



QUARTER NOTES

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 4
DECEMBER 1988

Published by the Plank Road
Music Society, PO Box 283
Brookfield, Illinois 60513

Greetings, Plank Roaders!

I've been asked to invade the pages of this issue of the Quarter Notes to let you know about, and to invite you to attend a truly exciting and important Plank Road gathering. On January 21, 1989 at 1:00 p.m., the 4TH ANNUAL PLANK ROAD FOLK MUSIC SOCIETY GENERAL MEETING will be held at the Two Way Street Coffeehouse, 1047 Curtiss, Downers Grove (phone: 969-9720 or 387-9312).

Folks, this is the folk convention of the western burbs. On hand will be the entire Plank Road board of directors, the booking committee, friends, associates and volunteers of the society, and a cast of thousands (maybe dozens) of ardent Plank Road members. Not only is this a prime opportunity for you to hobnob with the Plank Road heavies, but this is also your chance to have a voice in guiding the direction of our society.

The nuts and bolts portion of the program will include:

- 1) The Year in Review -- a quick look back at some of our projects, events, and collaborations.
- 2) Installation of Officers -- we'll introduce you to our board of directors and officers old and new.
- 3) Planning 1989 -- there are concerts, workshops, dances, parties, meetings, and outings to be planned, and other ideas to be kicked around too! Your input is essential to the discussion. Don't forget your calendar!

Later on refreshments will be served to the toe-tapping sound of the Jones Family String Band, after which we will do what Plank Roaders do best: the monthly sing-a-round will be a part of the afternoon, with the Jones Family as your leaders and hosts.

So, make sure to jot down your ideas about the Plank Road Folk Music Society and bring them along with your voices and instruments to the Two Way Street Coffeehouse on January 21st. And HEY!, bring a friend.

Happy Holidays and peace in the New Year,

Marianne Mohrhusen

CONCERT UPDATE

JAN. 14 ANNE HILLS and Shinobu Sato

Anne has a voice and a way with a lyric that's simply irresistible. She sings with a superb beauty and clarity in a performance that is both stunning in its sensitivity and inclusive in its warmth. Shinobu is an internationally acclaimed finger-style guitar extraordinaire who has earned a reputation as a "musician's musician" (Art Thieme). "He brings and elegance and depth to his music rarely heard outside of the classical concert hall" (Stuart Rosenburg of WBEZ's Flea Mkt).

FEB. 11 LOU & PETER BERRYMAN

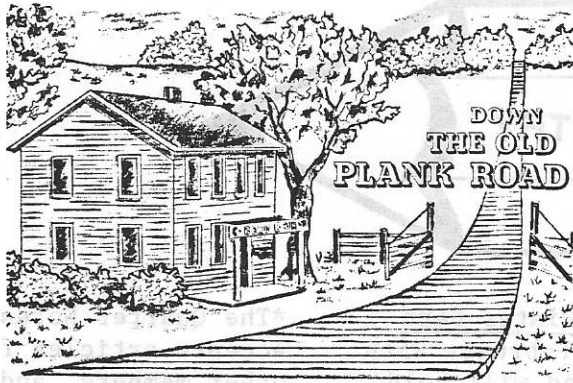
Lou and Peter come from Madison, WI, and are numbered among the finest songwriters and performers in the Midwest. "Sing Out!" magazine has noted them as their most requested songwriters in a recent issue. They seem to find humor in any subject and their special brand of humor and superb performances delight audiences all over the Midwest.

MARCH 11 JAMIE O'REILLY and THE ROGUES

Jamie and the Rogues are known as some of the best performers of Irish music in the area, but to categorize them in only this type of music would be a great disservice. Their repertoire also includes classical pieces, traditional folk and original compositions. Their fine musicianship combined with an energetic and theatrical presentation will make this a truly memorable evening.

Mark your 1989 calendars for these important Plank Road events!

