



The Folk Club

of Reston-Herndon

...Preserving Folk Traditions



Vol 7, No 1; January, 1993

A Great Way to Spend a New Year's Weekend

by Dave Hurd

Your editor finally has a chance to write about something he did which was a whole lot of fun (not just the recaps and chronicles of earlier editions.) Over the New Year's holiday I joined Folk Club member Donna Huchel for the New Year's Camp of the California Traditional Music Society held at Camp Hess-Kramer, located on the California coast west/north of Malibu in Ventura County. In a valley running up from the beach, this beautiful setting encompassed the best of the seashore and the coast range.

The California Traditional Music Society was founded some years ago by a couple of traditional music aficionados, Clark and Elaine Weissman of Tarzana, Ca, in the San Fernando Valley. Over the years these ambitious folks have held house concerts for up to 150 in their home 8-10 times a year, and have organized a Summer Solstice Folk Music and Dance Festival and the New Year's camp each year.

We arrived at the camp on Thursday, Dec 31 at around 4PM and were given keys to our quarters. 240 participants were accepted to the camp (the camp capacity) and accommodations ranged from space for tents, RV's, available "rustic" cabins, and rooms in the conference center. Being the "rustic" type I had chosen a room in the conference center, neat, clean and maid service. No sooner had we arrived, than the spirit of the camp was made known to us. Little groups in "jam" sessions were already formed and playing in the dining hall and around the grounds. Fiddles, banjos, guitars, basses, dulci-

mers (hammered and mountain), accordions (Cajun and European), flutes, whistles, bohdrans, indian drums, concertinas, balalaikas, bazoukis, rhythm devices of all kinds, and some of the most spirited and wonderful voices you could imagine filled the air of the camp - it was clear this was going to be a fun weekend.

Thursday evening's events included dinner, where we learned (re-learned) the art of camp-style family cooperative dining, from the setting up of the tables (literally) to the clearing and stacking the tables and rearranging the room for concert seating. Since the evening's main attraction was to be a costume party, participants were encouraged to come to dinner en-costume, and knowing no better, yours truly, dressed as a sultan in an authentic Moroccan outfit, and Donna, dressed as a harem dancer, arrived as requested. Little did we know that some of these people take their costume party seriously and were holding out until the last minute to change and reveal their garb. Anyway, eating dinner family-style in traditional desert garb was an interesting experience, especially since I ended at a table with eight ladies and no other men (personal harem? - I wish)! After dinner there was a sampler concert of a couple of numbers each by the featured performers for the weekend, then the costume parade and judging. When the judging began, the judges (dressed as court judges - wigs and all) sat at the bench and the contestants paraded before them. Bribes were encouraged and the couple who came as Hershey's kisses (with and without nuts) had plenty to bribe the judges. The male judges thought the harem girl would do well if she were to bribe them each with a veil - but to no avail (and, of course there went any chance of winning a prize). It was great fun and after the prizes were awarded the dancing began. Contra, interna-




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Folk Club of Reston-Herndon



January 3 - February 13, 1993

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Jan 3	Jan 4	Jan 5 Showcase Performance Scott Twiford 7:30pm Folk Club	Jan 6	Jan 7	Jan 8	Jan 9
Jan 10	Jan 11	Jan 12 7:30pm Folk Club	Jan 13 8:00pm Bagels & Ballads - Fairfax	Jan 14	Jan 15	Jan 16
Jan 17	Jan 18  <i>Martin Luther King, Jr.</i>	Jan 19 7:30pm Folk Club	Jan 20 Bagels & Ballads - Springfield  <i>Innauguration Day</i>	Jan 21	Jan 22	Jan 23
Jan 24	Jan 25	Jan 26 Showcase Lottery Draw Steve Key (\$6/5) 7:30pm Folk Club	Jan 27	Jan 28	Jan 29	Jan 30
Jan 31	Feb 1	Feb 2 Showcase Performance Groundhog Day 7:30pm Folk Club	Feb 3	Feb 4	Feb 5	Feb 6
Feb 7	Feb 8	Feb 9 7:30pm Folk Club	Feb 10 8:00pm Bagels & Ballads - Fairfax	Feb 11	Feb 12  <i>Lincoln's Birthday</i>	Feb 13 Lea Coryell at Del Ray Coffee House

tional and country dancing was done, alas not for beginners this night, but for the more experienced - I would have to wait to show my seven left feet. Tired and happy sleep came at 1AM (4AM Eastern).

