



Pacific  
Northwest

FOLKLORE SOCIETY

"in the tradition"

Since 1953

# the NW HOOT

pnwfolklore.org

October/November, 2008

Vol. 1, No. 1



Randall Walker

John Weiss

Bob Nelson

Coffeehouse Concert at the Crown Hill Bistro, Sept. 11, 2008. To see videos from this concert click on a name above or visit the web site <http://pnwfolklore.org>.

**WELCOME** to the first issue of the Pacific Northwest Folklore Society's NW HOOT (as in hootenanny). We plan to publish this newsletter every other month. We will announce upcoming events and include articles on folk music, folklore and the traditional music scene in the Pacific Northwest. A web edition of this newsletter is available on the web site, [pnwfolklore.org](http://pnwfolklore.org)

## NEW VENUE FOR COFFEEHOUSE CONCERTS

The 2nd Friday Coffeehouse Concerts have a new venue for October and November at the [Wayward Coffeehouse](#), 8570 Greenwood Ave N, Seattle. If this venue proves satisfactory it may be continued on a monthly basis. Mick Knight and Ovrille Murphy will be featured on October 10; Paul Michel and Sally Rose will play on November 14 (see [Events Calendar](#)).

## LIVE LOCAL MUSIC IN SEATTLE Where have all the audiences gone?

*Where have all the audiences gone? / Long time passing, / Where have all the audiences gone? / Long time ago. / Where have all the audiences gone? / Gone as relics, every one. / When will they soon return? / Oh when will they soon return?* (Frank Hamilton)

The most trying moments for a concert producer are those between the sound check and the performance. When will the audience come? Will they outnumber the performers? Or for the performers. Will we make any money for this gig? Or will it be just another rehearsal?

Our musicians want more venues in which to perform. We have more venues now, but the audiences (continued on page 2)

*The Pacific Northwest Folklore Society was founded by Walt Robertson and friends in 1953 in the University District of Seattle. The Society is devoted to the understanding and development of the folklore of this area. Collection, study, preservation, publication, and performance are all aspects of the Society's activities. The people of the Pacific Northwest are heir to a rich heritage of legend, song, dance, and other forms of lore. This study greatly aids the understanding not only of ourselves, but of our forebears and the land from which they sprang.*

*PNWFS Directors*

*Stewart Hendrickson, Bob Nelson*

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*This Newsletter is published bimonthly by the Pacific Northwest Folklore Society (PNWFS). Article submissions to our newsletter may be made by sending a MSWord document attached to an email to [pnwfolklore@comcast.net](mailto:pnwfolklore@comcast.net). Submissions for the December 2008-January 2009 issue are due by November 15.*

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(continued from page 1) have not kept up and rather seem to have declined.

I think communities are the key to providing audiences. These can be neighborhood communities or communities of people with similar interests.

We need to develop a community in the Pacific Northwest Folklore Society of people interested in traditional music, particularly of the Northwest. We hope you can support our concerts and spread the word among your friends.

In order to increase awareness of local live music in Seattle we will cooperate with other groups such as the **Haller Lake Arts Council**, the **Seattle Folklore Society**, **Victory Music**, and **Northwest Seaport**, and share information at our concerts, on or web pages and in our newsletters.

*Stewart Hendrickson*



## Hootenannies in Seattle

Hootenanny was a term you used if you couldn't think of the right word, like thingamabob, gizmo or whatchamacallit. Its use to describe a folk music jam originated in Seattle.

Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie came to Seattle in 1941. In *The Incomplete Folksinger* (Seeger, Pete; *The Incomplete Folksinger*; Edited by Jo Metcalf Schwartz; University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1992; p. 327) Pete tells how he encountered his first hootenanny:

"In the summer of 1941 Woody Guthrie and myself, calling ourselves the Almanac Singers, toured Seattle, Washington and met some of the good people of the Washington Commonwealth Federation, the New Deal political club headed by Hugh DeLacy. They arranged for us to sing for trade unions in the Puget Sound area, and then proudly invited us to their next hootenanny. It was the first time we had heard the term. It seems they had a vote to decide what they would call their monthly fund-raising parties. Hootenanny won out by a nose over 'wingding'."

"The Seattle hootenannies were real community affairs. One family would bring a whole pot of some dish like crab gumbo. Others would bring cakes, salads. A drama group performed topical skits, a good 16-mm film might be shown, and there would be dancing, swing and folk, for those of sound limb. And, of course, there would be singing."

