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The Appalachian Voice

August / September 2009

Water Matters

From drinking to agriculture to bathing to recreation, water is the most critical element to our existence. So why aren't we treating it that way?

Plus: Dancing for MTR • The Summer of Discontent • Monarch Migration • Operation Medicine Cabinet

The APPALACHIAN VOICE



A publication of

APPALACHIAN VOICES

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Appalachian Voices brings people together to solve the environmental problems having the greatest impact on the central and southern Appalachian Mountains. Our mission is to empower people to defend our region's rich natural and cultural heritage by providing them with tools and strategies for successful grassroots campaigns. Appalachian Voices sponsors the Upper Watauga Riverkeeper® and is also a Member of the Waterkeeper® Alliance.

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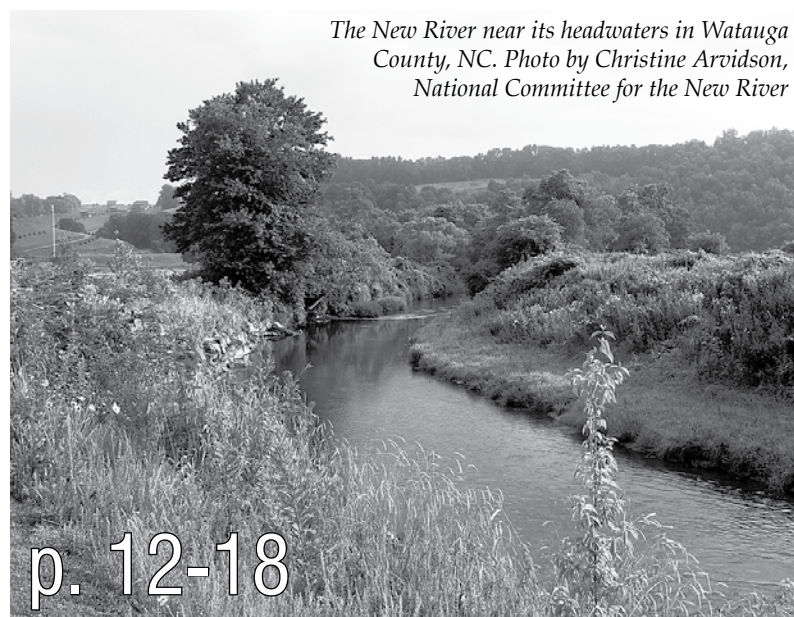
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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

It's all about the water

Thanks to the powerful flow of the earth's complex water system, a rain drop that falls into the New River's headwaters in North Carolina will eventually flow through Virginia and into West Virginia, combining with the Ohio River and on to the mighty Mississippi, eventually spilling into the Gulf of Mexico thousands of miles downstream. All of our water is connected, from stream to river, aquifer to well. It is precious and irreplaceable. But are we treating it that way?



The New River near its headwaters in Watauga County, NC. Photo by Christine Arvidson, National Committee for the New River

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Dancing Appalachia's Joys and Sorrows

"Eating Appalachia: Selling Out to the Hungry Ghost" is a simultaneously heartwrenching and humorous modern dance performance about mountaintop removal coal mining.

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Cover photo:

The New River rolls through picturesque rapids at Narrows, Virginia before plunging down the New River Gorge in West Virginia. Sport fishing and ecotourism generate income, but that is threatened by a mix of coal flyash dumps, legacy industries, erosion and non-point pollution. (Photo by Bill Kovarik).

A note from our Executive Director

I learned to swim in a rushing creek in Appalachia. I splashed in shallow pools when very small, venturing into the rapids as I got older. I joke that I learned to swim "rock to rock," which was a necessity in the white waters of the gorge. My dad was a Boy Scout leader, and I know many of his scouts also learned to swim in those mountain streams, lifting their voices in a gleeful chorus when they hit the icy water.

The rivers are the lifeblood of our Appalachian heritage; it is our responsibility and privilege to protect them. It seems amazing to me that we Americans have allowed our waterways to be so diminished. According to the latest data from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), there are currently 3,080 fish consumption advisories for mercury spread throughout 48 states, covering 14.1 million acres of lakes and 882,963 miles of rivers. Twenty-three of these states have issued statewide fish consumption advisories due to mercury in fresh-water lakes, rivers or both, while 12 states have statewide advisories due to mercury in their coastal waters.

Coal-fired power plants are the single largest source of airborne mercury in the country, spewing nearly 50 tons of this deadly poison into the air and into our local watersheds each year. Several studies have shown that as much as 70 percent of these toxic emissions are ending up in local waterways and fish.

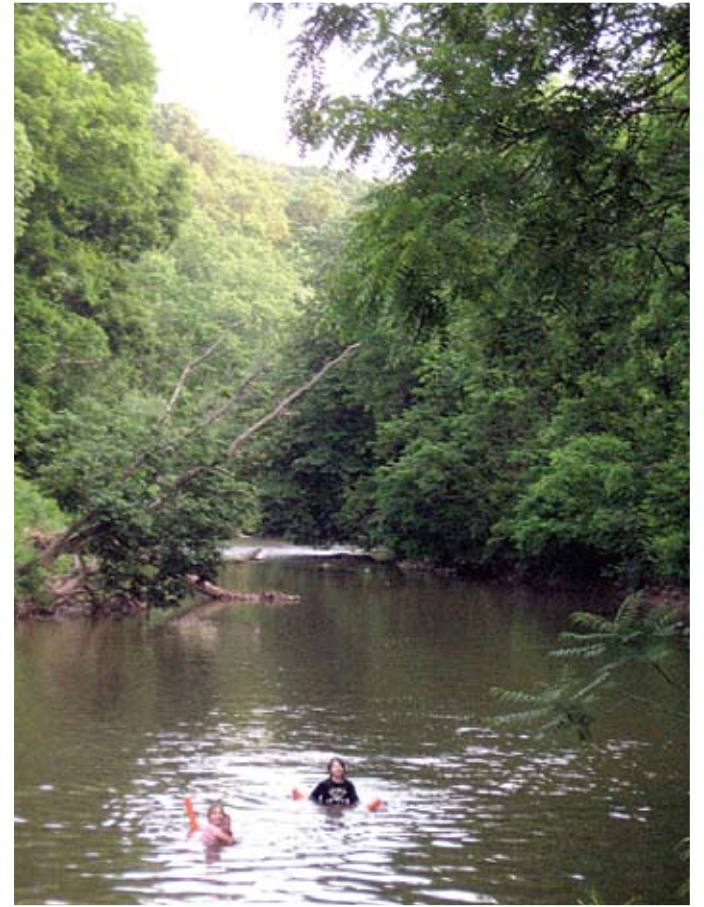
The Appalachian region has some of the most beautiful and vibrant streams in America and we have been blessed with abundant water supplies. But we are wasting that abundance. And, although it seems unbelievable, nearly 1200 miles of headwater streams have been totally buried by coal mining waste. Legally,

The EPA recently released a list of 44 high hazard coal waste impoundment ponds—24 of those sites lie in the Southeast, 12 in North Carolina alone. Although these ponds have been discharging untreated coal waste into rivers for decades, to date, there have been no comprehensive water quality monitoring programs to measure the amount of heavy metals in water, sediment and fish below these discharges. This is astounding when considering that the highest concentration of these ponds is in close proximity to the Carolinas' largest population center.

Appalachian Voices, a member of the Waterkeeper Alliance, is working at the national, state and local level every day to change policies that allow the continued pollution of Appalachian waters. But we cannot do it alone. Let's raise our voices together to protect our heritage. If not us, who?

Working for clean water for today and tomorrow—Appalachian Voices.

~ Willa Mays Coffey



Join Appalachian Voices Today!

Through donating money, time or talent, Appalachian Voices' members provide critical support to help reduce air pollution, protect the health of our forests and end mountaintop removal mining. Join us in protecting and restoring our irreplaceable Appalachian heritage. Become a member of Appalachian Voices.

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Hiking the Highlands

Joe Tennis is the author of "Sullivan County, Tennessee: Images of America" (Arcadia Publishing), which explores the history of the Cherokee National Forest, South Holston Reservoir and Kingsport's Bays Mountain Park.



On Pilot Mountain

Story by Joe Tennis

Ask any fan of "The Andy Griffith Show" what mountain they remember hearing about most, and they'll say Mount Pilot.

Why, Andy Taylor and Barney Fife talked about going to Mount Pilot practically all the time. But where is it?

Well, if we assume that Andy Griffith's hometown of Mount Airy, N.C., is actually "Mayberry," and that its businesses such as the real-life Snappy Lunch served as inspiration for TV scripts, then maybe we can also assume that a nearby peak - Pilot Mountain - was the source of similar inspiration for TV's Mount Pilot.

It is certainly plausible, said Matt Windsor, the superintendent at Pilot Mountain State Park.

What's more, it makes a good marketing hook. Businesses in the nearby town of Pilot Mountain use such names as Aunt Bea's, Mount Pilot Soda Fountain and Mayberry Shazzam! Go-Karts and Games. Yet other town landmarks include Dr. Flip-pin's Bed & Breakfast, housed in an 1896 mansion overlooking Pilot Mountain's Main Street. Here, owners Charlotte and Gary York cater to visitors wanting to explore the wine country of the Yadkin Valley - or simply rest after hiking the highlands of Pilot Mountain State Park.

Centuries ago, when the Saura Indians inhabited this area, they called Pilot Mountain such names as "Jomeokee," "The Pilot" or "Great Guide."

In 1751, surveyors Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson mapped the mountain. More than two centuries later, Pilot Mountain became



PILOT MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

HIKING LENGTH: Jomeokee Trail (1 mile); Grassy Ridge (2 miles); Ledge Spring (2 miles); Yadkin Islands (5 miles); and Sassafras (half-mile)

DURATION: One hour, including time for photographs and wildlife study, and exploration of the must-see Little Pinnacle Overlook

TO GET THERE: Pilot Mountain State Park (1792 Pilot Knob Park Rd., Pinnacle, N.C.) is located along U.S. 52, about 24 miles north of Winston-Salem, N.C., and 14 miles south of Mount Airy, N.C.

PARKING: No fee required.

INFO: (336) 325-2355

Matt Windsor, park superintendent of Pilot Mountain State Park, stands at Little Pinnacle Overlook, with the Big Pinnacle rising in the background.



North Carolina's 14th state park - after years of being a commercial tourist attraction.

It was saved in the 1960s thanks to the Pilot Mountain Preservation and Park Committee, which had proposed turning the place into a park in order to protect it and the surrounding area from further commercial development. Over the years, several acres have been added, ultimately bringing the total protected acreage to more than 3,500.

Now this park not only protects a natural landmark, it doubles as a monument to show what people can do when they work together to save a place they love.

Windsor considers Pilot Mountain among the most recognizable landmarks of North Carolina. Though only having an elevation of 2,420 feet, Pilot Mountain rises about 1,400 feet above the rolling countryside of the Piedmont plateau.

Like the rocky escarpments of nearby Hanging Rock State Park, Pilot Mountain is a remnant of the ancient Sauratown Mountains. Specifically, it's a quartzite

monadnock - a rugged mountain rock that has survived millions of years while everything else around it has withered away.

The Sauratown Mountains are, by far, not the easternmost peaks of North Carolina. Over 150 miles due east you run into Medoc Mountain State Park in Halifax County. At 325 feet above sea level, Merdoc is hardly what you call a mountain, but it is the core of what was once a mighty range of mountains east of Raleigh.

Pilot Mountain, located in both Surry and Yadkin counties, consists of two prominent pinnacles. The one you can see from so many other surrounding peaks - the "Big Pinnacle" - is connected to the "Little Pinnacle" by a narrow saddle.

Trails at Pilot Mountain State Park range from the five-mile-long stroll of the Yadkin Islands, along the Yadkin River, to the two-mile Grindstone Trail, ranked as moderate to strenuous.

Practically anyone could skip and hop among the park's scruffy pitch pines

to reach the Little Pinnacle Overlook: You simply follow an easy trail measuring barely one-tenth of a mile. This short trek gives you a classic view of Pilot Mountain plus Hanging Rock State Park, deep in the distance, looking east.

Another easy outing, starting at the main parking lot of the park's mountain section, is the half-mile-long Sassafras Trail.

Still, the big must-see must be the Big Pinnacle. This can be reached by the nearly mile-long Jomeokee Trail, which wraps itself in a circle around the base of the actual peak still commonly called The Pilot. On this moderate path, hikers can get an up-close view of the sheer cliffs of Pilot Mountain.

Or you could just relax and sit a spell on a boulder bluff, studying the bark of a pine tree.

One caveat: Climbing on the Big Pinnacle is not allowed.



