



Quarter Notes

Volume 23 Issue 1

Winter 2005

Plank Road's

Regular Events:

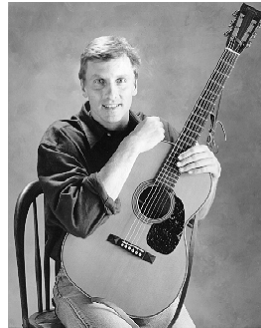
- **SING-A-ROUND** (Two Way Street Coffee House) 1st & 3rd Saturdays: Jan. 1 & 15, Feb. 5 & 19, March 5 & 19
- **DANCE BAND PRACTICE** (Jones Family School) 2nd Saturdays. Jan. 8, Feb. 12, March 12
- **BLUEGRASS JAM** (Paul Vander Woude's house: 708-354-3417) 4th Saturday. Jan. 23, Feb. 26, March 26
- **LAST THURSDAY: "It's Our Turn!"** (Two Way Street Coffee House) Last Thursdays. Jan. 27, Feb. 24, March 31
- Go to www.plankroad.org for full details!

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Help us celebrate over 20 years of Folk, Traditional and Acoustic music in the Western Suburbs!



Plank Road Proudly Presents:

An Evening with Mark Dvorak

Founding PRFMS member Mark Dvorak brings his unique talents to the Sunday Afternoon Concert Series on Sunday, January 23rd at the Ballydoyle (5157 Main Street, Downers Grove). Doors open at 4 pm, music begins around 4:30. Dvorak will play songs and tell stories from his most recent recordings, *The Streets of Old Chicago* and *Just Something My Grandma Used to Sing*. Rumor has it, he will be playing some songs he's written

himself— some over the bar at the Ballydoyle!

The Streets of Old Chicago is a collection of songs from teachers at the Old Town School of Folk Music. Dvorak interviewed many of the School's original teachers. He adapted their songs and styles for the album. He is 'old school' enough to have made numerous music and folklore trips searching the origins of the music he plays- from Woody Guthrie's birthplace in Okemah, OK to Leadbelly's Texarkana roots to the fiddle music of Ireland, Dvorak researches everything he plays and has the knack of presenting each song as his own while keeping it faithful to the tradition.

Dvorak's *Something My Grandma Used to Sing* CD recreates standards from the early 20th Century. As in all of his work, Dvorak concentrates on regular people from earlier times. Dvorak often tells his students and audiences the old songs were written and sung by regular people, just like us.

When his chance came, he headed over to the Old Town School to learn his art. He peppers performances with tales of learning how the late Steve Goodman helped teach Dvorak and his fellow basic guitar students how to finger pick Goodman's classic train song, *The City of New Orleans*. The best part, though, is Dvorak's complete command of his music- his repertoire is extensive and his stage presence gives away his basic approach to the music. Mark Dvorak shares the music and he wants everyone in his audience to enjoy it and share his passion.

Admission is \$7 for members, \$9 for non-members.

Saturday, January 22nd at 7:30 pm

Annual Meeting Set for The Log Cabin

Grab your instrument(s), a snack or dessert to share and join us at The Log Cabin! It's one of the biggest Plank Road events of the year. We start a fire, uncrate the instruments and enjoy everyone's music. After the break, Dave Reynolds will tell us what's what and then we start the music again! Come on out to the Four Seasons Park on South Main St., Lombard (between Roosevelt Rd & 22nd St.). Hot cider and coffee is provided! If you need a map— head to www.plankroad.org and navigate to the calendar page and you'll find a nice link there with a map you can print.



From The PRFMS President

Goin' Down The Old Plank Road

Greetings and Happy New Year,

Well folks, 2004 came and went. It's customary to do a year-end review but I'd like to zero in on one area: our musical health. How was our musical health last year? Did we get enough tunes in the key of D, G and C? Did we suffer any banjo deficiencies? Did we swing our partner with the gusto they deserved?

If any of these are issues of concern in your life, you need to act fast. If you're like me you need to set goals for the New Year. Here are a few to help us get started:

- Attend the Old Time Dance Parties. (These offer a great aerobic activity, guaranteed to keep your heart rate up.)
- Instrument Workshop. (Improve your skills and stretch your brain).
- Attend a Concert (Be inspired)
- Attend a Sing around (Sing like yah mean it, helps the lungs)
- Attend a Music by the Yard (Develop social skills and eat while you're doing it.)
- Volunteer (be a hero for a day).

