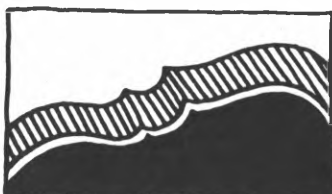


**The
Folklore
Society
of Greater
Washington**



Box 19303, 20th Street Station, Washington, DC 20036

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME X, No. 6

February 1974

Co-Editors: Marietta Plank
Valarie Thomas

COMMON GROUND

Our February program is going to be a good one! Our performers will be Common Ground, a quintet founded on banjo and fiddle tunes, country, bluegrass, story songs and ballads. Members of the group: Sandy Davis, Sarah Gregory, Lydia Mills, Bill (Smitty) Smith, and Bill Workman--will be playing approximately the following numbers of instruments: 3 guitars, 3 5-string banjos, 2 fiddles, 2 mandolins, 2 bass, 2 hammered dulcimers, 1 English concertina, 1 spoons, bones, 1 bodhran (Irish Drum). and 1 fretless banjo.

These five musicians will be transmitting to us a hybrid folk culture, adding in a good bit of their own humor and rhythm. Not only do they play and sing the ordinary folk music, but they also describe and teach their songs and stories, including demonstrations and explanations of exactly what their instrument is and how its played.

There's a good article about the Common Ground, written by Susan Bigelow Hill, in the Friday, November 23, 1973 issue of Christian Science Monitor in the Arts-Entertainment Section, p. 18. The article describes their concert given at the Brooks School in Lincoln, Mass. as an assimilation of the folk culture with their own culture and talent and desire to share their joy with others.

The closing sentence explains their feelings much more precisely. "Their joy...comes from creating the homelike setting in the enlarged community sphere, thus making their music a common ground for all."

The program will be held on Friday, February 8, at 8:30 p.m. at the Ethical Society, 7750 16th Street, N.W. Admission is \$1.50 for non-members; FSGW members get in free. It's really going to be an exciting and entertaining evening that you won't want to miss.

BY-LAW CHANGE FOR ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The members of the executive board of the FSGW have recommended that the by-laws for the election of officers be changed to allow for voting by members through the mail. They feel that a more representative vote will be obtained by voting through the mail than by the existing system of picking-up your ballot at the May meeting and voting the same night. All members are not usually present at the May program, and all members could receive an authorized ballot through the mail.

The following are the recommended changes to the FSGW by-laws:

VI. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A. No change

B. The Nominating Committee shall select a slate of candidates for office and shall report to the membership at the March meeting and at the April meeting. At both meetings, additional nominations for any office may be made and seconded from the floor.

C. No change

D. Immediately following the April meeting, the membership shall be sent authenticated ballots for the election which shall include the names of all candidates for office and space for write-in candidates. The ballots are either to be returned by mail to the Board prior to the May meeting, the envelope to be marked "Ballot", or brought to the May meeting. At the May meeting, the mailed ballots, unopened, and the ballots brought to the meeting, shall be collected and tabulated and the results announced. Write-in votes are permitted. Only authenticated ballots sent by mail to the members shall be counted.

E. No change

F. For each office, the candidate with the most votes shall be elected. In the case of a tie, the membership attending the May meeting will, by secret ballot, elect between the two candidates. The newly elected officers shall take office as of July 1.

The above by-law changes will be voted on at the February program, February 8th, in accordance with the rules for "Amendments of By-Laws".

OPEN SING

The theme for this month's sing will be one dear to all -- "Mother". The open sing will be held at the Ethical Society on Friday, February 1, beginning around 9:00 p.m. Admission is \$1.00 for both members and non-members. Refreshments will be served.

SACRED HARP AND POT LUCK SUPPER

Once again the Sacred Harp sing will be held at Dale Pragano's. Bob Blair will be co-hosting the event. Dale now lives in the District, in the Chevy Chase area, at 3245 Patterson. To get to her house, go out Connecticut Avenue; turn right on McKinley; left on 33rd; and right on Patterson.

Call to see what you can bring to the Pot Luck Supper or call if you get lost. Her number is 244-4861

The Sacred Harp Sing will be on Sunday, February 17th at 4:00 p.m.

MEMBERSHIP WORKSHOP

Having problems getting your Newsletter? Or have you forgotten to renew your membership? These problems among others will be seriously discussed and acted upon on Wednesday, February 20th at Nan Goland's. Nan, together with Janice Cole, Membership Chairman, will be working out some of the problems with the membership records, including up-dating the mailing lists. If you don't receive your newsletter automatically, either come to the meeting to help out, or at least call Nan to let her know your problem. Nan's phone number is 332-0232.

FSGW EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

The Board will meet on Tuesday, February 5, at the NFFA office, Room 718, Dupont Circle Building, 1346 Connecticut Ave., N.W. at 8:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend the meetings and join in on discussion of old and new business, or to suggest new ideas to the board.

