

HARPINS

#22
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If you want to send pasteup-ready copy, type it on a 10-pitch machine on a 43-character line. Dot-matrix print if done with a fresh ribbon is okay. Text will be reduced to 75% of original size during pasteup.

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UNDERSTANDING YOUR MAILING LABEL

Besides the basic address-lines, there are two code-marks; one alphabetic and the other numeric. The A, C or E indicates why you are getting this issue. A=active member, C=contributor, E=Extended. (If none of these appears, you may assume Editorial Whim). The numeric code is YY/MM for your expiration date. If YY/MM falls between 30 days before and 60 days after the postmark date on this issue, you need to renew NOW to be sure of getting the next issue. If your alphabetic code is E, you have credit for contributions of material and are getting one issue beyond your membership-expiration date for each issue you had contribs in.

Foundation membership remains \$15 per year.

QUICK CREDIT

The OVFF-V report which ran in issue #21 was by Mike Stein. He easyplexed it to me and I neglected to type in a byline below the title before pasting it up. Don't be so shy about blowing your own horn in the future, Mike.

Banjos and Bagpipes

Pat Apodaca of Quicksilver Fantasies passed along an interesting communication from Tom Brady of WSBF-FM radio at Clemson University. Brady is DJ of the folk music radio show *Banjos & Bagpipes* and, according to his letter, also happens to be a F/SF fan. He has discovered filk, and writes, "I think filksongs might be an interesting addition to our catalog of music; to that end, I request that you send us one of your catalogs, plus any other promotional materials you might have on hand (cassettes, albums, CD's [ha ha])."

As the title of the show suggests, the playlist (which he enclosed a copy of) runs mostly to Celtic music. Even I recognize The Chieftains, Silly Wizard, Schooner Fare, and Steeleye Spann among the artists. There are other non-Celtic types, though, such as Peter Ostroushko, and the Bulgarian State Radio and Television Women's Choir.

Pat adds a note asking whether this means that filk is going to hit the mainstream airwaves, or "is this program so odd that you can't call it 'mainstream'?" Actually it sounds a lot less odd than Dr. Demento, who has played filk in the past. Anyway, Brady wants samples if you care to send stuff. The address is:

WSBF-FM, Box 2156, Clemson SC 29632-2156

He thinks he's joking about CD's, doesn't he, Kathy Mar...

FILKS IN SPACE...

A day or so before the originally-scheduled launch of the Hubble Telescope, I came home to find a message on my answerphone from Teri Lee, saying that it looked like the wakeup music for the crew on the mission was going to be "Cosmos" from Frank Hayes' tape *Don't Ask*.

FILKERS, THE NEXT GENERATION

The *Filking Times* #14 quotes a letter from TJ Burnside-Clapp to Tera Mitchell, reporting that TJ and Mitch are expecting a youngun in late September.

NEW AND CORRECTED ADDRESSES SINCE LAST ISH

Barry & Sally Childs-Helton, 5271 Primrose Ave., Indianapolis IN 46220

Most of the rest of the material for this issue is from Mike Stein, so I am going to end this page here and start the next with his contributions.

FILK CONS AND OTHERS will follow Mike's page(s)

CON REPORT: Con2bile

- by Mike Stein

While I didn't think there would be many Americans with the resources to hop over to England for a filk con, I did think there would be a few. But due to the Great Filkish Unpleasantness, I was the only Yank who crossed the water.

I had heard about the con from Valerie Housden, whom I met at Noreascon. The idea "it might be nice to go" turned into hard plans when the airlines started offering insane prices for London roundtrips - \$301 on British Airways. That's nearly \$100 cheaper than a supersaver to California!

My flight left Dulles at 8PM on Thursday, the first of February. BA calls itself "the world's favourite airline," and I must say that they've got some basis for making that claim. The cabin crew was uniformly polite and eager to help, noticeably more so than on any of the domestic carrier flights I have taken in the last few years. Both the outbound and the return were right on time. If ever I go back to England (and I do have an attending membership in Treble, next year's con), I'll try to fly BA unless there's a significant cost difference.

