

**Inaugural Event of *Voices from the Hills*:
a Celebration of Appalachian Writers,
in Honor of Danny Miller (1949-2008)**

**Round-Table Discussion:
The Future of Appalachian Literature**

**Greaves Concert Hall
Northern Kentucky University
26 September 2009**

The Round-Table Discussion transcribed below was the opening event of *Voices from the Hills*, a daylong celebration of Appalachian writers in honor of Danny Miller, a beloved author, editor, mentor, teacher, and friend to countless writers and students throughout the Appalachian region. Danny taught at Northern Kentucky University from 1981 until his death on November 9, 2008, in his tenth year as chair of the recently renamed Department of English. Danny's acute, loving work as co-editor of this journal from 1988 is recognized in the tribute from co-editor and successor Gary Walton that begins the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary issue, published to coincide with our day of celebration on September 26, 2009. The Round-Table Discussion in Greaves Concert Hall, from 10:00-11:15 in the morning, was followed by a Memorial Luncheon in the University Center Ballroom at which the keynote speakers were Gurney Norman and Frank X Walker in dialogue. The Public Reading back in Greaves Concert Hall beginning at 1:30 featured readings by Gurney Norman, Crystal Wilkinson, and Wendell Berry. The afternoon concluded with a book signing and reception, with music by Sherry Stanforth and her Appalachian band *Sunset Dawn*.

The organizers at NKU are extremely grateful for the generosity of the writers and musicians who made this exhilarating event in memory of Danny possible. We are grateful that his brothers Tim and Jim Miller were able to be with us from North Carolina. We are also grateful to InkTank of Cincinnati for their warm-up event on the evening of September 25 and to the Kentucky Philological Association, the University Press of Kentucky, the Mercantile Library of Cincinnati, and Karen McLennon for

sponsoring the four prizes in the Danny Miller Student Writing Contests that were awarded at the Memorial Luncheon. Proceeds from *Voices from the Hills*, augmented by funds from the offices of the President and the Provost at NKU and scores of individual donations, have enabled us to create an endowed Danny Miller Memorial Scholarship for Advanced Graduate Study in the M. A. program in English (a program whose creation was one of Danny's last achievements as department chair).

—Robert K. Wallace, Regents Professor,
Department of English, Northern Kentucky University

Panelists:

**Richard Hague (RH), Chris Holbrook (CH), Jeff Mann (JM),
Frank X Walker (FXW), Marianne Worthington (MW).**

Moderator:

Laura Sutton (LS)

Event Organizer:

Robert Wallace (RW)

RW: Welcome to *Voices from the Hills*. Thank you all for coming on this drizzly morning to celebrate the life of Danny Miller and the writers he loved. I am Bob Wallace, one of Danny's colleagues here in the English Department for 28 years. Almost exactly one year ago, Danny had the pleasure of introducing Wendell Berry in this very hall for one of those readings that you never forget. Less than two months after that, this hall was again filled to capacity but this time for the memorial service for Danny, who died suddenly of a stroke at age 59, just about to complete his tenth year as chair of the English Department here. Everyone who was here remembers the extraordinary combination of love and loss that filled this room. I saw someone at a conference six months later. He said, "If church was like that, I'd be a believer" [laughter]. This is the first of four events that will celebrate different aspects of Danny's life as a reader, teacher, writer, editor, and friend. I am very grateful to Laura Sutton, who will be moderating our round-table discussion of the future of Appalachian literature. She is an editor at the University Press of Kentucky, where she has brought out an impressive range of books on Appalachian literature and culture. Laura will introduce our five panelists. As you will see, they are a veritable *Who's Who* of writers in the field. I am very grateful to each of them for being here with us today. After the round-table discussion, there will be some time for questions from the audience. We will end this session at 11:15 to allow time to convene for the luncheon at 11:45, which had to be moved to another building because so many people registered. Laura . . . [He hands the microphone, and session, to Laura.]

LS: Good morning, I'm Laura Sutton. It's so wonderful to see all of you here this morning on a day of true celebration. I want to quickly introduce our panelists and then just kind of let them loose. We're going to have some fun this morning.

To my immediate right is Jeff Mann. Jeff, from his bio, is at least a triple threat. He has written three award-winning chapbooks and two full-length books of poetry; a collection of personal essays, *Edge: Travels of an Appalachian Leather Bear*; and the novella, *Devoured*.

I think many of us probably best know him for his collection of poetry/

memoir, *Loving Mountains, Loving Men*, and he's also the author of the Lambda Literary Award-winning *A History of Barbed Wire*. Jeff comes to us from Virginia Tech, where he teaches creative writing.

To Jeff's right is Marianne Worthington. Marianne is a poet and educator. She, of course, is author of the chapbook *Larger Bodies than Mine*, which won the 2007 Appalachian Book-of-the-Year Award. She has edited two volumes in the Motes Books MOTIF anthology series. She is poetry editor for *Now and Then*, and she teaches communication and journalism at the University of the Cumberlands (some of us still like to call that Cumberland College).

Next, is Chris Holbrook. Chris, of course, is a native of Knott County, Kentucky. He sort of burst on the scene a little more than a decade ago, maybe 12 or so years ago, with *Hell and Ohio*, which won the Chaffin Award. More recently, he's come out with a second collection of short stories, titled *Upheaval*. He is a graduate of the Iowa Writers Workshop, and he now teaches at Morehead State University.

Next we have Richard Hague. Richard, I think you go by "Dick," correct? [Yes.] So we can call you Dick this morning? He is a member of the Southern Appalachian Writers Workshop; he is editor-emeritus of *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*, which is an anthology of contemporary Appalachian writing; and he is a board member of Cincinnati's InkTank, which hopefully some of you all experienced at the event last evening. It's a non-profit literacy and literature organization just over the river in Cincinnati. Dick teaches in Cincinnati and Boston. He is the author of *Ripening*, for which he was named Co-Poet of Ohio in '85; *Alive in a Hard Country*, which was the 2004 Poetry Book-of-the-Year winner from the Appalachian Writers Association; and his latest book is *Public Hearings*.

