



# Mountain Promis

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The Newsletter of the Brushy Fork Institute

Summer, 1996

## *Beyond the War on Poverty*

# The changing face of Appalachia

By Dr. Gordon B. McKinney, the Goode Professor of Appalachian Studies and Director of the Appalachian Center at Berea College.

Those of us who live and work in the Southern mountains recognize that much has changed here since the War on Poverty began in 1965. Even more important, we sense we are on the verge of an even greater change in the near future. But not everyone sees Appalachia in this light.

### On the outside looking in

For many people outside of the region, Appalachia is still the "land where time stands still." Television reruns of the Beverly Hillbillies and the Waltons have presented a new generation of Americans with longstanding ideas about the people who live in the Southern highlands.

Many of these negative ideas are asserted in public debates in a manner certain to wound those of us who identify with the region. If these same statements were made about other ethnic, racial, religious, or regional groups, there would be an instant cry of

outrage. Congressman Mark Souder, for example, gained little censure for stating that people in Appalachian Kentucky and Tennessee had sex with pre-teen children on a regular basis. Perhaps most important, the national television networks have not provided

any consistent alternative vision of Appalachia to counteract the negative impressions created by some of their own shows.

Unfortunately, the national public finds this image of the region reinforced by materials that come from

other sources as well. Newspaper reporters and investigative journalists often seize upon the sensational event to publicize the Southern mountain people. Stories about snake-handling religious meetings, vote buying during elections, and moonshining and drug selling are standard fare about the region in national print media outlets.

*For many people outside the region, Appalachia is still the "land where time stands still."*

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Also in this issue, watch for excerpts and ordering information on *Appalachian Values*, a set of essays by Loyal Jones and photographs by Warren Brunner published to counter negative stereotypes about the region. pages 4, 7, 11

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# Change in Appalachia

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*... one of the most persistent images of Appalachia is that of an area that endures "unAmerican" levels of poverty and social distress.*

At the same time, one of the most persistent images of Appalachia is that of an area that endures "unAmerican" levels of poverty and social distress. This stereotype is often perpetuated by the friends of the region as well. Appeals for funds made by educational institutions, grant applications written by local governments, and political rhetoric offered by members of both major parties often serve to legitimize the negative picture drawn by outside observers.

## The view from the inside

For those of us who have lived in the region since the War on Poverty began in 1965, there is a recognition that much has changed during that period. Universities, colleges, and schools that used to avoid any connection with the region now embrace it. Festivals that celebrate our mountain heritage can be found in dozens of educational institutions each year.

*For those of us who have lived in the region ... there is a recognition that much has changed ...*

Many colleges and universities now have well-staffed centers devoted to the economic, educational, and cultural advancement of the region. This activity has led to an explosion of writing, speaking and publishing about the Southern mountains.

We have come to understand that inequality of income and unequal ownership of resources have been with us since the removal of the Cherokees. We now recognize that efforts to improve the transportation system date from the 1830s—not the 1930s. Much of this important new scholarship is being written by people born in Appalachia who understand the people as well as the facts about the Southern highlands.

Even more important than the growing appreciation of Appalachia in the schools is the increased popular awareness among the general public. People in local communities in eastern Kentucky and

West Virginia have lobbied state agencies and legislatures to end surface mine abuses and alter the status of the broadform deed. Tennessee residents challenged the Tennessee Valley Authority on its energy and flood control policies. Western North Carolina activists opposed the alteration of the New River and the proposal to store high-level nuclear waste in their area. Local groups like SOCM (Save Our Cumberland Mountains) have sustained an active presence in the region for more than two decades. These same groups often draw their strength from the community by acknowledging their debt to the traditional society and culture of Southern Appalachia.

## Change breeds change

But it is not just the attitude of the people that has changed in the region. Anyone who remembers how difficult it was to travel about the mountain counties in 1965 will marvel at the relative ease of getting around today. The Interstate Highway system now provides convenient access to many previously inaccessible areas. In addition to these major highways, there are a significant number of four-lane connector roads that allow relatively easy travel to other parts of the region.

Other types of connections have greatly advanced as well. Cable television and satellite dishes and disks now bring people in the most rural parts of the Southern mountains access to information around the world. People in the most isolated cove can watch athletic events in Europe, the stock market in Japan, and cultural programs from Latin America and Africa.

The most significant communication changes have come in computers and electronic communications, however. Those of us who can remember hauling boxes of punched cards around and wait-

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ing hours to see if we had our command cards in the proper order to allow the computer to do our analysis marvel at the changes that have taken place in the last three decades. Now those same calculations can be done by a machine that can be carried around with you as you travel.

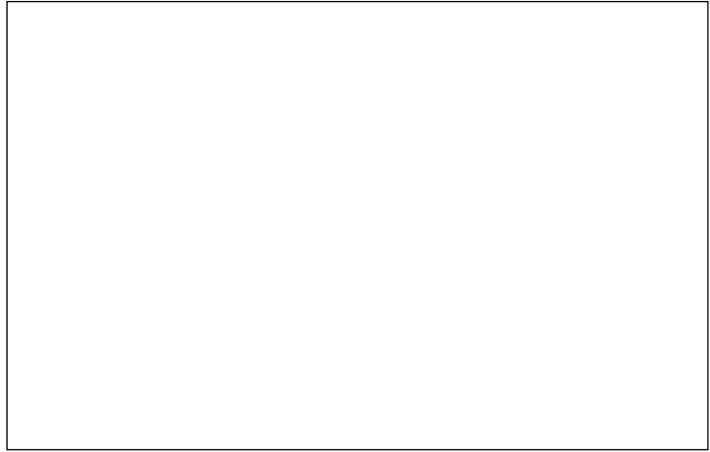
Personal, professional and business communications have been revolutionized by the World Wide Web. A student in rural Appalachia can look up books in New York City or Los Angeles, business people can obtain marketing information from international experts, and distant relatives can keep in constant touch in this brave new world.

