



Pacific
Northwest

FOLKLORE SOCIETY

"in the tradition"

Since 1953

the NW HOOT

pnwfolklore.org

June/July, 2009

Vol. 1, No. 5

WELCOME to the Pacific Northwest Folklore Society's NW HOOT (as in hootenanny). Every two months we will announce upcoming events and include articles on folk music, folklore and the traditional music scene in the Pacific Northwest. An online version of this newsletter is available at pnwfolklore.org/nwhoot.



Bill Rose, Doug Reymore, and Jim Portillo at the Everett Public Library, April 19th.

The Winter Concert Series at the Everett Public Library concluded on April 19th with a concert by a trio of folk singers - Bill, Doug and Jim. Rather than doing individual sets, they backed each other up on their favorite songs. Their voices blended beautifully, backed up by an autoharp and two guitars. You can listen to the complete audio recording of the concert and watch several videos on the PNWFS web page - pnwfolklore.org/BillDougJimVideos.html.

The Winter Concert Series also included Jerry Middaugh and Orville Murphy on February 15, and Morgan & Graves with Mary Grider and Ken Colfield (pnwfolklore.org/BobLynnMaryKenVideos.html) on March 15. We thank the Everett Library for sponsoring this series and letting us use their "acoustically perfect" auditorium. We hope to continue this series in the future.

Seattle Coffeehouses during the "Folk Revival" of the 1960s by Don Firth

According to legend, coffee was discovered in Ethiopia in the ninth century, first roasted, ground, and brewed by the Turks, then brought to Europe by Venetian traders. Coffee quickly spread throughout Europe and the first coffeehouse in England opened around 1650. Coffeehouses became known as "penny universities" because one could get a fairly good education sitting with a cup of coffee (a penny a cup) and listening to learned men as they discussed matters of great import. Not many years later, coffeehouses opened in Boston and Philadelphia, and were frequented by artists, poets, philosophers, and revolutionaries—like Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine.

I'm not sure when coffeehouses and folk music became associated. But by the mid-1950s at the latest, many coffeehouses in Greenwich Village, Boston, and Berkeley offered entertainment, often in the form of a resident folk singer.

(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 sprung.

PNWFS Directors

Stewart Hendrickson, Bob Nelson

Newsletter Editor: Stewart Hendrickson

Email: pnwfolk@pnwfolklore.org

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 pnwfolk@pnwfolklore.org.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

New Online NW HOOT page 2

Archiving Folk Music page 3

Tribute to Stan James page 4

Upcoming Events - page 5

Support the PNWFS - page 6



Canote Brothers at Wayward Coffeehouse, May 8

(Seattle Coffeehouses, continued from page 1)

The first coffeehouse in Seattle opened in summer of 1958. Rusty Thomas, a New Yorker, had come to Seattle to open an antique shop and discovered that, although there were plenty of coffee shops (not the same thing), Seattle was bereft of coffeehouses. Seeing an opportunity, he opened the *Café Encore* on upper University Way. Within a few weeks, local folk singers began dropping in. Rusty didn't pay, but he let the singers sing for tips.

Seattle's second coffeehouse was opened by Bob Clark in spring of 1959 next door to the Guild 45th theater. He also owned the theater, hence the name, *The Place Next Door*. He quickly realized that having a folk singer-in-residence on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings would greatly enhance his business. The *Place Next Door* was, perhaps, the nicest coffeehouse in Seattle, a bit on the "artsy" side, with paintings by local artists on display. The singers sang in sets, with breaks between, much like a night club. Clark paid the singers, and some of Seattle's best folk singers performed there regularly.

In 1960, Walt Wilcox, a retired policeman, opened a coffeehouse on Westlake Avenue, on the end of a dock among the yacht brokers on Lake Union. He decorated the walls with bullfight posters and dubbed the place *The El Matador* (redundant?). He intended to hire a flamenco guitarist to entertain. A flaw in the plan was that, at the time, there were no flamenco guitarists in Seattle. So he had to modify his plans and hire folk singers.

Next came *Pamir House*, named to evoke images of wayside inns along the Silk Road where it winds through the Pamir Mountains in eastern Tajikistan and Afghanistan—the "Hindu Kush." Located on lower University Way, John Timmons intended it to be an Indian restaurant. But a distressing lack of clientele prompted him to convert it to a coffeehouse.

