



S.A.L.S. JOURNAL

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WORKERS' SOLIDARITY CULTURAL FESTIVAL MAY 22

Everyone is invited to the Fourteenth Annual Workers' Solidarity Cultural Festival at 1 PM, Saturday, May 22. This year we will be highlighting folksinger Anne Feeney, cultural artist Jude Binder, Shayar and Krooshal Force, the SALS Harpists, and several other performers to be announced.

Anne Feeney is the Pittsburgh-born and raised granddaughter of a fearless miners' union organizer who also used music to carry the message of solidarity to working people. After two decades of regional activism and hell-raising, she took her show on the road. She's the minister of culture to some of the defining labor struggles of our time – the Frontier casino strike, the Decatur, Ill., labor wars, the Detroit News strike and Alaska Steel.

Anne Feeney is no stranger to trouble. Her riveting performance during Seattle's WTO protests is featured in the acclaimed video *This Is What Democracy Looks Like*. Narrated by Susan Sarandon, the video also includes music by Rage Against the Machine. Feeney's award-winning songs have made it into the repertoire of many activists and performers. Peter, Paul and Mary have recently included *Have You Been to Jail for Justice?* in their new boxed set. Anne herself has released eight CD's. *The Boston Herald* calls her "...the most creatively radical performer—on the coffee house circuit," and for good reason. Her web site is annefeeney.com.

Jude Binder, based at Heartwood in the Hills in Calhoun County, is West Virginia's leading cultural artist in the movement for social and economic justice. She will perform an interpretative dance on

violence in our society based on the work of folksinger Pete Seeger. Binder is well known for her expressionist works that frequently are masked creative representations.

Shayar and Krooshal Force hail from Jamaica. The group now based in Beckley, has become identified as West Virginia's premiere Reggae Band and provides a seemingly limitless repertoire of pulsating beats. Songwriter and lead singer Leval "Shayar" Jarrett, who spent 15 years in New York City while playing with the popular reggae band, Burning Spear, continues to take his traditional roots reggae to the world with his fellow Jamaicans, Robert Gray (keyboards) and Wayne Shorter (drums).

The most unique performance will be by SALS YouthBuild and young adults who will perform "Harping for Harmony" on a harp constructed from local worksite building materials. The youth have received direction from harpist Dr. John Lozier at West Virginia University, who has conducted several harping workshops at SALS.

The cultural festival is open to everyone. Admission is free and refreshments will be available on premises. Exhibits of SALS Housing and Youth projects will be on display and the facility has both indoor and outdoor play areas for the children. The festival will take place at 1 PM, Saturday, May 22, at the former Beards Fork Elementary School located on Beards Fork Road, 2 miles east off WV 61 in Fayette County. The turnoff from WV 61 is located about 8 miles from Montgomery and 17 miles from Oak Hill. For further information, call 779-2772, 779-2280, or 800/515-1349.

Don't complain if you don't vote

By Gary Zuckett

"The most serious threat to democracy is the notion that it has already been achieved." - Unknown

Everyone has heard the saying, "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem." There is no better illustration for that than our democratic electoral process.

According to our Secretary of State's Web page (www.wvsos.com), only three-fourths of eligible voters in West Virginia are registered. Actually, this estimate is high, as federal law makes it hard to delete dead people and ex-residents. And in a typical primary election, only one-third of those three-fourths who bothered to register actually vote. Translated, only one-fourth of eligible WV citizens will choose our candidates for the fall elections.

In 2000, the last presidential primary, only 41% of registered voters went to the polls. In 2002, an off-year election, we were back down to 32% participation in the primary. The 2000 presidential election in WV was won by 6 percentage points. Less than half (47%) of our eligible voting age population cast a vote. Considering that West Virginia's five electoral votes put Bush over the top and won him the national election (Florida and the Supreme Court aside), would things have been different in WV if more folks had voted? Would United States history have been changed?

We're on the eve of another presidential primary election. If you aren't already registered, it's probably too late to vote in this primary. However, if you register now (visit the Secretary of State's Web page and print out your registration form), you can vote this fall. Remember, if you don't vote, you're part of the problem.

It's now easier to vote than ever because of recent changes in election law. No-fault early voting is now permitted. You can vote early starting 20 days before election day for any reason. Just go to the county courthouse (even on Saturday) and vote when it is convenient. Now there really no excuse to not vote!

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The excuses of "It doesn't make any difference whether or not I vote" or "There isn't anyone worth voting for" are not true. Many state races are won by very small margins. For example, the 31st delegate district, located in Charleston's East End, was designed during the previous redistricting in 1990 to be more or less a minority district. The first election in this new delegate district was a primary race between African-American candidate Norm Ferguson, and Nelson Sorah. Sorah won by just three votes. This district has not elected a person of color ever since.

The last mayor's race in Weston was ultimately decided in the courts because it was "too close to call." And finally, our whole nation was rocked during the last presidential election when a relatively small number of votes (in several states) could have changed history.

As for the epithet that there aren't any good candidates to vote for, again, not true. Check out the endorsements of groups like WV Citizen Action (www.wvcag.org), Sierra Club, AFL-CIO and other labor and teachers organizations, etc.

In many races, the real election IS this month's primary. In areas that are overwhelmingly registered democrat, the winner of the democratic primary is usually a shoe-in against the challenger in the fall.

