



# SALS JOURNAL

*a publication of the Southern Appalachian Labor School*

Volume 28 Issue 3

[www.sals.info](http://www.sals.info)

Fall/Winter 2005

## Community Shares Kicks Off Fund Drive

*by Gary Zuckett, SALS Social Justice Advocate & President CSWV*

In October, Governor Manchin issued a proclamation to officially “kick off” a brand new organization dedicated to help fund progressive nonprofit groups in our state - Community Shares of West Virginia (CSWV). This capitol press conference was the culmination of several years of collaboration by the founding member organizations including SALS.

CSWV was built on the model of already successful Community Shares groups, forty of which are successfully operating in over half the states in our country. In a nutshell, community shares is a cooperative United Way type organization governed by the member groups and dedicated to helping fund progressive social change.

Workplace giving is a powerful tool for fund-raising that before now has been unavailable to alternative West Virginia organizations like SALS and the other member groups. As CSWV matures and grows each member group can look forward to a modest but regular income from donations coming through the organization.

In its first year, the group is focusing on WV state employees and Higher Education employees. If you are employed by the state or a state college or university you can now donate to SALS through a regular workplace donation through CSWV. For more information see [www.communityshareswv.org](http://www.communityshareswv.org)

## Beards Fork Clinic Marks First Anniversary

*by Dr. Dan Doyle*

The Beards Fork Clinic and Health Project marked its first anniversary this November. Begun as a joint project of SALS and New River Health, the clinic pro-



*Governor Joe Manchin (center) and several CSWV Directors at Kick-Off press conference. Shown left to right: Frank Young, WV Highlands Conservancy; Connie Lewis, AFSC; Gary Zuckett, SALS; and Michael Tierney, Step by Step*

vides physical exams, illness care, and chronic disease care to SALS employees and the Kincaid to Robson community one or two Friday afternoons each month. Dr. Dan Doyle and Lisa Manley are the clinic staff.

SALS employees without health insurance receive services free because SALS picks up their co-payments through New River’s sliding scale program. Insured SALS employees and community members pay the same as they would if seen at other New River Clinic sites. X-ray, lab, and pharmacy are not provided at the Beards Fork Clinic.

Some New River patients living in the Beards Fork area are choosing to schedule their regular follow up visits here rather than make the drive to Oak Hill and Scarbro. One patient commented “It’s more convenient for me. And with gas prices like they are, it saves me money.”

The clinic is open the second or third Friday afternoon of each month. To schedule an appointment talk to Lisa Manley or Vickie Mullins at SALS’ Beards Fork Community Center 779-2280. Or call New River Health Scarbro 465-1903 and ask to schedule an appointment with Dr. Doyle at Beards Fork Clinic.

# Katrina debacle shows need for renewed war on poverty

by John David, as printed in the *Charleston Gazette*, September 22, 2005

FORTY years ago, the nation was stunned by a book by Michael Harrington titled "The Other America." The slim volume explicitly detailed poverty in America and prompted President Lyndon Johnson to launch the "War on Poverty."

The poverty war created the VISTA program, CAP agencies, Office of Economic Opportunity, and numerous other similar initiatives. The Katrina hurricane tragedy in the Gulf areas once again has focused on the plight of Americans often hidden from public view. Tourists visiting New Orleans see the French Quarter and the features of the "Big Easy," seldom taking note of the struggling majority in the city.

Similarly, the thousands who flock to West Virginia for whitewater rafting and the beauty of the New River Gorge seldom see the poverty and living conditions of those in the surrounding area. Some tragedies are accidental while some occur because of benign neglect.

The consequences of Katrina were not unpredictable. As noted by Dr. Theodore Steinberg, an environmental historian at Case Western Reserve University, Katrina was "an unnatural disaster if ever there was one, not an act of God.... If the potential for mass death and distribution existed anywhere in the United States, it is existing in New Orleans." People at the bottom are being squeezed as never before. The examples are many. Job opportunities with a living wage and benefits are vanishing. Housing and health conditions have deteriorated. Substance abuse, with all the resulting consequences, has become rampant.

Immoral tax cuts for the wealthy have been implemented that transfer an increased burden to low-income families as "safety net" programs are substantially scaled back. The minimum wage, which is the base for an increasing percentage of West Virginians, has remained constant for more than a decade while prices have increased 30 percent or more. Fuel, natural gas, electricity and water rates have zoomed upward. The prison population in West Virginia has exploded upward over threefold in a decade.

