

P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

THE THREE R's OF APPALACHIAN STUDIES

Roberta T. Herrin

In 1987, the Appalachian Studies Conference theme was "Remembrance, Reunion, and Revival," an apt theme for our tenth annual meeting. That phrase has stuck with me and has become the identifying motif every year, no matter what the theme. This conference is different from any other professional meeting I attend. Though it is characterized by the quality scholarship and research that one expects from a professional organization, it is also characterized by a strong sense of community and fellowship. The remembrance, reunion, and revival motif is always strong--especially the revival part. I enjoy the conference largely because it is an annual reunion of friends and an annual revival of our commitment to the Appalachian community.

At the Berea conference this spring, as I sat in the session on Albion's Seed and watched Howard Dorgan's film on Old Regular Baptists and listened to the Appalkids' performance, my own sense of commitment was revived--but commitment to what? Certainly, to the organization and its goals. But a more specific concern arose during the two meetings of the Steering and Program Committees, and Officers of the Association: What can we do as an organization to address the representations of Appalachia in the media--many of which are ridiculous? By the same token, what "pictures" of Appalachia does our own organization promote?

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As we discussed the many pictures of Appalachia, I was reminded of Wend Ewald's stark photographic study, Portraits and Dreams. In the introduction to Ewald's book, Robert Coles writes:

In 1965 when I began working with Appalachian children in West Virginia and eastern Kentucky, I found myself in a quandary of sorts. I'd been reading books about the region, mostly by social scientists, and had learned from them about its remoteness and about the consequences of that geographic fact--the psychological remoteness of the people who live up the hollows. At a conference I attended in Lexington, Kentucky, "The Psychology of Appalachia" was discussed at great length. By then I'd put in a few months of trudging up and down hollow roads and was as perplexed as I'd ever been. How to reconcile, I wondered, the kindness and courtesy and, yes, the eager openness of the families I was visiting with the descriptions of people I was hearing at that conference and had been reading in all those big-deal books?

As scholars, researchers, and teachers who write and read "all those big-deal books," it behooves us to assess our contribution to the broad picture of Appalachia. In so doing, perhaps we can arrive at an effective way of addressing the frequent negative depictions of this region in all forms of the media. The Steering Committee has made this a priority for the coming year and is drafting a brochure which will in part allow us to address such depictions quickly and conveniently. We invite your suggestions and help. As we look forward to the Fifteenth Annual Conference of the Appalachian Studies Association in March 1992, let us **remember** the strong tradition which this organization represents, **reunite** in our efforts to perpetuate that tradition, and **revive** our commitment to an honest depiction of the region.

ASA Officers and Committees
1991-1992

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PLEASE NOTE: The association secretary is also the editor of APPALINK, so all submissions to APPALINK in 1991 and 1992 should go to John Inscoe at the address at right. Deadline for fall issue: Aug. 15.

APPALINK EDITOR:
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FOURTEENTH ANNUAL

APPALACHIAN STUDIES CONFERENCE

A Recap

Garry Barker
Program Chairman

The Fourteenth Annual Appalachian Studies Conference met at Berea College on March 22-24, 1991. It drew 357 registrants, with over 400 present for the opening banquet, which featured tributes to Harry Caudill and Wilma Dykeman's keynote address--"We were the land's before the land was ours." On Saturday eight concurrent sessions ran from 8:30 to 5:00, and were followed that evening by the premiere of Fred Johnson's video documentary on "Cratic Williams: Living the Divided Life," and Andreena Belcher's spirited one-woman dramatic portrait of Emma Bell Miles, "Wings Again, Wide and Free."

The 1991 theme, "Environmental Voices: Cultural, Social, Physical, and Natural," drew heavy emphasis on a variety of environmental themes and many new participants. Media presentations, panels, displays, individual papers, and the concurrent Youth Conference stretched the seams of Berea College's Alumni Building and filled every hour with activity. An open house at the Appalachian Museum, the Appalkids anniversary celebration, the ASA business luncheon (and two steering committee meetings) and late-evening gatherings kept every participant busy.

Papers from the program have already been selected for inclusion in next year's ASA Journal and editing is underway through the East Tennessee State University Center for Appalachian Studies and Services. Much of the local arrangement work for the conference was handled by Debbie Powell, Berea College's facilities/services coordinator, and by Berea students who gave up their spring break to help. Press coverage was coordinated by the college's public relations director Ed Ford. The 1991 program committee consisted of Pat Arnow, Karen Tice, Bill Best, Sidney Farr, and Garry Barker.

UPDATE ON 1992 CONFERENCE SITE

There is a change in plans regarding the 1992 Appalachian Studies Conference site in North Carolina. Because of limitations on space at the Maggie Valley Country Club, where along with the Western Carolina University campus, the conference was to be held next March, the meeting will be held instead at one of the large hotels in the heart of downtown Asheville. Stay tuned for further details from program chair Tyler Blethen in APPALINK and in other mailings.

U P C O M I N G E V E N T S

SUMMER 1991

FOURTEENTH ANNUAL HIGHLAND SUMMER CONFERENCE, Radford University, June 17-28, 1991. The Department of English and the Appalachian Studies Program at Radford will conduct this lecture-seminar-workshop combination, which features prominent writers and performers, including David Huddle, Denise Giardina, Mike Seeger, and the Appalkids. For more information, contact Professor Grace Toney Edwards at (703) 831-5366.