Pete then took the term back to New York. "Woody and I returned to New York, where we rejoined the other Almanac Singers, and lived in a big house, pooling all our income. We ran Saturday afternoon rent parties, and without a second's thought started calling them hootenannies, after the example of our west-coast friends. Seventy-five to one hundred Gothamites would pay 35 cents each to listen to an afternoon of varied folk songs, topical songs, and union songs, not only from the Almanacs but from Huddie Ledbetter, Josh White, the Mechau family, and many many others--including members of the audience."

Hoots became a staple of the Pacific Northwest Folklore Society in the early '50s. Don Firth describes them: "Most of the hoots I attended in the Fifties and Sixties were held in somebody's private home, but they were basically open—come one, come all, sing or just listen. Solo singing, group songs, whatever the people who came wanted to do. Some of them were held in halls of one sort or another and were more like informal, free-for-all concerts. They were mostly unstructured, with no formal program."

Later in the '60s the term hootenanny was used for commercial performances. Don Firth recalls, "In summer of 1963, a Los Angeles promoter came to Seattle, recruited a bunch of local folksingers, and started 'The Seattle Center Hootenanny' series modeled after 'ABC Hootenanny.' The whole idea was to promote the new Seattle Center and draw people in. They were held every Wednesday evening throughout the summer, ran for about two hours, drew huge audiences, and some of them were televised. I sang in many of these, as did most of Seattle's folksingers."

Despite the commercialization of hootenannies into staged productions, some original-type hoots still take place around Seattle. These are usually informal gatherings in private homes. There is no structure or planning involved. People just get together with musical instruments, food and drinks.

After a while someone starts a song, others may join in if they know the words or back up the singer with instruments if that seems appropriate, or just listen. Someone else may follow with a song on a similar theme. There is no order as to who follows who, it is just random. A good host will try to prevent one person from dominating and encourage everyone to participate. Some interesting threads develop as someone may say, "that reminds me of another song."

It's not always just songs, but instrumentalists may play tunes. Sometimes someone may sing unaccompanied while others just listen. Conversation may also take place, stories may be told and humor exchanged (what the Irish call craic). Not all the participants are musicians, some may be there just to listen. But the essence of a hoot is community and spontaneity.

*Stewart Hendrickson*





## UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR

**Saturday, October 4th, 2008, 7:30 pm. Seattle Folklore Society Presents GORDON BOK AND CAROL ROH.** Folksinger Gordon Bok, the “poet laureate of those who go down to the sea in ships” according to Time Magazine, returns to Seattle to present this Seattle Folklore Society concert. He will be joined by his wife, Carol Rohl. Gordon comes from Camden, Maine where he grew up and learned many of the songs and stories of the people he worked with. Phinney Neighborhood Center. 7:30PM, \$18, \$3 off for SFS & PNA members and seniors, kids half price. Info: 528-8523, seafolklore.org, or phinneycenter.org. See seafolklore.org for ticket locations.

**Friday, October 10th, 2008, 8 pm. Pacific Northwest Folklore Society Coffeehouse Concert. MICK KNIGHT & ORVILLE MURPHY.** Mick Knight has played guitar and sung the blues for over twenty years on three continents. His recent appearances in the Pacific Northwest have brought audiences a wealth of country blues and ragtime songs rarely performed. Orville Murphy was born and raised in Kentucky in a family where everyone played an instrument or sang. He learned to tell stories from Uncle Jim and how to play the harmonica from his Grandma (Gospels and Hymns) and, when Grandma wasn't listening, his Aunt Virginia (Blues). Free, 8-10 pm, The Wayward Coffeehouse, 8570 Greenwood Ave N, Seattle.

**Saturday, October 11th, 2008, 7 pm. Haller Lake Arts Council Presents THE RIGHTEOUS MOTHERS.** The Righteous Mothers are four funny, philosophical female folk-rock musicians who have been one of the Northwest's foremost musical performing groups for the past 26 years. They whip their audience into a frenzy with zany original music, witty theatrics, and mind-boggling, intricate vocal harmonies. The Righteous Mothers grab hearts and funny bones with songs about ice cream, labor pains, annoying dreams and Supreme Court decisions. They surprise and delight young and old, gay and straight, male and female with their quirky humor and open hearts. Haller Lake Community Club, 12579 Densmore Ave N, Seattle. General Admission: \$12, \$2 off for HLCC members, 12 & under half price. For Ticket Reservations call: 206-367-0475 or email: hend@stolaf.edu