Woody Allen (a clarinet player) once said, "Ninety percent of life is just showing up." What are we going to do with the remaining ten percent?

We'll be planning activities to help you reach your goals and as always we welcome your comments and suggestions. Please don't hold back.

See you down the Old Plank Road,
-Dave Reynolds



Old Time Dance Party Saturday, Jan 29 at the Ice Sculpture Festival!



The first dance party of 2005 opens at 7:30 pm Saturday, January 29th at the Two Way Street Coffee House at 1047 Curtiss Street in downtown Downers Grove. The party is part and parcel of the Downers Grove Ice Sculpture Festival, so come out early to take a gander at the ice sculptures then come in and warm up with some dancing! The evening features caller **Marianne Mohrhusen** (wearing her new headset microphone) teaching the steps as we go along. The live music comes from the front of the room from the **Plank Road All Volunteer Dance Band** under the direction of the **Jones Family**. No experience is necessary (musicians of all levels are welcome to sit in with the band) - so grab some friends and join us for this fun evening of music and dancing!

Admission: \$4/person. For info: (630) 964-0305 *For more information about the Festival, contact the Downers Grove Tourism/Events Department (630) 434-5921/434-5555*





February 20th Sunday Afternoon Concert:

Peter Nye and The Chicago Bluegrass Band Plays Plank Road

Peter Nye and the Chicago Bluegrass Band will perform Sunday, February 20th at the PRFMS' Sunday Afternoon Concert Series at the Ballydoyle in downtown Downers Grove. Singer/songwriter and founder Peter Nye will lead the band in selections from the group's first CD, *Steel Rails in the Tennessee Night* and its latest CD, *Songs from the Heartland*. In 2002, the band was invited to cross the Atlantic, playing dates in Sweden, Denmark, Estonia and Finland.

Peter Nye hails from Northern Illinois and has been writing and performing for over thirty years. He writes original songs about love, relationships, home, leaving, and death using Midwestern sensibilities in the trials of life.

Peter's vocal style touches the heart with soft sensitivity and pushes audiences to the edge of their seats with powerful depth. His acoustic guitar is first rate.

As a favorite at the Old Town School of Folk Music, Peter has toured with IBMA vocalist James King and has played with or opened for bluegrass greats Jerry Douglas, Sam Bush, The Seldom Scene, Mountain Heart, Del McCoury, Larry Sparks, Thyrd Time Out, and Larry Cordle as well as country star John Michael Montgomery.

The Chicago Bluegrass Band also includes legendary Indiana fiddler Ken Stone and tenor Tommy Boyd (formerly with Red Allen and Larry Sparks). Five string banjo duties are shared between Jeff Krause and John Schmaltz. Schmaltz was an original member of Allison Kraus and Union Station.

Doors open at 4 pm with music starting around 4:30. Admission is \$8 for PRFMS members, \$10 for non members



We Couldn't Resist Sharing!

An Art Thieme 'Gotcha'

While Art's web column on www.plankroad.org is on hiatus, he did send this along in typical Thieme fashion...totally deadpan:

One afternoon, a C, an E-flat, and a G walk into a bar. The bartender says to them, "I'm sorry, but we don't serve minors here."

The E-flat leaves.

Then the C and the G have an open fifth between them.

Irish Music Club Forms in Willowbrook

Murphy Roche Music Jams & Teaches Celtic Music

The Murphy Roche Irish Music Club cordially invites you to its Wednesday sessions at the Kerry Piper Pub in Willowbrook, Illinois.

The Murphy Roche Irish Music Club is for people who want to support Irish traditional music as performers, students, or listeners. It is affiliated with the international organization of Irish Musicians, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann. Members need not be Irish. We draw from a broad range of ethnicities.



The name honors two whose lives helped tradition flourish. Pat Roche emigrated from Ireland to the U.S. in 1925, settling in Chicago. He perfected a unique style of teaching Irish step dancing. Many of his students became dance masters themselves, teaching an ever-growing number of youth and adults. Edmond Murphy was a fiddler from Aclare, County Sligo. After emigrating to London as a young man, he served as treasurer of the Comhaltas Ceoltoirí Council of Britain for 25 years. Murphy is celebrated on a Sligo monument as one of the greatest fiddlers to come from that region of Ireland.

