

THE APPALACHIAN SOUTH FOLKLIFE CENTER

Epidemic Edition - Summer 2020

Vol. 55

Our 55th Year!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

James Campbell
President

Lori McKinney
Vice President

Loren Preston
Treasurer

Joanie Boyle
Secretary

Tina Russel-Gray
Robert Blankenship
Shalom Tazewell

STAFF

Crystal Atwell, Site Director
Tim Mainland, Program Director
Greg O'Quinn, Crew Leader

A SUMMER OF CHALLENGES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS; CANCELED PLANS AND DEEP GENEROSITY



From The Directors:

Summer of 2020 has been challenging. With good decisions and wise choices all around, virtually all of our programs were canceled for the summer. But as Mr. Rogers said, “look at all the people coming to help.” And that is how it went. Our GoFundMe, church and member donations rose and our staff continued to work without pay. Generosity can come from those who receive as well. The 20 or more projects that we had in the hopper were for people in desperate need. One by one they called and asked us to be careful – they could wait until next time. This is indeed generous, given the need for the help we offer. We have turned inward and have done some much needed repair at the center – once again through the generosity of our constituents. The City of Hinton has offered to help us out, but also had to delay with good reasons of their own. The Hinton Area Foundation helped us with on-site repairs as well. We are optimistic that we will emerge strong, though shaken. We look forward to having everyone back.

Poems by Don West
(from No Lonesome Road)
Paintings by Connie West

Brown Brother

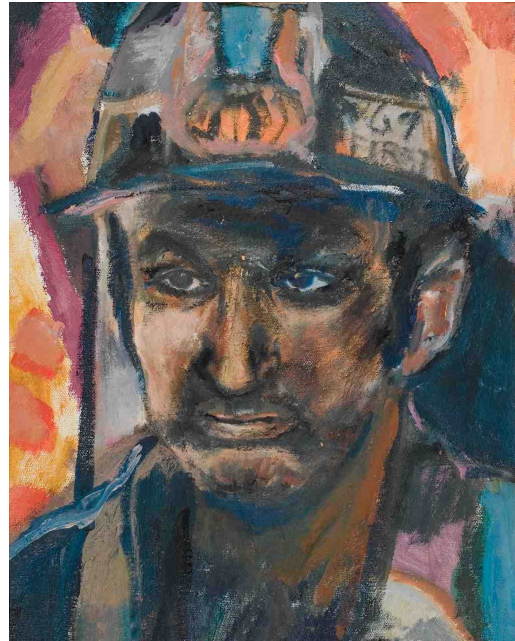
to Langston Hughes

I heard you, my brown skin brother,
Sing the songs your people think,
Saw the fire that we would smother
And the gall that you must drink.

We are proud and boast the whiteness
In the pigment of our skin,
Never think to measure rightness
By a soul that burns within.

Now I know you seek no pittance
From a condescending clan
That has failed to give admittance
Or to treat you like a man.

How can you sing songs of gladness,
Full of hope and growing cheer?
When your people live in sadness
With the white man's curse to fear.



I've Seen God

I've seen God-
I've seen him smile
In the several hues of a rainbow.
I've felt his warm breath
In the mists
The sun sends up
From the plowed dirt
After a summer rain.
And God was free.

I've seen God-
In the gaunt eyes
Of a factory worker,
Bound by chains
Of circumstances.
I've felt God's pulse beat,
I've seen his soul
And heard him groan
From the hungry throats
Of miners' children
In a Kentucky coal camp.
And God was in prison!

Our GOFUNDME campaign is going well! We still need your help though! As of this publication, we are about half way to survival. Your Directors organized this fundraiser on behalf of Appalachian South Folklife Center. Donations are 100% tax deductible. It can be found at:

https://www.gofundme.com/f/88hy4e-survive-the-summer?utm_source=customer&utm_medium=copy_link&utm_campaign=p_cf+share-flow-1

or by accessing it from <www.folkifecenter.org>

Here is the text from the campaign:

Every summer the Appalachian South Folklife Center welcomes campers from all over the country to work with us to make life better for homeowners in southern West Virginia. Our beautiful mountain site is inspiring and peaceful as our campers lend a hand to folks in hard times. We also offer opportunities to learn about Appalachia, its people and History.

We have been doing this work for over 55 years funded only by our campers who return again and again from schools and churches to find solace and service. We are dedicated to putting all of our income into our projects and our ability to stay open.

This summer is different. Most campers could not come. The center is now "winterized" as we cut expenses, downsize our bills and turn our attention to on-site needs. Our Directors are giving back salary to keep our Crew Leader working.