We clearly do not understand the full implication of these changes, but one thing appears certain—distance will no longer be the barrier that it has been in the past. It will now be possible to live in rural Appalachia and be thoroughly integrated into the international communications system. Significantly, the only completely connected electronic community in the world at this moment is the small Appalachian city of Blacksburg, Virginia.

### **Facing the changes**

To take advantage of these new developments, the Appalachian educational system must adapt and improve. There are significant indications that this is taking place. While dropout rates at area high schools remain high, the training of teachers in all of the Appalachian states has become more professional over the last three decades. In most states, college students have to jump over several academic hurdles simply to enter a teacher education program, and all states require that veteran teachers take graduate work to retain their certification.

Probably the biggest change in education in the region since 1965 has been the explosive growth of the community and technical colleges. Thirty years ago, there



*The economic landscape of Appalachia may bring change to the physical landscape as coal tipples, logging camps and family farms become icons of past industries.*

were relatively few of them and students usually took a single course to learn a work skill. Today, there are more than 50 of these institutions in Southern Appalachia with approximately 200,000 students attending a full range of academic and professional classes. Because these institutions are often located in rural areas, this means that virtually every resident of the region lives within an hour of an institution of higher education. Student attendance at private colleges, regional universities, and flagship universities has also increased significantly and now approximately 600,000 students are enrolled at Southern mountain colleges.

These changes in communication and education have been partially reflected in the region's economy. Coal mining, forest harvesting, and farming continue to be important sectors of mountain economic life. But in each case, the number of people employed in each industry is declining region-wide.

Following national trends, more and more Appalachians are finding jobs in service areas. Often they are working for businesses associated with tourism. This part of the economy is growing rapidly—particularly since parts of the mountains appear to be attractive to second home

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and retirement populations. More and more people appear to be employed in customer service jobs with national companies—McDonalds and Wal-Marts—as small businesses are forced to close in some communities. Unfortunately, the mountain economy as a whole has not experienced the rapid transformation that will be necessary to become part of the post-industrial world.

Greater citizen involvement will be absolutely essential if the Appalachian South is to avoid the hard lessons of the past. There is no question but that the new Appalachia will be considerably different.

Most observers feel that the United States and other advanced nations have entered a post-industrial economy. No longer will regions like Appalachia be able to depend upon coal mining and timber harvesting for the bulk of jobs and income. Instead, the international market place will determine how the people of the Southern mountains fare—including working in plants owned by companies from Asia and Europe.

Because of the information revolution that is taking place, many more of the positions will require persons to be better prepared educationally. Most persons will be required to adapt to a variety of different tasks and jobs in their work careers. Those who

do not accept these challenges will once again be left behind.

The good news for Appalachia, however, is that many of the barriers that isolated the region in the past will no longer be significant. The World Wide Web does not pause at the base of mountains to wait for tracks to be laid. E-mail does not carry a regional accent or require a large population base to support

it. Instead, more and more people can follow rewarding career paths in small companies in rural areas.

No longer does the large industrial complex or the massive urban area carry a

significant economic advantage. Increasingly, businesses, educational institutions, and social services can be offered on a decentralized basis. The key will not be large physical structures, but close connections between institutions and persons. Regional cooperation will allow the people and the businesses of Appalachia to compete on a level playing field for the first time.

The traditional strengths of the mountain South in close personal relationships and appreciation for the importance of the past will be significant assets in a rapidly changing world. For those in the region willing and able to meet the challenge, this future will be an exciting and rewarding time.

*The good news for Appalachia . . . is that many of the barriers that isolated the region in the past will no longer be significant.*

## On Appalachian self-reliance

Several years ago there came a great snowfall in western North Carolina. The Red Cross came to help people who might be stranded without food or fuel. Two workers heard of an old lady way back in the mountains living alone, and they went to see about her, in a four-wheel drive vehicle. After an arduous trip they finally skidded down into her cove, got out and knocked on the door. When she appeared, one of the men said,

"Howdy, ma'am, we're from the Red Cross," but before he could say anything else, the old lady replied,

"Well, I don't believe I'm a-goin to be able to help you any this year. It's been a right hard winter."

—excerpted from *Appalachian Values* by Loyal Jones

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To order a copy of *Appalachian Values*, send \$19.95 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling to:  
Jesse Stuart Foundation, PO Box 391, Ashland, KY 41114.

*Life in Appalachia*

# It's about the little things

by Kathleen Perry

Speaking of life in the mountains, Kathleen Perry notes, "Having lived my life in Appalachia, my roots go deep. The sights and sounds of Appalachia . . . surround me like a warm blanket and stimulate all my senses. I've learned that even the most seemingly insignificant occurrences are meaningful. . ." For several years Kathleen shared these "insignificant occurrences" through a column in her local newspaper. Below, one of her vignettes illustrates the importance of little things and tells us something of Appalachian humor.



