

Pine Mountain Settlement School  
36 State Highway 510  
Bledsoe, KY 40810

# NOTES FROM THE PINE MOUNTAIN SETTLEMENT SCHOOL

PINE MOUNTAIN • HARLAN COUNTY • KENTUCKY

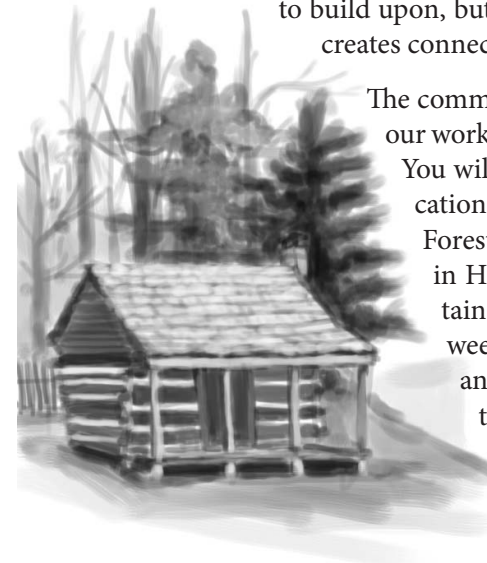
Fall

Dr. Geoff Marietta, Director

2015

Is it any surprise that the community is at the heart of what we do today? Without the support, engagement, dedication, and hard work of our community members (not to mention land, timber, stone, and labor), Pine Mountain Settlement School would literally not be standing. When you look back at our founders' visions, they embraced the Settlement House/School concept—work hand-in-hand with local community members to create a neighborly institution for education, social activities, economic opportunities, and “cultural uplift.”

In many ways, the community is like the strong and beautiful foundations you find on many of our buildings on campus—Laurel House, Big Log, Draper, Library, and of course, the Chapel. These foundations are built of solid local sandstone and constructed in ways—with guidance from external experts, such as architect Mary Rockwell Hook—that are unique to Pine Mountain Settlement School. They not only provide a strong base to build upon, but also exhibit outward beauty that creates connections beyond the region.



The community is indeed the foundation of our work as you will see in these Fall Notes. You will learn from Environmental Education Director Susan Brown about our Forestry Days, where every 5th grader in Harlan County visited Pine Mountain Settlement School during one week in September. Our agricultural and sustainability efforts continue to support families growing their own organic food to eat and sell. And our community outreach expands with new events like

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(Continued from front) the first ever “Trunk-or-Treat” and Veteran’s Day Dinner, both of which were warmly received and well attended.

Now is the time to return to the roots of Pine Mountain Settlement School, work hand-in-hand with the community, and embrace the Settlement School vision set by Petit, deLong, and Creech. We know the grim realities of the Kentucky mountains, including the more than 8,000 mining jobs lost in the last five years. Times are tough and jobs are scarce. In this time of economic transition, Pine Mountain Settlement School offers practical, action-based hope. Built on the solid foundation of the community, we will work together to change the region, to take our wonderful raw materials and build something beautiful and enduring.

Yours in the Spirit of Pine Mountain,

*Geoff Marietta*

This holiday season, give the gift of peace....  
Give a weekend at Pine Mountain for one of our naturalist, yoga, or arts retreats and save 10%

<b>Winter Naturalist Retreat</b>	<b>Winter Arts Retreat</b>	<b>Spring Wildflower Weekend</b>
February 26 - 28	January 22 - 24	April 22 - 24

*Purchase by December 31, 2015 to qualify for the discount  
We can send a gift acknowledgement card or e-mail a printable certificate.*



## Calendar of Events

- December 13 Nativity Play
- December 17 Pine Mountain Homemakers Christmas Dinner
- December 18 Community Children’s Christmas Party
- January 8-10 Yoga Retreat
- January 16 Community Folk Dance
- January 18 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Service Day
- January 22-24 Winter Arts Workshop
- January 22-23 Take a “Lichen” to Air Quality Workshop
- February 9 Garden Planning and Planting Workshop
- February 14 Valentine’s Day Dinner
- February 19 Owl Prowl
- February 25 Market Gardening Workshop
- February 26-28 Winter Naturalist Workshop
- March 12 Seed Swap Workshop
- March 29 Market Gardening Readiness Workshop
- April 21 Bee Workshop with Kentucky State Apiarist, Tammy Horn
- April 22-24 Wildflower Weekend
- April 23 Documenting the Family Homestead Workshop
- April 30 Spring Gala Dinner and Auction
- May 1-6 Window Restoration & Weatherization Boot Camp
- May 6-8 Black Mountain Wildflower Weekend
- May 8 Mother’s Day Dinner
- May 17 Organic Garden Maintenance



