

The Filking Times

April 1991

Issue 25

Filked in the U.S.A.

Or: We Built This Country By Filking Songs

by Nick Smith

One recent evening, I found myself looking through a book of the national anthems of the world (lyrics translated into English, fortunately for me). (Hey, I work in a library . . . it's part of my job to learn about reference books, so I flip through them sometimes . . . besides, my boss had already gone home.) While looking, I noticed some unusual things about our beloved national anthem, and it led me to some thoughts about the origins of filk. Bear with me.

One of the things I noticed was that the character of a nation's anthem *usually* reflected some interesting aspect of its national character. For example, Afghanistan's speaks of toughness and durability: ". . . So long as there is life in the world; / So long as a single Afghan breathes; / There will be this Afghanistan."

Andorra, a tiny nation on the French-Spanish border, has an anthem that *reeks* with history, voicing eleven centuries of freedom (along with their national thanks to Charlemagne--it's that kind of country).

Several nations, including England, Japan and Jordan, have simple good wishes for their ruler. In fact, a *lot* of countries with royal families have anthems that say, approximately, "God save the King and/or Queen". This may be due to royal sponsorship of anthem-writers, or some *really* good royal P.R. teams.

Denmark and Ireland, among others, sing of heroism against great odds, mirroring their heroic, martial pasts. Several, including Liechtenstein, sing of the beauty of the anthem's native land. "Lovely in summer time/On high Alpine pastures/Floats heavenly peace." **See National Filksong on Page 8.**

Westercon 44 Filking "Gimme That Old-Time Filking"

by Deborah Weiss

Since Westercon 44 is fast approaching, I thought it a good idea for *The Filking Times* to research filk programming at the con. Plus, Rick and I have been planning to attend Westercon 44 in Vancouver for the past year and thus I was doubly interested. Kay Shapero had mentioned on DAG BBS that she could relay messages to the con chair, Terry Fowler, through her BBS (Stormgate Aerie). I logged in on March 30, introduced myself and asked the usual filk info questions: Will there be filk programming? Is there someone in charge of filk programming? Do you know which filk dealers will be in the Huckster Room? Terry Fowler promptly responded back with the announcement that there wasn't anyone local pursuing this area of interest. However, she had asked Tam Gordy (a local musician) a year ago to head up this area, but the V-Con tradition has been rather spontaneous, more like a "60's happening, with nothing planned." And she further stated that without "some input from expert people like you, the filking at Westercon will be very casual."

Well, having read that, Kay Shapero called Rick and me to see what we three could advise as being minimally necessary for filking at a con. We then conferred with everyone else we could think of, like Eric Gerds, Lee Gold, Bob Laurent, Mary Kay Jackson, and Lady Colleen Savitzky, to see if anyone else was planning anything (they aren't). In the meantime, to get the ball rolling, we suggested to Terry that the con supply a largish room for evening filking, big enough to hold 60+ people, square in layout, with lots of electrical outlets for taping. This room should not be near any rock bands or other noisy activities nor, for that matter, near any quiet activities like sleeping fen, film or video rooms, etc. We also specified that this

room must be available for use till at least 5:00 or 6:00 AM.

We also suggested scheduling a total of three program/panel slots for anytime during the day during the con, thinking it shouldn't be too hard to create a filk panel or three, such as "Neo's Guide to Filking" or "All-Time Filk Favorites" or whatever. However, we all felt that trying to set up a complete filk concert at this late date would not be such a good idea. Kay also thought that a One-Shot-type Concert for Friday night would be fairly easy to run and which, if interest was minimal, could devolve into open filking.

Having suggested all this to Terry, she replied back that the Isabel McGuinness Room would be assigned for a filk concert on Friday night with smaller and more casual rooms for Thursday and Saturday nights. She stated that filking in general tended to be pretty relaxed and casual with lots of nooks and crannies available for impromptu filking.

At this point, Kay Shapero is looking for suggestions for filk panel topics and panelists. **Any filk performers planning on attending Westercon 44 and interested in participating in a panel, please contact Kay Shapero.** However, if she doesn't receive any feedback or if no interest is shown, there will be no official panels or programming. Get your suggestions to her as soon as possible so she can get confirmed panel timeslot(s) on the official programming list. You can reach her at 12536 Short Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90066, telephone: 213/827-3952; or via Stormgate Aerie BBS at 213/822-6729 (300/2400/9600 baud, n,8,1).

And watch this space -- *TFT* will be publishing updates from Kay and Terry as they are announced.

Conventions

BayCon '91, May 24-27, 1991. P.O. Box 70393, Sunnyvale, CA 94086. Telephone 408/629-4729. GoH: John Ford. Artist GoH: David Mattingly. Memberships: \$35 to 5-1-91, then \$45 by mail or at the door. At the door 1-day: \$25. Hotel: Red Lion Inn, San Jose, CA, 408/456-4000.

Concerto '91 CANCELED. Rich & Carol Kabakjian were unable to get the hotel contract signed, and decided to cancel rather than hold a second rate event. Info: Rich & Carol Kabakjian, 17 Lewis Ave. #3, East Lansdowne, PA 19050-2614.