Jan. 14	Anne Hills and Shinobu Sato	Sokol Hall, Brookfield	8 PM
Jan. 21	Annual Meeting, Jones Family Music Show, and sing-a-round	Two-Way St. Coffeehouse Downers Grove	1 PM
Feb. 11	Lou & Peter Berryman	Sokol Hall	8 PM
Feb. 18	Monthly meeting & sing-a-round	Two-Way St. Coffeehouse	12pm 2pm songs
Feb. 25	Barndance - musicians, dancers, kids, old folks, everyone welcome!	Two-Way St. Big Room	8 PM
March 11	Jamie O'Reilly and the Rogues	Sokol Hall	8 PM
March 18	Monthly meeting & sing-a-round	Two-Way St. Coffeehouse	12 pm 2 pm songs



DOWN THE OLD PLANK ROAD

DOWN THE OLD PLANK ROAD featuring musicians of the Plank Road Folk Music Society

SIDE A: Drop That Chicken and Run • All Night Sunrise • Two Little Boys • Wagon Yard • Let Me Try • Shady Grove • Lonesome Road Blues
 SIDE B: The Storms are on the Ocean • Hold Fast to the Right • I've Got Time For You • I am a Pilgrim • Anchored in Love • My Last Old Dollar is Gone • Farther Along

Plank Road Years

--Mark Dvorak

We've been travelling down the Old Plank Road now for seven years, the latest milestone being marked last Nov. at the Sokol Hall Anniversary/Tape Release Concert. And it was a very special evening: Reunited for the first time since summer, 'Ripe for the Pickin' delivered the spirited, sizzling set which has become their trademark. Roscoe Champ, who is in good health these days, was in fine voice and ably accompanied by Ron Simpson, perhaps the most underrated musician in all of Chicagoland. The Jones Family Stringband was on hand also and Jill Lagerstrom knocked us out with her guitar and banjo pickin' and singing. There were other highlights too! What an assemblage of pickers, singers, songwriters, and musicians-- among the very best to be offered at Old Quarter and Plank Road events over the last seven years. And it should be noted here that everybody played for gas money or donated their services altogether.

When recalling the night of the concert, I am warmed with thoughts of old friends reunited, the grand turnout and show of support for the album by the Plank Road membership, and, of course, the music. But when I slip the tape into the cassette deck of my truck I am flooded with images from the last seven years, and I can't help but reminisce some.

I often think back to the initial planning meetings for the first Old Quarter concerts, which were staged in various rooms and halls of St. Barbara's Catholic Church (actually just a block south of Sokol Hall). I vividly remember how exciting those evenings were for all of us who helped organize and perform. Someone once described those days as if we were all learning to ice skate at the same time. We'd first learn how to stand up and move forward without falling down, and then someone would learn how to do a figure eight to the amazement of the rest of us.

The beat goes on, as they say. There will be more concerts, more songs, and, in all probability, more albums in the years to come. But to Maurice Smeets, Jeff Sands, and Marianne Mohrhusen; who worked long hours and with great care, and to the musicians and people who helped bring this album to life Thank you.

I recall the night when Dave and Barb Reynolds first attended one of those shows with their new baby Amy, and the inevitable all-night bull sessions and song marathons in their basement that had to ensue. I remember a hectic, rambling year of rooming with Paul Klonowski and the endless jam sessions, music parties, and the steady stream of strangers, friends, and musicians who passed through our little house, but always had time to sing some songs or pick some tunes. And I remember giving some of my first guitar lessons to a wide-eyed but eager school girl under her father's proud and watchful keep.

I recall being one of the army who knocked out the walls of a Brookfield storefront and helped Dave and Barb to finally turn it into "The Old Quarter" Coffeehouse. And I remember the sadness we all felt when it had to close.