For those who now have nothing, credit is "maxed," savings are zero and bankruptcies are at a record level. Families at the bottom shoulder the greatest burden of unnecessary wars. Those most impacted by the economic squeeze are less likely to be registered voters and those in political office easily can postpone or ignore dealing with issues gripping nonvoters.

Accordingly, public works, safety net, and social

programs can be dismissed as "wasteful government spending" without a second thought until disaster strikes. In the case of Katrina, the \$100 billion and more in rebuilding cost could have been limited to a fraction of that amount if projects had been adequately funded previously. Those who made the decision to "ignore and postpone" get away with a simple apology. They merely add the cost of their tragic mistakes to the unsustainable \$7.9 trillion national debt shouldered increasingly by those at the bottom, and by reshuffling programs and services from others in need elsewhere.

The need is pervasive. In West Virginia, for example, the Anne E. Casey Foundation reports that conditions are poor in disturbing categories, including the teen death rate (national rank: 50), percentage of children in poverty (national rank: 47), percentage of children living in families where no parent has full-time employment (national rank: 44), and teens who are high school dropouts (national rank: 39).

The country has been told that national security will be improved by fighting foreign wars, spreading Americanized democracy, and "taking out" those perceived as terrorists and "evil" leaders. Yet, like a cancer that eats from within, security from want and fear has not improved for those in hidden America. People who fear tomorrow are barely surviving day to day.

There can be little doubt that the fabric of the nation is torn and socioeconomic conditions for those in hidden America are at a breaking point. For them, many of whom have few options, life has never been worse. Budget cutbacks, whether for levees, housing or education, are creating a sharply divided America of haves and have-nots. This apartheid creates divided economies, divided perspectives for the future, and divided priorities for daily survival.

Once again, the "Other America" is in the spotlight. Those who proclaim ideology and righteousness as supreme must revisit reality. We need to rebuild the base of the nation by totally refocusing our priorities before we join those other former great societies that

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The SALS *Journal* is published by  
The Southern  
Appalachian Labor School,  
a regional grassroots organization  
dedicated to social & environmental  
justice and workers rights.  
We welcome articles and  
submissions by our readers.  
Send to:  
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WWW.SALS.INFO  
SALS reserves the right to edit  
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# Director's Report

by John David

SALS, like most other non-profits involved in the human needs world of work, is navigating troubled waters. Funding has become extremely tight, as those funds that are available are prioritized and/or diverted for various reasons. Building materials have sky-rocketed in price and we have scrambled to purchase inventory prior to price increases. Carrying inventory, however, is costly in itself, as we expend the little we have in order to make dollars go further for those we seek to help. Thus, if you believe in what we do, a donation of any amount would be greatly appreciated at this critical time.

Those who donate a value of at least \$500 and pay taxes in West Virginia can take advantage of the state tax credits allocated to SALS by the WV Development Office. Donors receive both a state tax credit and a possible federal charitable contribution. We need everything, including land, buildings, vehicles, building supplies, and supplies for the Community Center. Items can be combined to make the minimum value of \$500. If you have an idea, give me a call at 442-3157 without delay.

Due to the funding situation, we are re-assigning staff and attempting to reduce overhead. The latter is a challenge, in view of rising fuel, utility, and insurance expenses. Another new cost issue is permits. Fayette County now requires an array of inspections and permits. Some of them have been temporarily waived by the Fayette County Commission after we had several meetings and we appreciate the commissioners willingness to work on this matter with us.

The Hilltop project, described in various reports elsewhere, is our newest development. Privately owned West Virginia American Water, caught with asbestos pipe in the wrong location without easements, still wants us to cough up \$20,000 to move their pipe to where it should have been and provide service to our newly constructed homes for low income families.

Vehicle maintenance is also a problem. Our 20 vehicle fleet is aging, with transmissions and other similar expensive components needing to be replaced. There has been several accidents, including our 15 passenger van with children from the after-school program hitting an eight-point buck. No one was injured, the deer is dead, the van had major damage, and our insurance has a \$1,000 deductible.

We have sent staff to numerous conferences and trainings as described elsewhere. In part, this is part of diversification, as we seek to have more staff folks become involved in more things. Among those involved, in addition to myself, have been Artie Mullins, Vickie Mullins, Debra Spurlock, Jackie Asbury, Brenda Winter, Kathryn



*Golbal Volunteers & SALS crew at annual rafting trip*

South, Vickie Smith, Gary Zuckett, Lisa Manley, Lisa King, Iris Adkins, and Jessica Williams. Vickie Smith attended a construction-focused training in Arlington, Virginia which required her to take an array of tests. She passed them all!

