

The Filking Times

May 1991

Issue 26

Poor Richard's Filksong More History of American Filk

by Nick Smith

Last time, as you may recall, I pointed out that our great national songs were all filks. In fact, I understated the case. I had forgotten that Irving Berlin wrote "God Bless America" to one of his *own* old tunes, written for a WWI-vintage musical. Also, "Hail Columbia," commonly accepted as our national anthem by other nations for many years, was written overnight to the tune of a march written for President Washington. (The reason for the hasty writing? The song had to be ready to help promote a Monday night show at a Philadelphia theater.) Also, that song is not to be confused with "Rise Columbia," which is to the tune of "Rule Britannia". But I digress . . .

The origins of our filk anthems come from the origins of our political system, oddly enough, as well as from the origins of broadcast news. Here's how.

For those of you who have forgotten, radio and television did not always exist. In addition, newspapers were rather an iffy thing back in the 18th century. They were a newfangled invention of people like Ben Franklin (you all remember crazy Ben and that incident with the kite . . . hardly respectable at all!) So, how was news conveyed? Largely by word of mouth. How was news commentary transmitted, complete with editorial biases? By songs. A relatively old British tradition existed of printing single sheets of paper with new words set to a familiar tune. This song might be a serious rendition of a disaster or shipwreck, or a lampoon of an unpopular law or official. Young Ben Franklin sold the ones printed up by his family. These single sheets were called "broad-sides," supposedly because of their size. See American Filk on Page 7.

BayCon Has Filksinging Programming, Performer's Circles Planned

by Rick Weiss

From a telephone conversation with Mary Kay Jackson and Colleen Savitzky

BayCon, the annual San Francisco Bay Area convention, will really be "Filker Friendly" this year. Cynthia McQuillin will be Filk Guest of Honor and will do a GoH concert rather than a speech. Daytime filk programming is being assembled by Mary Kay Jackson and Lady Colleen Savitzky will be coordinating the evening filk circles.

The convention itself will be at the San Jose Red Lion Inn. This has been

"Convention" Report Connubial

Excerpted from "Conreports and Ramblings," originally published in Lan's Lantern #35.

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Mary Ellen Wessels is a filksinger who has sung back-up on a lot of tapes. She has a beautiful voice, but is one of the few who can harmonize and blends well with others. So she is one who gets flown out to California a lot to record back-up vocals for other filkers. MEW (as she likes to be called) married Iain Sedgeman in a very non-religious, but quite moving ceremony at a hotel in Ann Arbor on Saturday morning. After the ceremony was a brunch, and we had fun talking to a lot of friends. Kathy Mar and her twin children (who were the flower children) and Joey Shoji were in from California. Others came in from Chicago, Wisconsin, Indiana (Barry and Sally Childs-Helton), Ohio, Canada and from the local area. Many I'd be seeing again at INCON. One of the endearing features of the Brunch was a little scroll at each table place-setting which said that the tapping of glasses would do nothing for See Nuptial on Page 8.

the scene of many good cons over the years, with especially fond memories (for me) of the '83 Westerchron and several Bayfiks. (See "Red Lion" by Misty Lackey in the Bayfiks II Baysong Filkbook or tape for further references.)

For daytime programming, several Performer's Circles on several topics are planned:

- Filk Rock - with Dr. Jane Robinson and Kathy Mar.
- Literary Filk - songs from or inspired by actual SF books.
- Cheeriose ("It's Jordin's fault, not mine," says Mary Kay) - starring Jordin Kare, Gary Anderson, Kathy Mar and Peter Thiesen.

Other special events will include Heather, the S.O. of GoH John Ford and a folk music performer, in a concert set. And finally, something that has not been heard for several years (and this will remind us all why), Jordin Kare and Cynthia McQuillin will star in a joint recreation of "The Fuel Duel."

For evening filk, two-and-a-half filk rooms will be available. One room will be open for a modified Chaos sing, with another for strict Bardic Circle. Half of the Reading Room will also be available for anything which doesn't fit the other two rooms (i.e., a poetry reading). Lady Colleen Savitzky, as the coordinator for all three areas, will be the person to call to schedule anything in the reading room or in case of any problems.

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

Filksings

Los Angeles Area (LAFA):

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

July 13: Harry & Mara Brener, hosts. 325 Sharon Rd., Arcadia, CA. 818/447-1664.

For info/mailling list, contact John & Mary Creasey, 213-329-6772.