It was small; nevertheless, Timmons often had two, three, or more singers on Friday and Saturday evenings, swapping songs and doing impromptu duets and ensembles. It was like a private song fest and the audiences liked the informality. Many of Seattle's better singers sang there at one time or another also. John Timmons paid the singers regularly and promptly.

Lee Capilli and local artist Val Laigo opened *The Door* in downtown Seattle, around the corner from the *Music Hall Theater*. Occasionally they hired a folk singer for a weekday evening, and on one weekend, Friday and Saturday, in 1961 they hosted a pair of concerts featuring a mix of folk singers from Seattle and Vancouver, B. C. But the main entertainment at *The Door* on Friday and Saturday evenings was jazz.

Toward the end of the Seattle World's Fair in 1962, Bob Clark turned his efforts to opening another art and foreign film theater in downtown Seattle and sold *The Place Next Door* to folk singer Stan James. Stan, interested in Australian songs and folklore, redecorated and changed the name to *The Corroboree*, which is a ceremony in which Australian Aborigines interact with the "Dreamtime" through singing and dancing. Stan had regular singers on Friday and Saturday evenings, and he instituted an open mike on Sunday evenings.

Avid mountain climber Eric Bjornstad opened a small coffeehouse a block north of *Pamir House* to provide

a hang-out for other mountain climbing enthusiasts. He named it *The Eigerwand*, after a mountain in the Swiss Alps that he had ambitions of climbing. Soon, of course, someone came in carrying a guitar case and asked if he was planning on having entertainment. His answer was an emphatic "No!" Wise move, because the Eiger was little more than a hole-in-the-wall, and with a dozen or so customers in place, there was little room to swing a guitar. Most coffeehouses were open only in the evenings, but the Eiger was open during afternoons as well. This tended to draw hordes of chess players, which is not quite what Eric had in mind either.

Shortly thereafter, he opened another coffeehouse, *The Queequeg*, named after the tattooed harpooner in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. It was on the Ave across from, and a bit north of, Pamir House. Whereas entertainment seemed to have been an afterthought in the *Café Encore*, the *Place Next Door*, and *Pamir House*, the *Queequeg* was set up from the start with entertainment in mind. Large, at least as large as the *Place Next Door*, it had a sizeable stage, not just a riser. All of the seats along the rows of marble-top tables faced the stage. The *Queequeg* also featured some of the best folk singers in the area, plus occasional visitors from out of town, such as Rolf Cahn.

In the mid-1960s, things began to change. Since folk music had been caught up in the fickle ebb and flow of popular music tastes, it was replaced in the mid 1960s by the "The British Invasion" led by The Beatles. Audiences dwindled, and the coffeehouses as venues for folk singers began to close one by one.

Other coffeehouses did open in the area, such as *The End* on lower Brooklyn Ave, and *The Llahngaethyn* on Eastlake just south of the University Bridge, but *The End* didn't have entertainment at all, and *The Llahngaethyn* featured jazz.

It was great while it lasted!

This did not end folk music in Seattle by any means. Many people had become attracted to folk music and that interest didn't fade with changes in popular music tastes. It was at about this time that the Seattle Folklore Society came into existence and a few years later, in 1972, the Northwest Regional Folklife Festivals began.

Don Firth is one of the founding members of the Pacific NW Folklore Society. His interest in folk music began with the folk music revival in Seattle in the early 1950s.

New Online E-zine, NW HOOT

The NW HOOT will now appear as an online e-zine (electronic magazine) at pnwfolklore.org/nwhoot. This format is easier to read online and includes interactive links and embedded videos and audio tracks.

If you are on our email list you will receive an email announcing each new issue. It will include the new feature articles (and an archive of past articles), a continuously updated Events page, videos, photos, and more.

The e-zine will replace this pdf/print newsletter. We are also on MySpace, <http://www.myspace.com/pnwfolkloresociety>, with photos, featured songs on a jukebox, and videos of recent concerts.

ARCHIVING FOLK MUSIC By Stewart Hendrickson

Anyone who's been involved in folk music for many years has probably accumulated a lot of recordings in many different formats. Back in the pre-digital age we had reel-to-reel tapes, cassette tapes, vinyl 78s and LPs. And before tape recordings there were wire recordings (spools of magnetic wire). I have seen them all and collected many.

Listening to these today requires special equipment not readily available – tape recorders of various types and turntables of various speed. The first step is to convert these to a digital format. The next problem is to sort out the gems from the trivia, and finally, to catalog and archive them for posterity, or at least for the next few generations.