LINCOLN DAY PROGRAM

FOLK SONGS AND BALLAD OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND THE CIVIL WAR

Once again there's going to be a program celebrating Lincoln's birthday through music and song. The program will be presented by the FSGW in cooperation with the National Folk Festival Association and the U.S. National Park Service. The program has been organized by Joe Hickerson, Reference Librarian, Archives of Folk Song, Library of Congress. He will also narrate the event.

The performers will be much the same as last year. They will include Gene Anderson, Bob Clayton, Jonathan Eberhart, Joe Hickerson, Allan Jabbour, Reed Martin, Helen Schneyer, and Andy Wallace.

The program will be held on Sunday, February 24th at 7:30 p.m. at Ford's Theater- 511 10th Street, N.W. If you want a good seat, or, in fact, any seat at all, show up at least one-half hour early. There has been an excellent turn-out in the past for this program.

AROUND TOWN

MONDAY NIGHT AT THE RED FOX

There's been a change on the stage at the Red Fox. Clayton Hambrick will no longer be the MC on Monday nights. Beginning January 1974, Bruce Hutton took over the position of Master of Ceremonies for the Hootenany. He has been working hard keeping the place jumping. It seems that the music keeps going and the Red Fox is more crowded than ever before.

If you haven't been to the Red Fox lately, make sure you go soon. Monday night is Hootenany night, so bring your instruments and talk to Bruce. The Red Fox is located at 4940 Fairmont Avenue in Bethesda, Maryland. The program begins about 8:00 p.m., but get there earlier if you want a seat.

THURSDAY NIGHT AT THE RED FOX

Hickory Wind is now performing every Thursday night at the Red Fox. The group consists of Sam, Pete, Glen, Bob, and Mark, all of whom play a variety of music on a number of instruments.

They play old-timey, country, jugband, bluegrass, and some original music on guitar, fiddle, banjo, bass, mandolin, 12-string guitar, kazoo and other jugband instruments.

Their program begins at 8:00 p.m.

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY COFFEE HOUSE

Every Saturday evening at 9:00 p.m. at the Mary Fraydon Center, there's good folk music for your enjoyment. You'll hear bluegrass, blues and good old-timey folk music. Bruce Hutton has already performed there. On Saturday, February 2, Hickory Wind will be playing there.

There is no charge for admission. For more information, call Dave Zinn, 686-0827.

WORKSHOPS

Although there won't be any workshops in February, there will be one early in March. On Sunday, March 3rd at 7:00 p.m. there will be a Hymn Sing Workshop. They'll be singing the old-timey hymns, gospel songs, and spirituals.

Bring your own hymn books and ideas to the Olives (Dave and Linda) in Glen Echo, Maryland. For exact location, call 320-5516.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Feb. 1 Open Sing, with theme of "Mother", Ethical Society
- Feb. 2 Hickory Wind, AU Coffee House
- Feb. 5 FSGW Executive Board Meeting
- Feb. 8 FSGW Program, "Common Ground", Ethical Society
- Feb. 9 Doc Watson/Hickory Wind, Lisner Auditorium
- Feb. 13 American Folk Music Class begins, taught by Joe Hickerson
- Feb. 17 Sacred Harp Sing and Pot Luck Supper
- Feb. 20 Membership Workshop
- Feb. 24 Lincoln Day Program, Ford's Theater
- Mar. 3 Hymn Sing Workshop
- Mar. 10 Ralph Stanley and the Clinch Mountain Boys, Smithsonian Institution,
 (String Bands--Old and New)

WANT ADS

FOR SALE

3-string Dulcimer with pearl and abalone inlays; boat-shaped; stripe inlayed on back. \$85.00. Contact Bob at 546-7604 or 7614.

Concertina, non-English type, 1919 majestic concert size. \$125.00. Call Bruce Hutton at 652-2692.

WANTED

Would the young lady who borrowed Reed Martin's copy of Earl Scruggs Bluegrass Banjo Book a year ago please return it as soon as possible. Call Reed at 949-4552.

Anyone else interested in buying or selling instruments, music books, etc., please mail the information into the FSGW post office box or call Marietta Plank at 946-6642.

BOOK REVIEWS

Book reviews, formerly published in the Journal, will now be appearing in the Newsletter. Joe Hickerson will be the book review editor for the Newsletter. If you have a book review you would like published, contact Joe, Route 1, Box 706 A, Accokeek, Md. 20607, or call 283-2084.

Only a Miner: Studies in Recorded Coal-Mining Songs. [by] Archie Green. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972. xv, 504 pp., bibliography, list of interviews, list of illustrations, index, facsimiles, music, photographs. \$12.50.

