

Appalachian Connection Founder Passes Torch

by Maureen Sullivan

When faced with a difficulty or a lack, some people give up while others envision what could be and then do everything they can to make that vision a reality. Michael E. Maloney, founder of The Appalachian Connection, is one of those people. As he prepares to pass the leadership of this paper on to the capable hands of Ryan S. Shadle it is appropriate for us to reflect on Maloney's vision, determination, and his many contributions.

Almost four decades ago, Mike saw the need to create an organization that would continue and build on the early organizing work by Ernie Mynatt and others in the Appalachian community in Cincinnati. Working with community people and their allies while providing leadership to the process, Mike became the founding Director of the Urban Appalachian Council. Since formally incorporating in 1974, much has been accom-

plished. Numerous research studies, publications and conferences provided documentation of socioeconomic status, settlement patterns, and other relevant information about Appalachian migrants and their families who were coming to the Greater Cincinnati Area.

Too often in those early years, people's response to the devastating statistics about urban Appalachians, as documented in research, was the complaint

that 'you just couldn't do anything with those Appalachians anyway'. Mike addressed that attitude directly by developing model programs in UAC to demonstrate that urban Appalachians could be engaged in creating positive change and the most effective ways to do so.

Larry Redden, who ran the Appalachian Identity Center at that time, reflected on his efforts: "Mike was the person who got it all together and made it work. He

became a mentor to all of us working with and for the Appalachian community."

Mike's role as mentor was echoed in the comments of Fred Hoeweler, Director of WEST C, the West Eighth and State Teen Council. "Mike is one of the Strategic People," Fred said. "He's someone you can bounce ideas off of and he'll provide sage counsel." The examples of those gifts are too numerous to recount in this



Michael E. Maloney

article but Mike's circle of friends and associates, including people he's mentored in areas as diverse as

See **FOUNDER**, p. 4

Feeling Connected



Ryan Shadle, editor of Appalachian Connection

I'm not sure if I buy into the old saying, "Everything happens for a reason", but I do believe that things happen when we look for reasons. This especially runs

true when I think about my involvement with the Urban Appalachian Council and Cincinnati's Urban Appalachian neighborhoods. For the better part of the

last three years I've continued searching for as many reasons as I could find to become even more involved. During this time I've volunteered at the East Price Hill Adult Basic Education Center, served on the UAC Research Committee, and been a fervent advocate on behalf of Cincinnati's Urban Appalachian neighborhoods.

More recently, as an adjunct writing instructor at Cincinnati State, I've just finished up my sec-

ond term teaching classes at the Lower Price Hill Community School. In fact, I literally demanded to teach at least one class per term there!

Over this time period I've also found myself connected to the Over-the-Rhine community, which we know was the first home of thousands of migrants from the Appalachian region. A couple summers ago, while conducting re-

See **CONNECTED**, p. 4

Community Mourns the Loss of Fiddler

Area musicians will be sad to learn that Northern Kentucky oldtime fiddler John Leming passed away on June 15 just shy of his 85th birthday. John played with Carl and Buzzy Leming, Sam Leming, Russ and Barb Childers in the Leming



John Leming

Family String Band through the '80s and '90s at the Cincinnati Appalachian Festival. He and his brother Carl and younger brother Sammy were mainstays under the shade trees at Coney Island's Appalachian Festival, fiddling and sharing stories. John's fiddles all have such wonderful stories attached to them. We will miss his wide grin as he shared those tales.

Environmental Justice - One Step Forward, Still Hurdles to Cross

by Dave Scharfenberger

Communities United For Action (CUFA) and a coalition of community and environmental activists crossed a major hurdle in their campaign to pass an environmental justice ordinance. In an effort that began almost four years ago, they won the support from the Health, Environment, and Education Committee of City Council in a vote on May 27th meeting. City Council members voting in favor of the ordinance were David Crowley, Roxanne Qualls, Greg Harris and Cecil Thomas. The other members of the committee expressed reservations but abstained from voting. They included Jeff Berding, Chris Bortz

and Chris Monzel. Cincinnati City Council is scheduled to vote on the ordinance on June 17th, after Council has heard an update on the budget.

CUFA first introduced the environmental justice ordinance four years ago. Vice Mayor David Crowley created a task force composed of community representatives, representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, and City staff from the Health, City Solicitor's office, and Building Departments to attempt to develop a consensus for an environmental justice ordinance. David Crowley introduced a new version of the ordinance almost one year ago.

