

FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

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Folklorist Karen Hudson photographs a gambrel-roofed cinder block barn in Odd, West Virginia, January 27, 1992. (2-63466-31) Photo by Rita Moonsammy. The American Folklife Center is working with the National Park Service to create a cultural heritage center in Grandview, West Virginia.

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The Library of Congress

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The American Folklife Center was created in 1976 by the U.S. Congress to "preserve and present American folklife" through programs of research, documentation, archival preservation, reference service, live performance, exhibition, publication, and training. The Center incorporates the Archive of Folk Culture, which was established in the Music Division of the Library of Congress in 1928, and is now one of the largest collections of ethnographic material from the United States and around the world.

FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

James Hardin, *Editor*
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Design by Library of Congress
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Folklife Center News publishes articles on the programs and activities of the American Folklife Center, as well as other articles on traditional expressive culture. It is available free of charge from the Library of Congress, American Folklife Center, Washington, D.C. 20540. *Folklife Center News* does not publish announcements from other institutions or reviews of books from publishers other than the Library of Congress. Readers who would like to comment on Center activities or newsletter articles may address their remarks to the editor.

EDITOR'S NOTES

New Design for Folklife Center News

The new look of this issue of *Folklife Center News* signals a move into the present-age of computer technology. After years of assembling the newsletter "by hand," cutting up galley proofs and pasting them down on boards,

the editor happily relinquishes his role as designer to the Library's Graphics Unit, which will use a Macintosh computer for composition and design.

Since the first issue of *Folklife Center News* in January 1978, eight pages printed on yellow paper, change has been gradual, the most dramatic perhaps coming in 1988 with the shift to black ink on white paper. But from the beginning the content has been a mix of news on Center projects and activities, articles on folklife, and reports and discussions of current issues of the profession. The presentation of photographs has always been important, thanks in part to the work of former staff member Carl Fleischhauer.

We hope the new look is more inviting and better reflects the liveliness and interest of the contents. The editor welcomes letters (and calls) from readers on the new design, or on other aspects of the newsletter.

Free Brochure on Assistance to Native Peoples

The American Folklife Center is among the federal agencies listed in a new National Park Service poster-brochure, *Cultural Heritage Programs and Projects--Sources of Assistance for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians*. On one side, color pictures (including three from Folklife Center projects) portray cultural activities such as dancing, storytelling, needlework, beading, basketry, and leather-work, as well as archaeological and archival management activities. Intermingled with the photos are short descriptions of the federal programs together with names and phone numbers of contact persons in each agency. On the other side, these same agencies are listed on a grid that shows the technical or funding services each provides.

The American Folklife Center is among the agencies that provide technical assistance such as information on archival needs, skills, and resources for tribes and communities seeking to document cultural traditions. The entries for funding agencies show the level of support and the kinds of activities each one covers. While in stock, single copies are available free of charge. Please contact Judith Gray, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. 20540 (202-707-1741).

A NEW CULTURAL HERITAGE CENTER FOR WEST VIRGINIA

The American Folklife Center has been asked by the National Park Service to help in planning a new cultural heritage center near Beckley, in southern West Virginia, on the former site of a small but popular state park, Grandview State Park. The park commands a spectacular view of the New River Gorge, and it has now been absorbed into the national park that surrounds it—the New River Gorge National River.

The Grandview park has long served two important cultural functions: (1) it contains an amphitheater that during summer months presents two outdoor dramas on regional themes, and (2) it is a popular site for regional homecomings and re-

unions throughout the summer season. Both the historical uses of Grandview and its location at the junction of interstate highways (I-77 and I-64) make it a logical place for a cultural heritage center presenting and interpreting the traditions of the region.

To assist the New River Gorge National River in planning the heritage center and related programs, the American Folklife Center was invited by the Eastern Planning Team of the National Park Service's Denver Service Center to conduct a preliminary cultural survey. The Folklife Center team consisted of Mary Hufford, project director; Rita Moonsammy, field coordinator; Dillon Bustin,



Jim McGee, a Presbyterian minister in Fayetteville, West Virginia, presents local songs and traditions at a fourth grade class in the Crescent Elementary School in Beckley, West Virginia, January 17, 1992, part of a program sponsored by the Youth Museum in Beckley. Identifying and conserving regional traditions will be tasks of a new cultural heritage center at Grandview. (7-63231-16A)

Photo by Dillon Bustin

fieldworker (music, dance, and other performance genres); Karen Hudson, fieldworker (vernacular architecture and landscapes); Gregory Jenkins, research assistant; and Charles Bean, archivist. Conducted between December and February, 1992, the survey was designed to provide a body of research on which to base concepts for the center and guidance for planners.

