

NEWS

LETTER



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The Germans Do It— Noncontroversial Stripping

In a report from a West German coal-mining site, Los Angeles *Times* reporter Murray Seeger observes that "company officials do not like to call their work strip mining because of the bad name many American companies have given to the process of removing top soil to dig out mineral resources." Seeger says that Rheinbraun, the German firm whose operation he studied, "has developed a complete system for restoring mined acreage so that it is at least as productive as it was before the digging started, and in some cases even more useful. The company leaves no scars like the ugly, mined-out areas of southeast Ohio, West Virginia and southern Illinois." Or, we must add, Kentucky, whose moonscape coal-fields have perhaps never been visited by Seeger.

Rheinbraun's research chief, Dr. Hans-Joachim Kersting, who has visited American mining regions, said to the reporter: "The wreckage of the earth left in the wake of much strip mining left me personally shocked and uncomprehending." His own company has been so successful at restoring the land that it won a Krupp Foundation prize of \$200,000 for carrying on "energy production friendly to the environment." Why do American firms not seem interested in adopting similar reclamation methods? Because, Rheinbraun executives say, "they find it too expensive. We set aside 10 percent of our costs for environmental protection."

Before anyone can say that West Germany is not Appalachia, we point out that Seeger quotes a 1972 Oak Ridge National Laboratory study of Rheinbraun's mining methods which concluded: "We found that the land restoration program has been largely successful and that strip mining is no longer a controversial public issue in Germany . . . Many features of the German approach could be applied to strip mining problems in the United States."

Strip mining no longer a controversial public issue—think about that for a while!

ARC—Four More Years And a Craft Center, Too

On New Year's Eve, President Ford signed the bill giving the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) four more years of life. Press releases from the commission pointed

out that the new act provides for increased funding for both the highway and the nonhighway programs. Highway money is up by \$840 million, nonhighway by \$640 million. As mentioned in the summer 1975 issue of the CENTER NEWSLETTER, there's an interesting side to the "nonhighway" appropriation: up to \$2.5 million may be spent each year for the "development and stimulation of the indigenous arts and crafts of the Region." This provision appears to have resulted not from the expressed desires of the region's craftsmen and -women or even from the planning of the commission's staff members but from the will of Rep. Joe L. Evins of Tennessee, who wanted to have a craft center in his district and had the clout to get it, regardless of its value or lack of it to the region as a whole.

Garry Barker, executive director of the Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen, reacted to the news with some dismay. "Kentucky is certainly a part of the region," he said, but "the Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen was never involved in any planning or even discussion of a possible center. Millions of federal dollars have gone down the drain in craft programs, largely because of lack of knowledge, mismanagement, and the strangling strings attached for funding. Ironically, the Tennessee plan has more merit than previous projects and should have been considered on merit rather than being the product of back-door politics. Tainted by controversy, the new center may become a disservice to all craftsmen."

(The NEWSLETTER would be interested in hearing from persons who support the ARC funding of this Tennessee center even though they may not approve of the "back-door" device whereby it was brought about.)

Appalachian winter beauty (see p. 3)



Attitudes Toward Dialect

On April 1-3 Eastern Kentucky University (Richmond) will be host to a meeting of particular interest to students of Appalachian linguistic matters. The gathering, which is the annual convention of the Kentucky Interdisciplinary Conference on Linguistics, will be addressed by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., noted linguistics researcher and professor of English and linguistics at the University of Chicago. Editor of *The Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States*, McDavid has studied the languages of the slums and of rural areas and is concerned with the problems of people whose speech habits interfere with their social and economic well-being. He will speak at a symposium, "Language Learning and Attitudes Toward Dialect." Information about the meeting can be obtained from Charles M. Latta, Department of English, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Ky. 40475.

Humanities: Cash on Tap

The Kentucky Humanities Council is an outfit with money to spend, and they're eager to spread it around. They have \$135,000 in the till to fund local programs dealing with almost any kind of issue. Programs must be aimed primarily at adults (not students) and must present various points of view (not propaganda). The KHC will help local sponsors plan such events as well as help with the funding; any nonprofit organization is eligible. A look at recent typical programs shows that the definition of "humanities" could hardly be more elastic; subjects include rape (all points of view?), zoning, strip mining, death and dying. You can find out more by writing the KHC at 206 Breckinridge Hall, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky. 40506. The point to keep in mind is that the next deadline for preliminary application is April 8.

For Student Filmmakers

Student filmmakers in Kentucky and Tennessee are eligible to do their thing — their "Super 8 Thing," in fact — in Chattanooga March 6-7.

The event will include a film competition with cash awards and will offer workshops dealing with beginning filmmaking and animation techniques. Teachers will have the chance to learn how to start film programs. Winners of the competition will be chosen from high school and elementary divisions. Entries must be submitted for judging by February 23. You can get the details from either the Kentucky or the Tennessee Arts Commission.