In the last few months, an environmental attorney from U.C., attorneys from the City Solicitor's office, and the Director of Environmental Quality worked on further revisions to the ordinance to make the criteria clearer and more easily enforced.

The new version recognizes that the entire City has too much pollution. It requires Environmental Justice (EJ) permits if a proposed project will cause "Material Cumulative Adverse Impact." This is defined as: Causing a public nuisance; Causing an Excess Cancer Risk (more than 1 in a million risk); Causing an Excess Risk of Acute Health Effects; and

Causing an excess risk in the event of an accident. The EJ permitting process requires public notice for residents, and businesses within a certain distance of the proposed facility. The EJ process does not apply to existing facility unless they are creating a new chemical or operation that will affect the cancer risk of the surrounding population. The ordinance provides specific criteria for evaluating whether a new facility will cause additional pollution and criteria by which the company needs to make changes in their facility or be denied a permit to operate.

At the Health, Environmental and

Education Committee meeting on May 27th, the majority of those testifying spoke in favor of the ordinance. The NAACP, Environmental Community Organization (ECO), Tony Stieritz, Director of the Catholic Social Action Office, the Faith Community Alliance of Greater Cincinnati, and St. Anthony's Peace & Justice Committee are among the individuals and groups that sent in letters supporting the ordinance. CUFA has delivered petitions with over 1000 signatures in support. City Manager Dohoney has raised concerns about the EJ ordinance, although he calls the new version, a vast improvement. Oppo-

sition has come primarily from the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, Cognis (a chemical company) and the University of Cincinnati. Mayor Mark Mallory has not yet voiced an opinion on the ordinance.

Although the ordinance has its limitations and flaws, community and environmental leaders see the proposed law as a step in the right direction. "We see the law as a start to protect the health and environment of our residents," said Marilyn Evans, Executive Director of CUFA. "We need jobs but we also need a healthy environment."

Stories of Our Lives

By Pauletta Hansel

Since October 2007 storyteller Omopé Carter Daboiku, visual artist Pic Michel and I have been a roving band of artists for the Urban Appalachian Council, working with groups of adults and youth in various Appalachian communities to help folks individually and collectively tell the Stories of Our Lives. The project took place with the support of the Ohio Arts Council, the City of Cincinnati and the

Fine Arts Fund.

We have worked with adult education students in East Price Hill and Northside and with women and girls in Lower and East Price Hill. Each time we come we focus on a project which allows participants to focus on some specific part of their story—their family, their community, their life's journey—and use the three art forms to gain greater insight into their lives and

greater skills to help make their own path in the world. The Urban Appalachian Council commissioned a video with a sampling of the people, stories and art from the first year of the project, filmed and edited by Pic Michel. This has been shown at the Appalachian CultureFest held at the Cincinnati Museum Center and at the Urban Appalachian Council's Annual Dinner.

This writing is by participants in the East Price Hill Adult

Education Center in February and March 2009. In addition to the three of us, these students had the opportunity to work with South Carolina poet and teacher Cathy Smith Bowers.



If I Were a Picture

by Anonymous

If I were a picture I would be this picture
sitting in a cold steel chair surrounded by darkness.
Yet you would see the warmth of my soul.
There is no sound
but the beat of my heart.
I sit calmly waiting for the rays of light
from the brightest thing on earth
that can give warmth
to the coldest room on earth.

The Gate

by Courtney Sanders

This chained and locked up gate shows how I feel inside. I am still a very loving and outgoing person, but it seems I will always have that chained locked gate inside me. I won't let people get too close. I know the reason for that gate, but sometimes I wonder if it will ever go away. My chained gate has keyholes on all the locks. There may be a key somewhere to unlock that gate.

See STORIES, p. 3

WIN and CUFA Bring the Federal Reserve to Cincinnati for a hearing

By Dave Scharfenberger

Working In Neighborhoods and Communities United For Action recently won an agreement calling for representatives from the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System in Washington to come to Cincinnati to hear from community, po-

litical and banking leaders about possible solutions to the current banking, foreclosure and economic crisis occurring around Cincinnati. The meeting with Federal Reserve officials is scheduled for Tuesday, July 21st, 2009, 7:00 p.m. at the WIN Economic Learning Center (1814 Dreman Ave.)

The meeting is sponsored by Working In Neighborhoods (WIN) and Communities United For Action (CUFA).