APPALACHIAN WRITERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE, Radford University, July 5-7. Tennessee poets Bill Brown and Malcolm Glass, co-authors of Important Words: A Book for Poets and Writers, will be the keynote speakers. Readings, workshops, exhibits, and sessions with press representatives are planned. Air conditioned dormitory housing is available. For more information, contact Professor Parks Lanier, Box 5917 RU, Radford, Virginia 24142-5917. (703) 831-5269 or (703) 639-0812.

AUGUSTA HERITAGE CENTER, Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, West Virginia. Week-long workshops are slated for July 7 through August 9 at the Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops. The focus of this year's sessions will be on Appalachian literature and folklore, on comparative storytelling traditions, on regional herbs and woodslore, and on West Virginia folklife. More than 90 other workshops will examine traditional music, dance, and crafts conducted by master artisans and musicians from across the United States and Canada, Great Britain, and Ireland.

A free 56-page catalog, outlining at the full 1991 program, is available from the Augusta Heritage Center, Box OH, Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, West Virginia 24241-3996 or (304) 636-1903.

Upcoming Meetings of ASA Officers and Committees:

Steering Committee:	Friday, June 21 Boone, N.C.
Steering and Program Committees:	Friday, August 9 Cullowhee, N.C.
Program Committee:	Early November (TBA) Cullowhee, N.C.
15th Annual Appalachian Studies Conference:	March 20-22, 1992 Asheville, N.C.

The 20th W.D. Weatherford Award for the best book on Appalachia published in 1990 was presented in May to the editors of Ivanhoe, Virginia: Remembering Our Past, Building Our Future. This local history was produced for the Ivanhoe History Project and edited by Helen M. Lewis and Suzanna O'Donnell. The book consists of the two volumes: the first, a community history, and the second, a compilation of oral histories by fifty residents of Ivanhoe. The book's focus is on the impact of two major industries, National Carbide and New Jersey Zinc that moved into and then out of this small southwest Virginia community.

Ms. Lewis is a sociologist at the Highlander Research and Education Center in New Market, Tennessee. Ms. O'Donnell is the director of development at the Appalachian Film Workshop in Whitesburg, Kentucky. The \$500 award is sponsored by Berea College's Appalachian Center and Hutchins Library. For more information on the book, contact the Ivanhoe Civic League, P.O. Box 201, Ivanhoe, Virginia 24350.

A new organization, the Assembly on the Literature and Culture of Appalachia (ALCA) has now been officially approved as an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English, thus making it the 19th such special-interest assembly in NCTE, the world's largest subject-matter organization. As part of that network, ALCA's activities will be publicized in various forums and potentially will bring about wider recognition of study and research about Appalachia.

The Appalachian Studies Association, by action of the Steering Committee during the conference in Berea, has joined ALCA, and all individual members of the ASA are invited to join as well and to attend its meetings as part of NCTE conventions. The first will be in Seattle on November 21-28, 1991. The next three such conventions, which meet each fall and spring, will be within easier range of Appalachian members: in Pittsburgh, Washington, D.C., and Richmond. Membership in NCTE is not required for membership in ALCA. To join ALCA, use the form on the next page. To receive more information about the organization, contact its chair, Grace Toney Edwards, English Department, Radford University, Radford, Virginia, (703) 831-5366.

JORDON'S WAGER

Berkley Jordon is a middle-aged mountain lawman and gambler. A deputy sheriff, he's running for high sheriff of his home county in Eastern Kentucky and struggling with his own uncertainties. Shortly before the election, an 18-year-old girl — unmarried and pregnant — is found brutally stabbed to death in the woods behind her home. Jordon launches an investigation and soon finds himself being advised, then pressured and threatened to drop it. He refuses to do so

*A novel by
Frank C. Strunk about
murder and honor in
the mountains of
Eastern Kentucky*

and eventually figures out who he thinks the killer is, but cannot prove it. He then devises a strategy to smoke out the murderer.

Jordon's investigation leads him not only toward the killer, but also toward a point where he will be forced to look deep into his own life and motives as he confronts one of man's oldest dilemmas — doing what's in his own self-interest versus doing what's right.

JORDON'S WAGER is available through your local bookstore. \$18.95. Hardcover. ISBN 0-8027-5771-5. (Booksellers: Order from Baker & Taylor or Ingram. Or direct from Walker & Co., 1-800-AT-WALKER.)

ALCA:
THE ASSEMBLY ON THE LITERATURE AND CULTURE
OF APPALACHIA

Affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English

PURPOSES:

- *To promote communication and cooperation among all individuals who have a special interest in teaching Appalachian literature and culture*
- *To present programs and special projects on this subject at NCTE conventions*
- *To encourage the development of research, experimentation, and investigation of effective teaching and scholarship in Appalachian literature and culture*
- *To promote writing of articles and publication devoted to the topic*
- *To integrate the efforts of those with an interest in the subject*

ADVANTAGES:

- *More visibility for Appalachian Studies in one of the world's largest professional organizations*
- *Guaranteed session on Appalachian Literature and Culture at the annual NCTE meetings*
- *Recognition in NCTE publicity and mailings*
- *Communication among members in the form of a newsletter*
- *Possibility of a journal devoted to Appalachian Literature and Culture*
- *Enhancement of a sense of community among those of like interests*

WE HOPE YOU WILL CHOOSE TO JOIN US!

TO JOIN, SEND A \$10.00 CHECK, PAYABLE TO ALCA, AND THE COMPLETED FORM BELOW TO:

*Teresa Wheeling
Route 2, Belspring
Camelot 88
Radford, Virginia 24141*

NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

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\$10.00 membership payable to ALCA enclosed _____