Phoenix, AZ:

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

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.

San Francisco Bay Area:

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

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

Conventions

BayCon '91, May 24-27, 1991. P.O. Box 70393, Sunnyvale, CA 94086. Telephone 408/629-4729. GoH: John Ford. Filk GoH: Cynthia McQuillin. Artist GoH: David Mattingly. Memberships: \$45 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.

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 9/30/91, then \$20 at the door. Children \$15, includes free baby sitting for pre-reg attendees. Midnight Buffet is not included in membership. Hotel: Hilton Inn North, 7007 N. High St., Worthington, OH 43085. Rates: \$60 flat rate. Call 614436-0700 for reservations.

See Convention Listings on Page 4.

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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New Releases From Wail Songs

by Deborah Weiss

Wail Songs has two new tapes just released in the past 2-3 weeks:

- For All My Closest Friends, a studio tape featuring the songs of Naomi Pardue, performed by her with backup by Joey Shoji, Heather Jones, Cynthia McQuillin, Ernie Mansfield & others. (\$11.00)
- Again Congenial Filk, a live tape from Congenial II (1990); 18 songs at approximately one hour. It includes songs by Susan Urban, Jane Freitag, Kathy Mar, Naomi Pardue, Deirdre Rittenhouse, Nate Bucklin, Charles & Maryann de Lint, Dave Clement, and Ernest Clark. (\$11.00)

And to update last month's listings, here's some additional information on two of the British tapes:

- Windsinger by Pat Brown, described as having the purest voice of the British Filkers. (\$10.00)
- Laughters & Laments, featuring Rhodri James, who has a very nice, deep voice. (\$10.00)

All of these are available from DAG, Wail Songs, Secret Empire & others.

From the Filk Echo

Westercon Filking Update

Posted by Kay Shapero

Tam Gordy is collecting songs for a sort of convention "fake book" for singalongs - if you have any favorites that he can use without mucking up somebody's copyright, please send 'em to him at 8151 Leslie Road, Richmond B.C. V6X 1E4, CANADA, electronically to Terry Fowler at 1:153/4 (Fidonet) or Terry_Fowler@cc.sfu.ca (usenet), or if necessary to me at 1:102/524 and I'll pass them along (this last will take the longest...)

Oh yes - thus far I've only gotten one suggestion for panel topics (filkish history; sort of a combination of "Where we came from" and "What not to do at the filksing" stuff.)

Posted by Terry Fowler

Hi there Kay (and Deborah),

Just an update on the Filking situation here. Tam is organizing some casual stuff, and some panel stuff, and is asking if either or both of you would like to be a panel on filking, and if you would like to perform in the first part of the concert. You will by the way, have

that room all night if you want it. No problem with stage and acoustics etc; we have used that room many times and we know where all the plugs are.

In terms of publicity, of course we don't have panel times, yet, but the concert will begin 8 P.M. Friday night in the Isabel McGuinness room in Gage and go until the last one turns out the lights. Tam will ensure that casual spaces are staked out and publicised. Tam is also in the process of getting a book of favorites put together for sing-a-longs...

Tam is getting things in hand quite nicely and my nervousness was unwarranted in his case. Thank you for the offers of help, and you will be able to relax and enjoy yourselves while here (except for being in the concert and/or on panels, hopefully!).

[An insert from Kay - I've written back and suggested the filkish history panel.]

Posted by Kihe Blackeagle

Proposed Filkish Panel Topics:

○ Improbabilities - Discussion of why the most outlandish topics are the most impressive / easiest / memorable for writing, singing, etc... ("Can you imagine a 47-ton bunny rabbit?") Feghoots encouraged! ("Give my big hearts to Maude, Ray"...)

See Vancouver on Page 7.

the woods. The L.A. Filkharmonics were invited, but have had to decline, due to prior commitments. (Have you ever tried to reschedule a solar eclipse?)

○ Filkers Beware! -- The next time someone sings "God Lives on Terra" in the presence of Lee Gold, she has the definitive follower/counterblast. It seems that she heard the song at least four times during Consonance and felt that a rebuttal was in order. Lee feels that God (he/she/it) would not want to just stay here, but would also like to travel about and visit the rest of his/her/its Creation.

Quicknews

○ Four filkers from the New Zealand SF Modellers Club and filking group, "Singing Starship," are planning to attend this year's Loscon, according to a conversation with Lee Gold and confirmed by local New Zealander Dean Thomas. If you would be interested in playing host or offering any other assistance, please contact Dave Thomas at 213/661-5432.