Federal Reserve officials agreed to hold field hearings, in a meeting attended by representatives of WIN, CUFA and other organizations affiliated with National People's Ac-

tion held in April. They met with Chairman Ben Bernanke and members of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

"We talked to them about what we see happening in our communities because of all the foreclosures and the problems in getting loans in our communities," said

Marilyn Evans, Executive Director of CUFA. "The Federal Reserve sets policies that deals with all aspects of banking from lending, foreclosures, Community Reinvestment, to fees related to credit cards and bank accounts. We told them that they needed to come out to our communities to hear what is

going on. They finally agreed to come."

The Hearing is open to the public. For further information contact Working In Neighborhoods at 541-4109 or Communities United For Action at 853-3947.

Saving the Mountains, One Door at a Time

By Nathan Rutz

"We're working to stop the destruction of the oldest mountain range in America." I'm a canvasser for Ohio Citizen Action, and I, among many other dedicated people, walk around suburban Ohio knocking on doors asking residents to get involved in stopping the travesty that is mountaintop removal (MTR). For a practice so widespread and so destructive, the lack of awareness of it among Ohio citizens is alarming.

It may be that I am hypersensitive to media coverage of MTR, but it seems that there has been ample coverage in recent years for almost everyone to have heard about it. Magazine articles, blog posts, TV news coverage, documentaries, and books galore have come out

about the horrors of MTR, yet only a small percentage of people I encounter on any given day have ever heard of it.

I suppose it's easy to forget about MTR, since mountains aren't being blown up in Ohio, but almost everyone has a personal connection to it in some shape or another. Once you realize that real people's homes are being washed away by flooding, cracked by blasting, that the ground water is so polluted that well water pours black and orange, that over 500 mountains are gone forever, you cannot sit idly by and allow MTR to keep happening.

MTR affects such a huge swath of the Appalachian region that many thousands of people have joined the cause to stop it. Every single

person in Cincinnati has a connection to the Appalachian Mountains, be it through family history, the Ohio River, or merely turning on your lights. The oldest mountain range in America needs us, needs you, to act and act soon to prevent further destruction of the mountains, and of the lives of the people that live in Appalachia. There are many ways to get involved. One easy and fun way is to attend the Music for the Mountains benefit concert at Northside Tavern, Sunday August 2nd. Find out about other ways you can help by visiting:

www.ohiocitizen.org

www.ilovemountains.org.

For the mountains!

Music for the Mountains

WHAT: A benefit for Ohio Citizen Action's campaign to ban mountaintop removal coal mining. Event to include a cakewalk and possibly some speakers in between acts. Sponsored by Shake It Records.

WHEN: Sunday, August 2nd. 5pm

WHERE: The Northside Tavern, 4163 Hamilton Ave.

WHO: Confirmed bands include Daniel Martin Moore, Magnolia Mountain, Cletus Romp, Peter Adams, the Majo and the Tillers

HOW MUCH: \$10 at the door

Stories— from p.2

The Girl Inside
by Cheryl Hodge

If I were a picture I would be a sad little girl in a woman's body, longing for my mother to guide me, to help me keep the promise she required me to make, a promise the child inside the woman's body didn't want to keep.

I would be that child inside wanting to cry and scream at God for taking her mommy too soon.

I would share the hurt my own children felt for losing their beloved Grandma.

I would shed their tears

and weep along with them.

The woman I am kept that promise not to cry. The little girl inside me wept and cursed the promise mommy had me make.

Goodbye
by Miranda Horsley

Daylily, so vibrant, so innocent, so...sweet. We've waited all winter long to be in your presence for just this one day. Soon you will go like everything else. Goodbye, vibrancy. Goodbye, innocence. So long, sweetness. It will be back next year, don't worry. Hello again! But only for a day.

Connected— from p.1

search on migrant life in OTR, I began volunteering at InkTank—a local non-profit that promotes writing as means of empowerment. A year later, I found myself as the Executive Director of the organization. How does this connect to the UAC you ask? Well, I've worked with the likes of poets and UAC affiliates: Pauletta Hansel, Richard Hague, and Mike Henson among others. And as the person in charge, I've made sure to include other Appalachian writers on our agenda to bring to InkTank in the near future.

If it's not evident by now, I keep pretty busy! So, it goes without saying that when, your now former editor, Mike Maloney, asked me to be his replacement I jumped at yet another opportunity to show my support.