A few weeks ago while sitting in our porch swing watching the early morning fog roll in across a neighbor's cornfield, I caught a glimpse of the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. I set my coffee mug down on the porch rail and squinted to make sure I wasn't seeing things.

There it was again. Caught in the first light of dawn and sparkling in the dew like many tiny diamonds on precious silver strands, was a huge spider web. . . still under construction!

In spite of my deep respect for God's creatures, there is one exception. Spiders. The sight of one makes my skin crawl. Oooh! But, after the initial shock wore off, I sat entranced and watched the spider work. She carried on as though I wasn't there, working like a mountain climber, swinging a slender webbing, connecting each section methodically.

She used all her legs, except one, to climb and move about. As the web was released from her plump little body, that lone hind leg guided a single strand and attached it with a quick outward thrust to the proper connection. The web was shaping up right before my eyes and in perfect proportions. I had never seen anything like it!

Fascinating!

As I watched, I kept a clear background behind her, silhouetting the tiny black leg and watching each intricate step of the web as it unfolded before my very eyes.

My husband and daughter had to see this! Harold shared my enthusiasm and said he'd witnessed this many times before. He said that hunters do not just hunt while out in the woods but often take time to see such wonders.

Kim, who is sixteen, did not react the same as her dad. "Mommomomom! That's a spider! Kill it!" she screamed.

We managed to calm her down, and in the two weeks that followed, we were all able to watch the spider spin several more webs on our front porch. Soon Kim forgot about trying to do the spider in, and actually enjoyed the performance. . . from a distance.

When the spider wasn't working, she could be found rolled up in a little ball and stuck to the ceiling directly over the web.

One afternoon, after running some errands in nearby Frenchburg, I returned home to find Kim with a funny look on her face.

She said, "Mom, do you remember how, for the past few weeks, I've been studying ecosystems in Biology class? How larger animals depend on smaller animals for their food supply? And how the food chain works? Do you remember, Mom?"

She was talking so fast, I was beginning to worry.

Quickly, in one breath, she added, "Bad news, Mom. The spider was spinning a web down over the end of the porch, and one of Dad's prize winning yellow chickens that George Brown gave him jumped clear up off the ground and got her! Peck! Peck! Peck! And she was gone! No more spider, Mom."

I was flabbergasted!

Harold came home an hour or so later, tossed his hat in the door and said, "Honey, I'm home! What's for supper?"

And with Kim's food-chain story still ringing in my ears, I brushed the yellow chicken feathers from my hands and said calmly, "Fried chicken, dear."

*Kathleen Perry is a Brushy Fork Associate and lifelong resident of Menifee County, Kentucky. She is also a graduate of Berea College's New Opportunity School for Women. She is currently working to compile her observations of life into a book.*



*A picture is worth a thousand words*

## Appalachia in today's media

based on an interview with David Sturgill of Appalshop

*David Sturgill is program director of Appalshop's Appalachian Media Institute in Whitesburg, Kentucky. The Institute was founded to help decrease the high school drop out rate in the surrounding area. Students in the program engage in a course of study that allows them to become active participants in their own education and their own communities. As part of the program, the students complete video projects on topics from their own lives.*

Like many young Americans, David Sturgill grew up watching the Beverly Hillbillies. He describes it as a show he loved about funny people in unusual situations—people who were really not like him. However, when he traveled to California on a college trip he realized the impact the show and other media depictions of Appalachia were having.

He recalls, “When we went on a tour in California, we stayed with people from area churches. One lady showed us how to use a remote control. . . . Another lady had a basketball court set up so we could play on a concrete court.”

Although he laughs when he tells these stories now, he had felt somewhat offended when the events took place. His anecdotes serve as witness to the fact that as Appalachians we disconnect ourselves from our stereotyped media representations, but people from outside the region don't.

Now David works with the Appalachian Media Institute at Appalshop in Whitesburg, Kentucky. *Mountain Promise* contacted him to see what he felt was significant in the way Appalachia is represented in media today.

The various media, especially televised forms, are a powerful force in today's society. Television sit-coms, newscasts, movies and other media tell us how to talk, how to dress, and how to behave. People tend to believe that anything that is different from the televised norm is wrong.

In today's media Appalachians are represented as a people who don't fit the norm. David notes that the image portrayed has changed somewhat from the original barefoot, stubble-bearded moonshiner in overalls that we saw in

shows like the Beverly Hillbillies. But although today's “media Appalachians” are no longer shown as a people who are barefoot and pregnant, we are still depicted as individuals who are less educated and less sophisticated than the rest of the world.

From the use of mountain dialect to the portrayal of unemployment and educational issues, Appalachia appears as a no-man's land with no shopping malls, no 19-theater cinemas, no superhighways. And the visuals used to depict this landscape lend to the portrayal of ignorance.

Take for instance an episode of 48 Hours that was shot a few years ago in Floyd County, Kentucky, in which videographers focused on destitute conditions of some of the families that live in the community of Muddy Gut. David said his first reaction to the production was to ask why the producers assigned this other-than-normal, unattractive face on all of Floyd County, calling it “another America”? Why didn't they show some of the nicer, brick houses in the community? Why didn't they show that there were some “normal” affluent and middle class neighborhoods? At that point he said he just didn't understand that the producers could only focus on part of the story and they chose to focus on the part that would sell.