And last but not least, to your far left, is Frank X Walker. Does he need an introduction in this crowd? Of course I have Frank's full-length bio memorized, but I was thinking when I went to introduce him, he kind of took over central Kentucky, you know; he's a native of Danville, he made his mark in Lexington, then there were the Louisville years, so it's only fitting that he's sort of bringing the party to northern Kentucky. I know you all are happy to have him here. He's currently Writer-in-Residence in the Department of English. He's the author of numerous books—*Black Box*; *Affrilachia*; of course he did two works of poetry about the Lewis and Clark slave, York. The first was *Buffalo Dance*, for which he won the Lannan Prize, and more recently, *When Winter Come*. And I have it on good authority that he's got two more books inspired by history in the works.

So, these are our distinguished panelists. Welcome everyone. I'd just kind of like to kick it off by—you know, I think there are certain assumptions we all have about Appalachian literature at this point in time. Words like "tradition" and "nostalgia" come up. So I guess I want to be a little contrarian and ask the panel or anyone who cares to answer: Is it me, or is Appalachian literature becoming a little more contemporary in feel? Have we crossed that line where more and more Appalachian books are set in the present?

JM: Yes [laughter].

RH: Thanks, Jeffrey.

LS: Okay.

JM: Well, I'm trying to think of some specific examples and I can't, but I have a really clear sense of that.

LS: Your work, for instance?

JM: Well, I mean, I think there's less of that nostalgia and romanticizing of the past and more a depiction of contemporary lives. That's, I think, a part of what you're saying. Any particular folks that you can think of [to other panelists]? It's all over the place.

RH: It really is, I think, so, yeah, it's varied.

FXW: I would definitely agree. I think, particularly when you think about the contemporary poets right now, they write about what's happening in their lives right now. I'm in touch with a lot of younger poets, many of whom are in this room, who are still trying to define their place in the world, and we wrestle with a redefining of Appalachia, you know, trying to insert this idea of an Affrilachia, but I've heard words like "Cubalachian" now. We published an essay in *Pluck!* by an Arab-Appalachian (we could not make "Arab-Appalachian" work as one word), but I think, for me, just recognizing that those new voices are still being discovered and what's the breadth of the region is really worth noting.

RH: I've really always thought of myself as a border Appalachian. I grew up on the Ohio River right across from West Virginia and when I talked about this once, Jim Wayne Miller sent me Daniel Boorstin's chapter called "The Fertile Verge." And I think, Appalachian literature is reflecting that, what's called an edge effect in ecology, where: here's an ecosystem, here that's forest, here's grassland, and the edge between them is the richest diversity. And I think we're seeing that, that there's a lot of diversity in Appalachian literature because the region itself is amorphous and it's changing, it's shifting, not only geographically and culturally but politically and in other ways, so I think it's a tremendously rich time when you have cultural shifts like that. You know, the Old English epic, *Beowulf*, arose when there was a cultural shift between indigenous people and the people that moved in and all that. The same thing seems to be going on in Appalachian literature.

CH: Yeah, I think that's always been the case. Ron Eller writes about the dynamic changes that have occurred in Appalachia always and, going back to the turn of the last century, with the coal industry's coming on then. That's still going on; it's a very, very dynamic place; there's a lot of conflict economically, culturally; it's extreme. And what we have—you know, those of us who are teachers—we see all the time, every year, young people who want to write and who are learning to write and want to dedicate their lives to it. And I think that's part of the wealth that we're seeing now, that Frank was talking about. There's diversity, but there's also just a really rich number of students wanting to write and wanting to write about what's going on now.

MW: I think we've learned to put pressure on each other and to motivate each other into telling our own stories because, you know, for so long, outsiders told Appalachians' stories until we figured out we were perfectly capable of telling our own stories, so I think we put pressure on each other and motivate each other and inspire each other to tell our own history. The American poet, B. H. Fairchild, who writes about the panhandle of Oklahoma where he grew up, says that the reason that he writes poetry and about that place is because he's the only person who's lived it and it's his story and he has to tell it, and I think we do the same thing.

JM: There's a poem I recommend by Maggie Anderson, who's a poet up at Kent State, in her collected *New and Selected Poems: Windfall* [*Windfall: New and Selected Poems*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000], which is called "Marginal." It's about that in-between space. I know one of the reasons that

I've been able to write about Appalachia is because I have felt—and Maggie has said the same thing—part of it and yet not part of it: you're enough a part of it to be able to find it fascinating but you're sufficiently detached from it that you can look at it with some objectivity and see things that perhaps you would not have seen if you were smack dab right in the middle of it, fully integrated in it, with a full sense of belonging.

MW: One thing that, to play off what Jeff just said about Maggie letting him write about Appalachia, I, for me, Danny Miller did that for me, and his book *Wingless Flight* was one of the first texts that I ever read where women and women characters were studied closely, and that led me to all kinds of places where I began to think about women's places in stories as well as in culture. And, I just wanted to say that so we could be sure to connect Danny to what we're saying here today. He was a great influence on me.

CH: That's an invaluable contribution that Danny made with that, and a part of what goes on in Appalachian literature is you have people like Danny make these opportunities available and look at something that needs to be looked at and give us an opportunity to bring it out. Without people like Danny Miller, it's much harder for all of us to work and connect.

MW: Amen.

LS: Yes, thank you. And of course I know that Danny played a big role in Frank's hiring here at NKU.

FXW: Well, absolutely. I'm sitting here *because of* Danny Miller. I'm at the end of my three-year contract, but his enthusiasm—I think we talked about it three years in advance, trying to figure out how to make it happen, even before there was money for it. But the thing about Danny is his enthusiasm is infectious. I mean, people still remember laughing with Danny. There's a wonderful book on the table out front—if you flip through it, in almost every photo, Danny has his head cocked back, and he's laughing. But that *was* Danny. And even in a tense situation, he always knew how to take the tension down and respond to what people needed. I think his value system really permeated the department. And the reason this place was filled for his service was that love, that very genuineness, that's a part of who he was in the world.

JM: And I'd like to also say I'm here because of Danny Miller, for two reasons. One is Steve Mooney; some of you may know him, the Appalachian scholar. I wish I knew half as much as he did about any number of things. He lent me, years ago, an essay that Danny never published—and I harassed Danny every time I saw him to publish the damned thing, and he never did. It's called "Homosexuality in Appalachian Literature." And Steve Mooney gave me a Xerox of that essay. That's how I met Danny before I met him. And that was a great boon to me and I've used that essay for years. I've given it to students. And then, years after that, I was putting together *Loving Mountains, Loving Men*. And you go through the scary, outside review crap, and they were smart enough to make him the outside reviewer [laughter].