So here I am to introduce myself your new editor of the Appalachian Connection! I'm putting this mildly when I say that this it is a great honor to serve you as both a local and regional source of news and happenings in and out of the Appalachian region.

While I've lived in Kentucky for over seventeen years now, I'm a born and raised Hoosier. So I'm not

Appalachian by definition, but I do share a deep love for the land as many others do. I grew up a stone's throw away from my Granddad's farm where I learned to both work and honor the land. My fondest childhood memories of the farm are walking the back forty every morning with Granddad to check on livestock and learn about the different types of trees. When I close my eyes I can still picture that old Beech tree that has all of us grandkid's initials carved into it. Granddad's gone now and the farm isn't in the shape it used to be, but I still yearn to someday return it back to its original shape. So, like many Appalachian Connection readers, I may have been gone for a while and made a new life in the city, but I still consider somewhere else as home.

Appalachia wasn't something we talked about a lot growing up—save a comment or two about how the town over in the next county, New Castle (then home of a Chrysler automotive plant) ought to be *r e n a m e d* 'NewTucky'. It wasn't until about five years ago that I'd even given Appalachia a second

thought.

While channel surfing one evening, I came across the documentary, *The Appalachians*, on PBS. I was absolutely awestruck at the conflicting reality of what I now consider some of the world's most beautiful landscape. I just couldn't believe that this magnificent region could, on one hand, be full of such environmental and cultural wealth while containing some of the nation's most impoverished communities.

From that moment on, I read everything about the region that I could get my hands on. Then I started firing off e-mails to anyone and everyone

who had written about Appalachia. I wanted to know how I could get involved in the fight against poverty and the environmental atrocity known as Mountain Top Removal. It just so happened that the first response I received was from longtime Appalachian scholar, advocate, and UAC affiliate, Phil Obermiller, who encouraged me to pursue scholarly study at the graduate level. I took his advice and enrolled in the Master's of Liberal Arts program at Northern Kentucky University where I spent most of my scholarly endeavors focusing on Appalachian Studies. I've recently finished my

degree and the rest they say is history.

So that's my story and hopefully by now you've gained a sense of who I am as a person.

But in closing I want to make two promises and two requests to Appalachian Connection readers.

First the promises: I pledge to put my heart and soul into making sure that the Appalachian Connection remains a source of both entertainment and information for all its readers.

I vow to carefully scrutinize all articles for fairness and balance before they appear in this publication.

Now for the requests:

Please always feel free to contact me frequently about potential news and information, poetry, art, and prose, and even compliments and complaints!

Last, but perhaps most important, is that you take a good look around you and ask yourself, "What can I do to help improve my community"—no matter where you reside.

I can be contacted by e-mail at ryanshadle@yahoo.com, or reached by phone at 859-441-1375.

Respectfully Yours,

Ryan S. Shadle, managing editor of your Appalachian Connection newspaper.

Founder— from p.1

research and community organizing, cultural arts and political strategy are testimony to the ease with which he shares his many talents.

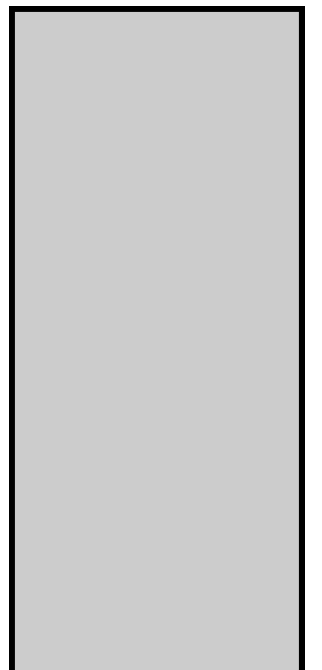
By early 1998, the need for a print vehicle that could provide information about, and be a focal point for urban Appalachian people, activities, and community news became acutely clear. Again Maloney took up the challenge and, working with others, developed *The Appalachian Connection*.

The paper still has room to grow but as Nancy Laird, community worker in Lower Price Hill remarked, "Often it's the only newspaper around that is positive about the people and what's going on." She called Mike a "real guiding light for the Appalachian community" and applauded him for his enthusiasm and leadership.