In 1877, Thomas Edison invented the phonograph. One century minus five years later, Archie Green has written the first book-length, scholarly treatment of the interrelationship between record makers, folksingers and folksong tradition. In view of the wealth of traditional music recorded during this past century, and

in view of the attention blues and jazz devotees have paid to sound recordings in their many publications, one has to wonder why folklorists have so long neglected this area. Indeed, until recently, scholarly neglect has amounted almost to a scholarly taboo. According to its proscriptions, any song which a folksinger learned from a record was shunned. Any traditional singer who ventured into Nashville or Tin Pan Alley was declared impure. Any traditional song which allowed itself to be captured in grooves of wax was gravely proclaimed to be, by that magic and from that moment, dead.

Now, at last, it is Archie Green's pleasure to demonstrate that reports of the death of folksongs are often greatly exaggerated. In Only a Miner, he examines a scant dozen songs (relating primarily to coal mining in the U.S.), and by cross-referencing data from field interviews and conventional archival sources with recordings issued commercially, he shows that recorded songs are quite capable of entering oral tradition, undergoing transformation, re-emerging as commercial material, returning to oral tradition, and so on.

Admittedly, this observation has been made at some level of awareness by even the most casual listeners. Dr. Green's particular contribution, however, lies in establishing that the folk-like behavior of recorded song is not mere happenstance, but routine, predictable, and subject to study by essentially the same analytical and comparative techniques that scholars have used in other, long established fields of research--for example, the broadside ballads. Moreover, he makes clear that the reason these same techniques apply is that certain genres of songs on record today fill much the same slot in some segments of society that the poetry on broadsides filled during the preceding two or three centuries. As far as the student of folksong is concerned, says Dr. Green, the main difference between songs that have been recorded and those that have not is that the individual histories of recorded songs may be studied with far more precision than those which exist in oral tradition alone. In short, his message is: Anyone interested in serious folksong study should henceforth view the record industry as part of the solution rather than as part of the problem.

None of these remarks is meant to imply that Dr. Green has written a polemical book. He has established full academic credentials for discographic study with modesty and good humor. He freely credits the work of Kenneth Goldstein, John Greenway, Wayland Hand, Fred Hoeptner, Robert Winslow Gordon, D.K. Wilgus and others who have shared his belief in the phonograph as a factor in tradition. The tone of the book is friendly, even anecdotal, and yet it bears an edge of authority that comes from knowing firsthand what single jack drills and labor rallies look like. As he develops the histories of individual songs, Dr. Green finds opportunity to comment on certain large scale social processes (e.g. the interaction of folk, sophisticated, and popular levels of culture), to provide brief biographies of singers, and of special importance to contemporary readers, to shed some light on the lives of those who have worked out their days where the sun never shines.

Gerald E. Parsons, Jr., Univ. of Pennsylvania

AMERICAN FOLK MUSIC CLASS

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, Joe Hickerson will be teaching a class in American folk music. This study/discussion course begins Wednesday, February 13, at 7:30 p.m. and runs for 8 consecutive weeks. John Jackson, a well-known folk guitarist, will be a guest at one of the sessions. Classes will be held at Woodrow Wilson Branch Library, 6100 Knollwood Dr., in the Bailey Crossroads area.

Classes cost \$20.00/person, \$30.00/couple or family. Call Carolyn Ely immediately if you are interested at 532-5800, or contact Joe Hickerson.

DOC WATSON/HICKORY WIND

Doc Watson will be the main performer at Lisner Auditorium, George Washington University, 21st and H Sts., N.W. on Saturday, February 9 at 8:30 p.m. Admission is \$5.00 in advance, \$6.00 at the door. No other discounts will be available.

There will only be one performance which is sure to be a sell-out. Ticket information should appear in the local papers and on radio stations, or call Lisner Auditorium, 676-6800.

ANOTHER NEW BOOK TO READ

A Guide to Cultural Arts Resources in the Washington Area for Young People by Judith Sandberg Naimon. This was published by the Cultural Arts Committee of the Montgomery County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations and printed by the Montgomery County Public Schools, 1973. Copies are available upon request from the Cultural Arts Committee in Rockville, Md.

FSGW membership is available for everyone. The cost is \$5.00/year for an individual and \$7.50/year for a family membership. You'll get free admission to our monthly programs, half-price at Special Events, first-class postage on the Newsletter, access to the tape archives and exchange publications, etc.

FOLKLORE SOCIETY OF GREATER WASHINGTON
P.O. Box 19303, 20th Street Station
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MEMBERSHIP FORM

I (We) wish to join the Society; enclosed is \$5 (individual) _____
\$7.50 (family) _____ for a year membership.
Renewal _____. Address change _____.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Would you be interested in helping the Society in any way? _____

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