

# Mountain Promise

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The Newsletter of the Brushy Fork Institute

Summer, 2000



## Citizen activism in the mountains

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful  
committed citizens can change the world:  
Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

-- Margaret Mead



**Mountain Promise** is published for friends and associates of Brushy Fork Institute of Berea College by Brushy Fork Institute CPO 2164, Berea College Berea, KY 40404 859.985.3858 859.985.3903 (FAX)

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### Mission of Brushy Fork

For over one hundred years, Berea College has served the people of Appalachia.

The Brushy Fork Institute carries forward this commitment by working to develop strong leadership in the mountains.

Working with both existing and emerging leaders, we draw on local understanding and vision to help communities build for tomorrow.

*On the Cover:* The Caretta Community Center, McDowell County, West Virginia.

# Beyond the "usual suspects"

by Peter Hille  
Director

*On July 12, 2000, the Appalachian Regional Commission held a Tri-State Town Meeting in Ironton, Ohio. Kentucky Governor Paul Patton, Ohio Governor Bob Taft, ARC Federal Co-Chairman Jesse White, and other activists, government officials, business and community leaders discussed the ARC's plans to help distressed counties in Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia. The meeting was the fifth in a series of meetings on distressed counties conducted by the ARC throughout the region.*

*The following presentation was given by Brushy Fork Director Peter Hille.*

Casablanca, 1939. You know the final scene. Humphrey Bogart and the chief of police face each other on a rain-slicked runway. A Nazi officer lies dead at their feet while a twin engine plane revs up in the background. A squad car of local cops squeals to a halt in front of them. The chief looks at Bogart, still holding the smoking gun. He turns to his men and says "round up the usual suspects."

Round up the usual suspects. We do it all the time. When you need to get something done in your community, you round up the usual suspects. When you want to start a leadership program, you round up the usual suspects. When we go to a public meeting—who do we see? The usual suspects.

Conventional wisdom tells us that when you want to get something done, give it to a busy person. But there is a problem. Busy people don't always have time to do one more thing. There are things that need to be done in our communities—and there just aren't enough usual suspects to do it all. Ask them—they are overbooked, and headed for burnout.

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"As much as coal has meant to us, it still has not built for us a self-sustaining economy. It's got to be more varied - got to be more broad. In the early 1970's we had an economic developer's dream come true. We had more high tech jobs than we could ever imagine in the coal

industry, and it still didn't solve the chronic problems of the region. So we have to build that basic economic foundation."

*Kentucky Governor Paul Patton.*



At the same time, there are far too many people sitting at home, watching TV. Too many people who don't vote, or attend public meetings. Too many young people who will tell you there is nothing to do.

Robert Putnam, from Harvard University, talks about the importance of social capital—that is, the networks, norms and trust that provide the glue in any community. He says social capital is important not only for its own sake, but he makes a case for the links between social capital, effective democracy, and economic prosperity. We can build social capital by increasing the level of civic participation in our communities. But to do this, we need to increase the pool of people taking an active role. We need to get beyond the usual suspects.

For the last few years I've been working on a project for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation that has required me to visit rural areas all over the United States. And everywhere I went, someone would take me aside and say, "Listen, you need to understand, it's really different here." And it was. And it wasn't. They all said, there aren't any jobs; our young people are leaving; everything is closing since the mill shut down, or the mine shut down, or the plant shut down—but whether it was coal or timber, cotton or sugar, fishing families or family farms, the story in rural America has a grave consistency: the economy that traditionally supported our rural communities has changed.

And the decisions about these changes are made, by and large, by people—or corporations—far away. People who have other inter-

ests, for whom the welfare of a community is not the driving consideration if the bottom line dictates that a plant should be moved, a mine should be closed, a mill shut down.

So, what can we do?

How can distressed communities take control of their own destiny, make for themselves the decisions that will determine their future? It is not hopeless—not easy, or simple, but it's not hopeless. To determine their own

future, communities need a range of critical capacities:

The capacity to create a shared vision, so everyone can see where they are trying to go, and see their own self interest in getting there;

The capacity for public dialogue, so decisions can be made in open, inclusive forums;

The ability to understand global trends and the local impacts of those trends; and

The ability to collaborate, to put aside turf issues and find common purpose among individuals, organizations, agencies and communities.

Perhaps the most basic and essential capacity is simply a sense of possibility—call it faith or hope if you will—but people need to believe that they can do something, that good efforts will pay off, that they are not alone, that their community does have a future, that they have a role in it, and that the future can be bright.

These capacities are fundamental leadership skills—vision, communication, collaboration—but it's not enough if only a few "leaders" have these skills. Many of our "usual suspects" already have these skills, but that won't be enough. We must be inclusive in our approach to developing leaders and embrace the many diversities within our communities: race, gender, class, and age; insiders and outsiders; those "from here" and those who "come here."