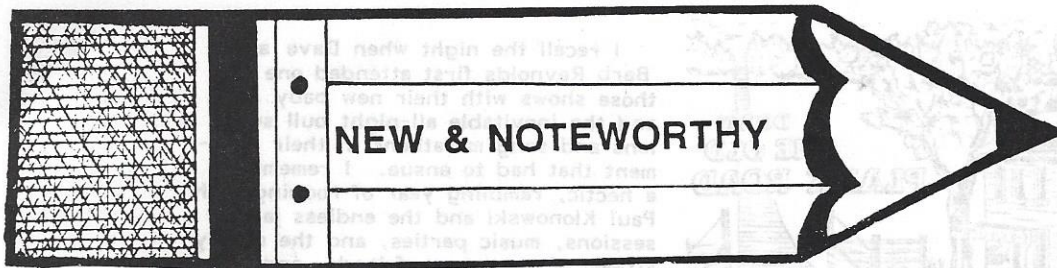
The past seven years become an overwhelmingly magical scrapbook of faces, friends, and songs when I stop and think about the hundreds of shows our little organization has produced in its various structures. We all remember meeting and chatting with Art Thieme for the first time, and I treasure moments spent with great folk artists like Larry Penn, Guy Carawan, and Blind Jim Brewer.

There's an old joke that asks 'How many folksingers does it take to screw in a light bulb?' The answer has something to do with reminiscing on how good the old one was.

Blind Jim Brewer is gone now, as is "The Old Quarter." Amy is now in second grade and the Reynolds have another son, Eric. Jill will be headed for college next autumn, and the buildings where our first concerts were held are now a parking lot.

But it's all here; it has all been preserved. And I flip through the scrapbook every time I plug Down the Old Plank Road into my cassette deck.

There's Roscoe Champ finally captured in great voice, singing his theme song 'Hold Fast to the Right.' There's Jill Lagerstrom picking a crisp and bluesy version of 'I Am A Pilgrim.' My friend Paul Klonowski is there, too, still frailing away at his banjo and singing 'Shady Grove' as if he made it up on his last hitch-hiking trip through Appalachia. 'Ripe for the Pickin's studio debut is also documented on Down the Old Plank Road with a blistering fiddle original from Steve Budde, and an excellent swing tune composed by Jim DeWan called 'I've Got Time For You.'



NEW & NOTEWORTHY

*The Plank Road board of directors meets monthly to plan and organize events. Meetings are held at noon at the Two Way Street Coffeehouse with sing-arounds following at 2 pm. (We have new, updated songbooks. Everybody is welcome at both the meetings and singarounds! We need your ideas! See our schedule for meeting dates.

*Rich Geiger, who has served Plank Road faithfully since its inception, is stepping down from the board of directors. He will continue to serve as our legal advisor. His leaving will open a director's seat on the board. Please contact Marianne by Jan. 10 if you are interested in this position.

*The Plank Road board now stands: Marianne Mohrhusen, president; Mary Nugent, secretary; Charlie Lewis, treasurer; Cathy Jones, Jeff Sands, Dave Humphreys, directors. The Plank Road booking committee: Mary Nugent, Dave Reynolds, Bill Fisher. Quarter Notes Editor: Lisa Lilly.

*HELP WANTED! We need someone to handle Plank Road T-shirt sales. This would involve ordering new shirts when supplies run low and getting T-shirts to concerts and other PRFMS events.

*Coming up--Winter Barn Dance!! On February 25th Plank Road will hold a barn dance in the big room at the Two Way Street Coffeehouse. Festivities begin at 8:00 pm so bring your dancing shoes. Refreshments will be available and caller Marianne Mohrhusen will be on hand to lead us through the steps. Admission is \$3 for adults, children under 12 free. Hope to see you there!

*Dr. John E. Dopyera, son of Dobro inventor John Dopyera, is compiling a list of resonator musical instrument collectors, owners, professional performers and folks who just enjoy picking.

If you own and/or play a National, Dobro, or other resonator guitar, mandolin, ukelele, mandola, banjo (or some variation) please contact "Dr. John" at Cumberland Hill Assoc. 16 University Station Syracuse, NY 13203 Please include your name, address, telephone, the type or instrument and music you play and some information about yourself.