The New River Health Association, to which we are connected with our 21<sup>st</sup> Century, MIHOW, and Beards Fork Clinic initiatives, recently had its MIHOW program recognized and accredited. Charlene Newkirk with SALS, who is the after-school site supervisor, is also involved with the MIHOW program.

Bill Waddell, one of our continuous volunteers, was hospitalized recently with chest pains as he toiled on the toy train he is making for our playground. Brenda Winter had major back surgery but has now returned. Other folks working for or with SALS have also had problems and some have had to leave for various personal reasons.

The Law School at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia, recently celebrated its anniversary of having a black lung outreach program by hosting an exhibit of drawings and paintings by the late Mike South. Mike, former President of the National Black Lung Association and a tireless crusader for black lung victims, served on the SALS Board for many years. Among those attending with a SALS connection were Kathryn South, Jackie Asbury, John Cline, and Bob Friley.

The passing of Rosa Parks brought into focus her days at Highlander in Tennessee. The late Myles Horton and Don West, co-founders of Highlander, were instrumental in organizing community leaders and they were both friends of SALS during our early years.

We are in the process of looking into obtaining warehouse space. The space would be used to store donated and cheaply obtained building supplies, provide a place for low-income families to obtain building supplies

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# SALS YouthBuild/DOL Updates

*Kathryn South & Brenda Winter*

Since the last newsletter went out, our young people have been busy building new structures and remodeling existing homes in and around Fayette County. Ms. Gore, our GED instructor, was off on medical leave the month of September, but she is back and feeling much better. Ms. Gore does a great job with mentoring and teaching our youth and helping them attain the GED certificate.

Brenda and I attended an AmeriCorps training in Boston in September. This year we were allotted 12 reduced time slots for DOL and YouthBuild members. This will help our young people with further education when they leave the SALS program. Several of our graduates are working full-time in various jobs in the county and doing well.

Congratulations to Jeff and Heather Mullins on the birth of their baby girl born in September.

Vickie Smith, Construction Manager, returned from a training in Arlington, VA. The focus of the training was teaching construction using modules and certification attainment for different components of building. Vickie passed all the tests with flying colors. Congratulations Vickie!!!

We have a few new youth in our YouthBuild Department of Labor Re-Entry Program: Ben Vargas, Noah Bennett, Jason Canaday, Matt Dailey, and Bobby Gardener, all from the Oak Hill area. Jim Adkins is the supervisor working with this program and he does a great job of teaching the youth skills to help them get jobs. Walter Brownlow, the team leader, has been in the program for about six months and has made progress with his leadership skills and team building strategies. Becky Williams, who is also on the team, just got back from a trip with Jackie Asbury and Jan Rezek to Zanesville, Ohio. Four SALS women, as noted in Jackie's report, were on a panel at a conference on Women in Appalachia. Jackie and Jan also wrote a paper last year that was presented at the previous conference.

## Challenge Camps Added to Next Year's Schedule

*by Debra Spurlock, Housing Specialist Counselor*

Well, another year of Group WorkCamps has come and gone. But we are already busy preparing for the summer of 2006. We are trying something new. Not

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only will we have the two regular camps, one in Oak Hill and one in Montgomery, but we will have four challenge camps. These challenge camps will be smaller groups that will be divided up among our regular job sites. I, myself, think this is a good idea. Not only will the kids get the experience and the joy of helping others but it will help us complete our projects quicker so we can move on to others on our waiting list. We do have quite a list. In fact, we are up to over 300 names now. It's sad to know that so many people are in need of help. Hopefully this new Group WorkCamps project will work out so we can use it in the years to come. I receive a number of calls every day from people who need their homes worked on. I try to help these folks through various sources like, USDA Rural Development, Federal Home Loan Bank Grant, and Group WorkCamps. All of these sources are limited. Even though we would love to help everybody, we can't.

The SHARE program is still going at SALS. One Saturday morning a month my husband and I rise early to meet the food truck in Oak Hill by 6:00 AM to bring the food back to SALS to make up the SHARE orders. A few of the VISTAs along with a few STAFF folks get up early to come and help. My husband, Carlos, volunteers on SHARE day to help me load, unload, and helps with making up the boxes. Some of the packages have to be delivered because some of the older folks can't make it out to get them. Carlos also helps me deliver these.

