

Research Up-To-Date

The Newsletter of the Urban Appalachian Council Research Committee

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Editor: Roberta M. Campbell

Contributors: Phil Obermiller, Ryan Shadle, Debbie Zorn

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The Research Committee was created at the founding of the Urban Appalachian Council thirty years ago and has always informed the council through active research. To be notified of future research committee meetings, which are open to all, please contact msullivan@uacvoice.org or phone 251-0202.

CONTRIBUTORS WELCOME!

Please send your article, announcement, or website link to Roberta Campbell at campbere@ucmail.uc.edu.



From the Editor:

Urban Appalachians still kept “invisible” by KET

By Roberta M. Campbell

I was surprised but I probably shouldn't have been when Kentucky Educational Television chose to exclude any mention of Appalachians in its recent documentary on the history of northern Kentucky, *Where the River Bends*. We remain an “invisible minority” it seems and that is not an accidental situation – it's by design.

When the documentary was being conceived, a producer came to my house with a camera crew to interview me as a professional with an Appalachian background. I spent a good hour discussing my views and expertise about Appalachians in northern Kentucky and about being an Appalachian. I wasn't the only one invited to discuss our positions in and contributions to the area.

Imagine how I felt after sitting through three hours of the KET premier, and the many pleas for contributions to the station, and there was not a single reference to the thousands of migrants who came in a steady stream from the central Appalachian region of Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia to Northern Kentucky.

About half the population of Covington and Newport have roots in Appalachia. I meet these people everyday when I go to the hardware or grocery store, in the college classes that I teach in the greater Cincinnati area, and in the public school systems of Northern Kentucky. My colleagues and I are engaged in many forms of research and activism that focus on Appalachians, especially those who are experiencing issues that are associated with high rates of poverty. Not all of us have those issues, fortunately, and many of us are thriving. Untold numbers of Appalachian migrants have added considerably to the economic development along our particular bend in the river.

But nearly all of us can cite instances of discrimination and some of us, sad to say, are quick to deny our heritage. Why? Because we remain invisible despite many efforts to make our cultural heritage and social contributions known. Or worse, we are bombarded with negative stereotypes that the public often accepts without question. Unfortunately KET elected to continue the sad tradition of ignoring urban Appalachians.

Northern Kentucky University is contemplating a major in Appalachian Studies. Northern Kentucky Vision 2010 seems to be an inclusive effort and I hope we will not be forgotten in the many strategies for civic engagement that are part of this vision. But will these plans turn out like the KET documentary and cut us out of the picture in the end?

I am writing because I, for one, am tired of "benign neglect". KET foisted a great disservice onto a large segment of Northern Kentucky citizens by being so obviously silent about our existence. I intend to make a lot of noise about being Appalachian and about what that has meant to me and to the greater community. I think it's time to stand on somebody's feet until they have to notice that I'm here.

Cultural literacy curriculum developed for community school

By Ryan S. Shadle

Ryan S. Shadle, a graduate student at Northern Kentucky University, is developing a cultural literacy curriculum at the East Price Hill Adult Literacy/GED office. The course materials are selected from noted Appalachian writers such as Lee Smith, Chris Offutt, and Frank Walker X. The course began on March 20th and will continue until April 19th. He is assisted in the project by UAC staff members, Debbie Holmes, Omope Daboiku, and Cheryl Hodges.

Over the last 30 years, the Urban Appalachian Council has provided the following community-based programs: education, leadership development, family and human services, cultural celebration and access to employment and training. The UAC has four main directional goals: Empowering Individuals, Strengthening Families, Developing Communities, Reforming Systems. Executive Director Maureen Sullivan states, "We look to our cultural heritage as a source of strength and to our youth, families, and communities as the basis for our continued success." However, federal spending cuts in social services have forced the UAC to eliminate many positions, including nearly the entire cultural staff. Thus, one of the major hurdles that the organization faces is that of instilling cultural heritage into the community.

Although the lack of staff certainly hinders the UAC's ability to institute a cultural curriculum into its services, an additional problem, according to one staff member, is that many students do not identify as being Appalachian. As Urban Appalachians in the Greater Cincinnati area are coming upon the fourth generation, this lack of identification continues to grow. Executive Director, Maureen Sullivan adds, "perhaps a lack of recognition coupled with the lack of identifying adds to this issue?" To validate this she makes the point that various cultures are celebrated throughout the school year, but none that specifically represent Appalachian culture.

Conversely, much of the research conducted from within the organization has pertained to both identifying Appalachians as well as the circumstances that inhibit people from claiming affiliation with Appalachian culture.

The goal of this project is two-fold in that it seeks to improve the literacy skills of adults preparing for the GED exam as well as help carry out the mission of the UAC in utilizing its strong cultural heritage to Empower Individuals, Strengthen Families, Develop Communities, and Reform Systems.

To measure the effect of this project on student literacy skills, pre-test scores will be collected for the 12 students consisting of the focus group. After a four week period all students will be required to take a second literacy practice test.

The results will then be analyzed to see if students participating in the cultural curriculum score higher than those not in the focus group.

The Child Policy Research Center

The Child Policy Research Center serves as a community resource for evidence-based, policy-relevant information on the well-being of children in a 29 county region in southern Ohio, northern Kentucky and eastern Indiana.