This must be the reason that, when looking over the voting numbers on the Secretary of State's page, I notice that in off-year elections, turnouts were actually bigger in the primary than the general election. So, don't wait until fall to vote - and expect to have someone worth voting for.

If you read this before May 11, do your homework; find out who IS worth voting for, and DO IT!

Democracy is an imperfect form of government, but the more who participate the better it gets.

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Director's Report

by John David

The SALS Family has sadly lost several people over the past period. They include Virginia Dent (spouse of Board Member Tim Dent), Mary Bryant (spouse of deceased Cliff Bryant), Sam Batey (spouse of Board Member Anna Batey), Neale Clark (folksinger and reporter), Jerry Beavers (step-father of former VISTA Nicole Hurley), Pete Comer (brother of housing specialist Debbie Spurlock), Larry Harless (attorney), Roger Wilson (former YouthBuild member), Frances White (former AmeriCorps member), Sarah Lanham Taylor (former YouthBuild member), and Vickie Smith's Mother, Sister and Niece. All of us were deeply saddened by these transitions.

SALS Board Chair Helen M. Powell was treated at a surprise 75th birthday party. The event, which was attended by several hundred friends and family was held at the Holiday Inn in Oak Hill.

There have been several grant developments. HUD reversed its decision and awarded us our 7th consecutive YouthBuild cycle. The Benedum Foundation awarded us funds to obtain the former Beards Fork Church of God, sponsor Group Workcamps this summer, and continue administrative/ match support. Mission West Virginia, in coordination with the Appalachian Regional Commission and Bill Loope with the Region 1 Workforce Investment Board, selected our community center for a fully equipped computer lab.

The West Virginia Development Office, in collaboration with the Appalachian Regional Commission, awarded us two grants for an unemployed adult training program and staff/board training. The Commission on Religion in Appalachia renewed us for our economic/ health/environmental justice initiatives. The West Virginia Development Office, in collaboration with the Fayette County Commission, awarded the Commission a HUD Small Cities Block Grant that will build a courthouse elevator and an annex at our community center. The Fayette County Commission has renewed its support for several initiatives including Group Workcamps, Energy Express, and community center support. The WV Legislature awarded SALS a \$5,000 Budget Digest grant last year which is now coming. Finally, the 21st Century "Accent Education" Community Learning Center Project, in collaboration with New River Family Health Association and Fayette County Schools, has been renewed.

The New River Family Health Association has applied for a service scope modification with the appro-



Kathrine Atwater, life-long Fayette Co. resident, speaks at SALS for Black History Month

priate regulatory authorities in order to begin some health clinic services at the Community Center in Beards Fork. Two rooms at the Center have been cleaned and equipped for that purpose. Dr. Dan Doyle, who in the past has been nationally recognized as rural physician of the year, will be the attending physician on two Fridays per month. SALS will rotate the youth and adult crews for screenings and preventive services. The clinic will also provide services for the 21st Century after-school programs, Energy Express and residents of the served communities in the catchment area.

Mission West Virginia's computer lab is now operational with ten stations. The grant also provided us with one year's service on Charter Pipeline, thereby freeing up the existing phone lines when internet access is needed. Pipeline service was also made available in all of the offices and the clinic area in the community center.

Herman and Cormany has completed the latest SALS audit in accordance with the federal A-133 standards. We continue to be a healthy nonprofit and major credit is due to our bookkeeping staff of Ruth Lanham, Brenda Winter, Valerie Cowley, and Tom Bass.

Joe Mario, who has regularly come with Global Volunteers, is once again planning another whitewater rafting trip for SALS youth and staff in August. He also has placed SALS on the matching list for donations by his employer Hewitt-Packard. For every dollar designated to SALS by a HP employee, HP will match the donation. This practice is common with other companies. Thus, if any of you can make a similar arrangement, please let us know.

Columbia National Resources LLC is now back in the capable hands of W. Henry Harmon. Henry and his staff in the past have worked on rehabilitations and the

Continued on next page

firm has donated numerous vehicles. His son, Mike, spent a week of time with several crews over the past year. This year, CNR has donated several replacement vehicles, including a Jeep and pick-ups.

Staff have attended numerous training workshops and conferences. Artie Mullins has attended workshops on computer/housing and, along with Brenda Winter, represented SALS at the Commission on Religion in Appalachia annual ADPC meeting. VISTAs Cynthia Rollins, Bonita Johnson, Marie Settle, Jessica Shrewsberry, and Lisa King, along with Charlene (Red) Newkirk, have attended several workshops related to the 21st Century project. Kathryn South has attended Youth-Build conferences and various training sessions related to the recently formed Fayette County Housing and Economic Opportunity Council. Vickie Smith and Brenda Winter have attended AmeriCorps Learn and Serve and Women/Nontraditional-work workshops. Jackie Asbury has attended several housing workshops. Brenda Winter and I attended an AmeriCorps workshop on building bridges with disability organizations.

Tony Newkirk, who works for UPS and is the spouse of Charlene (Red) Newkirk, was recently honored at a national UPS convention for his community service activities with SALS. UPS actually sent a film crew here and prepared a video showing Tony working on various projects. Several SALS staff members were also interviewed for the video, which was played at the convention in Florida.