All in all it has been a busy year here at SALS.

## Accent Education

*by Charlene "RED" Newkirk*

This fall The 21st. Century Learning Center "Accent Education" after school program began. This is a collaborative involving the New River Health Association, Fayette County schools and SALS with an education program funded through the West Virginia and US Departments of Education.

Students of all grade levels attend four days of after school programs each week. This includes helping children with homework, wellness activities, recreation, special events, snakes and supper. Also offered are basic skills on computers, fine arts, dance, yoga, and public speaking.

The students are bussed to SALS from Oak Hill and Valley Elementary, Collins and Montgomery middle, and Valley High schools. At SALS they begin with a snack followed by learning activities until they are served a hot meal.

On October 20th we had an Open House and "lights after school" program." Program activities included

teaching sign language, and making Christmas baskets and crafts. I also gave out certificates to children who participated in the Saint Jude Walk-A-Thon. We also have a birthday party once a month for children who that have birthdays that month.

## Youth Program Graduates Put Certificates to Work

by *Heath Forren, WIA/YES Program*

The RESA-1 Youth Enrichment Services program and the Southern Appalachian Labor School have been enjoying a successful partnership. Recently we have exited some long time participants, and are moving now more toward recruiting new participants. With a changing year come new requirements that measure our performance as a program. We are now adjusting to new performance measures that are required for us to stay in compliance with our grant. Assessment testing on a regular basis is now a measure that is used to gauge our progress. Therefore, any youth entering the WIA/Youth Enrichment Services Program must be willing to work on increasing their skills. Since working for the Youth Program we are always evolving and our performance measures are changing. So, I am in the process of adjusting to the new requirements and want to let everyone prepare themselves for the change. We will be working to stay on top of this, and will need commitment from our students in order to enroll them. After enrollment their will be additional work required in order to raise skill levels.

Two of our recent youth program participants have gone on to obtain employment putting their industrial electricity certificates to work. James Estep and Sayer Romage completed their training at the Fayette Technical Center last June. Sayer started working with Appalachian Heating and Cooling in Bradley back in June. James also went to work with Ballard Electric in Oak Hill after graduating. Both worked very hard and benefited greatly from their experience and training from the Labor School. I am pleased to report the success of these two former program participants.

In the past few months my two main contacts at the Labor School have been out with some health issues. Brenda Winter and Marie Settle have worked with our youth program students and their presence and effort have been missed. Their work is continued forward with others on the SALS staff. The SALS staff connected strongly to our youth and is an asset to both the Youth Enrichment Services program and SALS.

## VISTA'S Report

by *Lisa King , Jessica Williams, Lisa Manley and Iris Adkins*

Hello, VISTA's here (Lisa K, Jessica W, Lisa M, and Iris A)! We have finished up with Energy Express, which was very successful. There were 40 children enrolled in the program. Energy Express is a six week summer program that encourages students to maintain their grade level in reading during the summer months. Each week the students are given a book and the mentors design their lesson around the theme of the book for that week. At the end of each week they get to take their book home with them to read again and again. The kids have a really good time and often come back year after year.

After finishing Energy Express, we had a little time to get ready for the 21st Century "Accent Education" After School Program, that started on September 7, 2005. This is an after school program that runs Monday – Thursday from 2:30pm till 6:00pm. In this program, we have two teachers who come to the center and work with students on their homework. Upon arriving we give them a snack and then send them to the teachers to do their work. If they have no homework, then they must read for at least 15 minutes. Afterwards they have other activities such as computer lab, crafts, etc. to work on until we give them dinner and then provide a way home for them.

We also held a couple of fund-raisers which included selling candy, a Halloween carnival and a Haunted House. The money raised was used to help pay for new playground equipment and a Santa's Workshop where the kids in the after school program could do their holiday shopping for their families. They selected the gifts and we (VISTAs) wrapped them.

For "Make a Difference Day", we had several projects. We made crocheted hats and donated them to a cancer center, we took boxes of canned food that we collected at our Halloween Carnival to a local food pantry, we assisted with putting a window in for a widow in Oak Hill and we worked on finishing the SALS Memorial Park.

We continue to maintain the bulletin boards in our catchment area. In addition, we are still working with Multi-Cap in Kimberly and also with the SHARE program. So as you can see, we VISTAs have been very busy. But being busy makes the time fly !!

