

The Folk Club

of Reston-Herndon

...Preserving Folk Traditions

Vol 7, No 12; December, 1993

CARRY IT ON, CARRY IT ON Or At the Campfire by Bill Davis

I suppose that there was a fire. Somewhere around where and when civilization (and music) started, there must have been a fire. The tribe gathers around it to celebrate a successful hunt (or commiserate on an unsuccessful one). It is a cold night ... cold enough for the place by the fire to be more appealing than sleep. In the night sky, hard, cold stars shine through the trees, undimmed by anything but the firelight, and prehistoric eyes are led to them by the sparks rising on the column of smoke. Perhaps there is some spiritual connection made here, some glimmer of larger truth to be grasped and pondered.

In any case the fire quickly becomes the spiritual center of the tribe. Food is found there -- and warmth -- and protection. Stories of the hunt are told and retold here, the shaman or chief keeping order and suppressing interruptions (this is a listening tribe!) and calling each hunter in turn to tell his part.

As each hunter tells his tale, there is a good bit of exaggeration and some straight out lying as each tries to outdo the other. All this lying is good practice for later politics. The out and out lies will probably be believed with wide-eyed innocence, while the more obvious exaggerations will draw laughter. With only one- or two-hundred words in the vocabulary, puns are not yet possible, and that fact alone may account for the survival of these early ancestors.

Later in the night the fire dies down and the moon rises up to light up snow-covered tundra. The stories are quieter now and there are long stretches of silence. Then, far off on the icy air, a wolf begins howling at the moon. The tribe huddles closer to the fire and more wood is added. Another wolf joins in, and fear makes the night seem even colder. Then, in a moment of dramatic inspiration, one hunter begins to mimic the wolves howling at the moon. Soon others of the tribe join in a cacophony of howls, and in that instant the tribe gains power over its fear, the night becomes less menacing, and music, perhaps even harmony, is born.

I am sure that any reputable anthropologist could tear this scene apart scientifically, but I like to think it could have happened that way just the same. The origins of folk music may be lost in obscurity, but I am sure that each of us could identify a point where we became aware of the power and pleasure that music could bring into our lives. For me that point came while sitting around a campfire. We were not much more civilized than those aboriginal wolf howlers and certainly not much better singers. We joked and told stories and sang songs and practiced our vocabulary. You may remember the songs: "Rolling Home. Dead drunk! Rolling home. Dead drunk. By the light of the silvery mo oo oo ooon!" Dunderback, Sippin' Cider, and a hundred others. We were boy

scouts.

Later I took up the guitar in order to lead the songs around the campfire (Methodist Youth Fellowship by this time -- Kum Ba Yah, baby!). My first guitar was an ancient something or other that was strung with ski-lift cables and had a bow in the neck, which gave it about a three inch action. It was warped and cracked and untunable and I regularly drew blood trying to play it. But it was music and I loved it. Eventually my brother (I don't remember which one, it may have been all of them) did a John Belushi number on it. They were younger brothers so I wasn't allowed to kill them. The splinters were used for kindling.

Performing standing up in front of an audience where everyone is looking and listening to you -- was another skill learned around the campfire. One memorable early performance was at a Boy Scout Camporee. Five hundred scouts and leaders and parents gathered for the big ceremonial campfire, and I, dressed as an Indian in breechcloth and feathers (I was in the Order of the Arrow), was to do the campfire lighting ceremony.

After a suitable amount of ceremonial drumming and carrying on, all of which was designed to increase the solemnity of the occasion, I was supposed to say, "And now we ask the great Waconda to bring down fire from the sky to light this, our campfire..."

One of the Explorer Posts had rigged a wire from the trees, and a flaming ball was supposed to come down that wire to light the campfire. "And now we ask the Great Waconda to bring down fire from the sky to light this, our campfire..." Utter and total silence ... "Oh great Waconda! Send down Fire!..." At this point there was some rustling in the trees and some hurried whispered conversation. "OH GREAT WACONDA..."

At last they got the thing lit and started down the wire. "The Great Waconda sends down fire to light..." the flaming ball went out. "This our ..."

So there I was, in front of five hundred people, my friends, my teachers, my high school principal, dressed in feathers, pointing to the sky at a roll of toilet paper sliding slowly down the wire, swinging slowly as it came to, until it skidded to a stop ten feet short of its intended destination.