Later, when David asked himself why the community was portrayed as so downtrodden and poverty-stricken, he admitted the story was true for some parts of the county. The problem was that the strong emphasis led outsiders to believe that every family in the county (and possibly in the mountains) faced the same problems and lived in the same conditions. Any positive aspects that David noted in the

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production were outweighed by the sensationalism of seeing Americans who lived under what most people saw as third world conditions.

“I really think there were some good stories in there. There was a scene about how a guy got water down to his house. Just the ability to be able to manipulate and build the contraption he used was pretty ingenious.” He also notes a scene about a family graveyard that portrayed something of mountain culture, closeknit families and death rituals. But, again, because the producers chose to focus only on the problems in the rural community, these stories of hope and others like them were lost to most viewers.

Of course, the way media sources deal with the stories they choose is not likely to change in the near future, so how do we equip ourselves to avoid taking what we see and hear as the whole truth? David suggests that when dealing with a media treatment of any culture, “you have to ask yourself ‘is this real or not? What parts are real or not real?’” If you want to know more, be willing to research the topic. And above all, be aware that producers have limited time and resources to relate a story so, in most cases, they won’t be able to tell the whole story.

People are usually very surprised at the power of the media and at the fact that listeners and viewers adopt the stereotypes so readily. These stereotypes affect our views of ourselves and of others. Because

of what we see on television we know we are different, and that very often makes us want to change our accents, our appearance, our culture. We don’t want to share our stories but want to be a part of the overall “normal” story.

The Appalachian Media Institute puts a lot of emphasis on allowing young people to tell their own stories in their own ways and their own words. When the students arrive with ideas of producing music videos or materials on gangs or drugs, the instructors ask them “How many gang members do you know? How many drug addicts do you know?” For the most part, these are problems students have seen on their televisions but not in their own communities.

But when instructors ask “How many fathers do you know who are laid off, just called back or on strike?”, the stories come home. Questions like these start a dialog that leads students to look beyond the media stereotypes that have clouded their vision of their own culture. The young people begin looking at real life and letting the story tell itself without a lot of manipulation.

The lessons that students in the Appalachian Media Institute learn apply to all of us as we depend on the media to bring us news of our world. We all need to know how to carefully examine and critique what we see, hear and read before we form opinions about ourselves and others.

*Because of what we see on television we know we are different, and that very often makes us want to change our accents, our appearance, our culture.*

## On Appalachian personalism

One of the main aims in life for Appalachians is to relate well to other persons. We will go to great lengths to keep from offending others, even sometimes appearing to agree with them when in fact we do not. It is more important to get along with one another than it is to push our own views. Mountaineers will sometimes give the appearance of agreeing to meetings that they have no interest in or intention of attending, just because they want to be agreeable. This tendency has led outside organizers to accuse some of us of not being reliable. This personalism is one of the reasons confrontation politics have not always worked in the mountains. We are reluctant to confront and alienate someone, if we can avoid it.

—excerpted from *Appalachian Values* by Loyal Jones  
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## *Collaborating for more effective programs*

# Brushy Fork hosts Natural Bridge Summit

On May 8-9, 1996 Brushy Fork sponsored a gathering of organizations that work in eastern Kentucky communities. The Natural Bridge Summit was an ARC-funded initiative in which organizations discussed how their programs might complement one another. The group met on the precept that although each organization is doing different pieces, by doing them together they can increase their capacity to respond to the needs of the region.

The organizations spent the first sessions getting to know one another by presenting their mission, goals and programs. The whole group then identified gaps and opportunities in their work.

With these gaps and opportunities in mind, and after a quick overview of the collaboration process, the organizations focused on real connections they might make. From a brainstormed list, four discussion topics were chosen:

- 1) training opportunities—what we offer/what we need;
- 2) the connection between health care and economic development;
- 3) how to link research analysis with policy proposals; and
- 4) bringing “communities” together as a geographic community.

What came out of these discussions were potential areas for collaboration.

1) In the discussion group that explored training opportunities, a wide array of needs surfaced. Con-

flict resolution, technical training, fundraising, public relations, and time management were a few of the areas identified as needed by staff, clients or both. The discussion group identified organizations or individuals already at the workshop who could address most of the training needs. The group decided that being on each others' mailing lists would effectively spread the word about workshops being offered.

2) In the group that looked at linking health care and economic development, participants discussed why people seek health care outside rural areas. They noted the perception that local providers offer inadequate health care. Their conclusion was that providers must take social responsibility for their position and that communities must assert that they don't accept poor health care. Education about the region and culture for incoming doctors and education for the community about the value of using local providers surfaced as potential areas for collaboration.

3) The individuals that discussed research and policy identified a problem in terms of disseminating research to organizations and understanding what research organizations really need. They saw the need to generate more opportunities to do research that would impact policy-making. They suggested revisiting the public interest research group idea from the 1960s, in which citizen research teams were developed for local areas. Noting the value of having the facts when undertaking any effort, they stressed

*Organizations that attended the Natural Bridge Summit were:*

- *Appalbanc*
- *Appalshop*
- *Brushy Fork Institute*
- *Center for Community and Economic Development at Morehead State University*
- *Christian Appalachian Project*
- *Kentuckians for the Commonwealth*
- *Mountain Association for Community and Economic Development*
- *New Opportunity School for Women*
- *University of Kentucky Appalachian Center*
- *University of Kentucky Center for Rural Health*

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the importance of community groups sharing what they have learned.

