



# Newsletter of the Folklore Society OF GREATER WASHINGTON Box 19303 20th Street Station, Washington D. C. 20036

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Arlene Rodenbeck, Editor

## DAVID BROMBERG

Our monthly program will be held Friday, December 10, at 8:30 p.m. in the Smithsonian Institution Museum of History and Technology between 12th and 14th Sts. on Constitution Ave., NW. Cosponsored by FSGW and the Division of Performing Arts, Smithsonian Institution, the program is Free to FSGW members, as usual, and \$1.00 for non-members.

David Bromberg began learning about music a dozen or so years ago, listening to Weavers records and studying Pete Seeger's book on how to play guitar. In the years following, he has developed into one of the most brilliant instrumentalists and talented songwriters on the "traditional-style" folk scene today.

He first became known to the folk world in 1968 when he was touring as accompanist for Jerry Jeff Walker. His flashy, though always tasteful guitar playing became known to those who cared, and "Have you heard 'Bullfrog Blues'?" circulated through the folk camps. In the following years, he has accompanied either formally, informally, or on recordings many of the major performers on the modern folk circuit, including Rosalie Sorrells, John Hartford, and Tom Rush. At the 1969 Philadelphia Folk Festival it seemed that nearly every performer was backed up on guitar by David Bromberg. His guitar playing is rooted in country and bluegrass styles with a lot of single-string jazz riffs thrown in. Add a pinch of early R & B, stretch a lot of strings, combine with a large amount of good taste, and there you have it.

David grew up, musically, in the late '50's and early '60's, being exposed to the music of Pete Seeger, Bill Monroe, and the Coasters, and he draws on elements of their styles both in the traditional songs he sings and in the songs he writes. He has come into his own as a writer during the past two years. He has a knack for finding just the right word to use to convey the thought he has in mind, and he doesn't waste words--you know just what he's singing about without having to analyze his songs. His humorous songs are truly funny, often sly, and his serious songs come across with strong feelings every time.

In addition to the guitar, David plays the five string banjo, dobro, mandolin, and pedal steel guitar, and if that's not enough, is an accomplished magician. He has recorded an album for Columbia.

## SPECIAL FOR THIS PROGRAM ONLY

YOU MUST CALL THE SMITHSONIAN BOX OFFICE BEFORE THE PROGRAM AND RESERVE YOUR TICKETS IN ADVANCE. THIS IS AN EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE. TICKETS WILL BE HELD ONLY UNTIL 8:00 P.M. CALL 381-5395, AND INDICATE WHETHER OR NOT YOU ARE A MEMBER OF FSGW.

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## CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Our annual trek through the streets of Old Town Alexandria will be on Thursday, December 23. We'll meet at 7:30 p.m. at Louis Robert's picture frame shop, 317 Cameron St., which is a couple blocks south of Washington St. right across from City Hall. We'll be singing the traditional Christmas carols as well as some folksy things as we go, and in general spread some good cheer (probably receive some too if the local hospitality is true to form). At any rate it's lots of fun.

SINGING FROM THE SACRED HARP and potluck supper will be held Sunday, December 19, at the home of Carl Pagter in Potomac, Md. Why don't you look through your books beforehand to see if you can find any Christmasy things to sing. For directions and food ideas, call 299-4305.

The Ethical Society has a Coffee House the first Friday of every month, i.e., December 3rd this time. It opens at 9 p.m., admission is \$1.00 a head, and refreshments are furnished. It's an informal arrangement, so bring your instruments and songs and your desire to learn some new ones. The Society is located at 7750 16th St., NW., at Kalmia Road.

The FSGW Executive Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 7, at 8:00 p.m. in Room 718 of the Dupont Circle Bldg. (That's above the Discount Record and Book Shop.) Come and sound off, if you like, or just sit and listen; either way you're quite welcome to attend.

INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING--Free sessions will be held this winter at the Adelphi Friends Meetinghouse, 2303 Metzerott Road (23rd Avenue and Metzerott Road) in Prince George's County, Maryland. The classes, to be conducted by Vera Mae Duerksen, will begin at 8 p.m., Saturday, December 11, January 8, and February 12. There will also be a session at 8 p.m., Monday, December 27.

Our apologies for not noticing the Clancy Brothers concert on November 20 in our November Newsletter; word did not reach us by press time. In the future, if FSGW members notice a FSGW-cosponsored concert at Lisner Auditorium (cosponsored with Stanley-Williams Presentations) they can order tickets at 25% discounts by sending a check designating the event and membership and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Stanley-Williams Presentations, 1715 37th St., NW., Washington, DC 20007.

#### FSGW JOURNAL

Volume two, number two, of the Society Journal appeared in mid-November and by this time has probably been read and reread by FSGW members. All new memberships received up through December will receive a copy free. This will be the last issue of Volume two; look for Volume three sometime in the new year. This issue is edited by George Simpson and contains an article on urban folklore studies and too many book and record reviews to list here. If you're interested in receiving a copy or additional copies (\$1.00 each), call 244-2090 or 337-4353.

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#### FSGW BY LAWS AMENDMENT

A proposed amendment to the by laws of our esteemed society will be voted on at the January 14th program meeting. Passage requires a 2/3 majority of the members voting that night. The proposal is to change paragraph A of section X of the by laws--

From: The funds of the Society shall be kept in a checking account only to the extent needed for current operation. Additional funds and all reserve shall be kept in interest-bearing accounts insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the particular bank or banks being selected by the Board.