Westercon 44, July 4-7, 1991 (V-CON 19). Info: WesterCon 44/V-Con 19, P.O. Box 48478, Bentall Station, Vancouver, B.C. V7X 1A2, CANADA.

Phone: (604) 433-8817 or (604) 420-3316. Hotel: Gage Residence & Student Union Bldg., University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. Memberships: \$40 until 5/31/91, then \$50 at the door.

Con-Chord 7, September 27-29, 1991. c/o DAG Productions, 1810 14th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90404; 213/546-4935. GoH: Michael Longcor (a.k.a. Moonwulf). Toastmaster: Juanita Coulson. Totally Tasteless Concert, Kazoo Awards. Memberships: Attending: \$20 thru July 10, 1991. Supporting: \$8. Hotel: The Holiday Inn (LAX), 9901 La Cienega Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90045, 213/649-5151. (At the corner of Century and La Cienega.) Room rates: \$59 Single, \$69 Double, \$79 Triple/Quad.

See Conventions on Page 7.

THE FILKING TIMES Editorial Policy

Rick Weiss, *Publisher* Deborah Weiss, *Contributing Editor*

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All items sent to us will be considered open for publication unless specifically requested otherwise. We reserve the right to refuse and/or to edit any item sent. All submissions must include your correct name and address - pen names will be used for publication on request.

ARTICLES, REVIEWS, COMMENTARIES, LETTERS:

We are looking for items on topics of general interest to filkers, such as local news, pre-Convention filk plans and guests, filk reviews, tips on songwriting, post-Convention reports, filk history, local filk customs, comments on previous articles, or whatever else you can think of. Remember, we are only the Editors - YOU write this 'zine!

CONTRIBUTION POLICY: Contributors of items which generate 3-4 column inches of text (3.75-inch width and 10-point type) in one issue will receive that issue free; subscribers will extended one issue.

RATES: \$7.50 for 12 issues via 1st class mail. Higher in Canada or overseas. Single copies are available for \$0.50 plus postage. Back issues are available as a set, inquire for current price. Send cash, check or money order payable to: Rick Weiss, 13261 Donegal Drive, Garden Grove, CA 92644-2304. We will also trade for other filkzines.

EVENT LISTINGS: We will publish information about upcoming filk events and conventions which feature filk artists or programming.

DISCLAIMER: The opinions expressed herein are those of the writers and are not necessarily those of the editors. Different viewpoints and responses on issues of interest are welcome.

SUBMISSIONS: Send your submissions to the above address in hardcopy OR 3.5" or 5.25" IBM low density format diskettes with ASCII files OR upload ASCII files to the DAG Electronic BBS (213/546-1861 at 300/2400 baud) via the Z: Upload to Sysop command. Direct modem transfer is also possible - call by voice telephone to arrange.

CLASSIFIEDS/ADVERTISING: Classifieds will be published on a space available basis. Subscribers: four free lines/issue. Additional lines and non-subscribers: \$0.15 per line. Other advertising-call or write for rate schedule.

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Filksings

Los Angeles Area

L.A.F.A.:

Apr 20: Brandyhall, 3965 Alla Rd., Los Angeles, CA. 213/306-7456. Lee & Barry gold, hosts.

May 18: R&D Laboratory, 13261 Donegal Dr., Garden Grove, CA. 714/530-3546. Rick & Deborah Weiss, hosts.

June 22: House of Perpetual Commotion, 3754 W. 170th St., Torrance, CA. 213/329-6772. John & Mary Creasey, hosts

For info/ mailing list, contact (until May 18) Rick Weiss, 714/530-3546. After May 18, contact John & Mary Creasey, 213-329-6772.

Hypo-allergenic Filksing:

May 11: Mike Liebmann, host. 13144-9 Bromont Ave, Sylmar. 818/362-1322.

San Diego Area

Usually held the first Saturday of each month at Barney Evans' house, 8150 Jefferson, Lemon Grove, CA 92045. Call Barney at 619/697-3844, Rilla Heslin at 619/469-4874 or Karen Rogers at 619/265-0069 for more info.

SF Bay Area

For general info/ mailing list, contact Bob Kanefsky, 415/324-2001, Kathy Mar, 415/226-8129, or Colleen Savitzky, 408/294-6492.

Phoenix, AZ

Contact Charles Coons at P.O. Box 14245, Phoenix AZ 85063-4245 or on the DAG BBS for more info.

To have a filksing listed in this column, call or write Rick Weiss.

Contributor's Copies

Because of a last minute mad-dash to get last month's issue in the mail, contributor's copies were not credited or noted on the mailing labels. Contributors to issue 24 will find their extra copy noted on this month's mailing label.

Filktape Review**Sound OVFF:****Music from Ohio Valley
Filk Fest 5 (1989)**

by George "Lan" Laskowski

Published in Lan's Lantern #35

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Ohio Valley Filk Fest is a convention devoted to filksinging. There are some panels on songwriting, guitar technique, performing, producing tapes, etc., and lots of singing and performing. There is a songwriting contest (on a theme announced the year before, and one-shot concerts (a person signs up to sing one song in a specific time-slot), and also a midnight brunch on Saturday night at which the Pegasus Awards are handed out in categories such as Best Filksong, Best Performer, Best Fannish Song, Best Literary Song, and Best Songwriter.

