

## ATLANTIC REGION

For many years Halifax has had a coffee house or two where local folkies could find an outlet for their talents, and places like Ginger's Tavern run "open-mike" nights (Ginger's is on Tuesdays) when anyone bold enough can get up on the stage and play to the audience. This kind of arrangement works well for certain kinds of songs (e.g. traditional British chorus songs and Gordon Lightfoot numbers), but doesn't work so well for other types of song. The main drawback of the stage performance arrangement, as I see it, is that people who are not very good or who suffer from stage fright, are likely to be harangued or at least ignored, rather than receiving encouragement. (Fair enough: if you sit down in a lounge for beer or coffee you expect to be entertained, you don't want to listen to somebody play poorly.) Up till now, Halifax has lacked a folk club where people of all ranges of abilities and tastes in folk music could get together and play for each other. However, several people there have finally gone beyond talking about a folk club, and have initiated the **Halifax Folk Society**. Among these people are professional singers Sandy Greenberg and Ted Jordan. I spoke to Sandy and Patrick Purcell about it when they were in Saint John recently.

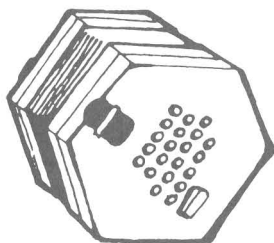
The Halifax Folk Society has had only a few meetings so far, and they have not yet (as of this writing) settled their organization or location; meetings have been held in The Space ("Halifax's newest coffee house"—1579 Grafton St.), in space that has been coffee houses before (Privateer's Warehouse was there at one time, and most recently it was called Odin's Eye). Word of the new club has been spreading rapidly by mouth, and there are already some 15 members, including amateurs as well as professionals. They have been using the song circle approach, "specifically so that every person has their fair chance to sing a song, or tell a folk tale, or do a folk dance, or whatever," Patrick said (adding

that no one has yet done a dance). The organizers of the Society looked at the structure of several clubs in the east and west to get ideas about how to set up the club. A steering committee is to meet in late March to allot jobs, consider the time and location for regular meetings, and to plan a "coming out" concert.

Speaking of new folk clubs: **Gordon Campbell** (see *Atlantic Insight*, March issue, p. 30) has been trying to get a club going in Wolfville, N.S. (home of Acadia University). So far he is the only member; he says he's had good press coverage but seems to be the victim of the "great idea but..." syndrome. He hasn't yet succeeded in luring local performers out of their kitchens, but he has run a concert every 2-3 weeks in a restaurant after hours on Sundays, which have attracted 30-40 people. Campbell plans to take a summer recess, and hopes in the fall to find a new location and to get more local performers involved. Meanwhile, he's working up a trade as a luthier.

Two festivals coming up in Nova Scotia this summer: **The Atlantic Folk Festival** this year will feature Pete Seeger and Arlo Guthrie. It will be held August 1-3 at Moxom's Farm, just off the Trans-Canada Highway at Exit 14, midway between Truro and Halifax. The **3rd Maritime Country Folk Festival**, for those who like their festivals smaller (and more sober), and who don't mind the admixture of country music, will take place in Oxford, N.S., July 11-13. For more information about this one write to Sim Ruston, Ellis St., Oxford.

*Chris Lobban*



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