# Volunteers 2004-2005

By Artie Mullins, Volunteer Coordinator

SALS welcomed its' final volunteer teams of the 2004-2005 year in October. Our first winter teams brought the spirited college groups while the more seasoned Global Volunteers groups brought a soothing close to our volunteer year. This was a fun year of learning about distant places, sharing Appalachian culture with volunteers, and watching our young workers expanding in confidence while making new friends from all over the world. It was also a challenging year of long days and sometimes even longer evenings. Overall, it was a wonderful year that will not be forgotten.

The thing I love most about my job is the opportunity to observe the progress made with the young adults in our various programs. The young folks in the YouthBuild, DOL, and YES programs are an inspiration to me. Despite the enormous barriers placed between them and a successful future, they face each day with such a positive attitude. I believe that the ability to interact with people from an array of social and economic backgrounds is one of the most important elements in helping these young adults succeed in life. The college volunteers are in the same age range and always bond with our youth. This offers the youth at SALS the opportunity to meet as equals with youth of diverse social, economic and cultural backgrounds. On the other hand, older professional persons that Global Volunteers attracts and those who come with our faith based partners, bring stories of how they dealt with their own battles in life and in turn inspire our young workers.

Our summer seemed incomplete because Rev. Mark Porter and his usual entourage were not able to join us in June. Rev. Mark and his congregation from Madison Presbyterian Church, Madison, Indiana, have been long time supporters of SALS and epitomize what Christ meant by "love your brother as yourself". The caring nature of the Indiana congregation has made them one of our favorite volunteer groups. Rev. Mark has moved on to do other great works. I know he will succeed in all that he attempts and I am certain that we will see him again.

We also missed Tammi Eversole and our friends from First Christian Church of Newcastle, Indiana. The staff at Beards Fork was disappointed to find that Tammi and her group were not returning. This group was largely responsible for building our gazebo at the community center and inspiring us to add a bridge to span the creek nearby. On the upside, our friends from St. James Parish, Lothian, Maryland did return. It was exciting to see familiar faces from previous years and to establish new friendships with first timers. Pete Finne and Rich Doran

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always provide a fun and hard working week for their Maryland groups.

Group Work Camps and Christian Endeavors were a great success as well. Thanks to the hard work of Vickie Smith and other staff members the two groups were able to service an incredible amount of homes in Fayette County. We are always in awe of every volunteer and the generosity and determination that drives him/her to create a better world.

## Volunteer Workcamp Schedule 2006

February 27-March 3, E. Michigan University, 10 Students

March 5-12, Vanderbilt University, 12 Students

March 4-11, University of Pittsburgh, 20 Students

March 12-18, Rutgers, 26 Students

March 18-25, Global Volunteers

March 19-25, University of Illinois, 12 Students

June 1-7, Faith Based Groups. TBA

June 10-24, Global Volunteers/St. Andrew's Episcopal School, Austin, TX

June 18-24, Group Workcamps: Challenge Camp/WVU Tech, 100 Youth

June 25-June 29, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Newark, Delaware

June 25-July 1, Group Workcamps: Regular Camp/Oak Hill High School, 400 Youth

July 2-8, Group Workcamps: Challenge Camp/WVU Tech, 100 Youth

July 8-15, Global Volunteers

July 9-14, Christian Endeavor: All Sites, Fayetteville High School, 120 Youth

July 9-15, Group Workcamps: Regular Camp/Valley High School, 400 Youth

July 16-22, Christian Endeavors: All Sites, Fayetteville High School, 120 Youth

July 16-22, Group Workcamps: Challenge Camp/WVU Tech, 100 Youth

July 22-29, Global Volunteers

July 23-29, Group Workcamps: Challenge Camp/WVU-Tech, 100 Youth

August 5-12, Global Volunteers

September 16-23, Global Volunteers

***Estimated Total Number of Volunteers Scheduled so far in 2006: 1,608!***

# Construction Manager Report

by Vickie Smith

Our Hilltop project is well underway. Our first house in under roof, insulated, wiring in, siding on, windows and doors in, and drywall is being installed. All this is thanks to *Mr. Vincent Smith* and his building construction class from the *Fayette Institute of Technology*, which is part of our AmeriCorps Learn & Serve program with Fayette County Schools.

Our subcontractor, *Barry Blackburn*, is building retaining walls, removing trees, working on equipment, and getting our next several footers and foundations ready.