Over the years Mike has given time, leadership, and vision to various efforts within the Appala-

chian community. His eleven years of service to the community through *The Appalachian Connection* is summarized in the comments of Pauletta Hansel, Appalachian artist and poet. "What a gift Mike Maloney has provided to the Urban Appalachian community by his thoughtful and inclusive work as editor of *The Appalachian Connection* for all these years! He has always tried to make sure that the full spectrum of the community has a

voice." She concluded what we all echo: "Thanks, Mike!"



Former LPH Community School Director, Tom Stegmaier, Honored

by Phillip J. Obermiller

Tom Stegmaier was named Outstanding Education Leader during the thirteenth annual Appalachian Unsung Hero Awards brunch in Dayton on May 22. The award recognizes his 28 years of service and leadership at the Lower Price Hill Community School.

Working as both a teacher and an administrator, Stegmaier prepared hundreds of students to take and pass the GED exam. In 1983 he became the coordinator of the school's partnership with local colleges that has enabled many of those GED graduates to earn two years of college credit by taking satellite courses at the school.

As executive director from 2005-2007, Stegmaier guided the school along a stable path for two years while

the board searched for a full-time replacement. He spent months working alongside the school's current director, Jen Walters, ensuring the transition would be as seamless as possible. Now retired, Stegmaier still devotes many hours as a volunteer advisor to the school's staff and teachers.

"Tom continues to grace the school with his wisdom and sweet spirit. There are things you cannot learn from a book or a report and I am grateful I have Tom as my mentor. He is a living tour guide to the school's institutional history, advising me as I became acquainted with the workings of the school. If I am to become a great leader, as my predecessors were, it will be because of his guidance," said Walters.

One of the letters nominating Stegmaier for the award

stated, "Twice a year the school organizes the Picnic in the Parking Lot, a cook-out where everyone in the neighborhood is welcome. You'll always find Tom there, but not easily. Even when he was director of the school, he would be wreathed in smoke from a charcoal grill, cooking up hamburgers until the last guests had been served. That's Tom's style, not flashy or obvious, but so quietly effective that nobody ever has to ask, 'Where's the beef?' when he's on the job."

The Unsung Hero Awards are presented by the Appalachian Community Advisory Board, led by Sinclair Community College faculty members Carol Baugh and Tess Little. For more information about the work of the Advisory Board call 937-512-2126. For more on the LPH Community School call 244-2214.



Left to right, Jen Walters, Tom Stegmaier, Linda Stegmaier, Patty Heideman

LPH Community School Graduates 35

This year, the LPHCS will have over 35 students participating in the graduation. Students of various ages and backgrounds have made commitments and worked hard to accomplish their educational and vocational goals. Despite sometimes seemingly insurmountable obstacles, the students don't give up.

The students who have successfully completed the GED program have demonstrated mastery in the academic areas of reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. Attaining the high school equivalency diploma often requires that students value and possess personal qualities such as courage, commitment, diligence, and perseverance.

With tremendous pride, the LPHCS congratulates its graduates!

06/08	Sharon N. Doane
06/08	Jessica A. Phillips
06/08	Cheryl A. Wilson
06/08	Debbie L. Doane
07/08	Paul L. Couch
07/08	Steven A. Hurt
07/08	Kayleigh M. Griffis
10/08	Rosalind R. Grove
10/08	Brittany D. Cox
10/08	Brandon Gibbs
11/08	Danielle Dickerson
12/08	Princess Brown
12/08	Sophia R. Smith
12/08	Amanda N. Moore
12/08	Elisha J. Moore
01/09	Amber N. Houpe
01/09	Kyle S. Dezarn
01/09	Andrew X. Todd
01/09	Dorothea A. Hurt
01/09	Jason A. Mason
01/09	Amanda J. Meyer
02/09	Rosa M. Marler
02/09	Amber M. Carmen
03/09	Tyrone V. Brown
03/09	William H. Darling
04/09	Kenneth A. Baxter
04/09	Jamie S. Dearwester
04/09	Trennell Langford
05/09	Claude L. Brown
05/09	Michael A. Hawkins
05/09	Edward J. Mumphrey
05/09	Greg Hamilton
05/09	Eddie L. Jones
05/09	Darrell R. Hibbard
05/09	Mecheko M. Garrison

Urban Appalachian Council
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(513) 251-0202 www.uacvoice.org

We invite you to join us in our celebration of this,
our 35th Anniversary Year! Look for Activities, Updates in future
issues of the Appalachian Connection

A Foundation for Success

by Danielle Dickerson

The Lower Price Hill Community School has been the foundation of my success.