Vaughn Grisham tells the story of Tupelo, Mississippi, and how it was miraculously transformed from the seat of the poorest county in

continued on next page

## Beyond the "usual suspects" (Continued from p. 3)

Mississippi in the 1930's to one of the most successful, thriving cities in America today. But Grisham will tell you it's no miracle: it's a lot of hard work. He describes the work as a pyramid, starting with human development,

Leadership doesn't exist in a vacuum. Good leadership must be grounded in values, Appalachian values, American values, like democracy, civic participation, the importance of family, the preservation of culture.

then leadership development, then organization development, then community development, and finally, at the top, economic development.

Grisham observes that people may be our greatest asset, but that unskilled, untrained, unhealthy people are not an asset—they are a

liability. So Tupelo put enormous resources into education. And when they set out to do leadership development, they sought to train everybody. Because leaders build organizations, and organizations build the community. All of this lays the foundation for successful, sustainable, economic development.

For over ten years now, at Brushy Fork Institute, we've been working on the leadership development piece of this in central Appalachia. And I'll wind up here by sharing a few observations from that work.

First, no one program, no matter how good is "the answer." It takes a lot of efforts, serving all kinds of people, providing a wide range of experiences. So we begin to see collaboration as a key to maximizing cumulative impact. We can build on each other's work. I don't have to provide follow up for program participants if I can make a good handoff to another program. I don't have to start from scratch to recruit participants if I can get good referrals from other programs. But to do that we have to get over the turf issues and work together. I know that Governor Patton and the ARC understand this, because they have funded significant collaborative leadership development projects, both in Kentucky and West Virginia. I'm pleased to report that higher education, non-profits and government agencies are actually working together on these

projects and working together well.

The second observation is simple: people learn by doing. That's why we have people do projects as part of a leadership program. They turn theory into practice, practice into ownership, and they can determine for themselves what works best in their community. ARC has provided funding for small grants to help get these projects off the ground. That's an important boost, because at the grassroots, even a little grant helps people think big. And the successful projects they complete contribute to their sense of possibility as they prove to themselves what can be done. Team training and small grants for team projects is a winning combination.

Third, if we want to increase the pool of usual suspects, we need to reach out to the untapped human resources in our communities: retirees, youth, low income people, folks who don't live in the county seat, the people we might overlook. These are leadership resources. For example, over the last three years we have been placing high school students on public boards—fiscal courts, city councils, school boards—in distressed counties in East Kentucky. And there has been a lot of learning, a lot of discovery going on, for the students and the boards. And the students tell us they plan to continue their newfound civic involvement.

Finally, I'll close with the words of the late John Stephenson, who founded Brushy Fork when he was President of Berea College. He said, "Leadership has to be for something." Leadership doesn't exist in a vacuum. Good leadership must be grounded in values, Appalachian values, American values, like democracy, civic participation, the importance of family, the preservation of culture. There is a lot of work to be done, and a hard road ahead, but we've already come a long way, and with leadership, partnership, and citizenship, I believe there can be a bright future ahead.

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To view the full video of the Town Meeting, visit [www.woub.org/multimedia](http://www.woub.org/multimedia) and under the "Specials" section click on "Watch" next to "Appalachian Town Meeting." (Requires RealPlayer.)

# "A group of thoughtful, committed citizens"

## Big Creek People in Action

by Ann Mary Quarandillo

The Caretta Public Library burned down on March 20, 2000.

In a community where so much has been taken away, it would have been easy for people in this small town in the southern tip of West Virginia to throw up their hands and let another piece of their community fabric disappear.

When the Olga Coal Company went bankrupt in the mid-1980's, over 3,000 people in Caretta lost more than just jobs. McDowell County lost 40% of its population - mostly critical 30-50 year old community leaders. They lost their school, a center for the community, when Caretta Elementary was consolidated into a larger school in 1986. They were losing their health as they dealt with decrepit water and sewer systems. There was no reason to think Caretta wouldn't follow the way of so many other coal towns - becoming swallowed up by neighboring communities, or disappearing altogether.

But the citizens who remained were determined that wouldn't happen. They knew that this 150 square mile area had one resource to help it survive and make it grow - its people.

It's often hard for citizen activists to see tangible results of their work. This can make it difficult to mobilize people to work for their community. But in Caretta, the results are everywhere - clean drinking water where there used to be black slime, a new community center where there was an abandoned elementary

school, and an organization working to involve all community members in making their area a better place to live.