According to Joe Kennedy, superintendent of the New River Gorge National River, "the new heritage center can make an important contribution to sharing Appalachian culture with the public and conserving it in the process. The folklife study will help us plan what the center will do

and how it will go about doing it."

Southern West Virginia is culturally part of the central Appalachian region; but that characterization should not obscure the cultural complexity of the New River Gorge and surrounding areas. The New River has long served as a path of travel and commerce, and throughout the past century the gorge has served as the major trans-Appalachian route of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway. To the west and, to a lesser extent, to the north, there are major coalfields, and the region is dotted with coal communities made up not only of white Appalachians but of blacks and the

descendants of a variety of European immigrants. The different groups retain aspects of their own distinctive cultural traditions, while at the same time participating in the larger cultural milieu of the region. To the east, southeast, and northeast lie the Appalachian highlands with their farm and timber economy and strong cultural conservatism. To the northwest lies the industrial corridor around Charleston. Thus the area incorporates all the multiple traditions (and multiple images) of the larger Appalachian region within which it lies.

The folklife of southern West Virginia is heavily influenced by a particular array of geographic and historical facts. In making West Virginia

home, the people living there have developed their culture in relation to the surrounding resources—the mountains, waterways and springs, minerals, soil types, and vegetation. A long history of efforts to develop these resources, often by outside investors, has left an indelible stamp on landscape and culture. Farming, hunting, gathering, mining coal, harvesting timber, and developing the railroad have all registered an impression on the region's folklife. Tourism is a long tradition in the region, as its venerable hot springs resorts attest. The more recent emphasis on the region's wild and scenic resources and the attendant rise in tourism will doubtless

have their own effect on the culture of the region.

In addition to the traditional practices for which it is best known—like basketmaking, dancing, quilting, hymns, blues, and ballads, traditional dance styles, storytelling, and fiddling—the region includes a plethora of seasonal celebrations such as harvest festivals and family reunions; hunting and gathering traditions; folk architecture; folk animal husbandry; family folklore; woodworking; the making of tools, toys, and musical instruments; stonework; and textile traditions.

The American Folklife Center's cultural survey will provide the folklorist's

perspective as the Park Service plans for the presentation and interpretation of the New River Gorge's cultural resources. Properly conceived, the new Grandview heritage center could help to dispel negative stereotypes of mountain people that persist in the national imagination and instill pride in place and community among local and regional residents of West Virginia. Cultural interpretation, whether to local or national audiences, can become a means of self-discovery and reflection, prompted by exposure to the unfamiliar or illumination of the taken-for-granted aspects of life.

The Assembly of God Church in Mt. Hope, West Virginia, is constructed of concrete block, brick, and stained glass, all locally made. The architectural style and building materials are also typical of residential and commercial buildings in the region. (6-63231-9) Photo by Karen Hudson