Wail Songs sets up microphones and recording equipment in the room, and (I think) leaves it running all weekend. This tape is a compilation of some of the best songs and/or performances of that weekend. Thus the quality varies somewhat, but you can understand most of the lyrics.

There are several excellent songs on this tape, and in looking at the credits, almost every one is original material—words, music, and often both. A newcomer to the filking community, whose first convention was this one, OVFF 5, is Folly Neuhaus, whose songs occupy the Honorable first position of both sides. Her soprano voice is clear on both "Peter Pan" and "Butterfly," both written by her. In the year she has been in fandom, Folly has become quite popular at filks. Another newcomer, Peter Grubbs, sounds a lot like Jimmy Buffet, but better I think. He too is represented by two songs, also written by himself: "Winter Fantasy" and "Sunshine."

There are humorous songs ("John Carter of Mars" by H.A. Roberts, "A Fannish Dilemma" by Naomi Pardue [written with Mary Jean Holmes] and "Con Dog Blues" [written with Stan Logan], and "Bloody Mary" by Renee Alper), literary songs ("Never Never See OVFF on Page 7.

New Releases From Wail Songs

by Deborah Weiss

From the Wail Songs 1991 Catalog

and a telephone conversation with Mary Kay Jackson

Newest Release

● "Again Congenial Filk": Live convention tape from Congenial with selections by Kathy Mar, Charles and Mary Ann de Lint, and James Freitag. To be released at Marcon 1991.

**New British tapes distributed by
Wail Songs:**

● "Windsinger": Studio tape by Pat Brown from VLB Recording.

● "Phil, Philked and Philched": Songs by Philip Allcock. (This tape was the subject of a fierce bidding war for the Flying Fan Fund at Consonance 1991.)

● "Lady in Veils": Studio tape by

Valerie Housden by VLB Recording. Most of the songs were inspired by particular works of fiction.

● "Laughter & Laments": Songs by Rhodri James. To be released at FilkOntario.

New in the Wail Songs Catalog

● "The Filk Rolls In": Recorded live at Consonance 1990.

● "Filk Under the Bridge": Also recorded live at Consonance 1990.

● "The Filker Strikes Back": Songs from Roberta Rogow.

● "Fossil Fever": Long awaited studio tape by (Dr.) Jane Robinson from Thor Records. Released at Consonance 1991.

● "Caterwauls": Recorded live at Noreascon 3 (Worldcon 1989), this tape features mostly the more upbeat or humorous songs from the convention.

● "Courtly Airs": This tape from Noreascon 3 has a fair number of songs from the British filkers in attendance. On the whole, the songs on this tape are a little more serious.

● "Face The Flame": Pete Grubbs writes and performs songs that border between mainstream and filk.

● "Hip Deep in Heroes": Discussed in *JFT* #22, this is a tape of Blake's 7 filksongs as done by members of the LA Filkharmonics and others.

● "Megalith": Celtic inspired rock & roll. With lyrics in all six Celtic languages, this tape was primarily inspired by Celtic mythology.

● "Tomorrow Morning": Studio tape by Orion's Belt, a trio from Florida, with their own songs and some written by others.

● "Sound OVFF": The longest Wail Songs tape at 70 minutes long, this tape contains much of the best music performed at OVFF in 1989. Reviewed by George Laskowski on the left.

● "Songs at the Ready": Suzette Haden Elgin's first filk tape has a fair amount of very good material and relatively simple arrangements—usually just one voice and one instrument.

**Musings From
Your Editor**

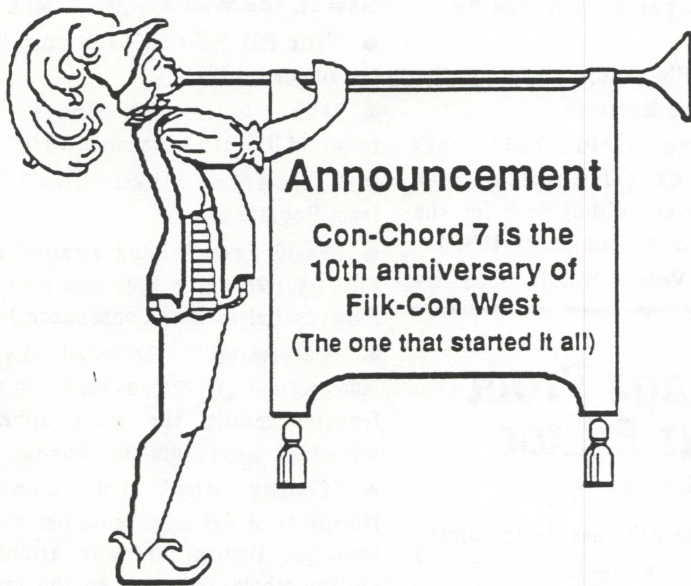
by Deborah Weiss

This past month has been pretty busy. I've been gleaning all sorts of filk-related material from anywhere I found it. Lan's Lantern from George Laskowski in Michigan had three tape and book reviews plus lots of interesting filk news, including Mary Ellen Wessels O'Cain's wedding. When I called him and left a message requesting permission to print his material, he called me back and we chatted for over an hour. What a fascinating man! He did mention that he would be reviewing fanzines in a future issue and that *JFT* would be included. Keep an eye out for his material; I'm sure you'll enjoy his reviews and commentary.