Sidney Yoho has worked on the road, site preparation and moved **tons** of dirt with our little D-3 dozer. We'd be lost without his experience and expertise. He **volunteers** his time 5 and 6 days a week to help with the project.

We bought an enormous amount of building materials so that we are ensured materials to continue to work on our sites after the hurricanes hit the US.

In October, I went to Arlington Va. where the YouthBuild Youth Re-entry DOL program requested that I become a certified as a certifier in order for all of our DOL participants to be able to be certified in Carpentry and their names placed in a national registry. This will enable prospective employers to look at the national registry and pull up names for employment. These in the DOL program who complete the classroom and performance tests will then receive a certificate from the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER). **A special thank you to all!**

## Crews & Workers Speak Out

*Terry Black's Crew Report*

We have been working on the McCune site in Smithers, which is now finished. We put new paneling in three rooms and put in a considerable amount of sheetrock and trim. In addition, we have been working on the Hilltop site doing landscaping and also helped at the Mahan Street site in Oak Hill.

It is hard to really list every little thing we have accomplished because we have done a lot between Hilltop and Smithers. But you can see a big change at Hilltop since the time we started. People have put in a lot of hours in working together trying to make something out of nothing and the results are impressive. Our crew has done so much and we even worked on Make-A-Differ-

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*SALS crew replacing a ceiling on "Make a difference Day"*

ence Day building a bridge for the Memorial Park at the SALS Community Center and we are still going strong. At Hilltop the votech students deserve much of the credit because they are working real hard at building the first house. They have been fantastic.

by *Steven Lanham*

I have been working on a rehab in Smithers which is now complete. At this time I am working in Hilltop. We will probably be there for a few months. We also worked on Make-A-Difference Day on various projects.

by *James Harvey, AmeriCorps Member*

We have been working on Nathaniel Wright's house for the past few months. It is just a great feeling to work and see the improvements on the house. It makes you feel great to see the smiles on faces as you complete a room or task. I think the program is a great learning experience for the youth and young adults in Southern West Virginia. We have taken a man's house and made it a home. I also worked on Make-A-Difference at the Arthur job site near Beckwith.



*Bridge construction at SALS*

# “Tools for Change” Presented at Women of Appalachia Conference

by Jan Rezek, WVU-Tech

On October 27<sup>th</sup> Stacy Richmond, Sue Navicki, Heather Plumley, Becky Stark, Jackie Asbury and myself piled in the SALS van and headed for Zanesville, Ohio to be presenters at the Women of Appalachia Conference. The topic of the paper presented was Tools for Change: Building Houses; Building Self-Esteem. The discussion was about young women in non-traditional work situations. The four young women and Ms. Asbury participated on the discussion panel. Ms. Asbury was the SALS expert and the official chaperone of the group. It was a big adventure for the young women as they prepared to present at a professional conference. It was a big adventure for me to drive that big silver SALS van.

The Women of Appalachia Conference is a very well organized conference with a friendly inviting atmosphere. The attendance this year was around 200 people. On Friday morning, we all attended various workshops. The lunchtime speaker, Gretchen Laskas, author of “The Midwife’s Tale” was of particular interest to the young women from SALS. Our presentation at 4:15 and was a favorite at the conference. It was very well received and those in attendance had both very good questions, as well as, very nice comments to make about the young women and the programs at SALS. We even had a couple of people say they would like to visit and a youth group leader sounded interested in bringing a group to do volunteer work at SALS.

Friday evening included an art showing, wine and cheese reception, and music entertainment after dinner. Saturday morning there were more workshops before we went on a shopping trip and headed home from a very exciting adventure. I personally thought the young women did a wonderful job. I enjoyed getting to know them and talk with them on the trip and during our time together. This experience certainly benefited both the young women, as well as the people who came to hear them discuss their work in the non-traditional field of construction. SALS can certainly be proud of these young women.

## *Director’s Report, continued from page three*

for self-help projects, and provide space for our participants to build off-site components. We are also in the process of seeking funds to buy-back foreclosed housing units from the WV Housing Development Fund. SALS would repair the units for low-income families.

Another idea on the burner is our entrepreneurial

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*SALS women well received at Women of Appalachia*

project that would permit our young adults to construct wooden household items and toys from our scrap. These items would be sold at events and during holiday seasons.

The VISTAs hosted an impressively attended Haunted House and carnival at the SALS Community Center in Beards Fork. No one was more startled about the success of the event than the VISTAs themselves and they deserve praise for a job well done.