4) The group that discussed bringing communities together noted constant change as a factor that defines a community. Changing demographics, people moving in and out and people who stay in the one place all their lives affect the communities boundaries more than geography. The group noted the necessity for organizations to know the defining characteristics of a community in which they plan to work. The group's suggestion to organizations at the summit was to communicate with each other about communities where they have worked.

The organizations at the Natural Bridge Summit discussed a variety of possible follow-up activities, from additional meetings to planning programs in a common area. Several people noted that at the meeting itself they had made important connections that they planned to use in the coming weeks.

Future plans may include an annual meeting at which the organizations share their yearly workplans. Meanwhile, the Morehead Center offered to set up an e-mail group through which the organizations could communicate.

## Planning underway for Teamwork for Tomorrow

Planning for a third round of Teamwork for Tomorrow workshops is underway. With funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission through the Office of the Kentucky Governor, Brushy Fork will be offering four one-day workshops on strategic and tactical planning, fundraising and involving citizens in community efforts. These workshops will be open to community organizations and individuals from eastern Kentucky counties.

The one-day workshops will be co-sponsored by eastern Kentucky Area Development Districts and will be held in their districts. Specific dates and sites for these workshops have not been set, but they will take place in the early spring of 1997.

In addition to the one-day workshops, the Institute will hold a two-day follow-up workshop at which participants will practice program planning

and proposal writing. Organizations that send three members to the one-day and two-day workshops and that meet other program criteria will be eligible to apply for mini-grants.

During the last Teamwork for Tomorrow program over 45 organizations received organizational development training. A total of \$25,000 in mini-grants was distributed among seventeen organizations. (See related article in the winter 1996 *Mountain Promise*.)

*Teamwork for Tomorrow workshops will be held in the early spring of 1997. Specific dates to be announced.*

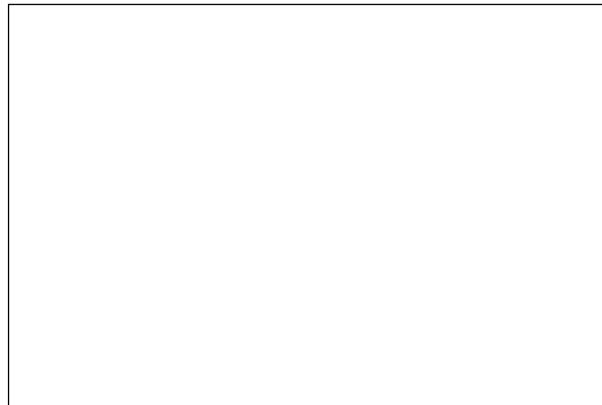
Look for a forthcoming brochure and/or more information on the workshops in the next issue of *Mountain Promise*, or call Van Gravitt at Brushy Fork, (606) 986-9341 extension 6838.

## Boone Boosters complete mural project

In April of this year the Boone Boosters of Boone County, West Virginia, proudly watched as a maintenance crew from the Appalachian Power Company erected the panels of a mural that represented over a year of hard work.

Celebrating Boone County and the industry that made it prosperous, the mural depicts various coal scenes, including a miner, a coal car and a coal train.

Congratulations, Boone Boosters, on your achievement!



The Appalachian Power Company's crew puts finishing touches on the mural in Madison.

# Appalachia

by Van Gravitt



Of the many changes sweeping across the Appalachian region and the nation perhaps the most substantial is the ever-increasing access to telecommunications. Not only does the Internet open the world on our computer screens, it also provides an opportunity to find information in our own backyard. I recently researched on-line sources for Appalachia. Below is a listing of some sites I thought looked promising.

## The Appalachian Center at the University of Kentucky

<http://www.uky.edu/RGS/AppalCenter/>

A multi-disciplinary institute created in 1977 to link University of Kentucky resources with Appalachian communities in programs of Research, Instruction, and Service. The site contains lecture notes from Dr. Ronald Eller's Appalachian history course and extensive links to other Appalachian sites on the net.

## East Tennessee State University

<http://www.etsu.east-tenn-st.edu/ctrexcel.html>

Contains the Archives of Appalachia, featuring one of the most extensive collections of materials about the Appalachian region in the nation. Holds approximately five million manuscripts, a large photographic collection, and over 4,500 sound and moving image recordings.

## The Appalachian Exile

<http://www.netfoundry.com/appyedits/>

This site offers a little taste of Appalachia, intended to help Appalachian exiles everywhere reminisce about the places they will always call "home."

## Appalachian People and Culture

<http://www.civic.net/webmarket/appcult1.html>

A project of Civic Net designed to help market arts and crafts across the region. Contains brief historical and cultural sketches with links to artists and crafts people.

## Newsgroup

alt.appalachian

If you have access to a news reader, this news group provides Appalachian region awareness, events, and culture spiced with a good sense of humor.

Look for more Internet connections on various topics in future issues of *Mountain Promise*.