○ The San Francisco Bay Area has two new filk distributors (See Resources on Page 8 for addresses):

- Records and Flowers and Things by Colleen, owned by Colleen Savitzky, is a new Thor Records distributor.
- Silver Dragon Arts & Music, operated by Mike Perry and Shelley Howell, distributes Firebird, Thor and Wail Songs merchandise.

○ Lee Gold reports that their residence was burgled the day following the LAFA filk at their home. Luckily nothing of great value was taken (only the VCR and some cash). However, Fuzzy [their dog] was sprayed with a noxious substance, but is now completely recovered. Lee now warns that future "guests" will be greeted with an alarm service. [Let's hope this will not turn into an ominous trend for future housefilks. -- Editors]

○ From Nick Smith on the DAG BBS: For those of you who do not plan to go to Westercon, but still want some quality filking, I have just been informed that the San Diego Comicon will have a filk concert. It will probably be on Friday night. I don't know who will be performing at this point. Windbourne is, I believe, since it's in their neck of

Bards: Part II of IV**On Music and Songwriting: Educating a Bard**Excerpted and annotated from Locksley's E-Z Harp Method by Joseph of Locksley, OL, Pel, &c.

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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.]

Every so often, one hears a self-important "scholar" say something along the lines of: "Well, you have only written new words, or parodied the words, to a common tune . . . this is not real songwriting, but simply "filk" (as termed in the Science Fiction sub-culture) songs."

Tell them to sit on it. This is, and was, an accepted thing to do, is quite legitimate, and very authentic. The period name for this technique is called the "siervente."

Just try to keep the general "sound" as Medieval/Renaissance as possible . . . admittedly a bit difficult when you are stealing adapting a rock and roll melody, but it can be done . . . and please encourage others to do the same.

If you must use a familiar mundane tune that is blatantly out-of-period, be clever with your adaptation. Otherwise, the song becomes just another boring "filk." About the cleverest I have heard is the use of the "Agincourt Carole" to the tune of "The Banana Boat Song." This is one of the most God-awful, and funniest, things I have heard in years.

Education of a Bard**Suggested College Level Courses:**

- Basic and Advanced Folklore of the Appalachian and Ozark mountains of the U.S.A.
- Basic and Advanced Folklore of the British Isles
- Music History (100 and 200 levels)
- Anything else in the Music curriculum that relates to Medieval music
- Comparative Religions
- Basic Sociology (100 and 200 levels at least) (Watch out here! This is an "art," not a "science!")
- Linguistics/Semantics
- Medieval History (100 thru Graduate levels)
- Medieval Law (100 thru 400 levels)
- English Writing
- The Literature of England (Ireland, Wales, Brittany, Scotland etc.)
- Poetry
- Fencing or other formal Martial Art
- Theater
- And anything else that might possibly relate and/or help.

Convention Listings

Continued from Page 2.

Musicon, Nashville's first all-filk con! January 3-5, 1992. P.O. Box 198121, Nashville, TN 37219-8121. Telephone: 615/889-5951 (no collect calls, no calls after 10 PM central). GoH: Naomi Pardue. TM: Murray Porath. Other guests: Robin Nakkula, and T.B.A. Memberships (payable to Lee Billings): \$15 to 7-31-91, \$18 to 11-1-91, then \$22 at the door. Hotel: Days Inn Briley Parkway, 615/885-2372. Rates: \$42/night, 1-4 filkers.

Consonance '92, March 6-8 1992. c/o Wail Songs, P.O. Box 29888, Oakland, CA 94604. GoH: Mark Bernstein TM: Elizabeth Ann Scarborough Memberships: (payable to Wail Songs) \$25 thru Con-Chord (9-29-91), \$30 thru 2-6-92, then \$35 at the door. Supporting: \$10. Hotel: Radisson Hotel, San Jose, CA (site of Consonance '90).

FILKOntario, April 1992. Info: Office of the Artistic Director, 1260 Marlborough Ct, Apt. 902, Oakville, Ontario, Canada L6H 3H5. Compuserve #75126,2744. Internet #75126.2744 @ compuserve.com. GoH: TBD. Hotel: TBD. See next month's *FTT* for (a little) more information.