We landed at Heathrow, and I changed some traveller's checks. I was rather taken aback at the 1.50 service charge for conversion, over and above the buy/sell spread. That seems to be common practice, though. Fortunately, I bought Visa checks, which are issued by Barclay's, a major British bank. Once out of the airport, I could go to any of their branches and cash them without a fee.

I took the Tube to King's Cross station, and bought a train ticket for Peterborough. The trip up took about 45 minutes. Handily, the hotel was right across from the train station. I checked in and found that Colin Fine was to be my roommate, though he had not yet arrived. Since I had been up for over 24 hours, I dozed off for a few hours; this proved to be all the time zone adjustment that I needed.

When I woke up, things were picking up steam. I registered and started mixing with the Brits. The last progress report showed me as the only American attending other than American GOH Meg Davis, who has been living in Glasgow for the past couple of years, and there were no walk-ins. Originally Frank Hayes and Teri Lee were supposed to have been the Yank GOHs. When I asked why the change had been made, I was told that Frank and Teri stopped answering their mail. This complaint was echoed by one of the dealers, who said that they had ordered goods from Firebird, had their credit card charged, but had not received anything after what they considered too

long a time. The company recently moved to Portland, Oregon. While I have not heard Frank and Teri's side of it, a number of people on the other side of the Off-Centaur dispute think it was to avoid payment of judgements awarded in a couple of lawsuits against Teri and Andrea Mitchell.

To my surprise, Meg Davis remembered me from the time she had done a concert set at Confusion a few years ago. She invited me to have dinner with her at the hotel restaurant, and we chatted on this and that while being served by a rather nervous waiter who had not been on the job long. She moved to Glasgow when she discovered that with her playing on both sides of the Atlantic, it was just as cheap to live there as here, and it enhanced her reputation in the States when she could be billed as Meg Davis "from Glasgow." She's currently married, but she told me that things are not good between her and her husband - he wants her to give up touring, and, as she put it, "I don't think that's even an option any more." I expect that she will be divorced in the not too distant future. We wound up dinner with an invitation to come visit her in Glasgow along with two enormous chunks of chocolate cake (we later found out that the waiter had been more generous than normal with the slicing; we did leave him a good tip).

The tech setup was so elaborate that some people felt that they had gone overboard. Part of the setup was defensive - they did not trust the hotel's PA equipment. While the concert room was not large, I gather they felt some people still might not have big enough voices to hit the back corners. Also, there were several electric guitars in attendance. The British GOH, Mike Whittaker, is a fine guitarist who plays both acoustic and electric. Another advantage of their tech setup is that they get very good recordings. Wail's technique of having a panel of four mikes across the stage is unobtrusive and does not require resetting for each performance, but the big drawback is that it allows more noise into the recording.

My impression of the general level is that they're a few years behind us. The balance between completely original compositions and parodies/resettings is more heavily weighted in favor of the latter, and the level of acceptability, as far as scansion and rhyme perfection goes, is lower. I spent some time with a couple of people helping them (rather more than I intended, which I think embarrassed all of us) to perfect a parallel (i.e., a non-funny parody) of *Hope Eyrie*; the authors seemed unaware of the scansion and rhyme errors. However, that's the way things were here back a number of years ago (and still are, in some areas), before more technically proficient work got around enough to serve as comparison, and "good enough for filk" started giving way to the idea that one should take the time to do one's best. At

least what they lack in polish they do seem to make up in enthusiasm! A big thing over there is "filk wars," where someone filks another person's song (often naming them in the lyrics) before the ink is dry on the original. Something else that's going on over there is what they call the "Before the Dawn" suite - a filkish version of a shared universe series.

My chief complaint, though, was that smoking was much more prevalent over there than in the states. The only two American smoking filkers I know are Leslie Fish and Bill Sutton. At Con2bile, there were a significant number of smokers, though still probably less than the society at large.

