, John Nicolay, sees this development as a chance for Appalachian writers "to know what other writers are doing and how they are interpreting Appalachia." And beyond that, of course, it's a chance for Appalachian writers to be published and thereby come to the attention of a wider audience. You can find out more about the chapbooks from Nicolay at P.O. Box 914, Blacksburg, Va., or from Jay Robert Reese, Box 1918OA, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tenn. 37614.

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