**Saturday, October 11th, 2008, 7:30 pm. Seattle Folklore Society Presents BILL STAINES.** For over thirty years, Bill Staines has traveled back and forth across North America, delighting audiences at festivals, colleges, concerts, and coffeehouses. Some of his better known songs include A Place in the Choir, River, Roseville Fair, and Sweet Wyoming Home. His songs are slices of Americana, ranging from stories of prairie people of the Midwest to the seekers of Yukon gold. Bill weaves a magical blend of wit and gentle humor into his performances and he delights in having the audience sing along. Opening the show will be the Cutters, a.k.a. “The Northwest's Favorite Family Band”. Phillip, Teresa, Arwen and

Tyler Morgan blend traditional and contemporary folk songs in Celtic, American, and Maritime styles. Their vocal harmonies are stunning, and are backed by guitar, banjo, fiddle, bass, bodhran, and Irish whistles. Phinney Neighborhood Center. 7:30PM, \$18, \$3 off for SFS & PNA members and seniors, kids half price. Info: 528-8523, seafolklore.org, or phinneycenter.org. See seafolklore.org for ticket locations.

**Saturday, October 18th, 2008, 8 pm. Northwest Seaport Maritime Concert. HOLDSTOCK & MacLEOD.** Dick Holdstock and Allan MacLeod sing sea songs and chanteys. Center for Wooden Boats, 1010 Valley St. in Seattle's new Lake Union Park.

**Sunday, October 19th, 2008, 4pm. Pacific Northwest Folklore Society House Concert. HOLDSTOCK & MacLEOD.** Dick Holdstock and Allan MacLeod sing traditional folk songs of the British Isles. They have performed together for over 20 years. “Their songs are filled with the richness of their English and Scottish roots.” House concert in NW Seattle (Broadview). Concert at 4 pm followed by an optional potluck dinner and a jam (bring instruments). Suggested donation \$10. For information, reservations & directions call 206-367-0475 or email hend@stolaf.edu

**Saturday, November 8th, 2008, 7 pm. Haller Lake Arts Council Presents TANIA OPLAND & MIKE FREEMAN.** Hamered dulcimer, guitar, violin, cittern, Native American flute, percussion... with songs in many languages and rhythmic roots from Siberia to Morocco. This Anglo-Alaskan duo have been on the road together since May '95 in a unique collaboration which combines their distinctly separate musical backgrounds, bringing their exuberant music and wild tales to audiences around the world. Haller Lake Community Club, 12579 Densmore Ave N, Seattle. General Admission: \$12, \$2 off for HLCC members, 12 & under half price. For Ticket Reservations call: 206-367-0475 or email: hend@stolaf.edu

**Friday, November 14th, 2008, 8 pm. Pacific Northwest Folklore Society Coffeehouse Concert. PAUL MICHEL & SALLY ROSE.** Paul Michel grew up in Ohio, where he learned to play fiddle, mandolin and guitar from local players, old 78s and tradition “revivalist” players in the 1960s and 70s. He moved to Seattle in 1981, and has played off and on in old-time, bluegrass, Irish and Balkan bands for the past quarter century. Sally Rose grew up in Yakima, WA. She has been singing since childhood. She plays mostly guitar and sometimes banjo. A longtime Seattle resident, she has recently relocated to the pastoral paradise of Snoqualmie, WA, where she sits on her porch and sings for her husband Warren, her fiddling daughter Tori and her guitar playing son Shawn. Free, 8-10 pm, The Wayward Coffeehouse, 8570 Greenwood Ave N, Seattle.

## FROM THE DIRECTORS

The Pacific Northwest Folklore Society was founded in 1953 by Walt Robertson, Don Firth and others in the University District of Seattle to preserve and promote the traditional folk music and folklore of the Pacific Northwest. Bob Nelson was an early member of the Society. The Society has been inactive for many years, but we think there is a need for this Society so we revived it.

We welcome your suggestions, contributions, and volunteer help in producing this newsletter, maintaining the web site, producing house concerts, coffeehouse concerts and other activities. Just indicate your interest and willingness to become involved (email [pnwfolklore@comcast.net](mailto:pnwfolklore@comcast.net)). We would appreciate articles, photos, audio/visual files to put on our website, ideas about concerts or other activities, or just general expressions of support. And in return, we would like to provide a forum where the traditional music and folklore of the Pacific Northwest can be presented and where local folk musicians can participate.

*Stewart Hendrickson*



With this first issue of the NW HOOT we are expanding our efforts toward the promotion of the folklore of our region. In future issues, we look forward to many articles, from many sources, relating to our Pacific Northwest folklore. Send us your tales and songs - we welcome your contributions.

*Bob Nelson*



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Pacific Northwest Folklore Society  
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*the NW HOOT*

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