Big Creek People in Action was a surprise. In 1989, local citizens were voicing their concerns about the vacant elementary school building. Four of them - Franki Patton, a health care administrator; Rev. Joe Robinette, the pastor of the local Methodist church; Linda Underwood, a homemaker; and County Assessor Dennis Altizer - decided to approach the Board of Education about donating the property for a community center. They figured it would take months, if not years to accomplish. Instead, Superintendent Dr. Kenneth J. Roberts brought it up at the next Board meeting, and the plan was approved.

"We weren't incorporated or anything," remembers Franki Patton, who now serves as Big Creek PIA's Executive Director. "Linda had to put the paperwork together so the Board would have someone to give the building to!"

That was the last time this group would be caught without a plan. They began meeting with people all over the Big Creek area to find out what they wanted to do with the school.

"We didn't ask them to identify needs," says Patton. "We asked them to identify community assets that could be built upon by the Center."

They held community meetings, where people drew what they thought Caretta should look like in 10 years. They gave surveys. They went door-to-door. They received opinions from over 600 people.

They formed a 15 member Board of Directors, working to represent the whole community, including traditionally underrepresented groups such as senior citizens, teens, African-Americans and women. The Caretta Community Center opened in April 1991, with little funding and no electricity, but with an ambitious charter to become an empowerment center for the Big Creek district.

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Big Creek PIA Executive Director Franki Patton in the Caretta Coal Museum. The mural behind her was painted by community members.

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## Big Creek PIA (cont. from p. 5)

Big Creek PIA continued their community assessment, and in 1993, used all the information they had gathered to develop a 10-year plan for the community. The plan included six priority areas: Infrastructure, Day Care, Recreation, Education, Employment, and Public Safety.

And they set to work.

Because of the community's efforts, the McDowell County Public Service District was



Young people enjoy the newly renovated gym in the Caretta Community Center

formed, and created a long-range plan for the county's water and sewer systems. A new \$1.5 million water and sewer system was developed in Caretta and Coalwood, and the owner of the old private water system was jailed for criminal negligence. The new Coalfields Expressway across

southern West Virginia will have an exit at Caretta to bring in more opportunities for citizens there. Big Creek People in Action continues to work with Caretta and surrounding communities to improve infrastructure in McDowell County.

In 1993, Big Creek PIA opened the first certified day care center in McDowell County. The Child Development Center prepares kids to start school, with computers available for pre-schoolers to work with technology. Recreational opportunities include sports in the newly refinished gymnasium, and a Cultural Arts program which offered the 8th annual Summer Music Festival in 2000. They also hold a spring arts festival, a fall festival, Christmas Crafts Bazaar, music lessons, and are beginning a drama group next year.

"We want to honor the coal mining culture," says Patton. "The history, strength, honor and bravery of miners were incredible resources to the whole country, and we want

our kids to value this rather than believe the stereotypes they see today." For this reason, the Community Center includes a Coal Heritage Museum, which opened in 1999.

Because "you can't do anything else without education," education became the foundational service of the Center. Beginning with the Child Development Center, educational programs include junior high and high school tutoring, a Family Literacy program both at the Center and in people's homes, adult basic education programs, GED preparation classes, and community education seminars on women's issues, economic issues, etc. The Young Leaders Action Council at the local high school offers leadership development training for young people, encouraging academic achievement, community service, and making connections for college, while emphasizing the need for these students to return to McDowell County and work for their home.

Big Creek PIA was formed by, created by, and is staffed by local people. The Community Center employs five full time and two part time workers from McDowell County, and has collaborated with local businesses to help remove employment barriers for community members, and set up a job training center. They are organizing a temp service and a youth employment program.

The key to Big Creek People in Action's success is their eagerness to work with other organizations and all community members to make McDowell County a better place to live. "The problems are too big for any one organization to tackle, so our non-profits have to work together," says Patton. "We came up with some great things once we put the turf issues away."

When housing issues became critical, organizations throughout McDowell County worked to develop a countywide Housing Development program. When the groups realized that housing construction money was going to companies outside the county because McDowell County had no large construction company, they developed their own construction company. They already have a contract for eight houses, with 32 more on the way. Ten



# Highlander Center in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

by Susan Williams, Highlander Research and Education Center

Highlander Center, located in New Market, Tennessee, continues its 68-year role of encouraging movements for social change. Highlander is a popular education center that brings together groups to learn from each other and to develop strategies and broader alliances. Highlander began in 1932 in Monteagle, Tennessee as an offspring of the great social upheaval of the 1920's and 1930's, and in those years, brought together Southern laborers and farmers who were seeking to build a better life.

Throughout the decades of the 20th century, Highlander supported the burgeoning labor movement in the 1930's and 1940's, the civil rights movement in the 1940's into the 1960's, and Appalachian organizing around health and safety, labor issues and environmental devastation, particularly from the growth of strip-mining, in the 1960's and 1970's.