So I owe *them* that and I owe *him* the letter that he wrote, which was glowing. I always said that I owed him a lobster dinner, and I never got a chance to follow up with that. Yeah, so the book was published because of that letter, and I pretty much got tenure because of that book, so, yeah, I owe him a great deal. So it's especially nice to be invited to this.

MW: Yes.

LS: Quite a legacy. Just kind of shifting gears slightly, I'm always interested—

perhaps because of a couple of projects I'm working on now—I really think there needs to be a new anthology of Appalachian literature and I'm trying to work with an author on writing the history of Appalachian literature. So I'm sort of thinking, you know, is Appalachian literature part of Southern literature? How does it fall out in the canon of American literature? And I'm just wondering if anyone would care to comment on where, circa 2009, where did Appalachian Lit fall? We've now had a couple of Oprah Book Club books, and if that isn't a marker of success [she shrugs]?

JM: She leaves.

LS: She shakes her pen at me [referring to Marianne]!

MW: No, I just found this little thing that I thought was a perfect little answer to that question. You may have seen it already—it's from the latest issue of *Oxford American*, which is devoted to Southern literature, and this is what the editor says about Southern literature: every time you hear the word "Southern," just substitute "Appalachian." I think it works really well. And what's the editor's name at *Oxford American*?

LS: Mark Smirnoff.

MW: Mark Smirnoff. This is a real brief statement:

The locale of your birth and upbringing is a fact, not a scarlet letter that reveals to people just what kind of soul you carry. And while regionalism informs and influences and pesters the human condition, it doesn't contain or touch everything about us.

Then he goes on to say how native Southern writers, like Flannery O'Connor and Faulkner, used that little postage stamp of native soil as a springboard. And he says:

None of these people, I think, would deny at least some regional influence on their work and personality, nor would they be paranoid or weirdly defensive about being called "Southern" or "Russian" [he references Chekhov] or "Eastern." Maybe this is where things get sticky for some people.

And I think maybe what we do in Appalachian literature is not just use the place as a postage stamp but as almost a character. So . . .

LS: In the way, you know, that New York City is often a character.

MW: Yes. And I'm not smart enough to put Appalachian literature in the canon of Southern literature but that's just my whole response to that question.

CH: Jim Wayne Miller had a great comment on this. I'm probably paraphrasing it incorrectly, but he said that Appalachian literature is a twig on the branch that is Southern literature on the branch that is American literature. . . . Do you have that?

LS: The toadstool next to the rotting log that is Southern literature [laughter].

MW: Is that what he said—"the toadstool next to the rotting log"?

LS: Yes.

CH: Well, I didn't know he said *that!* [more laughter].

JM: I would say there are some Appalachians who would not want to be included in Southern Literature. One of my friends is Phyllis Moore, who is sort of the unofficial West Virginia literary historian. She gave a talk once at Hindman Settlement School. She referred to West Virginians as "those Yankees south

of the Mason-Dixon line.” She’s from Clarksburg, which is northern West Virginia, and I’m from Summers County, West Virginia, which is as far south, almost, in West Virginia as you can get. So I marched up to her in mock high dudgeon afterwards and said, “Madame, you may consider yourself a Yankee, but . . .” So she calls me Rebel Boy and I call her Yankee Woman and it’s all perfectly friendly. She really identifies herself as a northerner and I’ve always felt exceedingly southern, so—interesting, “rotting log,”—that’s painful.

LS: So, who’s the Faulkner of Appalachian literature?

JM: Got to have a little Gothic in there somewhere.

MW: I don’t know.

LS: Could Ron Rash maybe be our future Faulkner?

JM: He’s mighty fine.

LS: He’s a little Gothic.

CH: Well, you know, we have James Still.

LS: All right. I’ll take that answer.

CH: He’s not Faulkner—he’s James Still and unique to himself, and I think Ron has that, the same as that, so . . .

LS: Yeah, he had his Yoknapatawpha.

CH: Yeah, absolutely. And Ron has that; Silas [House] has that; Gurney [Norman] has that. We’re, I don’t think that—I don’t know—I’ve not thought about the idea of Faulkner, but I don’t know if Appalachian writers necessarily fit with a Faulkner style. Cormac McCarthy maybe did when he was writing his books set in the ’70’s.

MW: Yeah, the early Knoxville novels, sure.

CH: That’s the closest I can come to a comparison with Faulkner, a direct comparison, anyway.

LS: Yeah, I think we’ve broken loose here. I think this exchange is going to result in many, many papers, so you all get to work out there [looking to the audience]. Any other thoughts on the canon? I mean, any comparisons with, you know, western literature, which I think now has a real environmental flair, and I see that happening more and more with Appalachian literature and culture. Any connections that we can make there?

MW: Well, I think, as the topography and geography and landscape changes, you get, particularly in eastern Kentucky and West Virginia with mountaintop removal mining, I think we can’t help but see those things in our literature. How could we *not* find those things in our literature? Maybe you’ve read Ann Pancake’s novel, *Strange as This Weather Has Been*, which is based right below—it’s set right below a mountaintop removal site. A family lives right below it. I think that’s an excellent example of environmental writing in fiction.

CH: All the major literature, to me, anyway—the major literature that’s come from the Appalachian canon that we think about going back to Harriette Arnow and James Still and Gurney Norman in the ’60’s, [and] Harry Caudill, too—they all had that social and environmental theme running through them. And even somebody like John Fox, Jr., who we look at with mixed feelings, there was an environmental concern in his books or at least an observation of it, and that’s still going on. I think that’s just inescapable in Appalachian literature. It’s just so much a part of the region—it’s so important. It’s that conflict that, you know, we were talking about within the region.

RH: I think one of the essays that synthesizes some of these ideas is Wendell Berry’s “Writer and Region,” and he starts with Wallace Stegner, if I recall correctly,

a western writer, and then, you know, brings that, synthesizes that to his kind of regional writing. And that essay is probably a really good doorway into thinking about these kinds of issues: you know, what is a regional writer? What are the obligations and responsibilities of a writer to the region? Lots of good conversation can arise from that essay, I think.

