



The Cougar Cry

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Dr. Jim Randolph, President

Places You Don't Forget

The other day, while browsing around the library, I happened to glance at the cover of the March 1991 issue of *Readers Digest* and noticed an article within the issue entitled "The Crimes of Mingo County." Now, to most people, this wouldn't mean much, but to me it did. You see, I had lived in Mingo County, West Virginia for six years.

Quickly, I flipped to the article and read the first line: "People called it the most corrupt place in America." Yup, that's the Mingo County I knew.

Mingo County is situated in southwestern West Virginia, on the Kentucky border. Located in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains, the county is made up of a number of small towns with such interesting names as Kermit, Ragland, Red Jacket, Dingess and Matewan. Most towns are squeezed in a narrow valley called a hollow or "holler" as it is called by the locals. The saying is that building space is so tight in the mountains that screen doors open in rather than out to keep from being hit by passing cars. In many cases, this was true.

The economic base of southern West Virginia is coal. Coal tipple and mine entrances dot the hillsides and during good times, coal trucks and trains travel the main arteries in and out of the area. During bad times, not much happens and life is difficult.

Mingo County's reputation is as rough as its terrain. The county is the home of the famous Hatfield-McCoy feud that took place after the Civil War. In 1920, the county was the site of one of the most devastating union-labor struggles in the country when the United Mine Workers of America clashed with mine owners. The bloodiest battle occurred in Matewan where miners and agents employed by the mining companies fought it out in a wild West style gun fight. (The 1987 movie "Matewan" documents this battle.)

President Lyndon B. Johnson chose a site just outside Mingo County to declare his "War on Poverty," which set up a national antipoverty program. He couldn't have picked a more suitable place. Poverty in Mingo County was a way of life. Unfortunately, so was corruption.

I believe that the isolation, the constant state of poverty and the struggles with the mining companies, which were controlled by outsiders, had made the people of Mingo County develop a strong allegiance to and a fear of their own leaders. For the most part, however, these leaders were more interested in getting rich than helping the people of the county.

To get rich in Mingo County, you had to be in control, and the easiest way to gain control was through politics. He who controlled the Sheriff's department, the county highway department, the county school board and the anti-poverty program controlled Mingo County. During the 70s and most of the 80s, these operations were controlled by one or two men who became exceedingly wealthy through an extensive network of drug dealers, stealing from the poor and selling political offices and jobs.

During my stay in Mingo County, from 1975 to 1980, I observed, first-hand, many interesting anomalies of

"Who's Who" Chosen for 1991 Academic Year



Every year, Wilkes Community College chooses 20 students to represent the school in *Who's Who Among Students In American Junior Colleges*. The students are chosen based on their leadership abilities, scholastic achievement, and potential for future success. WCC is proud to announce that the following students have been chosen to represent WCC this school year: Dena Gillette, Moravian Falls; Phyllis Smith, North Wilkesboro; Dian Marcum, North Wilkesboro; Thomas Parker, Statesville; Kathleen Brown, Hays; Sherry Miller, West Jefferson; Amy Pennell, Taylorville; Amber Herman, Taylorville; Louise Mullis, Union Grove; Michael Lyles, State Road; Gina Anthony, Hamptonville; Linda Carlton, Wilkesboro; Tamara Elledge, Purlear; Melissa Tedder, Moravian Falls; Jeffery Blackburn, North Wilkesboro; Amber Seals, North Wilkesboro; Nancy Jones, Ronda; Vicky Smith, West Jefferson; Tonya Bottomley, Wilkesboro; Rebecca Montoya, Millers Creek.

justice. For instance, while voting, I noticed a man being given a twenty dollar bill and a list of people who were to receive his vote. A poll worker was actually allowed to enter the voting booth to ensure that the \$20 was properly earned. On my way out, I spotted the voter and asked why he voted for those candidates. "Because I like them," he responded.

"But, I saw their poll worker give you money," I said.

"That," he concluded, "is exactly why I like them."

County school buildings were always a shambles. "Why?" I asked soon after arriving in the county. Service and maintenance positions were saved for political payoffs, I was told. "You wouldn't expect a person who gets a political job to work, would you?"

The article, written by Fergus M. Bordewich, tells the story of the downfall of two political bosses after extensive investigation by the U.S. Attorney General's Office. They found that drug-dealing was commonplace. Drugs were sold within eye sight of the police department. One investigator was quoted as saying "Everything was backwards. The police were criminals; the welfare program stole from the poor."

Happily, the current boss, who headed up the antipoverty program since its beginning, got 12 years in federal prison. The ex-sheriff was sentenced to 14 years and the major drug dealers were also put away. Maybe this is a happy ending, but I have my doubts. Change is slow to come to the southern mountains of West Virginia.

Remember!

Plans are in motion for the 1991 nationwide observance of Days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust beginning on Sunday, April 7 and continuing through Sunday, April 14. Members of Congress and the Administration, governors, mayors, civic leaders, churches and synagogues, universities, colleges and schools will observe Days of Remembrance in ceremonies, dramatic presentations, art and documentary exhibits, through reading, prayer and meditations.

The national civic ceremony will be held in Washington, DC on Thursday, April 11, Holocaust Remembrance Day. The theme for 1991 will be — Fifty Years Ago: From Terror to Systematic Murder.

Review of Forum

On Tuesday, March 19, 1991, Wilkes Community College held a forum on 'The Middle East After The War'. To begin the forum Bud Mayes gave a brief introduction of the guest speakers.