SENATOR REID VISITS FOLKLIFE CENTER

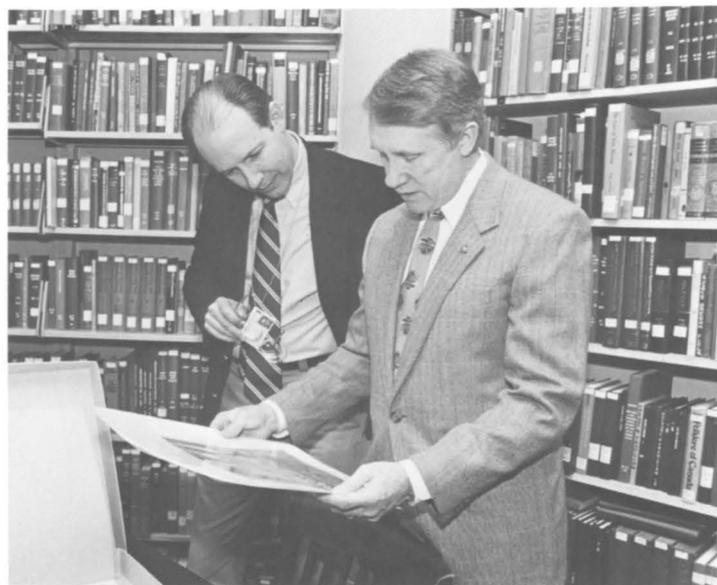
Nevada senator Harry M. Reid visited the American Folklife Center on July 19, 1991, in order to examine the Woody Guthrie material in the Archive of Folk Culture. The following remarks are taken from the Congressional Record—Senate, for September 10, 1991. Senator Reid has been speaking in favor of funding for libraries and literacy programs.

Right before our [summer] break, Mr. President, I went over to the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress and spent some time with Gerald Parsons, the reference librarian there. I went over specifically to learn more about someone's music that I think a lot of, and that is Woody Guthrie, a great American folk singer. He not only sang folk songs, but he wrote them; hundreds of them.

He wrote those songs during the Depression, most of them before he became ill and was unable to do much writing anymore. But he wrote great things: "This Land Is Your Land; This Land Is My Land." He wrote about the Depression. He wrote about the migration of American people because of the Dust Bowl. He wrote in a song what some people would take volumes to say.

What a lot of people do not understand is he wrote a lot of those songs when he was on welfare. He was on welfare, but the right kind of welfare. He was being paid. He was a member of the WPA, the Works Program Administration, where he was being paid to be an artist.

Many of the great American artists started as welfare recipients. They were paid to draw pictures, make posters, to develop symphony or-



On a visit to the Folklife Reading Room, March 30, 1992, Sen. Harry M. Reid reads one of Woody Guthrie's letters. With Senator Reid is reference librarian Gerald Parsons. Photo by Jim Higgins

chestras, bands. Woody Guthrie was paid to write songs, and write songs he did. So Woody is somebody I wanted to learn more about, and I did learn a lot about him.

We have a great collection over here of Woody Guthrie memorabilia, many of his letters. I did not have time to go through all of them, but I spent several hours. I want to read to you a portion of one of those letters dated September 19, 1940:

The Library of Congress is good. It has helped me a lot by recording what I had to say and to copy all of my songs and file them away so the senators caint find them. Course they're always there in case they ever get a few snorts under their vest and want to sing. I think real folk stuff scares most of the boys around Washington. A folk song is what's wrong and how to fix it, or it could be who's hungry and where their mouth is, or who's out of work and where the job is, or who's broke and where the money is, or who's carrying a gun and where the peace is. That's folk lore and folks

made it up because they seen that the politicians couldn't find nothing to fix or nobody to feed or give a job of work. I can sing all day and all night, sixty days and sixty nights, but of course I ain't got enough wind to be in office.

Woody Guthrie found America, and through the library, we can find Woody Guthrie and experience his life and observations. Those couple of hours I spent over there in the Library of Congress, Mr. President, were great hours. I mean I enjoyed that. I cannot describe

how enjoyable it was reading the letters that he wrote to his family and he wrote to the man in the library that was cataloging it, arranging his work.

We learn the truths about how average American folks think. That is what libraries are all about. That is what my experience was about in going to the Library of Congress and learning more about Woody Guthrie.

I have talked on this floor about the importance of our own Library, the Library of Congress. But it is only an example of what we need to do throughout the country with libraries and how we as a national government must be the leaders in library development around this country.

So, I guess, as Woody Guthrie would say, we need a lot less wind here in Washington. What we need is to find where the minds are and how to enlighten them; where the functionally illiterate folks of this Nation are and how to teach them to read. Our democracy depends on it.

A FOLKLORIST AT WORK IN RURAL RUSSIA

By Abigail Adams
and Thea Caemmerer

Russian ethnomusicologist Dmitri Pokrovsky lectured and performed at the Library of Congress on December 2 and 3, 1991, accompanied by ten members of his musical ensemble. Pokrovsky is president of the National Center for Traditional Culture and president of the Russian division of the International Organization of Folk Art as recognized by UNESCO.

