

Mad Folk News

The Friends of Folklore Village Announce Fall Fundraising ExtravaDANCEa

The Friends of Folklore Village's Fall Fundraising ExtravaDANCEa is the final gala of the year-long celebration of the 100th year of Folklore Village's founder, Jane Farwell (1916-2016). The event, which will be held on Saturday November 12th, 2016, will include three dance bands, a Centennial Quilt raffle, and a Pie Trot-Cake Walk.

Festivities will start at Folklore Village with a potluck dinner at 6:00 pm, followed by the three high energy dance bands – Balkan band Veseliyka, with dance leader Emily Beebe; the band Rare Privilege, with caller Catherine Baer, featuring square

dances from around the world and Quebecois circle dances; and the Folklore Village Orchestra. The \$20.00 admission (capped at \$50.00 for families) helps support upcoming programs and special infrastructure needs.

There will be breaks throughout the evening to announce the winners of the raffle. First prize is our hand-made Centennial Quilt, featuring the Folklore Village Schoolhouse motif in the center of lively quilt blocks. Other prizes include a Door County get-away for two, and two complimentary scholarships to a Folklore Village weekend festival. Raffle tickets will

be on sale right up until the time of the drawings. Price for raffle tickets is \$10 for one chance, \$25 for three chances.

Folklore Village Farm is located on County Hwy BB, off Hwy 18-151 between Ridgeway and Dodgeville, WI. The full year's calendar of workshops, festivals, concerts, and events for people of all ages is at www.folklorevillage.com. Please direct questions to celebratejane100@gmail.com or 608.924.4000

Kevin Gordon and Bonnie Whitmore play KHoRM in November

My musical taste has a lot in common with that of Bill and Kate Fitzgerald, owners of the venue that bears their name in the Chicago suburb of Berwyn. Fitzgerald's is the only place in the Midwest that Jon Dee Graham played more in the last ten years than my house. Their annual Fourth of July American Music Festival routinely hosts other Kiki's House of Righteous Music alumni, like Robbie Fulks, The Bottle Rockets, Curtis McMurry, Gerald Dowd, Loves It and more.


On this tour Gordon will be in trio formation. He will be joined by Ron Eoff on bass and Joshua Hunt on drums. Both are studio and touring musicians in Nashville where the Louisiana born Gordon has lived for twenty plus years.

Bonnie Whitmore's latest release F*@K with Sad Girls may not sound like poetry from the title, but what's inside

believes the title. The brand new record finds Whitmore leaving behind the nice girl country music to show off an angry feminist side. The Denton native, Austin resident wanted to give voice to the imperfect, a confirmation that it is OK to be sad. It's a voice she finds to be largely missing in current music. "Like where is the Liz Phair of today?" she wondered in a Dallas Observer article. "Originally I wanted to make a rock record," she told the Austin Chronicle. "There ended up being a lot of different flavors – not one genre. To me, it's a full-tilt vulnerability record." I've seen Whitmore in Austin, and I can't wait to see her in the basement.

The Kevin Gordon trio with Bonnie Whitmore will play at Kiki's House of Righteous Music on November 18 at 8 pm. For more information or to make a reservation, e-mail me at righteousmusicmgmt@gmail.com.

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Review by Kiki Schueler

Minneapolis Brianna Lane is probably best known around here as the girl crazy enough to join Milwaukeean Peter Mulvey on his annual bike tour, which just finished its tenth running. This year's impressive ten day trek started in Evanston IL and ended with a two night stand at the Warming House in Minneapolis, a cozy, basement listening room which Lane runs. Given her commitment to the tour, it's no surprise that her love of bicycling appears to have started young. The cover photo of her most recent release *The Navigators Club* features a very young girl (I'm guessing Brianna) on a very big bike, determinedly traversing a driveway. The record was actually released last year, but I hadn't heard it before the caravan of two wheelers stopped here last month. It's obvious after seeing her play, and hearing this record, that she wasn't invited on the tour all those years just because her partner just happens to own a bike shop. Though that certainly can't hurt.

The Navigators Club feels instantly familiar. Part of that has to do with Lane's conversational tone, her effortless voice and her laid back way of making everyday things interesting, but the rest is because I've actually heard some of these songs before. Opener "Company" and the chilling, stand-out track "New Tattoo" were both co-written with Brad Hoshaw, Brooks West and sometime Madison resident Jeremiah Nelson. I'd heard Nelson play the latter many

times, but it's surprisingly darker and more menacing in Lane's hands. It starts with the time to move on line, "Darling, I'm getting a new tattoo, it's the last time I'll think of you," but gets decidedly creepier when she finishes the thought, "tell me, how you think you'll feel when I carve your name beneath my ear." Despite the "one foot in front of the other" chorus, there is no way she is moving on. "Company" may travel the same road, though it is hard to tell if the narrator is threatening, or just concerned, when she asks "who will keep you company?" Though the confession "Look what a reckless mess I've become," may point to simply pathetic.

In case you are now looking for the number of a good counselor, not all the songs are that dark, I can't imagine a purer, sweeter love song than "Pancakes." "I will carve a pumpkin with your daughter, you will toast the seeds on the radiator. You will choose the music, we will sing along to the record player," she sings, painting a picture-perfect modern family. "Real Love" is a declaration of unwillingness to settle, buoyed and reinforced by a floating fiddle, compliments of John Moline. The bouncy "Stranger" tells of making a friend (or perhaps more) on a barstool over a glass of Tullamore Dew. The contemplative "Birds" weighs the pros and cons of life in Minnesota, "I wish staying wasn't cold, I wish leaving wasn't so hard, I wish these winter boots were walking shoes too." It's honest, and wistful, and absolutely relatable for their neighbors to the east.