## On Appalachian humor

We have a good sense of humor, although it is sometimes delivered in a deadpan fashion, in keeping with our sense of modesty and understatement. Humor is more than fun; it is a coping mechanism. . . Our humor is tied up with our concept of the human condition. . . .

Sometimes the humor reflects hard times, like when the woman went to ask the governor to pardon her husband who was in the penitentiary,

"What's he in for?" the governor asked.

"For stealing a ham."

"Well, that doesn't seem too serious," the governor said. "Is he a good man?"

"No, he's a mean old man."

"Is he a hard worker?"

"No, he won't hardly work a-tall."

"Well, why would you want a man like that out of prison?"

"Well, Governor, I'll be honest with you. We're out of ham."



—excerpted from *Appalachian Values* by Loyal Jones  
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toolbox

## On taking effective minutes

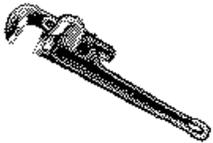


In most community groups having a record of meetings is a vital part of being effective. The group's recorder holds the responsibility of making sure the minutes accurately reflect the course of the meeting by recording discussions, decisions and actions, and task assignments.

Taking minutes for a group meeting can be a difficult task, from deciding what is pertinent to be recorded to making sure the facts are straight. In our own hometown, Brushy Fork found the answers to some of the questions we've been asked about taking minutes. The Berea Community School's Committee on Committees compiled a list of suggestions to other school committees about what to include in minutes. This list was designed to fit the situation at the school, so not all the suggestions are pertinent to community groups. But these ideas will provide a good start for recorders who may be unclear on how to go about taking good minutes.

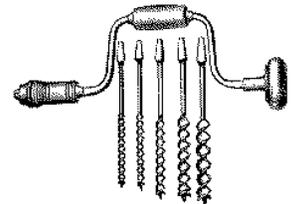
### The minimum:

-  Committee name
-  Date of meeting
-  Names of committee members present
-  Any decisions made



### Good to include:

-  Time the meeting began and ended
-  Names of others present, if they chose to introduce themselves
-  Summary of major points made in reports and discussions
-  Names of people who presented reports
-  Attachments of documents relevant to the committee's discussions
-  Follow-up summary: who agreed to do what

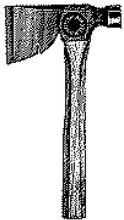


### Avoid:

-  Point-by-point account of discussions
-  Specifying who said what in a discussion
-  Reports on off-track discussions
-  Optional items that could embarrass someone

### Other considerations (added by Brushy Fork):

-  The minutes should be approved at the next meeting
-  Copies of minutes should be sent to all group members (especially helpful to inform those who were not present!). The group might choose to send minutes to anyone else they want to keep informed of their work, such as local officials or stakeholders in the group's efforts.



—adapted from a handout designed by  
Berea Community School Committee on Committees



# The State of the South

## *A report to the region and its leadership*

by MDC, Inc.

reviewed by Donna Morgan

From the plains of the eastern seaboard to the highlands of Appalachia and the valleys of the Mississippi, the South is a varied region facing many different problems. But every part of the South, along with the rest of the nation, faces the challenge of prospering in today's economy. To meet these challenges the people of the South need to be aware of where the region has been, where it stands and how to continue or change to the right direction.

A relatively new analysis of the region has been published by MDC, Inc. of North Carolina. In the report, *The State of the South*, unfolds the story of a region striving to break the cycle of past problems. Through charts and text, MDC explores economic progress and decline in the South, focusing on trends in population, jobs, income, poverty and education.

For those of us who live in the Appalachian region of the South, this report may be most important for it shows that many of our rural areas are being left behind. MDC provides us an opportunity to find our bearings based on the current status of our state's economic condition and then offers advice on proceeding in the right direction. Here's a taste of what readers might learn from this informative, well-written publication.

After years of losing its population as people moved away to find jobs, the South has experienced

an overall growth spurt since the 1970s. The growth has been concentrated in the Atlantic Coast states, leaving the inland states behind. In fact, in the 1980s, population in Kentucky grew less than a percent, and West Virginia lost residents. However, recent statistics show that these states are rebounding. Population in rural areas is also rising, but among the exceptions to this trend are the coalfields of Appalachia.

In addition to growing, the population is aging. A more mature workforce puts new demands on younger people seeking entry-level positions. Older workers are finding that they must receive additional training for skills that fit the new economy.

With the new economy comes a shift in the South's industries, resulting in workers with traditional skills finding themselves displaced. As production shifts from mining coal and picking cotton to assembling automobiles and working in high tech jobs, well-educated workers are in demand. And it is the urban areas of the South that attract these types of jobs.

Although the number of jobs has flourished in the South, wages still lag behind the national average by as much as 23%. MDC authors note several factors affecting income—education, gender, family structure and race.

### Still left behind

#### *The rural South isn't invited to the region's party of prosperity*

The shifting patterns of job losses and gains do not fall evenly. For much of the rural South, the times ahead will be trying.

Counties in North Carolina and Kentucky dependent on tobacco income will see this economic base dwindle. As textile and apparel firms lose jobs to new technologies and foreign competition, the rural South and Appalachia will be most affected.

Rural tax bases will suffer. The funds needed to support the social infrastructure—the churches, rescue squads, community halls so important to rural counties—will shrink.

