

Mountains

Continued from page 1

In fact, Bishop Matthew H. Clark is considered an Appalachian bishop, and co-signed a 1995 pastoral letter — "At Home in the Web of Life" — that highlighted Appalachia's current economic and social conditions. That letter was issued on the 20th anniversary of another such letter, "This Land is Home to Me," which was co-signed by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan, Bishop Clark's predecessor.

But when most of us hear the word "Appalachia," it's central Appalachia that comes to mind. Central Appalachia encompasses a good chunk of northern Tennessee, southern West Virginia and eastern Kentucky. Catholics are a tiny minority in central Appalachia, but they've made an impact in terms of helping to start schools, health facilities and other programs to benefit the people. And one such place Catholics have funded lies ...

Beyond Yonder

It's Tuesday afternoon, Nov. 10, and I am traveling up and down a rocky dirt road through the steep mountains of eastern Kentucky. I'm a passenger in a pickup truck piloted by Tom Shaughnessy, the editor of *Cross Roads*, official newspaper of the Catholic Diocese of Lexington.

The road bumps our truck up and down like a pogo stick enthusiast in an earthquake. We're tailing the rest of the press tour's participants who are traveling in a van. We are all on our way to an herb-growing cooperative, one of a small number of "sustainable," or ecologically friendly, economic efforts, many of which, including this one, are being funded by Catholic churches and groups.

Such efforts are being planted all over the mountains to help turn Appalachians away from their traditional dependence on such declining industries as coal mining to give them their livelihoods. Shaughnessy jokes, however, that apparently, paved roads are not considered a viable part of a sustainable economy quite yet.

When we get there, the Mountain Tradition Co-op's director, Linda Heller-Hilton, serves us spiced wine warmed over an open fire. In the co-op barn, two local fellows play banjo and upright bass. We know we've been told not to stereotype Appalachians, but we're actually quite happy that, at least this afternoon, we're getting to experience one of the more pleasant stereotypes about the region.

Heller-Hilton, a Kentucky native, wants her fellow Kentuckians to know they can plant and harvest herbs for medicinal purposes and sell them. It's already big busi-



Champion's mill in Tennessee processes thousands of wood chips each year. The mill has drawn fire from environmentalists opposed to clear-cut logging.

ness in the country, she says, and, over the long haul, will help Appalachians more than the mechanized coal and timber industries that, in her opinion, take more from the hills than they give.

"If people can plant something sustainable, then people would have the power to make a living that didn't hurt the land," she says.

How people will make a living in Appalachia was one of the larger issues we hear about on the tour. Some Appalachians say high tech computer companies will save the region, while others — often environmentalists — say the future lies in mountain tourism.

Residents say the future is uncertain because two of the region's biggest industries — coal mining and timber — both provide thousands of jobs, yet continue to draw criticism from many in the region.

A coal mining executive says his industry suffers from over-regulation by the federal government, which hampers its ability to compete with unregulated foreign coal companies. Meanwhile, environmentalists tell us the coal companies aren't regulated enough, and fail to adequately restore the mountain areas they mine.

A timber company official says his business works to save the forest, the company's income source. His environmentalist opponents vehemently disagree that clear-cut logging is in the best interests of Tennessee's woodlands. Clear-cut logging involves cutting down all the trees in a specific area, but environmentalists want the companies to do more selective cutting — only cutting some of the trees — which, the environmentalists say, preserves the complex ecosystem of the forest.

Meanwhile, Tony Turner, a TV news an-

chor with the CBS affiliate in Hazard, Ky., says Appalachians regularly play different angles in order to keep the region economically viable.

"If we need money from Washington, we tell them how poor we are," he tells our group when we visit his station. "But if we need jobs, we tell them how successful we are."

Outpost of hope

Many people we meet in Appalachia impress us with their dedication to serving the poor and the underserved. One in particular made a powerful impression on me. Her name is Eula Hall.

Hall founded and directs Mud Creek Clinic in Grethel, Ky. A friendly, 71-year-old Kentucky native, Hall has made it her life's work to bring health care to the low-income people of her eastern Kentucky area. A mannerly woman, Hall, however, is no pushover, having lobbied Congress in Washington, D.C., several times on health-care issues. This is a woman, keep in mind, who was shot at while standing on a union picket line.

"All my life, I've watched people suffer," she says, noting she's known families that starved simply because they were too proud to ask for help. "Here, people can come and ask for help."

Although she belongs to no denomination, Hall considers herself a Christian carrying out the work of Jesus.

"He said 'Blessed are the poor — what you have done to the least of these you have done to me,'" she says. "I believe that you're rewarded for what you did."

When she began the Mud Creek Clinic in 1973 — in her own house — a person would have had to travel several miles just

to see a doctor, she tells us. Most people had no primary care physician, she recalls, and many people depended on traditional home remedies for their ailments. Tuberculosis was a "big killer" she remembers, and women often died or suffered needlessly in childbirth.

Today, Mud Creek — which has received funding from the Diocese of Covington — serves between 75 and 100 patients a day, 30 percent of whom have no means of paying their bills, she says.

"Nobody's ever going to be turned away as long as I'm here," Hall concludes.

