

The EthnoFolk Letters - 1

Dear fellow members;

I thought I'd try my own favourite writing medium -- the old-fashioned letter -- first to tell you some news, and as time goes on, for all of us to exchange news, ideas, whatever occurs to us: your trips, memorable performances you've heard (or been part of), questions (looking for a specific song? community?), etc. If no one else writes in the next issues, I'll tell you stories about my various 1992 quincennial excursions to Turkey, Greece, Spain, Israel and Morocco; the bear sauntering past our window in downtown Istanbul; or women's frying-pan playing techniques in a Salamanca village; or our gig at the Diaspora Museum the night Tel Aviv was flooded; or ... but I digress. Actually, in this letter I wanted to tell you about how CSMT's pressing need for a Treasurer was met -- How Gordon Came to be Acting Treasurer of CSMT.

Several CSMT members were at this year's Ethnomusicology conference in Seattle last weekend and decided to meet to discuss possible approaches to the Society's financial and other problems. So, Friday's lunch break found us around a table staring gloomily at our salmon pizzas. We each confirmed our commitment to CSMT, but were worried about whether there would be a CSMT to be unwaveringly committed to. Ideas flitted about like bright birds, but kept homing back to the prosaic need for both money and someone to manage it. Bit by bit, we realized that Gordon Smith did not display that desperately self-effacing please-don't-notice-my-existence look every time the word "treasurer" came up. We began to snatch covert glances at Gordon between bites of pizza. He did not flinch, indeed began to look openly reflective. Finally, he said, mildly, as one might ask, "Has the rain stopped?" or "What kinds of pizza have you?": "What would being Treasurer actually involve?" Six heads swivelled toward him. Six bright pairs of eyes focussed their blinding gaze upon him. Six voices intoned as one, "Oh, Gordon, we'll all help you!" Ritual protests ("Now, I don't actually have much experience.") were duly answered by this same empowering antiphonal chorus ("Oh, Gordon, we'll all help you!"). It was an uplifting moment, from which we returned with renewed enthusiasm to our pizza.

Seriously, we would like to thank Gordon for taking this on. For those of you who haven't met him, Gordon teaches at Queen's University in Kingston, and has worked extensively with French Canadian songs (you can find one of his articles in the *CFMS Journal*, 1989, "Ernest Gagnon on Nationalism and Canadian Music: Folk and Native Sources". We appreciate the work of the last few Treasurers, but each had promised to take on the job as an interim measure, and Gordon is willing to carry on

for a full term (if, of course, elected by due process at the next meeting, and with our help), which means we'll have the consistent base we need to operate the Society and apply for the grants which enable us to have meetings, publications and all the essentials.

Those of us present at the meeting in Seattle (Nicole Beaudry, Kenneth Chen, myself, Bev Diamond, Jocelyne Guibault, Irene Markoff, Regula Qureshi, Paula Savilla and Gordon) began to discuss how each of us could best contribute to the Society in concrete ways. Nicole and Jocelyne will be applying themselves to grant applications, and I'll start this column, and continue working as Recording Secretary and, with Jay Rahn, initiating and keeping up contact with other organizations such as "The Folk Alliance." Meanwhile, please send us your own thoughts, ideas, news, ways in which you would like to contribute -- any communication, in French or English, and songs, stories, proverbs in any language. CSMT needs more members, and more member involvement; with the geographical distances involved, the **Bulletin** is the ideal medium.

Till later,
Judith Cohen

[Contributions for The EthnoFolk Letters should be sent to Judith at 751 Euclid Ave., Toronto, Ont. M6G 2V3.]

(Judith Cohen propose une nouvelle section du **Bulletin**, "Les Lettres EthnoFolk", dont la première, ci-haut, parle d'une réunion non-officielle de quelques membres de la SCTM qui assistaient dernièrement à un congrès à Seattle. Pendant cette réunion, on a cherché chacun des moyens pour aider la Société, et Gordon Smith a accepté d'agir comme Trésorier, au moins jusqu'à la prochaine Assemblée générale, et après aussi, s'il sera élu par les membres. Ceci rendra possible notre fonctionnement quotidien et facilitera nos demandes de subventions. Pour sa part, Judith propose de s'occuper de ces "Lettres," et vous invite à contribuer des communications, en français ou en anglais, aux membres. Le contenu est entièrement ouvert: des nouvelles, des remarques, des voyages, des enregistrements ou concerts intéressants, etc.)