A festival showcasing traditional and contemporary performances by some of Toronto’s finest Chinese singers, musicians, dancers, actors, storytellers and artisans.

February 18, 1996
HERITAGE DAY FESTIVAL. Wellington County Museum and Archives, Guelph.
(519) 846-0916
Multicultural folk festival, food entertainment and displays representing various cultural groups.

February 23 to 25, 1996
TORONTO FESTIVAL OF STORYTELLING. York Quay Centre, Toronto.
Annual since 1978
(416) 924-8625
75 storytellers from across Canada, family storytelling, concerts, workshops.

February 24, 1996
SOIREE TRADITIONELLE. Welland.

(905) 725-9174
Traditional French Canadian soirée, square and step dances, jigs and reels.
March 17, 1996
IRISH GAELIC TEA. Myrtleville House Museum, Brantford.
(519) 752-3216
Gaelic performances by traditional Irish musicians, Irish foods and tea, horse wagon rides.

April 21, 1996
EARTH DAY CELEBRATION. Ojibway Park, Windsor
(519) 973-1116
Music, performing artists and displays.

May 25 to 27, 1996
ODAWA POW WOW. 411 Corkstown Rd., Nepean.
Annual since 1976
Simone Charette, 396 MacLaren Street, Ottawa K2P 0M8
Bus.: (613) 238-8591; Fax: 238-6106
"Native dancers from across North America compete for prize money Drumming, Native arts and crafts, Native foods."

News, Views, & Stuff

We neglected to mention in the last issue that David Parry’s recordings are available through Bonanza Creek Records, 135 Britannia Road, Ottawa, K2B 5X1.

We apologize for omitting the Edmonton Folk Music Festival from our Festival Directory in the June issue. How we could overlook the fact that one of the largest festivals on the continent was missing, possibly dropped through a computer glitch, is unthinkable, but it happened, and we’re sorry.

By now you will have heard of the death of George Woodcock, one of our most prolific and internationally renowned writers. What you may not have heard about George is that he and his wife Inge … established out of their own pockets a fund for financially destitute Canadian writers, who have none of the employment benefits enjoyed by intellectuals who are attached to institutions.

The Woodcocks set up this wonderful temporary safe-haven to meet a pressing need that has not been addressed by any arts agency in the country. Since 1989, the Woodcock Fund has helped 30 writers through illness and other crises that have left them financially devastated. The Woodcocks’ contribution of $12,000 annually is continuing beyond George’s death, but their generosity can no longer meet the need.

The Woodcock Fund Endowment Campaign is seeking to raise $200,000, in order to guarantee that this important work will continue. While a small number of fortunate writers are able to maintain very comfortable lifestyles on their earnings, most writers must choose between working at their craft part time or living in poverty. In either event, the public suffers along with the artist, though of course this loss is less immediate and many do not even know what they have lost. Geddes notes, "In the face of massive government budget cuts and policies that are undermining our culture, it seems that those of us who can must lend a helping hand to our colleagues in need." A number of successful writers understand this, and donors to the Fund include Margaret Atwood, Pierre Berton, Robert Fulford, and Katherine Govier.

Readers who are able to support this important campaign may write to
The Woodcock Fund
The Writers’ Development Trust
PO Box 15361, Station BBM P
Toronto, Ontario, M7Y 2W1.

Tax receipts will be issued for all donations. In addition, a brochure will be published in 1996, acknowledging all contributions. For more information, phone Nancy Kroeker at The Writers' Development Trust, 416-504-8222.

Another item for our "Folk Process" files, from former Society President Bill Sarjeant.

"Doh-Re-Me" (Canadian Version)
modified after Woody Guthrie

1. If you don't have that doh-re-me, boy,
If you don't have that doh-re-me,
Then you'd better go back to old Manitoba,
Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia or B.C.;
Alberta's a garden of Eden, A paradise for every P.C.,
But believe it or not,
You won't find it so hot,
If you don't have that doh-re-mi.