Attendance was just over 100, making it equal to American filk cons. Besides those already mentioned, prominent British filkers in attendance were Gytha North (next year's Consonance GOH), Philip Allcock, Anne Rundle, Pat Brown, and Rhodri James (an excellent voice - he can do a creditable countertenor). They had their own version of Folly Neuhaus as well - this was the first con for Tracey Josham, who has a very good voice and writes good lyrics. (Unlike Folly, she doesn't usually do her own music.)

Besides the usual concert slots (I had one), program items included a cat filk set, microphone technique, an "incomplete filks" workshop, and a "filk wars" set. The open filking closed down much earlier than I am used to, though Sunday night (a good many people stayed over 'til Monday morning) was well-attended.

The gripe session turned up few; the main complaints centered around the over-teching, the hotel (which had inadequate hot water and freezing rooms, even by British standards) and the schedule slippage. I composed a one-verse "Ash Grove" filk in honor of Steven Glover, one of the most prodigious drinkers I've ever met, and purchased my membership for next year's con "on speculation." I gave out a couple of song copies, collected a large number of names and addresses, and was invited to join two APAs.

Perhaps the most intriguing thing that happened to me during the weekend was the remark from one woman that she thought she had heard my song *Wishful Thinking (A Few Years Later)* on a BBC-TV program about the Strategic Defense Initiative! Back in London, I tried to visit Television Centre to try to confirm this, but was turned back at the gate. As of this writing (March 12), they have yet to respond to my letter inquiry. (Yes, I did include a SASE.)

CON REPORT: Consonance
- by Mike Stein

I headed out a day early, leaving Thursday morning and spending the evening having dinner with some old college friends. Friday I went up to see a client and also to get a couple of sets of guitar strings - one of mine had broken when I tried to bring it back up to tune after having loosened the strings for the flight.

By the time I got back to the hotel, things were starting to get underway for the con. I registered and started schmoozing with people. I was surprised by both some attendees (e.g. Myra Bernson from Michigan, who is purely a listener) and some no-shows. Not one of the Off-Centaur crowd showed - not even Leslie Fish. The organizers had wanted the con to be a neutral ground for the factions; even the name, I was told, had been intended to get across the idea of reconciliation. Unfortunately, it did not seem to have happened.

There were no concerts on Friday night. Instead, after the brief introduction of guests (and the surprise presentation to Bob Laurent of a nice assortment of teas and suitable complements), there was a mixer.

The list of performers for Saturday and Sunday was long and varied - there were about twenty concert slots. Barry and Sally Childs-Helton were guests of honor. Joey Shoji organized a fund to fly out Julia Ecklar; they were still looking for donations at the con, but I think Joey finally came out OK. Tom Smith was brought out from Michigan by an anonymous donor. Most of the performers I had at least heard of before, but there were a couple of people who were new to me.

The song contest, on the theme "firsts," drew only four entries. There were two divisions - novice, for people who had never had a song on a tape, and pro, for those who had had at least one song recorded. The novice division was won by default - I did not make a note, unfortunately, but I think that the winner was Dawn Martin. I took the pro division with *You're the First*, a humorous song on one of my favorite subjects - sex.

I was nursing what I thought was a minor cold. However, it grew progressively worse and became bronchitis, which I still haven't shaken, though it seems to be getting better at a glacial pace. I just barely managed to do my concert set and my song contest entry before succumbing to laryngitis brought on by the coughing. I was by far not the only one at the con with some sort of sickness - in fact, I can't ever remember being at another con with so many people sniffing and coughing.

With my throat giving me trouble, I spent a lot of time swilling tea in the con suite, capably administered by Colleen Savitzky. She filled it with many varieties of regular and herb teas, plus healthy foods like hard-boiled eggs, raw vegetables, cheese, and fruit. There was also chocolate and some other varieties of candy on hand; Joey Shoji managed to clean out all the M&M's on Saturday night. Jordin Kare rigged a transmitter from the concert area, so Colleen was able to hear what was going on from the stage and the late-night filks.

