

**From:** Vancouver Folk Song Society vanfolksong@gmail.com  
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## Vancouver Folk Song Society

March 2024

[www.vfss.ca](http://www.vfss.ca)

Friends (Quaker) Hall, 1090 west 70th at Osler St.

### Got news? Performing somewhere?

Contact us with comments or news at [vanfolksong@gmail.com](mailto:vanfolksong@gmail.com) by **Saturday, Mar. 30** to be included in the next newsletter.

This email newsletter is sent to VFSS members and to subscribers by request.

**To unsubscribe**, go to [vfss.ca/email-lists](http://vfss.ca/email-lists).

**Health check!** Share songs, not bugs. If you have [symptoms](#) — coughs, sniffles, fever, "just a cold," please join us safely over Zoom. We care about your good health and ours, too.

## Schedule & Upcoming Events

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- **7:00 pm** Doors open
- **7:20 Harmony Jam** invites everyone to warm up their voices together as they start the evening with well-loved sing-along songs.
- **7:30 - 8:30** open stage / song circle
- **8:30 - 8:45** break (bring your own snacks/beverages)
- **8:45 - 9:45** feature performers
- **10:00 pm** Doors close

**5th Wednesdays** Song circles on Zoom with breakout rooms if there are enough participants.

**The Zoom link will be sent to our mailing list the day before, as usual.**

**Mar. 6**

**Open stage & features**

**In-person only**

• **Vaughan Evans** sings of BC, Canada, and the workings of his own heart. A member of the VFSS since 1992, Vaughan says, "Singing is good for the brain and good for the emotions." We couldn't agree more.

• **Mary Armitage** has been happily singing both traditional and contemporary folk songs, as well as writing her own material, since the 1960s in London, England. Here in Canada, she learned to play a variety of instruments and has enjoyed singing harmonies with her folkly friends at the VFSS for the last fifteen years.

- **Seamus Leahy and Jared Brown** An abandoned guitar, a construction site, and a love of Irish folk songs brought Seamus and Jared together three years ago. Originally from Galway (Seamus) and Courtenay (Jared), both are now members of the Amorphous Folk Collective.
- **Ruth Walmsley and Tim Bartoo** have been partners in music and life for 45 years. Their repertoire includes folk and original songs, with Tim on piano and Ruth on guitar and lead vocals. Heartfelt and socially engaged, their music always uplifts the spirit.

**Mar. 20**

**Songs of Place, Songs of BC:** Prepare for an evening in memory of BC's own folksong collector, Phil Thomas.

**Online song circle**

For the **Open Stage**, bring songs from BC, or from your own place. Bring two songs, one for back-up in case your first choice is sung before your turn on stage!

**Livestream for features in the second half**

Feature guests are:

- **David Querido:** Warm, resonant voice and a heart to match. Talented multi-instrumentalist with a vast repertoire spanning centuries. Having worked up and down the west coast for decades, David knows BC's music from the inside.
- **Linda Chobotuck:** In her own words (fair enough, from a songwriter): "As a singer-songwriter I am best known as a writer of songs about work, since after sleeping that is actually what we spend the majority of time doing. I grew up in a folkie household and have been singing and playing guitar since the age of seven. Not a terribly prolific songwriter but if you keep doing it long enough, it adds up."
- **Brian Robertson** is best known for his authentic, well-crafted songs about the region and its history, as well as some with more universal themes of love, travel, social justice and the blues. A warm, witty, west coast original. (Also a pretty good dancer!)

**Zoom link will be sent the day before the event**

**Mar. 27 VFSS AGM**

**On Zoom. Link sent the day before the event.**

**The VFSS Event of the Year! Members only!** 7:30 pm (opens at 7:15 pm) Online via Zoom. Hear reports of the year's events and finances, vote for the executive, or stand for election yourself! The link will be sent to all current members by email). Not sure of your status? Contact [VFSS@shaw.ca](mailto:VFSS@shaw.ca). If you need to renew or sign up, go to our [membership](#) page of our website.

**Apr. 3**

- **Robin Holmes** has taken to folk singing like a duck to water. His dramatic style brings life to his diverse song choices, including songs in Russian. Robin loves

song choices, including songs in Russian. Robin loves the “Filk” musical tradition, which draws from the sci-fi and fantasy genres.

- **Jane Slemon** is a sensitive songwriter and flautist, skookum guitar player, and builder of musical community. She sings and plays with musical groups including Erratica, J.E.S., and the Trout Lake Trio, has put out two CDs, and shares music in many communities.
- **Ken Hamer** is well-known to audiences on both sides of the Inlet and an old hand in the world of folk. Ken’s guitar, mandolin, and voice span the breadth from shanties to English Country Dance tunes.

## Future events

## Old friends and French tunes. Stay tuned!

**How to be a Feature:** Sign up for your “15 minutes of fame” in the calendar at the front desk at the Folk on Wednesday or [email](#) the coordinator.

## Accessible Folk!

The Friends Hall has upgraded its facilities to include elevator access for those using wheelchairs or other mobility aids. The entrance is from Osler St.

