



Newsletter of the Folklore Society

OF GREATER WASHINGTON
P.O. Box 19174 • 20th Street Station • Washington D. C. 20036

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Geo. A. Simpson, Editor

SCOTS SINGER NORMAN KENNEDY TO PERFORM HERE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8

Norman Kennedy, singer from the northeast of Scotland and soon-to-be weaver at Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, will perform at the Society's monthly program, 8:30 p.m., Friday, December 8, in the Washington Ethical Society auditorium, 7750 - 16th Street NW., Washington, D.C.

Northeast Scotland has long been a treasure trove for ballad hunters. It is the home of Jeannie Robertson, called by some "the world's greatest folksinger," and was much earlier the home of Peter Buchan, one of the significant penultimate sources for the collection of Francis James Child. It is there that Gavin Greig made his large collection of folksong.

Norman Kennedy sings unaccompanied ballads and songs in English and Gaelic. The latter he learned on his many trips to the Hebrides. He also "diddles" or makes "mouth music," which is dance music made with the mouth and traditional in Ireland and Scotland.

In his own words: "My folk have lived in and around Aberdeen for generations so that is where we belong. Some of my mother's people were singers and could play instruments like the concertina, accordion, fiddle, melodeon, etc., and as there were always older people, grandparents and aunts, in the house they sang to us a lot.

"By the time I was about twelve I was learning songs from singers like Davie Stewart, the tinker-singer, as we lived across the street from him at one time and also very close to Jeannie Robertson's mother, Maria. The tinkers used to sing in the streets and the marketplace, and I would stand and listen till I got the song right. When I was seventeen I went to the Isle of Barra in the Outer Hebrides and was in the heart of the Scottish Gaelic way of living there. I went every summer for ten years and was well acquainted with the old singers and storytellers there. These were people who had five or six hundred songs in their heads for most of them couldn't read Gaelic as that was not encouraged by the schools when they were young. Since leaving school at sixteen and a half I had taken up the handweaving and I learned a lot in the Islands as the old people had been brought up to be practically self-supporting and still remembered a lot of the old ways. In 1965 I was asked to come across to Newport to represent Scotland and as none of the old people I knew wanted to make the journey for fear of flying, I just came anyway."

In addition to Newport, he has appeared at the Philadelphia, Mariposa and Beers Family folk festivals and was here this summer for the Smithsonian Institution's Festival of American Folklife. His Folk-Legacy record is about to be released. Admission to the program will be free to Society members, one dollar for the general public, and fifty cents for children.

Folklore Society of Greater Washington
P.O. Box 19303 - 20th Street Station
Washington, D.C. 20036

MEMBERSHIP OR SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Enclosed find my check or money order in the amount of (\$5.00 yearly individual membership) or (\$7.50 yearly family membership) or (\$1.00 y early Newsletter subscription).

Name _____

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COLLECTANEA...

Society Open Folksing, 8:30 p.m., Saturday, November 25, Union Methodist Church, 814 20th Street NW., Washington, D.C., with emphasis on times and song of Woody Guthrie, who died last month; moderated by Bob Clayton; public invited to attend and perform; general admission fifty cents, members a quarter. Society executive board meeting, 8 p.m., Tuesday, November 7, Suite 710, 1346 Connecticut Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. First Metropolitan Folk Workshop, keyed for teachers (especially in physical education, music and social work), recreation professionals, youth and adult volunteer and professional group leaders, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Friday and Saturday, November 17 and 18, with Saturday evening party, at Wheaton Youth Center, 11711 Georgia Avenue, Wheaton, Md; staff includes May Gadd, Ailene Goodman, John and Ginny Dilline, and Guthrie and Mary Meade; call the National Folk Festival Association (202) 296-0068. American Anthropological Association 66th Annual Meeting, November 30 - December 3, at Washington Hilton; participants to include folklorists and musicologists; among them Alan Lomax, Roger Abrahams, Guy B. Johnson, Daniel Crowley and Charles Keil; registration required; contact the Association, Suite 122, 3700 Massachusetts Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. Matt McGinn at Patches 15 Below, 2020 1/2 York Road, Timonium, Md., Friday and Saturday, November 17 and 18. The John Edwards Memorial Foundation ("research in commercially recorded and published American folk music") needs financial support; send five dollars for year's membership, subscription to JEMF Newsletter included, to The Friends of the John Edwards Memorial Foundation at the Folklore and Mythology Center, University of California, Los Angeles, California 90024. Colloquium: "Folklore: Three Views," with Professors Douglas J. McMillan, Esther Birdall, and George C. Carey at 4 p.m., Wednesday, November 1, Shoemaker Building N 201, University of Maryland, College Park. Folklore Society of Greater Washington's membership chairman Andy Wallace with banjo is pictured on page one of a recent Dick Cerri Newsletter ("Folk Music News"); one-year subscription \$1.50 from P.O. Box 31233, Washington, D.C. 20031. Annual membership in the Society (valid for one year from the month of joining) remains \$7.50 for family and \$5.00 for individual; send check in the amount of dues to the Folklore Society of Greater Washington, P.O. Box 19174, 20th Street Station, Washington D.C. 20036.

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