Outsiders

Appalachians told us that many in the region have come to view such outsiders as corporate leaders, volunteers, government officials — and press people like us — with some suspicion. Too often, residents say, outsiders have come here with their own agendas, whether it's harvesting the area's rich resources at the expense of the mountains, or trying to make its poor people adopt various salvific plans, both social and religious, without their input.

For example, Hall says she is able to persuade people to come to her health clinic because she's one of them. However, she says, if a social worker from outside the area travels the hollers, some families fear he or she is only interested in finding reasons why their children should be taken away.

At the same time, however, residents will hasten to point out that the region welcomes those who sincerely desire to work with the people.

For example, CORA — the Commission on Religion in Appalachia — sponsors numerous community groups working to develop small businesses, health-care centers, credit unions and environmental action projects to aid the people and save the land. Co-sponsored by the region's Catholic churches along with several Protestant denominations, CORA welcomes volunteers from outside Appalachia who want to help people help themselves.

"It's very important when you're going to help somebody that you ask them 'How can I help?'" says Glenmary Father John Rausch, who teaches at the Appalachian Ministries Resource Center in Berea, Ky.

Whatever the future of central Appalachia, the region's rural values — life at a slower pace, an emphasis on knowing your neighbor — are values that the whole country can use, Father Rausch says.

"From the roots of Appalachia are going to come the values that are going to rebuild society," Father Rausch concludes.

To learn more about volunteering in Appalachia, contact the Commission on Religion in Appalachia, 111 Crutcher Pike, Richmond, Ky. 40475-8606, or call 606/623-0429.

COURIER CLASSIFIEDS

GENERAL

Announcements

ADOPTIONS The Catholic Courier does not publish adoption advertising. To obtain a list of agencies that serve birth mothers and adoptive parents, call 716-328-4340. Agencies wishing to be included on this list may send information to the Catholic Courier.

Troubles?

Turn Them Over to God & a Good Lawyer!
Vincent M. Barone
Attorney & Counselor at Law
125 State St., Rochester
546-6440

SATURDAY 7:30 p.m.
Good Shepherd Church
3288 E. Henrietta Rd.,
Rochester
716-334-3518

Card of Thanks

TO SAINT JUDE: Thank you for all the favors received. D.M.

EMPLOYMENT

Help Wanted

DeSales Regional High School
(Coed, Middle States Accredited)
in Geneva, NY
(Finger Lakes Region),

seeks applicants for Principal beginning July 1, 1999. Applicant must be a practicing Catholic with demonstrated leadership, communications skills, and experience in educational administration with emphasis in fiscal management, strategic planning and resource development. Candidate must possess a Master's degree and 5 years of progressive administrative leadership experience. Salary and benefits are negotiable and commensurate with qualifications. Application deadline 1/11/99. Send letter of interest and resume to:

Search Committee
DeSales Regional High School
90 Pulteney St.
Geneva NY 14456

EMPLOYMENT

Help Wanted

STAFF PERSON NEEDED: for Bethany House, a Catholic Worker Community serving homeless women and children. Room, board, health insurance and a small stipend. For information, contact Lois Amendola, Bethany House, 169 St. Bridgets Dr., Rochester, NY 14605. (716) 454-4197.

TELEPHONE:Solicitor for National Catholic Magazine locally. Earn \$9 on each paid sale. Average 3 sales per hr. Will train. Protected territory, generous production, bonus, great repeat business. Please call Mr. Luba 1-800-782-0848.

MERCHANDISE

Wanted to Buy

Furniture, Trunks, Clocks, Sterling and China, Linens. Wanted: complete estates and households. Sell to me for cash or I will conduct a sale for you.
Marilyn's Antiques
716-647-2480

SERVICES

Financial Services

MORTGAGES
• Purchase • Refinance
Revierview Mortgage Corp.
Registered NYS Mortgage Broker
NYS Banking Department
Loans arranged through third party lenders
(716) 424-2040

Heating & Air Conditioning

Hicks Home Heating
Call us for Winter Comfort!
Heat & Air Conditioning Specialists
• Sales • Service • Installation
Family Owned & Operated
424-4848

Home Improvement

CARPENTRY: Handyman service. Will do odd jobs. No job too small. Call Ken 716-247-8785.

SERVICES

Masonry

MASONRY REPAIR: brick steps, sidewalks, basements, patchwork. Reasonable. 35 yrs. exp. etc. 716-323-1007. Al Meyvis, Sr.

Moving & Hauling

K-D Moving & Storage, Inc.
Experience in office, household moving and deliveries.
Big or Small, We do them All!
473-6610/473-4357
23 Arlington St. Rochester NY 14607
NYDOT#9657

SERVICES

Painting & Wallcovering

Al Meyvis Jr. Interior Painting
basement walls repaired, painted. Wet basement problems, basement windows, gutters repaired-cleaned. All types home repair.
Senior Discount • Certified
716-392-4435 • 323-2876

BURG-MASTER PAINTING/PAPERHANGING,
texture ceilings, walls, ceilings repaired, rugs shampooed. Insured, powerwashing. Dan Burgmaster, 716-663-0827.

Call 716-328-4340 to
advertise in the Courier
Classifieds!