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Dancing Appalachia's Joys and Sorrows

Story by Bill Kovarik

Dancers cling to each other and spread their hands in the air, like trees on an Appalachian mountainside. Then, explosions rock the stage, and erupt on a screen in the background. The dancers collapse, and, in a while -- after a slow, sad dance of grief -- a grinning man in a bowler hat, smoking a cigar and grasping at fistfuls of money, is wheel-barrowed across the stage.

It's one of most heart-wrenching moments, followed by one of the funniest insights, to be enjoyed in a multimedia dance performance called "Eating Appalachia: Selling Out to the Hungry Ghost" that premiered this May at Radford University.

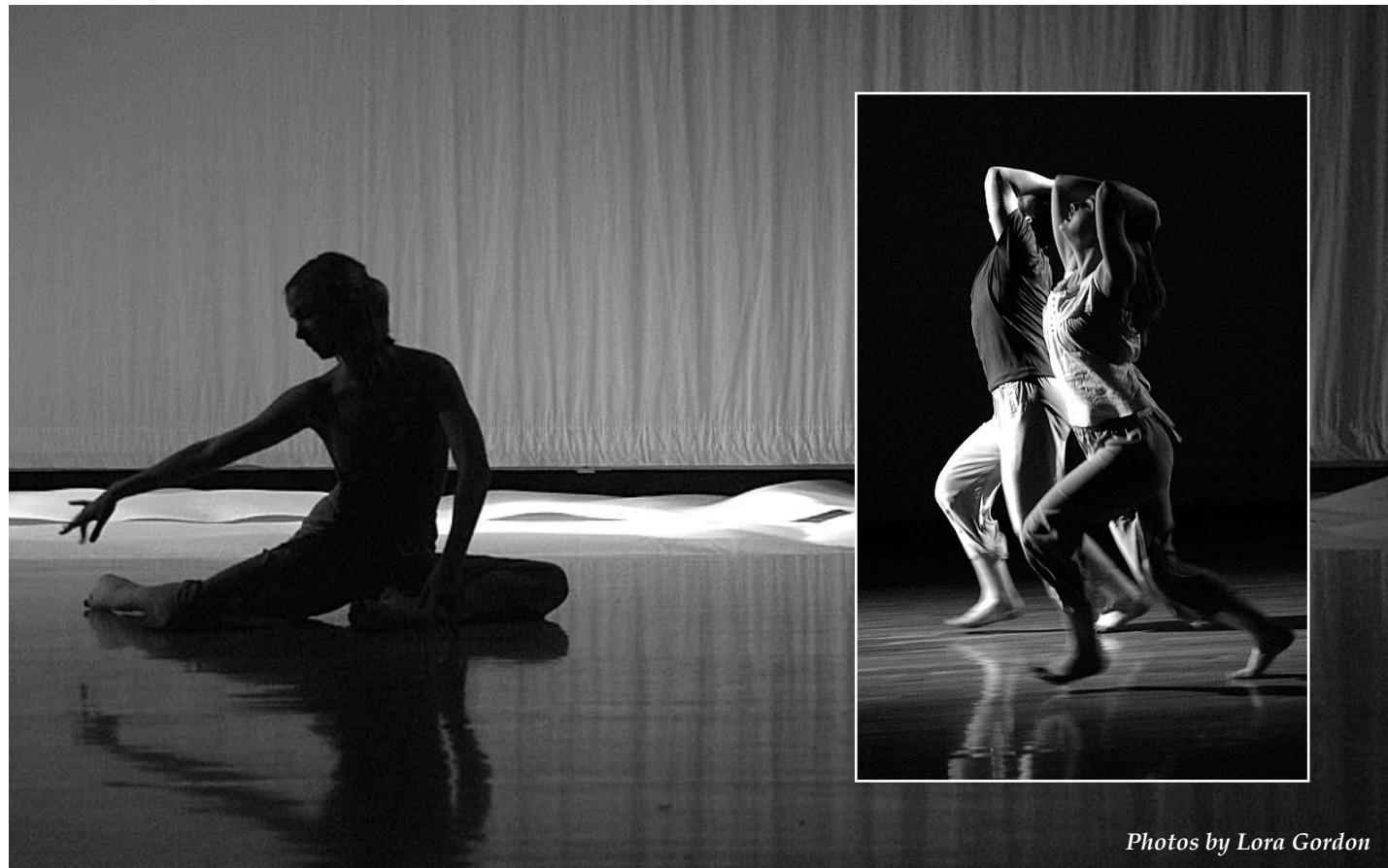
The 45-minute modern dance performance premiered in May and will be going on tour in the fall of 2009.

Blending strong emotions and environmental politics is difficult, says choreographer Deborah McLaughlin. Humor was the key.

"I feel that the humor is important; it frees us up," says McLaughlin. "I didn't want it to be depressing, because I feel that the media does depress us, as a culture, and I think that's part of the problem."

The problem of technology and greed is at the heart of mountaintop removal mining, McLaughlin says, and it is a major theme in the dance. At one point, dancers are caught in a web of electronics and cables. At another point, dancer Whitney Isaacs wanders around the stage, screeching with greed: "That. I've always wanted that. It's perfect. And that ..." But, like a hungry ghost, the dancer can never be satisfied.

"We can point the finger and blame the coal companies, but I finally realized I'm part of the problem with my own over-



consumption," she said. "There's a place for technology but for whatever reason our society just tends to overdo things. We're just so used to luxury."

McLaughlin's depictions of nature are also inspiring. The dance performance opens in a deep blue light with dancers tumbling along a rippling cloth, depicting a tumbling brook, embodying the beauty of free water.

"I was thinking about water as source of life, and that's one of the big issues with mountaintop removal is that we're killing the springs and the creeks and the rivers," she said.

Another part of the dance was in-

tended to honor the region's history, McLaughlin said. At one point, as an old coal mining song plays in the background, the dancers are in rocking chairs, holding still, almost holding their breath.

"I was trying to imagine what women would feel like when their sons or husbands would go off to work in the mines, and how frightening that would be," she said.

The idea for the dance performance about mountaintop removal mining emerged in the fall of 2008, in conversations with others who had been engaged in the environmental struggle. And yet, McLaughlin's Appalachian childhood -- she grew up near Louisville, Ky. -- had already sparked a lifelong interest in the region.

Her first choreographic work, performed in the 1970s, was about women who stood up for the unions and against the coal companies.

"There was something there that touched my heart," she said.

McLaughlin is an assistant professor of dance at Radford, and her background also includes professional credentials as the artistic director of the Movement Society in New York, performing with the Cincinnati Ballet with Lee Nagrin, and as a student with Cecile Heller of the Paris Opera Ballet.

Arts make an important contribution

and add new dimensions to the social and political process, she insists.

"People who are in the arts think outside of the box, and that's what we need, in order to figure out new ways to do things," McLaughlin said.

"I think this economic crisis is going to be a blessing if we allow ourselves to learn from it," she said. "Maybe we don't need all this stuff. That's not what is going to make us happy."

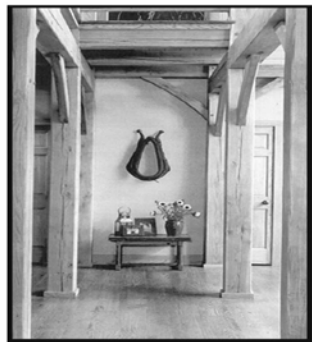
Appalachian musicians Bud Bennett and Don Hall worked with McLaughlin on the piece. Readings describing the impacts of mountaintop removal by Theresa Burriss were also part of the performance. Paintings by artist Suzanne Stryk, projected against the backdrop, helped illustrate some of the themes of hope, life, history and the joyful renewal of life in the mountains.

At one point, as the dancers talked about their connections to Appalachia, McLaughlin realized that Juliana Utz was the great-great granddaughter of Peter Urban, the only survivor of the great Monongah mine disaster of 1907. "This is destiny," McLaughlin said.

"People end up feeling hopeless and helpless... and just go out and shop," said McLaughlin. "We entertain ourselves to death."

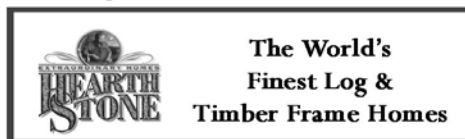
"So I was trying to figure out how to do a piece that would be compelling and provide some hope," she said.

Photos by Lora Gordon



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How Country Became Contra: THE AMERICAN SOCIAL DANCE

Story by Sarah Vig

To say contra is a dance craze would imply that it just came about recently or is going out of style. Neither of which seems to be true.

Contra's origins lie with the early American colonists who brought the popular English Country Dances with them when they hopped the pond to settle in the New World.

A very social form of dancing, the English Country Dances are organized, as is contra, in a long line which sets of partners move through, so everyone has the opportunity to dance with everyone else. This kind of dancing remained popular until the rise of more couple-centric dances,

such as the Turning Waltz, which came to popularity starting in the 1870s.

As more metropolitan dancers began to abandon Country Dancing, the style remained popular in more secluded communities. Its sink into semi-obscurity in the small, rural towns of Appalachia and New England both changed and saved the dance form, making it dissimilar from English Country Dancing and more distinctively American Contra. The American form of the dance is freer in meter and



Photo by Kelly Jordan

Society, and priming contra for large-scale revival in the 1950s and 60s.

Renewed interest in contra was fueled by the incorporation of new dance moves such as the "gypsy" and the "hey" by new contra choreographers in the 1970s. The dances don't require any formal training or set partner (which must feel liberating after decades of couples dancing!), and often each dance is taught by the caller before the music begins.

Today, American contra has spread to all 50 states. It remains perhaps most popular, however, in the places where it survived the cruel whims of fashionable society.

So grab a pair of dancing shoes (clean and soft-soled, please) and go swing your partner... or your neighbor, depending on the dance!

Put Your Dancing Shoes On - Where to Dance

Georgia

The Chattahoochee Country Dancers in Atlanta have dances weekly on Fridays and on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Tuesday. Their website has a great series of instructional videos for beginning contra dancers from all regions. Online at contradance.org.

Kentucky

Oh Contraire! based in Berea, Ky., holds a monthly dance every 4th Saturday as well as a "pick-up dance" on the 3rd Friday, where live music is performed by a pick-up band and calling is open mic. Online at folkcircle.org/contra.

Lexington Traditional Dance Association sponsors dances on the 1st Saturday and most 2nd and 4th Fridays. They give a discount to first time dancers. Online at ravitz.us/ltada.

North Carolina

Boone Country Dancers hold a contra 2nd Saturdays year-round, though they move indoors during the chill mountain winters. Online at boonecountrydancers.org.

Old Farmers Ball in Asheville, N.C., holds two weekly dances: Thursday nights on the campus of Warren Wilson College, and Monday nights at the Grey Eagle. Online at oldfarmersball.com

Tennessee

Historic Jonesborough Dance Society holds dances twice monthly on 1st and 3rd Saturdays. They also regularly sponsor dance weekends, including the upcoming Carolina Contrathon in September and Mountain Madness in October. For information on these events, visit their website: historicjonesboroughdancesociety.org

Knoxville Country Dancers dance weekly on Monday nights. They offer a deep discount for student dancers (only \$3!). Find

them online at discoveret.org/kcd

Chattanooga Traditional Dance Society dances on 2nd and 4th Saturdays. They offer a yearly dance pass for \$70. Online at contranooga.org

Nashville Country Dancers dance both English Country Dance and American Contra. Contrasts are held Fridays and English Country Dances are held each 2nd Sunday. Online at nashvillecountrydancers.org

Virginia

Charlottesville Contra Dance holds a Friday night dance September- June and also during those months **Contra Corners** hosts Greenville dances on the 2nd and 4th Sundays. Online at contracorners.com.

Blue Ridge Country Dancers holds contras in Floyd, Va., on 2nd Saturdays September through June. Online at floydcontradance.org.

Two Dog Waltz sponsors contra dances in Blacksburg once a month on the 3rd Saturday. Online at twodogwaltz.com/contra.

Roanoke Virginia Contra Dances began in February of this year and are now being held every 4th Saturday. Online at roanokecontra.org.

West Virginia

Kanawha Valley FOOTMAD (Friends of Old Time Music and Dance) of Charleston, W.Va., not only holds dances every 1st and 3rd Friday October to June, they also hold concerts, workshops and festivals! Online at footmad.org!

Morgantown Friends of Old Time Music sponsors dances at different times throughout the month and dance a mix of old time squares, contras, circle dances, and waltzes. Online at myweb.wvnet.edu/~mswim/sqdance.html.

music selection and has been influenced by intermingling and coevolution with traditional square dancing.