Reading list:

- Ogham: The Poet's Secret, Sean O Boyle; Gilbert Dalton, Dublin, 1980
- The English and Scottish Popular Ballads, Francis James Child; (five volumes) Dover, 1965
- The Singing Tradition of Child's Popular Ballads, Bertrand Harris Bronson; Princeton University Press 1976
- The Viking Book of Folk Ballads of the English-Speaking World, Albert B. Friedman; Viking, 1956, 1982
- Traditional Ballads: The Compleat Anachronist #11, Tsvia bas Tamara v'Amberview (pseud.); Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc, 1984
- Folk Songs of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, William Cole; Cornerstone, 1961, 1969
- Folksinger's Wordbook, Fred and Irwin Silber; Oak, 1973
- 101 Scottish Songs, Norman Buchan; Collins, 1974
- Rise Up Singing, Peter Blood-Patterson; Sing Out! 1988
- The Troubadors: The Compleat Anachronist #44, Leah di Estera (pseud.); Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc, 1989
- Caidan Bardic Circle Songbook (5 vols.), Caidan Bardic Consortium, 1988
- The White Goddess, Robert Graves; Farrar, Straus and Giroux, NY 1966 (LCCCN: 48-8257)
- The Golden Bough, James G. Frazer; Avenel Books, 1981
- Contrarywise, Zohra Greenhalgh, Ace (paperback) April 1989; 0-441-117112-2

Next month: On Bards, Part III: On Bardic Circles

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 95180, Phoenix, AZ 85068.

Letters To *The Times*

[This letter is a follow up to a brief telephone call. Ed.]

Dear Rick,

Sorry this took so long, but here's the info about Larry Niven's book.

The name of the book is N-Space. It's a semi-biographical anthology of stories, essays and excerpts, complete with background anecdotes and a bibliography.

The story "The Kite Man" (which Larry Niven says is the seed of a novel or series he wants to write) includes a large section of "Dr. Jane's" song "We Can't Find". Harp, one of the characters

is singing the song in the midst of an emergency to draw help to the survivors. Jane received a fee and full credit for the use of her lyrics. Larry really loves Jane and her songs and has been a long time admirer of her performances.

In the same vein, I received a letter from Pournelle on behalf of Larry, himself and Michael Flynn requesting permission to use part of "Star Fire" in a new book on the space program that they are collaborating on. I replied with a quick resounding "Yes!" (of course). Also to be included were excerpts from "Fire In The Sky" by Jordin Kare and "The Phoenix" by Julia Ecklar if they both signed the release, though I can't imagine why they wouldn't.

The Fossil Fever CD is out and will be available at Bay Con! This year Baycon is "Filker Friendly", they even have a filk guest of honor - none other than Cynthia McQuillin (yep, that little old filk maker me), and two filk coordinators. Mary Kay Jackson will be in charge of Programming for filkers and Lady Colleen Savitzky will be handling the filk rooms (there will be three).

Cindy McQuillin

From the Filk Echo

LepreCon Report

Posted by Joe Bethancourt

Well, LepreCon has come and gone (E-I-E-I-O?) - grin - and great fun it was. I was pleasantly surprised to see Leslie Fish there . . . did a little backup guitar for her at the filk on Friday night (as best as my poor ears could handle not being able to see her chording and with her guitar tuned just under a half-step low (AGGGGHHH!)) but it was most interesting indeed. (I had not heard her song "Mr. Christian" before, and as an unregenerate Country picker (not Country and Western! Different thing!) I really liked it a lot!

Did a concert Saturday evening that was very well attended and received, and a good time was had by all . . . hoping to do the same at CopperCon and at WesterCon upcoming (here in Phoenix).

For those who are interested: DAG now has my new tape "The Black Book of Locksley" along with Out Of This World Book Service . . . rather a neat thing to see the whole crown singing along with "Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Little Rabbit Fur Bikini" and "The Dream Song."

Good weekend. Good fun. Good people . . . see ya at the next Con in Phoenix!

From the Filk Echo

New Tape Release The Black Book of Locksley

Posted by Joe Bethancourt

After much waiting, and hassle, and confusion, the new tape by Master Joseph of Locksley (mka Joe Bethancourt) is now available for mail order! The Black Book of Locksley features SCA songs of all kinds, on both modern and period instruments! Songs are: "Hopscot", "The Bard's Song", "The Report of the Spanish Expedition of 1492", "The Itsy-bitsy . . .", "Weapons At The Door", "Londonderry Aire", "Atenveldt", "Die Gedanken Sind Frei", "My Love My Love You Broke My Heart", "Harp Song Of The Dane Women", "The Ballad Of The Three Kings", and "Flower Of The Desert".

