



The Folk Club



Of Reston – Herndon
Preserving Folk Traditions

Volume 15 Issue 3

March 2000

March 14 Showcase – Ray Kaminsky Plays the Blues.

By Dan Grove

It wasn't always that way, apparently – some old-timers swear they can remember Ray in an earlier era, playing an archaic genre called 'Folk.' As interest in the Kaminsky story has swelled, musicologists and historians have done extensive research trying to separate truth from legend, working to get an accurate picture of Ray's inchoate environment. Their job has been made considerably more difficult by the fact that most of the eyewitnesses, the old-timers, are now stricken with geriatric memory problems, and their stories contradict each other in most key respects. And the women – far too many, and covering too wide an age range, to all have been involved as they say – confound the researchers with an oral history that's nebulous in spite of its detail. Nonetheless, some consensus has emerged, and the researchers have agreed on the most likely set of events. What follows is a synopsis of their research findings. If Ray himself would only talk about it!

The 'Folk' music rumors appear to be true. Ray used to attend cultish sessions, held in darkened Speakeasy-like back rooms that were well hidden from the general public, where 'Folkies' would gather. The group would sit together in a trance, listening to a leader sing a 'Story Song,' the group silence broken only by occasional unison chanting. There's strong evidence to suggest Ray was a regular leader, and perhaps even the high priest of the cult. The 'Story Songs' would relate tales of woe and hardship, disaster, strife, and doom – virtually anything so long as it was sad. Many of these songs featured high body counts, impossible romantic longing, and human failure. Some had more than forty verses with no melodic variation, a tool used to exponentially increase the malaise associated with hearing them. Indeed, the signature trait of the 'Folkies' seems to have been their addiction to feeling unhappy, and the desire to share this gift with others.



A bootleg tape of Ray performing from this era appears to be legitimate, and can provide a reference point for this phase of his development. Called *Classic Acoustic*, the tape reflects the archaic recording standards of the last century, but it has since been extensively remastered by musicologist Tim Davis and released on CD for scholarly access.

Of the transition from 'Folk' to Blues, Ray has maintained a wall of silence, but was once overheard muttering about "getting to some happier music." And he steadfastly refuses to talk about the past, referring instead to his current release, *Barker Hill Blues*, and a new project (he has twelve songs recorded for his next CD). Ray also has booked a spectacular lineup for the Herndon Blues Festival in July, and has an extensive performing schedule (see inside), including a cool gig with Josh White Jr.

Joining Ray for his showcase will be Jack Fretwell on harmonica. Don't miss it! But please, don't ask about the 'Folk' days....

March Schedule:

March 7	Newsletter available, Open Mike
March 14	Ray Kaminsky Showcase
March 21	Open Mike
March 28	Sparky Rucker
	Send April Newsletter info to Carol

Music at 7:30 pm. Visit & eat from 6:30 pm.

Sparky Rucker

Tickets \$10 (\$9 Members)

James "Sparky" Rucker has performed throughout the U.S., Canada and Europe, singing songs and telling stories from the American tradition. Sparky Rucker has been performing for over 30 years, and is internationally recognized as a leading folklorist, historian, musician and storyteller. Sparky's music includes railroad songs, Appalachian music, old-time blues, slave songs, Civil War Music, gospel, work songs, cowboy music, ballads, and his own original compositions. Sparky has nine recordings, including *The Blue and Gray in Black and White* which featured his historical Civil War prowess and *Treasures and Tears* which was nominated for the W.C. Handy award for best traditional recording. Sparky was also nominated for the W.C. Handy award as best traditional artist, the Hurston-Hughes Award for significant contributions to the understanding and appreciation of Southern and American folklore, and the John Henry Award for pursuing the Black American Heritage through the legacy of American Ballads. Sparky's professional associations have included being on the Board of Directors of Sing Out! Inc., the prestigious folk music publication; a Music Harvest Artist Advisor for Common Ground, one of the premier folk song writing associations; board member for the Southern Folk Cultural Revival Project and the John Henry Memorial Foundation. Sparky has appeared at venues such as Wolf Trap Farm Park, the Smithsonian Folk Festival, Kerrville Folk Festival, and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Sparky appears on 3 video presentations, including *"Storytelling in North America, Vols I & II"* for the National Geographic Society. His numerous performances on television have included *"The Wild West"* from Time-Warner, and on radio with NPR's Prairie Home Companion, Mountain Stage and Morning Edition.

We are truly fortunate to welcome Sparky back to the Folk Club for an evening of music of stories!!!

The Folk Club
Proudly Presents ...
7:30 PM
March 28, 2000
at the Tortilla Factory
648 Elden Street
Herndon, VA



2000 Guest Artists

And Special Events

Most tickets for Guest Artists are
\$10 Non-member, \$9 Members
It pays to be a Folk Club member!

