

Letters / Lettres

A letter to Canada and its storytellers from one very grateful Yank: "What the ear does not hear will not move the heart," attributed to the late Joe Neil MacNeil, Gaelic-speaking master storyteller from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, as found within the pages of his *Tales Until Dawn* (McGill-Queen's UP, 1987).

Though few people know it, 1979 was a pivotal year for the storytelling scene in Toronto and across Canada; in that year seven storytellers got together at a local cafe, under the aegis of Dan Yashinsky, to undertake an adventure that, 22 years, half a dozen locales, and well over 1001 Friday nights later, evolved into *One Thousand and One Nights of Storytelling*. I have had the great fortune to have attended a number of these special Friday night get-togethers, now held at the Church of Saint George the Martyr.

To George Blake and Phyllis Walker, whose Jamaican tales spiced up many a Friday evening, may the spirits of Anansi and Louise Bennett guide your tongues, your hearts and souls, now and always. To Norman Perrin, whose tales from his Ottawa Valley home contain the very stuff of tradition, may the spirits of Black Bay Road always be your special guardian angels. May those spirits also watch over your Four Winds Library, a veritable treasure trove.

Here's a grateful thanks to all of the singers of tales across Canada: from PEI's Theresa Doyle to BC's Mike Ballantine, from Toronto's exponent of Judeo-Spanish song, Judith Cohen, to Yellowknife's mistress of the Child ballad, Moira Cameron. Spoken or sung, a good tale remains part of the grand storytelling mosaic that covers Canada from its Atlantic shores to the distant Northwest Territory.

To Lorne Brown and his stalwart band of ballad mavens, known collectively as the Toronto Ballad Project, may your ongoing love, respect, and promotion of the wondrous art of singing old story songs never fade, and in whatever heaven Edith Fowke may currently reside, hopefully a musical one, may her eternal spirit always shine down upon the Ballad Project. To such Project members as Carol Magirr, Karen Kaplan, Jim Meeks, Duncan Cameron, and Marilyn Peringer, may perpetual bardic blessings be yours as well. Thanks also to Lorne Brown for his editorship of the *Appleseed Quarterly*, the marvelous journal of the Storyteller School of Toronto. Happy tenth anniversary to the *Quarterly*, and may you have many more!

To Montreal-based Mike Burns, wordsmith and shanachie—the ancient bards of Ireland would indeed be very proud to have you in their ranks. Ottawa's raconteur, Jan Andrews, brings the magic isles of Britain so wondrously to life with a voice full of sunshine and the very music of story.

To Kelly Russell, a truly magical voice of Newfoundland, whose tales of Pigeon Inlet have given me many joyous hours, may Grandpa Wolcott's spirit guide you on your journeys. Ron Evans's tales of Louis Riel and the dignity of the Métis people have shown a side of Canadian history unfamiliar to too many. To Kay Stone, folklorist, teacher, and storyteller from Winnipeg, many thanks for your recent landmark volume on the Canadian storytelling scene. Gale de Vos, teacher, specialist in chil-

dren's literature, and storyteller from Edmonton, has produced some of the most useful storytelling resources, from urban legends to fairy tales, in recent years. Calgary's Wendy Berner keeps the flame burning in that city to the south.

Finally, two heartfelt greetings: to Alice Kane, whose tales and word-pictures have enchanted Canada for over fifty years, and to Dan Yashinsky, a true friend of rabbis, elders, mullahs, and innkeepers on the roads to all Canterburies. Seeds that were planted at Gaffer's Cafe over two decades ago have sprouted and blossomed into a cornucopia of stories and a harvest of tellers.

Robert Rodriguez
NYC

I agree with just about everything Michael Pollock wrote [reviewing Alex Mulligan's *Collection of Square Dance Calls*, 34.1-2, p.42]. If he had seen one of Alex's originals (or what's left of one), I think he would have appreciated our "revival." I believe the book's ordering had to do with the sequence in which Alex taught "olde tyme" square and round dances in Toronto. Skye felt that he had his reasons and that they should be respected. I added the indexes.

"Olde tyme" is used to differentiate the dancing from Modern Western Square, which is almost always danced to records, with the vocals of modern country and pop hits being replaced by calls—sort of like karaoke. We use live music wherever possible (fiddles, accordions, &c).

For more information about the Canadian Olde Tyme Square Dance Association, contact Murray Smith.

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[But do you really have to spell it with a "y"? We all appreciate the need to differentiate the two musics, but some of us feel that cute orthography demeans the music.—GWL]

"Elmer Campbell's Barn Dance" [34.1/2, p. 20] brought back pleasant memories of going to visit Elmer and Mable with my parents when they lived at Claude on the north-east corner, before my parents built their house at Claude. Their house wasn't right on the corner; that was the pasture for their cow; their house was almost across from my parents' house; there is a newer house on that lot today. I remember sitting in their living room, and Mable was at the piano. Elmer probably played his "Barn Dance," but I don't think I would recognize it.

Don Smith
Toronto, Ontario

[Claude is a crossroads village just north of Victoria, Ontario, on Highway 10, now part of the Town of Caledon. Don is a boyhood friend of mine. His family farmed near Claude, then moved into the village.—JL]