Throughout the last two decades, Highlander continued gathering grassroots and labor activists from both the South and Appalachia, particularly around environmental and economic issues, including providing links between grassroots groups and national and international issues and events. During this period, Highlander also had a strong youth and adult leadership program.

In the late 1990's, Highlander board and staff strategized to create a five-year plan to see us into this new century. Input from groups and the collective process resulted in a focus on two powerful themes, economic justice and democratic participation, as two critical issues

in the ongoing development of a democracy that provides equal access to justice and resources.

We see indications of a rising civil and economics rights movement in the South and Appalachia (connected to organizing in the rest of the country as well as globally.) Building on lessons from past leadership programs, we are

launching a major ten-year project to help build collective leadership and organizational capacity for 30 organizations addressing economic justice and democratize participation throughout our region. We want to support organizational capacity, not just individual leadership, by bringing together teams of 3 from each organization in two-year programs or residential workshops and community activities.

Groups will come together in three clusters — one made up of youth organizations, one of Latin American immigrant and migrant organizations, and one of African-American, poor white people and Native American organizations.

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## Big Creek PIA (cont.)

non-profit organizations in the area formed an Economic Development Collaborative to work with the private and public sector for more jobs in the county.

"We can't afford to lose or throw one person away," says Patton. The Center encourages and supports intergenerational work, helping the young people to value this community through the wisdom of their elders. A few years ago, funding was low, and the Center started to die away. But local citizens refused to let it go.

They will begin a formal evaluation process next April, and are creating a new 10-year plan for the community.

And the library? A temporary library is already open. Thanks to volunteers from all over the community and the country, the lot has been cleaned up, 20,000 new volumes have been donated, and design for a replacement library is underway. As Franki Patton says, "We are all working together to create a new future for this community."

With citizens like these, that future looks very exciting.

# Joe Begley—a man for his community

By Phil Primack

Reprinted with permission from *The Mountain Eagle*, Whitesburg, Ky.

*Joe Begley, 81, one of the strongest opponents of strip mining in eastern Kentucky for nearly 40 years, died March 27 at his home in Blackey, Kentucky. Begley was instrumental in forming The Citizens League to Protect Surface Rights, which helped win passage of an amendment to the Kentucky Constitution allowing owners of surface land to block strip mining of their land. He became a national hero in the environmental movement. The following tribute, from The Mountain Eagle in Whitesburg, Kentucky, shows the impact one citizen can have on the life of his or her community.*



To most folks from Letcher County (Ky.), the C.B. Caudill Store was the place to go to get some gas, groceries, pipe fittings or other supplies. Included in any transaction was the chance to talk about the weather, family, friends or anything else in the Blackey breeze with storekeepers Gaynell — C.B.'s daughter — and Joe Begley.

To most folks not from Letcher County — touring college students, reporters, federal poverty warriors, foundation funders and community activists — the C.B. Caudill store was the front-porch stage for Joe Begley to rail against strip mining, oil and gas exploitation or any of the other causes for which tall Joe stood. Gaynell would generally sit on the swinging chair or hold the fort behind the counter, full of her own wisdom but content to defer to Joe's determined outspokenness.

Some people — I'm lucky enough to be one of them — could live in both worlds, able to know Joe Begley as the photogenic, outspoken, looks-like-Lincoln advocate as well as the Blackey guardian and storekeeper who, with Gaynell, was daily proof of all that is so rare and so right about eastern Kentucky.

More than 30 years ago, I was one of those outsiders drawn to Letcher County because of its problems, which were as clear and visible as a strip-mine bench or a black-lung scarred miner or a school without books. Joe and Gaynell willingly — sometimes wearily — explained such problems to visitors, but they would do so only in the context of local positives. It's too bad so many visitors missed those positive things, which were as apparent as the store's long porch and the genuine bonds of friendship, family and community that quietly played out there every day.

To Joe Begley, and to Gaynell, that sense of community and place was the fuel that drove the outrage.

When I first met Joe, I was a Yankee newcomer, fofched-on, as it were — come to write for *The Mountain Eagle*. But during that first visit, Joe decided not to switch into his interview mode, enthraling reporters with perfect quotes, perfectly delivered with a fine mix of detail and anecdote.

No, on that first real encounter 30 years ago, Joe said hello and then suggested — well, sort of commanded — that I just get in the red Jeep with him. He had a Saturday square dance in Carcassonne to get to.

