



MONADNOCK FOLKLORE SOCIETY

August

1982

NEWSLETTER

Volume Two
Number 8

THE JOURNAL FOR FOLK CULTURE IN SOUTHWESTERN NEW HAMPSHIRE



THE DUBLIN TOWN HALL

A Symbol of Our Unique New England Heritage

FRIENDS OF THE DUBLIN TOWN HALL

Last month we reported on the movement in Dublin to restore the Town Hall. A committee, called The Friends of the Dublin Town Hall, has been formed to raise funds and increase public awareness of the value of the town hall, both as a gathering place, and as a beautiful structure.

Chairman Lucy Shonk reports that things are going well for the project. There are over thirty individuals in Dublin heading up the fund raising drive, and public response has been heartening. While they are far from the final goal of \$85,000, early donations have been encouraging enough to point to the feasibility of that goal.

Donations of any amount are welcome, and all donors will have their name written on a plaque to be located in the restored hall. All gifts are fully deductible and may be made out to: Dublin Town Hall Fund
Box 184
Dublin, NH 03444

It will be a fine day when we can dance again in the Dublin Town Hall.

(Our cover this month is taken from the brochure put out by the Friends of the Dublin Town Hall. Used with permission.)



DISARMAMENT FESTIVAL

AUGUST 8th, 12:00-DUSK at ANOTHER PLACE
GREENVILLE, NH.

Sunday, August 8th, marks the anniversary of the week of the bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

It is the struggle of our time to defuse the madness which nuclear war represents. In an effort to emphasize the good things in our life, by which we can overcome the fears that lead us astray, there will be a festival at Another Place Conference Center, Route 123, in Greenville, New Hampshire.

There will be a film, music, speakers, a 3.6 mile foot race, a suitcase art show, a contra dance, and a sunset service.

For more information call 878-3429.

ZUCCHINI 82

The First Annual International Zuchinni Festival is being held in Harrisville on August 28th. The day begins with a parade at 10:00 AM. There will be contests, revelry, eating and drinking throughout the day, with a street dance at 8:00 PM featuring 50's music.

Awards are being offered in categories too numerous to name here. Brochures are available at shops and restaurants. For more information contact:

THE ZUCCHINI CENTRAL COMMITTEE
Too Bad Farm
R.F.D. Marlboro, NH 03455
603/827 - 3254

Proceeds from the day will be donated to the Harrisville School.

603-827-3726



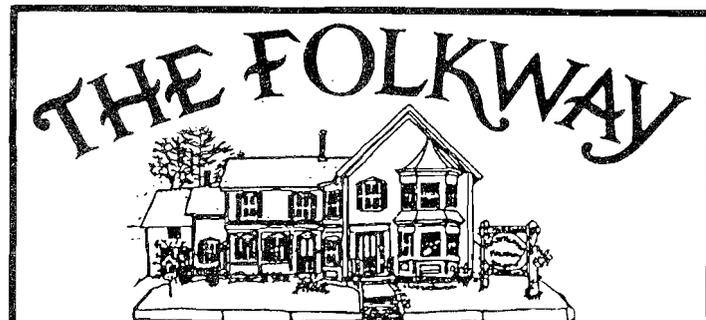
hal grant associates
real estate

116 Hancock Road

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"There's more culture around here in one weekend than there is in two months in Montreal".

- Ed Moore, formerly of the group BARDE, on a recent visit to this area.



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WHEN THE SET GETS SHORTER: an editorial

Early last spring, New England Tradition (Bob McQuillen, Pete Colby, April Limber) and myself travelled to Pittsfield, Mass. and Albany, New York to do a weekend's worth of dances. I am, when it comes to dancing, a real New England chauvinist: I can't conceive of anywhere else in the world being as fine as dancing in southern New Hampshire. To my surprise, there are many fine, enthusiastic, friendly dancers "out there", in the wilds beyond the Vermont border.

To say that our dances there were well attended would be an understatement. We had about a hundred and fifty dancers in one well-stuffed Albany hall. And they loved us. Treated us like visiting royalty. Clapped and cheered and stomped. Even laughed at Bob's jokes. The following week we did a dance in Henniker. About twenty people showed up. Needless to say, it all got me to thinking.