For more details on pricing and registration, please visit our website <http://pinemountainsettlementschool.com/events.php> or call 606-558-3571

## Upcoming Workshops

### December 13 Nativity Play

A Pine Mountain Settlement School tradition, the Christmas Nativity Play has been in continuous use since the first presentation in the 1920s. The script, written by Ethel de Long, the script is a simple telling of the birth of Christ. The play is elegant in its simple language and ease of presentation, and powerful in its minimalism and inclusion of the audience. The annual Nativity Play will be presented Sunday, December 13, 2015 at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. in the Pine Mountain Settlement School Chapel. The doors will open 30 minutes prior to each performance for special music. Visitors are invited to a tea in Laurel House immediately following each performance. The event is free to the public with lodging available for a fee.

### January 8-10 Yoga Retreat

Join us for a weekend of quiet relaxation and rest in a peaceful environment. Against the backdrop of a beautiful nature preserve, yoga instructor Amy Wardana will lead activities in yoga philosophy, poses, breathing, and meditation techniques inside the cozy lodge at Pine Mountain Settlement School. No previous experience is necessary. All faith traditions and all body types will be celebrated. All yoga practices are targeted toward cultivating awareness, compassion, and toward activating each individual's unique potential. Classes, food, and lodging are all part of the \$170 cost.

### January 22-24 Winter Arts Weekend

Participate in expert-led workshops in weaving, stained glass, cornshuck crafts, and woodcarving. Can't decide which session to select? We've made it easier for you by allowing you to choose two! You can learn to weave and make cornshuck dolls or maybe you'd like to try your hand at woodcarving and stained glass. Evening entertainment, cozy fireplaces, and farm-fresh food make the winter arts all that more inviting. Cost is only \$200 and includes all meals, 2 nights lodging, instruction and materials.

### February 26-28 Winter Naturalists Retreat

Pine Mountain Settlement School transforms into a wonderland during the winter. Join us for a weekend suited to beginning or experienced naturalists. We will learn how to identify trees in winter, investigate animal tracks and survival strategies of local wildlife, go on a nighttime owl prowls, and experience the beauty of winter while hiking through this unique and beautiful landscape. Inside the cozy lodge, we will warm up by the fireplace and celebrate the region's unique culture with a traditional folk dance. You get all this, meals, and lodging for the weekend for just \$170.

## Environmental Education

This fall season brought beautiful weather and some of the most intense colors to the mountains that we've seen in many years. Our stunning landscape was enjoyed by well over one thousand students, hikers, photographers, and artists who visited our campus through the Environmental Education, Fall Arts, and Fall Color programs, as well as a few new programs and workshops we offered this year.

In September, freshman students from Harlan High School gathered at Pine Mountain for an "Adventure Day" to kick off the school year. These students developed leadership, team building, and problem-solving skills by overcoming several physical and mental challenges as a group. Then the students got to know each other even better by finishing the day with a good old fashioned Pine Mountain folk dance.

This season also saw the success of our first "Forestry Days," a program that brought every 5th grade student in Harlan County to campus to learn about Kentucky's forests. In collaboration with our sponsor, the Kentucky Farm Bureau, students were guided through hands-on activities related to tree identification, methods of sustainable harvesting, and both the ecological and economic value of our forest. Activities were led by representatives from the Kentucky Division of Forestry and our Environmental Education staff. We are looking forward to continuing this program next year.

In October, we hosted the first in a series of three citizen science workshops, in which participants learned to collect scientific data about air quality by measuring lichens. Through this project, which is funded by Eastern Kentucky University's Center for Appalachian Regional Engagement and Sustainability (CARES), we have established lichen-monitoring plots in both the James E. Bickford State Nature Preserve on the campus and at Lilley Cornett Woods, which is managed by ECU. The second workshop will be held January 22-23, and a third will be held in the spring. We are excited to contribute to this important scientific study while also helping folks learn more about our local ecosystem.

Looking forward, we are busy preparing for two new workshops: Winter Arts Retreat January 22-24 and Winter Naturalists Retreat February 26-28. Winter is a time for quiet reflection, observing animal footprints in the snow, listening for the mating calls of barred owls, remembering traditional Appalachian arts such as stained glass and corn shuck crafts, and cozying up by the fireplace in Laurel House. We hope you will join us, and perhaps bring a friend to discover our unique place and programs.



## Agriculture & Sustainability

Despite challenges of a dry early spring and an exceptionally wet summer, our Grow Appalachia (GA) program has been quite successful. Working with 45 participant families representing over 200 individuals, we helped produce more than 40,000 lbs. of organically grown local produce.