The staff here is great! They helped me pass my GED (something that I had been putting off for a long time!). I never thought I would pass it, but with the support of three particular individuals—I did it! Ms. Rose, the math whiz, helped me touch up on my pre-algebra. So did Ms. Kathy by helping me realize my thirst for knowledge. And of course I can't for-

get Ms. Patty who works in the daycare. She loves my daughter who can be a handful at times! They have made me and everyone else who comes here feel at home. LPHCS has become my home away from home!

Before coming to LPHCS, I tried another school, but I didn't even last a month. I felt so out of place and I started to give up again. It was then that a friend told me that she had received her GED from here years earlier. She had so

many good things to say about the school that I had to them a try. It was just my luck they turned out to be great.

Not only did I get my GED at LPHCS, but also I am now a proud student of Cincinnati State. I could not be more proud of myself and I can't wait to walk across the stage to get my diploma and feel like a high school student with a bright future!

If there is someone in your life having trouble getting a start, especially with earning their GED,

LPHCS is where they should be. The staff and volunteers can help them with any subject. They make sure that there is always a healthy breakfast and coffee for a fresh start to the day. Yet it doesn't stop there. The LPHCS also offers students help with transportation, daycare, and free access to computers and the Internet. But most of all, these wonderful people motivate you and push you to go after your goals and reach your highest potential.



Danielle Dickerson with her daughter

Knowing that only grants and the help of volunteers support the LPHCS, I make sure to give back by helping out in any way I can by helping out my classmates.

Again, if there is someone you know in need of some extra love, support, and motivation, send

them to LPHCS. And if you have some time to spare yourself...please become a volunteer!

I can't wait to see where I go from here knowing that the whole staff is going to be right behind me!

Review: Where Drunk Men Go

At this year's Cincinnati Fringe Festival, Appalachian voices drew in a packed audience by the final night, held in rapt, and earned favorable review with the show, "Where Drunk Men Go."

Two voices comprised the show. Richard Hague pulled from the depths to present a dramatic rendering of his 31-part poem of the same name, and fellow poet Michael Henson interspersed his plaintive bluegrass and gospel strains throughout. Director John Ray deftly mixed all the ingredients together into a drama that was

as haunting as it was compelling.

Hague first heard the poem's title years ago during a meeting of the Southern Appalachian Writers' Cooperative when Jennifer Galloway Collins introduced one of her own poems by wondering aloud "wherever it is that drunk men go." He wrote the phrase down and, a decade later, gave the poem its shape. "Where Drunk Men Go" is the longest poem ever published in Appalachian Journal and it forms a part of Hague's book, *Alive in Hard Country* (Bottom Dog Press 2003), the Appala-

chian Writers' Association 2004 Poetry Book of the Year.

In graphic images and fragments of story woven together, the show "Where Drunk Men Go" captures the experience of being drunk and of being addicted to drink—in all their alluring, repulsive, mad and tragic dimensions. The show covers the landscape, from the spell that wildness and deep conversations cast early on, to the retching, bar fights, bloodstains and sorrowing women that always seem to show up sooner or later. The show also covers the local landscape, from

Stuebenville to Parkersburg to Cincinnati, from trees to alleys to night. The Ohio River flows through the background.

Yet, the experiences of drunkenness and addiction are not the only layers in this show. It also delves into the human desire

to stand on equal footing with the gods. While Henson sings, "I'm a-working on a building for my Lord," the lost men on Hague's creekbank are "unbuilding the building," pursuing the goddess but finding only a hag-mother and witch. In the midst of such a

spiritual conflict, Henson's note can't help but ring true: "I'm alone in this world."

Mary Anne Reese is a Cincinnati attorney and a graduate student in English at Northern Kentucky University.

A Mother's Love

By Hyder Zuern

Dedicated to Sarah S. Zuern 2/29/36-4/26/09

What is a Mother's love?

A Mother's love is precious, worth more than gold.

A Mother's love is enduring, it goes on and on.

A Mother's love is unconditional; no matter what you do she will still always love you.

A Mother's love is caring and gentle; there for every scrape, or bump on the head, or boo-boo.

A Mother's love is timeless, 24/7 it's always there.

A Mother's love is constant, it never changes.

A Mother's love is very hard work, 100 plus hours per week.

A Mother's love is a gift from God, immaculate.

A Mother's love is a tough job, not easy to do.

A Mother's love is a great thing to have.