Bob Nelson has been around folk music for over 50 years, and as an inveterate collector he has amassed a treasure trove of recorded material. I'll let him tell you about his collecting and the beginning of his project to archive this material.

"I was thirteen when I heard my first folksong. It came to me by way of a man who had a profound impact in my life, Bill Higley, aka "WilliWaw Willy." He was a radio personality from the earliest days of radio when he was the radio partner of Harry K. McClintok, aka "Haywire Mac." Bill married a family friend, moved to Seattle, and became an early morning DJ on KJR radio. He used to drag me to the station before dawn where we'd unlock the door, warm up the radio tubes, and start broadcasting. By the time I was 14, I was reading hourly weather reports on air... completely against the law but the FCC was loose in those days. All this was pretty heady stuff for a young kid."

"Bill and Verna Higley also took me into their home and became my surrogate parents. Bill drilled me, hour after hour, on the basics of diction, elocution and song presentation. It was during these early years that I also became adept at recording, first with a wire recorder, then a tape recorder. While still in high school I bought an 80-pound WebCore tape recorder and started dragging it with me wherever I went... my back still hurts. I started building a collection of recordings of sessions where other singers would teach me a song or two. I also recorded hoots, jam sessions, parties, you name it."

"Now that I am safely retired, I am able to take a step back and look at what I have amassed. I've begun a twenty year dream... archiving all these hundreds of recordings. I have over 300 reel-to-reel tapes and over 400 cassette recordings. As word of my project has spread, people are contacting me and offering their tapes for posterity. As I start to dig into this material, I realize just what a treasure I own. Most of the people on these tapes have passed on... that is quite humbling. And yes, I've shed a tear or two as I hear those treasured voices again."

Bob has just begun to send me digital copies of some of these recordings. So far it is only the tip of the iceberg, but it is quite interesting. I have edited a couple of these and put them up on the Pacific Northwest Folklore Society's web site (pnwfolklore.org).

In 1959 KCTS-TV in Seattle produced a series of six programs entitled Ballads and Books. Five of these programs were recorded in the studio by Bob Nelson. The fifth program (Jan. 20, 1959) is particularly interesting as it features **James Stevens**, **Ivar Haglund**, and local folk singers John Ashford, Patti McLaughlin and Don Firth. Now after 50 years we can again hear Jim and Ivar talk about the folklore and folk music of the Pacific Northwest and hear some of the songs.



James Stevens



Ivar Haglund

The show's host, Buzz Anderson, begins with a short introduction to local folk songs. Patti McLaughlin and Don Firth then sing Woody Guthrie's Northwest classic, Roll On Columbia. And John Ashford sings a Pacific Northwest variant of Little Old Sod Shanty On My Claim, known as Little Old Log Cabin On My Claim. The words may have originated with his father, Paul Ashford, perhaps in collaboration with his friend Ivar Haglund.

Buzz Anderson then introduces Jim Stevens and Ivan Haglund. Jim Stevens was a popular Northwest writer who introduced the American public to the tales of Paul Bunyan. He also wrote lyrics to many songs of the Northwest, including The Frozen Logger. Jim worked as a logger in Canada during his youth, and was active in promoting the logging industry in Washington State. One of his projects was the "Keep Washington Green Campaign." He talks about the songs he wrote with Ivar Haglund for this project, and Ivar sings short portions of some of the songs.

Ivar then sings his favorite Northwest song The Old Settler, written by Judge Francis Henry of Pierce County, Washington, around 1874. Ivar used the words "Acres of Clams" from this song as the name of his seafood restaurant in Seattle. Ivar was a colorful raconteur, folk singer, and restaurateur in Seattle.

Jim Stevens then talks about some of the books he had written about the Northwest. And Don Firth sings Jim's iconic Northwest song, The Frozen Logger.

Patti McLaughlin and Don Firth conclude the program by singing an old folksong Life Is A Toil, which speaks about the hardships of life for women on the frontier.

You can hear portions of this program on the [Pacific Northwest Folklore Society web page](http://pnwfolklore.org).

The term **hootenanny** was first used in Seattle for folk music get-togethers or jams. This was picked up by Pete Seeger during a visit to Seattle around 1940 and he carried it back to New York. It soon became a familiar term in the folk music scene.

Hoots were 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."