Rather than a tour of strip mines or pipelines, then, my first Jeep ride with Joe was a nighttime drive past Elk Creek and Bull Creek and up the steep, dirt road to Carcassonne which I would eventually grow to enjoy, but which at the time seemed little more than one endlessly long blind curve. Joe looked at the road occasionally, but mostly pointed out who lived where, adding color and commentary, at least some of which turned out to be true. At Carcassonne, he made a point of introducing me to the Dixons and Caudills and Fugates and others, many of whom I still count as friends.

Then he was off to the dance floor, happily cajoling and organizing circles within circles.

And that was the point: Joe Begley certainly enjoyed the national soap box role and the cameras and notebooks, but not for his own notoriety. Joe saw himself as the point man for a cause, and the cause was a culture and community he felt was under corporate, governmental and economic assault.

I lived in the little house behind the store. Joe would of course keep me duly informed of

newsworthy developments, but I also remember his boots thudding on the porch early one morning so that he could drag me outside to point out a hawk he had just spotted soaring over the river. To Joe, it was just as important for *Mountain Eagle* readers to know that a hawk had returned to Letcher County as it was for them to know that yet another delegation was visiting from Washington.

As an *Eagle* reporter, living in the little house kept me literally in the middle of many of the news stories of the day, from meetings of the Citizens League to Protect Surface Rights, organized by Joe, to more local stories, such as the fire that destroyed Blackey's school. The blaze also burned up the little bit of community fabric that held together Blackey as a viable town. Until the library was built — and more recently the water and sewer line — about the only glue left was the C.B. Caudill Store. Joe and Gaynell Begley became not just keepers of a country store, but keepers of a community.

As much as a wooden-plank wire service for strip mining and other coalfield developments, the store and its porch became my own center. Driving back just before dawn after delivering the *Eagle* from the printer, I would see the store just after that last broad curve before the Blackey bridge. Sometimes Pascal Dixon was already sitting there in the winter darkness, waiting for his ride to work. We'd talk a little, soon to be joined by Joe or Gaynell as they began their own day. "Be good, buddy," Joe would say as I headed off to Whitesburg or wherever.

I later moved to Ice, where my new neighbors were Clarence and Sara Ison, who writes a regular community column for the *Eagle*. Last



The C.B. Caudill Store at Blackey has been a gathering place for activists for many years, and is now a history center.

year, after visiting Joe in the hospital, I drove Gaynell to visit with Sara and Clarence. I just sat back and listened — and ate Sara's fine home cooking — as they talked about old times, old friends, and good ways of life.

For me, this wasn't just nostalgia or some kind of quaint exercise in oral history to observe. This was the kind of connection, the kind of values and positive tradition, which make folks like Sara and Clarence so special and which were the core of what drove Joe and Gaynell Begley to stay and persevere.

Countless mountain people, many of whom don't know it, owe a special thanks to Joe Begley for making it possible for them to stop worrying that a bulldozer might suddenly strip the hill above them.

But I'm grateful for something else. I'm glad that Joe chose not to launch into an eloquent and quotable tirade against strip mining that night I met him three decades ago. Being chauffeured by Joe Begley in his red Jeep made me understand what really made this fine man tick. And it made me appreciate once and forever why eastern Kentucky matters.

Be good, buddy.

## Next issue is on cultural tourism in Appalachia

*Mountain Promise*, the newsletter of the Brushy Fork Institute, is published quarterly. Our next issue will examine using mountain music, arts, crafts and culture to attract tourism in Appalachia. If you have an article or a story idea, contact:

*Mountain Promise*

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***For Common Things: Irony, Trust and Commitment in America Today***

by Jedediah Purdy (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 226 pages.)

In the midst of a Presidential election campaign where either choice seems the “lesser of two evils” and people are staying out of the debate in droves, Jedediah Purdy’s *For Common Things: Irony, Trust and Commitment in America Today* makes an impassioned plea for re-engagement in public life.

Have we really lost our sense of community and hope for the future? In his book, Purdy argues these things aren’t lost; rather, they are buried under an avalanche of irony, which makes a joke out of anyone who tries to take life seriously. His counterpoint to irony is West Virginia, and he begins by tracing his own West Virginia roots, growing up on a mountainside farm, where relying on family and neighbors was key to survival. He utilizes West Virginia to illustrate the beauty of this codependence, as well as the failures, including massive strip mining and

mountaintop removal.

Purdy clearly outlines America’s current disassociation with politics and public life. He argues that it’s hard, especially for young people, to believe that politics can change the world because they’ve never seen it done. Today’s activists are turning more to non-profits and more “hands-on” service within the business community because politics don’t offer the same sense of accomplishment.

But he concludes with the argument that ignoring public life is ignoring our responsibilities to ourselves and our neighbors. “We take our stance toward public life,” he writes, “in the way our work, relationships, and general way of living affect the commons” (p. 186.) Rather than distinguishing between public and private, we must take responsibility, through our own lives, for the good of the community as a whole.