Couple those trends with reductions in health care and other federal spending cuts—which unconsciously but inevitably discriminate against sparsely populated areas unable to compete on economies of scale—and it's clear that the region's extraordinary development will continue to elude much of the rural South.

—from MDC's *State of the South*

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The authors stress that education has the most impact on income. Yet even educated blacks and women tend to earn less than white males with a lower education—the legacy of racial and gender discrimination. As the years have passed the gaps between the earnings of blacks, women and white men have closed somewhat, but there is still much to be done to overcome cultural barriers and perhaps ease some of the challenges of poverty.

The South still contains the largest portion of the nation's poor. Many of these poor have migrated to the cities of the South, but in some states (including Kentucky and West Virginia), poverty is a rural challenge. People living in rural areas like the coalfields of Appalachia face increased geographical and educational hurdles as jobs move to urban areas.

Again, education plays a large role in determining who lives in poverty. The undereducated find fewer and fewer opportunities for decent jobs. The jobs of the future will require education beyond high school.

The South has made great gains in education. Blacks have made the most noticeable progress since the desegregation of schools. For example, in 1970

only 17 percent of black Southeastern adults had at least a high school diploma. By 1990 that number had increased to 46 percent.

But there is still a long way to go. Blacks and rural whites are facing resegregation as they are routinely tracked into "basic" classes while urban and more well-to-do children have greater access to advanced classes. The good news is that education reforms and access to local community colleges are overcoming some of the geographical disadvantages faced by rural areas.

MDC ends the report with an agenda for the South, based on the findings of their research. They stress education as the single most important factor for growth and prosperity. The authors view their report as a guide for southerners looking to move even further beyond the achievements of the past few decades.

We in Appalachia who strive to educate our children and develop our counties to thrive in today's economy need to know where we stand. *The State of the South* gives us a general overview of where we are and where we might go.

MDC is a private, nonprofit corporation created in 1967 to develop workforce and economic development policies and programs, especially for the South.

*The State of the South* is available for \$20 from MDC, PO Box 17268, Chapel Hill, NC 27516-7268; phone (919) 968-4531; fax (919) 929-8557.

The entire text of *The State of the South*, including charts graphs and maps, along with information on other MDC publications, is available on the Home Page of The Insider, North Carolina State Government News Service, at <http://www.nando.net/insider/insiders.html>.

## In the next *Mountain Promise*

### Forestry and secondary wood products

*Mountain Promise*, the newsletter of the Brushy Fork Institute, is published quarterly. Our next issue will examine forestry trends in Appalachia with an emphasis on secondary wood products. We encourage readers to submit articles, reports, photos, line art or story suggestions. If you have an article or a story idea, contact:

*Mountain Promise*, attention Donna Morgan  
Brushy Fork Institute  
CPO 35, Berea College  
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Fax: (606) 986-5510  
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# *Appalachian Centers:*

In recent years, education institutions across Appalachia have noted the need to preserve the culture and history of the region. Some of these institutions have founded Appalachian Centers both to preserve this history and to provide information and services to the region. Though it's not an exhaustive list, below is a sampling of some Appalachian Centers and what they offer.

**University of Kentucky Appalachian Center**  
110 Maxwelton Court, Lexington, KY 40506-0347  
Phone: (606) 257-4852

Public policy, teaching, research and service are all areas addressed by programs of the UK Appalachian Center. In addition to offering Appalachian studies courses through UK, the Center publishes teaching units and curriculum guides for teachers and students of Appalachian studies.

The Center also maintains an Appalachian Data Bank, which provides reports and current summaries of socio-economic statistics in the region.

Among various workshops offered by the Center is an annual fall conference on an Appalachian topic. The Center sponsors cultural events for which poets, writers, and musicians come to the UK campus.

The Center is a major source of background information for the 13-state Appalachian region. Among resources offered is an Appalachian collection at the university library.

**Berea College Appalachian Center**  
CPO 2336, Berea, KY 40404  
Phone: (606) 986-9341, ext. 5141

The Berea College Appalachian Center maintains an outstanding collection of traditional music and storytelling from the region as well as regional books that are housed in the Weatherford-Hammond Mountain Collection at the college library.

The Center offers various special workshops and festivals, including the annual Celebration of Traditional Music that is held the last weekend in October (see calendar on last page of this issue). Also offered each year is a summer Appalachian studies seminar open to regional students.

The Center publishes a quarterly newsletter, the *Appalachian Center Newsletter*, which explores events and topics around the region.

**Appalachian Regional Studies Center at Radford University**  
P.O. Box 7014, Radford, VA 24142  
Phone: (540) 831-5366

The Appalachian Regional Studies Center oversees the Appalachian studies minor at Radford University. The Center supplements this program with cultural events and other sessions.

Each year the Center coordinates the annual Highland Summer Conference on creative and expository writing within the context of regional culture. Other events include folk and bluegrass concerts, the Appalachian Folk Arts Festival and Appalachian Awareness Day.

The Center maintains the Appalachian Folklore Archives of more than 280 field collection projects and serves as an information clearinghouse for the surrounding region.

The university library has a collection of Appalachian books, periodicals, slide-tape shows and recordings, and videos of readings, performances and interviews with writers and performance artists.