Dudley Laufman, who got me, and a lot of other people, dancing a good many years ago, says that contra dancing is dying out - on another downward turn. Judging from some dances I've been to recently - as a dancer as well as a caller - I might tend to agree. You can't predict, anymore, which dances will draw crowds. You can hardly predict, even with experienced tried and true callers like Todd Whitmore and Tony Parks, where the dancers will come from. What does it mean when a good band can cause lots of excitement two hundred miles from home, and not make the hall rent (let alone their own!) the next week?

So many factors are involved in "who goes to dances". Gas is expensive: no doubt about it. Admission prices are going up, in order to match overhead costs. The market is saturated: there are a number of respectable callers around and you have to pick and choose. But I sense that there's something else going on here too. Maybe in our growing cosmopolitan-ism we're rejecting the "provincial" and rather elite area of country dancing. Maybe the nostalgia of the bicentennial era is wearing off. Maybe we're doing too many other things - or just getting old?

This is meant to be, not so much an editorial, as a request for feedback. I'm vitally interested in the future of country dancing, and that means interested in the people who do it. Why do you dance? Where do you dance? How do you like an evening's dancing to be run? Which halls do you like the best? Which bands? Old "chestnuts" for dances, or the newer ones? If you're a newcomer, what makes you feel at home at a dance?

I guess this is sounding a bit like the proverbial Harris poll. I'd be grateful for your thoughts, either in writing, or at a dance (please not during Hull's Victory!). Perhaps we can get some thoughts and opinions published in the next few newsletters.

Where is the dancing going? Plato wrote, "The well-educated are those who can sing and dance well". Are we in danger of illiteracy?

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Cloth of Many Colors

Mary DesRosiers



MORRIS ANYONE ?

The Harrisville Women will be accepting new dancers for their team during September and October. Interested women should call Mary DesRosiers, squire, at 827-3423.

There's also a new men's team forming; interested dancers (experienced or not) should call Bill Thomas at 478-3488.



Peterborough, New Hampshire has certainly come to be considered a major focal point for folk music in New England. Much of this reputation was developed in the days of radio station WSLE (rest its soul), which had a nationally known reputation for a format that included some excellent folk music programming. At this same time, the Folkway Coffeehouse was emerging as a major club.

For many of us it is difficult to remember what life was like around here before the Folkway and the radio station. Things would not have developed as they have were it not for some seeds planted years ago, which have grown into a solid foundation for what we enjoy today. A stalwart pillar of this foundation is folksinger and luthier, Chris Pearne.

Chris spent his childhood years in Cleveland. As he began to pursue an interest in music, he was met by the folk music revival of the sixties. The TV show Hootenany, and the many radio stations on the bandwagon provided influence from Peter, Paul and Mary, Joan Baez, The Kingston Trio, Eric Anderson, Buffy St. Marie, Patrick Sky, Bob Gibson, and the inevitable Bob Dylan.

Chris began picking and singing his way east in 1966. After being turned off by what he found to be a cutthroat music scene in New York, he chose the gentler Boston area to move into. While he was to spend the next several years working in Boston and Worcester (which at that time had a very active folk culture), he took up official residence in Mason, New Hampshire, and has called this area home ever since.

At that time, Chris recalls, there was a small interest in folk music in and around Peterborough, with occasional church basement coffeehouses. But most of the action was in Boston at such clubs as the Turks Head, The Loft, The Sword in the Stone, The Unicorn, and Club 47 (now Passim), and in Worcester at the Y-Not, a YMCA sponsored club.

With poetry and music in his blood, Chris emerged not only as a performer, but as a songwriter. In 1968 he placed second as most popular songwriter in a vote taken by the Boston Broadside - a Boston folk scene newspaper. While he was involved in the political activism of the era, and sang his share of protest songs, his own material at that time tended to be somewhat introspective.