To date, nearly 1700 volunteers have signed on to come to Fayette County and work with SALS Housing in 2006. This is a record number and we thank WVU-Tech and Fayette County Schools for assisting with accommodations. Most of the smaller groups will stay at our Center and Dorm Annex in Beards Fork. The larger new Dorm will soon be under construction, as Pentree Engineering completes the plans and obtains the necessary approvals.

SALS sold, under duress, a sliver of donated land to the state for the new Lochgelley Interchange along US 19 in Oak Hill. The negotiations netted us \$2,000 and a remaining parcel for future development.

SALS was one of three entities nominated for “Business of the Year” by the Fayette County Chamber of Commerce. While SALS was not the final winner, it was an honor to be recognized.

The Flex-i-Grant obtained from the WV Development Office and the Appalachian Regional Commission will permit SALS to re-focus groupings of Board, staff, and community people who would have increased responsibility over key areas of SALS’ work. Other grants that have been obtained included USDA/HPG, Federal Home Loan Bank/United Bank, Appalachian Community Fund, YouthBuild USA renewals for our AmeriCorps and DOL Youth Re-Entry programs, and collaborative re-newals for AmeriCorps Learn and Serve and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center initiative. We thank them all!

This is the holiday season and all of us wish all of you the very best for peace, love, and justice as we struggle forward on our difficult journey in constructing change from the ground up.



# Grants + Volunteers = Safer Housing

by Jackie Asbury

Here it is again. Another year has come and gone, well almost, for soon it will be 2006. What lies ahead? Hopefully a successful year when we can build new relationships and hold on to the ones we already have. This year at SALS has been a busy one for all of us. We have worked hard to accomplish many things.

The house going up in Page has been slow mainly because George just hasn't had the people to work on his project. But hopefully by Martin Luther King Day we will have another dedication. Twelve families have received total rehabs this year and we have another twelve to go to finish out 2006.

Grant writing has begun to make more sense to me and I am trying to master my skills in this area of my work at SALS. I wrote a grant to Federal Home Loan Bank - Pittsburgh and SALS was awarded \$100,000 to do 12 rehabs. I also wrote the flex-i-grant and SALS was awarded \$10,000 to start focus groups and a other projects. Rural Housing and Economic Development from HUD was not funded and SALS will be affected in the coming years. Hopefully, the YouthBuild grant will be funded for 2006 but we won't find out until early New Year. We did receive funding again thorough USDA Rural Development on two grants to combine with FHLB to do the total rehabs.

The second year of AmeriCorps will start early December. Six members will assist Artie do Group Work Camps for 2006, SALS will be doing both a week in Oak Hill and one in Montgomery. The site writing will begin in early January since all the write-ups have to be completed and in to Group by March or April. SALS will also be doing (for the 1st time) Challenge Camps with Group Work Camps. This means that SALS will have added labor for four weeks through Group Work Camps to help out with our twelve rehabs.

I attended the First Annual Faith Based Conference in Florida in October sponsored by BB&T, Federal Home Loan Bank - Atlanta, and Freddie Mac. I brought back many resources for funding and a lot of zeal that I can make some difference with our efforts to help keep the housing program at SALS going.

Jan Rezek and I along with four girls from four different SALS programs attended the Women of Appalachia conference at Ohio University on October 28 & 29, 2005. Stacy Richmond of AmeriCorps program, Becky Stark from Department of Labor program, Sue Navicki from Workforce Investment Act program, and Heather

Plumley from the YouthBuild program. Jan held a session on Tools for Change: Building Houses; Building Self-Esteem - Young women excelling in non-traditional occupations. This panel discussion focused on the young SALS women who were working construction in Rural Appalachia. This conference was really great for our girls at SALS, they learned much from their weekend in Zanesville, Ohio.

Vickie Smith and I attended a conference in Loveland, Colorado with Group Work Camps about our six camps coming in Summer 2006. The conference was held in early November at Group Publishing headquarters.

Over all we at SALS have been blessed another year and I hope you and your families have been blessed also. So from all of us at SALS, we wish you a very blessed New Year.