Jan Rezek, who is WVU-Tech's only full-time sociologist and is also a SALS Board Member, accepted on behalf of SALS the Helen Lewis Community Service Award at the Appalachian Studies Association annual meeting in Cherokee, NC. Joining her in the acceptance was former WVU-Tech sociologist Chris Baker, who initially nominated SALS for the award and presented a paper at the conference about SALS work in community development. Those who submitted recommendation letters for the SALS award were Dr. Karen LaRoe, (President of WVU-Tech), Cecil Roberts (President of the UMWA), and Guy Dooley with United Bank. Helen Lewis is a long-time Appalachian scholar and activist who has related to Highlander, Berea College, Mountain Life and Work/Council of the Southern Mountains, and Clinch Valley College, among others.

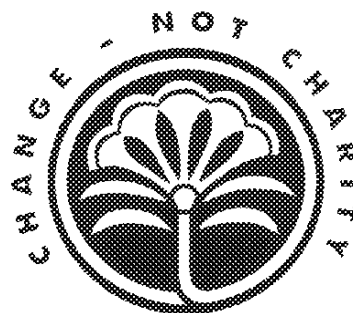
Jackie Asbury and Jan Rezek are co-presenting a paper at an upcoming sociological meeting on the role of women in leadership in SALS. They are presently in the process of conducting interviews.

Once again, SALS conducted various community service activities on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. A presentation by Norman Jordan also occurred for those in

the after school program.

As noted elsewhere, top-flight cultural artists are scheduled for the Annual Worker's Solidarity and Cultural Festival on May 22nd. It will be worth your time to attend and we would welcome a gigantic turnout.

Congratulations to several marriages involving the SALS family. They include Site Supervisor J.R. Williams and VISTA Jessica Shrewsberry to each other, as well as ARC Member George Hensley Senior.



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Appalachian
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Jan and Chris (left to right) accept award from Helen C. Lewis (center).

SALS Receives Award at Appalachian Studies Conference

by Jan Rezek, Assistant Professor-Sociology, WVU-Tech & SALS board member

It was a great pleasure to represent the Southern Appalachian Labor School at the Appalachian Studies Association Conference in Cherokee NC. The conference title was "Building a Healthy Region-From Historical Trauma to Hope and Healing". Isn't that exactly what SALS is all about?! Everyone that receives this SALS newsletter must be proud that "building a healthy region" is the reason for the continued need for and success of SALS. At the awards ceremony the Southern Appalachian Labor School was the proud recipient of the **Helen C. Lewis Community Service Award**.

This is quite an honor for the Labor School and I was honored to accept the award for SALS. Helen Lewis is a prominent figure in Appalachian activism and Appalachian Studies. The conference had over 700 people in attendance. This was a great opportunity for SALS to gain name recognition and let people know the good work being done in rural West Virginia. Chris Baker, a former professor at WVUTech, nominated SALS for the award and was also there with me to accept the award. Dr. Baker also did a paper on the community work carried on at SALS. That paper will appear on the SALS web site in the near future.

The conference offered a wide variety of workshops that were valuable to me for the workshops I conduct at SALS as well as my classes at WVUTech. It was also a great opportunity to learn more about the Cherokee history so rich in Appalachia and make connections with many cultural practices in Appalachia with the indigenous people who were our predecessors in this land we love.

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Housing Moving Forward

Jackie Asbury - Housing

February 10, 2004, John David and myself had a very successful meeting with John Bendel of Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB), in Flatwoods, WV. We discussed whether or not to apply for funding for 2004 for the Affordable Housing Program and decided to wait until 2005, because we are just starting to work on the funding that was granted to us in 2003. SALS will be doing 12 additional rehabs in Fayette County starting very soon. John Bendel also used SALS as an example in the FHLB Guidebook, which we felt very proud of. Thanks to John Bendel and Eric Dickerson of FHLB of Pittsburgh for choosing SALS as an example!

Dave Peters of Group Work Camps came to SALS in late January to discuss future projects with SALS and Group Work Camps in 2005. We will be doing repairs in the Oak Hill area. For this year we will be doing repairs on approximately 130 homes in both the Oak Hill and the Montgomery areas. For 2005 repairs, if interested you should contact Debbie Spurlock of SALS to be put on the list.

Appalachian Regional Commission, (ARC) has funded SALS to place six unemployed adults to do housing duties for one year and hopefully they will fund us again next year for six more adults.

I did write a proposal for funding through FHLB of Atlanta. We were not funded last year, but we are very hopeful that we will be funded this year. This funding will be to help with the match with our Housing Preservation Grant submitted to USDA Rural Development. We should be informed very soon whether we will be funded or not. We have our fingers crossed.

Jeff Palmer from Group Work Camp came to SALS in early March to meet the staff and the ARC people. He was very pleased with the work our people at SALS do with this project and wants to continue this relationship for years to come. He was very impressed with the work we do to help the people in poverty which is what we are all about.

In the housing aspect of things we have three rehabs underway and are working on two new homes at the present time. We should be placing families in the new homes in the next couple of months. Until next time....

YouthBuild and WIR/YES News

by Kathryn South/YouthBuild
& Brenda Winter/WIA-YES

Since the last newsletter was sent our young people have been very busy learning how to do more tasks related to building and rehabbing houses and also keeping up with reading and math studies at the Vo Tech Center.

In January the YouthBuild members participated in a Martin Luther King Day Celebration which included working on a roof for a man with disabilities in the Oak Hill area and then enjoying a presentation by Norman Jordan.

