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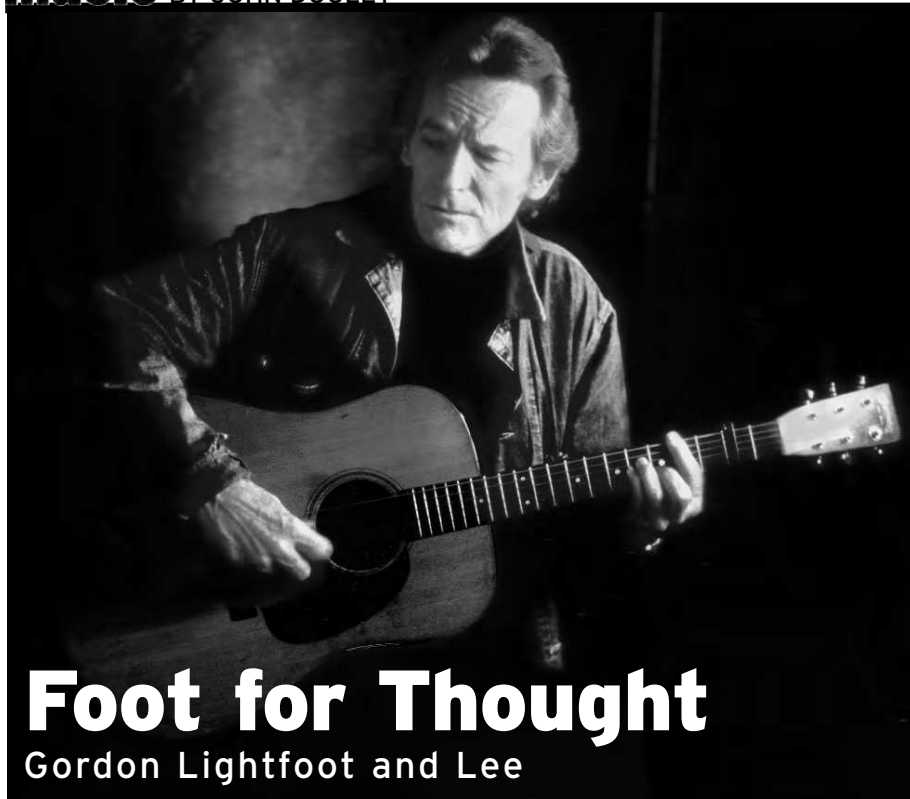
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music BY JOHN DOOLEY



Foot for Thought
 Gordon Lightfoot and Lee

come from an interesting family. My cousin Lee, for instance, suffers from congenital analgia, meaning he doesn't feel physical pain like most people. That sounds fun but can lead to disastrous complications when you don't feel your hand burning away on the stove or you cut yourself and don't have a clue and unexpectedly bleed out. In the Air Force, stationed in isolated Goose Bay, Labrador, his fellow soldiers reveled in the fact that Lee worked comfortably in the mechanics bay in his skivvies and boots, in 30 below C.

Must have been 1977-78. On the glove box of Lee's brand new VW bug, he'd painted a picture of a lightbulb and a bare foot, signifying his enjoyment of Canadian folk singer/songwriter Gordon Lightfoot. At a time when rock and roll was the be-all-end-all musically, I was intrigued at Lightfoot's storytelling and easy delivery.

But who uses model paint to decorate the interior of a new car? That would be Lee.

Now an oldie but a goldie (off the charts, still in our hearts), Lightfoot celebrates over 40 years in the music business. He cut his teeth performing in Toronto's fabled folk scene in 1960 and released his fist album five years later. Though his songs were covered extensively by Dylan, Cash and Presley, it wasn't until "If You Could Read

My Mind" topped the charts in 1971 that he emerged from obscurity in the U.S. and beyond. Lightfoot's rich narrative style and timeless subject matter is eerily potent in his "Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald," a chilly musical tribute to the worst maritime disaster in Great Lakes history.

With numerous accolades under his belt (15 Juno Awards, five Grammy nominations, inducted 2004 into the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame), Lightfoot performs today with the strength of an accomplished master musician.

I ran into Lee last month during a short visit to California. While walking around downtown Santa Rosa recently, scaffolding

had broken loose and crashed down upon him. Lee heard it coming and pressed against a brick wall to avoid the tumbling lumber and steel, but unfortunately, the debris crashed onto him and severed half of his foot. And despite his congenital analgia, for the first time in his life, Lee now feels pain, and lots of it.

"How's your foot?" I asked as we sat down to eat.

"Missing," he said. I'm not one to chide others, but I think Lee went a little too far this time honoring Gordon Lightfoot. What with his new *light-foot* and all.

Gordon Lightfoot
 8 pm Friday, Aug. 24
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