An Irish session is much like a folk jam. You'll hear banjo, fiddles, flutes, pipes, piano, tin whistles, piano, guitars, bodhran, and the occasional hammered dulcimer blending for jigs, reels, and polkas. Whether you bring an instrument or come to listen, you'll enjoy the warmth and tradition of this music.

Everyone is welcomed warmly to these friendly sessions. When you arrive, please introduce yourself to Mike Chole (the session leader, on banjo), Kell Chole (club chair, on flute) or any of us. We want to get to know you.



The sessions run from 8:00 until 10:00 pm (often a little later) but come when you can and leave when you must. For information on the session tunes, finding the Kerry Piper near Route 83 and I-55, session etiquette, visit our web site at www.Murphyroche.com or call Kell and Mike Chole at 630-662-8611.

Besides the weekly sessions, club members enjoy other activities. Special club-sponsored workshops bring members into close contact with some of the very best traditional Irish musicians in the world.

The Club also hosts a music school teaching children and adults to play traditional Irish music through private and group lessons. Instruction covers fiddle, flute, tin whistle, banjo, mandolin, accordion, piano, hammered dulcimer and snare drum. Singing and lilting round out the School's offerings. Kell and Mike Chole team as principal instructors.

"Performing propels learning," says Kell, "and it's fun!" So Murphy Roche sponsors several performing groups (from duets to full bands), which appear in community festivals, music competitions, sessions, social dances (called ceilis), and other events. "We believe strongly," says Mike, "that our bands should include both kids and adult musicians. There's no better way for the generation-to-generation mentoring that is such an important part of the Irish music tradition. And truthfully, the kids and adults learn from each other." Venues have included the University of Chicago Folk Festival; Chicago's Annual Grant Park Celtic Fest; the Euclid, Ohio Celtic Fest, the Fox Valley Folk Festival; and the Memorial Day Festival at Gaelic Park.

For more information on the Murphy Roche Irish Music Club, please contact Kell or Mike Chole at 630-662-8611 or info@murphyroche.com

Let's come together with music and leave as friends!

PLANK ROAD MEMBERSHIP & ORDER FORM

Cut out the order form and send to address below. Please make checks payable to the
Plank Road Folk Music Society
 Post Office Box 386, Downers Grove, IL 60515

***Please include \$1.50 shipping/handling for t-shirt**

Total Order:	\$ _____
Total Postage*:	\$ _____
Total Enclosed:	\$ _____

Memberships

I'm interested in helping with:

- \$10 for 1 year/Individual
- \$20 for 1 year/Family
- Other: _____

- Events (ticket sales, concessions, set-up, take down, hosting, etc)
- Workshops, Community Appearances, Sing A Rounds
- Nitty Gritty: Promotion, Publicity, Finance, Archive

PRFMS T-shirt: \$12 each
 (Yellow/Orange Logo)

PRFMS T-shirt: \$12 each
 (Blue/Purple Logo)

- M** Yellow/Orange
- L** Yellow/Orange
- XL** Yellow/Orange

- M** Blue/Purple
- L** Blue/Purple
- XL** Blue/Purple

- I would like my Quarter Notes sent to me:**
- By regular mail
 - Email and regular mail
 - Don't bother, I'll take it off the website
 - By e-mail

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____



'Puter Resources You Can Use

High Tech Digital Radio for Folkies

It's taken awhile, but I can finally recommend a couple of fabulous audio sources for folk music on the Internet. Here's what you'll need:

- A Windows PC (you might be able to use a Mac, but since I don't have one, you're on your own)
- Either Windows Media Player (if you have a Windows, PC, you already have this) or Real Media Player
- An internet connection that can sustain 28 Kb or higher (most modems, cable and DSL connections)- higher/faster is better

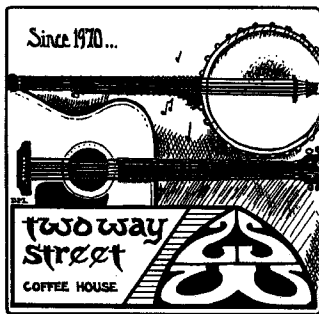
Now, launch your Browser and go to one of these websites (my buddy Troy got excited by this column and did some listening for me and here's what he heard the week before we went to press):

- <http://www.folkalley.com>– Kent State University– traditional folk with some surprises
- <http://www.wfuv.com>– Fordham University– traditional and contemporary
- <http://www.KPFT.org> - Pacifica Radio Houston- (Austin Lounge Lizards)
- <http://www.KRCL.org> - Radio Free Utah- (Leonard Cohen)
- <http://www.WUMB.org> - Folk Radio- UMass Boston (Steve Goodman, Keb Mo)
- <http://www.wxpn.org>- University of Pennsylvania (Guy Clark, Ani DeFranco) home of "World Cafe"

Some want you to set up a free account, some let you get right to it– just tool around the webpage. Take a look around each of the web sites– lots of nice features, play lists, archives, folk-related news, message boards and other high tech means of creating community. Once you start listening regularly, send them a few bucks each year to help share the musical wealth!