Unlike some turn-of-the-century Macarena, though, contra didn't remain in obscurity. Folklore historian Cecil Sharp documented the dances of small, rural communities in the World War I era, founding the Country Song and Dance

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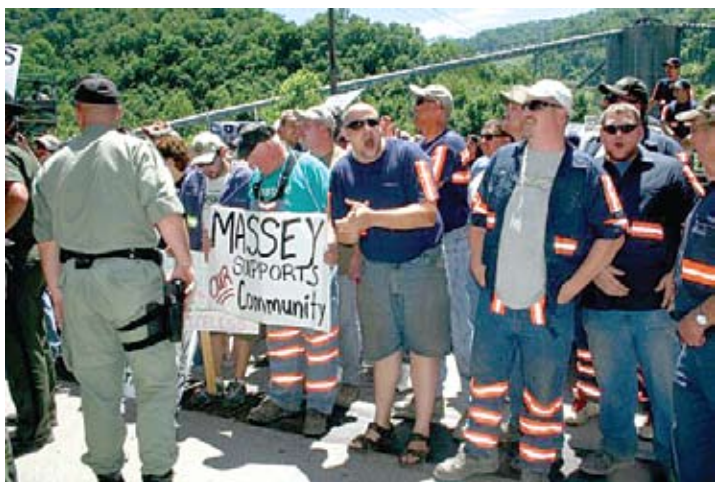
Mountaintop Removal Coal Mining's Summer of Discontent

Story by Bill Kovarik

A summer of discontent is rapidly turning into an autumn of confrontation, as Congressional hearings and regional protests increasingly pit environmental activists against coal industry employees.

In one of over a dozen full scale protests this spring and summer, scientist James Hansen and actress Daryl Hannah were arrested in a protest at Marsh Fork elementary school in June. The arrests took place amid a swirl of abusive and threatening commentary from coal miners, and one counter-demonstrator was arrested after she struck Goldman environmental prize winner Judy Bonds.

A few days later, spectators swamped the first formal Congressional hearing on mountaintop removal mining. Testifying against the practice was Goldman Prize



Miners and workers for Massey Energy counter a protest at Marsh Fork Elementary School in West Virginia. One counter-demonstrator was arrested for slapping a local environmentalist. Photo by Jamie Goodman

winner Maria Gunnoe, who noted that MTR contaminated water so badly that it was impossible to live near the mines. "Our people were here before the coal was discovered. Why should we have to leave now in the name of coal?" Others testified

to "immense and irreversible damage" being done to West Virginia.

Margaret Palmer of the U. of Md also testified: "There is no evidence to date that mitigation actions can compensate for the lost natural resources and ecological functions of the headwater streams that are buried."

The hearing begins a legislative process to the Clean Water Act to stop the dumping of coal overburden into stream beds. Such a prohibition would effectively stop mountaintop removal mining. Some 155 Congressmen are cosponsoring HR 1310, the Clean Water Protection Act, on the House side, while eight Senators have thus far signed on to cosponsor a companion bill.

A few days after the Congressional

hearing, at a family picnic on Kayford Mountain, 20 men and women dressed in coal miners outfits crashed a picnic intending to intimidate environmental advocates. One particularly disturbed man issued a string of direct death threats. A video of the event ("Mountain Madness - Invasion of the coal thugs") went viral on YouTube in July.

In response, the West Virginia Council of Churches issued a statement warning that "bitter rhetoric and latent violence" needed to be "put aside."

"We ask leaders to encourage an attitude of understanding toward those with whom one disagrees," said the Rev. Dennis Sparks, head of the council.

Meanwhile, on the regulatory side, the US EPA will be taking over some water discharge reviews from West Virginia's state Dept. of Environmental Protection. To highlight the issue, four demonstrators chained themselves to the doors of DEP offices in mid-August, saying the agency was "closed for incompetence."

Music on the Mountaintop Combines Music, Mountains and Sustainability

The Music on the Mountaintop Festival will be held again at the Old State Fairgrounds in Boone, N.C. on Saturday, August 29, 2009. The event will feature headliners Sam Bush, Keller Williams, The Steep Canyon Rangers, Acoustic Syndicate, and Yo Mama's Big Fat Booty Band, as well as 15 regional and local acts from western North Carolina.

The festival, run by Appalachian State University students, returns with a green theme, using a solar-powered stage, precise recycling and waste disposal programs,

compostable cups and utensils, and the integration of renewable energy non-profit organizations. A portion of the proceeds from this year's festival will go to the Appalachian Institute for Renewable Energy (AIRE) and the Appalachian Energy Center.

Music on the Mountaintop 2009 will showcase three music stages, a Green Village, a 35-foot climbing wall, and many local and organic food and craft vendors from the Boone area.

This year's festival will also feature a River Cleanup Initiative that will take place the day before the festival on Friday August 28 from 3 to 6 p.m. at the fairgrounds.



Camping will be available on site the evening of August 29. Camping spots are limited but will be announced for purchase on the festival's website.

The gates will be open to the public at the Old State Fairgrounds on August 29 at 10 a.m. and the music will begin at 11 a.m. For tickets or more information on Music on the Mountaintop 2009, visit www.musiconthemountaintop.com. For more information about AIRE, visit www.aire-nc.org.



Prize-Winning Prose to be Performed at NC Stage

Peter Neofotis is an extraordinary storyteller. He does more than narrate; he embodies every syllable of his well-crafted prose, which centers on a small town in the mountains of Virginia. He navigates characters, drama and flashbacks with grace and brings life to an entire town through the personalities and personal histories of its people. But, we don't want him to quit his day job.

Neofotis wrote his collection of short stories, "Concord, Virginia," by night while

working as a Contributing Author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Neofotis grew up in the Blue Ridge and will be returning to the mountains to perform his stories.

Performances will be held August 20-23 and 27-29 at 7:30 PM at the North Carolina Stage Company in Asheville. Tickets are \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door. Reach the box office at (828) 239-0263 or online at www.ncstage.org.

Across Appalachia

Environmental News From Around The Region

Will Harlan Runs 72 "Miles for Mountains"

The same day members of the Alliance for Appalachia waited in the halls of Congress for the Senate hearing on the Appalachia Restoration Act (S 696) to begin, iLoveMountains.org supporter Will Harlan ran 72 miles along the TN-NC border to raise awareness about the campaign to end mountaintop removal coal mining. Harlan, editor of Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine, completed his end-to-end "Miles for Mountains" run of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in just under 17 hours. During the run, his support crew distributed information about iLoveMountains.org and mountaintop removal coal mining at popular trailheads.

Harlan's ultimate goal is to enlist hikers, runners, walkers, and others to dedicate their mileage—whether it is on a treadmill or the trail—toward the collective goal of 1 million Miles for Mountains to end mountaintop removal coal mining. Find out more at milesformountains.wordpress.com



New Report Projects 8,000 Clean Energy Jobs For KY

A projected 8,750 new jobs in the energy efficiency and renewable energy sectors could be created in the next three years and spread out through 87 Kentucky counties, a new report by the Ochs Center for Metropolitan Studies claims. The job creation would be possible through investments by the East Kentucky Power Cooperative (EKPC) in clean energy projects, rather than in its proposed \$766 million Smith coal-fired power plant.

Another study released in May by Synapse Energy Economy Inc. showed that diversification of EKPC's energy sources will help protect co-op utility customers from higher costs of coal and coal-burning facilities.

Economic modeling shows enormous potential for jobs in home weatherization, hydroelectric dams, solar hot water, heating, cooling, and more.

Copies of the Ochs Center report and the modeling data source are available at www.kyenvironmentalfoundation.org.

lower court decision barring the Kensington Mine from dumping its tailings from ore processing into an Alaskan lake just north of Juneau. The ruling allows the Coer d'Alene Mines Corporation's gold mine to pump over 200,000 gallons per day of toxic wastewater slurry—composed of water, chemicals, and solid waste from ore processing—directly into a lake in the Tongass National Forest. The dumping will deposit 4.5 million tons of solids in the lake over a 10-year period, killing nearly all its aquatic life.

H.R. 1310 would amend the Clean Water Act's definition of "fill" back to its original intent, thereby making it illegal for mining operations—such as mountaintop removal coal mining prevalent in Southern Appalachia—to dispose of mining waste into the

country's waterways.

For more information about Alaska's work on H.R. 1310, visit <http://www.seacc.org/issues/mining/kensington-mine>.

Berea College Goes Solar

Berea College has joined the ranks of higher education seeking to diversify their electric generation. As of March 13, the school's Loyal Jones Appalachian Center is now partially powered by a 66-panel, 15,000 watt photovoltaic roof system. The installation contributes to the college's goal of meeting 10 percent of its energy needs through renewable sources by 2010. A monitoring device attached to the PV system will feed data to the internet, where the

public can view stats such as air temperature and electricity output. Visit www.berea.edu/appalachiancenter/ and click on "Solar Array Status" in the right column.

The center is also working to reduce energy use by exploring lighting options, energy controls and usage habits.



Blair Mountain Historic Places Status Uncertain

After less than four months as a protected historical site, the 1,600-acre Blair Mountain battlefield is facing removal from the National Register of Historic Places, a list that is maintained by the National Park Service.

In April, the State of West Virginia requested the de-listing of Blair Mountain. Federal rules mandate that an area can be registered only if a majority of area property owners support it. Originally, 22 out of 57 property owners opposed the listing, but that number was revised to 30 following the request to de-list.

A signed petition was delivered to Governor Joe Manchin in June urging him to help reach a solution to allow both mining and preservation of the historic site, but so far no word. At the end of July, the National Trust for Historic Preservation won an extension through mid-September on the required comment period for the de-listing. To comment, visit www.preservationnation.org/travel-and-sites/sites/southern-region/blair-mountain-battlefield.html

Blair Mountain was the location of a 1921 battle between 10,000 miners and coal-company sponsored police and federal troops. Since 1980, various organizations and local residents have tried to obtain Historical Places status for the site.

Opponents of the historic register listing include Massey Energy, a company which plans surface mining near the original historic site.

NC Senate Votes to Ban Western NC Wind

A North Carolina state Senate vote to ban wind turbines in mountain areas but approve coastal development may not pass the House this year, but it has energized opponents.

About 768 to 1000 Megawatts of electric power, enough for 300,000 - 400,000 energy efficient homes, could be produced along North Carolina's Appalachian ridge tops, according to a study by Appalachian State University's Western North Carolina Renewable Energy Initiative (WNCREI).

Western NC Senator Steve Goss, the only state Senator to vote against the bill, tried several times to amend the language to include responsible, environmentally sensitive wind energy development for the mountain region. At the center of the debate is North Carolina's 1983 Ridge Law, which prohibits large structures from protruding more than 35 feet above the crest of a mountain's ridge. However, wind energy proponents note that "windmills" are explicitly exempted from the 1983 statute. The bill is expected to remain in committee in the NC House until the end of this year's legislative session.

Alaska Joins H.R. 1310

Environmental rights groups in Alaska recently threw their support behind H.R. 1310, the Clean Water Protection Act, after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a

APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

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Blue Ridge Parkway
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Environmental Issues
Flora and Fauna
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Flora & Fauna

Don't forget to Submit to the 7th annual competition by Friday January 30, 2010 at www.appmtphotocomp.org

Behold the Beautiful Butterfly

Monarch Migration Offers Teaching Opportunities

Story by Marsha Walton

Talk about endurance athletes! Monarch butterflies make human tri-athletes look like slackers. Millions of these beautiful insects (weighing less than two ounces as adults) embark on a spectacular 2000+-mile journey from the United States and Canada to spend winters on a few mountaintops in central Mexico.

Tens of millions of the orange and black butterflies create one of the most stunning sights in the natural world, during their winter slumber party in the oyamel trees in the state of Michoacán.

While there is no clear evidence of a population decline in monarchs (*Danaus plexippus*) across this continent, scientists are concerned about threats to their habitat and other human-induced pressures.

"The mountaintops where they overwinter are the Achilles heel of North American monarchs," said Andy Davis, a monarch expert and doctoral student at the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources at the University of Georgia. "If they go, the



University of Georgia photo by Pat Davis

whole system may collapse," he said.

A few weeks ago a "butterfly brain trust" from Canada, U.S. and Mexico met at the University of Georgia to discuss ways to improve monarch population

monitoring programs.

Davis and Professor Sonia Altizer of Georgia's Odum School of Ecology organized the gathering, designed to get the three governments on the same track for monarch observation and protection.

For nearly 30 years scientists have been collecting data on monarchs. This new effort aims to coordinate that information among governments, universities, conservation groups, and another group of growing importance—citizen scientists.

"Citizen scientists are extremely important to large-scale monitoring programs, which, if run only by paid staff, could rarely, if ever, collect the amount of data that volunteers can over the broader landscape," said biologist Tara Crewe of Bird Studies Canada.

Currently, information collected by individuals or even some conservation groups might be unknown to others with the same mission—to protect this elegant species and its habitat. The Commission for Environmental Cooperation, established by Canada, U.S., and Mexico, is a major player in the effort to improve data collection, and, scientists hope, better target research and conservation efforts for the monarch.

