

RETROSPECTIVES

The Frostbite Folk Festival (1st annual) held Feb. 16, 17 was a great success with Dave Essig, Willie P. Bennett, Pied Pear plus local artists like 2 Rivers, Brian Valli and Herbie Bouman and Andrea Davidson, the latter stealing the show from the imports. Interesting workshops including "The Mines, the Mills and the Factories", "Ye Olde Thyme Music", "Hank Williams Pain Songs and Newbury's Train Songs and Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain". There were also instruction workshops on harmonica, improvisation, banjo and voice. There will definitely be another Frostbite festival next year. Contact: Mel Orecklin, 42 Dieppe Rd., Whitehorse, Y.T. Y1Z 3A9

Larry Saidman

11th Annual Regina Folk Festival

If you missed the 11th Annual Regina Folk Festival in April, don't despair—next year's is only 10 months away. If you were there and still haven't recovered, don't worry—compulsive foot-stomping and hand-clapping don't cause cancer. They are, however, highly contagious, as over 1,000 folk fans found out to their everlasting delight. Humorous ditties, softly-crooned love ballads and social commentary combined with enough fancy pickin' and hot lickin' to keep even the most jaded festival veterans smiling and singing along all weekend.

Even the speeches and overtly political performances were well-received as though an unspoken agreement between audience and performers made it appropriate, if not *de rigueur* to criticize government and corporate activities and policies. Anti-uranium songs by performers from Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta elicited particularly warm responses. Not that the audience represented a wide cross-section of the population. Most belonged to the slowly aging but not slowing down counter-culture—the people who used to live in communal houses, hitch-hiking across the country with musical instruments, herbal teas and other illicit substances stashed in their knapsacks. Some of them are still doing it, others are still dreaming about it. But many have by now settled down, bought houses, planted gardens and even had babies. In all, the festival drew an interesting crowd. Many were musicians and performers themselves; others were writers and photographers, craftspeople, teachers and union

workers. The back-to-the-land crowd came back to the city for a weekend fling; the co-ops were there, as were organizers of all sorts. The scientists, the waitresses, the labourers and even the unemployed also came.

It was a great opportunity to greet old friends, make new ones and exchange ideas on how we're all getting by. Through it all, the music provided the central focus for the celebration. Its choice ranged from the personal to the very traditional, but all the possibilities in between were also covered. We heard the blues; unaccompanied single performers sang as did groups as large as 35. There were bagpipe solos every night and the 15 members of the Swift Current Old Time Fiddlers nearly brought the house down.

Kids were more than welcome. They were even provided with their own room to mess up, complete with healthy snacks, puppet shows, magic tricks, clowns and even face paint and costumes.

In future years, it is to be hoped festival organizers will look towards attracting a more culturally diverse group of performers. There were no Native entertainers and the ethnic dancers of previous years were sadly lacking. Such a broadening of scope should encourage a more mixed audience as well.


The work necessary to organize and ensure the smooth running of the Folk Festival is done entirely by volunteers. Even some of the performers played for free. All the people who helped engineer the fine and memorable weekend stand to be congratulated. I'm already looking forward to next year.

Marian Gilmour

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