That's all there is to it. I've got some 8 year old speakers on my PC at home, so I use headphones connected to the soundcard on the rear of my PC– if you have decent speakers, the sound should be fine. Since this audio is digital and 'streamed' (meaning compressed and send to a bunch of PCs at the same time), you can and should use the graphic equalizer function of Windows Media Player (it's one of the 'visualization' screens– I add a little high end since the incoming signal is a little muddy.

-Scot Witt



TWO WAY STREET COFFEE HOUSE

1047 Curtiss Street • Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

www.twowaystreet.org • 630-969-9720

(Across from the Public Library)

Folk Music Every Week since 1970!

ENTERTAINMENT SCHEDULE

- Friday December 17 8:15pm \$5 **THE JONES FAMILY CHRISTMAS SHOW** — Enrich your Christmas season with our 18th annual traditional program featuring Anne, Tom and Cathy and their talented guest musicians. You'll want to sing along!
- Fridays, December 24 & 31 **CLOSED** — Enjoy the Holidays!
- Friday January 7 8:15pm \$5 **PETE NORMAN'S Post-Christmas Blues Fest!** — 20th annual show sure to banish *your* post-Christmas blues! Great songwriter Pete, DK and guests present folk, blues and fun songs. Guitar, Dobro, fiddle, banjo, more!
- Friday January 14 8:15pm \$5 **MARGO JEAN & THE RUBES featuring JOEL SIMPSON** — Two locally grown and high energy singer-songwriters present traditionals and well-crafted originals, with guitars, mandolin, lap steel, bass and percussion.
- Friday January 21 8:15pm \$5 **KAT EGGLESTON** — Compelling lyrics, beautiful alto voice, and eloquent fingerpicked guitar and hammered dulcimer touch listeners with honesty, power, imagination and great musicianship! Great Waterbug CD's!
- Friday January 28 8:15pm \$5 **MOLLY & THE TINKER** — This rowdy, hearty, satirical, funny Irish duo returns! In 18 years, 11 albums and 2 kids, they've been featured on WFMT, WGN, WJOL, WTTW, cable, and even "Dr. Demento." Come share the fun!
(Ice Sculpture Festival!)
- Friday February 4 **JOE REILLY** — With his Italian, Cherokee and Irish heritage, plus folk, blues and hip-hop influences, he creates songs of peace, the environment, and social justice with wisdom, compassion, power, and laughter. With guitar.
- Friday February 11 **DENNIS JOHNSON & DUANE LARSON** — This entertaining and popular duo returns with folk, gospel, country and original songs accompanied with fingerstyle and flatpicked guitar, banjo and bass.
- Friday February 18 **SWING BLVD** — Kate Moretti's rhythm guitar and sultry lead vocals, Dan Zahn's Django Reinhardt-inspired guitar leads and vocals plus Marc Edelstein on bass and vocals recreate the great music of the 30's and 40's. They swing!
- Friday February 25 **AUBREY ATWATER** — Rhode Islander Aubrey Atwater returns presenting traditional Celtic and American folk ballads, stories and originals. Guitar, banjo, Appalachian dulcimer, tin whistle, spoons, bones, and beautiful vocals!
- Friday March 4 **** OPEN MIKE **** Anyone is welcome to perform, and we always have a great variety of acoustic performers. So popular we must limit the number of acts. **1-2 songs, 10 minutes max.** Open at 7:30 for signups — first come, first served. **Show starts 8:00.** For more information, phone 630-968-5526.
- Friday March 11 **TRAVELER'S DREAM** — Original and traditional Celtic, French and American music from this Indiana trio of modern troubadours, performing with guitars, flute, tin whistle, concertina, bagpipes, mandolin, bodhran and more!
- Friday March 18 **CRAIG SIEMSEN & PATTY STEVENSON** — Two fine Milwaukee songwriters in a terrific duo show. Both acclaimed musicians: Craig is a powerful guitarist, Patty plays piano, guitar and harp. Great lyrics, voices!
- Friday March 25 **JONATHAN BYRD** — Kerrville new-folk winner, masterful flatpicking guitarist, his songs shine with intelligence, humor and graceful compassion. "The most buzzed-about new songwriter in folkdom." (Alarik, *Boston Globe*)