These butterflies face a lot of different threats, including the disappearance of habitat. Females must lay their eggs (usually 100-400) on the underside of milkweed leaves. A toxin in that plant protects the caterpillar and butterfly from predators.

"Unfortunately, milkweed is still considered a noxious weed in Ontario and some states, even though this plant is required for

monarch larval development," said Crewe. "There is also evidence that some farming practices reduce the amount of milkweed available to monarchs," she said.

Monarchs must fly south for the winter. They cannot fly in temperatures below 55 degrees Fahrenheit. And while caterpillars feed exclusively on milkweed, adults need nectar from other flowers, so they have to go where the food is. In Mexico, it is habitat loss from logging that puts them in jeopardy.

Davis said protection and understanding of monarchs doesn't take a lot of study. His advice to young people fascinated by these iconic butterflies: "Ask questions. Be curious. Get outside and start looking at plants and caterpillars. Ask yourself, 'Why is it there? Why this plant, and not that one? Why is there only one here, and six on another one?'"

Questions like that, he said, are the basis of all good science, and could spark an interest in contributing important data to monarch research.

Crewe suggested participation in monitoring programs already in place, including Journey North, Monarch Larvae Monitoring Program, Monarch Health, and Monarch Watch. MonarchNet.org is now in development, and will provide links to many programs.

"People can also plant butterfly gardens at their home or school, with a focus on milkweed and other flowering plants (for nectar) that are native to their area," said Crewe. "Native plants are preferred because they are adapted to the climate and require less maintenance and watering than non-native species," she said.

"Native flowering species are a great deal of help," said Davis. "[The monarchs] migrate through the Appalachians," he said. Migration south takes place from August until mid-November.

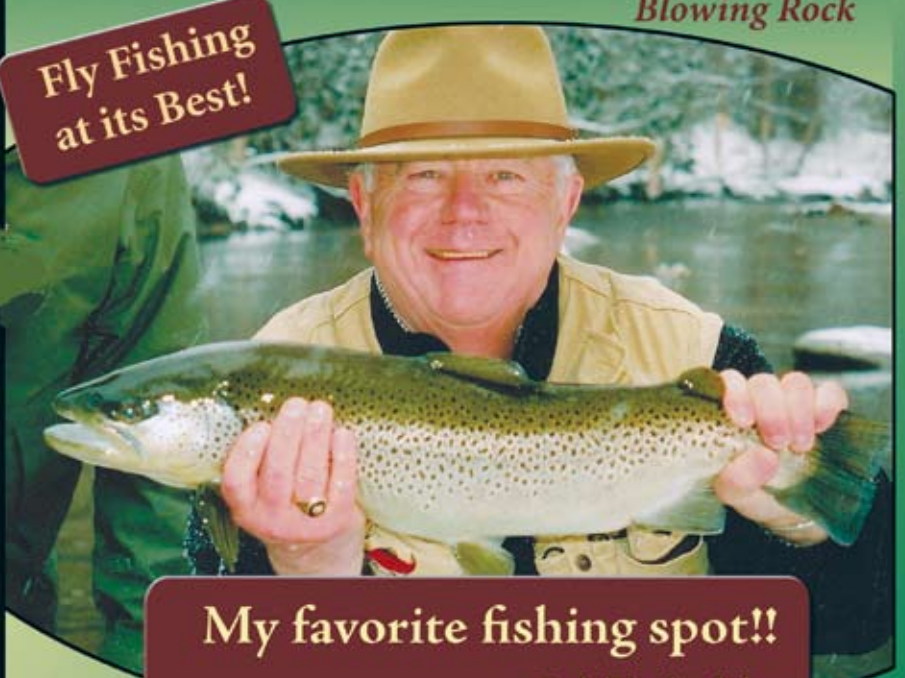
While pandas and polar bears may be the most visible stars of the conservation world, Crewe believes the monarch is also a great ambassador species.

"People are overall very fascinated by the life cycle of this insect," said Crewe. "The fact that monarchs that developed in northeastern North America can fly all the way to Mexico, without 'parents' to show them the way, is astounding! Its long-distance migration is truly unique to the insect world, and that alone is reason to conserve this species and this phenomenon in particular," she said.

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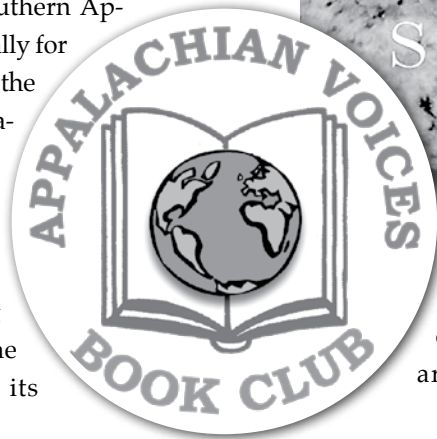
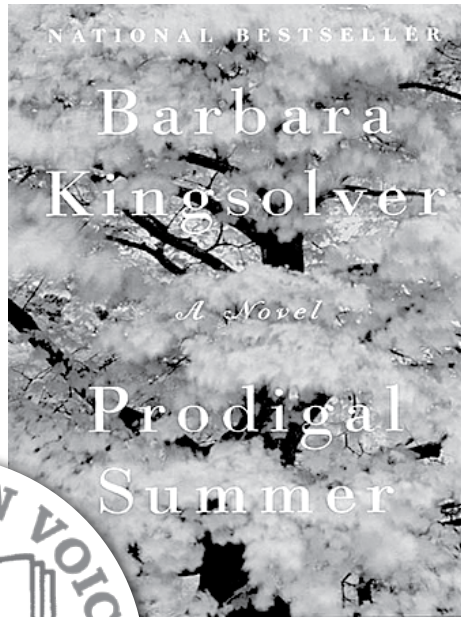
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PRODIGAL SUMMER: Steamy and Smart Summer Reading

Story by Sarah Vig

Appalachian author Barbara Kingsolver's 2000 novel "Prodigal Summer" reads at times like a steamy romance, a natural history, and a family drama, and it is the best of all these things: sexy, smart, lovely, and at times deeply sad. The unlikely mixture of all these elements makes the book perfect for summer reading.

The book gives the reader three narrators, all living on the fictitious Zebulon Mountain in Southern Appalachia. Especially for those who live in the southern Appalachian Mountains, the setting will seem familiar, yet fresh. Nature is nothing if not vital in the novel, exerting its



pressures on the action of the novel and the evolution of its characters. Though its forces are unrecognized by many

(especially those who make their living off the land, a point that is brought out as ironic by the author), they are brought to light by the awareness of the book's female characters.

Kingsolver's multiple narrators are isolated, yet drawn together by the environment they share. Natural events become like a recurring character in the narratives, giving the reader a reference point with which to align the pasts and presents of each. This interconnectivity serves to accentuate the reader's attention to the common setting and sense of shared cultural history that pervades small mountain towns as well as bear proof of Kingsolver's skill at interweaving complex histories and events in unconventional narrative form.

The novel's compelling characters and rich prose are vivid enough to bring the town of Egg Fork and its unique and

complex environment to life. The lessons in biology, ecology, organic farming and entomology woven into the narratives are often fascinating, and for the most part flow smoothly with the action of the novel. At times, however, the do-no-harm principles Kingsolver clearly holds make the text feel slightly overwrought.

In total, the novel holds many rewards: a blushing romance colored by the fervent sexuality of the natural world; a truer understanding of the environment and natural history of the southern Appalachians; an intriguing interwoven narrative that reveals the social history of a small town; and most importantly, a great read!

To view archives of our Book Club, visit appvoices.org/bookclub.

Reading Questions

1 The book contains three narrative voices; which narrator do you find yourself relating to most? Why do you think Kingsolver chose to give expression to these three particular voices?

2 Invasive species are a recurring motif in the novel (coyote, honeysuckle, chestnut blight) and the narrators have an intimate relationship with the ecological effects of each, though some of their views are unconventional. Did

the novel change or challenge your views on interspecies relationships?

3 The book presents different approaches to farming; to some it is a constant battle to keep nature in check, to others the natural processes are tools to enable production. How do you see characters' involvement with farming shaping their views?

4 Deanna, Lusa and Nannie Rawley are all strong female characters who seem

to be exceptionally in touch with nature and succeed by working within natural orders. Why do you think Kingsolver made this choice? How do you think voice in the final chapter, "31," fits in?

5 Each narrator identifies with a specific species: coyote, moth and chestnut. If you were to have a narrative in this book, what species of plant or animal do you think you would be identified with? Why?

Online Resources

On YouTube

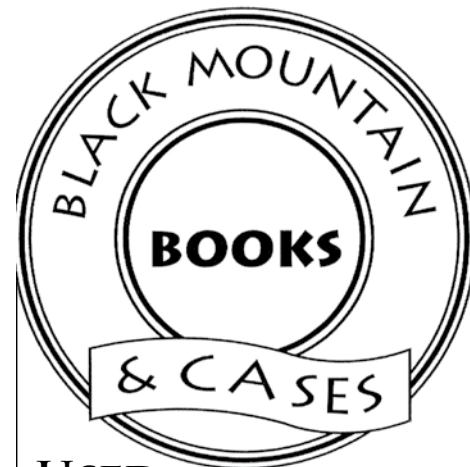
- ▶ The luna moth is a beautiful, fascinating creature that holds special significance for Lusa in the novel. See its life cycle from hungry caterpillar to mouthless, mating moth in this detailed, informative video from Backyard Bugs software: youtube.com/watch?v=atOSro3_W7c

Websites and Blogs

- 🌐 **The American Chestnut Foundation (acf.org):** An Asheville-based non-profit carrying out the work being done in the novel by the narrator Garnett. Through back-crossing and inter-crossing American and Chinese chestnuts, they hope to restore the chestnut to Appalachian forests. Their website is a wealth of information and resources to help you learn more and get involved.

Further Reading

- 📖 The Audubon Magazine article "The Ultimate Survivor" by Mike Finkel (May/June 1999) inspired much of Kingsolver's thinking on coyote populations and helped inform the creation of the characters of Deanna Wolfe and Eddie Bondo: audubonmagazine.org/coyote/index.html



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Water Matters

Drought Brings About Water Wars

Story by Bill Kovarik

When Mark Twain famously said “whiskey is for drinking; water is for fighting,” he was referring to the American West. Today, water is also for fighting back East, as drought cycles and increasing population lead to intense competition for the remaining supplies of water.

With average per capita water use in the South at 1,553 gallons per day – and increasing— experts are warning that the region will have to start taking conservation and planning seriously. Water use in the rest of the country is 1,168 gallons per day and decreasing.

Meanwhile, paleo-climatologists believe that even without human-influenced climate change, the Southeast is looking at increasing long-term drought.

The drought of 2007-08 for example was considered the worst since recordkeeping began in 1895. More than one quarter of the region was covered by the National Weather Service “exceptional” category. The response involved voluntary and mandatory water conservation measures, but how effective they were is still not known.

Electric utilities – which use two out of every three gallons in the region – monitored water supplies closely to see if they would have to cut back production, as happened in France during the heat wave of 2003.

Conservation was mandatory in some states, like



WATER WARS OF THE SOUTH

- **Georgia, Alabama and Florida** have been in court over the Chattahoochee River and the river’s Lake Lanier for decades. Water supply for Atlanta is the upstream issue; enough water for fisheries and shellfish, particularly in the Apalachicola Bay, is the downstream issue for Florida and Alabama. A federal court ruled in July that Congress would have to get involved in negotiating a deal within three years. Environmental attorneys said this was a “resounding wake-up call” for Georgia.
- **Georgia and Tennessee** have been in court over the state boundary line. Apparently the original line was in error by about a mile, and that kept Georgia’s border away from the Tennessee River. In the unlikely event that the 192-year old error were to be corrected, Georgia would be able to draw water from the Tennessee.
- **North Carolina and South Carolina** are in a lawsuit over a 10 million gallon per day transfer of water from the Catawba and Yadkin rivers to the Rocky River basin. North Carolina approved the transfer to accommodate development in the area east of Charlotte.
- **South Carolina** is fending off a suit by the Southern Environmental Law Center over re-licensing 13 hydroelectric stations owned by Duke Energy. SELC says Duke’s plan would reduce flows in the Catawba and Wateree rivers to a level “insufficient to maintain water quality and habitat for fish and other species.”
- **The North Carolina General Assembly** is considering a bill creating the Yadkin River Trust, which would allow the state to acquire and operate the river’s dams and recreational lakes rather than Alcoa Power Generating Inc. Alcoa has held federal license to control the river for the past 50 years.

Virginia and Georgia, but had to be voluntary in some others, such as the Carolinas and Alabama, where state regulations have been proposed but not passed.

A more organized approach will be needed in the future, according to Bill Holman, director of state policy at Duke University’s Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions.

