

# TUCSON FRIENDS OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC

## NEWSLETTER

Vol. 1, No. 3

NOVEMBER 1975

DONATION 10¢

### MARGARET MACARTHUR

#### TO VISIT TUCSON

Tucson folks will get a real treat on November 21 when Margaret MacArthur visits the Basement Cafe. Margaret is one of the best known folk singers in the East and has been featured at many, many concerts of traditional singing for major folk festivals and folk clubs.

Her concerts are always fun--friendly and informal, with material drawn from New England tradition and also songs and ballads she has learned while living in the Ozarks, the southwest, and around the country. It's hard to know whether to describe her as a performer or as a folklorist. She's an outstanding singer in the traditional style, and one of a handful of dulcimer players who have sparked the dulcimer revival of the last decade. Single-handed she has been the creator of a growing interest in folk-harp in the East. Her versions of many traditional ballads and her arrangements of dance tunes for dulcimer have become standards for many young performers, perhaps because her workshops in dulcimer and folk-song collecting have been some of the most constructive and helpful available anywhere.

As a folklorist, she's collected much traditional material and has a great store of anecdotes about the people she's learned from. She has records of her own on Philo, Folkways, and Folk-Legacy labels. The FL album "On the Mountains High" has one of the best liner-note booklets imaginable in terms of identifying and explaining the songs (not to mention that it's a great album).

#### WE ARE LOVED!

TFIM received official thanks from Jim Griffith of Tucson Meet Yourself for our contribution to the festival. About 10 members appeared on stage at various times, and about 16-20 folks spent a total of about 40-50 hours answering inquiries and selling newsletters and records of performers at the information desk. Some non-members were there at the desk with us and made things a lot easier to deal with.

TFIM has also received a nice certificate of appreciation from the Payson Chamber of Commerce thanking us for our help in publicizing the state fiddle contest.

#### COMING EVENTS

##### AT THE BASEMENT...

- Nov. 1 - Lucy Billings (song-writer)
  - \*Nov. 6-8 - Micky, Rocky & Julie (cont. folk harmony)
  - Nov. 14 - Rebecca Donahue
  - Nov. 15 - Jennings Family
  - #Nov. 21 - Margaret MacArthur (½ price to TFIM members)
  - \*Nov. 27-28 - Bimbo
  - #Nov. 29 - Leslie Keith
  - +Dec. 4-6 - Ken Tucker
  - Dec. 11-13 - Dick Arnold/ Jamie Mizell
  - +Dec. 18-20 - Gerri Glombecki
- \*=\$.50, #=\$2.00, += \$1.00 cover

#### TUCSON GETS BLUEGRASS TREAT

Bluegrass lovers got a welcome earfull on the 8th and 9th of October. The Sawtooth Mountain Boys of Corvallis, Ore. appeared at the formerly tranquil Ox-Bow Saloon and showed locals a tight, professional band with good singing leads and harmonies matched by excellent instrumentals. Much of the group's drive was provided by Steve Waller, the mandolin player, who sang a very high lead. Hal Spence on guitar has one of the best tenor voices I've heard. Mike Eisler plays strong, steady banjo and his fiddling brought cheers from the house over and over. Rollie Champe held things together with forceful bass and guitar and sang lead on several numbers.

The group's material tended toward the older bluegrass tunes and featured some tunes from Jimmy Martin, Bill Monroe, the Stanley Brothers, and Sons of the Pioneers. On the second night, the group was joined by our local folk - Pete Rolland on fiddle and bassist Steve Dennis of the Normal Brothers.

Incidentally, speaking of Pete, the Summerdog band has been playing around town - notably at the Rusty Scupper and at the Mt. Lemmon Inn. Audiences have been enthusiastic, as always. Summerdog has added several new tunes to a repertoire that already includes lots of bluegrass favorites, old-timey tunes, and some norteno songs.

Mike Wallner

#### THE CUP COFFEEHOUSE

715 N. Park  
(Outside the U of  
A Main Gate)

Open Friday and Saturday  
Food and Folk Music!!!!