Saturday January 29 8:00 pm \$4	Old Time Dance Party! — Reels, squares, line dancing, waltzes and more, plus the music of our great band. Fun for the whole family! All dances taught and called by Marianne Mohrhusen. No experience, costume or partner needed. Plank Road Folk Music Society is co-sponsor.
Saturday February 19 8:00 pm \$8	Musicians from AYNE MAIREAD in Concert — Dona and Dan Benkert, Mim Eichmann and others perform Celtic music from the upcoming Midwest Ballet Theatre production of <i>Ayne Mairead</i> and more music, with hammered and mountain dulcimers, concertina, guitar, whistle and vocals.
January 1 (yes!) & 15 February 5 & 19 March 5 & 19	Sing-Arounds — Our popular song circles where beginners and experienced musicians can learn and/or share songs. Listeners and singers welcome too! Songbooks provided. Plank Road Folk Music Society co-sponsors. First and third Saturday afternoons of each month at 2:00 pm.
Thursdays Dec 30, Jan 27 Feb 24, March 31 7:00-9:30 pm	LAST THURSDAY: It's OUR Turn! — A monthly unplugged open mike for high school and college age students on the last Thursday* of every month. Music, poetry and other performance arts — 10 minutes max. Doors open 7:00 for signups — first come, first served. More info on our website (www.twowaystreet.org) or phone 630-968-5526. Free!
Live entertainment is featured every Friday night beginning at 8:15. Doors open 7:30. \$5.00 donation requested. Beverages and snacks available. The <i>Two Way Street Coffee House</i> is a not-for-profit community project of the First Congregational United Church of Christ, Downers Grove. Member: Plank Road Folk Music Society, Fox Valley Folklore Society, Old Town School of Folk Music, Aural Tradition, and North American Folk Alliance. Please call us at 630-969-9720 for current entertainment listings, or visit us on the web at www.twowaystreet.org	

Songbooks explained!

High Notes from the Sing-Around

Plank Road Folk Music Society and the Two Way Street Coffee House co-sponsor a Sing-Around at the Coffee House on the first and third Saturday of each month at 2:00-4:00 pm. The sessions are open to everyone who wishes to raise a voice, play an acoustic instrument or just sit and listen to a group of folks singing and 'raising the roof'.

Two volunteers host each Sing-Around, one from PRFMS and one from 2WS. The Two Way Street volunteers do all the under-appreciated work: opening and closing the place, making the coffee, and cleaning-up afterwards. They deserve a big 'THANK YOU' from all of us who attend the Sing-Around.

For about ten years, it's been my pleasure to be the usual PRFMS co-host at the Sing-Around and do the easy work of leading the group in song. I often hear words of thanks for doing this, but truly I feel blessed and honored and want to thank everyone involved in the Sing-Around for the opportunity to participate.

Generally, we do songs from our songbooks or from **Rise Up Singing**, but we also enjoy doing songs from outside our regular books. The emphasis is usually on group participation, so songs with familiar or easy-to-learn choruses are welcomed. Occasionally, someone may wish to do a song that is unfamiliar to the rest and we're happy to listen. (Although, some of us may be found noodling away on our instruments or trying to find a harmony on the chorus.)

Recently, we found that we needed to re-edit our songbook. The books have been evolving over time with new songs added, but it has been difficult to keep the books consistent with each other. We have encouraged people to bring in new songs and have been *too* successful in that the books grew too fat. We now have two sets of songbooks. Book One includes many of our traditionally performed songs and some newer, more popular songs. Book Two includes many new songs and some older songs not played as often. Both have tables of contents that we will attempt to keep as up to date as we can. I plan to update Book One about once a year and Book Two's Table of Contents every few months.

I want to thank everyone who has brought in songs to the Sing-Around and I encourage you to continue. We do need to be more selective in choosing songs for the books. Bring in songs you want the group to sing and play and we will do that song when it's your turn. Then, based on the ease of play and appropriateness of the song, the songbook committee will decide if it should be included in Book Two. Preference is given to songs in the folk tradition. If you feel a song should be included in the books, bring it in a few times and let the group play it a few times. After people are familiar with it, it's more likely to be chosen.