In 1969 Dmitri Pokrovsky began making expeditions to the villages of rural Russia in order to study traditional village instrumental music. He was particularly interested in wedding music and music played on shepherds' instruments. Pokrovsky had been trained in orchestral conducting at Moscow State Musical Institute, and he was invited to return to the institute as a professor and to teach his theories and findings regarding traditional Russian folksong. Coursework dealing with traditional village instruments and musical styles was unheard-of in the 1960s, since ethnomusicology had not yet become a recognized field of research in the Soviet Union. Today it is a standard part of the Institute's curriculum.

By 1973, Pokrovsky had concluded that the music in the villages was primarily a vocal tradition and that it was impossible to study instrumental music apart from the singing. He began his research on the voice as the primary village instrument by organizing a group of conservatory students into a musical ensemble. The students were instrumentalists but not trained singers. Pokrovsky taught them to sing in order to test his theories about the ways in which traditional village singers use their vocal chords and mouth



*Members of the Pokrovsky Ensemble, in traditional dress, perform a women's song collected during one of the group's ethnographic collecting expeditions into Rural Russia. The singers are (left to right): Yelena Sidorenko, Tamara Smysova, Galina Parinova, and Anna Konyukhova. (AFC 12291 A-30A)
Photo by Reid Baker*

to create their particular vocal quality. After members of the ensemble came to understand these vocal techniques, they began themselves to make expeditions into rural Russian villages to learn to sing from traditional peasant singers. Once in a village, they would each find a mentor and would work to understand and imitate not only the vocal style of the mentor-singer but also the mentor's role in group singing and in daily workings of the community.

In the villages of Russia, singing shapes the way members of a community live and work together. Singing is used to enhance cooperation at work, allowing a group of workers to function as a single unit while planting, scything, or harvesting. Singing is used in celebration, and is regarded as an integral part of the event being celebrated. Song is used to mark days of importance in the sacred and secular calendars. Song can also be used for dowsing or for calling on the forces of nature to alter climactic conditions. By 1979, ethnomusicology became a recognized field of research in the USSR, and Pokrovsky began post-graduate work at the Scientific Re-



*Pokrovsky's two-day presentation on Russian ethnographic expeditions included musical performance, lecture, and films, as well as a display of traditional costumes. Shown here with Center public events coordinator Thea Caemmerer (left), art historian and folk costume specialist Anna Konyukhova displays an embroidered chemise (rubashk) from southern Russia. (AFC 12291 B-11)
Photo by Reid Baker*



*Russian ethnomusicologist Dmitri Pokrovsky (left) leads members of his performing ensemble in a traditional Cossack riding song. Themselves folklorists who learned the song while on a collection expedition in the south of Russia, ensemble members wear traditional costumes from the study area. The singers are (left to right) Sergei Zhirkov, Alexander Kondurin, Dmitri Fokin, Yevgeni Vedernikov, and Alexander Danilov. (AFC 1229-A-23)
Photo by Reid Baker*



search Institute of Art of the Ministry of Culture of the USSR and the Academy of Science of the USSR. It was at about this time that the group of musicians who were assisting him with fieldwork began to perform publicly the style of singing they were learning during the expeditions. They began by singing informally in homes to satisfy the curiosity of friends. The group was a novelty because Russian folksong was usually presented in romanticized versions by professionally trained musicians. Later the Pokrovsky ensemble began to give more formal performances, like the ones during their tour in the United States, using the proceeds from the concerts to support their own work and to help the village people whose traditions they are studying.

The core group of twenty members continues its expeditions and field research. In addition to this activity, they are developing a multimedia archive, which is dedicated to the documentation and preservation of traditional culture. Their goal is to create a network of archives across the vast territory of Russia that would share information with each other as well as make the collected materials—such as videotapes, audio tapes, still photographs, and field notes—more accessible for researchers and others interested in traditional village culture.

Abigail Adams is a concert manager for World Stage in Boston. She organized Dmitri Pokrovsky's U.S. tour of lectures and performances. Thea Caemmerer is public events coordinator for the American Folklife Center.