## Make a Difference Day at SALS

By Vickie Mullins

AmeriCorps/VISTA's all across the United States celebrated the annual "Make A Difference Day" on October 22, 2005. SALS projects consisted of several things. The VISTA's wanted to help do something special, so they decided to make colorful hats by hand crocheting them and donating them to cancer patients in Raleigh and Kanawha Counties. We also decided to help an elderly lady in Fayette County by placing a window in her basement to keep the cold air and stray animals out. This will also help keep her heating bill from raising as much this winter. AmeriCorps/VISTA's donated their fund-raising monies to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana by going out and purchasing items such as t-shirts, socks, toys, games, watches, snacks, and other items, which were taken to Camp Dawson in Preston County. We also finished part of our Memorial Park for Make A Difference Day! The park is being used for special events so our volunteers from all over the United States can enjoy the nice West Virginia scenery!

# Privatization, The Fox in the Henhouse

Paul J. Nyden, *Charleston Gazette*, October 30, 2005

Si Kahn — a writer, singer and community organizer for 40 years — visited Charleston yesterday to talk about his new book, written with his wife Elizabeth Minnich.

“The Fox in the Henhouse: How Privatization Threatens Democracy,” just published on Thursday, makes a powerful case that privatizing government programs hurts a lot more people than it helps.

Kahn and Minnich describe the growing roles that large private companies play — and hope to expand — in running schools, prisons, military bases, public lands, health-care services, workplace safety and Social Security.

Tax dollars are not being saved. Put simply: Tax dollars are taken away from poor and middle-class Americans and handed over to the wealthiest. “Privatization is an agenda more or less forcibly imposed on governments that lessens their powers in favor of the largest corporations,” Kahn and Minnich write. “I believe in grassroots organizing, in doing things where you are,” Kahn said during an interview last week.

Working with the West Virginia Council of Churches and the Appalachian Center at Wheeling-Jesuit University, Kahn has visited West Virginia several times in the past year. “Recently, I have been working on prisons, private prisons and alternative incarceration,” said Kahn, who now lives in Charlotte, N.C. (Grassroots Leadership, his group that offers advice to Southern activists, has a Web site: [www.grassrootsleadership.org](http://www.grassrootsleadership.org). “We put out a report about the need not to privatize prisons, jails and detention centers. What does the expansion of the prison industry cost West Virginia in lost revenues for schools and public education? It undermines public education. “West Virginia is not getting bigger. And it is not getting smaller. It is amazing how constant its population has been. West Virginia also has an aging population and one of the lowest crime rates in the country. “Yet, in the last 10 years, the prison population in West Virginia has more than doubled,” Kahn said.

“The Fox in the Henhouse” is filled with powerful examples of the impact of privatizing government functions. Last Dec. 22, insurgents in Iraq blew up a U.S. military mess hall in Mosul, killing 22 people. In the past, the U.S. military, even during training exercises, fed soldiers at different times, then had them disperse after picking up their meals.

Things are different now. Ralph Peters, a retired colonel, said, “Instead of security, what we saw [at Mosul]



*Si Kahn speaks against prison privatization and for alternative sentencing at the WV capitol in March.*

was convenience and efficiency. But it just baffled me that this base and this chow hall ... had been attacked before with rocket fire, with mortars. And we were still crowding these troops, not even staggering the schedules.

“Privatizing means many jobs will never be done well again.” A couple of nights ago, I was talking on a radio station in Oregon when a guy called in who lost his job when they privatized custodial services at his school, giving the work to a cleaning agency,” Kahn said. “The caller said, ‘We were the custodians. But we were also the caretakers. I had responsibility to make sure our kids were safe, that they were protected. That is what a custodian does. “We don’t just sweep the floors. We make the schools safe. The new cleaning service — they don’t care who they hire. It can be a different person every day. They do not offer safety. They do not offer care and love,’ he said. “What are we doing to our kids?” Kahn asked. “Doing the right thing costs money.”

“The Fox in the Henhouse” argues privatizing government services has become a growing problem since Ronald Reagan’s presidency. Privatization “is a purposeful, planned, global, political agenda with dramatic consequences for the lives of people in the United States and around the globe. “The difference between the values and goals of privatizers and ... of those committed to the public good is the great divide of our times,” the book states.

## *Katrina, continued from page two*

became historical curiosities. In essence, this means that we must practice at home what we preach to others elsewhere and join together in the quest for human priorities that focuses on respect, dignity and survival.

Dr. David, a professor at WVU-Tech, is a *Gazette* contributing columnist.

# Southern Appalachian Labor School - Who We Are

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## Energy Express

Jason Crouch

## Bookkeeping Team

Valarie Cowley, Ruth Lanham

\* 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\$\_\_\_\_\_

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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.

**SALS Journal**  
**POB 127**  
**Kincaid, WV 25119**

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