We also hosted nine well-attended educational workshops on a variety of topics, with three more scheduled through the end of the year. Some of the workshop topics included food preservation and healthy cooking, sorghum production and processing, woodland medicinal production and marketing, as well as mushroom production. The average attendance for each workshop was 38 participants and the combined total for all workshops was 348.

We have also been assisting participants of GA who are interested in marketing their produce to gain the knowledge and skills necessary for developing a successful local food oriented enterprise. In support of this work Pine Mountain Settlement School has set aside 5% of the kitchen budget to purchase local produce, placing priority on GA participants. Building on the success of this pilot, we plan to increase the budget to 15% for local food purchases.

Work on the high tunnel construction (giant greenhouses) project funded by the USDA-NRCS has commenced and is nearing completion. Making use of two 30'X48' high tunnels, we hope to greatly expand winter production of greens as well as extend the main growing season from early spring to late fall.

In our sustainability efforts, we continue to cut energy costs and develop a renewable energy system on campus that includes a micro-hydroelectric project. The preliminary site inspection is complete and we have begun working with a manufacturer to properly size and price the system. Also, we researched local regulations regarding electricity generation and use at this scale. Furthermore, a local electrician has been contracted to advise us on system design and to ultimately help with installation. Finally, the on campus recycling program continues to operate smoothly and to date we have recycled thousands of pounds of paper, cardboard, plastic, aluminum and tin cans.



## Lesson Plan: Black Rat Snake

by Bucky Field

Of Kentucky's 32 species of snakes, the black rat snake is one of the most common. Occupying a variety of habitats, this snake can be found in all parts of the state. Not only are they common, but they also reach lengths of 72 inches, making the black rat snake one of Kentucky's largest snakes. Peterson lists the record black rat snake at 101 inches.

Like all snakes, the black rat snake is a carnivore. It is primarily considered a rodent eater; however, it is also an excellent climber, so in addition to small mammals including bats, its diet may consist of birds, bird eggs, and occasionally other snakes, including venomous copperheads. Black rat snakes are non-venomous and kill their prey by constriction. It was once believed that black rat snakes would steal milk from a cow, so they are sometimes referred to as cow-suckers. Of course, this is an untrue myth because only mammals drink milk.

The behavior of black rat snakes can be somewhat unpredictable. Many are quite docile when handled, but most can be aggressive when cornered or captured. When defending themselves, they are often known to coil and vibrate their tails thus simulating a rattlesnake. With continued provoking, they will strike.

Rat snakes are categorized in the class Reptilia, so we call them reptiles. In cross section, they are not perfectly round. They are flat ventrally as is a loaf of bread. This allows for rigidity, adding to their ability as climbers. While many snakes are live bearers, black rat snakes are egg layers. Like all snakes, black rat snakes taste the air. Snakes pick up chemical senses in the air with their tongues and the Jacobson's organ in the roof of the mouth relays this information to the brain. Snakes do not have eyelids; however, the eye is permanently protected by a covering called a spectacle. This, together with a snake's reduced eyeball mobility, results in the cold unblinking stare that many people find unnerving.

A black rat snake is an important predator of its ecosystem. It is also beneficial to have around homes or farms where it feeds on nuisance mice and rats. Due to the reproductive rate of *Peromyscus* mice, a rat snake should be a welcomed guest. A single *Peromyscus* female in the spring may well have nearly 1,000,000 descendants within 2 years. Sadly, due to people's lack of knowledge as well as an irrational fear of snakes, black rat snakes continue to be victims of human persecution.



## People in the Neighborhood: Joyce Scarse

Joyce Scarse was born in Cincinnati Ohio, but grew up in Leslie County, Kentucky where she attended high school for two years before completing her education at Red Bird High School in Clay County. Immediately following graduation she moved to Lexington and began working, first at a nursing home and then a coffee shop at Central Baptist hospital. Joyce said she really liked working at the coffee shop because she got to meet a lot of people.

Joyce married Harlan County native Robert Scarse in 1972 and left Lexington to make her home in Indiana. She and Robert had three children there before making their final move – back to Kentucky – where their fourth child was born. After raising her children, Joyce continues parenting with a teenage grandson that has lived with her since he was 4 years old. She and Robert currently have twelve grandchildren with another expected in December.

Joyce began work at the Settlement School through a government work program, but was soon hired by Pine Mountain Settlement School as a part-time employee in April 1989. She became full-time in 1998, working closely with Lorraine Browning who was the current kitchen manager. When Lorraine retired in 2006, Joyce filled that position. Joyce loves Pine Mountain and her favorite thing is meeting and talking with people. Her philosophy is “if you provide a clean place for people to stay and good food to eat, that makes them happy and their nice comments make me happy.”