CELEBRATING THE YEAR OF THE MONKEY

By Vivien Chen

Vivien Chen presented a slide show and lecture at the Library of Congress on January 30, from which the following remarks are taken. She was joined by members of the Wong Chinese Boxing Association and the Han Sheng Chinese Opera Institute, both of Washington, D.C., who enacted traditional dances of the lion and the monkey king. Readers may wish to compare the Chinese New Year customs with those described by Yassaman Amir Moez in her article "The Magic of Noruz: Iranian New Year's Day Celebrations," *Folklife Center News*, vol. XIII, no. 2 (spring 1991).

Chinese New Year is the greatest of traditional Chinese festivals and arrives on the first day of the first new moon of the lunar calendar. February 4, 1992, ushered in the Year of the Monkey. The monkey is the ninth animal of the Chinese zodiac and a symbol of trickery. In *The Dragon, Image, and Demon*, H.C. DuBose writes:

Before heaven and earth existed, there was the monkey. By taking in light from the sun and moon, his animal spirits were made perfect, and at one somersault he could travel one thousand miles. His peregrinations were to the Heavenly Palace and down to Hades. He stole from the Western Royal Mother the peach of immortality, defeated the generals of heaven in battle, and started up a quarrel in the palace of the Pearly Emperor. At length he was captured by Buddha and shut up within a hill, but was released by the famous traveller Hsuan Tsang.

According to legend, the mythical



Above: Vivien Chen at the podium for her presentation of Chinese New Year celebrations. (LC-USP6-13179-36) Photo by Jim Higgins

Below: Chu-Shyan Zhu, principal actor of the Han Sheng Chinese Opera Institute, as the Monkey King in a scene called "Monkey King Creates Havoc in Heaven." (LC-USP6-13180-6) Photo by Jim Higgins

character Monkey has the ability to bestow upon humans good health, protection, and success in study and trade by keeping away malicious spirits or goblins. People born in the Year of the Monkey are believed to be clever and skillful in grand-scale operations and adroit in making financial transactions.

Based on the agricultural life of farmers, the customs and practices of Chinese New Year are a fusion of folk beliefs, Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. The date of the holiday was set to coincide with the time of year when work in the fields was slack and there was time for mending, fixing tools, preserving and smoking meats, and taking a rest before beginning another arduous year. Because it signals the awakening of spring, the New Year Festival is also called the Spring Festival. It is celebrated during the two weeks between New Year's Eve and the Lantern Festival, which marks the official end of the holiday.

Cooking for the holidays often requires several days of work. Special foods are prepared for a big dinner on New Year's Eve. Some are considered lucky, either because they are made to look like something desirable, such as money, or because their names sound like a lucky word. For example, people eat dumplings because they look like old Chinese silver money, while the term for New Year's cake sounds like the expression meaning "every year things are getting better." Other favorite foods for the holiday include fish, chicken, tangerines, and apples. Pastries and trays of sweets and nuts are also prepared to share with visitors.

On New Year's Eve, families sit down to a dinner that welcomes the New Year with plenty, so that the rest of the year may be plentiful too. All quarrels should be forgotten or patched up at this dinner, which

*Chu-Shyan Zhu,
principal actor
of the Han Sheng
Chinese Opera Institute,
as the
Monkey King
in a scene called
"Monkey King
and the
Magic Fan."
(LC-UP6-13180-16)
Photo by Jim Higgins*



symbolizes harmony and family unity. Ritual offerings are made to the ancestral spirits in thanksgiving for favors in the past and hope for continued blessings in the year ahead. Firecrackers and fireworks are set off to terrify evil spirits with their noise, and to welcome the gods and good spirits. A new picture of the Kitchen God is installed in the kitchen on New Year's Eve to welcome him to the new year.

Traditionally, no one goes to bed on the night of the thirtieth day of the twelfth month. Everyone sits up to welcome in the New Year. This practice is based on the belief that the time of passage from the old year to the new is risky and full of danger.

On New Year's Day, family members, dressed in new clothes, greet one another and make their rounds to visit relatives and friends. One custom popular with children is the practice of giving red envelopes of lucky money. It is also customary for married people to give lucky money to their unmarried relatives.