2. (First four lines as verse 1)
Alberta has much lower taxes,
Which is great for the rich, I'll agree,
But for those with no dough,
There's just no place to go,
If they don't have that doh-re-mi,

3. (First four lines as verse 1)
In Alberta they don't like education,
Museums, health or anything free;
Better pay on the dot,
Or back home you must trot,
If you don't have that doh-re-mi.

lyrics ©1995 by William A.S. Sarjeant

The inside back cover of issue 29:1 featured a couple of photos of cowboy singers, with a request for identification. Daphne Rackstraw and I feel that the right-hand photo is of a young Bev Bandur, whom we knew in later life. He died in October 1994 at the age of 81. Bev was known as "Canada’s Blue Yodeller" for his way with Jimmie Rodgers songs; his voice was also wonderfully suited for cowboy songs such as those of Gene Autry. (For me, Bev's version of "Riding Down the Canyon" typifies "country-western" music in the true sense of the term.) Bev rode the rods in the '30s, and became a radio entertainer in St. Catherines, Winnipeg and Regina before moving to Calgary in 1945; one of his proudest memories was being one of the entertainers on the "Grey Cup Special" train from Calgary to Toronto in 1948—the event which defined the Grey Cup Festival as an integral part of Canadian culture.

When Daphne and I knew Bev, he had come out of retirement to perform in Calgary's folk clubs, and became part of the group The Mystic Sons of the Coyotes, whose other members included Dave Wilkie and Ted Waterman. The group produced an LP, The Mystic Sounds of the Cowboys, likely unavailable now. Bev was featured in a workshop at the 1980 Annual General Meeting of the CFMS in Calgary; longtime members of this Society will remember him in that capacity. He also constructed great-sounding guitars, and contributed many volunteer hours singing in nursing homes and hospitals. The statement in Bev's obituary, "He was a happy man and he made those around him happy," is absolutely true, and I remember him best by his wide smile. [JL]

Some readers may not be aware that U. Utah Phillips has had to cancel his touring activities due to health problems, namely congestive heart failure. While we do not propose in the Bulletin to keep track of all American performers, Phillips has been well loved and highly influential north of the border, and it seems to us that many Canadians will wish him well. On October 6, Utah sent out a letter to his "Friends," explaining his situation and what he intends to do about it. Following are a few excerpts from that open letter, which is apparently floating around the Internet, for those who know how to fish that water.

I know that there are any number of alternative therapies besides "western" medicine out there. But remember, I live in Nevada City, California, the new age capital of the western world. There are so many healers here that it makes me sick. So don't think for an instant that I lack therapeutic advice. I get it all, from mushroom tea to channeling Rudolf Steiner. For now, I'll stick with basic—sound, consistent, well monitored program of medication, exercise (mostly walking), stress reduction, and diet (I'm well into Dr. Dean Ornish's regimen and find it more than adequate). The coronary damage can't be undone. In my risk category, 50% of the people who have this condition live past five years. 50% don't. The idea, then, is longevity—getting into the 50% who do. After talking a lot with the doctor, the cardiologist, and most of all with my wife, Joanna Robinson, I have decided to stop touring and to reduce performing to a minimum.

I know that this is a chore and a trial for those who have put so much effort into producing upcoming shows, especially for my old friends and comrades at Fleming, Tamulevich & Associates who do the booking. I despise cancelling. But I'm at a place where very difficult choices have to be made. So I'm making them. Joanna and I will have to figure out another way to make a living. Prospects? Well, there's the song book which, with the help of the Rex Foundation, is nearing completion. Also, recording projects, one with Ani DiFranco, another with Rosalie Sorrels, and hundreds of hours of live performance tapes (currently being reviewed and indexed.
by Mark Ross in Butte, Montana) that might be boiled down to self-produced recordings. How about a syndicated radio show of interviews, ruminations, live recording excerpts, and rational politics? (By the way, this would be a good time to ask that live recordings of past performances be sent to me here at home.) ... In any case, there's more than enough to do. And a lot to get done that I need to see to before it can't get done anymore.