We've had several volunteer groups visit and join in with construction of the houses at various sites of our project. Rev. Mark Porter and three of his parishioners from Indiana have visited several times during the past few months and we look forward to seeing them again real soon. We love having visitors in our little community since it really boosts morale of the young people and the staff as well.

Mrs. Helen M. Powell, SALS Chairperson, visited the Beards Fork site to speak to staff and youth about her involvement in the civil rights movement and her work with others on human rights issues. Several other speakers also participated in Black History Month at the SALS Center including Ms. Atwater and Mr. Jordon. Thankyou for sharing your knowledge with our young people. You are an inspiration to us all!

YouthBuild graduate Terry Black is working with the ARC program, which is involved with doing work to get ready for Group Workcamps this summer. Six folks are visiting communities from Gauley Bridge to Fayetteville and all the areas in-between to find families who need minor repairs done on their homes. Families with school children in the 21st Century "Accent Education" collaborative are also being contacted

Several new faces have been added to our roster of YouthBuild members: Shanda Morton, James White, David Spencer, Kristy Reese, John Chapman, and Janes E white to name a few. Welcome ALL! Krystal Maynor joined our group last Fall and passed her GED test in the first few weeks in the program. Great going Krystal! Daniel David and former YouthBuild member Loretta Elder had a son in March. Rebecca Williams also added a new member to her household. Congrats!

Wesley Jones joined George Hensley's crew a few months ago and is improving his skills and gaining confidence in his ability to do basic building tasks. Lavina



Group WorkCamps volunteers repair an old roof

Bigelow is a fresh face who works on Tom McClung's cork site. She also is doing well and improving every day.

We are still recruiting for the YouthBuild Program. If you know of a young person between the ages of 17 and 24 who does not have a high school diploma and would like to learn construction skills please give us a call at 779-2280.

In February, Professor John Lozier with the Harping for Harmony Foundation, thorough WVU Extension service, brought supplies and plans to assist our YouthBuild and WIA members in constructing a Harp. The six youth who participated were: Shandra Morton, Wesley Jones, Franklin Daniels, Sayer Romage, Eric Miller, and James Estep. We also stopped by and attempted to play the harp with the group.

The whole idea of Harping for Harmony is a way of dealing with anger and stressful situations by using music as a channel for diverting negative feelings into more positive and restful outcomes. It is very difficult to have any bad feelings or depression while strumming the soothing strings of this magnificent instrument. We hope to see Mr Lozier again in a few months to show him what the young folks have learned. Richard Miller got the plans and believes he can build a harp with the helpful instruction Mr. Lozier offered. A performance is scheduled for the Workers Solidarity Cultural Festival in May.

With Spring upon us we have exciting plans for our young people to get involved in voter registration and the primary and general elections this year. With so many issues that involve the lives and futures of our youth and their families, we do not intend to sit by and let someone else make decisions that will affect our lives without having some input. Please join us and get out and vote this year to make a difference

Volunteers Highlight Winter

By Artie Mullins, Volunteer/Building Coordinator

SALS has enjoyed entertaining a record number of volunteers in the past year. SALS is in the unique position of being able to host volunteers from all over the country and a few from abroad. As the volunteer coordinator, I am in close contact with the volunteers and find this work very rewarding. Our staff and youth have also expressed how much they enjoy the interaction with the volunteers. We have worked together; laughed together; rafted together and grown from our interactions.

The winter months brought us college students from all over the U.S., giving up their Christmas and spring breaks to work alongside our youth. We were also fortunate enough to host the AmeriCorps NCCCs (National Civilian Community Corps) during October and November. Rev. Mark Porter from Madison Presbyterian of Madison, Indiana, and members of his congregation have put in long hard hours throughout the winter in preparing or dorm annex. Mark and his congregation have become an important part of this organization and the SALS family in general.

On a personal note, I spent the month of November in St. Paul, Minnesota training with Global Volunteers. Global Volunteers is an international organization that provides working vacations for professionals and has had a long history with SALS. Michelle Gran, the vice president of Global Volunteers, visited us last fall and decided to hire me as permanent on-site team leader. I have found this alliance to be beneficial to all involved. SALS now has an inside link to Global Volunteers; Global Volunteers has a direct link to us; and me, I have met so many wonderful people from all over the world that words cannot express my gratitude to both organizations.

The upcoming months offers an intimidating amount of work to be accomplished. We are planning our Solidarity Festival, which will occur on May 22nd, and are looking at a busy summer filled with volunteer groups, Energy Express, Group Work Camps, computer classes, construction of a gazebo at the community center and finishing the work on the annex. As always, we will pull together as group to make all of our goals a reality.

Accent Education a Success

by Charlene 'Red' Newkirk, Site Coordinator

Accent education, the after-school tutoring program funded through the 21st Century Community Learning Center, has been very successful of far this year. The
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students continue to attend and enjoy the various projects the program offers. In addition to the learning and nutritional benefits the program offers, they have also enjoyed several fun-filled trips to places including the Clay Center and the Disney on Ice show at the Charleston Civic Center. The students also enjoyed a great learning experience. These trips are a way of rewarding the students for their hard work and faithful attendance.

Learning Through Helping

Bonita Johnson, AmeriCorps VISTA

This is my third year as an AmeriCorps VISTA member at SALS. I started off the new year by going to the nursing homes, visiting the home bound seniors once a month, and then going to seniors homes who live in the community of Beards Fork. We have visited many seniors in the area such as Ms. Shirley Johnson, Ms. Flora Barrett, and Ms. Marion Dillard.