I want to thank Denise Davis, Jeanne Halama and Carol Sommer for their help in re-editing the songbooks and for serving on Songbook Committee. Their comments were and continue to be invaluable in the editing process as well as all the work that was done getting the books consistent.

My thanks to everyone who helps and keeps the Sing-Arounds going. I hope to see both old and new faces there for many years to come.

-George Mattson



Folk Festival Archive Project Completed!

Four hundred hours of performances recorded at the University of Chicago Folk Festivals from 1961 to 1995 have been transferred to CD. Years of work and thousands of dollars are now a resource now available to all at the Harold Washington Library, 400 S. State St. in Chicago.

The University of Chicago Folklore Society is planning the 45th Annual University of Chicago Folk Festival (February 4-6, 2005). Each year it draws an audience of nearly 4,000 to the University of Chicago campus.



Internet Resources

Francis James Child (1825-1896)

Editor's Note: Lonesome Jim has been working on his links page at www.plankroad.org since we first ask for help in organization and maintaining links last summer. As a matter of fact, Jim's been doing a yeoman's job of it and we could use a half dozen other folks willing to jot some thoughts about websites they visit. Anyway, a few weeks ago, Your Editor asked Jim to vet a couple of sites claiming to have annotated Child Ballads— seems a company was selling CDs of the Child's work at The Fox Valley Folk Festival for over \$100 each we wanted to know if there were less expensive resources like that available. Between us, we found some— and we thought Jim did a superb Internet detective job, even though he doesn't seem to think so, anyway—read on!)

Francis J. Child's *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882-1898) is considered by many to be the 'canon' of folk music. We wanted to know a little more and see if we could find some good resources for our PRFMS membership. A web search for Francis James Child returns about 2 million links! If this article gets on our web site, it will return about 2,000,001 links. I guess anyone REALLY knowledgeable about English and Scottish Ballads would already know of his five volume work).

Child was a Harvard professor who graduated first in his class in 1846 and did extensive research into the history and origins of ballads, using only original manuscripts— these are considered 'primary' sources in the social sciences. He was first offered a position in mathematics, then history and political economy. His legacy, though, was collecting and codifying English and Scots ballads— comparing different versions and showing us how the music changes over time— sometimes the story as well.

If you've ever heard *Barbara Allen* or *Three Ravens* or even *Scarborough Fair* (collected as *The Elvin King*), you've heard the ballads he collected in England and Scotland. English and Scottish ballads history of the words and themes rather than music Child's research was international in scope, covering thirty-seven languages. Child was less interested in the music than the language, so we only have 50 of the tunes of all the ballads he collected.

The complete list of the "Child" ballads can be found at www.contemplator.com. The site includes lyrics and beautiful midi files for many of the songs. Another site you might to check out is The Child Ballads Index: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/eng/child/>. If you don't want to type the addresses in, we'll add these links to the tabs/chord progression and songs page I manage up at www.plankroad.org— just click the Links Button and look for my page in the resulting list.

Child's work inspired the song collectors of the early 1900s which tell us so much about how folk songs evolve and move as countries and circumstances change with the singers. His English and Scottish Popular Ballads remains the standard by which all other works are measured— including the 1920's hill and mountain country expeditions and the blues chases of the 1960s.

-Lonesome Jim Zethmayr

PRFMS Thanks The Ad Hoc String Band

While cleaning out the closets in preparation for his recent move to Milwaukee, Steve Moss came across several pieces of equipment used by the Ad Hoc String Band and donated them to the Society. We wish to thank Ad Hoc members Nick Battaglia (Park Forest, IL); Mike Glidden (Little Rock, AR) and Steve and Jenny Moss, now of Milwaukee, WI. We look forward to your visits, guys and wish you bon voyage, health and prosperity in your adventures in Milwaukee and beyond.



April 3rd at Ballydoyle

David Francey Plays Sunday Afternoon Concert Series

David Francey has become one of Canada's top performing folk artists, recently winning his second JUNO award in the Best Roots and Traditional Album - Solo category for his third CD, *Skating Rink*. The title track *Skating Rink* aired during the nationwide CBC broadcast of the Canadian Heritage Classic Hockey Game. His second CD, *Far End of Summer*, won a JUNO in 2002. Over the last five years David has won the hearts of audiences across North America.