## OLD-TIME BANJO

by Robert Freeman

There are are basically three types, divided by picking technique: "Frailing", "Clawhammer" and "Fingerpicking". Clawhammer is a type of frailing, but some frailers avoid it, so well think about it as a distinct type. (More on frailing next month.) Does anyone flatpick the banjo? I can't think of any mountain banjoist that used a flatpick on a banjo. The use of a plectrum (flat-pick) is characteristic of tenor banjo playing (as in ragtime, dixieland, and Irish ceili music) but mountain styles are only concerned with the 5-string banjo.

The first patented banjo was a fretless 5-string built in the U.S. aroun 1860, probably similar to those made by black slaves. The 5-string became popular with whites and in the Appalachians the Afro and British-Irish heritage merged into mountain banjo music.

Since early 5-strings were fretless, left-hand noting was limited. As with fiddling, chording and playing high on the neck was difficult - later, with fretted, commercial instruments, full left hand chords and runs high up the neck became possible. While bluegrass pickers have tended to take full advantage of this, many old-time players have preserved fretless techniques. Fred Cockerham and Tommy Jarrell (County Records) use re-tunings and simple notings with open strings to match the keys and flavor of the old tunes. Both these men are fiddlers and play banjo in a style suited for fretless - often playing the same notes on banjo as they play on fiddle. Oscar Jenkins, one of their neighbors, is a good contrast. Jenkins uses a syncopated back-up style, finger picking, with many chords up and down the neck of his Mastertone. Dock Boggs, another traditional player, uses the banjo to accompany his singing - often playing note for note the sung melody. This leads him into modal tunings for many tunes (g-DGCD, f#-DGAD).

Boggs learned many of his tunes from blacks while working in the mines or on the railroad and felt that most of the good musicians near his home had been blacks. In some regions this wasn't true, and regional styles may reflect the difference.

Roscoe Holcomb, Lee Sexton and Bill Cornet can be heard on Mountain Music of Kentucky (folkways). Their playing reflects some of the different styles of old time finger picking. Pete Steele is another good 2-finger picker. Stuffy Jenkins is at the level of a slick, professional genius in 3-finger picking wildness. Jenkins, an old-time picker, has been one of the links in the chain leading to bluegrassers like Earl Scruggs, Ralph Stanley and Larry Richardson, who have copies his licks.

For string-band music with banjo, hear Uncle Dave Macon with the McGee bros, Charlie Poole and the North Carolina Ramblers, the Skillet Lickers, and the Camp Creek Boys (see County Records) or Burnet and Rutherford. (To be continued next month.)

## MINGUS GUITARS

2512 N. Campbell 795-4782

Bluegrass, Old Timey and Traditional and Contemporary records at discount prices.

### DO SI DO!!!

Ma Bell lists a "Square Dance Center" in Tucson. Does anybody know about it? How about some reader trotting over there (it's not too far from U of A) and finding out what's up. We'd be glad to have an article on what they're up to - also any other traditional dancing anyone knows about.

## OFFICERS AND ELECTION

Elections were held, as announced in the October newsletter, at the Tucson Meet Yourself Festival. The following Directors were elected: Bill Bowman, Matt McConeghy, Bob Sayers, Anne Schmitt, Rick Sonder.

A Directors meeting was held at Rick's house on Oct. 20. The following decisions were made:

- 1) Sandy Goers was unanimously appointed to be Secretary-Treasurer;
- 2) it was agreed that business meetings will be held the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM at the Basement Cafe, so that the members will be able to attend;
- 3) a set of the by-laws will be left with member Kenny Erickson at the Basement Cafe so that any member who wants to see them can do so;
- 4) the board has agreed to use club funds to guarantee the fee for Margaret MacArthur's concert with arrangements for repayment from admissions. Club members will get a break in admission.
- 5) plans are proceeding for a Holiday Fiddle Jamboree in December or early January - we hope to get several outstanding Arizona fiddlers to take part;
- 6) members will get a mailing in the near future to announce additional club business.

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 21  
Basement Cafe (see Ad).  
MARGARET MACARTHUR

Dulcimer, Lap-harp, guitar traditional singing.  
Admission TFTM members \$1.00  
Advance ticket sales -  
Mingus guitar, Basement Cafe.  
TFTM Memberships \$5.00  
(Family \$8.00).