- FXW:** I believe that, even before the environmental themes that are pretty common now, that there was a genuine reverence for the land that really dominated Appalachian lit and Affrilachian lit and Southern lit. But I think there seems to be a shift away from the romantic notion of the mountains and really dealing with the grittier, sometimes ugly truths that exist there, too. I think that's important.
- RH:** I think that "gritty" is part of how *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* came about. As Jim Webb was, you know, he's a punster, and so "gritty"—sand and gravel—that was the whole idea, that it was going to be contemporary Appalachian literature and it was going to try to move away from some of these romantic and stereotyped notions. That's still alive, I hope.
- JM:** I think environmental issues really force us to be more contemporary writers because writing quite often is about commemorating what's being eroded and what's being lost, and it's hard to be nostalgic about the beautiful landscapes of Appalachia when it's being torn all to hell. And since writers love conflict, well, by god, *there's* a conflict to write about. I wanted to say one quick thing about the Southern lit connection, courtesy of Irene McKinney. She's the Poet-Laureate of West Virginia. I interviewed her years ago for a book Felicia Mitchell edited, called *Her Words*, about Appalachian women poets. Irene was talking about Breece Pancake's poetry, ah, short stories; she said that just as with Southern literature there's a real obsession with the past, the whole bit about, you know, Faulkner, the past isn't past, and all that thing. She said that Appalachian writers, one of the things that makes Appalachian writers unique is so many of us have not just a sense of the depth of the past, the personal past, the communal past, but even the geologic past. She talks about the "Trilobites" story of Pancake's and a poem by Louise McNeill about the geologic history of the New River. In some Appalachian writers, you are so connected to the land that you think about the geologic past of those mountains.
- LS:** Any other thoughts on the environment? What I'm taking from this is that Appalachian writers have once again proven to be ahead of their time. We've *always* been interested in these issues; perhaps it's a little more fashionable in the current decade, but it sounds like maybe some of our forebears merit reconsideration.
- MW:** Well, look what Wilma Dykeman did with *The French Broad*, which was published in the fifties. You know, the popular story is that her publisher wanted her to take out the chapter about environmental concerns that she had for the French Broad River before they would publish the book, and she refused. And so, yeah, I think it goes back a long way.
- LS:** Yeah, yeah, proud, proud heritage.
- FXW:** I think also in Appalachian writers there are more writers identified with also being activists. I think about the way Silas [House] is in a music group that regularly performs at mountaintop removal gatherings. When you think about Gurney's activism—I think a lot of writers in the region are as popular and well known for their activism—even Wendell Berry, think about his activism. And I think that really, you don't see that as much in the Southern literature.

- CH:** I think there's a common strain with Appalachian writers that we all, in our writing, feel an obligation to the region and for the region that we're writing about. We're not *using* the region; we're trying to incorporate something important into our writing and reveal that and show that. And I think that's a common thing—it's a very common thing.
- LS:** That, I guess, brings us a little bit to the notion of identity. You know, how do we identify ourselves as Appalachian writers? And how do you combine those various identities?
- RH:** I'm not so sure this is something you sort of consciously do so much as it's the result of the things that arise as you write. Your writing is part of your identity—for a writer, it's a major part of your identity, and if these things are inescapable as you sit down to write, then I think that's what qualifies you as an Appalachian writer. If you are constantly drawn to the land, constantly drawn to the destruction of the landscape that's so common in the region all over, if you're drawn to a kind of nostalgia because you remember, or your grandparents remembered, or your great-grandparents remembered. Whatever arises as you're writing, if it happens to be Appalachian in subject matter or theme, that's your identity, I think, as a writer.
- CH:** And I would add, I don't think you have to be a native-born Appalachian to do that. You know, you can be from California or wherever and if the region affects you and you write well about it, then you're an Appalachian writer.
- JM:** Rita Riddle, who died a few years ago—she was at Radford—she said something in an interview that I found really, really helpful because it's part of what I write about, [which] is how difficult it's been to balance gay identity and Appalachian identity. People sort of want you to be one or the other. And she said, "It's not 'or,' it's 'and,' 'and,' 'and.'" As much as the outside world wants to pigeonhole you and make things simple and make you choose "either /or," it's "and, and, and" and "I'm this and I'm this and I'm this." If you think that's mutually exclusive, you have a small mind, that sort of thing. I think that's a really helpful way to look at identity. It has been for me.
- LS:** And talk about tension! We've said several times this morning that, you know, the tension of Appalachian life propels so much of its literature. If you're—on the one hand—part of this traditional culture, and—on the other hand—you're representing a minority or perhaps you've moved into the region, that seems to me an inherent tension.
- RH:** Yes, it is, and speaking for the Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative, I think anybody who has come to a meeting of the Southern Appalachian Writers Co-op in the last twenty, twenty-five years (since the sort of revival in 1980), it is an incredibly welcoming organization. You know, if you are a writer, if you have some passion about something, there's common ground there for anybody to come into Southern Appalachian Writers Co-op. And so we've had a vast array of folks, who all, in a sense, become adoptive Appalachians if they aren't, and whose awareness is raised and whose consciousness is raised and whose activism becomes a part of what they do. There's a tolerance for "and, and, and" in the best sense, and I think that's very remarkable. And I think it's probably because Appalachia has always been digesting and synthesizing folks.
- MW:** Do you think that's because outside of the region, there is not that tolerance—outside of Appalachian writers there is not that tolerance?
- RH:** I must, if I said that, but I haven't thought about that. I have to think about that—now I have to think about that.

MW: Well, while you were talking I was just thinking about—I have a friend who has written a book of poems and I queried the editor at a national magazine to try to write a review of that book of poems. And he wrote me back and he said, “Well, we may review that book but we certainly would never let *you* review it because she’s an Appalachian writer and you’re an Appalachian writer and, you know, you can’t be fair or”

LS: You must be related, too [laughter].

FXW: I think, getting back to the tension, I think DuBois had a notion that African-Americans in America dealt with an issue of double consciousness, trying to find some balance with that war between being black and being American, as if there was a conflict naturally. I think that—there are several Affrilachians in the room, I see Crystal in the back, Keith down in front—and we talk about a kind of a triple consciousness. Crystal was often challenged at public events with her identity; you know, people would challenge her because they didn’t think she was Appalachian enough. You know, she

LS: Black and country.

FXW: Black and country. So I think sometimes that tension doesn’t come internally, it comes from outside forces. We have this ideal about who you ought to be or what existed and even in the idea of what is Appalachian-Affrilachian. Gurney has kind of infected me with this notion that there are no geographical boundaries to Appalachia when you consider where the out-migrants live, you know, when you consider that a lot of those people in the region moved to Cleveland and New York City and D.C. to work and live and maintain a relationship with a home place and come, travel back and forth. The region does not really limit it to that government definition of what Appalachia is, but there are these people, these forces in the world who said, “That is Appalachian, that’s not,” because of that marker, that demarcation between one county and the next. I prefer Gurney’s notion, obviously.