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*Jedediah Purdy was born and raised in Chloe, West Virginia. He worked in environmental politics before entering Harvard, where he completed his degree in social studies. He is currently studying law, environment and social values at Yale. In 1990, at age 15, he was a member of the Calhoun County, West Virginia team in Brushy Fork Institute’s Leadership Development Program.*

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**Highlander Center (cont.)**

While together, there will be a combination of sharing ideas from the local work of the groups and building additional skills for democratic organizations. Additionally, the groups will analyze community connections to broader issues around globalization, immigration, human rights, the prison industrial complex, cultural tools and other issues that arise in the process of coming together.

We will partner with organizations to return to home communities with helpful information, and to plan workshops, political activities and events locally to spread more broadly the insights and learnings of the workshops.

Highlander Center is also undertaking a community research project with the Center for Research on Women at the University of Memphis, Tennessee and the Southern Re-

gional Council in Atlanta, GA. We will be working with multi-racial groups in East Tennessee to study the racial tensions arising from the changing demographics in workplaces and communities, to analyze the forces that oppose democratic participation and economic justice and to find ways to work together to build a movement that works for all who are treated unjustly in this society.

Alongside this major thrust of our work, we also make our workshop center available to groups for retreats and meetings, and we want to continue to pull together relevant workshops as new issues and needs arise for social change groups in our home region. For more information, to receive the Highlander Report, or to get a copy of our publications brochure, call 865.933.3443, fax 865.933.3424, or e-mail us at [hrec@highlandercenter.org](mailto:hrec@highlandercenter.org).



toolbox

## Getting people to meetings

*One of the hardest things about a community project is getting people to the planning meetings. The following tips from Brushy Fork Associates should help.*

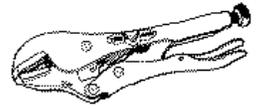
### A Clear Purpose

How many times have you heard (or said) "I don't even know why we're meeting today"? The key to good attendance is a clear reason for meeting:

**Step 1:** Ensure there is a decision to be made or information/input needed from the team. Before setting a meeting date, the team should decide on the agenda items to be considered or accomplished at the next meeting. You can always add more if necessary.

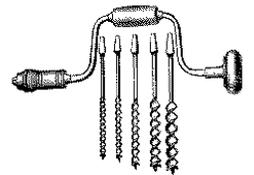
**Step 2:** At each meeting, set each group member's tasks to work on before the next meeting. Be sure to establish why each task is important, and how it will contribute to the project as a whole.

**Step 3:** If information is needed from an outside resource in order to make a decision, be sure to arrange for that person to attend the meeting. It's easy to get frustrated when decisions are tabled for lack of information.



### A Clear Agenda

Everyone on the team should receive a written agenda a few days prior to the meeting. A clear agenda will remind people why the meeting is being held, and remind them of their contribution to the meeting. It also assures team members that there will be an organized discussion that should stay within a reasonable time frame.



### Timing is Everything!

Flexibility in setting meeting times is important, but it is also key to set a meeting time frame and stick to it. When people know they will be out at (or close to) a specific time, they are more likely to fit the meeting into their schedule. They're also more likely to come back to the next meeting!



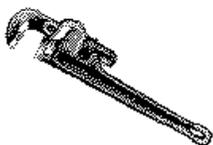
### Food Never Hurts

People enjoy discussing while sharing food. Just some cookies or pretzels, and something to drink, make a meeting more pleasant -- and productive.

### Reminder Calls

Even when things are written on the calendar, busy schedules can overwhelm people and make them miss a meeting. Once they miss one, it's easier to miss the next one.

Reminder calls not only remind people of the meeting date and time, but of their importance to the group and to the project. It's harder to skip a meeting when you know the team will miss you!



*If you need more tips on enhancing project participation, Brushy Fork has numerous resources to help! Call us at 859.985.3858.*

# 1999 Leadership teams work together



Johnson County team members report on their success.

## Johnson County, Tennessee

### **V.O.L.S.: Volunteers Organizing Leadership Skills**

As members of a growing county, the Johnson County, Tennessee group identified a need for a county-wide resource manual which would list the organizations and resources in the county. They named themselves the Volunteers Organizing Leader-

ship Skills (V.O.L.S.) to reflect their project (organizing) as well as the leadership skills they hoped to grow and share with others.

The manual includes information on clubs and organizations, emergency services, health care, children, recreation, businesses, community services and more. The emphasis is on volunteer opportunities in the community, so those who want to volunteer in the community have a resource guide to tell them where to go and who to contact for those opportunities.

The V.O.L.S. partnered with their local juvenile correctional facility to build display racks for the manuals. They are distributing the guides to supermarkets, welcome centers, gas stations, schools and other places where people go for information in a new community.