**Augusta Heritage Center at Davis and Elkins College**  
100 Sycamore Street, Elkins, WV 26241-3996  
Phone: (304) 636-1903

The Augusta Heritage Center is dedicated to passing on the traditions of early Appalachia through public presentations and educational programs. Throughout the summer the Center offers classes on crafts, folklore, music and dance.

The Center also coordinates an annual Spring Dulcimer Week and Fall Old-Time Music Week.

The Augusta Collection held by the Center is an archive of unique field recordings and videos of traditional music and dance, oral histories, commercial recordings and artifacts.

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# *A sampler of resources on Appalachia*

## **Center for Appalachian Studies and Services at East Tennessee State University**

Box 70556, Johnson City, TN 37614-0556  
Phone: (423) 929-5348

The Center for Appalachian Studies and Services (CASS) sponsors a wide variety of projects dealing with the social and cultural history of Appalachia. Many of these projects vary annually as CASS administers a fellowship program underwriting regional research and publications.

Two annual events coordinated by the Center are the Dance Heritage Workshop/Homefolks Festival held in April and the Old Time Radio Reunion held each August.

Three times a year the Center publishes *Now and Then*, a magazine of poetry, fiction, articles and essays about Appalachian life, past and present. In addition CASS publishes *News CASS*, a newsletter that reports activities of the Center, the Archives/Special Collections and the Carroll Reece Museum.

## **Mountain Heritage Center at Western Carolina University**

Cullowhee, NC 28723-9646  
Phone: (704) 227-7129

The Mountain Heritage Center celebrates and promotes the natural and cultural heritage of the southern Appalachian region through exhibits, publications, and educational programs.

The Center maintains a collection of over 10,000 artifacts that are used in historical and cultural exhibits about mountain life. The "Migration of the Scotch-Irish People" is a permanent exhibit that documents the contributions of the Scotch-Irish to the region. The Center also publishes books, tapes and other materials on mountain culture.

On the last Saturday of September each year, the Center hosts Mountain Heritage Day, a festival of music, storytelling, food and crafts. Other special events are held throughout the year, including concerts, lectures and other programs.

## **Center for Appalachian Studies at Appalachian State University**

University Hall, Boone, NC 28608  
Phone: (704) 262-4089

The Center for Appalachian Studies at Appalachian State University coordinates and promotes the effective use of faculty, libraries and research facilities on the southern Appalachian region. The Center offers the W. L. Eury Appalachian Collection and the Appalachian Cultural Museum as resources on the region. The Eury Collection features comprehensive, multidisciplinary materials on folklore, music, religion and local history.

The Center also publishes the *Appalachian Journal*, a quarterly publication of research and commentary on the region. The journal features essays, interviews, reviews, poetry, and current events pieces.

## **Appalachian Center for Community Service at Emory and Henry College**

Emory, VA 24327-0947  
Phone: (540) 944-6133

The Appalachian Center for Community Service coordinates instruction and oversees service learning opportunities related to study in public policy and community service. Study in this field is designed to lead to careers in nonprofit organizations and government agencies and in fields related to human services, community development, the church and social change.

For undergraduate students, the major in Public Policy and Community Service leads to a B.A. degree and provides an educational experience that links the curriculum with the Appalachian community.

A special thanks to Naomi Schulz, Brushy Fork's student worker, who researched information for these listings.



**A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z**

*In Memoriam*

**Jim Wayne Miller 1936-1996**

Jim Wayne Miller, teacher, poet, novelist, short story writer, essayist and lecturer, died at his home in Bowling Green, Kentucky, on August 18, 1996. A North Carolina native, he graduated from Berea College in 1958 and received his doctorate from Vanderbilt University.

Miller was best known as an authority on the people of Southern Appalachia. He published numerous essays in regional and national publications on Appalachian culture. He was a gifted lecturer and speaker and was generous and tireless in assisting numerous programs throughout the region. He was perhaps the most skillful scholar in relating world literature and scholarship to Appalachian Studies programs.

He published several volumes of poetry, including *The More Things Change The More They Stay the Same*, *The Mountains Have Come Closer*, *The Brier*, *His Book*, *Vein of Words*, and *Nostalgia for 70*, and two novels, *Newfound* and *His First, Best Country*, the last of which was also a play.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Ellen Yates, a professor of English at Western Kentucky University, three children, James, Fred and Ruth and two grandchildren.

He was a gifted son of Appalachia, and he will be missed.

—Loyal Jones

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**for the calendar**

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**Celebration of Traditional Music  
Berea, KY October 25-27**

From October 25-27, Berea College will host the 23rd annual Celebration of Traditional Music. The three-day festival will feature regional artists sharing traditional music, ballads and songs, string music and square dancing. For more information, contact the Berea College Appalachian Center, CPO 2336, Berea, KY 40404; or call (606) 986-9341 extension 5140.

**East Kentucky Women in Leadership  
London, KY October 4; Morehead, KY  
October 11; Hazard, KY October 18**

Workshops sponsored by EKWIL will address topics such as self-esteem, self-development, communication, assertiveness, health and fitness, stress management, goal setting and planning. For more information, contact your local ADD office or Linda Gayheart at 100 Foxrun Ridge, PO Box 105, Hindman, KY 41822; or call (606) 785-0606.

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**Brushy Fork Institute  
Berea College CPO 35  
Berea, KY 40404  
606 986-9341 ext. 6838**

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