## Our COVID precautions

We can’t eliminate all risk of exposure, but we try to limit it by caring for one another through our safety measures.

**Ventilation** During cooler weather, we’re *reducing* the use of open doors and windows for ventilation and adding *additional* HEPA air purifiers instead. The CO<sub>2</sub> monitor remains. So, it won’t be warm, but it won’t be as cold. This change makes following mask and self-monitoring guidelines even more important.

- **Masks.** We *welcome* you wearing a mask when you’re not leading a song or reciting a poem, especially if you have health risks. Please respect each other’s choice and continue to stay home if you’re not feeling healthy.
- **Self-monitoring** If you are experiencing *any* [Covid symptoms](#), please stay home and get well soon!

## VFSS news

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**Wed., Mar. 27, Annual General Meeting! The VFSS Event of the Year! Members only!** 7:30 pm (opens at 7:15 pm) Online via Zoom. Hear reports of the year’s events and finances, vote for the executive, or stand for election yourself! The link will be sent to all current members by email). Not sure of your status? Contact [VFSS@shaw.ca](mailto:VFSS@shaw.ca). If you need to renew or sign up, go to our [membership](#) page of our website.

**VFSS Now with Cookies!** Sort of ...Refreshments, aka “tea and cookies” are now available at the break. It’s more streamlined than pre-COVID, and we’re asking you to bring your own mug to reduce (or even eliminate) the dishwashing task! See you downstairs! All that singing is hungry work!

**Banjoes available for adoption.** Free, to good home(s) only. The four-string banjo comes "as is," the five-string banjo has a case. Please contact Jim 778-229-0594.

## **In Memory of**

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*I was not looking forward to sending this newsletter. It brings the news of three recent deaths from our community — Jeanie Cox, an original founder who lived to reach 100 years of age; Allan Davison, who had been dealing with severe health concerns; and Bill Gies, whose death came unexpectedly.*

*However, I spent part of this weekend chatting with people who reassured me that as parents and grandparents, they are teaching the current generation of "little folk" that singing is a natural part of life, something you share with other people, and that everyone has a voice. With that in mind, we acknowledge the passing of these VFSS folks.*

*-Allison Campbell, enews coordinator.*

**Jeannie Cox** We were saddened to hear of the recent passing of Jeanie Cox (Moss) at the age of 100, the last survivor of the [five founders](#) of the Vancouver Folk Song Society. She and Al Cox became friends with Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger in the early days of the Folk Revival. A detailed account of her life is found in the [obituary](#) published in the Vancouver Sun.

**Allan Davison** In the face of advancing dementia, Allan chose MAiD and had a peaceful and gentle death February 29, surrounded by love. He was full of gratitude for his 87 years of adventures, beginning with his early life in South Africa. He joined the VFSS around 1971, shortly after arriving in Canada. He helped to coordinate Retreats and served on the Board.

Music was a huge part of his life. In addition to the VFSS, he used to perform at Music and More on Main regularly and sung with the Solidarity Notes choir for over a decade. Music was also an important part of life with his partner Cindy, and together their harmonies created unique, unforgettable, and heartfelt songs.

In his "other" life, he had been a professor of Health Sciences at Simon Fraser University, with a special interest in First Nations Communities. He would often walk up the mountain to his office from home and was passionate about hiking and the outdoors. Allan was kind, patient, and had a wonderful sense of humour. He did not want a celebration of life, so Cindy suggests that folks sing a tune in his memory or party with loved ones.

### **Bill Gies**

Bill Gies, long-term VFSS member with many years on the board, died on January 11 after suffering a stroke. Bill was born in New York City, lived in Washington DC, Japan, and northern California as part a family of "army brats." Later, his architecture degree brought him and his wife Bonnie to BC where they raised a family. From out of his busy life, he carved time to attend VFSS meetings and folk events, often standing quietly at the back to join in the singing, slipping in and out to his next commitment.

Bill was quiet and insightful, and his comments often brought new angles to our discussions. Some of us knew him (fittingly) as "WAG," from his initials William A. Gies, or shared his love of jazz, architecture, wordplay, or nature. When a cleaning session in the VFSS archives uncovered some early printed posters for our meetings and special events, he encouraged us to have them professionally scanned to preserve the historical and artistic value of these frail and aging artifacts. When the Hollyburn "Druids," including Jim Edmondson and various other VFSS members, performed on Hollyburn mountain for the cabin dwellers, he helped to rig a massive tarp to shelter them from the falling snow.

them from the family show.

In February, Bill's son and daughter-in-law were guests at the Folk, and we enjoyed chatting with them to share and compare memories. We look forward to meeting them again.

## VFSS Folks Out and About

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**Christopher Levenson** hasn't been by the Folk to sing for a few years, but he's busy with his poetry. His latest book, ***Moorings***, is an exploration of aging, loss, and friendship. Congratulations to Chris on his 14<sup>th</sup> book and the fine reviews it has been receiving, including in [The Vancouver Sun](#).