The Lantern Festival is celebrated on the fifteenth day of the first moon of the lunar calendar and marks the official end of the New Year holiday. Some people believe that this festival originated as a ritual to usher in the increasing light and warmth of the sun after the dark and cold of winter. Lantern shops are often crowded with customers buying lanterns to decorate their homes, and filled with toy lamps in the shape of rabbits, frogs, birds, or airplanes for children. Some country districts retain the ritual use of lanterns—burning them at crossroads to guide lost spirits back to their graves.

Vivien Chen is a folklorist at the Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies at the Smithsonian Institution.

Selected List Panel Meets

The selection panel at work on preliminary balloting for the 1991 edition of *American Folk Music and Folklore Recordings: A Selected List*, an annual publication of the Folklife Center listing the best folk recordings of the year. The panel met at the Library of Congress on March 19 and 20, and reviewed over two hundred submissions. Seated around the table from left to right: Kip Lornell, Smithsonian Institution; Horace Boyer, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Charlotte Heth, University of California, Los Angeles; Dick Spottswood, WAMU FM Radio; and Terry Miller, Center for the Study of World Music, Kent State University. Standing is project coordinator Jennifer Cutting; seated at the table behind the panelists is project assistant Victoria Brown. The Folklife Center has received a \$2,000 grant from the Education Committee of the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences, Inc., to assist with the publication of the list. Photo by Reid Baker



At the January 1992 meeting of the American Folklife Center Board of Trustees, members Robert Malir, Lindy Boggs, and Juris Ubans at a Madison Building reception. Photo by Reid Baker



Cowell Tapes Duplicated for American Memory Project

With Folklife Center archivists Elaine Bradtke and Cathy Kerst, Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound (MBRS) audio engineer Mike Turpin discusses the process of transferring acetate discs onto reels of analog and digital audio tapes for the Library of Congress's American Memory Project. The project is reproducing selected collections using various technologies and making them available to other libraries throughout the country.

Turpin is working on discs from the WPA California Folk Music Project Collection, which includes a cross-section of folk music recorded in Northern California by Sidney Robertson Cowell between 1938 and 1940 and represents a wide



variety of musical styles and genres from seventeen ethnic groups. The

analog tapes will go into the American Folklife Center's recorded sound archives for preservation and the digital tapes will be used to produce the Center's first contribution to the American Memory Project.

"The idea," says Turpin, "is to get these discs transferred to tape while they are still in reasonably good condition. Once the acetate begins to peel and crack they become more difficult to play and some of the material is lost. Tape assures at least another forty years of shelf life and by then everything will probably be on optical disc or chips in a mainframe. That's what is so fascinating about this work,

the blending of old and new technologies." Photo by Reid Baker

FOLKLIFE GOES INTERNET

Folklife, the telephone information service of the Folklife Center and the American Folklore Society, is pleased to announce a new service for members of FOLKLORE, the on-line "discussion list" for the folklore special interest group. In cooperation with the list owner, folklorist Mark Glazer, Folklife will be posted on FOLKLORE on a weekly basis on Tuesdays. Users should be aware that the Folklife announcements average four to five pages.

Contributors to Folklife may send

complete job announcements or notices of national events or awards to Folklife, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540. Announcements should be complete, and should be posted by the individual or organization making them. Include a contact address and phone number and an ending date. Jobs and events will be reported until the announcement expires. Folklife is updated weekly. The American Folklife Center and the American Folklore Society cannot assume responsibility for accuracy of announcements or for employment policies.

FOLKLINE

For timely information on the field of folklore and folklife, including training and professional opportunities and news items of national interest, a taped announcement is available around the clock, except during the hours of 9 A.M. until noon (eastern time) each Monday, when it is updated. Folklife is a joint project of the American Folklife Center and the American Folklore Society. Dial:

202 707-2000



Having completed terms of office as members of the Folklife Center's Board of Trustees and been presented with decorative redware plates bearing the Folklife Center logo, Judith McCulloch, Juris Ubans, and Nina Archabal pose with members of the Center staff, from left to right: Tim Lloyd, David Taylor, Cathy Kerst, Thea Caemmerer, Ray Dockstader, Mary Hufford, Alan Jabbour, Judith Gray, Doris Craig, Peter Bartis, and James Hardin. Photo by Reid Baker

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