CH: And I think that even like 10 or 15 years ago, to be called an Appalachian writer, you would feel marginalized or limited.

FXW: Yes.

CH: But that’s changed. I think that has changed significantly. I think the term “Appalachian writer,” it’s an expansion in meaning now, you know, with the Affrilachian writers, with all the diversity that’s being shown, and the increased base of readers and authors.

MW: I’d even be in favor of recapturing the term “hillbilly” and just be called a hillbilly writer, you know

LS: Reclaim it.

MW: As a power term, “hillbilly” is a power term.

JM: I would say that—I go to AWP [Associated Writing Programs], the kind of academic, national creative writing conference, occasionally, and I feel absolutely invisible there. I was telling my friend in the audience that I always wear baseball caps, especially there, just because so many of them have black berets and black turtlenecks and smoke clove cigarettes. I’m exaggerating a little bit. They also look over your shoulder to see if there’s someone more important to talk to. I really have felt alienated there and more alienated, and just kind of like a cantankerous old bastard over the years, but I have always—despite my initial trepidation growing up in a little town in West Virginia in the seventies where I was at home and not, very much *not* at home, you understand—the Appalachian literature community, since I started going to Hindman [Settle-

ment School] in the mid-nineties, has been entirely welcoming. That tolerance that you mentioned was a very pleasant surprise, so I say somewhere in some book that while Appalachia is not always very tolerant of queers, that the Appalachian literary community has been entirely. I love to be in these contexts, I feel absolutely at home, and I don't feel that way at AWP at all, I think because a lot of mainstream writing is not only defiantly heterosexual but defiantly suburban and urban. And I know that in my own department, I can feel from my MFA students, they're "juberous," to use the Appalachian word for "dubious," about regional writing. They don't really, they're not all that interested in what I'm doing because they sense that if they are, if they take on the identity of a regional writer, that they will to some extent be dismissed, and they're right, to some extent. But of course that's no damned reason not to do it, but still

LS: It's interesting that you mention AWP—that's the Associated Writing Programs. They sponsor several book competitions—definitely a creative nonfiction award and, I think, a poetry award, and so they probably do fiction, as well. And I'm thinking through in my mind, I can't think of a single Appalachian book that's ever won any of those prizes. You know, maybe somebody could do the

MW: Uhm, I

LS: You can think of one?

MW: Yes.

LS: All right.

MW: Karen, Karen McElmurray's memoir, *Borrowed, er, Surrendered Child*, was an AWP winner for nonfiction.

LS: Oh, that's right, Karen. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yes, because I was thinking that at least two of the publishers, Pittsburgh and Georgia, are sort of, you know, we claim them within the broader Appalachia. But, yeah, Karen is a notable exception that maybe proves the rule.

RH: Well, just for the record, though—I was a finalist in the AWP's creative nonfiction with work that eventually became *Milltown Natural*. So that was an almost—they at least read it somewhere along the line.

MW: Could I read just this real short little thing about what Danny says about this? This is from *American Vein*—I had the best time getting ready for this panel because I got to go back and read everything Danny had ever written.

LS: Yes, that's right.

MW: This is from *American Vein: Critical Readings in Appalachian Literature*, which was edited by Danny and Sharon Hatfield and Gurney Norman:

Despite growing enthusiasm for Appalachian literature among readers who know it, there is no denying that this unique part of American literature remains largely unrecognized by the rest of the country. Many individual writers from the mountains have found success and acclaim beyond the region but awareness of the region itself as a thriving center of literary creativity is not widespread.

And so, one of the reasons they put the book together was the hope that people outside the region would know us and recognize us.

LS: *American Vein* was kind of a brilliant title, when you think about what they were trying to say. We hadn't planned for this question, but do any of you care to share publishing experiences? Obviously, you've all found a way to kind of subvert any sort of bias, and perhaps it's through being published locally?

- JM:** Well, I found out that Ohio University Press has an Ethnicity and Gender in Appalachia Series, and, hell, “a queer in Appalachia”? So I went right after them. I made that happen but those niches are not so forthcoming in other areas and that was kind of a one-shot deal.
- LS:** Yeah, I think Ohio is really ahead of its time in carving out that series, and I think that’s going to bear fruit for a long time to come.
- MW:** I guess what I know about publishing you could write on my little fingernail, so—I mean, my chapbook is a Georgetown, Kentucky, publisher. They only do chapbooks. And the anthologies are Motes Books, which is owned independently by Kate Larken in Louisville, Kentucky.
- LS:** And she’s becoming a real activist publisher, it seems to me.
- MW:** Yes, yes. She had a textbook business—and still does—for many years before she began to publish literature. And I’ve lost the trail of the point I was going to make, so It’ll pass, I forget.
- LS:** Little finger
- MW:** I’m sorry.
- CH:** I’m going off in a slightly different direction but I just want to remark that I think in terms of literature, we’ve become far more activist in the last 20 years. And I think back to the nineties when that awful play came out—*Kentucky Cycle*.
- LS:** Yes, *Kentucky Cycle*, Pulitzer Prize-winner.
- CH:** Yeah, and by god, we shut it down. I mean, I didn’t personally—but Gurney Norman and a lot of people who were just active about that play and incensed and wrote about it and, you know, said our piece for us. And I think that’s—you know, we’re not letting ourselves be defined by these other forces.
- LS:** So Schenkkan inspired some great Appalachian literature, it sounds like, unwittingly.
- CH:** Yeah, absolutely. I still use Schenkkan as an example of what not to do as an Appalachian writer, so
- LS:** One topic I did want to get into—this is really changing gears again. It’s sort of a sensitive topic—with outsiders looking at the region, I think of the recent “Prime Time Live” look at Appalachia, for instance: the drug culture. I’m curious—I know at least one of you is tiptoeing into writing about that. I’m just curious—what is your responsibility as chroniclers of contemporary Appalachian society, how do you handle that in your writing?
- CH:** I think you have to look at the good and the bad and the forces that are negative in the region as well as the forces that are good. And if you’ve been watching the news at all lately, we’ve got this thing down in Clay County where a government worker has died under mysterious circumstances. And, you know, the national focus is on Daniel Boone National Forest in eastern Kentucky and talks about marijuana patches and meth labs, which is all part of the reality of not just eastern Kentucky, but rural regions throughout the country. I think we have to look at it—we have to examine that as writers.
- LS:** It certainly is, as you say, it’s real, in the newspaper every day, but I guess there is some sensitivity, you know, if you’re representing your region to outsiders. I guess the key is putting it in a context—you show the good and the bad. And the hope is if you shed light on maybe some unpleasant things, over time solutions will present themselves.
- MW:** Well, I think that’s one of the things that has made our writing so much bet-

ter in the last few years because we are open and tolerant; we would accept almost any kind of writing. There's a lot of *bad* Appalachian writing out there, you know, and real over-romanticized and, you know, mossy fence posts and mountain dew [laughter], and I don't think that makes for good literature *anywhere*. So, I think we have a responsibility to look at the truth and to try to put that into our writing. Otherwise, it's just going to be dull reading.