“We’re in a transition to thinking about water as a scarce and valuable resource,” said Holman.

“Our 20th-century water policy is inadequate for our 21st-century population and economy,” said Holman. “The water resources that sustained a population of 4 million in 1960 and barely sustained 9 million during the 2007-08 drought will have to sustain a population of over 12 million in 2030.”

Whether that is possible or not remains to be seen.

Holman and Richard Whisnant, a law professor at UNC Chapel Hill, authored a water allocation study last year that recommended a permit system for water withdrawals that would at least be similar to other states.

Many businesses are planning ahead for water resource risks, Holman said, so there are economic as well as environmental reasons for better science, better coordination of conservation efforts, and more centralized regulations.

“Just like carbon footprinting is a real trend, water footprinting is also an important trend for businesses,” Holman said.

Elliot Metzger, a policy analyst with World Resources Institute, said that the East would have to learn to be more like the West when it came to water policy. “The real focus in western states is on efficiency, on making sure that risk is mitigated with basic policy,” Metzger said. “They are

NOW MORE THAN EVER, it’s a good time to think about the future of water in Appalachia and the Southeast. Experts warn that we will have to face declining quality and quantity of water due to expanding population, changing climate, mountaintop removal mining and other issues. The solutions may prove to be elusive, but rational planning and conservation top the list.

a little more holistic with planning, getting water regulators talking with energy regulators.”

The energy sector “adds immense stress to river systems during the warm months,” a recent report by the Southern Environmental Law Center said.

The center, which is involved in several lawsuits related to water useage, advocates greater planning and protection for aquatic species.

“We’ve urged states to take serious steps to do water planning on a watershed scale, ensuring flow, quality, and habitat,” said Cat McCue of SCLC. “We need to get a grip on land-use patterns that exacerbate these water resource issues, and NOT get distracted by chasing down big, expensive, engineered fixes like dams and pipelines that are short-term and cause more eco-problems down the road.”

MORE INFORMATION

sogweb.sog.unc.edu/Water -- The UNC / Duke University “Water Wiki” keeps track of current events and trends in water science and policy.

www.wri.org/stories/2009/05/water-watts-south-east -- World Resources Institute - Water for Watts in the Southeast.

www.southernenvironment.org -- Keeps track of water resource lawsuits and issues. The report “Drought in the South: Planning for a Water-Wise Future” makes state drought and policy comparisons.

snr.unl.edu/niwr -- National Institutes for Water Resources provides science – based information on a state-by-state basis.

Proposed Water Intake Facility Near New River Headwaters Concerns Downstream Residents

Story by Linda Coutant

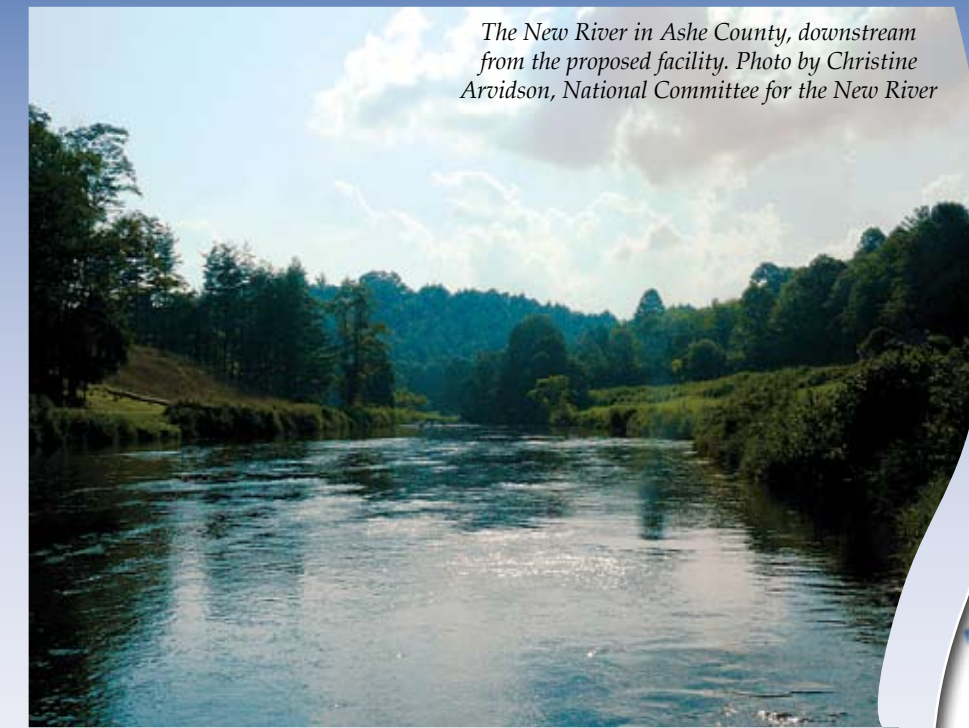
One community’s demand for drinking water is causing angst among residents concerned about preserving the New River’s historic, environmental, recreational and economic future. It’s a common debate across North Carolina and other states as growing populations demand more from limited natural resources.

The Town of Boone, located in Watauga County, N.C., proposes to build a water intake facility that would pull up to four million gallons a day from a section of the New River’s south fork frequented by canoers, kayakers and fly fishermen. The site is located near the county line. The town’s proposal – which includes running the water through its water treatment facility before returning it to the river – is awaiting review by state and federal agencies before an official 30-day public comment period, but neighboring Ashe County residents are already organizing in protest.

“Who owns the river? It belongs to everyone,” said Mia Hartsook, a resident of Fleetwood, an Ashe County community just downstream from the proposed facility. She and other residents, known as the New River Stewardship Committee, have gathered more than 400 signatures on a petition opposing the project, including the signatures of Boone, N.C. residents and out-of-state tourists.

The petitioners question the methodology used for projecting Boone’s future population and water needs, as well as the scientific validity of data used by the town to determine the river’s flow rates. They claim there’s been little coordination with neighboring governments in the planning process and believe that withdrawing and returning water to the river could hurt tourism. They

The New River in Ashe County, downstream from the proposed facility. Photo by Christine Arvidson, National Committee for the New River



also fear untreated waste pharmaceuticals in the return water – a growing concern in many municipalities across the U.S. – could cause environmental harm.

They also point to the New River’s American Heritage River designation, which President Bill Clinton signed in person in a ceremony along the river’s banks in Ashe County.

“We feel Boone is making decisions that are regional in terms of water rights and that will clearly affect Ashe County

idly approaching maximum capacity from its existing water sources. The Town of Boone implemented a voluntary water conservation program in 2005, an effort that Public Utilities Director Rick Miller calls successful. It has included rain barrel giveaways, free home and business water audits, and educational sessions in the public schools.

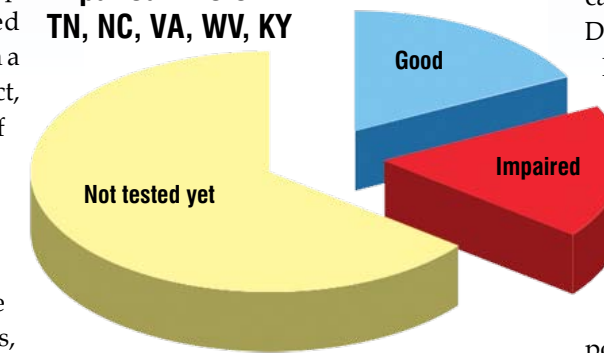
Despite conservation, Boone’s water system surpassed 80 percent of capacity in 2006, at which point the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources recommended expansion. A 90 percent capacity is expected sometime in 2009, at which point the state could impose a moratorium on new water hookups.

A new study shows the town’s population doubling over the next 50 years. Consultants said the proposed site is best from a location and economic standpoint. The same firm, W.K. Dickson, was retained for the environmental assessment.

“We considered reservoirs from Watauga Lake in Tennessee to the Yadkin River in North Carolina, as

Continued on next page

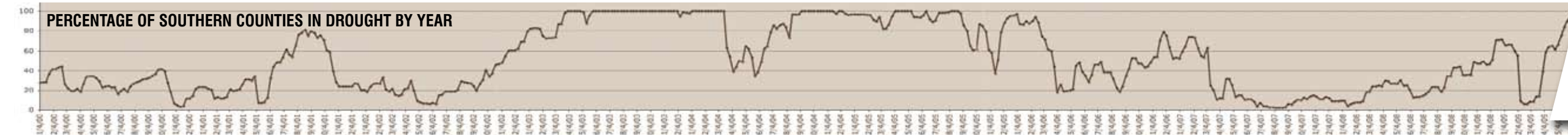
Impaired Rivers in TN, NC, VA, WV, KY



Source US EPA Watershed Assessment

and others. We’re not opposed to growth, but we feel everybody who is a stakeholder should be involved in the decision making,” Hartsook said.

According to a project description available on the Town of Boone website, the town learned in 2004 that it was rap-



Water: First Colonists Were No Strangers To Drought

Excerpt from a new book:

Heart of Dryness / By James G. Workman.
Visit www.heartofdryness.com

“New hard evidence, accumulated from tree ring data and pollen counts, suggests that devastating droughts have shattered human settlements, dating back to when people first arrived in North America.

Paleoclimatology remains a young and inexact science, and no one could pinpoint the precise stages at which high temperatures and dryness caused local human extinctions. But the correlation was sobering....

Some 5,000 ago, flourishing Native American cultures suffered prolonged exposure to climate only slightly hotter than it is today and nearly went extinct; for more than a millennium the Southwest was little more than one big ghost town.

A hot era that lasted from 800 to 1300 boosted medieval European agriculture but scorched much of pre-Columbian America.

... Despite superior technology, immunity, and weaponry, America’s first colonies

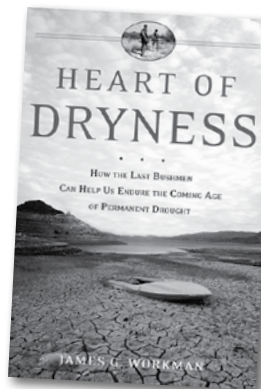
were far less adept (than Native Americans) at coping with protracted thirst. Queen Elizabeth’s first settlers at Roanoke were last seen on August 22, 1587, hungry and running out of water, during a dry spell so severe that it even affected the native subsistence food of indigenous Croatoan tribes upon whom the colonists depended. Three years later they had vanished. Following centuries of mystery, a recent tree ring reconstruction from A.D. 1185 to 1984 showed that the Lost Colony precariously arrived at the onset of the region’s driest three-year episode of the last eight centuries.

Two decades later, 4,800 out of 6,000 Jamestown colonists died in waves upon their arrival. Early historians blamed the deaths on dumb planning incompetence and weak support, but scientists have now directly and precisely linked the sudden crash—in native subsistence, peak mortality, domestic livestock deaths, and a rapid decline in drinking water— to the driest seven-year period in 770 years. Unlike the colonists at Roanoke, these settlers left

written records of what occurred. As water dried up, Jamestown’s former “London Gentlemen” degenerated into thirst-wracked, scurvy-ridden starving wretches turning on each other, killing and even eating members of their own family.

Following those first unfortunate colonies, the geographically blessed United States enjoyed an exceptionally cool, wet era during which it progressed from agricultural and mercantile economies through a postindustrial Information Age of 300 million highly urbanized people. Even so, during the wettest century of the past millennium a few dry “speed bumps” have profoundly destabilized Americans, suggesting the level of risks water scarcity held. A relatively mild six-year drought in the 1930s wreaked agricultural and social mayhem throughout the Dust Bowl.

A less acute but more widespread drought pressed down across the Midwest



during the 1950s, extinguishing many rural economies. Over subsequent decades the already arid Southwest and West grew increasingly dry. Starting this century, laypersons across America have been observing everyday weather that seems hotter and drier than normal.

Scientists confirm that in fact it is, and will likely worsen in the decades ahead. As we

humans burned and cleared vast forests, converted land to irrigation agriculture, and powered industrial growth with fossil fuels, we were unwittingly baking the earth in what appeared to be an irreversible process. Our carbon emissions had thickened the relatively thin layers of the outer atmosphere, trapping solar radiation. The effect resembled leaving our collective car in an exposed parking lot with windows sealed and kids locked inside.”

Proposed Water Intake Facility Near New River Concerns Downstream Residents

Continued from previous page

well as sites in the Watauga River basin. These involved interbasin water transfer, a process that creates quite a few environmental issues,” Miller said.

The Town of Boone claims the proposed site has sufficient water flow from which to withdraw water and still meet state and environmental requirements, based on calculation methods approved by the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Support for the project is being sought in the N.C. General Assembly where Rep. Cullie Tarleton (D-93), who serves both Ashe and Watauga counties, introduced a bill

in April 2009 that, if passed, would grant Boone the right “to construct and maintain a water intake system in the waters and submerged land of the South Fork of the New River notwithstanding any public trust rights.” The bill passed first reading in the House and has been referred to the Water Resources and Infrastructure Committee, which Tarleton chairs.