"Ah, does anybody got a match?"

The folk process being what it is, we now gather around the amplifier instead of the campfire, but our traditions of performing and listening, of sharing and caring, are rooted deep in our individual and collective past. As the song says, "Carry it on, carry it on."

All of this disconnected rambling was designed to bring me to the real point of this article, which is to begin a NEW FOLK CLUB TRADITION -- a tradition loosely based on the round robin story game we played around the campfire. Here is how it works: First, anyone can write material for the newsletter anytime, just do it but be sure there is something of interest -- a feature article or equivalent -- to read, and make sure that one



person isn't saddled with the chore each month. THE PERSON WHO WRITES THE MAIN FEATURE NAMES THE NEXT MONTH'S WRITER. Now no tag backs for six months or so, OK? And it would probably be a good idea to ask the person whom you name prior to putting their name in print. The next person writes their article (or whatever) and finds someone else to carry it on. That's their job. Once you have asked someone, it might be a good idea to follow up with some reminders to see that it gets done. After that there is no telling what the Great Waconda will bring down upon you if you break the chain.

Carry it on. Carry it on

NEXT MONTH: LOU RUFFINO will tell you about "MOOSE MUSIC."

Submit material to Dave Hurd in person or by mail or by FAX (703) 573-6855 or (301) 295-5506. The deadline is the last Tuesday of the month.

Holidays, Memories and Saying Goodbye

by Ellen Kaminsky

We've just said goodbye to the Thanksgiving holiday and the last of the visiting relatives. Although they were here for several days, I find there were things I wanted to say to them but just didn't find the time. Sure, I could call them up, but the things I'd like to say are best done in person. I guess I'll tell them next time I see them. For now, however, it's time to think about the rest of the holiday season.

For some folks this means shopping, baking, wrapping and decorating. But for me the holidays mean CARDS! Writing them, sending them and receiving them. I love this aspect of the holidays because those cards carry a little piece of the person who sent it. Simple cards or fancy, loaded with news or just a photo of the latest niece or nephew; Christmas, Chanukah or the good old standard "holiday," it makes no difference. For no matter what the card says, it also brings with it all the memories associated with the sender. And for me, sending the cards out has the same effect as receiving them.

As soon as I get out my card list, the memories start to flow back to me. For each of these names there is or was a relationship. I remember who they are, what they meant to me, and how they influenced my life. Lots of names. People I see all the time, folks I rarely see at all; family in nearby towns, friends who've moved away. I've said goodbye to all these folks at one point or another, but in only a few instances did I know if that particular goodbye was forever. And it's with that thought in mind that I write this article.

To all those folks I have said goodbye. For some it may have been a temporary goodbye knowing I would see them again. For others, the goodbye was more permanent and we knew it was the end of an era. In each case I believed I knew if I'd see this person again. However, too often Fate can deal us a nasty turn and put an end to a relationship sooner than expected. And often when this happens we find there were things we wish we'd said before it was too late. Now that I realize how temporary relationships can be, I understand how important it is to invest in them daily. We can't wait until later to tell someone how we feel. We can't assume there will always be a tomorrow to share our feelings.

Recently the Folk Club said goodbye to three very special people. Don and Mary Twist retired and went on the road with Lane to see the world (or at least most of the United States). Ray Hillman found the call of the Denver area too hard to resist and returned with his family to Colorado at about the same time. These folks were very special, not only to Ray and me, but to many other members of the Folk Club as well. Making music hasn't been quite the same since they left. However, we had our chance to say goodbye and probably said most of what we wanted to before they were gone. If Providence is kind and Fate is looking the other way, we may see them all again. I hope so.

But who else has left (or quietly slipped away) without knowing how we feel. Is there someone sitting nearby waiting for a little encouragement or a few words from a friend? Or maybe there is someone you truly admire that hasn't a clue how you feel. Why not tell them now before you forget: tell them now while you still have a chance. Think of it as a holiday gift all year round. When you say goodbye this time, make sure you've said all you want to them before Fate looks your way and steals your opportunity.

I look around and see so many friends and realize I am a lucky person; I am grateful for these friends. The Folk Club has been a special part of my life for these last 6 years and some of my very closest friends have come from my association with the club. I can't imagine life without folk music or the very special people it seems to attract. ...I just thought I'd say that before it was too late. Have a happy holiday one and all!