Berea Celebration: Cultural Shock

Events like the Berea Traditional Music Celebration (CENTER NEWSLETTER, Fall 1975) are usually thought of as occasions where performers and devotees meet to play and hear music that is known just about equally well by both groups. But they can also present the opportunity for a kind of aesthetic conversion experience or, as is described by the writer of the following reactions, a joyous cultural shock.

Klaus O. Staerker, who wrote the letter we quote here, is a German engineer and filmmaker who at present lives in Huntington, W. Va.

October 25, 1975. A most unusual weekend for me. The two days at Berea can only be described as a cultural shock for me. What I heard during those two days gave me an insight into part of an American culture of which most Europeans don't know a thing.

To the typical German who lived during the Hitler regime, musical culture was Wagner, Beethoven, etc. Today, if that music is conducted by von Karajan—heaven is just around the corner. Sure, some American music I had heard before on the Armed Forces Network; "Hillbilly Guesthouse" was the program. What I didn't know was the fact that it was as fake as the "Nashville Sound."

All of a sudden: *bang!*

The first hint of a real American musical tradition came to me this summer at Greenbo State Park, where J. P. and Annadeene Fraley had their festival. I went to the jamming sessions after midnight. It took me weeks to come back down to earth.

You must understand, that up to that time, a fiddler to me was an old toothless guy in overalls, dripping tobacco juice, extracting squeals from the fiddle. A fiction of my imagination based on anything but facts. Sure, I had heard the name J. P. Fraley. So what? I tell you what: he, and the musicians jamming with him, socked it to me. They played music like I'd never heard before. Soul music, the stuff that comes from the hearts of the people. I could not believe my ears!

I can't forget the sight of the group, huddled together, illuminated by a lantern, pure enjoyment reflected on their faces, unrestricted by formalities, conductor or microphones — just living the music.

The music I heard in October is old stuff to you, but to me it was brand new. I was almost in a different world. And when J. P. started the "Blue Danube," I realized what the difference between a fiddler and a violinist is: the first plays from the heart, the second from the music sheet.

It would take me a long letter to describe to you the feeling I have about each performer. I can only say that never in my life have I heard so much beautiful music that originated among the people of a nation. I have never heard such ordinary people produce such extraordinary sounds. (A few years ago, 1971, when I came to Kentucky, I told a fellow worker how wonderful Doc Watson played. He said: "Oh heck! We got plenty of people just like that and better, right here in the hills." I thought he was nuts. October 27, 1975, I apologized to him and agreed with his statement.)

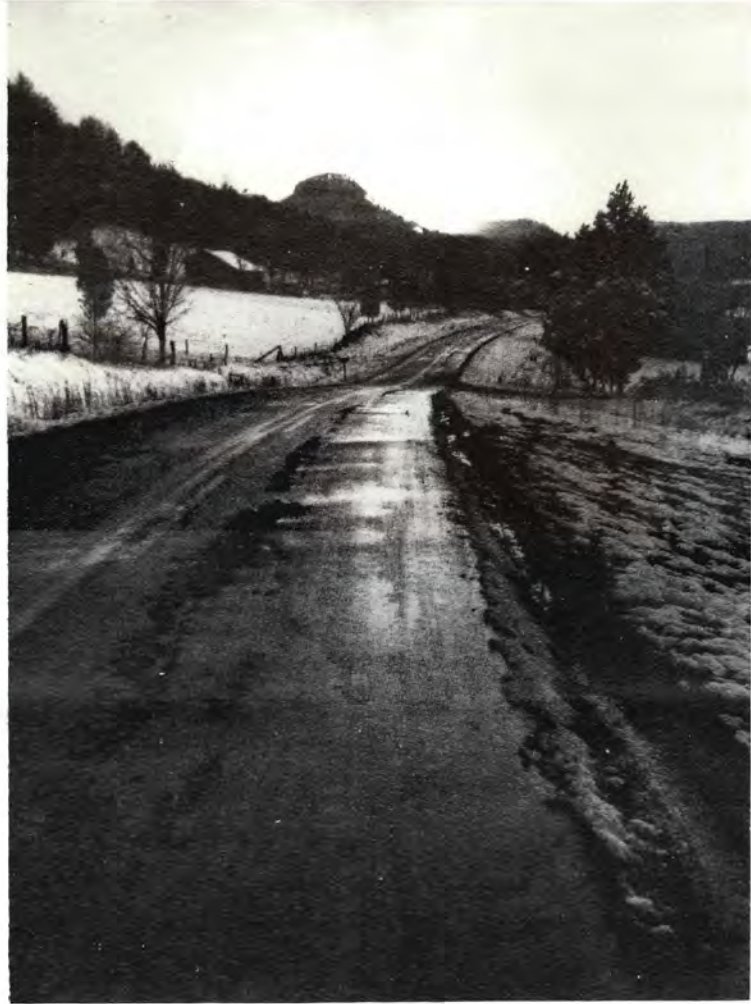
Rural Research Recognized

Applications for the 1975 research award of the Rural/Regional Education Association are due by June 1, 1976. The award, which includes a cash prize of \$100, is given for "meritorious research" concerned with the kind of subject matter suggested by the name of the association. It can be based on study either in the United States or in foreign countries. For full information, you can write

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Appalachia . . .