*Ad space in the Quarter Notes is now available! If you'd like to place an ad please call 387-9312 or 485-5829 or drop a line to our P.O. box. We now have well over 300 members waiting to hear about you or your business!

*The Quarter Notes accepts articles from other members, and makes note of information sent to us, space permitting. If you'd like to contribute, or if you have any comments concerning the Quarter Notes, please write us at our P.O. box, or stop in at one of our meetings.

*Don't forget, for complete listings of area folk music events, call the "Folk Phone." 844-3655.

ORDER FORM:

Please send me _____ copies of Down the Old Plank Road at \$9.00 ea. (includes shipping)

Tapes will be mailed after November, 1988

Plank Road Folk Music Society, P.O. Box 283 Brookfield, IL 60513 387-9312 or 482-8632

SHIP TO:

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"Getting Started"

--Lisa Lilly

Like any other kind of writing, the hardest part of songwriting can be getting started. What do you write about? Where do you start--with the words or the music? How do you know what you write is good? And can you really learn to write? Isn't it something you either have a gift for or don't?

Starting with the last question first, there's nothing magical about writing. Like any other skill, you can learn it by doing it. No one is born knowing how to write any more than they're born knowing how to play an instrument or paint a portrait or hit a tennis ball. There are some people to whom some things come more easily than to others, but all of these skills can be developed. There's no need to worry about whether or not you're a natural.

The first thing to remember when you decide to give any kind of writing a try is that the only way to be a writer is to write. There's no use walking around with all kinds of great ideas, or great lines, in your head. Until you sit down and work with them you're only thinking about writing, you're not doing it.

Along the same lines, don't wait for inspiration to hit you. Sit down with your instrument and a pad of paper and pen every day, preferably around the same time, whether or not you have anything to say. At this point don't worry about being profound or making it sound just right. The idea now is just to get something onto the page or recorded on the tape machine. You can always make changes later. Pick a topic out of the dictionary if you have to. Write about work or your kids or taking the car into the shop. Hum a few notes and try to work them into a melody. Once you get started you'll find that if one idea doesn't work out it at least leads you on to another that might. And sooner or later your mind will get used to writing every day, and it will come more easily.


Whether you write words or music first depends only on what works best for you. Some people like to write a poem all the way through and then set it to music. Others make up a melody and write words to fit. I like to work on both at the same time. I'll write down one line, sing it over and over again until I find a sequence of notes that I like, then go on to a second line. And I'm always backing up to try the first line over again. It probably takes more time that way, but it works for me.

One thing to remember is that one element of your song will always affect the other, and you may have to make some adjustments to get them to fit together. You might have to add more syllables to a line, or use a different key to change the feel of the music. If you're stuck on one part, work on another. Don't let frustration keep you from writing. Try your words to a different tune, or your melody with new words. But save your originals-- you might want to use them again sometime.

Finally, the biggest stumbling block for a beginning writer is often the question-- what if what I write isn't any good? There's only one way to deal with that question. Write something first, then think about whether it's good or not. Scrutinizing every word or note that comes to mind to see if it's meaningful enough or has a nice ring to it will only slow you down. The first job of a writer is to write. Something can't be good or bad until it's there. And so on.


So give yourself a chance. Write first and evaluate later. Having a finished product--a song--is an accomplishment in itself, whether or not it's "good." And if you're not completely happy with it when it's done, well, that's what rewriting is for.

But that's something to talk about on another day.




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Winter Music Classes and Events

The Jones Family Music Studio

36 E. Hickory St., Lombard, IL 60148
(312) 916-1356

Tom, Anne, and Cathy Jones present their 23rd Winter program of lessons, workshops, jam sessions, singarounds, picking groups, and artists in concert at the Jones Studio. Classes begin January 7th. Instruments taught are *guitar, banjo, fiddle, mandolin, hammered dulcimer, mountain dulcimer, autoharp and bass.*

SPECIAL EVENTS THIS WINTER

HOUSE CONCERT WITH MARK DVORAK: Saturday, February 4th, 8 PM. Join us for a cozy winter evening around our fireplace with our good friend and prominent Chicago area musician, Mark Dvorak, singer of old time and contemporary folk songs, player of finger style guitar and old time banjo.