David's fourth CD, *Waking Hour*, was recorded in Nashville with veteran performers Kieran Kane, Kevin Welch and Fats Kaplin. This collection of original Francey tunes shares the simple recording style of David's first three CDs but adds a driving rhythm provided by these amazing Nashville artists.

The response to David's music has been immediate and heartwarming. His songs have been performed by artists worldwide. Del McCoury, James Keelaghan, Raylene Rankin and Harvey Reid, among others, have each recorded Francey tunes. Three choirs, Kingston's Open Voices, Vancouver's Solidarity Notes and the Seattle Labor Chorus have performed works by David and his songs are being taught to school children in classrooms across Canada.



Flatpicking Workshop Set for April 30th at Jones Family School



Join Dan Zahn and other flatpickers and would-be pickers for an afternoon of fun and challenge!

Every string musician reaches a certain point when the basic 1-2-3-4 folk, the alternating bass and other strums don't help you interpret the songs the way you hear them in your head.

If you're thinking about the move to making your plectrum fly or are already a veteran picker- be at the Jones Family School of Music in Lombard on Saturday April 30th!

Details on the PRFMS website (when we get them) and in the next issue of *Quarter Notes*.





Banjo Philosophy 101

Limited Time: Banjo Method & Philosophy Book Available On-Line

I just finished reading the on-line version of *The How and the Tao of Old Time Banjo* by Patrick Costello published under a Creative Commons Public License. I exchanged several emails with the author— he generously shared his thoughts on teaching and learning banjo. This book, with others, is available at: www.funkyseagull.com/book/tao.html for \$24.95. For a short time, you can get it with another book - *A Book of Five Strings and the Old Time Banjo Deluxe Edition CD ROM Video Music Workshop* for \$39.95. You can also view it on his web site.

The book has two sections. In the first (the 'How' section) he teaches banjo and music; the second ('Tao') is full of down-home wit and wisdom aimed at getting you to play, go to jams, screw up, go to festivals, screw up some more and have fun playing the banjo with other people and sharing your techniques.

The 'How' section describes frailing and all the tricks you need to spice it up with hammer-ons, pull-offs, slides, drop-thumb, double-thumb, bending and bump. He uses his right thumb as anchor/pivot, resting on the head which I thought unusual but he certainly gets away from it when doing drop-thumb. Costello says nobody's technique is the same so do what works for you.

The book has easy tabs for several tunes in standard G tuning. He discusses other tunings and includes a tab of the same tune in both G tuning and G Modal or Mountain Minor tuning to show you don't really need to use alternate tunings all the time to get a certain effect.

There are some interesting up-the-neck riffs inter-weaving open string notes with up-the-neck notes, which can be used to spice up your playing when you are backing someone else up.

He touches on other techniques and describes several useful patterns in the popular 3-finger/Scruggs style.

He includes a good summary of basic music theory and scales in all the different modes, including my favorites—Dorian and Mixolydian and different minor scales. This is info that all musicians need to pick up somewhere.

After explaining some basic scales along the neck, Costello includes many tunes using standard music notation in a bid to work the tunes on the banjo. This brings more tunes into the banjo world and maybe recognizes there is much more sheet music available than tablature.

This suggests a couple different approaches. You could try to memorize where standard notation happen to fall on different strings at different frets on a banjo neck in your favorite tuning. This isn't my first choice. My approach would be to get the tune in my head from the sheet music first, then let it flow on the banjo. (It helps if you've practiced one or two scales about a hundred times on the banjo first.) Then, of course, you need to work it into whatever style you're working in.

I have many music books at home. Most have tablature and varying amounts of explanation. When I started, I looked for books with my favorite tunes. Then I needed books on different styles. Finally, I needed more on backing techniques in ensemble playing. While *The How and the Tao of Old Time Banjo* has tablature, it has less than most. It's geared to teach you to play with great rhythm, improvise and work your favorite tunes in your own style. I think it is geared towards people who seem to give their lives to the art (usually at an early age). Players like me (day job, long commute and little spare time) need short cuts (more tablature). I also prefer learning traditional tunes in alternate tunings rather standard G. I think it's a little easier and sometimes has a different sound. For instance in double C tuning, you often hear the IV chord with no 3rd (open 5ths) - a haunting sound. So buy the book if you want to learn frailing/clawhammer or if you want to learn some new great licks in that style in standard G tuning. There are lots of tunes that traditionally use that tuning (and 92.39847% of bluegrass tunes use it if you're going to go that way too).



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