Winter Album

PHOTOS BY BRUNNER



from page 2

Walter Turner, Executive Director, Northern Colorado Educational Board of Cooperative Services, 830 South Lincoln, Longmont, Colo. 80501.

New Chicago Center

The Uptown area on the North Side of Chicago has been home to a number of centers and other enterprises concerned with in-migrants. A relatively new center is the Dew-Drop In-Migrant Center at 4403 North Sheridan Road. The DDI has recently begun publication of a newsletter containing opinions, reports on activities and other contributions. The director for the current year is Andrena Belcher, one of the founders, who received training at the People's Uptown Center operated by Northeastern Illinois University. If you'd like to keep up with the varied activities of DDI (and also with the changing migrant scene), write the newsletter editor, Martha Upton, at the address given above (ZIP is 60640).

Looking for Talent?

From time to time, the Center gets calls from organizers of special events at colleges and other institutions who are seeking authentic traditional musicians. While we are not a booking agency, we know lots of knowledgeable and talented persons who like to perform now and then. If you are in need of such talent, let us know, and we'll introduce you to some of them. You can take it from there.

EYE on Publications

We Be Here When the Morning Comes. Text by Bryan Woolley, photographs by Ford Reid (University Press of Kentucky). A writer-photographer team from the Louisville *Courier-Journal* took up residence with a coal miner's family during the last weeks of the 1973-74 strike at the Brookside and Highsplint mines in Harlan County, Ky., and with camera and tape recorder preserved the events and emotions of that climactic time. Regular readers of the CENTER NEWSLETTER will recall our coverage of the strike in the Spring 1974 issue, some time before a young miner was killed; this book concludes the story, and you shouldn't be put off by its title--it has nothing to do with minstrel shows.

The Border South States, by Neal R. Peirce (Norton). During World War II the late John Gunther visited every one of the then-48 states and in 1947 he produced *Inside U.S.A.*, his report of the America he found. Now Neal Peirce, a political writer, is emulating Gunther,

except that he's producing a series rather than one book; *The Border South States* is a volume in this series. The author acknowledges the hazards of such an endeavor, but a check of his Appalachian sections shows that he talked with some well-informed persons indeed--some highly opinionated ones, too. Commendably, the author does not view himself as an ideological salesman, but he spent enough time in Appalachia to develop some pretty strong views of his own.

The Battle of the Books, by Franklin Parker (Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation). In this little (34 pp.) "fastback," a West Virginia University education professor describes and analyzes the Kanawha County textbook controversy of 1974. Not very surprisingly, it turns out to have been a rather more complex affair than it appeared to be on the 6:30 news.

Ghosts Along the Cumberland, by William Lynwood Montell (University of Tennessee Press). A roundup of sayings and lore about death that still persist in some areas of Kentucky's Cumberland foothills. The author teaches at Western Kentucky University. Photographs are by Mike Morse.

The Spirit of the Mountains, by Emma Bell Miles (University of Tennessee Press). A facsimile edition of an early (1905) and remarkable statement by a native on the culture and characteristics of the mountaineer and the conflicts between mainstream American and Appalachian cultural traits. The author contributed poems to the leading magazines of the day. *The Spirit of the Mountains* is one of the Tennesseana editions being published by the UT Press.

Foxfire 3, edited by Eliot Wigginton (Anchor Press/Doubleday). You already know about this book, of course, but we mention it here for the sake of the record. The third book product of the now-famous educational experiment at Rabun Gap, Ga., *Foxfire 3* features "animal care, banjos and dulcimers, hide tanning, summer and fall wild plant foods, butter churns, ginseng, and still more affairs of plain living." And, of course, it features people.

Stars of Country Music, edited by Bill C. Malone and Judith McCulloh (University of Illinois Press). One in a series of books on music in American life, this volume contains 21 scholarly essays on the musicians who have influenced one stream of American music from the traditional source to the Nashville Sound. An impressive group of knowledgeable and careful writers have for the most part given equal attention to biographical facts and critical evaluation. The range of stars is from such performers as Eck Robertson, Uncle Dave Macon, Bradley Kincaid, Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter family to Johnny Cash, Loretta Lynn, Charley Pride, Tom T. Hall and Johnny Rodriguez.

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