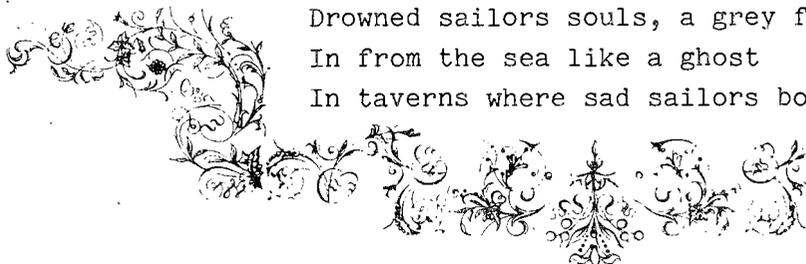
I think it was night time when we were first one
And soon it was morning and we were the sun.
The trees are all strangers now, ancient and wise,
And we may be trees when we die.

His next songwriting phase was story songs, which included collaborating with his brother Dennis (a fine musician in his own right with whom Chris occasionally performs) on a score for an Orson Wells stage adaptation of Moby Dick. The score saw performances first in summerstock theater, and eventually made the well known Cleveland Playhouse.

The clock rings eight bells in the village where we dwell
Scattered like shells on the shore.

Drowned sailors souls, a grey fog that ever rolls
In from the sea like a ghost
In taverns where sad sailors boast.

Seven long months now at sea
Twenty one fine mates and me
Long to be... Long to be...



In early 1975 Chris got a call from Folkway co-founder Jonathan Hall, who asked him to play at one the the first coffehouses in that establishment. Several conversations later Chris and his wife Susie joined the core group of volunteers who helped Jonathan and Widdie get the place going. Both Chris and Susie have served in a variety of ways as mainstays of the Folkway, and Chris still runs the Wednesday night Open Stage, which he initiated.

A strategic turning point in Chris's life came when he began working in the music shop which then existed at the Folkway. He had learned, out of necessity, how to do minor repairs on guitars, and soon he was taking in work from the shops customers. Jonathan perceived Chris's knack for repair, and encouraged him to take up a formal study of guitar building. Soon Chris was studying with Charles Fox at Earthworks (now known as Guitar Research & Design) in So. Stafford, VT.

A few weeks later he returned with a masterpiece. Currently working on his tenth guitar, Chris points out that his official occupation is in the repair of fretted instruments, and he considers it a positive statement of music in this area that he has plenty of work. Guitar building alone, as he does it, could not generate a livelihood. Nor does he want it to, for as with his music, upon which he has had to at times rely on to eat, he perfers to think of it as a labor of love.

The repairs do more than provide a living though. Over the years Chris has been able to see the weak points, and the strong points, of many guitars. Before he had even built his first guitar, he had performed surgery on enough Gibsons, Guilds and Martins to know what kind of problems could develop and why.

Chris's design for guitars is a pre-dreadnaught style (slightly rounder than the dreadnaught), using a modified version of the traditional Martin bracing (he will not divulge what those modifications are). His choice of woods is traditional; German spruce top, rosewood, maple, walnut or mahogany sides, and always mahogany for the neck, because of its stability. All but the walnut has to be imported, and Chris will use only wood that is naturally seasoned. The increasing unavailability of these woods is one reason why Chris doesn't try to produce more guitars. As it is, he will spend one hundred and fifty hours, over a period of six months to a year, on one instrument.

Eventually Chris would like to specialize in building twelve string guitars. He has produced two so far, claiming them to be among the few that can be safely tuned to, and held at concert pitch. The geometry of twelve strings is critical - the pull of the strings at the bridge is about 180 lbs, as opposed to about 90 lbs on a six string. Imagine that on a piece of spruce only 1/8th of an inch thick!

Because he uses only naturally dried wood, and is very selective in his choice of laquers and glues, the guitars "aquire their voice" in about two years. Generally a factory built guitar take about ten years to reach its full sound. And Chris builds his guitars with the idea that they are a lifetime instrument for their owner.

continued next page



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August 5th - A Dance and Concert with Susie Crate and Fred & Jenny Armstrong-Park. On tour from Swannanoa, North Carolina, this should be a very lively and entertaining evening. Most of the evening will be dancing, but these folks are fine musicians all around and we'll be sure to have them sing us a few songs. See the enclosed poster for details.