We've also had a Soup Day and Bingo program for seniors. February was Black History Month and we had several speakers for the month including, Ms. Helen M. Powell, Ms. Katherine Atwater, and Ms. Ruby Price, RN from Montgomery General Hospital. Ms. Price came to check our blood pressure and blood sugar.

Also we have a quilting group every 1st and 3rd Friday of the month. Ms. Shirley Kincaid, Ms. Beatrice Hamilton, and several other people from around the community donated lots of material. Ms. Anna Fugate teaches the class and Ms. Barbara Williams, along with Ms. Carol Rangnow, volunteer.

I'm proud to be an AmeriCorps VISTA helping anyone that I can. Volunteering here at Southern Appalachian Labor School (SALS) has taught me so much.

Grant Funds Blacklung Volunteer Training

Following a tradition of helping coal miners and widows that was spearheaded thirty years ago by SALS Chairperson, Helen M. Powell, a group of 20 retired miners, widows, and family members are studying the complex Federal Black Lung regulations in order to assist others seeking federal black lung benefits. The training is funded by a grant from the Crandall, Pyles, Haviland & Turner Foundation and is sponsored by SALS, New River Health Association, and the Fayette County Black Lung

Continued on next page

Association.

Under the direction of SALS board member, John Cline, who has been assisting and representing federal black lung claimants for the last 14 years, the group will be meeting every Friday afternoon for 6 weeks. Initially, they are learning how to review the results of pulmonary function tests and regulations in order to determine whether someone has a viable claim. Then, they will shift their attention to the regulatory process for developing evidence, filing an appeal, and preparing for a formal hearing.

Just like the miners and widows who needed help from Ms. Powell and the Black Lung Association thirty years ago, today's miners and their survivors also desperately need assistance because there are so few attorneys who will still represent federal black lung claimants. Therefore, SALS proudly joins with the Crandall, Pyles, Haviland & Turner Foundation, New River Health Association, and the Fayette County Black Lung Association in support of this new group of dedicated volunteers and their efforts to study and help others in need.

Construction Notes

Vickie Smith, Construction Manager

Everyone has had a very busy winter and we are enjoying some warm dry days.

Timmy Hall's crew has finished a new house in Ingram Branch and his crew was also helping work on a manufactured unit in Beards Fork. He also helped Tommy McClung's crew complete a rehab in Page. Currently, Timmy's crew is in the Oak Hill area putting an addition on another manufactured unit in order to help the home owner access his home with a wheel chair.

Tommy's crew is working on a rehab in the page area that should be complete soon. His crew has also finished an extensive rehab in the Page area. Recently, Tommy went to St. Louis for a YouthBuild training session for supervisors.

George Hensley's crew is building a new home in Phase Two of Page. This home is just about complete. The crew also has another manufactured unit ready to move from the valley area to Page.

J.R. Williams' crew is working on a extensive two-story rehab in Cokeoven. They are now taping and mudding drywall. This job should be completed in the next two months.

Ron Yellets' crew finished a new house in the Montgomery area and is now building a new two-

story house in Oak Hill/Minden area. We've had several set backs on this one. The first was that we had to take down the framing and restart the project due to family size. The second one was that the home was vandalized and most of the windows and doors were broken out of the unit.

We have Dave Shaver on the road to supply the jobs with materials several times a week in order to keep our job sites more productive and cut fuel cost. This is working very well. In his spare time he moves our equipment and works to keep our equipment and fleet of vehicles safe and on the road.

I have been busy as well. I attended two zoning hearings in order to obtain special use permits for the homeowners who are receiving manufactured units, and worked with Jackie, Debbie and Jennifer on housing issues. We have also had several meetings with USDA on compliance issues and inspections of the jobs that we have completed.

Brenda and I took a couple of youth to a conference in Blackwater Falls. Sallie Harrington, from the WV Dept. of Education, was quit impressed with our youth. Kathryn, Brenda and myself had a meeting with Workers Compensation in hopes of lowering our rates. This will take a great deal of effort from all to accomplish. I am also working with our engineers in order to locate property that SALS has acquired so that we can get several new foundations in the ground. Dave and I will be doing the clearing on the acreage.

As most know I have had a couple unusual months with many deaths in my immediate family and I would like to thank all of the Board Members, Staff and associates for all the support and prayers during these trying times. It was and is very appreciated.

Housing Shorts

The past few months we have been working on the Dorman house. We are almost 70% finished. We have had several different groups come in to help out and we specially thank them all. We have developed a couple new ways to handle some of the disciplinary actions and things are working a lot better. The idea of one person being responsible for all the materials being brought to the sites has developed very well. At first there were a few problems, but they all worked out. Now things are really going smoothly. We hope to be finished with the Dorman house before too long and I look forward to going to another house. I would also like to say thanks to all my crew for their hard work.

J.R. Williams, Site Supervisor

I have finished up the Frazier house. This was one of the older homes in Page. It required some extensive repairs. And with a lot of hard work, Mrs. Frazier is now living in her newly remodeled home. After leaving that site I moved right down the street to my next site, the Harvey house. Hopefully this site will be finished before long.

Thomas McClung, Site Supervisor

We are working on the Harvey house and have a lot accomplished. Here are some of the things that we have done so far: moved all furniture out, took floors out, removed insulation from the walls and under the house, painted, put up sheet rock, installed some plumbing, worked on the roof, took up tile, and started painting the outside of the house.