Construction of the proposed facility cannot begin, however, until the environmental assessment is approved by the state and federal agencies. It is uncertain when the agencies will be ready to announce their response.

“Until the environmental assessment report is made public, we don’t know what

we’re dealing with,” said George Santucci, executive director of the non-profit group the National Committee for the New River. His advocacy organization, which has fought development of the river in North Carolina and Virginia in the past, has been involved with the Town of Boone’s exploration of the proposed site. It has also conducted its own research. At this point, Santucci said he doesn’t see cause for an environmental battle.

“The research we’ve done doesn’t show any scientific data that the proposed water intake facility will have a significant negative impact,” Santucci said. “If there were a

threat, trust me, we’d react.”

When it comes to water usage and water rights, Santucci said it’s easy to point to municipalities as the problem while ignoring the impact of housing developments outside town limits, which rely on wells. “Everyone’s actions impact the watershed, and people need to own up to that and act in accordance. Rain barrels, cisterns, and low-flow showerheads and toilets – people should have these in their own homes.”

Learn more about this local issue at:

- townofboone.net
- newriverstewards.blogspot.com
- smartnewspost.blogspot.com

Water: New River Expedition Sees Both Beauty and Problems

By George Santucci, Executive Director
National Committee for the New River



Non-point source pollution from agricultural runoff presents a major problem along many Appalachian rivers, but is an issue that can be fixed with farm conservation measures. Photo by Bill Kovarik

We started talking last year about a complete trip down the New, from Watauga County, N.C., all the way to the confluence in West Virginia, to celebrate the river's 10 years with the American Heritage designation.

At times we feared we'd bit off more than we could chew; the logistics are daunting for such a trip and in these economic times, all non-profits are keeping a close eye on expenses and bottom lines. But the river called and volunteers came and our members and supporters encouraged us.

We launched just outside Boone, N.C., where the river is narrow but spectacular. Volunteer Tony Patchett, board president Henry Doss, Chris Rasmussen, and others joined us.

During the first week, in Watauga and Ashe counties, we passed many of our restoration projects. Over the last few years we've planted or restored more than 69 miles of New River and tributary banks, creating riparian buffers and correcting erosion problems. Overdevelopment, the result of poor or non-existent land planning, is the New River's greatest threat these days.

Further along, we passed sections of the river where very large new homes are being built, often in posh developments (in spite of the housing downturn). The pressure is only increasing as available land appropriate for development disappears and land which would normally remain vacant becomes valuable as riverfront property.

This is especially true in areas of what could be called "suburbia," on golf courses like the one on the outskirts of Radford in Virginia, or along the shores of Claytor

Lake. Where homes are close to the river banks, or where the banks are mowed to the edge, a great deal of erosion can be observed.

If only property owners understood that grooming the banks of their property is a guarantee they'll be sending their own land downstream. The runoff carries nutrients from fertilizers and other pollution—elements which healthy riparian buffers naturally filter. The river was often muddy when hard rains preceded us, especially in areas of Ashe County, N.C..

There are also places on the river that have been traditionally used as dumps - particularly for tires. The efforts of NCNR Clean Ups in North Carolina and excellent and very active groups like ReNew the New in Giles County, Va., are helping to improve the trash situation overall.

As we ventured from North Carolina into the heart of Virginia, farms along

with a retired U.S. Navy vessel and heavy conveyor equipment to move tons of trash from Claytor Lake. Like the rest of the New River, Claytor Lake's biggest problem is the ever-present development pressure.

The Expedition also floated the river in the Radford Army Arsenal section with Lt. Col. Andy Munera and son Justin. The Arsenal's contribution to the pollution of the New River is a major concern for NCNR, as it is for officials at the Arsenal. Our float emphasized the importance of continuing dialogue.

As we put in one morning, local fisherman said Claytor Lake dam had released water during the night; they thought the water was up a full foot and a half. With so many rapids due for the day, we hoped the novices in our group would spend less time swimming and more time paddling as we continued our expedition.

NCNR began their New River Expedition on July 20 and will conclude in August. Visit www.ncnr.org and click through to their Facebook Causes page and Twitter account (www.twitter.com/ncnewriver).

the New shifted from Christmas trees to cattle. A little further long, Ronnie Powers, president of the Friends of Claytor Lake, took the expedition crew out on his pontoon boat. He and volunteers run a sophisticated cleanup operation complete

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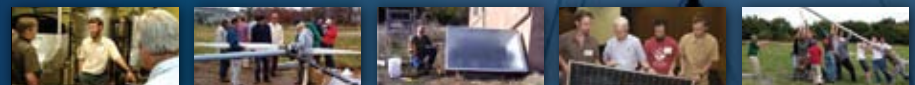
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Water: Moratorium Declared on New Slurry Injection Permits

Story by Sarah Vig

In a partial victory for citizens and environmental groups opposed to the process, the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection declared a two-year moratorium on new permits for disposing of coal slurry by injecting it into abandoned mines.

Coal slurry is a byproduct of coal preparation, a mixture of fine coal particles and water, as well as the chemicals used to remove impurities from the coal before it is sold.

Three citizen groups in West Virginia, the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, Coal River Mountain Watch and Concerned Citizens in Mingo County, formed the Sludge Safety Project (SSP) to spread awareness about what they see as insufficient regulation.

After many hours of citizen lobbying, the state legislature asked the DEP to evaluate environmen-

tal and public health ramifications of coal slurry injection.

Once the DEP released its report, a moratorium was declared on new injection permits, although 13 currently operating slurry injection sites will be allowed to continue.

Though SSP sees the study itself and the temporary moratorium as a step in the right direction, the group doesn't feel the DEP has gone far enough.

"The solution the DEP has come up with is inadequate," said Maria Lambert, a representative for SSP. "People are going to be left with the same health issues for as long as companies are allowed to inject slurry under existing permits."

"There is one solution to fixing the problem of coal slurry contamination in West Virginia," Lambert stated in response to the DEP's announced plans, "a ban on all slurry."



Members of the Sludge Safety Project successfully argued for a reconsideration of slurry injection and, so far, have partially stopped the practice. Photo by Vivian Stockman

Water: Coping With Contamination

Stories by Sierra Murdoch

Maria Lambert Sand Lick, W. Va.

Maria Lambert was born in the coal camps at the head of Prenter Hollow. When she moved down the road to Sand Lick in 2000, her father drilled a well. He tested the water and found it safe to drink.

In 2003, Massey Energy began blasting the ridge over Prenter Hollow. The first time her house shook, Lambert says, boards fell from the ceiling. The next day, she noticed orange slime and blackened water coming through her home's waterline.

Many months later, Lambert's mother gathered a meeting of neighbors who had polluted wells. Lambert discovered that in Sand Lick and neighboring communities – Hopkins Fork, Prenter, Laurel Creek – an abnormally high proportion of citizens had gallbladder and kidney disease, intestinal disorders, and cancer. These ailments affected residents of all ages.

Lambert suspected that a possible cause of the poor water quality and health was a slurry injection, located three miles from her house, adjacent to the blasting site. Slurry – the wastewater produced when coal is washed with chemicals to prepare it for use – had been pumped back into an abandoned underground mine. In addition to chemicals, slurry contains high amounts of the heavy metals found in coal, including arsenic, mercury, and selenium.

With Coal River Mountain Watch, the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition and her neighbors, Lambert created the Prenter Water Fund (prenterwaterfund.org), which supplies clean water to polluted communities in the area. By next April, the communities expect to have city water. Until



Maria Lambert of Prenter Hollow in Sand Lick, W.Va., shows a sample of her tap water – contaminated by nearby mining – and the countless jugs of water she must now carry to her home every day for cooking, drinking, etc. Photo by Paul Corbit Brown

then, Lambert says, "I'm waiting on our governor to say, 'I'm sorry, I'm not going to let this happen to anyone else.'"

Elmer Lloyd Benham, Ky.

Elmer Lloyd calls himself a lost-and-found man. He's 52, back bent from 15 years in the mines. If his property hadn't flooded three years ago when Nally & Hamilton began blasting the mountain above his home, he wouldn't have thought twice about strip mining. Now Lloyd's seen what's happened to his water as a result of it, and he's spoken out.

In 1993, Lloyd built a pond behind his home and stocked it with fish. Thirteen years later, his fish died due to sediment run-off from the strip mine above his home. When the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Service tested the pond, they told Lloyd that it was dead and he should have it removed. The pond drained into Cumberland's

primary water source.

"That was heartbreaking for me," Lloyd says. He had built the pond for his grandchildren to camp and fish like he had done in the mountains, decades before when the peaks were still intact.

Regional inspectors fined Nally & Hamilton and gave the company 30 days to remove Lloyd's pond. But Lloyd's grievance addressed one of many company violations, and his was evaded like the rest.

A year after the incident, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth found and publicized Lloyd's story, connecting him with the Kentucky Resources Council. After two years,

Nally & Hamilton has agreed to compensate Lloyd and rebuild his pond, a process that could take 10 years.

But for Lloyd, this isn't just about his fishpond. It's about protecting his neighbors from poisoned water when they won't speak out themselves: "I don't believe in giving up on something I know is right."

Erica Urius Phyllis, Ky.

Erica Urius worried about strip mining long before her water smelled like rotten eggs. TECO Coal began blasting above her hollow in the mid-nineties. Heavy truck traffic rutted the roads.

With help from Kentuckians for the Commonwealth (KFTC), Urius organized community meetings and pro-

Continued on page 18

Water: Private Wells Raise Concerns for Public Health

Story by Sarah Vig

You would think for small, rural communities in central Appalachia, water from a private well—available at the fairly low cost of maintaining a well and without the hassle of a monthly bill—would be a blessing.

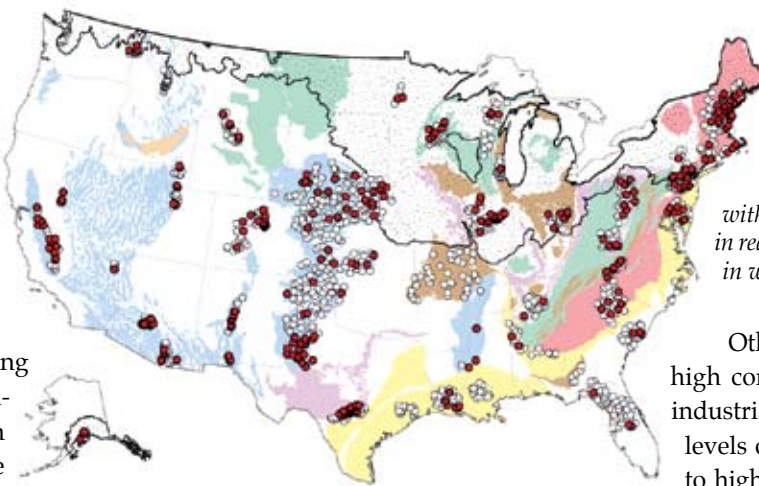
And if it weren't for mining operations, slurry injections, radon-rich aquifers, and an often poorly managed private sewage system, you might be right.

Whereas public water sources are tested for contaminants regularly (several times a day in some cases) and are regulated by EPA-set standards, water from private wells have no such insurance.

Private wells, the source of drinking water for 15 percent of U.S. residents, are not regulated; their monitoring and safety is the sole responsibility of the owner.

Though well-maintained, regularly tested wells are generally safe to drink from, recent studies indicate that contaminant levels in domestic wells may be an area of concern for public health.

In a March 2009 study, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) found that more than 20 percent of sampled domestic wells contained one or more contaminants at a concentration greater than an EPA Maximum Contaminant Limit (MCL) or other human-health benchmark.



A 2009 study by the USGS found that more than 20 percent of domestic drinking water wells had one or more contaminants above a human-health benchmark. Sampling sites with contamination issues are marked in red, sample sites that were unaffected in white. Image courtesy of USGS.

“The results of this study are important because they show that a large number of people may be unknowingly affected,” said Matt Larsen, USGS Associate Director for Water. “Greater attention to the quality of drinking water from private wells and continued public education are important steps toward the goal of protecting public health.”

The study also showed trends in contamination based on geologic characteristics of aquifers. Radon, for example, a radioactive gas that can dissolve in water was found at relatively high concentrations in crystalline-rock aquifers in the Northeast, in the central and southern Appalachians, and in central Colorado. According to the study, about 30 percent of wells in these regions had radon levels above the EPA-recommended human-health benchmark, compared to 4.4 percent nationally. Radon exposure has been linked to the development of lung cancer.

Other regional concerns arise from high concentrations of agricultural or industrial activity in certain areas. High levels of agricultural activity can lead to higher concentrations of nitrates in the water; mining may increase heavy metal contamination.