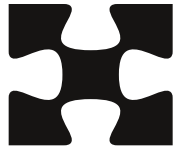
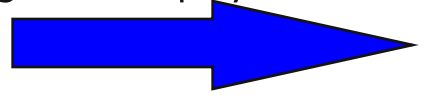


Your donations will help keep us solvent during this difficult time as our nation struggles with the pandemic.

Thanks friends! Peace and Blessings.

Tim, Crystal and Greg

One of our favorite groups that visits the folklife center every year, and always puts their shoulder to the grindstone for our community is the Center for Faith and Justice from Lawrenceville, New Jersey. They represent the Catholic community in their area. Recently they undertook a project to provide a resource site for anti-racism. Your Program Director found this to be a fabulous site, and we asked if we could copy their email to share in our newsletter. They were enthusiastic and said text appears on the next page. We hope you will visit <https://faithjustice.org/antiracism-resources/>



Paintings by Constance West





"I can't breathe."

These final words uttered by George Floyd before losing his life at the hands of Minneapolis police officers have awakened a national consciousness to the systemic and persistent problems of racism and white supremacy that plague our country. Notably, these final words have opened the door to much-needed conversations about the dynamics of race and privilege in our families, our schools, and our communities.

At the Center for FaithJustice, we seek to elevate the voices of those who are experts in the field of racial justice. We want to be a resource without drowning out black voices and other voices of color that desperately need to be heard. We want to advance anti-racism strategies that align with our Catholic faith and organizational values.

This is not a political issue or a partisan argument. As Catholics, our faith compels us to respond to the issue of racism. As Pope Francis said last week "Catholics cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism while also claiming to defend the sacredness of every human life." This is a moment for our Church to take an important stand in stating, unequivocally, that black lives matter.

This page is designed to offer resources on the journey of understanding. It includes films, podcasts, books, speeches, artistic depictions, and actions you can take. Many of these have helped our organization to learn more about and confront unconscious bias in our work and daily lives. Pick one or two that strike a chord with you and then start a conversation. Remember that it doesn't have to be perfect to be meaningful.

With these resources, we hope to ignite conversations, to deepen understanding, and to open hearts to acknowledgement and reconciliation. Know that this is the first of many actions that we plan to take in the coming months to advance dialogue in support of our brothers and sisters of color. This list is in no way exhaustive. Please share other resources with us that you have come across and found helpful. We are all together in this sacred work of building a beloved community.

Stephanie J. Peddicord, President



Visit the CFJ anti-racism resource page:

<https://faithjustice.org/antiracism-resources/>

In March of 2020, ASFC hosted a camp organized by the Appalachian Climate Action Group. This group of about 200 participants stayed with us for a week, bringing programs and seminars. The group submitted this article to our newsletter:

Appalachian Climate Action Camp: Building Community and Taking Action

by Appalachians Against Pipelines

At the beginning of March, a coalition of pipeline resisters fighting the Mountain Valley Pipeline (including Appalachians Against Pipelines) hosted the Appalachian Climate Action Camp (ACAC) at the Appalachian South Folklife Center. Looking to grow the movement against fossil fuel extraction, ACAC was a 10-day camp where community members, activists, students, and families came together to learn, train, and take direct action to disrupt the systems that are destroying our climate. The all-volunteer camp was organized by local community members, building upon Appalachia's rich history of resistance to extractive industries.

Appalachians Against Pipelines (AAP) is part of the campaign to stop the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) in Virginia and West Virginia. Direct action against the MVP has been powerful and unrelenting. Beginning with two tree sits on Peters Mountain (which stopped work crews from clear cutting the pipeline easement in 2018), there have since been nine more aerial blockades, around 20 day-long equipment lockdowns, and more than 40 arrests of water protectors who have put their bodies on the line to stop the MVP. There are currently two tree sits in the pipeline's path in Elliston, VA preventing MVP from cutting down the last remaining trees along the route. As of this writing, those tree sits have been there for over 600 days!

At ACAC, the MVP campaign aimed to connect pipeline resistance to other struggles against industries and systems wrecking the environment and contributing to climate change. ACAC was a place for people from different fights to build solidarity and take power out of the hands of corporations and politicians threatening our collective future. People spent the week in conversation with each other, training, and taking action together. All in all, ACAC was a whirlwind – 10 days where we worked hard, built relationships, and continuously challenged ourselves.

Through snow, rain and sun, ACAC attendees participated in a wide variety of workshops and panels throughout the week. There were many opportunities to build skills, including (but not limited to!) direct action trainings, facilitation trainings, workshops on how to support folks when they are arrested, de-escalation, and consensus decision making. One evening, there was a presentation on a piece of art called True Cost of Coal by the Beehive Collective. An artist who helped create the large mural was joined by local activists, using the poster to talk about the history, impacts of, and resistance to mountaintop removal coal mining in the region. This presentation grounded the camp in Appalachia's history and culture. To celebrate and honor International Women's Day on the first Sunday of camp, a panel of women involved in a diversity of movements and resistance discussed their lives, struggles and accomplishments.