(continued on page 4)

(Archiving, continued from page 3)

The final program in the Ballads and Books series of KCTS-TV in 1959 was a live hoot put on by local folksingers Don Firth, Patti McLaughlin, Nancy Hubbard, Bob Nelson, Helen Stark, Mike Reedy, Don Clarke, Ron Ginther, and Sally and John Ashford. It is particularly interesting to hear the kind of folk songs that were sung back then. Several of these people are still singing in the Seattle area, and it is a thrill to hear how they sounded 50 years ago. You can listen to this program in its entirety on the [Pacific Northwest Folklore Society web page](#).

These recordings are like time capsules from 50 years ago. Listening to these is like being transported to an earlier time and hearing how your friends sounded back then, or becoming acquainted with people you've only heard about, but have since passed on. That's all quite fantastic. I can't wait to hear more. Hurry up Bob!

Reprinted from the Victory Review, May 2009 (vol. 34, no. 05)

TRIBUTE TO STAN JAMES (1934-2008) AT NORTHWEST FOLKLIFE - SUNDAY, MAY 24

As part of the "Tribute To Silent Voices" on Sunday, May 24th (1-3 pm in the Cafe Impromptu), Stewart Hendrickson and friends will present a tribute concert to Stan James from 1-2:30 pm. Paul Dorpat will serve as the MC with performances by Stewart, Nancy Quense, Al Hirsch, Chris Roe, Mariide, Percy Hilo, Alice Stuart, Paul Gillingham and Steve Lalor.

Stan James, a Seattle folksinger from the early 1950s passed away at his cabin near Granite Falls. One of the mainstays of folk music in this area, he was one of a group of young folk-singers who sang at the UN Pavilion during the 1962 Seattle World's Fair. In 1962 he bought "The Place Next Door," a coffeehouse in the Wallingford District, redecorated it and re-named it "The Corroborree." It was one of the best coffeehouse folk venues in Seattle at that time.

Stan, a ship builder, was involved in some of the early restoration of the Wawona, and lead many chantey sings at the NW Seaport on South Lake Union. He was the second president of the Seattle Folklore Society, and was active in the Seattle Song Circle. He will indeed be sorely missed!
Stewart Hendrickson

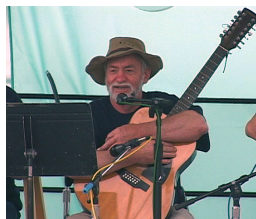


UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, May 24th, 1:00-2:30 pm.

Northwest Folklife Festival. STAN JAMES TRIBUTE CONCERT, Stewart Hendrickson & Friends. A Tribute Concert for Stan James (1935-2008). MC: Paul Dorpat.

Performers: Stewart Hendrickson, Nancy Quense, Al Hirsch, Chris Roe, Mariide, Percy Hilo, Alice Stuart, Paul Gillingham, and Steve Lalor. In the Cafe Impromptu from 1-2:30 pm.



Friday, June 12th, 2009, 8-10 pm. Pacific Northwest Folklore Society Coffeehouse Concert. GINNY REILLY.

Half of the well-known Reilly & Maloney duo, Ginny has one of the sweetest voices in folk music. She sings some delightful original songs as well as traditional ballads. Come and hear her in a unique solo concert appearance. Free, donations welcome, 8-10 pm, **The Wayward Coffeehouse**, 8570 Greenwood Ave N, Seattle.



Saturday, Sunday, July 4th,

5th, 10 am – 6 pm. LAKE UNION WOODEN BOAT FESTIVAL.

South Lake Union, Seattle. The theme is heritage wooden boats. The ambiance is that of an old-fashioned, down-home waterfront festival where everything is fun, almost everything is free and nothing much is fancy. It's as authentically grassroots American as you can get and has been for the last 32 years. Features a maritime music stage both days. Suggested Donation: \$5/person; \$10/family. cwb.org/2009-wooden-boat-festival



Friday, July 10th, 8-10 pm. Pacific Northwest Folklore Society Coffeehouse Concert. MARTIN NOLAN, Irish Piper.

Martin Nolan is a highly respected and accomplished musician and composer who has been playing uilleann pipes for almost thirty years. Part of the Irish traditional scene, Martin plays in a Dublin-based band, Khanda. His piping is strongly influenced by the 'travelling style' of piping, which employs legato and staccato techniques, elements which are heard to great effect in his playing. Free, donations welcome, 8-10 pm, **The Wayward Coffeehouse**, 8570 Greenwood Ave N, Seattle. martinnolan.com/



Saturday, July 18th, Mukilteo Waterfront Art Festival Call for Artists, Artisans, Musicians, and Writers!