I finally logged onto Stormgate Aerie and the Filk Echo there. Been lots of fun watching the traffic; there's stuff from all over. Hopefully, over the next few issues, I'll include some of the more interesting and/or pertinent messages in a column. One of the funniest interchanges has been "Do you remember those old childhood camp songs?" and all the myriad variations in lyrics of those songs. I've been chatting with Joe Bethancourt in Arizona; he's been busy **See Editor on Page 7.**

CON-CHORD 7

SEPTEMBER 27-29, 1991



GUEST OF HONOR
MICHAEL LONGCOR (Moonwulf)

TOASTMASTER
JUANITA COULSON

HOTEL
HOLIDAY INN - LAX
At 9901 La Cienega Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA. 90045 (213) 649-5151
(The same place we were last year.)

CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

(In no particular order)

Concerts Both Saturday and Sunday • Performers' Circle • Music and Song workshops • Open Singing Room • The Totally Tasteless and Tacky Concert • Kazoo Awards • One-Shots (Where anyone can get up on stage and perform one song) • Dealers' room

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For more information write to:
CON-CHORD 7 • 1810 14th St. #100 - Santa Monica, Ca. 90404. (213) 546-4935.

The Filk Isn't Over

by Robert D. Coleman (aka TOLF - The OLdest Filker - at least in California)

As Mark Twain is reputed to have said, "Reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated." Well, actually, Deborah Leonard [now Weiss], in the October/November dual issue of *The Filking Times*, reported very accurately my close brush with Death and subsequent survival.

For those of you who do not know, I had an abdominal aneurysm of record size - "the kind usually found only on the autopsy table," according to my doctors. I had a 1:2 chance of survival with surgery, and none at all without it. It was successfully repaired, and at this point I have regained most of my strength and energy, and my sense of humor and creativity have returned.

When I wrote to *TFT* before my surgery, I did not mean to be mysterious. I had already contacted some LAFA filkers, and told them of my upcoming crisis. I mistakenly assumed that Rick and Deborah would have "heard it on the grapevine." Deborah noted that my letter sounded like a "final farewell." Indeed it was; my chances were slim, and I didn't know I would be coming back. I wrote to *TFT* at that time because I could not bear to approach that "Last Dark Door" without attempting to tell all of you how much I appreciate you and what you have meant to me. If I failed to do so then, I want to do so now.

I have framed and begun this article/letter a hundred times, without the strength, drive or courage to finish it. All versions have included a short "clinical" section - not because I am one who believes that everyone wants to hear about my operation, but because the statistics are somewhat spectacular.

Item: The aneurysm was a bubble where an artery should have been, four inches in diameter. I estimate it held nearly a quart of blood; I think the human body holds five. It has been replaced by five inches of woven nylon tubing, which "often outlasts the patient" - let us devoutly hope!

Item: It was awkwardly located. The incision is more than 18" long. Some people aren't 18" wide! And finally - when I woke, I counted eight wires and

four tubes attached to me. I think Frankenstein's monster had fewer!

Want to know just how dedicated a Filk/Folk singer can get? During one of the endless tests before the knife-work, I spent three long hours on a small, cold slab with eerie chemicals working their way through my veins. I was suffering some lung congestion. I asked the attending nurse if it would be OK to sing, to pass the time and clear my pipes. She said it was and would relax me, too. So I sang my best story-songs for three hours, lying on that table. Sure passed the time fast.

I am now somewhat legendary in the intensive care section of Cottage Hospital in Santa Barbara. When I woke up, I again had congested bronchia. As soon as they got the tube out my throat, I sang the "Locktender's Lament," my favorite mermaid song. I was glad to be alive! (Ask me - I'll sing it for you.) And, oh yes, I wrote a poem for a night nurse, when she learned I was a poet: "In the black midnight, a dark-eyed Susan Babbled of sunshine and daffodils."

You may not think of yourselves as a "support group," but in fact you are. You are a group of caring and concerned people, far finer than the human average. You care about and care for each other, and are a positive asset to "a weary world." I submit that it is difficult to be a musician or a musician-lover, and at the same time harbor the baser human emotions and modes of behaviour. (Well, there was Nero - but informed sources tell us he played hideously and couldn't carry a tune.)

Those who love Science Fiction and Fantasy are a minority of the population. Those who also love music are a still smaller minority. We must fight for our rights even within the SF community and are often ignored or abused by SF Con committees. Perhaps it is this that makes us a tighter knit, more cohesive, supportive community than is commonly found in SF circles. This is not to say, as we all know, that there are no quarrels - but in the long run, I think you all give more than you take.

Quicknews

☞ The LAFA flyer will not be included in *TFT* after issue #26. To continue to receive it, contact John & Mary Creasey at 3754 W. 170th St., Torrance, CA 90504-1204. *TFT* subscriptions will remain with *TFT* unless a conversion to the LAFA flyer is requested.

