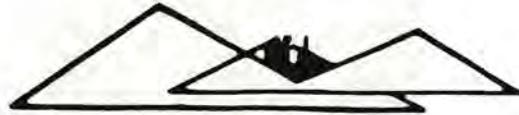


NEWS

LETTER



APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE

Loyal Jones • Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Looking Forward

December 26-January 1: Christmas country dance school, Berea College. Featured, besides dancing, are other folk arts—storytelling, singing, puppetry, wood-carving. Information from John M. Ramsay, 606/986-9341, ext. 5143.

December 26-January 2: At the John C. Campbell Folk School they call this the most popular dance week of the entire year. To find out more, you may call 704/837-2775 or write the school at Brasstown, N.C. 28902.

February 5-11: Intensive courses in basketry, John C. Campbell Folk School; experts will teach traditional and contemporary styles.

February 10: Knoxville's Laurel Theatre presents a musical triple-header, with Maura O'Connell (voted best Irish female singer for 1984 and 1985), Russ Barenberg (flattop guitar) and Jerry Douglas (dobro). For more information about this and other programs, call Jubilee Community Arts at 615/522-5851 or write to this organization at 1538 Laurel Ave., Knoxville, Tenn. 37916.

February 12-18: Intensive courses in quilting, John C. Campbell Folk School: cathedral-window, string patchwork, Stars and Stripes, chintz applique.

March 3-5: Winter craft weekend, for those who may not have been able to take advantage of the John C. Campbell Folk School's week-long offerings. This session will present instruction in everything from batik to kaleidoscopes.

March 17-19: Appalachian Studies Association annual conference, West Virginia University, Morgantown, W.Va. The theme of this meeting is "transformation of life and labor in Appalachia" as the region passed from the traditional through the industrial stages of development. In addition to the usual scholars and teachers, participants will include the winner of a student paper competition. Information about the competition and any other aspect of the conference is available from the Appalachian Consortium office, Appalachian State University, Boone, N.C. 28608; the telephone number is 704/262-2064.

March 19-25: Craft and dance week, John C. Campbell Folk School. This mixture features familiar crafts plus clogging and western square dancing.

April 20-22: Eighth annual New River symposium, sponsored by the New River Gorge National River of

the National Park Service and a variety of other public institutions in three states; Best Western motel, Radford, Va. Not for the intellectually faint-hearted, the symposium will, as usual, concern itself with archaeology, folklore, geography and all sorts of other scientific and humanistic concerns. Direct your questions to park headquarters at 304/465-0508.

Help for the Grassroots

Although the 26,000 foundations in the United States give away more than \$6 billion annually, most of these organizations make grants of less than \$25,000 a year. Thus, in only its second year of operation, the Appalachian Community Fund proudly reports that the \$75,000 it awarded during the past year put it among the top 40 percent of foundation givers. Not only that, say ACF spokesmen, but the fund worked with dozens of other groups to help them raise money elsewhere.

They're especially pleased because, when the fund began operating, various observers foresaw a short and unhappy life for it. Either it would never manage to raise any money, people said, or even if it did it would soon displease conservative donors, who would cut it off without a penny.

But, in fact, the ACF has now moved into its third year of supporting organizations run by low-and middle-income Appalachians in the four states of Central Appalachia. During the past decade these grassroots community groups have found it increasingly hard to raise the funds they need while facing increasing problems. ACF help, even in small amounts, has made a significant difference in the work of these groups in a variety of fields—economic development, worker health and safety, protection of the environment, civil rights, community organization and others. The fund, says Chairperson Vicki Quatman, has "a mandate to support the movements for social justice in Central Appalachia."

Without financial support from people and foundations that know what the local groups are doing, adds Director Kim Klein, "many fine organizations will have to close or severely curtail their work over the next few years." Hence "it is imperative for us to keep

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BOBBY McMILLON
was one of the stars
at the Celebration
of Traditional Music
held in Berea
in October.



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growing, keep providing grants to organizations addressing the root causes of the social problems of our region. This year we funded 36 of the more than 100 groups which applied. Next year, we will have more applications and we will fund more groups."

If you want to know more about the Appalachian Community Fund, you can write to 517 Union Ave., Suite 206, Knoxville, Tenn. 37902.

With Regret

We are sorry to record the deaths of two great friends of Appalachia. Francis S. Hutchins, 86, who served as Berea's president from 1939 to 1967, died on November 28. Jean G. Perrin, 81, who with her husband Alfred gave funds to help establish the Appalachian Center and specifically this newsletter, died on December 1. Hutchins, a native of Northfield, Mass., came to Berea from educational work in China. He reintegrated Berea in 1950 when state segregation laws were modified, and he is credited with increasing the Berea endowment five-fold, building major new buildings, establishing Bachelor of Science programs with a strong liberal arts base and insisting on excellence at all levels. Mrs. Perrin and her husband founded the annual W. D. Weatherford Award and donated over 5,000 books to the college library. She was involved in numerous civic activities and was a charter member of the Body Recall exercise program.

