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MOUNTAIN FOLK FESTIVAL IN BEREA, KY

The 75th Annual **MOUNTAIN FOLK FESTIVAL** will take place at Berea College on April 1 and 2, 2011 at Seabury Center, Berea College, with events for both registered participants and the public.

The **MOUNTAIN FOLK FESTIVAL** celebrates young people dancing and learning to dance. Started in 1935 as part of Berea College's outreach to the young people of the mountains, the Festival has trained both dancers and dance leaders who have carried on the cultural folk traditions of the area. Traditional music and dance from the British Isles, Denmark, and Appalachia are taught to children from the fourth grade through high school. Groups who have been learning these dances at school and in community groups come together to share what they have learned and learn new dances.

The Festival starts Friday, with a day of practicing and learning dances and songs, and ends with an evening dance called by internationally acclaimed caller Bob Dalsemer. Classes continue on Saturday, culminating in a performance by the youth dancers followed by a dance Saturday evening that is open to the community.

An article in the January 1935 **MOUNTAIN LIFE AND WORK** magazine, which was published in Berea for many years by the Council of the Southern Mountains, tells of plans:

"Our first mountain folk festival will...be a festival of folk games, folk songs and folk plays. Berea was chosen because...we turn to Berea as a sort of mother of mountain schools. The festival is primarily for the joy of sharing and passing on such folk material ...One of the great reasons for the occasion, however, is the joy which comes from doing games together."

Author of the article, Marguerite Butler, the first chairperson of the Festival, ends by saying:

"Perhaps in some ways this will be a unique festival, as there will be no competition, no judging, no prizes, no banners, no votes for the best. We come together for the joy of sharing with each other the rich store of the folk material which has come down to us through the ages."

The public is warmly invited to watch a new generation of dancers, singers and musicians share the joy of this folk material. A Pre-Show of skills learned in Festival workshops will take place in Seabury Center, Old Gym, at 6:15. The musicians and dancers will begin the Gala Dance Performance with a processional, or parade dance, where the group welcomes the coming spring season in a centuries-old tradition of "dancing in the branches of May" with a dance called "The Beginning of the World." An evening of dancing with caller Bob Dalsemer and Berea musicians Al and Alice White, and Atossa Kramer will follow. Both events are free and open to the public.

For more information, please call Pamela Corley at 859-200-8652 or 986-9455, or check out the Mountain Folk Festival at www.berea.edu/peh/dance/mff.

FACULTY BIOGRAPHIES

Internationally known caller, teacher and author of several books about traditional dancing, **BOB DALSEMER** has served as the featured teacher and caller for the Mountain Folk Festival since 2000. Bob is the Coordinator of Music and Dance Programs at the John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC, and former President of the Country Dance and Song Society of America. With 40 years of calling experience, an easy going manner, and exceptional teaching skills, Bob is one of the country's most popular traditional dance callers. His repertoire of dances includes a wide range of American contras, squares and circles as well as English and Danish dances.

Co-directors of the Festival: Berea recording artist and dance teacher, **JENNIFER ROSE**, grew up with the traditions of the Mountain Folk Festival and is a talented and energetic professional performer. **PAMELA CORLEY-SLOWKOWSKI**, ritual dance coach of the Berea College Country Dancers and founder of several seasonal display dance groups in Berea, brings a wealth of knowledge about traditional dances, especially those of the British Isles. **THERESA LOWDER** wears many leadership hats in the dance community, but is perhaps best known for her 23 years as director of the Berea Festival Dancers, the local middle and high school folk dance troupe that tours nationally and internationally.