Goodbye for now Ellen

The 23 Songs of Christmas

by Terry Lewis

It was a silent night in the Little Town of Bethlehem. Despite the fact that it was not a White Christmas, I still had that Holiday Feeling. I guess it was my way to hear The Herald Angels Sing The Christmas Song. Or maybe it was because somebody told me, "Santa Claus is Coming to Town."

I had hoped to catch a glimpse of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, but he was Away in a Manger.

Disappointed, I headed for home, thinking it was going to be a Blue Christmas, when I saw three wise men coming the other way. When I asked the wise guys where they were going, they replied, "We Three Kings of Orient Are travelling to Bethlehem." They said they had been on the road throughout The Twelve Days of Christmas, adding that it would have been only ten days but they got lost. I was about to ask what was in the packages wrapped in Pretty Paper that they carried when one of them interrupted, saying "Do You Hear What I Hear?" None of us did, and his friends told me he had been hearing things ever since The First Noel.




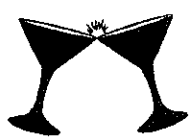
I left them Rocking Around the Christmas Tree and took a Sleigh Ride home through Winter Wonderland.

I had told Santa, "All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth," but he left me a rock instead. I called it my Jingle Bell Rock. Of course, after I saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus they gave me everything I wanted, including the Silver Bells I had my eye on.

Mommy said something about not wanting Daddy to ask What Child Is This?

Folk Club of Reston-Herndon

December 5, 1993 - January 15, 1994

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Dec 5 Martin Van Buren (1782)	Dec 6	Dec 7 Showcase Performance Deirdre Murphy 7:30pm Folk Club	Dec 8	Dec 9  Hanukkah	Dec 10	Dec 11
Dec 12	Dec 13	Dec 14 7:30pm Folk Club	Dec 15 7:30pm Ray Kaminsky - Sierra Club -NWF Hq- Rte 7, Va	Dec 16 Frederick Folk Club - Deli Creations - Frederick Partners in Song	Dec 17	Dec 18
Dec 19	Dec 20	Dec 21 Christmas Party Winter begins 7:30pm Folk Club	Dec 22	Dec 23	Dec 24	Dec 25  Christmas
Dec 26	Dec 27	Dec 28 Showcase Lottery Draw 7:30pm Folk Club	Dec 29 Andrew Johnson (1808)	Dec 30 Frederick Folk Club - Deli Creations - Frederick	Dec 31  New Year's Eve	Jan 1  New Year's Day
Jan 2	Jan 3	Jan 4 Showcase Performance 7:30pm Folk Club	Jan 5	Jan 6	Jan 7 Millard Fillmore (1800)	Jan 8
Jan 9 Richard M. Nixon 81st birthday	Jan 10	Jan 11 7:30pm Folk Club	Jan 12	Jan 13 Frederick Folk Club - Deli Creations - Frederick Doris Justis	Jan 14	Jan 15

Coming Folk Club Events

**December 21 - Christmas
Party**

**January 25 - Culley &
Elliott \$8/7**

**February 22 - Chris Procter
\$7/6**

**March 29 - Anne Hills
\$7/6**

**April 26 - David Massengill
\$7/6**

**May 17 - Tommy Sands
\$10/9**

**June 14 - Bill Staines
\$8/7**

Showcase Performances

December 7, the featured performer will be **Deirdre Murphy**.

On the first Tuesday of every month we feature a Folk Club member in a showcase two-set (25 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!

The Folk Club

President, Larry Mediate

Treasurer, David Hurd

Members of the Board:

Ray Kaminsky, Ellen Kaminsky

Lynn Jordan, Bill Davis

Richard Flinchbaugh, Liza Cobb

Jim Rosenkrans, T.M. Hanna

Brian Gilmartin, Nina Gilmartin

Newsletter Published Periodically

Editor, David Hurd

Publicity & Information

Lynn Jordan - (703) 437-7766

Dave Hurd - (703) 573-6855

Bookings

Ray Kaminsky - (703) 689-0444

ATTENTION! ATTENTION! ATTENTION!
Check your Label - Are you expiring? "19931201" 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!

The Folk Club

of Reston - Herndon
at The Tortilla Factory
648 Elden Street
Herndon, VA 22070

c/o David A. Hurd
1405 Cottage Street SW
Vienna, VA 22180