Dr. Jawad I. Barghothi, Professor of Political Science at Appalachian State University, was the first to speak. Dr. Barghothi was originally from the Middle East. He spoke to the audience on how the Iraqi Government would rebuild the country. In his opinion the United States Government was not being completely truthful to the American public. He went on to stress his point by telling how U.S. politicians coerced the allied countries to war. Dr. Barghothi also felt that Saddam Hussein was not the threat the government made him out to be.

Dr. David L. White, Associate Professor of History at Appalachian State University, gave a brief history background of the Middle East. He spoke on how the United States' past record with Iraq probably indicated the seize of Kuwait. He also explained how the future relations with Iraq and other countries in the Middle East would change.

The forum was concluded by Bill Moffett who gave a question and answer session on the opinions expressed during the forum.

—Derek Ellis
Kemp Kirk

Be Prepared!

World Health Day, April 7, has as its 1991 theme: *Should Disaster Strike, Be Prepared?* In case you need convincing, note the following:

- In 1906, an earthquake struck Northern California and killed approximately 2,000 people in and around the city of San Francisco.
- An earthquake in Long Beach, California killed 100 people in 1933.
- In 1964, an earthquake of magnitude 9.2 on the Richter scale, the largest ever in the United States, killed 100 people in Anchorage, Alaska.
- In 1971, an earthquake struck San Fernando, California killing 64 people.
- Mount St. Helens, a volcano in Washington state, erupted violently in 1980, leaving 62 people dead.
- In 1989, Hurricane Hugo struck the North and South Carolina Coast, killing 21 people and causing an estimated

\$7 billion damage.

• The Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989 killed 63 people in the San Francisco Bay area.

• In 1988 and 1989, floods and flash floods caused 127 deaths and approximately \$760 million in damage in the United States.

A natural disaster like one of the above could happen to you. When? Who knows. Be prepared all the time.

How? Ask for a free copy of the *World Health Day Planning Kit*. This 30-page guidebook contains background information of disaster preparedness and relief, a World Health Day poster, activity suggestions, proclamations, lesson suggestions, and a special resource section listing other groups which provide disaster preparedness and relief-related educational materials as well as information on other global health issues.

Obtain your free copy from the American Association for World Health, 2001 "S" St., NW, Suite 530, Washington, DC 2009; (202) 265-0286. The kits are available in English and Spanish. Please specify.

College Financial Aid: What do you know about it?

Says Student Loan Marketing Association (Sallie Mae) Senior VP Dennis Kernahan, "It pays to have a basic knowledge of the public and private aid programs that are available — and where to begin to apply for them. Answer the following statements true or false:

1. T F Nearly half of all students today receive some sort of public or private assistance to finance their college education.
2. T F Most financial aid is awarded to students based on academic performance, rather than demonstrated financial need.
3. T F Financial aid packages prepared by colleges cover tuition, but students and their families have to pay for room and board, books and personal expenses on their own.
4. T F The most expensive colleges and universities rarely award financial aid to their students.

5. T F If a family's income is more than \$30,000 annually, the family isn't eligible for federal financial aid.
6. T F Students do not have to make payments on their federally-sponsored student loans while they are in school.
7. T F Even though Stafford Loans (formerly Guaranteed Student Loans) are sponsored by the federal government, not all students are eligible for them.
8. T F If a family's income makes a student ineligible for need-based financial aid, the only option parents have is to take out a standard consumer loan from their lender.

Answers

1 — True. Last year, nearly half of the 13 million students enrolled in post-secondary educational institutions nationwide received some type of public and/or private financial aid.

2 — False. Most financial aid is awarded based on financial need.

3 — False. The financial aid package developed by a school's financial aid office takes into account the total cost of attendance, including tuition, fees, room and board, and books.

4 — False. The most expensive colleges usually have more financial aid available, using more of their own funds for student aid.

5 — False. Many factors determine a family's need, including a family's assets and number of children in college, in addition to income.

6 — True. Loan repayment begins after the student leaves school or drops below half-time status — and then, only after a six- to 12-month grace period.

7 — True. Stafford loans are awarded to students based on demonstrated financial need. (SLS loans, another federally-sponsored loan program, are available to independent students without a needs test.)

8 — False. While many parents rely on competitively-priced, private loan plans, the predominant education loan used by parents is the federally-sponsored PLUS loan, which provides parents at all income levels with a low-interest, supplemental source of education financing.

Ways to Meet College Costs

Financing a College Education, a new booklet from the Money Management Institute of Household International, can help almost anyone wondering how to manage the costs involved — parents hoping to assist their offspring, high schoolers attempting to make it on their own, college students unable to make ends meet, even graduates confronted with student debts.

Right up-front in the 32-page booklet are charts, information and guidelines for readers wanting to set up college-savings funds, including those off to a late start. This section is followed by descriptions of the investments considered most suitable for college savings. There's also a section on borrowing, for those unable to meet their target goals.

Financing a College Education, in addition, contains a wealth of information for high school students on ways they can meet some of the costs themselves. It systematically explores the types of financial aid offered by federal and state governments, colleges, businesses and community groups, by walking the reader through the entire process.

The booklet was developed by money management specialists and written in consultation with experts in education, business and government. To obtain a copy, send \$1.25 and your name and address to Money Management Institute, Household International, 2700 Sanders Road, Prospect Heights, IL 60070