☞ Joe Bethancourt has been confirmed to do a noon concert at LepreCon (May 4-5, 1991) in Phoenix.

☞ Additions for The Filker's Directory: Valerie Housden, "Minas Istarion", 2 Duncan Gate, London Rd., Bromley, BRI 3SG, England. Telephone 081-290-6156.

Pat Brown, 83 Cavendish Road, Patchway, Bristol, B512 5HH, England. Telephone 0272-693453.

☞ From the DAG BBS: Mark Bernstein will be getting married in early June 1991.

☞ Kathy Mar was Filking Guest of Honor at Balticon 25 (March 29-31) and performed in an all night musical extravaganza on both Friday and Saturday nights. In PR#1 (as posted on Stormgate Aerie), according to the Filking Czar, Lindy Sears, Kathy was to be joined by other filk musicians such as Roberta Rogow, Duane Elms, Jack Carroll, Crystal Hagel, and maybe Joey Shoji.

☞ Filker and Marine Stephen Harmon is back from the Gulf War. He was re-united with his wife Charlene and two children (one a newborn son he had not seen yet) the first week of April. He is now expecting to be out-processed in the near future.

☞ Mary Kay Jackson and Jordin Kare have announced their engagement. Plans are in motion for a wedding in late 1991 or early 1992, but a date has not been decided on yet.

As far as I am concerned, I was looking for you all my life before I found you. I began learning folk music around 1935, 55 years ago. I became an SF nut in 1939, 51 years ago. My loyalty to both is well past the half-century mark. That there were people
See TOLF on Page 7.

Bards: Part I of IV

The Celtic Bardic Tradition

Excerpted and Annotated From
Locksley's E-Z Harp Method

by Joseph of Locksley, OL, Pel, &c.

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W. J. Bethancourt III

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[Although this article was written specifically for the SCA, it is of interest to modern S-F Filksinging, which has quite a few traditions in common with the SCA... Editor.]

In the SCA, in written Fantasy, in too many instances the word "bard" seems to be bandied about in a rather loose manner, being applied indiscriminately to true Bards, trouveres, troubadors, jongleurs, poets, playwrights, actors . . . in short, anyone who entertains.

I hope to clear up this misconception, though to hope that the usage of the word will be corrected may be a forlorn hope . . .

* * * * *

Bards are found in Celtic cultures (Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Manx and Brittany) and a rough equivalent can be found in Norse culture, too, where they were known as "scops."

There is no real equivalent to the Celtic Bard in Anglo-Saxon England, however (see Bards: Part IV, An Extra Note).

In Ireland and Scotland, the use of the word "Bard" apparently fell into some disrepute, as the records we have show that the Bard was simply a minor poet, while the "filidh" (seer) or the "ollave" (master poet) occupied the former status and functions of the Bard.

In Wales, the Bard was not so lucky. There, the traditions ossified, and the Bards, after the advent of Christianity, became Court Poets, known as "Gogynfeirdd," or "Prydydd," limited in subject matter and form, and with rigidly structured rules.

The word that corresponds with the Irish "filidh," in Welsh, would be "derwydd," (oak-seer) the word from which "druid" is derived.

The "hedge-Bards" were the ones that carried on the real traditions of the Bard. These are the people that gave us the "Cad Goddeu" and the "Hanes

Filk Tape Review

Audiophilikia

Escape from Mundania and Paradox by Barry and Sally Childs-Helton

Reviewed by Rod O'Riley

Both of these are somewhat older tapes at this point, and both have been reviewed in these pages before. But I bring them up now because they are both such good examples of how to do a lot of things right.

The first thing that strikes you when listening to a Childs-Helton tape is Barry's voice. That deep, rich baritone is a rarity in folk music, let alone filk, and it cries out "I'm going to sound tubby in the bass!" But it doesn't -- and that's the first good sign. The next thing one might notice about the voice is that it's rather "naked" in space, with very little reverb. That would normally be dangerously thin, but here it manages to keep Barry's voice right out in front and ringingly clear -- even on certain Paradox songs like "War of the Worlds" where the instrumental mix is intentionally a thick, jumbled mass. Finally, Barry has excellent control on his voice, even when he moves into ranges above his normal baritone. (Though on "Moose and Squirrel" (Paradox) he's pressing his luck!) If I have any complaint about the voice, it's only on certain songs like "Building Q" and "Light Sailor" (Paradox) where Barry is way out in front of his own guitar, which sounds unnatural.

Taliesin," and who *may* have passed the "Matter of Britain" on to the French troubadors and trouveres, thus giving us Arthur and Camelot.

The word "Bard," in Wales, denoted a master-poet. In Ireland it meant a poet who was not an Ollave, one who had not taken all the formal training. Apparently even the lower-status Irish Bard was on a level with the Welsh Bard in knowledge and poetic education, however, and these were what I have termed "hedge-bards," above.

In the Celtic cultures, the Bard/Filidh/Ollave was inviolate. He could travel anywhere, say anything, and perform when and where he pleased.
See Bards on Page 8.