A Mother's love is wise; she always gives good advice.

A Mother's love is something very special.

A Mother's love is always a top priority; it is first.

A Mother's love is something to hold onto.

A Mother's love is forever.

40th Annual Appalachian Heritage Festival in Photos



Kyle Meadows on the hammered dulcimer



Steve Bonafel and One Iota



Paul and Danielle McDonald



Fern Lunsford and Freda Smith

The Affrilacian Connection

By Michael E. Maloney and Phillip J. Obermiller

(Most Cincinnati-ans are aware that African Americans and Appalachians have had a significant role in shaping the history of the Tri-State. Many may not be aware that the two groups overlap, and have a shared heritage that comprises an important part of the American experience. This is the first in a series of occasional articles exploring that shared history by telling the stories of notable African American Appalachians, a group known to many as Affrilachians.)

The pioneering African American his-

torian, Carter G. Woodson, identified one of the earliest Appalachian migration streams into Cincinnati when he wrote "...during the period between 1826 and 1840 ... Cincinnati had to grapple with the problem of immigrating Negroes and the poor whites from the uplands of Virginia and Kentucky."

Woodson himself was a migrant from his birthplace on the edge of the Appalachian uplands in Virginia. As a youth, he worked as a miner in the West Virginia coalfields before enrolling in Frederick Douglass High

School in Huntington. He moved on to attend one of the nation's first racially integrated institutions of higher learning, Berea College in Kentucky. Woodson's Ph. D. dissertation at Harvard focused on the anti-slavery movement in Virginia that led to the formation of the state of West Virginia. Later in his career he returned to West Virginia to serve as the Dean of West Virginia State College.

It is not surprising that Carter Woodson, "the Father of Black history," was Appalachian. Black miners played a promi-

nent role in the Appalachian coalfields of Ohio, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Kentucky. They participated in the founding of the United Mine Workers of America, and stood on the picket lines shoulder-to-shoulder with white mountaineers and European immigrants. Woodson's contemporary, Booker T. Washington, was another African American leader who once worked in the coal mines of West Virginia. The Eastern Kentucky Social Club, composed of

See AFFRILACIAN, p. 8

Once again this year thousands of folks visited one of Cincinnati's most heralded cultural festivals during this Mother's Day weekend. The weather was a pleasant surprise, save a few sprinkles, and unlike now, it still felt like springtime.

Photographer, Mark Brockett was there with your editor taking in the sights and sounds to share with you. Among the scenes Brockett captured were longtime quiltmakers Fern Lunsford and Freda Smith who spend the spring and summer festival season traveling around the Bluegrass selling their quilts.

Wayne Badida, retired schoolteacher and wrestling coach at Connor High

School, reminds us of the blending of Appalachian and Native American culture. Northern Kentucky newcomers, formerly from the great state of New Hampshire, Danielle McDonald and son Paul enjoy their first Appalachian Festival.

Crafts were aplenty as usual, and Jon Hornback was there to display his woodworking skills. Also in accordance to custom was the blending of musical styles ranging from the high harmonies of local County & Bluegrass favorite, Steve Bonafel and his band One Iota to the Old Timey sounds of local festival pickers along with the soothing sounds of Kyle Meadows' hammered dulcimer.



John Hornback



Wayne Badida

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Affrilacian— from p. 7

African American miners and their families, still gathers over a thousand people for its annual reunions.

Woodson maintained an Appalachian focus throughout his historical studies, as illustrated in this entry in *The Encyclopedia of Appalachia*: "In his landmark article 'Freedom and Slavery in Appalachian America' published in the *Journal of Negro History* in 1916, Woodson argued that the geography and the economy of the Southern Highlands combined with the religious and ethnic background of its populace to make the region largely anti-slavery." Later scholarship has challenged some of Woodson's views, but Affrilachian writers have consistently maintained that race relations were marginally better in Appalachia than in the flatland South.

In 1915 Carter G. Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, and the *Journal of Negro History* where, as we have seen, he published articles about Appalachians of both races. The tradition he began continues in the Appalachian Studies Association where the son and grandson of African

American miners, Dr. William Turner, recently received the Association's highest award for his scholarly work and activism in the region. The Association is also cooperating with a group of Black scholars in founding a sister organization in the Deep South, the Black Belt Studies Association.

