North American Alliance of Folk Music and Dance

For the second time in as many years, representatives from across USA and Canada's folk community gathered to network and construct an organization.

Held in Philadelphia, PA, from January 25 to 28, the conference was hosted by the Philadelphia Folk Song Society and welcomed over 200 delegates from a wide variety of organizations. The delegates attended discussions and seminars on a wide range of topics, took part in regional networking sessions and by the end of the weekend elected a Board of Directors. Three Canadians have been elected to this Board. They include Ann Blaine from Vancouver, James Keelaghan and Shelley Romalis from Toronto.

Canada was well represented and warmly welcomed as an integral partner in this gathering. Canadian organizations represented were Ontario Council of Folk Festivals, Mariposa Folk Festival, Flying Cloud Folk Club in Toronto, The Woods Song and Dance Folk Society, Folklore International from Montreal, Halifax Harbour Folk Society, Vancouver Folk Festival and the Canadian Folk Music Society. Musicians who came to take part in the showcasing included Ann Lederman, Norm Hacking and Ken Whiteley from Toronto, James Keelaghan from Alberta, and Tom Lewis from Halifax.

News from Tamarack

1990 is proving to be veteran Canadian folk group Tamarack's busiest year ever. The twelve year old traditional trio enjoying the success of their latest (and fifth) album "Shave the Bear." In support of the album they are on the road this
As for myself, after two research trips in Fort Franklin and Fort Norman (in 1988 and 1989), I am learning about singing, drumming, dancing and playing in Denendeh, but I am also learning to appreciate a different way of thinking and of approaching life’s fundamental questions. Each culture has a unique way of dealing with the many facets of life and the exploration of this diversity will forever give ethnomusicological work its human and exciting dimensions.

Nicole Beaudry

Notes from the Field

With a Canada Research Fellowship (SSHRC) and a Standard Research Grant (SRC), I was able to undertake the study of the traditional music and games of the northern Athapaskan people, the Dene Indians of the Canadian Northwest Territories. The long-term program includes researching archival material from the Hudson’s bay Company and from the Oblate missionaries, as well as the ethnographic literature on northern Athapaskans. But it especially entails fieldwork in the areas inhabited by the Mountain, Hare and Slavery Indians, that is, Fort Franklin on Great Bear Lake, Fort Norman and Fort Good Hope on the McKenzie River and Colville Lake, north of Great Bear Lake.

The music and the games of the Dene, never thoroughly studied before, are now, for the Dene themselves, a popular subject; these provide one of the ways of keeping in touch with genuine older traditions that they are proud of. And even though the drum dance songs are of sacred or spiritual origin, the drum dance itself is a greatly appreciated form of social gathering.

A Tribute to D. K. Wilgus

D. K. Wilgus, North America’s finest folksong scholar, died in Los Angeles on Christmas Day from complications following heart surgery. D. K., as he was always known, first came to prominence with his book, Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898. It begins with the “Ballad War” about the origins of the ballads, and goes on to discuss the growth of folksong collecting in Britain and North America, describing and analyzing the major collectors and their books, and then outlines the major developments in folksong studies. Although it was published thirty years ago, no work since has presented as comprehensive and valuable a survey.

While teaching at Kentucky State University, D. K. collected many songs in the area and wrote numerous articles about them. He was record review editor of the Journal of American Folklore from 1959 to 1966, and during that time, reported on all the major traditional records produced in Britain and North America.

In 1962, D.K. left Kentucky to join the Folklore and Mythology Program of the University of California in Los Angeles. Over the next