November 22, at 11:00 AM  
Dulcimer Workshop at Mingus  
Guitar (see Ad).

# THE ARKANSAWER AND THE TRAVELLER by Matt and Bill

Howdy, farmer...howdy, stranger...can I take this road to Little Rock?... don't have to, they got roads of their own there...I mean, can I ford this creek?...I saw some ducks ford it just this morning...I mean, how deep is it?...water clear to the bottom...why farmer, there's not much between you and a fool!...just that picket fence there...farmer, it looks like you started to fix that hole in the roof, why didn't you finish?...got wet in the rain...it's not raining now...it's not leaking, neither...(farmer plays part A several times)... Farmer, I believe it's Sunday. Are there any Presbyterians around here?... check the barn door, Lem skins everything he shoots... (keeps playing)...Farmer, don't you know the rest of that tune?...didn't know there was a rest... Let me have that fiddle (plays A and B)... Why stranger get down off that horse! Come on in to dinner. Ma fetch the jug, sissy, get that county map with the roads marked, then run down to the Presbyter church and fetch Rev. Black. Stranger, we're mighty glad to see you!

## BANJO TABLATURE by Bill Bowman

A

B

(See Traditional Music in America, Ira Ford, Folklore Assoc., 1965 for another version.)  
For fiddle notation see Coles 1000 Fiddle Tunes, Ira Ford, the Robbins Collection, and almost any other collection of fiddle tunes. Ed Smith, Les Keith, Pete Rolland and almost any other local fiddler can play you a version if you don't read music. mm

## INSTRUMENT CARE

Hey - Winter's Coming!  
What about our instruments and Tucson weather? Here's some advice from Carolyn and Bill, repair persons at the "Guitar Workshop."  
Outside of moving to Seattle, here's some suggestions: 1) buy a dampit (humidifier - Damp-it's Inc. It's the one.) 2) buy a dampit today, not tomorrow 3) humidify your home air, use plants, pans of water, etc. At this time of year with our ultra dry weather cracks will open up (some cracks can be fixed more easily in dry weather). 4) watch out for heat and hot things - fireplaces, space heaters, gas wall heaters, etc. - any sudden temperature change is bad, especially for the finish. 5) don't use polishes that contain oil (such as lemon oil) or silicon - these will penetrate joints and cracks and remove the glue - wax polishes are ok. We use Gibson's, Guild

is good, too - when you pick one, look for a high carnuba wax content. 6) keep it tuned, at the proper pitch - not above pitch and also, don't de-tune when you're not playing. The neck isn't a hinge and constant loosening and overtightening of the strings can lead to trouble. 7) think about regular maintenance. A teeny drop of sewing machine oil on exposed gears will save lots of wear and tear. Change those strings you've been playing since April. Look closely at the joints - is the bridge losing touch? It should be solid. Check the heel and the neck. If there's a dramatic change in the action, something probably going wrong. Stores like ours, that specialize in repair, will usually check this sort of thing for free and let you know what's happening. 8) the more protection you can give your instrument, the better off you'll be. A good instrument should have a decent case, and the instrument should be in the case when it's not actively being played.

## The GUITAR WORKSHOP

2313 N. Country Club Road Tucson, Arizona 85716  
Phone 325-4206

Parts, Strings (best prices), Guitar maker Supplies  
Used Guitars, Banjos, etc. Bought & Sold  
Repairs, Refinishing, Inlay work  
Electric Guitler Service

Discounts to TFTM members.

### OTHER...

Tucson has a classical Guitar Club - see Bruce Fulton (playing at Don Quixotes'). There is an excellent newsletter - "The Dulcimer Player's News". c/o Phillip Mason, RFD 2, Box 132, Bangor Me 04401 - \$4/year. Issues have theory, tablature, record reviews, etc.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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## DIAMOND STUDS COMMENTS

by Melanie Jane Morris

It wasn't only the fast picking bluegrass music or the almost calesithenic dance numbers that made "Diamond Studs" a hand clapping, foot-stomping, audience-participating type show. It was the constant high spirits and honest enjoyment the entire cast had that reached the audience, bringing people back time after time. Diamond Studs was a Tucson "first." No show has played here for 15 weeks; no show has enjoyed quite the same enthusiastic response; and no show has been performed in the movie-land world of Old Tucson. Considering these factors, it's no wonder Diamond Studs enjoyed a very special and successful run.