The next thing which comes up is the instruments and the way they're arranged. The main items here are Barry's acoustic guitar and Sally's multi-percussion (especially on the less heavily-produced Mundania), and it is amazing what they get out of just those objects. Barry's guitar is very high and bright, which is odd because at the same time it does an excellent job of filling the entire sound spectrum. Songs like "Stairway to Fandom" and "Cosmic Drain" (Mundania) are rich and filled out even given that there's no bass guitar! Sally's use of conga's, tambourine, and the occasional cymbal are a welcome addition to the standard singer-and-guitar mix. (The tambourine could be a tad less forward at times . . .) The arrangements are not to be missed -- especially the full "rock band" effect on "War of the Worlds", "Monorail to Atomland" (Paradox) and "Secular Humanist" (Mundania). The instruments blend well and fill the spectrum, even when the parts are overdubbed. (This is not so true on "Motel of the Mysteries" (Paradox) where the instruments unfortunately wound up kind of naked and hanging in space, for some reason.) The Childs-Heltons make very good use of effects, from the subtle electric-guitar-does-flute on "Science Fair" (Mundania), to the whisper of just-warm-enough synths on "Light Sailor", to the dangerously weird mix that's pulled off without a hitch on "Small Designs" (both Paradox). In this and many other ways, for any lover of good music, good sound and good fun both of these tapes receive my highest recommendation.

[Escape from Mundania and Paradox available from Space Opera House, 5271 Primrose Lane, Indiana 46220.]

(A Side Note: My last critical listening to Paradox revealed a tubby sound and drop-outs that I know weren't there before! The dangers of over-playing a favorite tape, I guess. When do we get a CD of these things?!)

Editor Speaks

Continued from Page 3.

with recording a new tape and prolifically posting song lyrics. *TFT* will be serializing two of his articles in this and future issues. Kay Shapero and I have been burning the phone lines about Westercon in Vancouver. Seems that filking is pretty low in priority for con activities and the con chair, Terry Fowler, has asked for suggestions, including volunteers for organizing any filk activities. Kay and I have been doing everything short of actually volunteering to run the filking. Any takers?

I've also been talking with Bob Laurent and Mary Kay Jackson about what can be expected in terms of Northwest filking. So far, most of the attending performers look to be the Californians. When I asked Mary Kay, who ran filking at Norwescon, about filking in the Northwest (how many filkers, are they very active, etc.), she said that there were mostly only Californians and Montanans (the Miscon contingent) at the con, plus one lone gentleman from Portland, and that performers were in the minority.

We also talked about filking at Baycon, SiliCon, and ConFrancisco. Mary Kay will be running the filk panel programming at Baycon this year--she's got some great ideas--like reopening the Fuel Duel, having Cynthia McQuillin and Jordin Kare in a mini-concert consisting of their songs from the "Fuel to Feed the Drive" cycle. Or mini-concerts entitled "CuriOse: How Fun It Is to Get Down" and "Singing From Books: Literary Themes." Lady Colleen Savitzky will host the nightly filk rooms.

Wail Songs will be very active this spring--Bob will be taping FilkOntario and Mary Kay will be going to Marcon to tape the filking there, plus finalizing future new tape releases. Also, look for Heather Rose Jones at the Wail Songs dealer's table at Westercon in Vancouver. On other fronts, Jane Mailander is in the process of revising and finalizing her "Neo-Filker's Guide to Filking." The introduction was just posted on DAG BBS and *TFT* has obtained permission to serialize the Guide in future issues. I

OVFF Recording

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Land" by Michael Longcor, "Black Davey's Ride" and "My Father Was A Harper" by Cynthia McQuillin, "Watchman" by Mike Stein), space songs ("Wanderer--Fire in the Sky" by Jordin Kare, "Re-Discovery" by Tera Mitchel [written with Rick Weiss], "Asteroid Ore" by Robin Nakkula and "Living in Space" by Joey Shoji), and some serious ones. Barry and Sally Childs-Helton show up with two excellent pieces in "Whistling in the Dark" and "Small Designs."

Two others are of particular note: "My Thousand Closest Friends," written and performed by Naomi Pardue, is a wonderful heartfelt song about fandom; and Mark Bernstein's production (music by him) of Robert A. Heinlein's "Green Hills of Earth," sung with 16 other filkers as a chorus (arranged by Mike McGonagle) is a real tear-jerker and a worthy tribute to a great SF writer. Either of these songs alone, the last on each side, is worth the price of the tape. That you have them on one tape, and together with all these others, this is a real bargain.

Sound OVFF by Wail Songs, P.O. Box 29888, Oakland, CA 94604

also intend to post it on the Filk Echo--it's just the thing for those newcomers asking that perennial question: "So, just what is this stuff called 'filk'?" Continuing in that vein, future postings on the Filk Echo from *TFT* will also include the Filker's R&R's and other articles of interest from previous issues.

Please keep your letters and comments coming in--we love to hear from our readers! Share your filking activities with us--it's exciting to hear about far-flung filkers and their exploits. There's so much filking going on all over that Rick and I cannot keep up with all the news (Rick's threatening to put a governor on the telephone/modem!). If you know of a new tape release, have information about filking at a convention, have a con report or an article any a filkish subject, do write and tell us all about it. We'd love to publish you!

