

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Howard Dorgan

**G**reetings from Boone, North Carolina, where on March 20-22, 1998, the Appalachian Studies Association will stage its twenty-first annual conference, to take place at Appalachian State University's Broyhill Inn and Conference Center. Under the leadership of Susan Keefe and Fred Hay, ASA's Program Committee and Local Arrangements Committee chairs respectively, numerous individuals are already busily involved in planning our 1998 gathering.

One product of that planning can already be announced: ASA's 1998 banquet speaker will be Lee Smith, noted Appalachian writer, author of such widely recognized novels as *Black Mountain Breakdown*, *Oral History*, *Family Linen*, *Fair and Tender Ladies*, *The Devil's Dream*, and *Saving Grace*, plus two short story collections, *Cakewalk* and *Me and My Baby View the Eclipse*. For a short time, all of us here in Boone also thought that we had secured Doc Watson as ASA's 1998 Saturday evening concert talent. Unfortunately, Doc's manager had already finalized other plans for him, which include a concert in California that weekend.

Please don't be too disappointed relative to this loss of Doc. Sue Keefe, Fred Hay, Mary Greene, CeCe Conway, and Bill Lightfoot are already at work arranging another event, which as planned will include a number of other regional musical talents in a concert designed both to honor Doc's contributions to our area of Appalachia and to serve as the conference's Saturday evening entertainment. Details concerning this event will be provided in my future remarks to the membership.

ASA's 1998 conference will be enthusiastically supported by two companion organizations. First, Appalachian State University's Center for Appalachian Studies will next year celebrate its own twentieth anniversary, and in honor of that milestone the center will be heavily involved with the conference. Second, the Appalachian Consortium, an alliance of several regional

colleges and universities—with such other member institutions as the Blue Ridge Parkway, the John C. Campbell Folk School, the Southern Highlands Handicraft Guild, the U. S. Forest Service, and the Western North Carolina Historical Society—will hold its spring meeting in conjunction with the ASA conference. In terms of meeting space, this is all manageable simply because the Consortium holds all of its committee meetings on Friday morning. The earliest that ASA's programs will begin will be Friday afternoon. There is a heavy overlap between the memberships of the Consortium and ASA, but this fusion of meetings should increase conference attendance somewhat.

One division of the Appalachian Consortium—the Appalachian Studies and Education Committee, which I chair—has agreed to sponsor an ASA conference event that will provide student/secondary teacher/community activist scholarship money to be made available for use for our 1999 gathering in Virginia. As planned, this event will be a silent auction of Appalachian craft items, other works of art, musical recordings, books (both fiction and nonfiction), photography, and miscellaneous mountain artifacts. Beginning in the fall, this committee will solicit auction items from individual authors, regional presses, area photographers or videographers, mountain craftpersons or guilds, and a host of related possible contributors; therefore, all such persons and craft or publishing concerns should be prepared for these solicitations. The committee will be especially interested in signed first-edition works donated by established regional writers and in signed creations contributed by known Appalachian artisans. My deep appreciation to Judith McCulloh of the University of Illinois Press for her suggestion of this event.

One standing committee and two ad hoc committees have been established to study issues concerning the operations of the Appalachian Studies Association. The standing committee is our new ASA Website Committee, being chaired by Barbara

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Rasmussen. This group will be forging policies and procedures for ASA's newly created home page—policies such as those dealing with design, operations, links, and updating.

The two ad hoc committees will consider questions relative to conference finance and conference supplementary funding for students and elementary or secondary teachers. Doyle Bickers has been asked to chair the Conference Finance Committee, a select group of ASA leaders asked to deliberate all financial aspects of our annual conferences. At the 1998 conference, Doyle's task force will report their recommendations relative to conference sites, fees, and budgeting, all to the purpose of keeping ASA solvent while staging meetings that are affordable to the wide range of our membership.

## **Congratulations**

Congratulations to the winners of ASA Awards at the 1997 Conference. The Carl Ross Student Paper Award was presented to Rebecca Bailey, a graduate student from West Virginia University. The University Press of Kentucky presented its Appalachian Studies Award to Joyce Dyer for her manuscript *Of Many Pasts and One: Reminiscences of Appalachian Women Writers*. Ken Cherry, Director, announced that the Press had received a grant which would enable them to make the monetary award presented to the recipient of the Appalachian Studies Award \$2500 for this year and future years.

## **Appalink Deadlines**

*Appalink* is published three times a year, in the Summer, Fall and Spring. All news items are encouraged. To help you plan your submissions, the editor provides the following schedule of deadlines:

Summer issue (published in June)  
Deadline for submissions is **May 1**.  
Fall issue (published in September)  
Deadline for submissions is **August 1**.  
Spring issue (published in February)  
Deadline for submissions is **January 1**.

Please send news items or short articles to the *Appalink* editor: Danny Miller, Department of Literature and Language, Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, KY 41099. E-mail address: [millerd@nku.edu](mailto:millerd@nku.edu). FAX: (606)572-6093.

Bobby Starnes of Foxfire, on the other hand, will lead her Teacher/Student Scholarships Committee in exploring ways by which ASA can acquire more funding for elementary and secondary education involvements in our annual conferences, touching such issues as outside grants, activities similar to the planned silent auction, and the possible establishment of special endowments. That task force also will be reporting at our 1998 conference.

With high respect for the accomplishments of the 1996-1997 ASA officers and committees, the current cadre of ASA leaders is determined to stage a 1998 conference that will at least match the high standards set at Fort Mitchell, Kentucky. Make your plans now for your trip to Boone. We'll have a multitude of lights on for you.

## **Highlights of the 1997 ASA Conference**

- Gurney Norman's witty, funny and sometimes sad banquet address focusing on his urban Appalachian connections
- Dr. James Brown's attendance
- The Plenary Session on Urban Appalachians with participants Maureen Sullivan, Michael Maloney, Virginia McCoy and William Philliber
- Richard Blaustein's constant querie: "OK, there's the Beowulf Room, the Chaucer Room, the Grendel Room. Where's The Wife of Bath Room?"
- Five-year-old Robin Arnold's salespitch at the Appalachian Community Development Association's tee-shirt sales booth
- Kate Black's near hysteria gradually giving way to her usual serenity
- Deb Weiner, Susan Lewis and Rebecca Bailey always helpful at the registration desk
- Jean Ritchie's incredible performance despite a terrible cold
- President Dwight Billings's leadership
- The Urban Appalachian Council's tour of Over-the Rhine



## ASA Officers and Committees for 1997-1998

President .....	Howard Dorgan Appalachian State University
Vice-President/President Elect .....	Steve Fisher Emory & Henry College
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