Lavina Bigelow, YouthBuild member

For the past several months we have done a number of things. We have met a lot of interesting people and tried to make a difference everyday. Some of the days are a little slow, and other days there is plenty to do.

Lately we were kind of between jobs, so we managed to help Tommy McClung's crew remodel Grace Harvey's house in Page as well as doing a few odds and ends left behind by other crews.

We made a huge difference in Beards Fork on a trailer that really needed help, but we were pulled off that job to do other things that needed done.

With each problem we have come across, we still go to work everyday and do the very best we can with what we have to work with. We think we do a pretty good job. The next job assigned to our crew will be in Page Bottom.

By Timmy Hall's Crew

I have been very busy supplying all the sites with material on a daily basis. I feel we are more productive and efficient with our new system. I am also able to keep our tools in a central location for distribution to various sites. With the good weather approaching our equipment is being serviced so that we can clear new property to build on.

By Dave Shaver, Site Supervisor



Matte Staunton & Daughters at her 91st birthday party at SALS Community Center

Staunton Birthday in New Home

By Tim Hall, Site Supervisor

After months of hard work the Staunton home is finally finished. Mrs. Staunton was able to move into her new home in time for her 91st birthday. She had been staying with her daughter in Michigan. She was very excited to be able to come home to West Virginia. Mrs. Staunton and her family were very pleased with her new home. Her daughters brought a huge fruit basket and thank you card to the SALS office for everyone who was involved in the process to help their mother. The SALS Community Center had a Senior Tea Party, at which Mrs. Staunton was surprised with a birthday cake. Everyone involved in helping to make Mrs. Staunton's life easier was very excited to see how happy she is in her new home.

After finishing the Staunton house I began repairing a manufactured unit for a man with disabilities and his wife. These units are donated and then refurbished for the people in need of a place to live. The unit is almost ready for the family to move in. I have also been helping Tommy at his site in Page. There is always work to be done, houses to be finished and families to please.

Mt. Hope After School Program

Jessica Shrewsberry, AmeriCorps/VISTA

My name is Jessica Shrewsberry and I am an AmeriCorps VISTA here at SALS. Working with people and helping them really is the best gift that you can give anyone. The gift of caring. My days Monday through Thursday are "split". The first part of my day I am here at the school assisting anyone who needs my help and setting up different projects to do. I help with our Multi-Generational Bingo, Soup Days, Senior Quilting and checking e-mails and messages. But the second part of my day is also really great and exciting. I assist the 21st Century Accent Education After School program at Mount Hope High School. I have really become attached to these kids. The after school program at Mount Hope begins at 2:40 PM with a meal followed by an hour of homework and reading time. Then they get an hour to do anything including Yoga, computer time, obstacle courses, or art. The kids really enjoy me helping them, but I also really enjoy helping those kids. It brings joy to my heart.

On Fridays I assist with the after school program here at the Beards Fork Center. I help cook and serve the kids, help with homework, and assist with any other projects the kids may have.

I was also chosen to be the volunteer coordinator for the summer program known as Energy Express this year, and I am very excited to be part of such an excellent program.



Randy Gilkey entertains college volunteers at SALS

Getting Ready for Work Camps

Ralph Shockey, Jr. ARC Member

The first part of 2004 brought not only the New Year but also the beginnings of Group WorkCamps for 2004. Its a nonprofit organization where teens 15 to 18 years of age volunteer their time to help low income families. With Group WorkCamps underway we set out to find families in need of help. To begin our site writing, we drove around the Fayette County area highways, city streets, into hollows, and many back roads for two months. We met a variety of individuals along the way who were pleased that someone was offering help with their homes that they could not afford to do themselves. So from leaking roofs to building new porches and putting on fresh coats of paint, the Plateau Area will shine a little brighter this summer after Group Work Camps arrive with 450+ teenagers to help a community in need,

On March 1st, 2004 we met with Gregg and Eric, site directors for Group WorkCamps 2004. Being from Florida they were blessed with warm temperatures upon their arrival, not really knowing what to expect. They asked questions about various sites and took notes. That Wednesday Eric and I completed four write-ups for homes in the Mt. Hope area and were able to drive around the area looking at other sites that had been written up. Eric stated that he feel this is going to be a great Work Camps Summer.

We worked frantically all week to complete our site writing goals and on Friday we were given the totals for the Plateau area. Eighty-six sites were to be written up so we said our good-by's to Gregg and Eric. Eric said he would see us again during Work Camp setup week this summer.

On Monday, March 8, we met with Jeff from Group Work Camps who came in from Loveland Co. After a four hour meeting we showed Jeff around various sites, showing him the area where the youth would be working. We told him of the floods of 2001 and told him about the families yet to fully recover from the devastation the flood had left behind. We dropped Jeff off at his hotel and told him of the rewarding experience this had been and that we were pleased to be working with him on Group WorkCamps 2004. Shaking hands, Jeff told us about the great job the cosponsor and site writers had done for Group Work Camps, that he felt this would be a great summer for the camp, and was pleased to be a part of it.

We can't wait to see the benefits of Group Work Camps, June 21 through 25 and to be a part of something that is bringing compassion and hope to a community.