The group felt that their greatest success was growing in their leadership skills, and bringing those skills back to their home community. They were excited that people in Johnson County were calling to see how they could become involved in community leadership. They can't wait to take their motivation and new skills home to keep working for the good of Johnson County.

## Wayne County, West Virginia

### **W.O.R.D.:**

### **Wayne Outdoor Recreation Directory**



The Wayne County team had a long-term goal of making community members aware of the multitude of recreational opportunities in Wayne County, and encouraging tourism both inside and outside the community. They called themselves WORD (Wayne Outdoor Recreation Directory,) and have worked to publish an outdoor recreation directory for Wayne County, including pictures and a brief description of facilities in the area.

They began developing community partners right away, working with the local newspaper, which helped with layout and design for the

## ***-Return Workshop: April 7-8, 2000***

brochure. They were concerned about fundraising, and decided to sell advertisements to local businesses in order to fund the directory. They were able to sell numerous ads – mostly to businesses with ties to outdoor recreation in the County, and because of this, could afford a full color directory brochure that shows Wayne

County at its best.

The directory is being distributed to all businesses who advertised, local tourism offices, and statewide at highway rest areas. The group members felt they had overcome a number of obstacles, and learned that they could accomplish quite a bit working together.

### **Nicholas County, West Virginia Multi-Cultural is Multi-Fun**

The Nicholas County team wanted to provide local students with alternative after school programs that would lead to positive, structured, educational and entertaining activities. They named their group the Multi-Cultural is Multi-Fun team, and decided to develop a one-day program in their local junior high school to provide students with a “hands-on” introduction to Nicholas County Heritage, Culture and Crafts.

The Team went first to the stakeholders at the school, and was pleased that the teachers and administration were very enthusiastic. They held a one-day event which included 21 sessions for 450 7th-9th graders, emphasizing the many opportunities students have to keep their culture alive while learning new skills and activities. Kids were able to participate hands-on in various activities such as quilting, folk dancing, and candle making, and the day ended with a Native American activity for all students.

The students were also given the opportunity for lunch and reflection time, where they

engaged in a conversation about their experiences and were given a chance to evaluate the program. A number of kids were interested in continuing with this type of activity, which fit in well with the Team’s goal of offering alternative after school activities.

Although the Multi-Cultural is Multi-Fun Team members had to work through some serious personal difficulties, they were able to hold a successful event that taught the students about their area and heritage, and helped them to participate in keeping these traditions alive in Nicholas County.



Nicholas County students learn about folk dancing during Heritage Day.



Local musicians share their knowledge with Nicholas County students.

## LDP Return Workshop (cont.)

### Berea College Team

#### **Kids Reach**

When the Brushy Fork team from Berea College came together, they wanted to address the needs of parents in Berea and on Berea's campus. They chose the name Kids Reach to reflect their goal of consolidating information about available services for children and parents into one place so that parents could find it more easily.

The group began by identifying the areas they wanted to cover, including child care, health care, education and recreational opportunities. Then they did leg work — talking to child care providers and parents. Although they lost several members to other

demands, the core team was able to pull together and publish the directory. They even received a grant from a Berea College donor. They also learned the importance of finding stakeholders and receiving input from varied groups.

Kids Reach distributed their directory throughout campus, as well as to some of the schools in the area. They also sent copies to everyone who was listed in the directory. Group members valued their challenges, and were glad to have learned what they did about group dynamics and getting the job done.

### Wayne County, Kentucky

#### **WC Group: We Care**

The WC Group chose a project to encourage community pride and participation - revitalizing the "Tot Lot" at the Monticello/Wayne County Park. Their first challenge was to identify stakeholders and get them on board, since the lot was operated by the local Women's Club. Once the group spoke with the park supervisor and the Club, they were on their way.

The group worked hard to raise money, holding a car wash and bake sale. They also received donations from local businesses and community groups. But the most important thing they learned was that money was not the focus of their project, and they were able to accomplish more once they focused on the project itself rather than being preoccupied with raising funds. The WC Group found that having a clear goal to work toward helped them unite a variety of people and personalities to reach that goal.

The WC Group purchased and installed a swing set with an infant swing, and painted some of the existing equipment. Their project's second goal was to help bridge the generation gap in Wayne County, and they built a sheltered waiting area where parents and grandparents could socialize while their kids played.

The Group was most proud that they worked together with the Women's Club and others to accomplish more at the park than they could have done themselves. They also used some of the meeting techniques they learned from this project in their businesses and other civic groups and taught them to other community leaders. As Wayne County's bicentennial approaches, they are looking forward to new challenges in the future.



XX & YY working on the shelter at the Tot Lot in the Monticello/Wayne County Park.