Friday dawned to bright sunshine and music everywhere. I admit to not hitting the breakfast rush (fruit and coffee were available at anytime of the day) as I will sleep in if given a chance and was still somewhat on Eastern time. Went to a singing and a Cajun accordion workshop. Singing was just that - group sing with two of the featured performers, Cathy Barton and Dave Para from Missouri. The group was enthusiastic and the music fun. Many were recording the session to learn new lyrics and songs. The accordion workshop was very instructional - made me want to go out and buy a button accordion - good thing there wasn't a music store nearby. After lunch I walked on the beach, listened to jams, and attended workshops on fiddle in the style of the Southwest Indians who were introduced to fiddle by the explorers so they could perform in the Mass. The Indians took to it but adopted the European dance tunes to their own liking. Basics is European, but with interesting and intriguing enhancements. Leaders for this workshops were Ken Keppler and Jeanie McLerie from Albuquerque, NM.

Following the fiddle workshop was one on "Shape Note Singing." This term refers to a notation developed to teach musically illiterate persons to sing in tight harmonies without having to teach theory. It is very simple in concept, but the more music theory a person already has the more difficult it seems to be to follow and learn. A whole article could be written on the subject, but suffice to say that the scale is Fa, So, La, Fa, So, La Mi, Fa with the Fa, So and La notes separated by fourths and fifths which makes harmonies, especially in sacred songs, very easy. To sing a song the four parts (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) each sing their music line using a Ma, Ma, Ma, ... line. Then all four parts do it together with Ma, Ma,

etc. Finally the whole chorus sings the words - it works, is fun and is not too difficult, even for the musically impaired.

The evening concert featured Cathy Barton and Dave Para, followed by "The Boiled Buzzards." The former sang beautifully arranged duets featuring songs of the river and of the Civil War period, while the latter, a dance band which plays for international and contra dances, played a lot of jigs, reels, horas and the like. Great music! After the concert, Rick Dougherty - tenor for the "Limelighters" - led a group sing and gave some voice tips that really work. No one wanted to quit, but he had a cold and was fading so could hold out only a bit over an hour.

It rained overnight, but all in the dark. Saturday dawned bright and sunny again. Another voice session with Rick Dougherty, a workshop on hammered dulcimer - "no look" playing, another Cajun accordion workshop, a workshop on Carter Family songs, and plenty of jamming and singing. Saturday night's concert featured Rick Dougherty followed by Jeanie McLerie and Ken Keppler and their widely varied music from Cajun/Zydeco to Norteno (Native American). Following them was a group who billed themselves as Balkan musical plagiarists. All their music is "in the style of" but none is actually traditional. They were very entertaining. Rounding out the evening was more dancing (finally something of the beginner instructional level!) so I only tripped a few times trying to do simple steps. Not Nureyev yet, but ... Naw!

Sunday morning was devoted to an open mike-like concert by camp attendees. There had been a sign-up sheet and about a dozen folks/groups did their thing. A wide variety was shared, much like our Folk Club open mike, with both serious and humorous, singing, playing and dancing. It was a wonderful end to a great weekend. Unfortunately, after lunch it was all over and the real world beckoned. Such are escapes, they seem to have to end.

For all of you who might think this type of thing is interesting, the next New Year's camp is already being planned and by September will probably be booked up. So if you have an inkling, contact the California Traditional Music Society, 4401 Trancas Place, Tarzana, CA, 91356-5399 for information about that or the even bigger Summer Solstice Folk Music and Dance Festival scheduled for June 25-27, 1993, in Calabasas, CA.

Steve Key will Perform at the Folk Club January 26, 1993,
Put it on your calendar!

Tommy Sands returns to the Folk Club March 9, 1993, you won't want to miss that one!

ATTENTION! ATTENTION! ATTENTION!

Check your Label - Are you expiring? "19930101" is expiring with this issue. Don't miss an issue - Don't miss the benefits of the Folk Club. Please send in your membership check (\$12.00) to keep your membership active!

Showcase Performances

January 5, the featured performer will be **Scott Twiford**.

On the first Tuesday of every month we feature a Folk Club member in a showcase two-set (24 minute) performance. To become one of these "showcase" specials all you have to do is 1) be a member of the Folk Club, 2) fill out a lottery slip by the last Tuesday of the month, 3) win the drawing and 4) practice, practice practice!

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