Musically, the show used a variety of styles. Old-timey, bluegrass, and traditional folk ballads were heard. The songs composed for the show resembled at times Honky tonk, blues, or even rock. All, however, maintained a western 1850's feeling.

Personally speaking, being a part of Diamond Studs was an experience I'll never forget. After Labor Day, I was called by Arizona Civic Theater to take over a part when the show was extended. Two hectic days and six new cast members later, Diamond Studs re-opened for another incredible month. Thank you, cast and crew, for all your help. Becoming a saloon girl and playing "Zee James" in the atmosphere Old Tucson provided are memories I'll always treasure.



Featured Performers -  
Thurs. thru Sat.  
Old-timey jam - Tuesday  
Hoot - Wednesday

502 N. FREMONT 622-8942  
SOUTH OF UA CAMPUS

## ON RADIO...

Basement Cafe program  
Nov, 29 (?) (6:30pm Ch.6 TV)  
Chip Curry's Bluegrass hour  
will continue on KWFM (92.9)  
(4 PM Sat.) while Diamond  
Studs is away. KUAT AM  
(1550) has an excellent  
series of programs coming  
up (12 noon Sun) including  
Snuffy Jenkins, Benny  
Thomasson, Deseret String  
Band, etc. Also, Sun. at  
4:30 they have a program of  
Latin American music. KUAT  
FM (90.5) has a folk pro-  
gram (Sat. 12:05).

## T OR C FIDDLE CONTEST

T or C, New Mexico held its fall fiddle context last week-end. This contest is one of the toughest and best in the country, thanks to lots of prize money and the stiff competition between the Texas-New Mexico fiddlers. Naturally, current interpretation of old western style dominates, giving the judges a headache - when 8 or 10 fiddlers in each division can play the old style virtually perfectly, the judges have to rely on "hokum" - to distinguish who's the best. Well, times change, but we wonder how would one of the old masters - say, Eck Robertson - make out? John Barnhouse went over to compete and reports these results:

Under 12 - Olin James ("he's not a bad fiddler, he'll be something to see in a few years"),  
12-18 - the suddenly famous Mark O'Connor won easily, just as he won the Tennessee National Master's, and the National Flat-Picking Guitar Championship (!) and he finished second in the Grand Championship at T or C against extremely rough competition. 18-48 - Dale and Terry Morris of Decatur, Tex. finished 1, 2. Sol Rudnick did Arizona proud in this very tough division, finishing about 5th. 48-65 - Dick Barrett, Junior Daugherty. 65+ - a Texas fiddler, Bill King, won.

MODERN TIMES BOOKSTORE  
920 E. Speedway  
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Books, Records, Bluegrass, Old-Timey, and Traditional Music.  
British and Irish Imports.  
10% off on music books, and records for TFTM members.

## LOCAL NOTES

Some very nice music this month past. A hot bluegrass band (see review) that was high energy - and an audience that was even higher energy, verging on the riotous. Meanwhile, things were calmer at the Rusty Scupper where a slightly nervous Summerdog was edging into the respectable club circuit. They warmed up to things real well - even to the point of doing an old-timey set, we hear. They were really great at the Tucson Meet Yourself Festival; especially the improved vocals - that's what a summer of constant workouts will do!

John Barnhouse and Ray Caudill have been adding a very nice touch to the jams at the Basement...a dose of real old western style fiddle and backup in the midst of a crowd of city-bred easterners. Ray plays back-up guitar for a C/W band in the Longhorn, a cowboy bar on the west side Friday and Saturday, with a jam session Sunday afternoons. Maybe someone can get into one of these sessions and report back?

Walter Ross (294-4966) is trying to contact people who are interested in Scottish customs and culture. Give him a call if interested.

## NEXT ISSUE

-Diamond Studs - from R. Sayers, Jim Griffith, Dave Luckow  
-A dulcimer tablature with accompanying fiddle.  
-Frailing  
-Concertina! (What?)

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