

Folk song opens celebration

By LORA CUYKENDALL
Of the Emerald

*Come you Alsea girls, listen to my noise
Don't you marry the Oregon boys
If you do, your misfortune it will be
Cold Johnny cakes and venison is all you'll see.*

Singing a warning to Alsea girls and telling about the lady with red and yellow stockings who liked to walk when the "wind was high," Barre Toelken, University English professor and folklorist, kicked off the University's centennial lecture series Monday night.

Speaking to a crowd of over 100 students and members of the community in the EMU Ballroom, Toelken talked about the importance of folklore in general and the particular character of Pacific Northwest folk songs. His presentation was the first in a series entitled "The Northwest Passage into the 21st Century."

Toelken told the audience that folk songs and folklore "give a picture of the spirit of this part of the country." He said a region's folk songs transcend the formal chronicles of factual history and provide a picture of how people felt about the things that were most important to them.

During the course of his talk, Toelken sang nearly a dozen songs about loggers, cowboys, early settlers, women and Oregon rain to illustrate the way in which folk songs capture the feelings of a group of people. He called the songs and customs "a way of pleasing the people you live with" and said that such "inside" knowledge as knowing the proper way to say "Willamette" are the kinds of small things that tie groups of people together.

"Some songs and stories last beyond the individual and come to characterize a region — they give the flavor of that part of the country," he said. To illustrate the particular flavor of Oregon folk songs, Toelken traced the course of one

song as it moved west. To the tune of "Beulah Land," Toelken sang various verses of a song adapted by settlers in Kansas, New Mexico and Oregon to fit the geography and climate of each region.

A former editor of the *Journal of American Folklore*, Toelken highlighted his talk with stories and anecdotes from such local folk heroes as Benjamin Franklin Finn of the McKenzie River, who credited himself with moving Finn Rock, and Hathaway Jones on the Rogue River, who used to say that his watermelon vines grew so fast the fruit got worn out from being dragged around the yard.

Through the course of his lecture, Toelken emphasized the importance of good lying. "People don't always realize the art of lies — but there are liars all over the Northwest." He credits these liars, or spinners of tall tales, as persons who "pass on a way of saying something that satisfies the spirit of people."

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Drawing by JoAnn Fahigren

Guest lecturers to honor Northwest's uniqueness

Inspired by both the University's centennial and the nation's 200th birthday, the University's Honors College, along with seven other campus groups, is sponsoring a series of lectures featuring prominent Northwest writers and historians.

Highlighting the unique character of the Pacific Northwest, the lectures will be held Monday nights at 7:30 in various campus locations. They are open to both students and the public.

The series will include presentations by William Stafford, poet laureate of Oregon; Theodore Roszak, author of "The Making of a Counter Culture" and "Unfinished Animal;" Kevin Starr, city librarian of San Francisco and author of "Americans and the California Dream" and Norman Clark, president of Everett Community College in Washington and author of "Milltown." Victoria Hochberg, an award-winning filmmaker, will screen and discuss her film, "Metroliner." The last lecture in the series will feature an Early American potluck dinner and a presentation of Joaquin Miller's play "Forty-nine" by the Eugene Repertory Company.

Students can receive one credit hour for attending the series by registering for HC 199 (TLN 6881) this week in the Honors College office in the basement of Friendly Hall. Students may also register at Monday night's lecture. Discussion sections taught by Reed Straus and Jack Bennett of the Honors College faculty are being offered for two credits.

The lecture Monday will feature Thomas Vaughan, executive director of the Oregon Historical Society. He will be speaking in Gerlinger Lounge.

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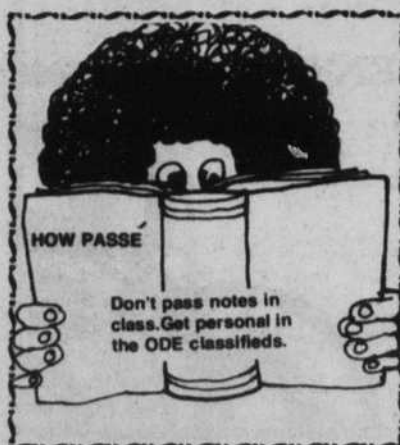
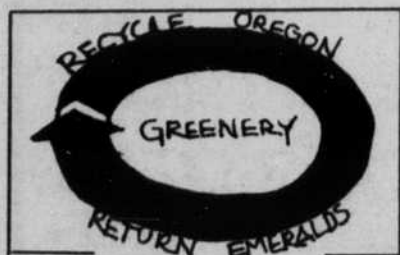
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