Besides the concerts, workshops were given by Heather Rose Jones (harp), Barry and Sally (performance), Sally alone (percussion), Chrys Thorsen (guitar), Karen Jolley (dulcimer), and a group of people on electronics. There were also theme circles - folk, harmony, Celtic, pagan, and space. I attended the Celtic circle and heard Leigh Ann Hussey give a remarkable performance with electric guitar and Macintosh.

There may or may not be a songbook out of the con. I transcribed my song contest entry and gave it to Heather Rose Jones, but she was thin on submissions and won't do one if there isn't enough material. Next year's GOH will be Gytha North, whom I met at Con2bile in England.

FILK CONS AND OTHERS

ROC*KON 14
May 4-6, 1990
Holiday Inn Otter Creek
Little Rock, AR

"Back to The Rock-Con". Guests George Alec Effinger (pro), Randy & Lisa Farran (fan/filk). Reg \$15 til Apr.1, \$18 after. Info PO Box 45122, Little Rock, AR 72214

PHOENIXCON 5.0
May 4-6 1990
Powers Ferry Holiday Inn
Atlanta, GA

Guests: Piers Anthony (pro), Ron & Val Lakey Lindahn (artist), Steve & Sue Francis (fan). Reg. currently \$15.
info Phoenixcon
1579 Monroe Dr.
Box F218
Atlanta, GA 30324
Bill & Brenda Sutton are on the concom:
guaranteed filking.

GALAXY FAIR'90
May 11-13

Fairmont Hotel, Dallas TX.
Guests C.J. Cherryh(GoH), Lois McMaster Bujold(Writer), Robert Asprin(TM), Bill & Brenda Sutton (filk), among others.
Reg \$20 til Apr.1, \$27 after. \$15 Children
A filk concert is planned. Hotel \$65 s/d;
\$75 triple. (214)720-2020. Info Galaxy
Fair, Inc. 5812 Woodsetter, Arlington, TX
76017. (817)572-5547.

MISCON 5
May 11-13
Best Western Executive Motor Inn
Missoula, MT

Guests Elizabeth Scarborough(Author), Phil Foglio(Artist), Steve Jackson(Gaming), Dr. Jane Robinson (Fan)
Reg. \$16 til Apr. 15, \$20 after. Children 6-12 with parent halfprice; under 6 free. Hotel rates vary with bed/body count from \$27 for 1/1 to \$38 for 2/4, plus tax (4%). Info WMSFC/Miscon 5, PO Box 9363, Missoula, MT 59807, phone (406)549-1435.

MARCON
May 18-20
Hyatt Regency at the Ohio Center
Columbus, OH

GoH;s George R.R. Martin and a whole bunch of writers who have been in Wild Cards, also Gahan Wilson (Artist)
Reg \$22 til April 1, \$25 after and at door.
Info PO Box 211101, Columbus OH 43221
phone: (614)2-MARCON

X-CON XIV
June 1-3
Hyatt Regency, Downtown
Milwaukee WI

Guests: Christopher Stasheff(Wizard of Lit.), Joan Hanke-Woods (W.of Art), Wilson "Bob" Tucker (First Fandom W.Adept), Bev & Gene DeWeese, Buck & Juanita Coulson, Elaine Bergstrom. Reg.\$20 til May 2, \$25 after & at-door.\$10 childcare reg (6 mo-6 yrs), \$10 kid-in-tow reg (6-10 yrs). Room \$64 single-quad, (414)276-1234, make reg.by May 2 to guarantee in block.
Info X-Con Ltd, PO Box 7, Milwaukee, WI 53201-0007

AD ASTRA 10
Howard Johnson Airport Hotel, Toronto,
Ontario CANADA

Guests: Terry Pratchett (writer), Frank Kelly Freas (artist), Larry Stewart (TM). Reg. US\$18/C\$22 til May 16; C\$27 at the door (Canadian funds only at the door, please.)
Hotel room C\$72 single, C\$77 double.
Info PO Box 7276 Stn. "A", Toronto,
Ontario, CANADA M5W 1X5

The Filk Foundation
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The Filking Times
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Garden Grove CA 92644

