

MILK AND HONEY

Vol. 1, No. 5

The Craddock Center
(Enriching Lives through Service)

June, 2004

THE CENTER BOARD HAS LOST ITS MIND

I know of no other way to explain it. At its June 1 meeting, nothing seemed out of the ordinary at the beginning: prayer, minutes, financial report, discussion of upcoming events such as Appalachian Weekend and Preaching Workshops in Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky. So far so good. Then came motions to expand our program. Shall we develop a program of support for foster parents and children? Unanimous yes. Shall we establish an annual public lectureship on some aspect of Appalachian life and name it for Helen Lewis, retired sociologist and friend of the Center? Unanimous yes. These two votes mean our already tight budget of \$105,000.00 will have to be expanded, but maybe we can do it.

Then came the year-end reports from our Storyteller Betsy Doty and our Musician Pam Lindsey. Photos of 800 happy children; evaluations off the charts; letters of praise from directors, teachers, and parents; books given to the children; CDs of the children singing; T-shirts for all the children. On and on. Enthusiasm was building, board members were excited. I was losing control. "I am your Director," I said. "Let's not be taken in by these wonderful reports," I said. "Don't let these children get to you," I said. No one listened. "Shall we expand the program next year?" asked one board member, obviously on drugs. "I so move," said another who should have been at his AA meeting. "I second the motion," said another whom I had never seen before. I held my ground: "this will require more storytellers and musicians and money." "All in favor?" Unanimous yes.

Budget for the Craddock Center for 2004-05: \$177,000.00.

This Board has lost its mind. How else to explain it? Whatever happened to those comfortable board members who are full of reminders of reality, and the economy, and the great depression, and signs of the end times?

My parting shot: "What has gotten into you people?"

"Faith." Again, unanimous.



DID YOU KNOW DON WEST?

If you did, please contact us here at the Center. As part of our program at Appalachian Weekend September 25-26, we will share stories about Don West. Several who knew him already plan to come and join in the conversation. I did not know him but I know many who did and I look forward to their stories.



YOU WILL BE PLEASED TO KNOW

That the Center board voted to expand our services to include the Foster Care Programs in Fannin and Gilmer Counties. We do not yet know exactly what we will do, but it will be done in consultation with foster families and with the appropriate social agencies, and it will be in the spirit of our motto, "Enriching lives through service."

WILL IT EVER STOP?

In the 2002-03 school year, our modest program of music and storytelling served 140 Head Start/Pre-K children in Gilmer and Fannin Counties. Encouraged by the responses of directors, teachers, parents, and children, we extended the program in 2003-04 to 800 children in Gilmer, Fannin, Pickens, and Union Counties in Georgia, Polk County, Tennessee and Cherokee County, North Carolina. Invitations from other schools continue to come, and so, in 2004-05, we will add four more Georgia counties: Towns, Lumpkin, Cherokee, and Dawson, reaching 1000 children.

This is getting ridiculous! Will it ever stop? No, not as long as there are children out there. No, not as long as we have breath. No, not as long as you support us.



IS BLACKBERRY JAM ART?

As you know, the display and sale of arts and crafts traditional in Appalachia will be an important part of Appalachian Weekend, September 25-26. We have invited any who wish to participate to call or write the Center to reserve a space.

The question has arisen, would foods prepared in traditional fashion be regarded as an art or craft? Most certainly yes. For example, green beans sewn on a string and hung up to dry, ready for winter cooking, would be great. Such beans are called "leather britches." Or pumpkin, cut in rings and hung in the sun on a broom handle, would stir warm memories. And, of course, jams, jellies, preserves, pickles, sassafras roots, and cracklings.

But please, no souse. Souse is neither art nor craft.

DON'T FORGET



If you'd like to reserve a space for the Arts & Crafts Display/Sale on Saturday, September 25, in conjunction with Appalachian Weekend, please contact the Center ASAP. The cost is \$10.00. First come...First served.

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LECTURESHIP TO HONOR HELEN LEWIS

Beginning in 2005, a public lecture will be given annually focusing on some aspect of Appalachian life for the purpose of informing us about this area and its people, with a view to preserving or improving our life together. Highly qualified persons will be invited by the Center to deliver these lectures, to be publicized and to which all will be invited.

It is appropriate that this lectureship honor Dr. Helen Lewis, a well known sociologist who has spent her life working for the people of Appalachia. Helen now lives in Fannin County. She will be more fully presented in a subsequent issue of *Milk and Honey*.

THE POETRY OF DON WEST

The following is from *The Road Is Rocky* published in 1951.

Advice to Would-Be Poets

Note: On a bright Sunday in 1950 I sat in a meeting of "Texas poets" in San Antonio and listened to a lot of verses about a lot of things – a lot of things beside life and people with their hurt and trouble and hope and pain. I heard poems in praise of practically nothing, and poems in praise of MacArthur as the great Christian gentleman and champion of democracy. And I thought: "O Lord, how long? How long, O Lord, until poets learn to go to the people for inspiration, for poetry?" And I wrote these lines there.

Away with pious references
To patriotism and to prayer,
As the naked child is born,
Let the truth lie cold and bare!

If there is a thing to tell
Make it brief and write it plain.
Words were meant to shed a light,
Not to cover it up again!

Don West's poetry will be read by Jeff Biggers of National Public Radio at Appalachian Weekend, September 25-26. Join us to hear Mr. West's sometimes poignant, oftentimes painful, always memorable, words come to life.

A CONSOLING WORD TO THOSE UPSET



It never occurred to me that the extraordinarily good news that the Story Express van is paid for would be upsetting to some. Yes, the van is paid for! Your gifts poured in, the money is in the bank, and upon delivery, a check will be written for the full amount. Paid in full. No balance due, no mortgage, no loan. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Calls are coming in: "I didn't think you could do it"; "I knew you could do it"; God sure smiled on this program"; "I'm proud to have been able to help."

And then this: "I didn't know you would get the money so fast; I was going to give something; I didn't think there was any hurry about it." The voice was sad. My heart went out.

Good news, my friend. When the van is delivered, it will be paid for, it's true. But there it will sit: without a license tag, without fuel, without insurance, and uncustomized. Unless – unless, someone with thought and imagination says, "That van is not the Story Express without an Operation Fund."

I have asked Kay to set up an Operation Fund and then jump in her car and speed to the post office. You know how swiftly the gifts came before. And those who dilly-dallied and missed out: hurry, and maybe your gift will start the Story Express rolling.

I love it when a good plan comes together.

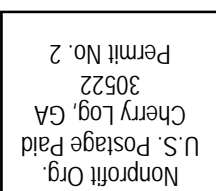
WE'D LIKE YOU TO MEET

Laura Lindsey: Laura is a young woman of many talents, trained in both dance and voice. Laura graduated from Fannin County High School in 2004. She will be a great addition to the HeArtSongs program in the Head Start and Pre-K schools served by the Center.

Magan B. Martin: Magan is another graduate of Fannin County High School. She is multi-talented, playing a variety of instruments. Magan, too, will be working with Pam Lindsey to expand our musical programs for children.

Yvonne Daves: Yvonne is a very creative person who has been working in a public school system for the past 12 years, the last three in Fannin County as a substitute teacher. Her creativity and extensive work with children make her a natural fit for the work of the Center.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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