Available by mail order for \$10.00 each plus \$1.50 postage and handling from Chris Masters Productions, P.O. 31000, Phoenix AZ 85032. Wholesale orders OK!

[DAG Productions is now carrying The Black Book of Locksley or inquire at your favorite filk dealer. -- Editors]

From the Filk Echo

Hypoallergenic Filksing It's Nothing To Sneeze At

First Hypoallergenic Filk

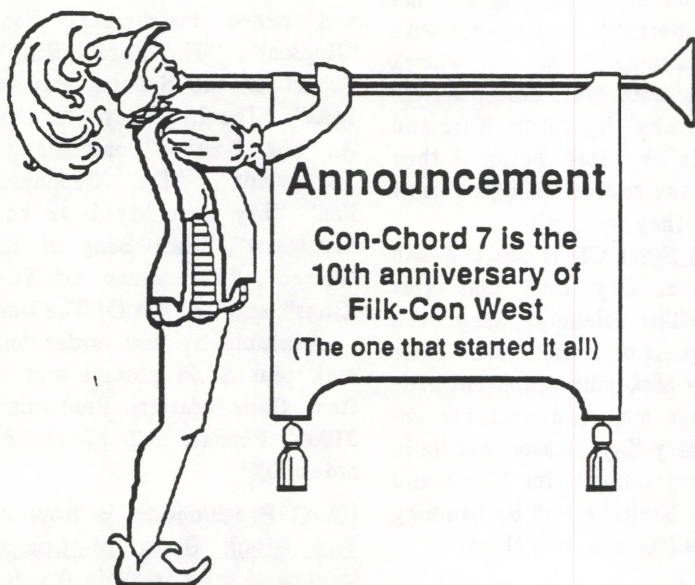
Posted by Mike Liebmann

Because of the fact the next LAFA filk is at a location which has cats, and I like the idea of breathing, I held the first hypoallergenic filk tonight (last night?). [May 11, 1991 - Ed.] Attendance was smaller than expected (only 10 people, including myself), but that is, as it turns out, the capacity of the Humble Abode. We had a dinner run at 6:30, and started really singing at around 7:00. The setup was chaos with gestalt (if you will). Everyone had a chance to participate, and if someone was just sitting and being quiet, was asked if s/he wanted to hear a song or

sing one or something, so that everyone contributed to the effort. While the filk broke up at around 12:30, and everyone else was gone by 1:00, there was a lot of good music, good discussion, and a good group of friendly people. Since it seems it was a success, even if size is limited, I will be considering doing another one if the situation shows up where I cannot go to a filk because of cats. I also remind everyone that I'm not trying to compete with the regular LAFA monthly filk (to which I still go), but since I cannot go to a place with cats, and I do enjoy filking, it seems to me this is a reasonable alternative. If you want to find out more about it, ask.
See Sneezy on Page 8.

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

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

American Filk

Continued from Page 1.

and shape. Personally, I like to think they were also called that because they often blasted at things with all guns blazing. (A lot like filk, really.)

OK, so what was so different about American music? After all, if the idea of broadsides was British, why is filk so American? Well, think about what was different about America by, say, 1790-1800. What did England and most of the other nations have that we didn't? A king, and the nobility that went with it? Yes, that too, but more importantly music schools. There were no great American composers, no great traditions. American music depended much more on vocal music for that and other reasons. (After all, much of the nation was still rural--there were few orchestras or even large musical instruments.) Few Americans could read printed music, and fewer printers went to the trouble of printing it, so people learned tunes by ear. Following the tradition of folk songs from the British Isles, people in rural America sang music about work and life, accompanied by simple instruments that still influence folk music today (instruments related to the guitar and dulcimer, for example--banjos came later). So, those were the types of tunes most people were familiar with, and when the broadsides printed a new song, it was to a folk tune, not a Gregorian chant or something from the latest composer from Europe.

It was not just a matter of lack of education, either. Ben Franklin himself stated a preference for the more "natural" sounds of what we call folk music over much of the "new" music of what we would call a classical nature, at least when it came to vocal music. There were many Americans who wanted to "popularize" the music, creating styles that did not require years spent in European schools. William Billings helped create the American style of hymns and singing. His philosophy was that "Nature is the best dictator" of style, and that a song should just "sound right" rather than follow strict rules about where eighths and fifths fit. Of course, William Billings died broke, which says something in favor of styl-

Vancouver Ideas

Continued from Page 3.