Lane's voice and guitar often take center stage, but she also makes good use of her ukulele, notably on the stark "Oh Boston" with just Mikkel Beckmen's percussion filling the spaces. As good as she is, the supporting players she's enlisted are equally important. Moline is

terrific throughout, conveying emotions words alone can't on somber songs like the reflective "Till & Sow." And it was a surprise to find out that my friend Blake Thomas was the one laying down those pretty tenor banjo parts. Turns out The Navigators "Club" is really just Lane, getting by with a little help from her friends.

Mad Folk News is published monthly by the Madison Folk Music Society, a non-profit, volunteer-led society dedicated to fostering folk music in the Madison area.

Contact us at madfolk@charter.net. Learn about concerts, membership, scholarships, and volunteer opportunities at www.madfolk.org.

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Me and Bob Dylan

Well I have to write this WZ about Dylan. I mean, he has nailed the Nobel Prize in Literature! This on top of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, eleven Grammys, an Academy Award, a Golden Globe Award, an induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, a special Pulitzer Prize "special citation," and many, many more.

As I've mentioned before, I do have mixed feelings about how American culture has turned into a cavalcade of contests. I was in Michigan last Sunday and after the gig we went to a sports bar where there were two huge screens over the back bar. On one screen was the Packer game and on the other was the second presidential debate. The sound was on for both events and people were cheering and booing alternately for a presidential candidate and a football team, in the same tone of voice. It was weird.

But maybe this is sour grapes. I had my eye on the Nobel Prize and still wonder how the committee can pass by such of my lyrics as:

*Her nose is like a steamship
Grounded in the parlor
Her eyes are like Chicago
An hour after dawn*

*And when she wants to see me
She writes it on a kumquat
And rolls it 'round the dog dish
Until the urge is gone.*

Can you see the Dylan influence there? No? Well anyway, as with most songwriters my age, Dylan was among those artists who started me writing songs, and poems too. I was in high school, and a bunch of us had bolted from the established high school newspaper and had formed our own underground version. This was in 1964, the first semester of my senior year. I remember being part

of a response poem in which I argued with someone in a Dylan style of writing, in response to HIS Dylan-styled writing. And by "Dylan styled," I mostly mean dropping the "g" from "-ing" word endings, and using "ain't." "I'm goin' down a-fightin' and I ain't a-gonna quit." But I was also moved by Dylan to write songs with that Tambourine Man feeling of being dazzled by wind, and night, and longing, and so forth. I was a big fan of Kerouac by then too and it was all very heady.

The first Dylan song I learned, along with 300,000 other plunkers, was **Blowin' in the Wind**, from the **Free-wheelin' Bob Dylan** album of 1963, though I may have learned it via Peter Paul & Mary's version which came out three weeks later.

But I do remember learning **The Ballad of Hollis Brown** and **When The Ship Comes In** directly from the 1964 Dylan album, **The Times They Are A-Changin'**. I especially remember playing the latter, sitting on the hood of my family's flamingo pink 1959 Plymouth wagon at the Peninsula State Park campground in Door County. I had just bought my second-hand 12-string Harmony guitar. (That was a memorable camping trip, probably the last one I took with my family. My youngest sister Susannah and I stayed up half the night in our own tent making up centipede jokes, the traditional one being "What goes 99 thump, 99 thump? A centipede with a wooden leg." We made up dozens of these, the apex being Susannah's: "What goes 50, 50, 50, 100, 50, 100, 50, 50, 100, 50, 100, 50, 50, 50? A centipede playing hopscotch.")

Not sure why I picked those songs to learn. I do remember liking the starkness of **Hollis Brown**, and it was easy to play. I don't think I could have picked a more different Dylan song from that than **When the Ship Comes In**, which was surreal and upbeat compared to the grim, straightforward, and depressing **Hollis Brown**.

As with most of us Boomers, Dylan has delighted, awed, disappointed, and charmed me through the years. After

Nashville Skyline came out, I actually wrote a long and supposedly funny imitation Dylan song, which I mortify myself by actually performing now and then. Many years ago everyone seemed to have an imitation Dylan song and I'm as embarrassed by mine as I'm sure everyone else is by theirs.

I only saw Dylan in person twice. The first time was in 1964 when he was to perform at Milwaukee's Oriental Theater. A bunch of us drove down from Appleton and got a pretty good seat. As it turned out, the truck carrying the sound system apparently was in an accident. Dylan came out and started singing without amplification, which didn't work at all. He then waved everyone to leave their seats and pile toward the stage. I actually touched his boot. He tried singing again and THAT didn't work out, so he left. He had sung maybe twenty words. We were refunded our money and drove sullenly back to Appleton.

The next time was in Madison with my wife Kristi, in 2004, exactly forty years later. Dylan and Willie Nelson were playing a double bill in various small ballparks around the country. Willie put on a great show, with lyrics clear as a bell. Dylan came out and played keyboard, standing, never moving an inch. He had on like a white suit and white big brimmed hat. The sound was horrible, which was odd because it was the same system Willie had used.

He was at least halfway through **Mr. Tambourine Man** before we recognized it, due to the wretched sound and his lackluster stylings. We actually went home halfway through the show. I still find it hard to say that, though it's true, Nobel prize or no, but have to add that this didn't diminish my adoration of the man's work.

So there you go; that's my life with Bob Dylan. Huge congrats to him and hooray for his winning the Nobel Prize; how cool. I love it. And incidentally, I'm still very proud of my 8th grade second place ping pong ribbon, despite my silly indignation about contests.

WZ, November 2016

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