Carter Woodson is not the only nationally recognized Affrilachian. Others include musician, singer and storyteller Sparky Rucker, and Harvard scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Noted Affrilachians in southwest Ohio include Cincinnatians such as poet Francis X. Walker, publisher of **PLUCK!**: The Journal of Affrilachian Arts and Culture, and folklorist and storyteller Omope Carter Daboiku. Dr. John Bryant is a board member of the Urban Appalachian Council and a past CEO and President of the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative. In Dayton, Affrilachian artist and art educator Willis "Bing" Davis recently received the prestigious Governor's Award in the Arts.

The Appalachian region was the site of slavery, and later segregation and other examples of racism. Still, it is significant

that the Woodson family gravitated to the region after emancipation. It was in Appalachia where a young Carter Woodson obtained an education and an identity as both a Black man and an Appalachian. True to his Appalachian roots, after a life of national prominence Carter G. Woodson was buried next to his parents and four of his siblings in Spring Hill Cemetery in Huntington, West Virginia.

(Michael Maloney and Phillip Obermiller are members of the Urban Appalachian Council's Research Committee.)

Cultural Corner July-August 2009

JULY

17 Edensong Free Summer Concert Series, 8pm, Eden Park, Cincinnati, OH. Featuring the Rabbit Hash String Band, the Tillers and more. FREE. Presented by the Queen City Balladeers.

18 Appalachian Opry, 7pm. Famous Old Time Music Company, Wapakoneta, OH. Featuring Vernon McIntyre's Appalachian Grass, musical guests and comedy/variety acts in the tradition of Hee Haw and the Grand Ole Opry. Family-friendly and food available for purchase. \$7. Info: 419-568-1220 or www.fotmc.com.

20-25 MACC Bluegrass Show, Hoover Y-Park, Columbus, OH. Benefit show for children with cancer formerly known as the Bluegrass Classic. Featuring Rhonda Vincent & the Rage, Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver, Russell Morre & IIIrd Tyme Out, J.D. Crowe & the New South, Lonesome River Band and many more. Camping. \$35 - \$105. Tickets available online through Ticketmaster, at the gate or by phone 740-548-4199. Info: www.bluegrassclassic.com

27 - Aug. 1 Clermont County Fair, Clermont County Fairgrounds, Owensville, OH. Great family fun including a demolition derby, lumberjack show, crafts and live entertainment by the Comet Bluegrass Allstars, Rabbit Hash String Band, Dan Hemming, Bill Whyte Comedy, the Kenny Welch Band and more. \$10 - \$35. Info: www.clermontcountyfair.org.

AUGUST

1 Painter's Creek Bluegrass Festival, Noon - 11pm, Round Eyes Park, Arcanum, OH. Featuring Vernon McIntyre's Appalachian Grass. Info: 937-548-7219.

2 Music for the Mountains, 5pm Northside Tavern, Cincinnati, OH. Benefit to stop mountaintop removal coal mining featuring the Majo, Peter Adams, the Tillers, Magnolia Mountain, Cletus Romp and Daniel Martin Moore. Proceeds benefit Ohio Citizen Action. \$10. Info: 513-221-2100 or www.ohiocitizen.org

8 Appalachian Heritage Festival, all day, Miami Whitewater Forest, Harrison, OH. Appalachian crafts, boating, kids water park and live music featuring Vernon McIntyre's Appalachian Grass. Info: 513-686-0234 or www.fotmc.com.

13-15 Grass Stock 2009, Guysville, OH. Fundraiser for WorldWideBluegrass.com, a streaming internet bluegrass station. Featuring the Green Bottle Boys, donna Wlisse & Poor Mountain Boys, Blackwater Run, Lee Elliot & the Country Cousins, Lonesome Meadow and many more. Plus workshops, jamming, hayrides, kids activities, camping, an auction, raffle and more. Info: www.GrassStock.com.

19-23 Festival in the Cornfields, Famous Old Time Music Company, Wapakoneta, OH. Workshops and dry camping. Music by Muleskinner Band, Lonesome Meadow, Lee Elliot & Mule Stories and more. \$35 for weekend pass. Info: 419-568-1220 or www.fotmc.com.

20-22 Brown County Bluegrass Festival, Fairgrounds, Georgetown, OH. Music, food, camping and more. \$15 - \$60, children free. Info: www.browncountybluegrass.com.

30 Comet Bluegrass Allstars, 2pm, Boone County Public Library, Florence, KY. FREE. Info: 859-384-5550.

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