As part of Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center's commitment to

improving child health locally and across the nation, Lisa Simpson, MB, BCh, MPH, FAAP, a nationally known pediatrician and child health services research and policy leader, has been recruited to build on the CPRC's accomplishments over the last eight years and expand its impact.

The expanded Center will:

- develop a nationally recognized program of health services and policy research and analysis focused on the outcomes and value of health services for children and their families; and
- promote the translation of this research into national, state and local policymaking through agenda setting and communication activities.

Current programs and projects within the Center will continue as new initiatives are developed. Concurrent with the arrival of Dr. Simpson, Gerry Fairbrother, PhD, is transitioning from the Center for Epidemiology and Biostatistics into the CPRC. Additional faculty and staff are being recruited to carry out the Center's expanded mission and scope.

Initial areas of emphasis in the expanded center have been selected to advance the policy agenda on quality of care and include:

- making quality matter to policymakers and the public by synthesizing and making available information on the quality of care as well as effective strategies to improve quality and eliminate disparities;
- studying the economics of quality, including quantifying the impact of poor quality care and measuring the return on investment from quality improvement activities; and
- examining the role of health information technology in accelerating improvements in the quality and efficiency of care for children, especially chronically ill children.

Examples of expanded activities in the Center are:

- developing a report on strategies which Congress should consider as part of the reauthorization of the State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) to promote quality of care for publicly insured children;
- partnering with the National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality (NICHQ) in the development of the policy arm of the Childhood Obesity Action Network;
- working with state policymakers to craft new policies for expanding and improving quality of public health care coverage for children and families in Ohio
- developing population measures of child well-being for the 600,000+ children in greater Cincinnati. These outcome measures (i.e. infant mortality) will help determine the effectiveness of efforts to improve quality of care.

Working closely with Edward Donovan, MD, and Gerry Fairbrother, PhD, senior researchers in the Center, Peter Margolis, MD, PhD and Carole Lannon, MD, Co-Directors of the Center for Health Care Quality, hospital leaders, and input from stakeholders in the local, state and national

arenas, the CPRC will develop a new plan that is aligned with and furthers the strategic plan adopted in June 2005.

Resource Directory for Teaching Appalachia now Available

The Resource Directory for Teaching Appalachian Topics in K-12 Classrooms developed by Phil Obermiller has been posted on the Appalachian Studies Association website. Each entry has a hotlink that takes the user to the materials described in that item. You can access the directory at:

<http://www.appalachianstudies.org/resources/K12/>

Research Notes (From the Research Committee: Debbie Zorn, Chair)

Member Updates:

Jeffrey Jacobsen is developing an NIEH grant for a curricular project on environmental genetics which involves training trainers in three communities. He is also looking for some small grants and to find more people to train.

Ann is working in an intern on an article to send to the Appalachian Journal on cardiovascular health. She is also going to a meeting of the Appalachian Task Force in Columbus.

Mike and Phil have both submitted articles to the Appalachian Journal's special issue on community involvement in honor of Steve Fisher. Mike and Phil announced that the most recent edition of *Appalachia: Social Context Past and Present* is now in print. It's the fifth edition of this widely-used textbook. They will also be participating in the Turning Point session on migration at the 30th annual Appalachian Studies Conference in Maryville, TN.

Phil announced the completion of an interactive resource directory for teaching Appalachian topics in K-12 classrooms. It can be accessed at <http://www.appalachianstudies.org/resources/K12/>

Ryan is developing a cultural curriculum to integrate into the GED program. He will be co-authoring an article for *Cultural Literacy*.

Mini-Conference on April 16:

The mini-conference will be held from 9 to noon. Save the Date cards have been sent out. Invitations will follow. There is a registration form on the website. There will be a continental breakfast. The conference will be held at the Greater Cincinnati Health Collaborative. There will likely be three facilitators for the conference for breakout sessions on employment, education, and health needs.

The Research Committee will bring in experts, policy-makers, and community people. Ann McCracken developed an information piece on health needs of urban Appalachians. Roberta, Sherry, and Bonnie will develop one on education and employment. This information will be sent out with the invitations.

Jeff will put together a demography piece for the conference. Maureen will invite a reporter from the Cincinnati Enquirer to attend.

Additional Links

Center for the Study of Gender and Ethnicity in Appalachia

<http://www.marshall.edu/csega/index.asp>

The Appalachian Connection (newspaper)

<http://www.uacvoice.org/AppalachianConnection/apdec06.pdf>

East Tennessee State University Center for Appalachian Studies and Services

<http://www.etsu.edu/cass>

The University of Kentucky Appalachian Center

<http://www.research.uky.edu/Appalcenter/index.html>

Berea College Appalachian Center

<http://www.berea.edu/appalachiancenter/>

The Center for Appalachian Studies, Appalachian State University

<http://www1.appstate.edu/dept/appstudies/>

Appalachian Studies Association

<http://AppalachianStudies.org/>

Social Areas Report of Cincinnati

<http://www.socialareasofcincinnati.org/>



Urban Appalachian Council

2115 West Eighth Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45204

phone: (513) 251-0202

fax: (513) 557-2542

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