TOLF

Continued from Page 5.

who did both things was too good to be true. In five years, I added more songs to my repertoire than I had learned in almost 50 years before. At the same time, I met many new and worthwhile people. I do not make friends lightly, but many of you are my friends, and I care about and value you all.

Two things meant the most to me during my darkest hours. The first was that Kathy Mar, knowing I was going into surgery, told me to call her collect at any time after it was over. In the hospital bed afterwards, bereft of my clothes, dignity and credit cards, I took her up on that offer. Until you are in that situation, you cannot know how valuable it is to have a human life-line. Thank you, Kathy - I cannot thank you enough.

The second thing was a card I treasure, from the gang at the monthly filksing. I think it was at Jane Mailander's, and I wanted with all my heart to be there. Everyone signed it and someone wrote the words I will never forget: "The Filk isn't over!" Indeed it isn't and I intend to see all of you who can make it at the Holiday Inn in Oakland at ConSonance 1991.

P.S. One admonition and warning. I did fine after the operation, except for one thing. Because of my obesity, not because of weakness, I was helpless and could not do the simplest things for myself for the first few days. I could not shift my weight to sit up. Young ones, carrying too many pounds: Take Warning. It is very easy to wind up on the operating table.

Conventions

Continued from Page 2.

Ohio Valley Filk Fest 7, November 1-3, 1991. P.O. Box 211101, Columbus, OH 43221. GoH: Cynthia McQuillin. TM: Robin Bailey. Listener GoH: Howard Scrimgeour. Special Guest: Tom Smith. Pegasus Awards. Memberships: \$18 to 4-15-91, children \$15. Midnight Buffet: \$12. Hotel: Hilton Inn North, 7007 N. High St., Worthington, OH 43085. Rates: \$60 flat rate. Call 614/436-0700 for reservations.

Bards

Continued from Page 6.

The reason for this was, of course, that he was the bearer of news and the carrier of messages, and, if he was harmed, then nobody found out what was happening over the next hill. In addition, he carried the Custom of the country as memorized verses . . . he could be consulted in cases of Customary (Common) Law. He was, therefore, quite a valuable repository of cultural information, news, and entertainment.

Bards were part of the Druidic hierarchy, though this may or may not (depending on who you talk to!) be period for the SCA.

A true Bard must know the following: music (and the playing of a period instrument, preferably Harp), poetry (original, and other people's), song (original and other people's), the History, Law and Custom of his/her Kingdom and of the SCA, as much knowledge of mundane medieval history, Law, and custom as they can possibly learn, and at least a very basic knowledge of linguistics and alphabet/cyphers. Some training in Folklore, and in the arts of Sociology and Semantics would help, too. A reasonable amount of heraldic knowledge would not be out of place, either. See the list of suggested College courses at the end of this article.

The Bard should investigate the "Matter of Britain" very thoroughly, paying special attention to Sir Gawain, and to Arthur's Queen. Do a little reading in the Robin Hood cycle, too, with special attention to the village festivals in Britain that mention him.

Bards do *not* just sing songs! They recite, and write poetry, stories, tell myths (both historical and SCA...), but the operative word here is that they *perform*. Just playing music does not entitle you to be called a Bard.

Some Bards are "titled," that is, someone, be it another Bard, or whoever, or sometimes (very seldom) the Bard himself, has given them a bardic "name" or "title," that serves to identify them. Thusly, I am known as "y bardd Gwyn," "Baird Ban," or "the Whyte Bard." Another was known as "Derwydd Prydain," while even another has no title at all, and does not

National Filksong

Continued from Page 1.

Others, most noticeably the Swiss anthem, have religious themes. The Swiss sing: "In the sweet sunset, Thou art nigh..."

I finally realized what was different about "The Star Spangled Banner". Not merely that it is to a "borrowed" tune (more on that later). Not merely that it is to a difficult tune ("O Canada" is really no easier, and *they* should have had more sense). No. In one way very specifically, our own beloved national anthem is truly unique: The version commonly sung *begins and ends with a question!*

Think about it. Every other anthem in the world (at least the ones with lyrics) makes a statement of some kind, or expresses some kind of hope. Ours, instead, asks "Hey, is that flag still flying out there?", not once, but *twice*.

want one. Be wary of taking such a title yourself. Allow the giving of such to happen on its own, and do **not** take it from a King of any kind, unless you wish to be the "King's Bard" in the Welsh sense of the word.

Each individual Bard will have certain prerogatives that they have developed over the years. I, myself, tend to interrupt a Coronation court, or other Courts, at any time with a poem, or a song, relating to the event. Other Bards will have other prerogatives. Don't try to set yourself up with these; let them happen naturally.

A Bard should remain as neutral as possible in matters of SCA politics, though the expressing of his/her opinion *in verse* about such things is quite acceptable, and is traditionally "non-challengeable," but may be answered *in verse* . . . and **only** in verse.

The other classes of period musical entertainers include Minstrels, Troubadors, Trouveres, Jongleurs...and, believe it or not, Heralds!