August 8th - David Colburn & Deborah Stuart at the Cap Mountain Bakery in Troy. David and Debbie have travelled through the British Isles and many parts of this country. They specialize in childrens songs and work extensively in schools. However their overall repertoire is quite varied and is sure to be enjoyed by all.

Music at the bakery is from 7:30 - 10:00. Donation is a dollar, and there are divinely inspired refreshments available. Right on

Pearne (continued)

As a musician, and a luthier, Chris has both participated in, and observed the folk music activities that have developed over the years. Regionally, we now have the Folkway, Deacon Brodies, and the Monadnock Folklore Society, all of which have been inspired by local interest, and have gone on to return that inspiration to larger groups of people.

But what is folk music? There is talk of a new folk revival. Will it be like the sixties revival? Chris sees some similarities, but he also perceives some important differences.

"It used to be a matter of baring your soul to the audience - they loved it and they expected it. And now it's got to be a big joke. This makes it harder for me - I'm still serious about my music."

To Chris, the emphasis is no longer on the folk song, it's on the entertainer. Folk music has become show business. The desire for meaningful material has taken second place to people's desire to be amused.

Chris does not discredit fine material because it is presented with a flash. In fact, he has an honest admiration for such showmen as Jim Post and Stan Rogers - he enjoys their songs and their performances.

But as he speaks, there is a little sadness that the folk revival of the eighties might be missing something.

I have been like a sword in the hands of the Lord,
I have been here before, this I know.
There's a place I must find, in my heart, in my mind,
I'll be lost for a time, this I know.

Though I know I have strayed, been misled and delayed
I will not be dismayed.
There's a simpler way - This I know.



the Common in Troy. This is a pleasant, low keyed way to end one week and start the next.

September 12 - Keene's fine bluegrass duo Whole Wheat will be at the bakery.

September 17 - A lively concert with the Cranberry Lake Jugband, from Cazenovia, NY. Interspersing their main repertoire of old timey and jugband music, with some ragtime, swing, and blues, this thoroughly entertaining group was a favorite at the Chelsea house in Vermont. We look forward to their return to this area. Concert location to be announced shortly.

September 18 - 5:00 PM - A picnic for members of the Monadnock Folklore Society, at Barbara Fraser's house in Greenfield. Details to follow in a letter to members. Be sure to reserve this date.

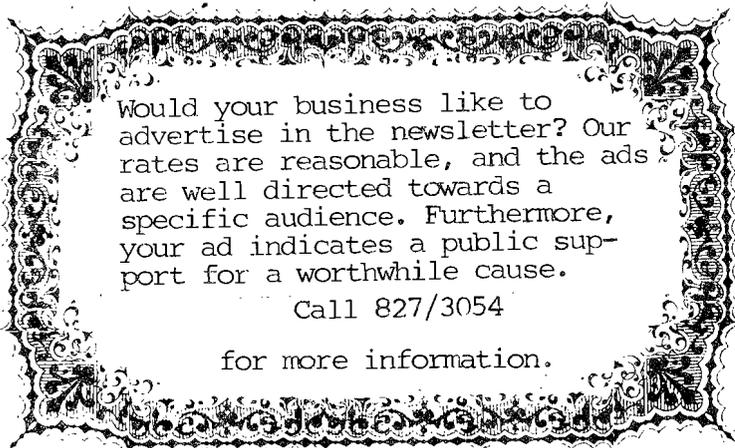
October 10 - Carl Jacobs, singer and songwriter from Keene, sharing his warmth and music at the Gap Mountain Bakery.

A Completed Cycle

It was a year ago this August that Mary DesRosiers and I received a letter from Sandy Bradley, asking if we wanted to have her call a dance in the Monadnock area as part of her eastern tour. It was at that time that we decided we needed an organization to facilitate such requests, as well as the growing interest that we and many of our friends had in "folkstuff".

We asked Jennifer Price, Ken Wilson and Gary Heald to join us as directors of the group, in part because they were people who shared our interest, and also because we felt that the experience and personality of each of us combined would make for a productive combination of resources.