HARMONY- SINGING CLASS: Saturday afternoons. In response to numerous requests, we enthusiastically offer a class in harmony singing this session. Emphasis will be on folk and bluegrass harmonies, two, three and four part harmonies. Special guest performers have volunteered to participate. See lesson section for details.

OPEN JAM SESSION: First Sunday of every month, 2-6 PM. All of our friends and students welcome. Y'all come!

PRIVATE AND GROUP LESSONS

Lessons – Various Instruments:

Daytime as well as evening lessons are available. Private: One person, half-hour, 4 weeks for \$40. Semi-private: Two people, one hour, 4 weeks \$40. Group Lessons: Three people, one hour, 6 weeks for \$40; Four or more people, one hour, 8 weeks \$40. Larger groups may run longer.

Beginners' Singaround:

Saturday 10:00-11:00 AM; all instruments welcome; registered students free.

Intermediate Guitar:

Monday 8-9 PM; With Anne, for graduates of our programs at Wheaton North, COD, etc.; 8 weeks \$40.

Harmony-Singing Class:

Saturday 1:00-2:00 PM; starts 1/7, 8 wks \$40.

To register, fill out form and mail along with a check to 36 E. Hickory, Lombard IL 60148. We will contact you in early January to confirm scheduling; if we are unable to schedule you we will return your check.

OTHER CLASSES THIS WINTER

Guitar and Banjo: beginning and continuing adult evening classes are offered by the following schools with the Joneses as instructors: (Register directly with the schools. Call the numbers below for information). Most start early January.

Tuesdays: Wheaton North High School, 682-2091; beginning and continuing guitar and banjo (Tom and Anne).

Wednesday: College of Dupage, 858-2800 (at Glenbard East High School); beginning guitar only (Tom).


Thursday: Naperville Park District, 357-9000; youth and adult beg. and cont. guitar & banjo (Tom). Moraine Valley Community College, 371-3800; beginning and continuing guitar (Cathy).

Holiday Special: Register before Christmas and get one free lesson!