Next month: Bards - On Music and Songwriting

Permission is given for this paper to be used in publications of the SCA or related groups. If you use it, send a copy of the publication to: Joe Bethancourt, P.O. Box 35190, Phoenix AZ 85069.

So what does that have to do with filking? I'm getting to that. Most of you probably know that "The Star Spangled Banner" was not the only national song this nation has ever had. As a matter of fact, it was not adopted as our official anthem until 1931, in a much-debated Congressional act. They had several other possible choices, after all. For instance, they could have chosen "America" (also known as "My Country 'Tis of Thee"), which is sung to the tune of "God Save the King (or Queen, if England is so inclined)". Or, with that same tune they could have chosen "God Save Our Native Land" which superseded "God Save Our Thirteen States" (that one quickly ran into problems . . . when we got up to seventeen states, the scansion started falling apart). Or they could have chosen "America the Beautiful", which is *not* sung to the tune the author intended, but is instead sung roughly to the tune of "Materna" by Samuel A. Ward. Or they could have even chosen "The American Star", which is of course sung to either "The Wounded Hussar" or "Humours of Glen". Even "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" was written to an already existing tune called "Glory, Hallelujah". Do any of the rest of you see a pattern here?

In fact, "The Star Spangled Banner" is often said to be to the tune of "To Anacreon in Heaven". Well, sort of. Actually, there was *already* a patriotic song to that tune, called "Adams and Liberty" or "The Boston Patriotic Song", written by one Robert Thomas Paine in 1798. "The Star Spangled Banner" *re-swiped* the tune.

What does all this mean? It means that until Irving Berlin wrote "God Bless America", our major patriotic songs were all sung to previously existing music, to replace the original words! In other words our anthems were all filks!

Is it any wonder that filking has taken off much more readily here than anywhere else in the world, with England a distant second? After all, it's the American thing to do. The *really* funny thing that I discovered while looking all these things up is that there is a legitimate academic theory to explain it all. But that's for next month's column...

New Arrangements for the LAFA Flyer

Starting with the June 1991 flyer, John & Mary Creasey will be doing the monthly flyer mailings, *not The Filking Times*. To continue receiving the LAFA flyer, you must notify the Creasey's. Flyers will be available in three ways: without charge at each LAFA filking, pay \$4.00 for 12 flyers postpaid first class mail, or by supplying SASE's to the Creasey's.

Your current *TFT* subscription will remain with *TFT*. All or some of your subscription can be transferred or split with the LAFA flyer, but only if you notify Rick Weiss. The LAFA flyer will be dropped after *TFT* Issue #26 (May 1991).

Each 3 issue 'unit' remaining on your *TFT* sub may be converted to 5 LAFA flyers. To calculate the split take the number of your last issue of *TFT* (in the upper right corner of your mailing label), subtract 26 and divide by 3. This is the number of 'units' you can convert or transfer to the LAFA flyer. Any fractions can be prorated.

LAFA Filking

WHEN -- Saturday, April 20, 1991 - 3 PM to ??
WHERE -- Brandyhall (a.k.a. Lee & Barry Gold)

3965 Alla Road, Los Angeles, CA 90066
213/306-7456

DIRECTIONS See Thos. Bros. page 49, grid E-3

Brandyhall is located southwest of the intersection of the San Diego (I-405) and Santa Monica (I-10) Freeways.

FROM THE WESTBOUND SANTA MONICA FWY: Continue west on I-10 from the Interchange with I-405. Take the Bundy-South exit. Continue south on Bundy (the name will change to Centinela) past the Santa Monica Airport and Venice Blvd. Turn Right on Washington Place (the next major street after Venice), then see *From Washington* below.

FROM THE NORTHBOUND SAN DIEGO FWY: Take the San Diego Fwy (I-405) to the Venice/Washington exit. Turn Right on Sepulveda, then Right onto Washington Place. See *From Washington* below.

FROM THE SOUTHBOUND SAN DIEGO FWY: Take the San Diego Fwy (I-405) to the Venice/Washington exit. Turn Left on Sawtelle, then Right onto Washington Place. See *From Washington* below.

FROM WASHINGTON: Continue west on Washington Place. Washington Blvd will merge in from the left. The next signal is at Beethoven St. Go another two blocks and turn Right on Alla. Brandyhall is the yellow house on the left about three houses in.

FILK STYLE: Non-Topological Bardic Circle, or ad-11b as desired. In a NTBC, everyone gets their turn, but it does not go in a strict rotation. To exercise your turn to pick or perform, you turn in a marker (usually a poker chip). When most of the markers have been used, a new supply is passed out (one to a customer).

NOTES

1. Crash space available.
2. There is a FuzzDog Warning - one Black & White unit on the prowl.
3. Dinner break about 5 PM. Dinner will be a potluck - everyone please bring something to contribute.
4. Bring all of your usual filk stuff.
5. **NO SMOKING -- PERIOD!!** (Except allowed outside.)
6. Two Silicon life-forms are now present and working and a mimeograph is available.

Next LAFA Filking: May 18, 1991
R&D Lab, Garden Grove, CA. Rick & Deborah Weiss, hosts

The Filking Times

13261 Donegal Drive
Garden Grove, CA 92644-2304

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