The Importance of Mass

A concept borrowed from physics helps to explain why many current efforts to improve rural schools will fail to do the job, according to a new study of school-reform programs. Even if

- curricula are expanded,
- class sizes are limited,
- remedial programs are adopted,
- special classes are created for gifted students,

reform efforts may prove ineffective because the school in question lacks the "critical mass" of students and teachers needed to sustain an educational chain reaction. The population base is simply not big enough to

spread the costs, thus making reform prohibitively expensive.

In other points, the study not only discusses the difficulty rural districts have in recruiting qualified teachers in subjects like art and mathematics but asserts that keeping existing teachers up to date is a continuing problem because many of them operate small businesses or hold second jobs and thus have trouble taking time off. And governments add to the schools' problems by imposing complex mandates on limited administrative staffs.

You may obtain a copy of the study, called "Education Reform in Rural Appalachia," from Jack Russell at the Appalachian Regional Commission, 202/673-7876.

EYE on Publications

Kentucky's Clark, with Bill Cunningham (McClanahan Publishing House, Route 2, Box 32, Kuttawa, Ky. 42055). "Kentucky's Clark" is Thomas D. Clark, professor emeritus of history at the University of Kentucky, where as head of the department from 1942 to 1965 he transformed a lackluster entity into a department of national reputation and through his teaching, his writings and his public advocacy became not only the state's leading historian but a revered figure to persons who had no connection at all with the university. Born in Mississippi early in the century, Clark became a teacher at Kentucky in 1931 and grew into what the editor of this book calls "a Kentucky landmark."

The book itself is a lengthy, detailed, wideranging interview, in which Clark mingles reminiscence, commentary and analysis to present a fascinating picture both of himself and of the commonwealth to whose welfare he has devoted his efforts for well over half a century. Anecdotes, of course, abound; Clark has had the good fortune to know many Kentucky political figures, including perhaps the most colorful of all governors, A. O. Stanley, a man who once angrily denied having been dead drunk for two days. "Hell, that's a lie," declared Stanley. "I've been drunk all my life." If someone held a festival of political humor, in fact, many of Clark's stories would be prizewinners. But more important than the anecdotes is the way in which this book enables one to meet and know a person of Clark's caliber.

Can Somebody Shout Amen! by Patsy Sims (St. Martin's Press). When the author was a proper church-going girl growing up in the South, "tents and tabernacles were as off limits as the abandoned house next door." But she nurtured a continuing curiosity about what went on inside those forbidden places, and in 1981, as a grown-up, she decided to take an extensive look. The result is this study of the nature of the American revivalist, detailing his day-to-day activities and probing his beliefs. In attending some fifty services and interviewing 22 revivalists and more than a hundred other persons, Ms. Sims discovered a world she found utterly fascinating, "dominated by men who are colorful, compelling, and not just a little unorthodox."

These revivalists spring from a tradition going back almost two centuries, to the Great Revival that swept the frontier around 1800, with rough-hewn preachers

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"Long Journey Home"



Storyteller Anndrena Belcher is featured in the Appalshop film *Long Journey Home*, which shows the patterns of Appalachian migration, the forces that shaped them, and the people involved. You can obtain this 58-minute film by writing Box 743, Whitesburg, Ky. 41858.

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bringing rugged pioneers to their knees; in the largest meeting of the time, more than twelve thousand sin-hardened settlers congregated at Cane Ridge, near the village of Lexington, Ky. By the 1950s, revivalism, though still dealing in big numbers, had developed a new emphasis: rival preachers vied with each other to see who could acquire the largest tent. In this period, the heyday of the healing revivals, one Jack Coe bragged in his publication that his new "Gospel tent" was "by a slight margin" larger than that of the eminent healer Oral Roberts, and then along came A. A. Allen to declare that his latest tent was not only bigger than anybody else's but was made of vinyl. A notable practitioner of his art, Allen, after buying successively larger tents, cut up one of his discards into strips and declared that God had instructed him to offer these "power packed prayer rugs" to the faithful; for a pledge of \$100, you could get one by return mail.

In addressing the needs of the emotionally poor and dispossessed, such evangelists filled a social role neglected by other cultural figures. They continued to do so through the 1960s and 1970s, though healing declined in importance and tents were often replaced by auditoriums and civic centers and TV. The 1980s gave the world the spectacle of Jim and Tammy Bakker, the latter of whom was called by another preacher "that little Jezebel on television!"

Though granting that these men and women of the cloth are not necessarily all good, the author declines to say who is sincere and who is an Elmer Gantry. Who can know, she asks, whether God did or did not tell a particular person to buy a Jaguar?

