

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Dec 18 - Folk Club Christmas Party at the Tortilla Factory

Dec 29 - Rod MacDonald & Jane Gillman at the Club
Acoustic - Industrial Strength Thtr - 8PM

Jan 3 - Ray Kaminsky at Magpie's in Middleburg, Va.
8PM to Midnight

Jan 12 - Hazlewood at the Club Acoustic - Industrial
Strength Theater - 8PM

How to become a member? Send or hand \$12.00, checks to **The Reston Folk Club**, to a board member or Dave Hurd at the address below. Membership is for one year and entitles one to a mailed newsletter and discounts to events. Also, to perform in a **Folk Club** sponsored community event, one must be a member (the "open mike" is open to ALL, member or not).

The Reston Folk Club

at The Tortilla Factory
648 Elden Street
Herndon, VA 22070
c/o David Hurd
1405 Cottage Street SW
Vienna, Virginia 22180



The Reston Folk Club

... Preserving Folk Traditions



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"PIE IN THE SKY"

by Dick Moore

By the early twentieth century, the American dream had turned to a nightmare for many. Often, these were the out-of-work men moving west to find their "fortune" on the frontier. By then, however, the frontier had been staked out by ranch and mine owners, lumber barons, and businessmen who had such plentiful supplies of cheap labor that they needn't worry about fair wages or working conditions.

It's difficult for us today to imagine the tinderbox status of American society at that time...but it truly was ready to go up in flames in many cities.

It was 1906 when radicals formed the infamous Industrial Workers of the

World: the IWW, also known widely as the "Wobblies," which advocated taking over American industry on behalf of the working class.

The IWW organizers were tough, determined, and a fascinating combination of individualists and social joiners, prepared to lose their blood, and sometimes their lives, in battling police and company guards.

They worked the hobo camps and the skid roads, mainly in the Northwest, haranguing all who would listen, and increasingly finding themselves competing with the Salvation Army in trying to capture the attention of the down-and-outers.

It was a study in contrasts...both organizations determined to save the souls of the desperate destitute...one

through religion; the other through organizing to fight the establishment.

For a while, the Salvation Army had an advantage: loud music by street musicians. Then the Wobblies retaliated with its own bands, the first started by a young hobo named Mat McClintlock, who played the clarinet, sang in nearly every saloon in the Northwest, and wrote such songs as "The Big Rock Candy Mountain."

Another songwriter was a Scandinavian immigrant named Joe Hill, virtually unknown until charged with murder while robbing a store in Salt Lake City. The community and press demanded retribution. Hill was tried and convicted despite two phone calls from President Wilson to the governor of Utah asking for clemency because of the lack of evidence. The government of Sweden also appealed for leniency, without effect.

No one knows whether Hill was guilty or not. He

refused to testify or explain his whereabouts the night of the robbery or the cause of his obviously recent gunshot wound.

To backtrack a moment, it should be noted that Hill had provided the Wobblies with a number of songs, some of them parodies on Salvation Army songs. One familiar song was "Pie in the Sky," written to the tune of "In the Sweet Bye and Bye," and mocking "long-haired preachers" who promised "pie in the sky when you die," as opposed to the Wobblies' offer of pie in the stomach before you die.

Joe was colorful, and seemingly without fear. From his jail cell, he sent out word to the working man, "Don't mourn me; organize." He also was quoted as saying he wanted his body moved to the state line after the execution, because he "didn't want to be caught dead in Utah."

On the day of his execution, he shunned a blindfold and then proceeded to shout instructions to the firing

squad.

He also left a poem written the night before:

My will is easy to decide
For there is nothing to divide.
My kin don't need to fuss and moan,
Moss does not cling to a rolling stone.
My body? Ah, if I could choose,
I would to ashes it reduce,
And let the merry breezes blow
My dust to where some flowers grow.
Perhaps some fading flower then
Would come to life and bloom again.
This is my last and final will,
Good luck to all of you.—Joe Hill.

Credit for most of the above goes to the musicologist Alan Lomax and his classic book *The Folk Songs of North America*.

As for Joe Hill, he may have been a saint. Or he may have been a sinner. Or he may have been a bit of both.

Whatever the case may have been, he is—and no doubt will always remain—an American legend.



Who is this folksinger?
Thanks to Pam Coulter we will be having quality filler in our newsletter.
A pony is a clue!

As we approach the Holidays!

December is a wonderful time of year. The spirit is full and giving, the holidays make us pause and reflect upon ideas which we haven't time to contemplate all the rest of the year.

This holiday season finds the world in turmoil and the threat of violence affecting you or me in the very near future is high enough to be of concern, whether we look to the Middle East, or to the crime in our own midst.

I, for one, don't intend to be distracted by the threats, but will try to make the most of the opportunity to seek ways to make the holidays happy for at least a few fellow travellers.

Won't you join me through your song, your charity and your will and give of your time and your means to make this a better world in which to live!

Happy Holidays!

- editor!