To: The funds of the Society shall be kept in a checking account only to the extent needed for current operation. Additional funds and all reserve shall be kept in interest-bearing accounts insured by an agency of the Federal Government, the institution to be approved by the Board.

Now in case that sounds like gobbledygook to you, the change is essentially that, if the amendment is passed, we would be able to put our extra funds into an account that pays more interest, such as one offered by a savings and loan or some such institution. So decide if you're f'r it or ag'in' it and come prepared to vote.

With Yuletide fast upon us, differences of opinion will once again arise concerning the verses of our favorite Christmas songs, especially "The Twelve Days of Christmas." Allowing that there is no "correct" version, Joe Hickerson sends along the text as it first appeared in a collection of Christmas songs (William Henry Husk's Songs of the Nativity: Being Christmas Carols, Ancient and Modern, Several of Which Appear for the First Time in a Collection (London: John Camden Hotten, 1868, pp. 181-85)), where the 12 gifts are itemized as follows in the final verse:

The twelfth day of Christmas  
My true love sent to me  
Twelve lords a-leaping,  
Eleven ladies dancing,  
Ten pipers piping,  
Nine drummers drumming,  
Eight maids a-milking,

Sevens swans a-swimming,  
Six geese a-laying,  
Five gold rings,  
Four colley birds,  
Three French hens,  
Two turtle-doves, and  
A partridge in a pear-tree.

The lady who was the favoured recipient of the gifts enumerated must have required no small extent of shelf or table room for their accommodation, as at the end of the Christmas festivities she must have found herself in possession of twelve partridges in pear trees, twenty-two turtle-doves, thirty French hens, thirty-six colley (i.e. black) birds, forty gold rings, forty-two laying geese, forty-two swimming swans, forty milk-maids, thirty-six drummers, thirty pipers, twenty-two dancing ladies, and twelve leaping lords; in all three hundred and sixty-four articles, one for each day in the year save one.

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PROGRAM MEETINGS COMING UP--Here's what we have tentatively planned in the next few months. Remember, our monthly programs are always the second Friday of the month at 8:30 pm. at one of the Smithsonian auditoriums on Constitution Ave. Members of FSGW admitted free; non-members pay \$1.00.

January 14th--Pam Ostergren--Museum of History and Technology-- Will probably do old-time traditional things. (By the way, we are working on holding a banjo seminar sometime that weekend while Pam is still in town.)

February 11th--Bill Williams (75% definite)--Natural History Museum--Mostly blues.

March 10th--John Wilcox (pretty near definite)--Natural History Museum--Mostly modern, writes a lot of his own material.

By now your friendly local music store probably has in stock the Original Bottle-neck Slide, a chrome plated piece of steel tubing packaged in a polyethylene bag, for the purpose of playing "slide" guitar (a la Muddy Waters). It comes in two sizes to fit skinny or pudgy fingers, and in two weights, a light model for electric guitars and guitars with light strings and low action, and a heavier one for more traditional playing larger flat top guitars and (for the most funky) steel Nationals.

TRANSPOSOGRAPH--FSGW member Bill Morris says he has invented a simple device to help the guitar player transpose (change key). The inventor claims that his Transposograph will enable you to transpose quickly and easily from any key to any other key, and is especially useful to strummers who do not read music. For example, you can transpose the often awkward chords shown in song books to chords in a key with finger positions more familiar to you. Bill says the device may be used with or without capo, and is equally useful with banjo, uke, mandolin, guitar, etc. He will send you a Transposograph (no charge) if you send him a self-addressed, stamped, envelope with your request to: W.K. Morris, c/o Prince George's TB-RD Assn., 5215 Church Place, Hyattsville, Md. 20781.

It's come a long way since, as Furry Lewis once said: "...We used to go down to the General Store with our guitar on a lazy afternoon. Go in and buy a bottle of RC. We'd drink up that RC and then break off the top of the bottle on a rock, and then, you'd hear some guitar playing..."

Two services available to members are access to the tape archives and the exchange publications. We've explained what they are in earlier Newsletters, but here are the phone numbers again in case you've lost them. If you're interested in borrowing from the tape archives call 524-5061; and if you'd like to see some exchange publications, call 522-0648, evenings and weekends in both cases.

The most recent bibliographies compiled by Joe Hickerson at the Archive of Folk Song, Library of Congress (Washington, DC 20540) are on American Folklore and Dulcimers (Hammered and Plucked). Copies can be obtained in person (Library of Congress Room G-152, Monday-Friday, 8:30-5:00) or by mail (write or phone 426-5510).

#### MEMBERSHIP

Looking for a unique and thoughtful Christmas gift for your favorite relative, friend, or lover? (Those are not mutually exclusive categories.) How about a membership in the Society? The recipient would be entitled to free admission to our monthly programs, half-price at Special Events, Newsletter mailed first-class, the Society Journal, access to the tape archives and exchange publications, discounts at programs sponsored at Lisner, and a warm feeling inside whenever he thinks of you.

Folklore Society of Greater Washington  
Box 19303, 20th Street Station  
Washington, DC 20036

Enclosed is a check for: \$5.00 (individual membership) \_\_\_\_\_ \$7.50 (family) \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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RETURN REQUESTED

*Arlene*