03/28/00	Sparky Rucker
04/25/00	Chuck Pyle
05/23/00	Michael Smith
05/16/00	Folk Club's 15 th Birthday Party
06/13/00	Bill Staines
07/xx/00	TBA
08/xx/00	Folk Club's 13 th Anniversary at the Tortilla Factory Restaurant
08/29/00	Dana Robinson

In Concert

Local performances by members of
The Folk Club of Reston-Herndon

Ray Kaminsky

3/25 8pm St. Elmo's Coffee Pub,
Alexandria, VA (703) 739-9268

T.M. Hanna

3/10, 6-10 pm Bennigans, Tysons Corner
3/15, 8-11pm Zig's, Alexandria
3/17, 6-10pm Bennigan's, Tysons Corner
3/18, 9pm-12:30am Mark's Pub, Falls
Church
3/24, 6-10pm Bennigans, Tysons Corner

James Houch & Friends

3/10-12 Brianna Chapman will be skating to
a new song called "Never Give UP" in
Annapolis at the Naval Ice Rink.
4/7, 7-9 pm, Barnes & Nobel Bookstore
Reston Town Center
5/13, 1 pm, Leesburg Classic Car Show
6/16, 7:30-9:30, Borders Books, Sterling

July 22 - 4th Annual Herndon Blues Fest

Noon to 9pm, Frying Pan Park, 2709 West
Ox Road, Herndon, VA 20171, 703-
437-9101, Information: 703-689-9535

Email: karenc@herndonarts.org
<http://www.herndonarts.org>

ACOUSTIC JAM 3rd Sunday of the month
from 1 - 4 P.M. at Frying Pan Park Country
Store in Herndon. Call Yvonne Johnson at
703-437-9101 for details.

Email your performance dates for the next
newsletter to cd7158@erols.com.

Classifieds

Intellitouch Tuner, clips onto guitar
headstock, easily visible in daylight, new
condition, retail \$60, sell for \$25. Dan 703-
742-7993.

Acoustic Bass For Sale: Rarely used, like
new \$1000 include stand & cover. Jim
Rosenkrans at 301-695-2733,
jimr@rosedalesoftware.com

Come Spring Enterprises: Professional
sound reinforcement by Richard W.
Flinchbaugh. Specializing in Folk, Celtic,
Traditional and Contemporary Acoustic
Music. 703-255-0112

Julia Rose: all-original, alternative folk
artist. Her debut CD, "Suspended in Air."
410-237-0899, website:
www.erols.com/julia.rose

**Stringfellow's Beautiful Handcrafted
from Around the World:** Sponsors of a
summer concert series. Folk Music, Cds,
Tapes and they accept instruments and
original Cds for consignment. 201 Union
St., PO Box 502, Occoquan, VA 22125,
703-494-3755, stfellow@doubled.com

Sandy's Greatest Hits: Jim Sandy is
looking for country/folk artists to help with
CD...yes, finally!! Male vocal/guitar, bass,
fiddle, harmonica. Female vocal/guitar,
flute. Call Jim at 301-481-7645.

**Still Available through Birdphluph
Music:** Good Things Take Time by TM
Hanna and Bare Facts, recorded live at
Avalon Folk Festival, by Bill Davis.
Contact Birdphluph Music, PO Box 131,
Sterling, VA 20167 or
www.birdphluph@pressroom.com

The Folk Club of Reston-Herndon

Tuesday nights, 7:30 P.M.
The Tortilla Factory
648 Elden Street
Herndon, VA
703-471-1156

President: Ray Kaminsky
Treasurer: Richard Flinchbaugh
Board of Directors: Ellen Kaminsky, Lynn Jordan,
Bill Davis, T.M. Hanna, Sue Beffel, Dave Hurd, Mary
King, Sue Schier, Carol Rogers, Chris Kramer-
Harnage,
Publicity: Sue Schier **Telephone:** Mary King
Bookings: Ray Kaminsky 703-689-0444

Folk Club Format

On most Tuesday evenings, the Folk Club is an open mike format with a sign-up board. **Each performer has 12 minutes, including setup time.** This allows three songs if you set up FAST and the songs are of moderate length.

Showcase Performances

On the second Tuesday of each month, we feature a Folk Club member in a two set (25-minute) "Showcase" performance. To be in a showcase you have to:

- be a Folk Club member who has not done a showcase in 6 months.
- fill out a lottery slip any time in the month before the drawing
- win the drawing on the night of the current month's showcase
- prepare to be featured in the next newsletter!

The Folk Club of Reston-Herndon
c/o Dave Hurd
110 Devil's Backbone Overlook
Stephenson, VA 22656

Newsletter Publication

Folk Club members are encouraged to submit performance calendars, classified advertisements, articles, reviews, artwork and other items to Carol Rogers at cd7158@erols.com. All items must relate to music and be emailed in WordPerfect. Information must be received one week before the first day of the month in which you want it published. Items will be printed on the basis of music related interest, timeliness and space available with club information being the first priority.

Volunteer

Volunteers are always needed to help set up and take down sound equipment, to fold and stamp newsletters on first Tuesdays and LOTS of other things! Tell any board member you want to help keep the Folk Club going.

Membership

Address Changes

Renewals

To join The Folk Club of Reston-Herndon, send or hand your check for \$12, payable to The Folk Club, to Dave Hurd at the return address on this newsletter.

If you are already a member, your membership expiration date, in year-month-day format (YYYYMMDD), is on the mailing label on your newsletter. It is your responsibility to renew each year. If you move, send Dave your new address so you don't miss an issue.

Expires  20000301
Mr Richard Flinchbaugh
9712 Cymbal Dr
Vienna, VA 22182