JM: Well, plus, you're going to write about what inspires you. And if you sit there thinking about what will people think about this, hell, I would never have written anything. I don't know anything at all about the drug culture—I've already said, don't ask me that question, but I'm now talking about it [laughter]. I live in Pulaski, Virginia, and my grad students, one of them lives in that area and wrote this piece about all the drug use and my students were highly amused that I was asking questions about the drug culture because I'm in the same damned town. They call it "Methlaski" instead of Pulaski, but it's amazing how you, I, feel completely insulated from all of that, and therefore I don't write about it because I don't know anything about it. And I don't know whether that's a lack of social responsibility or the fact that I just write about what grabs me and that doesn't really grab me, even though it's a concern, obviously, since it's one of the side effects of poverty. One of my students called meth the elixir of the poor.

LS: Well, I do think when you're writing about these darker issues—and for some reason, Robert Morgan's *Balm of Gilead* is popping into my head—when you're talking about sort of the dark side, you are talking about poverty at its root; invariably, you're talking about poverty.

RH: Well, there is a member of the Southern Appalachian Writers Co-op in Cincinnati, Mike Henson, who has a regular column in the homeless newspaper called "Hammered," and it is an unstinting look at drug culture and its connection to poverty and homelessness and all these social ills. And he is as straightforward as you could be. By profession, he is a drug and alcohol counselor. He is an Appalachian writer, but he is taking a very close look at it and this is an ongoing column in *StreetVibes*—every week, every two weeks, every new edition he's got a new column. He's really doing a lot of work for us, in a sense, because he's there taking a really close look at it.

CH: I think "straightforward" is a good watchword for all of us who write about these things and do it honestly.

FXW: Now, I think that draws attention to the importance of journals—like the one at Appalachian State University—you know, Berea has a fine journal—that particular issue of *StreetVibes* that you refer to is something that's important for us to be reading because it helps us stay current. I know that one of the things that my writing group was involved in—during Spring Break, we took something we called The Affrilachian Poet Bus Tour, and we actually spent nine days on the road, touring the region. And part of the rationale was there were members of the group who had never really been outside their own communities and it's hard to be authentic, to write legitimately, about something you've never seen. And part of the other reason was to inspire new works, and every day we were challenged with a new writing prompt. And some of the writings that came from that nine days on the road were some of the best things I'd heard these young writers put out and I think it was that face-to-face—you know, we were in Knoxville, in Ferrum, Virginia, across Virginia, through the mountains—and it was wonderful to see these young urban kids wide-eyed

about, you know, *real* mountain dew, not the drink. But those journals, those opportunities to be current, to share their information—if we're not there *in* that space, if we're reading about it, it *feels* current, it feels real.

MW: Although I would say that, that urban is just as important as rural in Appalachian literature, and maybe something that's been missing from our own canon is the urban experience. I mean, I grew up in Knoxville and most native Knoxville-ians would not call themselves Appalachians. You know, they, somehow they think it bisects them, you know . . . [laughter].

LS: I think there's a challenge there for writers in the audience. We need more on the Appalachian urban experience, perhaps.

CH: Huntington, West Virginia, you know, this is a place that's, it's kind of on the drug corridor, and they've experienced tremendous conflict and changes the past few years. And that's the urban Appalachian environment, I think, a perfect example of something that could be written about. I don't know who's doing it but . . .

FXW: As far as mission, then, one of the projects Danny was working on before he passed away was this physical space for the Urban Appalachian Center, housed here at NKU, which we were very proud of. My fear is that that's one of the things that will be lost with his passing because he was—there are a few people in this room who were a part of that conversation to build that package. There is a whole document that exists and he figured out what it needed. Of course, like everything else, the part he hadn't figured out was the funding. But that shows you how present he still is.

LS: I'm curious, maybe as a final question, and I know we want to open it up to the audience—what's inspiring to you all as writers today, you know, September 2009? What's exciting to you—what do you find yourself wanting to write about?

JM: Well, I'm highly pissed about the state of same-sex marriage in this country and, as a hard-core Southerner who has used the “Y” word most of my life in an unpleasant way, thank you, until I settled down with a guy from Massachusetts, I know, right [rolls eyes], I'm thoroughly humiliated as a southerner that all of those New England states have done what they've done about same-sex marriage and my beloved South has [pause] shown its ass again and again and embarrassed me considerably, so a lot of what I write about is because I'm pissed off about the state of, I feel (I think part of this is growing up in a small town, part of it is growing up in Appalachia, but I don't really think Appalachia is particularly any more homophobic than any other part of the nation), I feel like, at this point in my life, I'm sort of on siege mentality all of the time, which is a bad thing and exhausting, and I feel especially after eight years of Bush, I have all of these warrior tattoos. A lot of what I write is about that, that sense of what I consider to be injustice, and a lot of it's about anger, and I have to write it just to get it off my chest.

MW: Well, for all of our talk about moving forward, I'm actually looking to the past to do some writing. I spent June in a library studying ballads and ballad collectors and ballad musicians. And I'm trying to write some poems about that, but what I sort of discovered along the way—this is not a new discovery, people have discovered it way before I did—the ballad collectors were real picky about who they would get ballads from, so they excluded a lot of singers. They didn't pay any attention to African American families, for instance, and so there was this prejudice that was, at the turn of the last century, that

was reemphasized in the national conscience that Appalachians were white people—they were all the same, you know, that homogenous culture. I'm sort of rediscovering that. I want to try to illuminate those facts in these poems and then bust open the stereotype. Because I think that's something else that we're charged with as writers in Appalachia—to just bust open those stereotypes, deconstruct our constructed history. So that's what I'm working on.