⇒ Rhymes or Rhythms - When should rhyming lyrics be used (or, conversely, when not to rhyme -- or to rhyme badly / obscurely)? Also: Free verse versus musical conversation, other related matters . . .

⇒ Imaginative Cheering - How to react as an audience participant when the puns get really, *really* obnoxious! (Subtopic: science fiction alternatives to traditionally racial denigration, i.e. "Three Chinese Cheers" becomes "Three Martian Cheers": Foey! Foey! Foey!)

⇒ So Now You Are the Filksing EmCee! - Survival guide to planning filk activities at "normal" cons (include mention of Non-Fan conventions, please?)

⇒ Some New Empathy - The serious side of filking, with better known examples (songs drawn from well known sources, such as some cuts from Solar Sailor, are strongly encouraged). Laments, paeans, hymns, "sober" (serious, non-comedic) "history" . . .

ized music: you can charge more money for teaching rules than for teaching flexibility.

Oh yes, political theories of filking: If Alexander Hamilton and his faction had ended up running the United States, folk (and filk) music would have taken two tough punches to the gut:

1) There would have been a *de facto* American aristocracy capable of sponsoring European-style music schools and styles. As late as the 1870's, the finest schools in Europe would not even accept American music students. After all, they couldn't be serious musicians coming from a place like that . . .

2) Music critical of the government would have been considered illegal in many cases (honest, it came up as a political issue in the early 1800's).

About the first: by the time that an American monied class had gathered enough momentum to substitute for an aristocracy (say, late 1800's), it consisted of people who had worked their way to money, rather than inherited land and such. Their preference, historically, seems to have been for lively, flam-

⇒ Banned Songs & Banter - Study of "overdone" material ("Banned From Argo", "REAL Old Time Religion", etc.); include brief forays into parodies of the parodies . . . Also some mention of use for the immortalized "silent H" of fannish spelling (Ghod, bheer, etc.).

⇒ Tune Time - How to select an existing piece of music to go with *your* filk. With commentary on timing (before or after creating new words); sample sources; one or two workshopped examples. Display literature encouraged! (Old hymnals, songbooks, albums) Include discussion of desirability to choose recognizable tune while avoiding over-used music (Greensleeves, Day-O): but make clear when it is *desirable* to choose that overdone tune to complement & strengthen the parody.

Posted by Kay Shapero

Kihe - Thank you, thank you, thank you! (Will you be at Westecon and do you want to be on one of the panels?) I've just passed the whole list on to Terry Fowler with my favorites marked, and am waiting to find out how many panels we'll get (three is my guess.) Then I get to call people...

ANYONE OUT THERE want in on a panel?

Send any replies, comments etc. to Tam Gordy at 8151 Leslie Road, Richmond B.C. V6X 1E4, CANADA, electronically to Terry Fowler at 1:153/4 (Fidonet) or Terry_Fowler@cc.sfu.ca (usenet), or if necessary to Kay Shapero at 1:102/524 (Fidonet) or the StormGate Aerie BBS at 213/822-6729.

boyant music. That led to the development of American musical theater to a great extent, which is why America developed John Philip Sousa and Irving Berlins rather than Beethovens.

About the second: the Bill of Rights applies to songs, too. The basic right of Americans to make fun of their government was an important one. People sang songs for and against candidates. People sang songs for and against wars. People sang songs for and against policies, politics and people. And if they wanted others to sing along, they set the songs to familiar tunes, ranging from "Yankee Doodle" to church hymns. And, win or lose, they kept on singing.

Filk Sources And Resources

DAG Productions, 1810 14th Street #102, Santa Monica, California 90404. Telephone: 213/546-4935 or 213/546-1861 (BBS). Eric Gerds, owner, producer and publisher. Write or call for Free Catalog and Update Flyers.

Firebird Arts & Music, Inc., P.O. Box 14785, Portland, Oregon 97214-9998. Telephone: 800/752-8494. Andrea Mitchell, proprietor; Teri Lee, executive producer. Write for Free Catalog.

Pegasus Publishing, P.O. Box 150471, Arlington, Texas 76015-6471. Write for further information.

Random Factors, 3754 W. 170th St., Torrance, California 90504-1204. Telephone: 213/329-6772. John & Mary Creasey, proprietors; Retailers of Firebird filk tapes and other merchandise. Look for them at conventions and local filksings. "We sell filk, not politics."