It has been a long and arduous year, one which has been exhausting, and fullfilling. We have received a lot of warm support from the public, with a membership now approaching fifty. While this is only a quarter of our goal (and economic requirement) of two hundred, we are generally pleased with our development.



Would your business like to advertise in the newsletter? Our rates are reasonable, and the ads are well directed towards a specific audience. Furthermore, your ad indicates a public support for a worthwhile cause.

Call 827/3054

for more information.

Regular \$10

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Couple \$14

Dependent Children \$2

Newsletter only \$5

**MONADNOCK
FOLKLORE SOCIETY**

Membership Form

Availability for volunteer work:

Poster placement

On site concert help

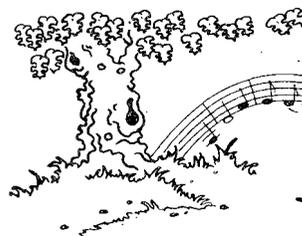
Newsletter articles

We spent last August and September laying the groundwork for the Folklore Society, and Sandy Bradley came in October to call a dance that was our first public event. Since then we have presented Malcolm Dalglish & Grey Larsen, Si Kahn, The Early Music Ensemble, Do'a, The Battlefield Band, The Valley Partners, Johnny Cunningham, and Leo Kretzner. This month we have a trio well established in the dance field on a national level - Fred & Jenny Armstrong Park and Susie Crate.

Members receive a .50 discount on our monthly concerts, as well as this newsletter and admission to the Annual MFS Spring Dance.

By being a member, you also help to provide a base of support so that these things can continue. During our second year, we will be moving towards the development of programs for schoolchildren of all ages, lectures and seminars in folk related topics, and planning for a new Folk Festival in New Hampshire for the fall of 1983.

You can participate in this ever-ongoing project by becoming a member of the Monadnock Folklore Society. If you are already a member, be an active one. Come to our concerts and dances, take advantage of your discount, give us your ideas, come work with us on a project of special interest to you. After all, the Monadnock Folklore Society is yours. See you soon.



Gordon Peery
Chairperson

Name: _____

Street: _____

Town: _____

State: _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____

Other names included in membership:

Mail to: Monadnock Folklore Society, P.O. Box 43, Peterborough, New Hampshire 03458

Performer Listing - AUGUST

1 - Harmony - Deacon Brodies Tavern
5,6,7 - Lui Collins - Folkway
8 - Lily - Deacon Brodie's
11,12,13,14 19,20,21 - Stan Rogers, Garnett
Rogers, Jim Morison - Folkway
26,27,28 - David Mallet, Peter Re,
Mike Burd - Folkway
September 3 - Tony Bird - Folkway
4 - Jack Hardy - Folkway

The Performer Listing is a regular feature of the MFS Newsletter. It is open to all New Hampshire Performances, and exceptional out of state performances. Information must be received by the 12th of the previous month.

DANCE IN DUBLIN

The Dublin Community Church
Every Wednesday through the summer
Mary DesRosiers - caller
Music - Bob McQuillen, Jack Perron
Bill Thomas & friends
8:30 - Midnight \$3.00



CONTRA DANCES

AUGUST

5 - Keene State College, Brown Room
6 - Northfield, MA. Town Hall
13 - Henniker - Congo Church
14 - Frankestown - Town Hall
14 - Brattleboro - Congo Church
20 - Ashby, MA - Unitarian Church 7:30
20 - Northfield, MA Town Hall

Weekly Dances

Every Monday - Nelson Town Hall - 8:00-10:30
Wednesday - Dublin Church
Saturday - Fitzwilliam - Town Hall
Sunday - Brattleboro - Green St.
School

Most contra dances start at 8:30 and go until midnight. Admission is usually \$2.50 or \$3.00.

The Monadnock Folklore Society Newsletter is published monthly. We welcome submissions of articles or information pertinent to our cause. We reserve the right to determine the appropriateness of the material.

Subscription to the newsletter is included as part of membership, or may be obtained separately for \$5.00 annually.

Monadnock Folklore Society
P.O. Box 43
Peterborough, New Hampshire
03458