**Tues., Mar. 5 Morris Invitation! Graham Baldwin**, when not sharing music with VFSS, is an integral part of the **Vancouver Morris Men**. They're inviting anyone interested in trying it out and learning more about this old tradition to join them for a practise on Tuesday at Lord Beaconsfield School, 3663 Penticton St., from 7 pm to 9 pm. No obligation to join, and dance practices are usually followed by singing, music jams, and possibly beer. See their [website](#) for more incentives.

## How to stay in touch

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- With [Facebook](#) and [Youtube](#), you can view the news and photos we share there.
- Our [website](#) has details and reminders of upcoming VFSS events, as well as news, photos, and technical tips for Zoom events.
- Contact us with news of an upcoming performance for the next newsletter at [vanfolksong@gmail.com](mailto:vanfolksong@gmail.com).

## OTHER EVENTS

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### Music & More on Main – Note location of live events

Zoom on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thurs. Live on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month and last Sunday afternoon of each month. Live events at **City Heights Housing Society, 155 E. 37<sup>th</sup> Ave.** If there is no one in the lobby to let you in, go past the bike racks into the garden on the north and tap on the glass of the meeting room. Contact Tim Mar at [timmarsongs@gmail.com](mailto:timmarsongs@gmail.com) if you want to perform or attend. To get on the mailing list, email Stoo Born at [emin7b5@shaw.ca](mailto:emin7b5@shaw.ca)

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### Folk Music on the Beach – 2<sup>nd</sup> Fridays

**Fri. Mar. 8** at the Hollyburn Sailing Club, **Features: Graham Fidler, Gary Poole.** And the house band, The Hollyburners, feature VFSS musicians **Steve Deering** and **Ken Hamer**. 1326 Argyle Ave., West Vancouver. \$10 at the door, BYOB. House band from 7:30-8 pm, featured performers from 8 pm – 10 pm. Reserve with Neil at [carroll\\_neil@hotmail.com](mailto:carroll_neil@hotmail.com). It helps with their planning! [www.folkmusicatthebeach.com](http://www.folkmusicatthebeach.com)

### Musical Friends on Fraser (MFF)– 2<sup>nd</sup> Fridays

**Fri. Mar. 8** MFF is an open stage coffeehouse at the 411 Seniors' Centre, 3502 Fraser St. Doors open at 7 pm, Open stage starts at 7:30 pm and a 30-minute feature begins

at 8:30 p.m. The evening finishes around 9:30 pm-10 pm. By donation. For more information, contact [earlepeach@yahoo.ca](mailto:earlepeach@yahoo.ca)

### Deep Cove Coffee House – 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays

**Fri., Mar. 15 Double-feature night! 7:30: Rueben Gurr “Jazz in Blues; Blues in Jazz,” 9 pm: Steve Maddock.** Mount Seymour United Church, 1200 Parkgate Ave, Doors open: 7:00 pm, Warm-up acts: 7:30 pm, Feature act: 9 pm. Admission: \$15 includes baked goodies, coffee, teas, and cold drinks (Youth: \$5 / children & musicians: free).

### Beats on Broadway – 4<sup>th</sup> Friday

**Fri., Mar. 22** Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House, 800 E Broadway. Doors open at 7 pm, Open stage starts at 7:30 pm and a 30-minute feature begins at 8:30 p.m. The evening finishes around 9:30 pm-10 pm. By donation. For more information, [earlepeach@yahoo.ca](mailto:earlepeach@yahoo.ca)

## Local Folk Resources

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Available at our in-person events or order copies online

- ***Songs of the Pacific Northwest***, by Philip Thomas, edited by Jon Bartlett. 208 pp., 62 songs with lyrics, notes for melody, and chords, historical background to the people and events in the song, b&w photos, and index.
- ***Phil Thomas & The Songs of British Columbia***, by Jon Bartlett, 35 pp. This is a brief biography of Phil Thomas and a description of how he travelled throughout BC meeting singers and collecting their songs and history.
- **“Blow the Man Down: Tall Ships on the Fraser.”**  
This CD is a collection of some of our favorite shanties, performed by a collection of singers no longer performing together – so this is your only chance to hear them! It’s a gift to new members upon joining, but maybe you need more than one copy. It includes a small booklet of historical information about shipping on the Fraser River and the songs.

To read more or order copies, go to <https://vfss.ca/order-form/>

## Local links and beyond

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### Across the Water to Vancouver Island

Check out the [Victoria Folk Music Society](#) to see a schedule of their events, as well as other music (and dance!!) events around the Island, from Cumberland to Sooke, and of course, Victoria. VFMS meets every Sunday at 1110 Hillside Ave., 6:30 pm jam; 7:30 pm open stage, 9 pm feature. \$8 at the door.

### Rogue Folk Club live and streaming

The [Rogue](#) is offering live concerts again, as well as streaming options. Upcoming concerts include performances by long-time folk favorites as well as new faces. James Keelaghan pairs up with Jez Lowe on [Friday, March 8](#).