# EKLN Youth Celebration 2000

By Ann Mary Quarandillo

On April 28 and 29, coordinators, students, mentors and other participants celebrated the third successful year of the East Kentucky Leadership Network (EKLN) Youth Leadership Program. The celebration was held in conjunction with the 13th annual East Kentucky Leadership Conference in Cumberland, Kentucky. Governor Paul Patton addressed the full Conference at a special dinner on Friday night at the Benham School House Inn, and praised the EKLN Youth for their interest and commitment as the future leaders of Appalachian Kentucky.

Students also got to hear from Vaughn Grisham, whose extensive work chronicling the community development initiatives in Tupelo, Mississippi provided a hopeful assessment of what is possible in Eastern Kentucky. Mr. Grisham has been a frequent contributor to Brushy Fork Institute events, and was the keynote speaker at our 10-year anniversary celebration in 1998. He will be speaking at the 2000 Brushy Fork Leadership Development Program Opening Workshop in Berea September 14-16.

The Youth Leadership Program participants met at the Appalachian Center Exhibit Hall at Southeast Community College (SECC) in Cumberland on Friday afternoon for a series of "Youth in Action" workshop sessions in which they reflected on their experiences in the program and what they had learned. On Friday evening, the students and their adult leaders enjoyed dinner with the full Conference, and fellowship activities planned especially for them at SECC.

On Saturday, they joined the other East Kentucky Leadership Conference attendees for sessions dealing with Eastern Kentucky issues.



EKLN participants take a break outside the SECC Appalachian Center.

Topics included: Early Brain Development: Chapter 2; Dialog on Poverty 2000; Artisan Initiatives: Catalyst for Community Development; Media Responsibility Towards Eastern Kentucky; Community Visioning - the CDI Model; What Can We Do About Declining School Enrollment?; How Aging Affects Our Communities; and Appalachian Development Institute. A full day intensive session "Ideas for the New Millennium: Thinking Outside the Box" was held concurrently.

Many of the sessions benefited from youth participation. For example, in the Media Responsibility session, young people spoke up about the lack of school newspapers in their home schools, and the fact that they did not have the opportunities in high school to develop media skills. This was recognized as a significant reason why newspapers and other media are having difficulty finding young reporters.

The EKLN youth participants enjoyed the opportunity to meet and network with attendees at the Leadership Conference and with Governor Patton.

## What is EKLN?

EKLN is a collaboration of organizations involved in leadership development in eastern Kentucky counties for which Brushy Fork serves as the coordinating agency. The Youth Leadership Program, EKLN's first collaborative project, seeks to engage under-involved youth in the civic life of their communities.

Through the program, young people serve on local public boards and are mentored by active board members. These opportunities encourage young people to be active and involved community participants throughout their lives.

# Thank You!

Brushy Fork Institute is able to continue supporting Appalachian community leaders because of old and new friends who support our work.

In June, the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation awarded Brushy Fork a \$40,000 grant. Since 1991, the Benedum Foundation has supported a substantial portion of our West Virginia work, and contributes to the publication and distribution of *Mountain Promise* in West Virginia.

The Wayne and Ida Bowman Foundation has also renewed their commitment to Brushy Fork's mission in the mountains with a grant of \$13,000. They awarded the same amount in 1998-99.

The Benedum Foundation, based in Pittsburgh, was established in 1944 by West Virginia natives Michael and Sarah Benedum as a memorial to their only child, Claude, who died while serving in the first World War. The Foundation awards grants in areas of education, health and human services, community development and the arts. The Bowman Foundation, based in Louisville, Ky., was founded by Mr. and Mrs. Bowman to help charities fulfill their missions and to help students with college expenses.

We sincerely appreciate these foundations for making so much of our work possible.

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## Counties chosen for 2000 LDP

Brushy Fork staff have been working hard on recruiting county teams for the 2000 cycle of the Brushy Fork Leadership Development Program.

Participants from Clinton and Lawrence Counties in Kentucky, and Doddridge and Upshur Counties in West Virginia will be joined by a team from Berea College.

They will attend their opening workshop in Berea Sept. 14-16.

*Mountain Promise* readers who know residents of these counties are encouraged to share their experiences and help develop support for the teams in those areas.

The 2000 cycle will close with a two-day workshop from April 6-7, 2001.

## Annual campaign

Brushy Fork kicked off its eighth annual campaign in the fall of 1999. Our appreciation goes to the following for their contributions to our programs.

Novella Chambers  
Deborah B. Garrett  
Carol Lamm  
Betty Jo McKinney  
Bob and Liz Menefee  
Francis E. Moravitz  
Tommy Mullins  
Virginia F. Piland  
Susan Spectorsky

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