*Milk-“Staches” on Ruby Price, RN Montgomery
General Hospital & 21 Century After School Kids*



Uncle "Dud" Settle & Bonita Johnson entertain for Black History Month Celebration

In Their Own Words

Hello, My name is Lisa King, and I'm an AmeriCorps/VISTA volunteer. In the past few months we have been busy with organizing and preparing for Soup Days, which were days with a free meal for all in the community. Also we were preparing for the Martin Luther King Day Celebration.

I have also been helping with the 21st Century "Accent Education" Program by working with kids, helping with homework including math, reading, and spelling. I also helped escort the kids to events such as Disney on Ice. Each child gets a snack and dinner before we make sure the child gets home safely.

It has been a rewarding experience working with the 21st Century program and SALS. As spring blooms, so do our spirits for more good things to come.

Lisa King, AmeriCorps/VISTA

As a fellow AmeriCorps/VISTA member with SALS we began in January covering our Soup Day program which we finished on Martin Luther King Day. I and other VISTAs attended house dedications in page. We are very proud of YouthBuild regarding the housing projects. WE have continued our senior programs home visits, quilting and other social gatherings. In February, we celebrated Black History Month by hosting several speakers sharing their personal experiences in the struggle for freedom. One speaker, Mrs. Helen Powell, had actually walked with Dr. King on one of his marches.

SALS Journal

I along with other VISTA members put together a Senior Tea Party along with a birthday celebration for on of our new home recipients, Mrs. Nattie Staunton from Igram Branch.

In March some of our projects were hot dog sales to raise money for community service needs. We plan to help assist with a wheelchair ramp for a shut-in at Boomer. Yes, I'm still excited about my volunteer service and I'll keep striving to get it right.

Cynthia Rollings, AmeriCorps/VISTA

It's hard to realize my first year as an AmeriCorps/VISTA member is nearly over. I guess the old saying, "time flies when you're having fun," is true. At least it has been for me. Don't misunderstand, it hasn't been all fun and games. There is a lot of hard work in being a volunteer, especially when you are involved with an after school program as was are here. This is our first year working with the 21st Century "Accent Education" Project. The kids have worked hard and their hard work has paid off with higher grades, better school attendance and several great field trips, basketball games, and several parades for area school functions. We are now preparing for the summer program, Energy Express. It will be my first time working with this project as well.

I, along with the other VISTA members have been involved in several other projects at SALS. We have been working hard to get a Women Wellness Center set up with the help of Dr. Dan from New River Health Assoc., and Ms. Peggy Lambert from Montgomery General Hospital. This is a work in progress and no date has been set for completion.

SALS "state of the art" (for us anyway) computer lab is now up and running. This is a project I am pleased to be so involved. Artie Mullins and I, with the help of Charter Communications, have been busy setting up each of the 11 donated by Mission WV Inc. Since each computer will be on-line the computer lab will also be available (on a limited basis) to the community.

As my first year nears completion, I hope I can continue to work and in some small way make a difference in my community.

Marie Settle, AmeriCorps/VISTA

Gearing Up for Group Work Camps

by Vickie Mullins, ARC Worker

SALS received a \$1,000 grant from WalMart (Oak Hill) for "Make a Difference Day" The funds were used to

buy twenty SHARE food baskets for the senior citizens in the area. We also had "SoupDay", where people came to the SALS Community Center and received a hot bowl of soup. In January, SALS received a grant through the Appalachian Regional Commission to hire several adults to do site write-ups for Group WorkCamps and learn construction skills.

We completed 80 applications in the Oak Hill area and 60 around Montgomery. The homeowners in both areas are excited and looking forward to getting their houses repaired! It took months to complete the applications and we'll have a variety of work for the youth to do this summer. I've enjoyed working with Group WorkCamps in the past and hope to continue in the future.

Helping Families Get Through the Paper Maze

Debbie Spurlock, Housing Specialist

I have been quite busy here at SALS the past months. I've been working with Group WorkCamps, working on the rehab files, dealing with Federal Home Loan Bank issues, and with the daily tasks of explaining the various programs to a large number of potential applicants.

Even though Group WorkCamps doesn't start until June and July, there is a lot of work to be done to prepare. Sites had to be identified, visited, and measured for repairs. This time around we have a new area to work in. The past few years we repaired homes in Montgomery and the surrounding areas. This year we will add a week in the Oak Hill area where we expect between 450-500 youth to repair up to 80 homes. We expect about 350 youth for the Montgomery WorkCamps, which should result in the repair of another 60 homes.

I was aided in completing all the paperwork involved by six ARC members who were hired under the Appalachian Regional Commission grant received by SALS. They all did a great job. After all the preparations were done two people from Group WorkCamps came to review our work. Eric and Gregg spent a week with us going over all the applications and making any needed changes. After the review was over, the applications were shipped to Colorado to be entered into their database. From now, our part is on hold, but not for long! After everything is entered into their system, I'm sure there will be some questions. The ARC members will be needed to deal with questions and again when for set-up weeks, camp weeks, clean ups, and finishing uncompleted projects.

Group WorkCamps isn't my only project. I also

work with the Rehab Program which applies grant money to repair homes of those who qualify. This program also requires a lot of paper work. About a year or so ago, I began a file on Mrs. Staunton, a 90 year old woman from Igram Branch. Her hose was so bad it practically fell down. Now a year later, she has moved into her new home. It's very rewarding to know that I helped this lady have a more comfortable life. Mrs. Staunton is just one of many, many applicants waiting to have their homes repaired.