### From the Archives

“Four splendid instructors from the Kentucky State University have been here for four days holding Farmers’ Institute. It is a splendid thing for this part of the country and you never saw such interest as the farmers showed. Last night one of the men said it was by far the best meeting he had ever had in Kentucky. Of course mothers, fathers and children came for miles around. Yesterday the school cooked dinner for all out in big black kettles in the open. The men killed a sheep Saturday for the great affair. The talks were splendid on the soil and care of it, proper kind of food and why, how to raise fruit trees and poultry, which are both easily but poorly done in the mountains.”

*-Margeurite Butler, 1915, describing the “Farmer’s Institute”*

## Community

It has been a thrilling time for community support and engagement at Pine Mountain Settlement School, with hundreds of local visitors coming to campus for new events. Just as importantly, these events showcase new connections and collaborations made with local organizations, businesses, and people.

In October, we partnered with the Harlan County Library and Joanne Boggs, Bookmobile Librarian, to bring a monthly “Story Time” to campus. Our first event included six children aged one to five who heard stories, completed crafts, and were able to check out books.

As the month ended, we worked with A & A Turner’s Grocery to host the annual Trunk or Treat event for the north side of Pine Mountain. We offered hayrides, games, contests, food, a bonfire and storytelling, and, of course, a trunk or treat. Food and prizes were donated by the local churches and community members, as well as Turner’s Grocery and Nolen’s Lodge. We estimate that over 400 people showed up, including attendees from Bell, Letcher, and Perry Counties.

In November, we held our first annual Veteran’s Day Dinner. We honored 26 veterans with a free meal, including our three veterans on staff: Paul Creech, Oscar Epperson, and David Shepherd. More than 80 people attended the dinner, allowing us to raise over \$300.00 for the Harlan County Honor Guard.

With the excitement of new programming, we have also continued our monthly offerings. Family Fun Nights included an opportunity to build a birdhouse, as well as a movie and pizza night. Community Meetings are held on the first Thursday of every month and bring a strong group focused on advising our Executive Director on local needs.

Exciting things are in the works for the winter. We hope you might join us for our annual Nativity Play on December 13th. This longstanding tradition showcases how much we can accomplish with the help of our local citizens.



*Ben, age 3, of Bledsoe was one of more than 275 children at Trunk-or-Treat*

## Support Pine Mountain Settlement School

Your gift to Pine Mountain supports our key initiatives in education, sustainability, and economic development. The opposite page provides a snapshot of one way to support the people of the Kentucky Mountains. There are many more reasons to give, including: preservation of rare species on our nature preserve, safeguarding historical documents and artifacts important to the region, and hands-on educational programming that instills the virtues of conservation. We are a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and contributions to Pine Mountain are tax-deductible. Please use the enclosed envelope to send your donation or make an online donation at <http://pinemountainsettlementschool.com/donate.php>

*If you would like, you may also donate for a specific need:*

- Energy Star Certified Refrigerator
- Electric Work Utility Vehicle
- 2-Line Desk Phones
- Microsoft Office Business Software
- Adobe Creative Cloud Suite Subscription
- Two PC Laptops
- WiFi Extenders/Repeaters
- Storage Unit for Playground Equipment
- Leaf Blower
- Library Renovation
- Children's Books for our Environmental Education and Community Programs
- Digital Single-Lens Reflex (DSLR) Camera



## Why Give? Focus on Agriculture and Sustainability

### Feeding Families

On the North Side of Pine Mountain, more and more families are returning to tradition by growing and preserving their food. From February to November, more than 348 individuals have come to Pine Mountain Settlement School as part of a monthly series aimed at practical agricultural solutions, from using rain barrels for irrigation, to organic pest control, to canning produce. In collaboration with Grow Appalachia, 45 families also receive free seeds and gardening supplies. Between regional economic decline and the long distances needed to travel to buy produce, home gardens meet the critical need voiced again and again for healthy, affordable food.

### Growing the Economy

PMSS is working hard to make agriculture part of a diverse economic future for Eastern Kentucky. Our Agriculture and Sustainability program has tapped into the entrepreneurial spirit of the mountains by focusing on emerging markets: forest medicinals such as ginseng and goldenseal; high-value, shelf-stable products such as honey and sorghum; and engaging local gardeners to supply food for our own kitchen. This fall, participants in our Grow Appalachia program have been supplied ginseng seeds, made sorghum with a local expert who has grown cane on reclaimed mine lands, and listened to Emory professor Berry Brosi explain how they can support the health of honey bees.

Katherine Pettit imagined PMSS as a test site for agricultural innovation and business more than 100 years ago, and we are returning to this important core mission. Won't you join us in feeding both the body and hopes of the people of the Kentucky Mountains? Your support will help put food on the table in Laurel House and beyond.