In a 2005 study published by “Water, Air, and Soil Pollution” nearly half of the 179 tested wells from across the Appalachian region (eastern Kentucky, western West Virginia, southern Ohio, and northern Tennessee) had detectable levels of arsenic. Six percent of these had levels exceeding the EPA MCL of 10 parts per billion.

Poor sewage management, including large numbers of “straight pipes” which send untreated sewage directly into surface water supplies, is also an area of concern

for private well owners in Central Appalachia. According to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, over 50 percent of the private drinking water wells in the Appalachian area of Kentucky are contaminated with disease-carrying pathogens as a result.

The EPA recommends that well owners get their water tested annually, after floods, or if otherwise suspicious of contamination. Annual tests are important for both ensuring the safety of private drinking water supplies and establishing documentation of contamination issues.

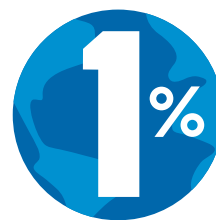
Though home test kits are available, well owners should contact their local health departments for information on well testing. Often, county health departments will help perform basic tests for bacteria and nitrates. If not, or if more tests are required, they should be able to provide contact information for state-certified labs. These labs provide testing kits and conduct sample analysis.

You can find one in your area by calling the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800-426-4791 or visiting www.epa.gov/safewater/labs.

Well Contamination Checklist

Conditions or Nearby Activities:	Test for:
Recurring gastro-intestinal illness	Coliform bacteria
Household plumbing contains lead	pH, lead, copper
Radon in indoor air or region is radon rich	Radon
Corrosion of pipes, plumbing	Corrosion, pH, lead
Nearby areas of intensive agriculture	Nitrate, pesticides, coliform bacteria
Coal or other mining operations nearby	Metals, pH, corrosion
Gas drilling operations nearby	Chloride, sodium, barium, strontium
Dump, junkyard, landfill, factory, gas station, or dry-cleaning operation nearby	Volatile organic compounds, total dissolved solids, pH, sulfate, chloride, metals
Odor of gasoline or fuel oil, and near gas station or buried fuel tanks	Volatile organic compounds
Objectionable taste or smell	Hydrogen sulfide, corrosion, metals
Stained plumbing fixtures, laundry	Iron, copper, manganese
Salty taste and seawater, or a heavily salted roadway nearby	Chloride, total dissolved solids, sodium
Scaly residues, soaps don't lather	Hardness
Rapid wear of water treatment equipment	pH, corrosion
Water softener needed to treat hardness	Manganese, iron
Water appears cloudy, frothy, or colored	Color, detergents

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Water: Coping With Contamination

Continued from page 16

tests, and filed grievances against TECO Coal. She and her neighbors slowly earned the company's wary attention.

In 2004, TECO began blasting the ridge above Urius's home. Not long after, Urius and her husband noticed something different about their water. They checked

their pump and found it coated with a black, oily sheen. Researchers from Eastern Kentucky University tested the water – it contained over 100 times the safe levels of arsenic, in addition to high levels of iron, mercury, and manganese.

At the time, Urius's daughter was three years old, and the orange stains in the bathtub, sinks, and toilet deeply concerned

Urius. With KFTC's support, she contacted TECO Coal, and the company began delivering water from city taps to her home.

Urius has requested direct access to city water, but she lives remotely, and digging a waterline would be expensive. TECO Coal tried drilling the family another well, but the water still ran orange.

"I think TECO thought we'd just get quiet after a while," says Urius. "But my daughter will be six this month, and I still can't let her play in the tub. So we still believe in what we're fighting for."

Larry Bush Exeter, Va.

Larry Bush is quick to say that coal has been good to him – his father was a miner, as was he. He recalls picking blackberries down by the streambed near Exeter and hunting with his father in the mountains above the coal camp. "We'd wash the squirrels in the water and drink right out of the stream," says Bush.

But in 1999, the streambed started

running orange, and now the mountains are stripped to gravel and grass. The pool where the Exeter Methodist Church once baptized its congregation has filled with silt. Just across the road from town, the slope is clear-cut in preparation for mountaintop removal mining.

Bush has asked the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) to test the water around Exeter for toxins and heavy metals. The VDEQ has mostly denied his requests.

But Bush has seen the orange water before in other mountain-stripped regions – the color could indicate heavy metals and a highly acidic pH.

After repeated calls, Bush convinced two biologists from the VDEQ to observe the stream behind his house. They assessed the stream's biological diversity, and concluded that it was critically low – the stream was essentially "dead."

With Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards, Bush is working to gather community support against the Exeter mine. "I've got three grandkids," he says, "and I don't want them living in a desolate wasteland."

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Editorials

Unequal Justice in the Coalfields

In the long and troubled history of Appalachia's coal fields, violence between the industry and its critics in the labor and the environmental movements is not unusual. What needs to be understood now, however, is that the cycle of violence is escalating with the strong encouragement of the coal industry.

Just this summer, events caught on video include:

- Coal industry thugs openly threatening to cut children's throats at a picnic on Kayford Mountain;
- Judy Bonds, a Goldman Prize winner, getting socked in the face by an angry counter-demonstrator;
- Coal miners screaming threats of violence at demonstrators, including NASA scientist James Hanson, movie star Daryll Hannah and former WV Congressman Ken Heckler;
- Someone named "superhippieslayer" on YouTube urging people to shoot and hang environmental activists;

Events have taken such a serious turn that the West Virginia Council of Churches issued a statement this July and asked the governor to step in. Gov. Joe Manchin did make a weak and perfunctory statement that violence would not be tolerated, but no one has been charged for making public death threats, and the counter-demonstrator who attacked Judy Bonds in plain view was given the lightest possible charge. When police protection is needed for demonstrators, it is frequently unavailable.

In contrast, activists arrested in protests are facing criminal conspiracy charges and heavy fines. Journalists who trespass while covering protests are having their cameras and equipment confiscated. Instant police presence at demonstrations is a given.

In short, the West Virginia state government is performing as a subordinate branch of the coal industry, administering unequal justice in an escalating climate of violence.

Dirty Coal Forgeries

Just when we thought the debate over "clean" coal couldn't get any dirtier, the news breaks that pro-coal lobbying groups have been caught forging letters to Congress. They have opposed carbon trading in the name of civil rights groups, university women and the aging, appropriating their logos and making up names of staff members.

The harder investigators look at the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity (ACCCE) and its subcontractors, the more forgeries they are finding. Its nothing less than an Anti-American Corrupt and Corrosive Conspiracy Effort.

Even with all the heated rhetoric this summer, such as the nonsense about the elderly facing "death committees" under reformed health care, the ACCCE forgeries have registered a new low on the American political barometer.

ACCCE has done our country, our communities, and our very democracy a great disservice. This is a time of unprecedented change in Appalachia, and as our coal supplies decline and our economy diversifies, we need to share ideas on how best to shape the future of our region.

We all need to do so in the spirit of honest public debate and vigorous collaboration with fellow citizens. Our future is too important to be decided by fraud and forgeries.



JEFF PARKER ©2009 FLORIDA TODAY

Letters to the editor

Appalachian Voice welcomes letters to the editor and comments on our website. Letters are subject to editing due to space limitations (letters can be read in full on our website). The views expressed in these letters, and in personal editor responses, are the opinions of the authors and are not necessarily the views of the organization Appalachian Voices. Write to editor@appvoices.org.

More News, Less Fluff

Dear Editor,

A number of years ago while visiting the Southern Appalachians for birding and botanizing, I picked up a copy of your newsletter and I have been an avid reader of it ever since. It has encouraged me to take many trips to the area since, which, of course, helps the local economy in many ways. Being a conservationist and preservationist, I look forward to every issue in order to keep abreast of things that are going on in one of the critical natural environments on our planet.

However, in some of the recent issues I feel that you are seriously straying from the original intent of the newsletter and from the kinds of news that those of us working in the environmental field crave to read and become familiar with. The June/July 2009 [issue] is a case in point. Other than some interesting, appropriate, and necessary advertisements, the first nine pages contain the types of articles that one can find in

numerous journals, magazines, and on the internet. I don't expect to find in this kind of newsletter articles about kayaking, trail building, and gardening. This information can easily be found elsewhere.

But the remainder of the June/July 2009 issue is VERY interesting and appropriate. It contains much information about events and issues that concern the Appalachian region that I cannot find elsewhere.

I would hope that in the future you will stress the environmental issues in your newsletter and leave the people-activity articles to other publications where they are more appropriate. Of course, I realize that in order to make a publication viable and not lose money, one has to occasionally publish items that are attractive to the masses who will make monetary contributions. However, in my opinion you went overboard in the [June/July] issue.

Sincerely yours,
Richard C. Rosche



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Naturalists Notebook

The Firefly Phenomena

Story by Alison Singer

For me, the mystique of fireflies began in childhood. We went outside with our mason jars, captured the beckoning lights with open palms. We held them under our blankets, or sleeping bags, and watched their flickering lights as we faded into sleep.

I used to name all the fireflies I caught Pete. Whether this was a result of lack of creativity or some uncanny affinity for the name, I can't remember, but I at least had the gender right; female fireflies often don't fly at all.

All through the summer their lights begin at dusk, soaring and swooping, flashing and flickering. Males perform intricate flying and blinking patterns; the stationary females give their own patterned flash responses. The flashing patterns are species-specific, a useful trait since there are more than 2,000 species of fireflies in the world.

Some devious she-flies actually use

their lights as entrapment. Females of the *Photuris* genus use their flash patterns to attract males of other firefly species, who they then devour. While this may sound familiar to some of you (in a metaphorical sense, of course), scientists are unsure of the females' motivations. One reason could be that, by targeting species that generate bad-tasting chemicals within their bodies, they can absorb the chemicals for themselves, thus becoming more distasteful to predators.

Another unexplained flashing phenomenon is the synchronization that occurs among some species, particularly in Southeast Asia. In the mid-nineties, locals in Elkmont, Tenn., contacted scientists about the synchronized fireflies that begin each June. Since then, synchrony has also been discovered at high elevations of the southern Appalachians, in Congaree Swamp in South Carolina, and along the Georgia coast. Each firefly population dif-



Photo © ABdesigns

fers slightly in its synchrony, though approximately six-second intervals are common. The purpose for this synchronization is unclear, though scientists hypothesize it has to do with mating.

For a time, I thought my own fascination with fireflies had ended along with my childhood. I grew up, and I did more important things than hang out in backyards and chase bugs. Then, I saw a giant firefly.

I was sitting on my porch in the evening when I spotted it. It was flitting around behind some trees, maybe 50 feet in the air. Glowing intermittently. It looked to be a firefly the size of a hummingbird, or perhaps it was an enormous glowing bumblebee.

I don't know what I saw that night. I

can find no evidence of fireflies the size of bumblebees or hummingbirds. They can be up to an inch long, but even the largest firefly wouldn't produce a light the size of what I witnessed. Maybe I found a new species. Maybe my eyes played tricks on me, maybe I had had a little too much wine; but my friend was there too—giving me a valuable witness.

Now the thing I find most fascinating about fireflies is their ability to bring wonder to even the most grown up of grown-ups. You can know the facts: their light is created from a bioluminescent reaction; they communicate with other fireflies with their flickers; they can be violent and deceitful; they aren't flies at all, but beetles; they are actually very small. We can know all that, but the sight of one flash in the darkening sky is still enough to become that child again, wanting only to capture that source of light.

Tonight, if it's still warm, I encourage you step outside, listen to the crickets and frogs and the whisper of bat wings, watch the last pink light sink behind the trees, and look for blinking lights. And, if you catch one, tell him to say hello to my friend Pete.

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INSIDE APPALACHIAN VOICES

Appalachian Coalfield Delegation Travels to Colombian Coal Region

Part 1 of a 3 part series

Story by Sandra Diaz

This June, I was fortunate enough to visit the Colombian coalfields with a delegation of people from across the U.S., including citizens from the Kentucky coalfields. The trip was organized by Witness for Peace, a group which sends delegations to bear witness and support communities working against corporate and government abuses.

The delegation spent time seeing the area's natural beauty and the unnatural destruction caused by mining. We also spent several days visiting communities directly impacted by the two biggest coal mining complexes in Colombia, El Cerrejon, owned by a consortium of multinationals, and El Descanso, owned by Drummond, an Alabama-based company. Witness for Peace has been working with the communities affected by El Cerrejon for a while, and have recently started to do outreach in La Loma, the community affected by Drummond.

Listening to the community members in the Colombian coalfields tell their stories, I sensed a similar tie to the land as there is in communities in the Appalachian coalfields. However, the communities located near the Colombian coal mines are fighting to be relocated, while



Sandra Diaz of Appalachian Voices, far right, stands with the Witness for Peace delegation at the El Cerrojon mine complex.