CH: I've always written about the conflict of past and present, traditional values and contemporary values, and whether traditional values still work in a changing society. And I'm still going to be writing about that—I've barely scratched the surface. Everything that's been talked about here falls within that—and in the change and dynamism that's going on. Just look around.

RH: My latest book, *Public Hearings*—these poems span 20 years. My books of poems are always things that take a long time to come together. But anyway, this is a book of poems of political comment, of satire, and of protest. You know, I feel some of Jeff's anger and the issues are pretty clear for me. There's a section about school—I've been teaching for 40 years and I have seen, oh, therapy dragons [laughter]. There's a section about in-country, you know, rural views. There's a section about just the city politics on the streets. Yeah, it's not Appalachian by any of those other definitions, but it's what's bugging me. And I don't know what that means. Maybe it is these years that we've gone through and these wars that we're still fighting and this craziness—we know as much as we need about education to fix it and we still don't fix it, all of that.

FXW: And I think, if I can sum all of my work up right now, it would be kind of a fixation with discovering or recording untold stories or absent voices, particularly historical voices. I've just completed a manuscript on Isaac Murphy, the black jockey in Kentucky, who a lot of people have forgotten, and African Americans' connection to horse racing in Kentucky. Another collection is about Medgar Evers, actually it's more about the death of Medgar Evers, because the major voices in the collection are his assassins, his assassin's wife, and his widow. So I guess I kind of balance that with what's happening today with me; I'm a not-so-new grandfather; that's new territory for me. But I'm more fixed on, I'm trying to gather information about arts and culture in the region. I am struggling keeping alive a publication called *Pluck!* That is the journal of Affrilachian arts and culture that has developed a pretty good readership and we've been able to discover some wonderful new voices—poet voices, fiction voices, scholars, and I think it's an important journal for the region. But I think all those are connected—still trying to recapture, retell, reintroduce.

LS: Thank you, Frank, for mentioning *Pluck!* We've learned about *Sand and Gravel*, the Southern Appalachian Writers Co-op, Hindman; we've talked about Maggie Anderson; Ann Pancake, Danny, Jim Wayne Miller have gotten several nods, Wendell Berry. Any other new, younger Appalachian writers that you care to cite or mention, just kind of as a wrap-up?

JM: I want to put in a plug for Katie Fallon. She has published in *Now & Then* and in a bunch of very nice journals. She's a creative nonfiction writer and she's an environmental writer. In particular, she writes about birds.

LS: Oh—spell her last name.

JM: F-a-l-l-o-n. She's freelancing now in Morgantown, West Virginia. She has a book manuscript that's going around about the Cerulean Warbler and the ways in which mountaintop removal has completely screwed up its nesting

grounds. She has essays about owls and vultures and hawks—beautiful writing, very fine. She’s now a creative nonfiction editor for an online magazine called *Connotation Press*, out of Morgantown. She’s really good.

MW: Laura asked us to come armed with names of up-and-coming writers and before I mention a couple, I just want to say that some of us sitting at this very table have been in the trenches, writing, for a long time and maybe, you know, we can all say we’re up-and-coming even though *I* am old . . .

LS: Absolutely.

MW: I mentioned Karen McElmurray—I think she’s the writer to watch as a novelist and a nonfiction writer. She has just got a gift for making beautiful stories. I also wanted to mention Amy Greene, who has a new book called *Bloodroot*; it’s a novel. She grew up in Russellville, Tennessee, and the novel’s set sort of in that place. I’ve just gotten through the first few pages of it; it’s not even out yet; I got an advance copy. It’s beautiful writing, so Amy Greene, g-r-e-e-n-e. And Jason Howard, I think, is going to be a really important writer. He is the co-editor of *Something’s Rising: Appalachians Fighting Mountaintop Removal*, and he’s working on a memoir and he’s an editor. I think he’s one to watch, too.

CH: And Mark Powell, I think.

MW: Yeah, Mark’s on my list, too.

CH: Oh, he’s good. Mark Powell is actually this year’s Chaffin Award winner at Morehead State. He’s just a tremendous novelist. But I still think of Silas as that young, new writer coming along, Silas House.

RH: Yeah, Ann Pancake was on my list for a prose writer and, for a poet, Maurice Manning. My criteria for these: if I’ve studied with them or read with them or hung with them or something. Maurice actually taught my son creative writing at IU [Indiana University], and so it was a really good occasion—he gave a reading at Frankfort, at Richard Taylor’s book store in Frankfort, and my son and I went to see Maurice.

LS: He’s a star.

RH: And later we worked at Hindman together. So Maurice Manning’s poems; his latest book is *Bucolics*; they’re very powerful, muscular, strange, surprising poems.

FXW: Agreed, and not just because Maurice is from Danville, also. But two poets: Bianca Spriggs, whose first book comes out next year from Wind Publications, and a wonderful poet (I believe Marianne has a copy of his book), Randall Horton, from northern, actually Birmingham, Alabama.

MW: From Birmingham.

LS: Say the name again.

FXW: Randall Horton, Dr. Randall Horton now, as of the spring, but—Marianne what’s the title? *Lingua Franca of . . .?*

MW: *The Lingua Franca of Ninth Street*.

FXW: You’ve got to get this book—it is *amazing*.

MW: It’s Main Street Rag, Main Street Rag Publishing in Charlotte, North Carolina. He has an amazing story. He grew up in Birmingham and he got into trouble and went to prison, and after he was released from prison, he got his Ph.D. and he’s teaching in Albany, I believe, in an English program, and he’s just a tremendous writer. Very talented.

LS: Thank you—that was great. That was a question just for me, the editor and the avid reader of Appalachian lit.

RW: I have a mike here and we have time for a couple of questions, but let's give a hand to our whole panel before we do that [much applause]. Who has a question? I'll bring the mike.

Audience #1: I have a comment for Jeff. It interests me very much, Jeff, that you said you were a part and not a part of Appalachia. And before the meeting began, I talked to this lovely lady here about the difference in Danny Miller and I, because we were at the English Department at Berea College at the same time, just after Jim Wayne [Miller] and Loyal [Jones] and Billy Ed [Wheeler] and all of those people. I'm the one who stayed home and I'm not gay, but those of us [who] stay home are also a part and not a part, if we are writers, if we are [inaudible] of literature, because we have the gift to see ourselves as we are. And so I think that's what writers do, whether they come in from out, or stay in, or they're like Arnow [Harriette Arnow], who left and looked at it backhatters Its interesting that in Cynthiana last weekend that same concept came up; George Ella Lyon said that we, that writers stand apart in a place. And so I think that you were different and apart because you were a writer first.