I'm leaving a trade which I love very much. When I left Utah over 45 years ago, I had only a slim hold on what folk music was, $75 in my pocket, a head full of songs and stories, and no prospects. When I landed at Cafe Lena in Saratoga Springs, New York, I found gradually that I had stumbled into a family that was in fact transcontinental.... Listen. For 25 years now I have been part of a family which has given me a living—not a killing, but a living—a trade without bosses where I felt partners with those working in organized folk music, a trade in which I could own what I do, make all of the creative decisions, be free to say and sing whatever I chose to, courting criticism from peers and loving friends. Front porch, kitchen, back yard, drunk and sober, young and old, coast-to-coast folk music, a world in which I discovered that I don't need power, wealth, or fame. I need friends. And that's what I found and still find.... Who needs the "entertainment" industry? Who needs mass media? Small is beautiful! To hell with the mainstream.

It's polluted. What purifies the mainstream? The little tributaries up in the wilderness where the pure water flows. Better to be lost in the tributaries known to a few than mired in the mainstream, consumed with self-love and the absurdity of greed. Please. Don't give our world up. It needs to grow, yes—but subtly, out, through, under, quietly, like water eroding stone, subversive, alive, happy.

... I'll keep most of the irons in the fire, writing, talking. You younger ones who want to take your song over the road, let's talk. Anyone who wants to be in touch, I'm at PO Box 1235, Nevada City, California, USA 95959. I don't have an "e-mail" whatever, but maybe someone hereabouts does. If so, have them pass missives along to me when they see me on the street.

Love, U. Utah Phillips

Phillips did not in his letter request assistance with funding, but people have remembered that the United States is not a great location for illness when you've had your livelihood truncated. Among others, the IWW has created a Utah Phillips Solidarity Fund % Industrial Workers of the World, 103 W. Michigan Avenue, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197, USA. Make checks payable to Utah Phillips. You might also send it directly to Phillips at the address he gives in his letter. Sounds like a good excuse for a benefit concert—you know that Utah would love to think that you were having a good time while you thought about him!

Mr. Harrison remembers having lots of parties in the winter. As they never had too much money, a couple of the men would go to Drumheller for a few bottles of liquor.... Alf Govin would play the violin and two boys living on the Nolan farm just east of Redland could play the accordion. Margaret Males would play the piano. This would make up the music for the dances. Sometimes there would be just the violin. Some of the men would play poker, and the party would go on all night.

During the party they would take up a collection to pay for the liquor. If there was any money left over, it would go towards buying liquor for the next party. These parties were held about once ever two weeks.

Merle Marshman, Where We Crossed the Creek and Sealed (Rockyford, Alberta)

Years ago, a good many of Rimbey's social events were sponsored by an organization known as the Rimbey Literary Society. On one memorable occasion, a huge crowd was enjoying a dance in Rimbey's first dance hall, which was built by Woods and Peabody. In fact, the crowd was so large that a numbering system was adopted. Everyone was given a number, and the odds and the evens took turns standing outside while the other half danced.

The orchestra, composed of Clarence Platt as organist and Mike Donovan, Bert Saunders and Al Preston as fiddlers, was in the midst of a hoedown, with eleven sets on the floor.

Suddenly, the merriment was interrupted by one Fred Hayes, described as a wild and woolly hombre from 'way out west. Stamping and shouting and brandishing a 30-30 rifle, he demanded revenge on the guy who had stolen his gal. He really broke up that square dance. Those 44 people were said to have cleared the floor in mighty short order. Hayes virtually had the floor to himself. How he did it isn't clear, but he got his girl back and later married her.

Author unknown. Pas-Ka-Poo (Rimbey, Alberta)