Appalachian communities are fighting to stay on their land. This is because of the different way mineral rights are governed.

In Colombia, mineral rights are government-owned, no matter who owns the land. In an action called expropriation, the government can forcibly take land away for corporate interest. The town of Tabaco, a trading hub for surrounding villages, was forcibly and violently razed in August 2001 for the Cerrejon mine expansion. With

that, the coal companies had destroyed an important economic center and shut the remaining communities out of the land they have traditionally used for hunting and fishing, forcing them to ask for relocation.

The negotiation process has been going on for several years, with little progress until recently.

El Cerrejon has hired a new Manager of Social Responsibility, Paul Warner, who has specialized in community engagement in other land relocation scenarios. We were able to meet with Mr. Warner and go on a tour of the mine.

It seems that Cerrejon has been paying strict attention to things like reclamation and wildlife services, but not as much to the rights of the indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. Hopefully, Paul Warner will change that, but it is still too early to tell.

The connections between Colombian and Central Appalachian coal-impacted communities was striking. One McRoberts, Ky. resident on the tour was particularly affected. "I went fully expecting to see all these differences between my coal community and the Colombian coal communities," said Willa Johnson, "instead I found more similarities than I ever expected. Coming back home I realized how much of a human rights issue this is, and that we need to act now to protect our people."

Are you a Steward?

Chances are, your piece of the Appalachian Forest didn't come with an owners manual. Your forest is an investment for you and your family. It also comes with a responsibility for good stewardship. That's why we made a handbook that gives you the knowledge and resources you need to make smart decisions about your forest.

2nd edition

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A Guide for Southern Appalachian Landowners



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Virginia Office Helps The Town of Dendron

To speed the approval process of a proposed 1500-megawatt coal-fired power plant in the small town of Dendron, Va., the Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC) and the pro-coal Surry County Board of Supervisors presented an ordinance to the Dendron Town Council to have the Surry County Board of Supervisors serve as a planning commission to "help the town with various studies," "assist in expertise," and make the ultimate decision on the plant's approval.

But residents who learned of this proposition were hesitant to surrender their sovereignty to the Board of Supervisors.

With the help of community organizers

from Appalachian Voices and the Wise Energy Coalition, citizens have led the fight for a locally-based planning commission, knocking on virtually every door in Dendron to ensure residents were aware of the decision.

When the ordinance came up for a vote, it was standing room only. By a 3-2 margin, ODEC's ordinance was rejected. Instead, the town council vested itself with the legal power to make a decision on the plant.

The fight is not over, but Dendron has kept the ultimate decision in their hands.

Visit wiseenergyforvirginia.org for details on Appalachian Voices' coalition-based work on this and other issues.

Thank you for Dining Out!

Appalachian Voices would like to thank the following restaurants for participating in our Annual Dine Out for the Mountains by donating a portion of their Earth Day proceeds to our cause!

Boone Bagelry	Dos Amigos	Our Daily Bread
Canyons Restaurant	Joe's Italian Kitchen	Reid's Cafe
CiCi's Pizza	Makoto's	The Gamekeeper

INSIDE APPALACHIAN VOICES

OPERATION MEDICINE CABINET: Saving the River and Kids from Drugs

Donna Lisenby, our Upper Watauga Riverkeeper, has teamed up with organizations in Watauga County, NC to offer the first ever prescription drug take-back day on Saturday, October 3 from 9 a.m. to noon.

Dubbed Operation Medicine Cabinet, the event is designed to safely dispose of drugs and keep them out of the hands of children and out of our water.

Anyone with outdated or unused prescription drugs, syringes or other medical supplies are invited to drop these off at the take-back centers. The event has been declared as an amnesty day, so controlled

substances will also be taken with no questions asked.

Takeback locations will be available at three Food Lion stores in Watauga County: the Hwy 321 store in Boone, the Hwy 421 Deep Gap store, and the Blowing Rock store. The event will be held in conjunction with the county's annual Hazardous Household Waste day from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The disposal of prescription drugs has long been a dilemma, and many home medicine cabinets contain unused or outdated medications. Among teenagers, one of the highest increases in illegal drug

use over the past several years has been in prescription drug use, most commonly obtained by raiding a family member's or friend's medicine cabinet.

As well, because local water treatment facilities are not set up to filter prescription drugs, an emerging threat to our waterways is the increasing evidence of prescription drug residue in the rivers. Tests have found blood pressure medicine, mood-enhancement drugs like

Prozac, and antibiotics and estrogen.

Partners in Operation Medicine Cabinet include The Upper Watauga Riverkeeper, Boone Drug, The Watauga River Conservation Partners, Watauga County Sheriff's Department, Boone Police Dept, NC Cooperative Extension Service, Town of Boone Utilities Department, the DEA, North Carolina SBI, Mountainkeepers, and Watauga County Solid Waste/Recycling Department.



Voices from the Field: Citizen activists speak about what inspires them to stand up and take action

Lorelei Scarbro is no stranger to the economic support coal mining has brought to West Virginia. Her grandfather, father, and husband were all underground miners. She is also no stranger to its downsides. Black lung made her a widow before she turned 50, and now the threat of mountaintop removal mining, slurry impoundments, coal dust, and tainted water loom heavy on her community of Rock Creek, W. Va. Now 54, Lorelei is one of the most dedicated coalfield activists in the fight to end mountaintop removal. She travels monthly to Washington to meet with legislators about critical legislation that would put a federal ban on valley fills, part of the process of mountaintop removal where literally tons of exploded mountain are deposited in mountain valleys as a crude, destructive form of "waste disposal." Lorelei spoke with The Voice about mountaintop removal, activism, and what inspires her to fight.



living in the area where they mine. But I say, we don't live where they mine coal, they mine coal where we live.

AV: If your husband were alive, what do you think he would say about mountaintop removal coal mining?

LS: My husband was a very proud underground union coal miner and he was also very connected to and protective of

this place. He loved the land and grew up living off it. He quit school when he was 16 years old to work in the mines to help his parents feed and clothe his brothers and his sister. He harvested coal because it was the only way to make a living, but he never did anything to harm the land. He would be outraged [about mountaintop removal] and very proud of me for the stand I have taken to protect the land he loved.

AV: How long have you been an activist?

LS: I started as a community activist on another issue in early 2001. The local Board of Education decided to implement a planned closure for our local high school. Some of my closest friends and I decided that was not a good idea and we engaged in a two and a half year battle to stop it. We won the battle and lost the war. Today, the coal company is removing the top of the mountain behind where the school used to sit.

AV: Why did you first decide to go to Washington to advocate for an end to mountaintop removal?

LS: I believe what is happening here [in central Appalachia] is a social justice issue and a crime against nature. I know the people in Washington, D.C., have the power to stop this. Unless we are there telling them how [mountaintop removal] impacts the lives of real living, breathing human beings, they don't know. The coal industry tells them there are no people

AV: With difficulties, including threats and anger from your neighbors, why have you not just given up?

LS: I have a five-year-old granddaughter and it pains me to think of the quality of water she will have to drink and the air she will have to breathe when she is of child-bearing age if we don't stop this. It is not about me. I have a responsibility to do all I can to leave this world a better place than I found it for her and the generations to come after me. That being said, I can't stop.

AV: What is the best experience you have had during your time as an activist?

LS: Standing with Larry Gibson [a fellow coalfield activist] in D.C. on March 2, 2009...we turned and looked down the street to see 2,500 people coming toward us standing in solidarity against the evils that are inflicted upon us by the coal industry. Because of his 20+ years in this battle and all that he has sacrificed I told him, "Look

what you have done." Many of us would not have had the courage to do what we do without what [Larry] has done.

AV: What is the worst experience you have had during this time?

LS: I cannot think of any one incident but the hardest thing is watching people suffer adverse health effects due to coal.

I watched my husband struggle for every breath until his last with black lung, I have friends who live in communities where large numbers of them have terminal illnesses, and I fear for my own longevity because of water and air contamination.

AV: Who would you say is your hero or heroine, and why?

LS: The people who risk their lives expecting nothing in return to stop mountaintop removal. There are a lot of them but Larry Gibson in particular is my hero and the biggest man I have ever met.

APPALACHIAN VOICES



New and Renewing Business League Members

JUNE 2009-JULY 2009

Gaines Kiker Silversmith Blowing Rock NC

Dancing Moon Bookstore Boone NC

Gladiola Girls Boone NC

The Mustard Seed Market Blowing Rock

The Looking Glass Gallery Boone NC

Capone's Pizza Boone NC

Red Onion Cafe Boone NC

The Bead Box Boone NC

Rexel of Boone Boone NC

We encourage you to patronize members of the Business League.

To become a business member visit www.AppalachianVoices.org or call us toll free at 877-APP-VOICE



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WATER CONSERVATION is all well and good, but there are certain essentials, such as a cool shower during the dog days of August. Bonnie, a golden retriever, enjoys a charity "dog wash" at the Radford, Va. city farmers' market sponsored by Grace Church. Low-flow nozzles and a conscientious approach to saving water will make sure that there is enough for future dog washes. (Photo by Bill Kovarik)

GET INVOLVED environmental & cultural events in the region

WNCREI trainings

Appalachian State University and the Western North Carolina Renewable Energy Initiative invite you to attend their upcoming 2009 renewable energy workshops: Saturday August 22nd - Solar Thermal with Brian Raichle, Wednesday August 26th - PV and the National Electric Code with John Wiles, Saturday September 12th - Small Wind with Brent Summerville, September 18th-20th and October 2nd-4th (Friday evening through Sunday evening) - NABCEP Entry Level PV Course (NOTE: the full workshop includes both weekends), Saturday September 26th & Sunday September 27th - Solar Thermal with Chuck Marken. Visit www.wind.appstate.edu/workshops/workshops.php for more information and registration.

Music on the Mountaintop

August 29: Held at the Old State Fairgrounds in Boone, Music on the Mountaintop features stellar headliners and a green theme. Sam Bush, Keller Williams, The Steep Canyon

Rangers, Acoustic Syndicate and Yo Mama's Big Fat Booty Band will join 15 regional western NC acts on three stages. The student-run green event festival boasts a solar-powered stage, precise recycling and waste disposal programs. A portion of the proceeds from this year's festival will go to the Appalachian Institute for Renewable Energy (AIRE) and the Appalachian Energy Center. Limited camping is available. Visit www.musiconthemountaintop.com. For more information about AIRE, visit www.aire-nc.org.

The Gathering of the Peacemakers

Aug. 30-Sept.5: Join us for days of conscious instruction and nights of conscious music. Workshops include: solar, wind, permaculture, organic gardening, holistic health, meditation, yoga, creating loving unions, finding peace within chaos, expressing love in your worklife, and much more. At night party w/ Inner Visions, Chalwa and Satta Lion. Held at Camp Rockmont in Asheville/Blk. Mtn, NC. Info at www.onelovepress.com or (828) 295-4610.

Daniel Boone Days

Friday Sept 4th, 2009 and Saturday Sept 5th, 2009: Join Boone, NC for the 2nd Annual Daniel Boone Days Music & Culture Festival. Performances by Larry Keel and Natural Bridge, Donna the Buffalo, Upright & Breathin', The Forget-Me-Nots & Randell Jones, and more! Also featuring: The Watauga Arts Council 2nd Annual Fiddlers' Competition, kid activities, games, AirWalk, storytelling, living history, a Daniel Boone Look-Alike Contest, a World Record Attempt, and other fine merriments. Visit www.danielboonedays.com for more information and news.

Bristol Rhythm and Roots

Sept 18th - 20th, 2009: Bristol, TN's 9th Annual Rhythm and Roots Reunion hosts some of the best artists in bluegrass, Americana, jamgrass, traditional country, Celtic, Old-time, singer/songwriter, Piedmont Blues, and other music genres. Performers

include: Patty Loveless, The Dan Tyminski Band, Dr. Dog, Gene Watson, Tim O'Brien, Darrell Scott, Peter Rowan Bluegrass Band, Jason Isbell & The 400 Unit, Scythian, Sierra Hull & Highway 111, Larry Keel & Natural Bridge, and many, MANY more! Visit www.bristolrhythm.com for more information.

LEAF

Oct 15th - 18th, 2009: The Lake Eden Arts Festival fall lineup is red hot! Exceptional headliners include (DRUM ROLL!): Arrested Development, Zap Mama, Cowboy Junkies, Alex Torres and His Latin Orchestra (Mexico), The Squirrel Nut Zippers, Los Amigos Invisibles, Los De Abajo (Mexico), Battlefield Band, Wild Asparagus & Notorious, Red Stick Ramblers, and more. Other activities include a Special Kids' Village, performers including Red Herring Puppets - a special Latin-themed puppet show, Jam Tent, a Poetry SLAM, Yoga & Healing Arts, workshops and more. For additional information visit www.theleaf.com.