

## The Centrefold

According to a partial result of the survey conducted along with membership renewals (results which we're continuing to tabulate for the rest of the year), over half of our members consider themselves to read reasonably fluently in French as a first or second language. So those of you who like to keep up with happenings in other parts of the country would do well to cast an eye at a couple of informative French-language newsletters.

One is *Le billochét*, organ of *Le Centre franco-ontarien de folklore* in Sudbury (of which our Associate Editor Donald Deschênes is Director General). The one copy I've seen so far includes a short article on a Breton folksong concerning the capture of a ship, "Le Foudroyant," in 1758. The ship shows up in songs in French Ontario as "Le Foudrion," and the article draws some interesting parallels. There's also a folk tale, "Les Voleurs de poules", a brief profile of sculptor Maurice Gaudreault, and updates on the Centre's successful revival of traditional song-and-story sessions for the holidays *La Sainte-Catherine* and *La Fête des Rois*. (Donald told us in more

detail about the latter at the paper session at last year's Annual General Meeting of CSTM.) The newsletter lists recent acquisitions of publications by the Centre, recommends books on history and music available at the public library, mentions upcoming TV shows featuring franco-ontarien storytellers, and of course includes news of organizational doings, like all good newsletters.

*Le billochét* is available with membership, \$20.00 per year. Its frequency is unspecified. The address is: Centre franco-ontarien de folklore, Maison d'Youville, 38, rue Xavier, Sudbury, Ontario P3C 2B9.

The CSTM's meeting in Québec in 1987 was hosted by the group which later became *Le Centre de valorisation du patrimoine vivant*, so we've been receiving their Bulletin for years (but I have only one copy before me at present). As you'd expect in a milieu with many thriving organized folk music events, many festival reports, from throughout the province, are included in the newsletter. There's also a column of other news

briefs. For example, I was interested to see that old time dances at Le Poulailier (literally "The Chicken Coop") in Inverness are being revived. We had a memorable experience there in 1987—it's definitely "à ne pas manquer"!

The Centre has a goodly selection of cassettes and CDs of Quebec traditional music for sale, which might in themselves be worth the price of a membership. The rate is \$10.00 (student/senior), \$15.00 (individual), \$25.00 (family) and \$30.00 (organization). As usual with newsletters, there's no indication of the frequency of publication of the Bulletin, but this issue is designated "Printemps 1996," so I'd guess quarterly. The address is: Centre de valorisation du patrimoine vivant, 310, boulevard Langelier, suite 241, Québec, Québec G1K 5N3.

Newsletters of local organizations are an oft-neglected source of information about other regions of the country and aid invaluablely in getting the "big picture" of what's happening musically and culturally in Canada. Making the small investment to join helps out these organizations and gives us valuable windows into what's going on throughout our nation. [JL]

The British Columbia Folklore Society has presented its first issue of *BC Folklore*, eight pages of great promise. They begin with a discussion of the Society itself, a few queries, odds and ends, and a list of new items received for their library, which they describe as "extensive." More details on their library would be useful—one would like to know where it is located and how (or if) scholars and interested persons might have access to it. Editor Murray Shoolbraid notes that future issues of *BC Folklore* will include notes on current research and reminiscences from folklorists, a continuing "Folklore Glossary" explaining terms of the discipline (obviously the publication is intended to appeal both to specialists and fans), and an examination of "the song of the Seaforth Highlanders, 'Glenwhoorple' ...." Congratulations to Shoolbraid and to the Society!

Subscriptions to *BC Folklore* run \$10.00 (students, seniors, unwaged), \$15.00 (individual), \$20.00 (household), \$25.00 (institutions), \$50.00 (supporting business), \$100.00 supporting member, \$500.00 (benefactor). Write to the British Columbia Folklore Society, PO Box 312, Cobble Hill, BC, V0R 1L0.