During the camp, water protectors and pipeline fighters shut down the TC (TransCanada) Energy Headquarters in Charleston, WV. People blockaded the lobby while the Warrior flag symbolizing Indigenous power was raised outside the building. The group acted in solidarity with the Indigenous Wet'suwet'en people, who are defending their unceded land in so-called British Columbia, Canada from the Coastal GasLink Pipeline and other dangerous pipeline projects. The Coastal GasLink Pipeline is a project of TC Energy. This action was taken the day after International Women's Day in solidarity with the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women movement. Pipeline companies often build man camps for their workers, which is directly

connected to such high rates of missing and murdered Indigenous Women.

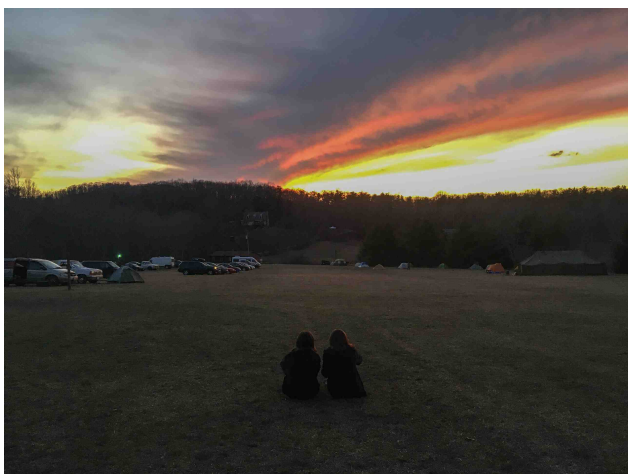
When ACAC began on March 5, we didn't know that the world would feel different by the time it was over. Throughout the camp, we heard bits and pieces of news from outside the Folk Life Center (the NBA is canceled, states are considering closing down, all of the stores are out of toilet paper...) and slowly the gravity of the coronavirus pandemic sunk in. On our last day of programming, we shifted our focus and hosted teach-ins, panels, and workshops about mutual aid and disaster relief. The fight against fossil fuel exploitation continues, but now as we face an unprecedented global health crisis, there is so much more work to be done.

We greatly appreciate the amazing space the Folk Life Center provided us for learning, living, cooking and caring for each other during camp. The Folk Life Center has long been a space for resistance movements in Appalachia to gather and organize. We were honored to be a part of that history. Thank you for continuing to be that space.

If you want to support the fight against Mountain Valley Pipeline, please contact us! Our Facebook page is "Appalachians Against Pipelines" and our donation link is bit.ly/supportMVPresistance. We appreciate people's support, and would love to have more folks join us!