God's Peculiar People, by Elaine J. Lawless (University Press of Kentucky). Members of Pentecostal sects—Holy Rollers, as they are often known—have attracted derisive attention since their churches came into being early in the 20th century. Viewed by outsiders as a peculiar people, they number among their believers one group, the nontrinitarian "Jesus Only" Pentecostals, who are aware that they are regarded as even more peculiar than their fellows and profess to take pride in the fact.

Although the Pentecostal interpretation of Biblical teachings accords dominance to men, the author found in her study of churches in southern Indiana and southern Missouri that significantly more women than men are involved in this charismatic religion. At the first Pentecostal church she attended, the congregation was composed entirely of women, the only males present being the elderly pastor, his son and a few small boys. Thus, she says, her book contains a bias toward the experience of Pentecostal women, but it is not an artificial bias because, besides their greater numbers, the women participate in the services with greater intensity: this religious arena offers them an acceptable forum for the expression of ecstasy. Ms. Lawless also observes that in a milieu in which women are largely excluded from participation in social and political affairs, ecstatic religious experience provides a means of establishing group identity. Although Pentecostalism allows women to become licensed preachers, the author senses an uneasiness among members who look back to Paul, who not only objected to women's taking authority over men but even wanted them to "keep silence in

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the churches." As one man said with reference to women preachers: "God didn't have any."

Overall, the author, a folklorist at the University of Missouri, seeks to present a picture of the "Jesus Only" sect as a group distinguished by its own folk traditions and religious expression, but as her comments on sexual roles suggest, she has more in mind than the painting of an innocuous portrait. Even so, the portrait itself displays some nice features; for example, one woman observed that there's nothing odd about Pentecostal behavior in itself—Pentecostals simply behave in church the way other people behave at ball games, and what we have, said the woman, "is something to shout about."

All Night Dog, by Garry Barker (Kentucke Imprints, Box 337, Berea, Ky. 40403). A third collection of the author's stories, following *Fire on the Mountain* (1983) and *Mountain Passage* (1986), both also from Kentucke Imprints. In a foreword Barker speaks of his continuing efforts to "write 'real' stories about real people"—efforts that led a reviewer of an earlier collection to comment that "the honesty of the writing and the author's familiarity with his subject turn familiar scenes into poignant visions of Appalachia." In unembellished prose the author presents the doings of his mountain people, very often wandering Kentuckians set adrift by the Army or moved by the need of work or self-definition. These stories, says Barker, represent attempts to write "the way best suited to my peculiar personality and viewpoint."

Brier, His Book, by Jim Wayne Miller (Gnomon Press, P.O. Box 106, Frankfort, Ky. 40602). As the term "Brier" suggests, the central character in these poems is intended to be a quintessential Appalachian. He's a complex fellow indeed, intimately familiar with the land yet capable of dreaming up literary conceits such as the creation of a "mountain vision center" that would not fit people for ordinary spectacles but would devote itself to "exchanging rose-colored glasses for

poems that made gentle contact with the mind's eye." A reviewer of an earlier book did a neat job of catching the Miller essence. "Watch out, sillies of the world," he said. "This man's got your number."

BOOKS FROM BEREА: The Berea College Press and the Appalachian Center currently have available four regional titles, three of them first editions and one important reprint. *Beech Creek*, James S. Brown's widely known study of a mountain neighborhood in the 1940s (for a review see CENTER NEWSLETTER, Summer 1988), appeared in book form during 1988; the price is \$20.00. Another first edition is Richard Sears's "A Practical Recognition of the Brotherhood of Man," which is concerned with John G. Fee, the founder of Berea College, and the part he played in the ending of slavery in Kentucky (\$8.50). The third is James Still's *Wolfpen Poems* (hardcover, \$10.95; paperback, \$7.50). The reprint is actually a revised edition of Loyal Jones's biography, *Radio's 'Kentucky Mountain Boy,' Bradley Kincaid*, which contains not only the singer's life story but a discography and the words and music to 50 songs (\$7.50). You may order these books from the Appalachian Center at the address on page 4 of the NEWSLETTER; enclose \$2.00 for shipping.

NEW MAGAZINE: We don't often hear the state of Maine mentioned in Appalachian contexts, but a group of literarily inclined Down Easters have just announced the establishment of *Potato Eyes*, a semiannual literary magazine emphasizing the work of writers "who live along the Appalachian chain from southern Quebec to Alabama." Even though the magazine is edited a long way off, we felt an immediate sense of reassurance when we noted that numbered among the charter contributors is the xenophiliac but thoroughly Appalachian Jim Wayne Miller. You can subscribe to *Potato Eyes* for \$9; the address is P.O. Box 76, Ward Hill, Troy, Maine 04987.

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