JM: That's, that's entirely possible. I'm not sure of the chicken/egg there.

Audience #1: I'm not either.

JM: Yeah.

Audience #1: But that interests me extremely, those of us that are apart. Silas is a part of Lily, but he's not a part of Lily. Does that make sense?

JM: Yeah, I don't know. I mean, I know most writers feel that. You have to have a sense of detachment in order to write about it in an intelligent way. On the other hand, a lot of us, perhaps, come to writing because it's one of the ways that we make sense of that sense of displacement—yeah, it's all tangled up. But no, that's a good point.

Audience #1: That's why we write, though, because . . .

JM: Yeah, yeah, absolutely, absolutely, that's helpful, actually, yeah.

RW: Is there another question?

Audience #2: Do any of you have a comment about Chris Offutt's future—or contribution to the Appalachian body of literature?

CH: No [laughter].

MW: Well, I can't predict anything about the future, but I always loved Chris Offutt's first two collections of short stories. I think they were powerful and muscular and gritty and . . .

LS: And the first memoir, *Same River Twice*.

MW: Yeah, the first memoir I enjoyed. I don't know what happened that he would write such a nasty memoir about Morehead, Kentucky—why he felt led to do that. I think that put a lot of people off; it certainly put me off. But if he'd be writing some more stories like are in *Kentucky Straight* or *Out in the Woods*, I'd be reading them. Anybody else?

LS: You can talk to Chris [Holbrook] privately.

MW: Yeah.

RW: Any other questions?

Audience #3: You guys were speaking about insider, insider versus outsider interpretation and identity in the area. Do you ever think that an outsider's interpretation or writings on the area would ever be viewed as being as credible as those of someone who is inside the area? And has anyone from outside the area ever done that?

FXW: I don't know. I think it's entirely possible, but I think it really is more reflective

of the amount of research they would have to do to make sure it's credible. I think you can't ever write authentically about a place you've never seen or been in or talked to. But people who live there aren't necessarily authorities, either, just because they live there.

MW: I think our cultural and literary history was in fact written by outsiders for a long time. And we kind of don't tolerate letting anybody else tell our story. I agree with Frank—maybe it's possible that someone could write authentically about the region, but we'd probably get mad about it, like we did with *The Kentucky Cycle*, you know.

JM: Or at least be dubious, or juberous.

RW: I think we have time for one other question, if anyone has one.

Audience #4: I won't waste time on the history of where this came from but I have several friends, families who are friends of mine, who live in Harlan, Kentucky, some of them with numerous children in their families, and some of them who still have children—they're 24, 25, you know, young adults now, who have managed to really slip through the cracks of education and are 24- and 25-year-olds who are completely illiterate, who are literally unable to read and write, therefore can't hold a job, get a G.E.D., anything. And I guess my question is, you know, like in the seventies and sixties, I think there was a real focus on the issue of illiteracy and Appalachian children, or education in Appalachia, and I don't have my homework well enough to know if that is changing, if that has improved a lot, but I guess my question is do you, as Appalachian writers, feel that there's still a concern for the illiteracy of Appalachian children and, if you do, are there organizations (co-ops, individuals) that promote literacy in children who are born and raised in Appalachia?

CH: I'll give one example: Hindman Settlement School in Knott County. I don't know how many years ago it is, but they started a dyslexia school, which was an entirely new thing in that part of the country, and has a history now of just helping a great, great many children who are dyslexic. But, yeah, it's an ongoing concern, and not just in Appalachia, I think the whole country should be concerned about literacy. I think we're far behind where we should be.

JM: I know something about the topic just because my partner of 12 years works for an organization in Charleston called Edvantia and they have to do with instructional technology, computer technology, to teach and assess students. And he works in Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, I think some in Ohio, and I know that he has told me very conflicting stories about some of the rural counties he has gone to, say, in the coalfields of West Virginia. At the same time that he finds really incompetent teaching and very poorly taught students who are somewhat illiterate, he also runs across amazingly sharp, super-smart students and teachers. So I know that it's a concern, at the same time that there's some really good teaching going on in those counties outside the region everybody assumes, well, you know, the educational system is [very poor]. I had a very good high school in West Virginia in the late seventies. I had a bunch of good teachers. So it's very spotty, I think.

MW: I think I can only speak from my own experience, but I always have one or two functionally illiterate students in my college classes and 99% of the time, they are *not* from Appalachia.

RH: I can only address urban issues, you know, as an inner city high school teacher for all of these years. We have a problem in America and it's not just in Appalachia. It's widespread—it's systemic—there's great inertia in the American

education system. And even though you may reason your way to some solution to the problem, to overcome the inertia and the bureaucracy that are in the system itself is almost impossible. It's astonishing.

FXW: And I would just say that I think that there are a lot of similarities between inner city challenges and rural challenges, particularly when you factor in how much poverty has impacted notions of . . . I remember asking kids in classes, "How many of you have more than 25 CDs in your house?" Every hand goes up. "Twenty-five books?" [He shrugs, saying nothing].

RH: And compounding the problem in rural America is the distance students have to travel. Down in southeastern Ohio where we've had a piece of property for a long time, regularly kids, to get to the high school, have a two-hour drive. The bus comes around, because it's a consolidated county school, one place in the county—two hours to get there, which means that they have to get up at 5:00 o'clock in the morning and two hours to get home, which means they don't get home until 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon. How do you overcome that? I mean those are issues that are rural issues. You know, there are urban issues, then that's a rural issue. My god, the amount of time those kids spend on a bus. Wow.

RW: Well, I guess that's the end of a wonderful round-table. I want to thank everyone for giving us such a stimulating discussion. If Danny was here today, he would have been in heaven, listening to these speakers. If there *is* a heaven, Danny is with us today—that's for sure.*

* A DVD of this Round-Table Discussion can be ordered from the Northern Kentucky University, Office of Information Technology, Media Production and Distribution, Landrum 333, Nunn Drive, Highland Heights, KY 41099. Ann Harding was very helpful in producing the transcript published here.