A recent issue of *Pass It On!: The Journal of the Children's Music Network* (#22, Winter 1996) includes a rather thorough interview with Raffi, who has some interesting comments to make on the subject of computers and television. Asked why he has avoided videos and television specials, the singer says, "Sure you can reach more people, but what are you saying to them? If the message is lost in the medium, that's part of the problem here. There's enough video for kids to watch.... Of course we want children to watch appropriate imagery. But quantity of watching may be even more important." He cites the research of American academic who may have demonstrated that the passive experience of television watching may "impede a

child's neurological development." The same concern applies to computers: "It's a silly idea that you need to give a young child a computer at birth in order to gain a leg up, as if a child were born to compete.... The word 'interactive' is the cleverest sales slogan since 'new and improved.'" Raffi's conclusion is startling, and one wishes more performers would consider the implications of it: "The children's entertainment industry is not geared to serve children. It's geared to sell things." The same thing applies to the (so-called) adult music industry, of course.

Membership for Canadians in The Children's Music Network ranges from \$40.00 (individual and family) to \$155.00 (corporate), with a couple of points in between. (Prices in US dollars.) Write them at PO Box 1341, Evanston, Illinois, USA 60204-1341.



*Folklines* 178 (December 1995/January 1996), the publication of the Queensland Folk Federation, was sent to us by Gregg Brunskill, our man in Australia (see the Letters column). An attractive publication overall (though I was surprised by the number of typos I noticed, one or two of which slowed down my geriatric comprehension—perhaps my own face can be spared a few blushes), it's a little heavy on event news to interest many North American readers, but I found a couple of items quite readable.

"More Than Just A Number" is Rob Willis's account of a recent visit to old time musician Bert Jamieson in a nursing home. Jamieson, 92 years at the time of the visit, was an important source for older dance tunes from the Australian bush. In 1991, an edition of tunes collected from him was published by Carrawobity Press, and Willis and others put together a recording, with Jamieson in the fore, of many of these tunes. Willis's brief article manages to offer a portrait of Jamieson's awakening from his ill-health to the sound of music, an overview of Jamieson's importance to Australian folk music lovers, and some important comments upon the relationship of collectors and those who share their music with them. A photo of Jamieson and one tune, an unnamed mazurka, accompany the article.

In a brief but substantial interview with Paddy Moloney (which accompanies his review of The Chieftains' appearance at Queensland), James Harper draws some interesting quotes, but Canadians might want to take note of the following: "There's a bit of a complex. Irish people are funny, you have to go away and make something abroad, then you come back and you're a massive hero. Like the Clancy Brothers did a great job in the early sixties when they did their big thing in America and they became heroes back home. Before that you wouldn't see them anywhere in Ireland...." Readers will remember that Brunskill noted in an earlier letter (Bulletin 30.1) that for many Australians, "folk music" refers to British and American acoustic music; the mental habits of colonialism seem to have begun very close to the British centre of things, probably at the London city limits.

The QFF-Folklines people have begun an interesting project, "a cultural mapping of Australia, defining the place and

value of tradition to contemporary Australia.... to define and highlight the cultural layers, forces and deeper 'folk roots' that formed and presently make up the contemporary culture of Australia." The Project, the results of which will in part be presented at the Woodforad-Maleny Folk Festival, will "aim to examine and present connections between the cultures represented at the festival, with a view to increasing the understanding of the role of tradition in contemporary Australian society." I'm reminded of a few, less grandiose but nonetheless significant, projects undertaken during the 60s with the profits from the Newport Folk Festival (some collection projects were funded, Mississippi John Hurt was given a guitar, &c.); have any Canadian festivals returned anything to the source in such fashion?

Worth noting, as well, that in this fairly slim publication (22 pages, generally with only two small columns and wide margins), two Canadian performers are given notice, Heather Bishop as a member of the Wandering Women Tour and, more

substantially, Sarah McLaughlin as an opener for The Chieftains. Given the increasingly important role of the antipodean nations in the literary culture of Canada, perhaps the lovers of traditional music in our country might wish to begin to pay attention to Australian folk music. The Bert Jamieson recording might be a good place to start—or Dave de Hugard (see Brunskill, this issue). I myself have an older cassette by the latter, *The Magpie in the Wattle* (Larrikin LRF-158), which is a delightful mix of country dances and songs, featuring concertina, button accordion, and fiddle. The Jamieson tune book and tape, as well as other recordings, by de Hugard and others, are apparently available from David De Santi, Wongawilli Colonial Dance Club Inc., PO Box 17, Albion Park, New South Wales, 2527.

For Folklines itself, write Folklines PO Box 840, Nambour 4560. The price is given as \$20 annually (Australian \$\$, not Canadian), but that's probably for domestic consumption. You might want to write for a current price. [GWL]