I've also helped two families receive donated manufactured homes through the Federal Home Loan Bank Program. A file has to be completed and approved by the bank for the funds needed to refurbish the homes. I'm now in the process of completing the paperwork for a third family.

Helping others, especially those who can't help themselves, is very rewarding. I hope to continue helping as many people as possible in the months to come.

Web Site Helps People Discover Government Programs

adapted from Charleston Daily Mail 03/15/04

By Brian Bowling

With 24 initial questions and 10 to 30 follow-up questions, a government Web site can tell people whether they qualify for any of more than 500 federal and state programs.

The site doesn't ask for the user's name or other identifying information. U.S. Labor Department spokeswoman Peggy Abrahamson said the answers are not shared with any agency.

The site - www.govbenefits.gov - allows users to either conduct a general search for any programs they might qualify for or allows them to search in specific interest areas such as housing, insurance or education benefits.

Doing a general search for programs can take about 15 minutes to get through the questionnaire.

The site is strictly advisory. It doesn't provide a means for someone to sign up for a program, but it does provide contact information and links to other Web sites for people who want to pursue a particular program.

The site provides a link to a state-run site for other low-income benefits, which is located at www.wvinroads.org.

The site also provides a link to a National Council on the Aging site that provides benefits information for people 55 and older, www.benefitscheckup.org.

A Letter To Mother

“There is never peace in West Virginia because there is never Justice.” - Mother Jones

Dear Mother, you were wrong, for we are full of peace without a bit of Justice.

Horizontal guillotines decapitate our mountains,

leaving a flat wasteland where once serrated ridges reminded us that Earth is our equal.

Strip mine excess over burdens our streams, Dynamite flung boulders break our homes,
in flood time naked hillsides sweep down in angry waters, flashing away instantly our few accumulated things,

leaving us to pick up the pieces of a lifetime.

Our Poor people have peace, as best as we can tell, for we have one-upped Jesus and they are no longer with us,
at least not on the welfare rolls, because we have slashed them off wholesale,

closed up shop on helping, held a fire sale on human compassion,

a going-out-of-the-business-of-caring sale.

Smacked down by the State, poor women grow fat on biscuits and gravy,

‘cause rabbit food can’t fill a hole in the belly, or poverty’s constant companion,

a hole in the spirit.

Our poor children wear brightly colored knock-offs, made in enterprise zones in Mexico by other poor mothers,
making cheap imitations of a living wage that the World Bank pretends will feed their poor kids.

Two parents working means twice minimum wage, equals no parent families falling apart

like our orphan roads, where over gross coal trucks haul mountains away

while the asphalt buckles;

Seven miles of bad road ain’t Just a country song, it’s a plain fact thousands of Mountain mothers
send their least ones off to school over ripped up roads, while their hands at their throats touch hearts

still rising, already breaking.

Oh Mother, you were right, we have no justice in West Virginia, with our lives and land in shreds

just as long as we keep the peace, for just that long, we will have nothing whole.

Tim Dent 3-11-02

Southern Appalachian Labor School - Who We Are

**SALS Community Center: 800-515-1349
304-779-2772 or 779-2280**

Housing/WVU-Tech: 304-442-3042 or 442-3156

Construction Coordinator: 304-469-9721

John David, Director - 304-442-3157

WEB: www.sals.info

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Supervisor

J.R. Williams YouthBuild Trainer/
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 Terri Harlin Project Coordinator
 Benitez Jackson Project Director
 Cynthia Rollins AmeriCorps/VISTA
 Maria Settle AmeriCorps/VISTA
 Lisa King AmeriCorps/VISTA
 Jessica Shrewsbury AmeriCorps/VISTA
 Debbie Ferri Teacher
 Lisa Keffer Teacher

G.E.D. Instructors/Fayette Co. Schools

Joy Snead & Mary Lynn Flint
Share Program
 Bob Friley
Bookkeeping Team
 Valarie Cowley, Ruth Lanham
 Tom Bass, Brenda Winter

* Indicates members of the SALS Leadership Team



Yes, in these difficult times I understand the importance of an organization like the Southern Appalachian Labor School. Enclosed is my contribution to keep your essential work on track and moving forward.

Contributions to SALS are Tax deductible: Mail to SALS POB 127, Kincaid, WV 25119

Enclosed is: ___\$250 ___\$100 ___\$50 ___\$25 Other\$_____

Visit us at www.sals.info for secure on-line donations & issue updates

Please send me a thankyou gift..

___\$50 +: SALS Handmade Coffee Mug or similar item

___\$100 + SALS License Plate

Name _____
 Address _____
 City/St/zip _____
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SALS engages in solitication for the purpose of acquiring funds to support the Southern Appalachian Labor School. WV residents may obtain a summary of the registration and financial documents for the Sec. of State, State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305. Registration does not imply endorsement.

The Wall Street Journal reports new information from the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress reported:

More than 60% of U.S. corporations didn't pay any federal taxes for 1996 through 2000, years when the economy boomed and corporate profits soared.

Corporate tax receipts have shrunk markedly as a share of overall federal revenue in recent years, and were particularly depressed when the economy soured. By 2003, they had fallen to just 7.4% of overall federal receipts, the lowest rate since 1983, and the second-lowest rate since 1934, federal budget officials say.

By JOHN D. MCKINNON, Wall Street Journal



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