1047 CURTISS STREET • 969-9720
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 (ACROSS FROM THE PUBLIC LIBRARY)

ENTERTAINMENT SCHEDULE

- Friday December 16 **** OPEN MIKE **** Another of our popular sessions where anyone is welcome to perform, and we always have a great variety of excellent performers. If YOU would like to try our stage on for size, call Dave (968-5526) or just show up!
- Friday December 23  **CHRISTMAS SHOW WITH THE JONES FAMILY** -- Enrich your Christmas season with a wonderful evening featuring Anne, Tom, Cathy and their guest musicians. Be ready to sing along!
- Friday December 30 **MIKE CASEY** -- Mike presents an evening of old-timey, fiddle tunes, bluegrass and country folk in the tradition of Doc Watson and Norman Blake. With guitar, fiddle and banjo.
- Friday January 6 **SUSAN URBAN** -- Susan is an excellent Chicago singer-songwriter who sings about social issues, human interest, and more. Six and twelve-string guitar, and some a capella songs.
- Friday January 13 **PETE NORMAN** -- Celebrate Friday the 13th at Pete's 4th annual "Post-Christmas Blues Fest," which will also feature folk and fun songs and some great guitar rags. Our lucky day!
- Friday January 20 **DAVID WILLIAMS** -- A songwriter influenced by traditional blues, country and folk, he really excels as a lyricist. Songs of pioneers, cowboys, hoboes, carnivals and more, sung with guitar, fiddle, banjo and mandolin.
- Friday January 27 **RON SIMPSON & ROSCOE CHAMP** -- Individually and as a team, they present some of the best traditional music around. Vocals with guitars, autoharp, mandolin and dobro.
- Friday February 3 **MURIEL ANDERSON** -- Widely acclaimed classical and fingerstyle guitarist, Muriel was recently a guest performer with Chet Atkins at Orchestra Hall. Tonight we celebrate the release of her new cassette album. A wide variety of guitar styles.
- Friday February 10 **BRYAN DAGENHART** -- Always a popular performer, Bryan is one of the best all-around folksingers and songwriters we know. Old songs and new, fun songs, sea shanties, singalongs and more!
- Friday February 17 **CHIP MESSINEO** -- New to our stage, Chip is no stranger to Chicago-area venues. He performs contemporary folk, light country, and originals with guitar.
- Friday February 24 **DENNIS JOHNSON** -- Heard on "Flea Market" and "Midnight Special" radio shows and in many clubs and concerts, Dennis presents folk, gospel and original songs with guitar and banjo.
- Friday March 3 **** OPEN MIKE **** Another of our popular sessions where anyone is welcome to perform, and we always have a great variety of excellent performers. If YOU would like to try our stage on for size, call Dave (968-5526) or just show up!
- Friday March 10 **AMY BETH & ODETTE MUSIEL** -- Traditional and contemporary folk and fun songs and a variety of instrumentals. Guitar, fiddle, dulcimer, autoharp and more, with great vocal harmonies.
- Friday March 17 **LARRY UNGER** -- An excellent fingerstyle guitarist from the Boston area, Larry presents rags, blues, swing tunes, old-time, originals and (for St. Pat's Day!) Irish. Guitar, clawhammer banjo and an unusual instrument, the piano-harp.
- Friday March 24 **PASSAGES** -- From New York, the duo of Jem Moore and Ariane Lydon present a varied show featuring traditional Irish tunes, Chilean folksongs, Bach inventions and original compositions on hammered dulcimer, guitar, tin whistle & more.
-
- Saturdays Dec. 17* **MONTHLY SING-AROUNDS** -- Our popular song circles where beginners and experienced musicians can learn and/or share songs. Listeners welcome too! 2:00 PM \$1.00.
 Jan. 21
 Feb. 18
 Mar. 18
 Apr. 15
**December sing-around will be held at the Jones Family Music Studio, 36 E. Hickory, Lombard. Phone 916-1356 for directions.*
- Monday December 19 **CHRISTMAS CAROLING** -- Join us at 7:00 to go caroling, and then return for refreshments and fellowship. Bring flashlights!
- Saturday January 21 **ANNUAL OPEN MEETING** of the Plank Road Folk Music Society at 1:00 PM, including a short concert, and a sing-around.
- Saturday February 25 **BARN DANCE!!** Kick up your heels to the old-time music of our All-Volunteer String Band. Fun for the whole family! Caller provided and dances taught. Or just listen! 8:00 PM.
 \$3.00

Watch From the Two Way Street Coffee House on DGTV,
 Downers Grove Cable Television Channel G/20, Mondays at 7:30 PM.

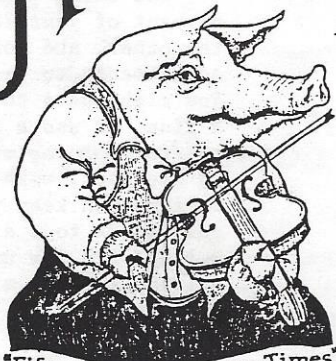
The Two Way Street Coffee House is a not-for-profit community project of the First Congregational Church of Downers Grove, and is open to the public every Monday, Tuesday and Friday night at 8:00. Live entertainment is featured each Friday beginning at 8:45. \$1.00 donation requested Fridays. Refreshments available. Member: Plank Road Folk Music Society, Fox Valley Folklore Society and Aural Tradition.

Call FolkPhone at TGI-FOLK (844-3655) for complete Chicago area folk music listings.

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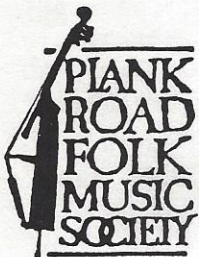
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