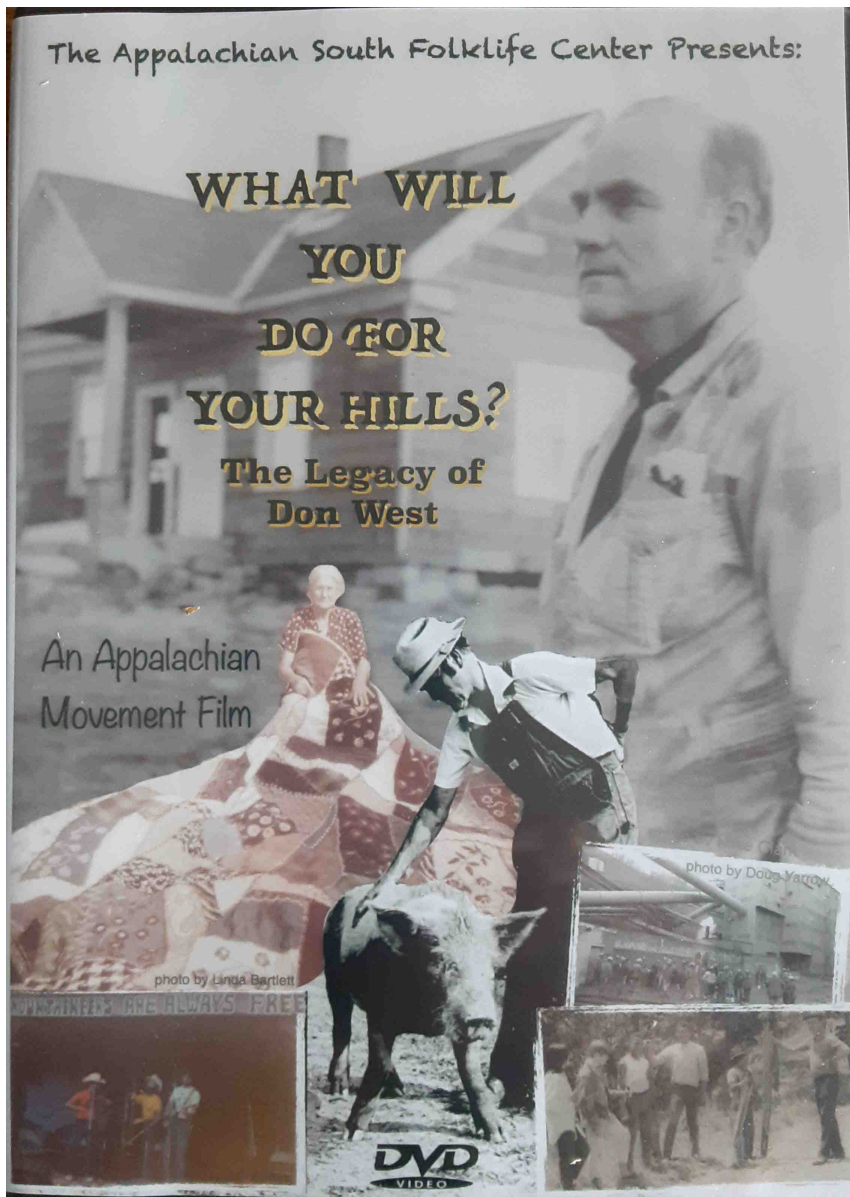
Water protectors gather at TC (TransCanada) Energy building in Charleston, WV in solidarity with Wet'suwet'en and to draw attention to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.



Two camp participants watch the sunset on one of the warmer days.



A group enjoys the swing set by the playground.



WHAT WILL YOU DO FOR YOUR HILLS? The Legacy of Don West

Most of you have already heard about our new documentary DVD. Many of you have seen it on PBS. We are very excited about it. This superb historical work was created by our friend and neighbor, videographer Jon Averill. We can send a copy to anyone and would appreciate at donation of \$25 or more to help us keep them in stock and available.

This work was begun five years ago during our 50th anniversary celebration and concurrent symposium. Painstaking work has gone into the interviews, clips and documents that are represented here. The video runs 55 minutes.

Contact us at
<appalachianfolkifecenter@gmail.com>
or call at (304) 466-0626

Many Many THANKS to the HINTON AREA FOUNDATION!

for funding our roofing project. Seen to the right are volunteers under Greg's supervision re-roofing the Director's House.



Learning Day Camp 2020

by Jeannette Justice



This is our 33rd year of Learning Day Camp and we have had to make some difficult decisions . We have been working hard to determine the best course of action for our beloved Day Camp and all of you who make it such an incredible and special program. With a current limit of 25 people in camp groups, with social distancing recommended by both our WV guidelines and the DHHR guidelines for camps, we have become aware that we cannot have our traditional camp during our traditional week in June for 2020. While much of LDC happens outdoors, if there is rainy weather we don't have appropriate shelter that will allow for social distancing, even for small groups.

We are however, moving forward with online activities such as teacher videos that connect with the materials we have received through grant funding by the Community Grant of the Two Virginias. We will cover Literature, Science, Yoga, Music, Art , and American Sign Language. One especially exciting project involves each child getting a recorder and the teaching and learning of one of our favorite camp songs called "Joy, Joy, Joy to the Universe. We are hoping to have two Zoom sessions to connect us all together. Currently, we are brainstorming ideas to include our teens in some meaningful Service Projects from home!

We at LDC are incredibly grateful to the many children, teens, families, and supporters who have come together each year to make learning fun and creative, to lift each other up in terms of self- esteem, to weave a tighter community despite obstacles. Through the years we have planted a Peace Garden, painted a Peace Quilt, created a Tile Mural in the Chapel. Every year, campers and counselors artistically decorate muslin bags, which are then packed with books and stuffed animals. These bags are donated to agencies that work with at risk kids. One year we were able to send educational supplies to an orphanage in Mexico. We believe in giving back. Through the years we have learned songs in other languages and drumming from other cultures. We have learned American Sign Language, studied other countries and integrated teaching tolerance, and social justice. LDC Science classes encompass using microscopes, hands on learning activities, and environmental awareness projects. We at LDC are excited for what the future holds for all of us as we break new ground by using technology and creativity this summer for LDC 2020.





PO Box 10 Pipestem, WV 25979
(304) 466-0626
appalachianfolklifecenter@gmail.com