Quicksilver Fantasies, P.O. Box 1660, Post Falls, Idaho 83854. Write for Free Catalog.

Records and Flowers and Things by Colleen, 343 Leigh Avenue, San Jose, CA 95128. Telephone: 408/294-6492. Colleen Savitzky, owner, distributor of Thor Records merchandise.

Silver Dragon Arts & Music, 1233 Weyburn Lane 33, San Jose, CA 95129. Telephone: 408/255-8603. Mike Perry and Shelley Howell, owners, distributor of Firebird Arts & Music, Inc. merchandise.

Space Opera House, 5271 Primrose Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana 46220. Barry and Sally Childs-Helton, filk tape publishers.

Thor Records, P.O. Box 40312, Downey, California 90241. Telephone: 213/862-1722. Chrys Thorsen and Ralph Mason, music producers. Write for information and flyer.

Unlikely Publications, 839 37th Street, Richmond, California 94805; 415/525-5534. Cynthia McQuillin, proprietor, producer and publisher of Folk and specialty tapes and songbooks.

Sneezy Filking

Continued from Page 5.

Hypoallergenic (achoo) Filk
Posted by John Creasey

The (achoo) hypoallergenic filk was attended by (achoo, achoo) 5 couples. The singing was (sniffle) lively and sometimes slightly ose. A good (achoo, achoo, ACHOO!) time was had by all, except for that sound truck interrupting things from the street. The absence of (achoo, achoo, sniffle) of allergens was commented on.

Mike's place was comfortable with the few people in attendance and was not overcrowded (achoo).

Achoo???

Posted by Michael Liebmann

What John didn't mention was the great pizza run (we beat the ninja turtles to Pizza Hut) and the fact that it was a successful chaos. While there were 10 people there and the condo was comfy, it seemed not to matter.

**Filkers Dew It
'Till Dawn!**

Filkzines Around The Country

APA-Filk: Collated and published quarterly by John Boardman, 234 E. 19th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11226-5302; 718/693-1579. Current copy count unknown. John will mimeo your 'zine for you if you send a him a cut stencil.

Harpings: Published by the Filk Foundation, edited by Margaret Middleton. P.O. Box 45122, Little Rock, AR 72214. 501/327-8272; Compuserve 71525.1372.

LOOSE NOTES: A Zine for Filky-Minded Fans. Published and edited by Susan Landerman, 3327 West Luke Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85017.

Wail Songs, Inc., P.O. Box 29888, Oakland, California 94604. Telephone: 800/TON-WAIL or 415/763-6415. Bob Laurent, proprietor, producer, and publisher. Write for Free Catalog.

Nuptials

Continued from Page 1.

them. However, singing a verse of a song that has the word "love" in it would inspire the bride and groom to kiss. Since there were a lot of filkers at the reception, there was lots of singing; the songs were mostly silly and bawdy, with the only serious presentation being a Shakespeare sonnet recited by Kay Jarrell. It was lots of fun.

Finally, before the concluding traditions (garter & bouquet throwing, and the cutting/feeding of the cake), Iain announced that their last name will be O'Cain: Mary Ellen Wessels O'Cain and Iain Sedgeman O'Cain. And MEW commented on all the wonderful singing and loud enough for everyone to hear, "Iain, I told you this would be better than hiring musicians to play." After the laughter died down, Tom Smith piped up, "Wait till you see what you get in the mail next week."

In the evening Iain and MEW hosted a filk-con called CONNUBIAL. The music started about 9:30 PM and we left at about 2 AM. It was wonderful. With most of the good filkers in the Midwest there, the music sounded great.

Na Mele O Na Hoku--Song of the Stars: Published and edited by Debra F. Sanders, 1415 Victoria Street #206, Honolulu, HI 96822.

Philk-Fee-Non-Ee-Non: Published by Philk Press. Paul Willett, editor. P.O. Box 4128, Panorama City, CA 91412, 818/893-7397.

Philly Philk Phlash: Published and edited by Carol Kabakjian, 17 Lewis Avenue #3, East Lansdowne, PA 19050-2614.

The Filking Times: Published and edited by Rick & Deborah Weiss, 13261 Donegal Drive, Garden Grove, CA 92644-2304.

Xenofilkia: Published and edited by Lee Gold, 3965 Alla Road, Los Angeles, CA 90066, 213/306-7456.