Waterfront Art Festival on the Mukilteo waterfront in Historical Old Town Mukilteo. Showcase and sell your original works of art, music, and books in this highly publicized event. Deadline for very reasonable booth fees and applications -May 15, 2009. For details, information, and application forms contact

- Christine Awad Schmalz, theartworkshop7@aol.com or 425-423-0450 and Debby McGehee, debbymcgehee@comcast.net or 425-501-5922. The Waterfront Art Festival is presented by the Mukilteo Arts Guild and co-sponsored by the City of Mukilteo. Proceeds from the festival go to the Mukilteo Arts Guild- Student Scholarship Fund, scholarships for graduating high school seniors pursuing a higher education in art.

Thursday-Sunday, July 23-26. FOLK MUSIC WORKSHOP AND FESTIVAL! WILLAMETTE VALLEY AUTOHARP GATHERING.

Three days (and nights!) of autoharp workshops and acoustic jam sessions. Instructors are Mike Fenton, JoAnn Smith, Charles Whitmer, and the Gustafson-Zook family. Staff concerts are open to the public. Lodging and meals available. Western Mennonite School (Folk Music Workshop and Festival! Willamette Valley Autoharp Gathering.), 9045 Wallace Road NW, Salem, OR. 3 days, for cost and registration see www.wvag.com. Info: rzbarber@yahoo.com, 660-9434, wvag.com.

Friday, August 14th, 8-10 pm. Pacific Northwest Folklore Society Coffeehouse Concert. ELIZA JANE MANOFF & KIM RUEHL.

Eliza Jane, from Everett, WA, and Kim, from Seattle, sing original songs in the folk tradition. Free, donations welcome, 8-10 pm, **The Wayward Coffeehouse**, 8570 Greenwood Ave N, Seattle.



Saturday, August 15th, THE PORT GAMBLE MARITIME MUSIC FESTIVAL Port Gamble, WA.

Imagine sitting in a natural amphitheater overlooking picturesque Gamble Bay on a warm August afternoon in the Pacific Northwest and looking out where once the oldest operating sawmill in the United States processed and shipped lumber all over the west coast. Steeped in history, Port Gamble is the perfect place to have one of the west's few maritime music festivals. Now in our fourth year, we've played host to the cream of the northwest maritime music community and continue to have much fun doing it! Info: portgamblemaritimemusic.com



Friday, August 21st - Sunday, August 23rd, 2009. Princeton Traditional Music Society (Canada) Presents The PRINCETON TRADITIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL.

Will start with a big public dance at sunset on Friday, followed by two days of concerts, jams, workshops and presentations from 10 am to 6 pm both days. Free and supported by the town of Princeton, B.C. and the Regional District, as well as (hopefully) Heritage Canada. Email princetonfestival@telus.net



Support the Pacific Northwest Folklore Society

The PNWFS requires little money to operate, yet there are a few expenses that need to be covered, such as printing this newsletter, preparing posters and flyers, and maintaining the web site. We would appreciate your donations. Complete the following form and mail it with a check to PNW Folklore Society, 11720 1st Ave NW, Seattle, WA 98177.

Name:

Address (street, city, state, zip):

Email:

Amount of donation (check payable to Pacific Northwest Folklore Society):

For donations of \$10 or more, would you like to receive the newsletter by regular mail?

Mail to PNW Folklore Society, 11720 1st Ave NW, Seattle, WA 98177

Mike & Val James at the Wayward
Coffeehouse, April 10th 2009



SONGS OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Songs of the Pacific Northwest



**Donate \$20 or more
and receive this
complimentary CD**

This collection of songs grew out of a workshop at Rainy Camp, a weekend singing retreat of the Seattle Song Circle at Camp Don Bosco in Carnation, WA, Feb. 2005. Most of the songs were recorded live in the camp chapel, others were recorded or taken from previous recordings as indicated. Some of these songs are traditional, others are newer songs written in the traditional style. Some have never been recorded before. They all represent a part of the ongoing folklore of the Pacific Northwest.



*Pacific
Northwest*

FOLKLORE SOCIETY

"in the tradition"

Since 1953

Pacific Northwest Folklore Society
11720 1st Ave NW
Seattle, WA 98177

the NW HOOT

pnwfolklore.org