

## NSW Folk Federation

### President's Report (July 07 to Easter 08)

On my way to the 2007 AGM I stopped at the Sydney Film Festival to see the creepy film *Wise Blood*, based on the creepier book by Flannery O'Connor. The central character wants the life of a fanatical Christian evangelist but doesn't believe in Christ. He comes to a Bad End.

What does this have to do with being President of the Folk Federation? Nothing! (It's a great book though).

Seriously – the concept of the Folk Federation is that people will come together to work to keep the folk flame burning bright, for the folk community and also for the world at large. There is an overwhelming amount of work to be done – and with very few (read “no”) resources except people power. In 2007-08 we didn't change the world, nor did we manage to even change our logo. However, plenty of people-power we did have, and it was determined, enthusiastic and willing to get involved.

Every month, a Cornstalk Gazette is edited, distributed and made available electronically. No mean feat. Thank you Coral. Thank you, thank you. And thank you Wayne, who not only works behind the Cornstalk scenes but is also responsible for the excellent and as yet under-exploited jam.org.au. Thank you to Dallas and Jim Baxter who wrap the Cornstalk so you can receive it. We need more – people who will contribute articles, letters to the editor, reviews, photos: come forward, immediately!

This year was a special year as NSW was the featured state at the National Folk Festival. Thanks to Danny Watson for planting the seed of an idea and thanks to the National for running with it. The Folk Federation presented the Featured State stage every night of the festival at the new Flute & Fiddle venue. Despite the program being omitted from the festival program (that's right – no one knew what was on and when ... Not a Good Thing for a venue) I consider the project a great success. The performances were eclectic, engaging and generous. But more than that – committee members really rose to the occasion and did what needed to be done with little fuss.

To coincide with the featured state venue, we produced “State of Play”, an impressive snapshot of the folk scene. We got it mostly right (apologies to Selalu). Andy Busuttil did a sterling mastering job (how lucky we were to have a mastering guru on the committee). Claire Morgan donated her time and wonderful design skills. Of course it was not a complete snapshot of the NSW scene: some people were off-camera, some arrived late, some brought too-big families and some just wouldn't fit! Apologies to those who didn't make it. There will be future compilations (and perhaps future snapshots will show a more culturally and musically diverse family. Who can tell.)

The other significant project we adopted was the update and reprint of Chris Kempster's Henry Lawson songbook, a huge undertaking by a small group

which included Wayne, ex-President Christine Wheeler and Alison Jones. The book is magnificent and the Folk Federation is proud to be associated with it as publisher of the book. The paragraph that follows is not intended in any way to detract from the cultural and musical significance of the project.

Since my resignation as President, I have learnt that a decision to extend the print run and engage a distributor has left the FF in an extremely tight financial position. Hopefully this will be relieved when the book starts selling like hot cakes. Until then, the new Committee will face great challenges to keep that folk flame burning with a serious lack of fuel.

I thank Treasurer Bruce Cameron for all his work during the year (I mean this most sincerely!) and wish him and the new team good leadership and wisdom to manage the Federation well through lean times.

Other thanks yous: to Pam Davis who keeps insisting she is of no use to the committee but has provided priceless wise counsel and great humour throughout the year. To Peter Miller Robinson who has turned out to be a closet stuff-doer and has run with a number of projects since my departure including the Folk day at Lane Cove and the Sydney launch of "State of Play". To Julie Bishop who spends so much time finding out what's on in order to let us know what's on. To committee members Kate Delaney (the uncrowned queen of the folk picnic who will go to great lengths to make it happen), Terry Clinton (finger on the publicity machine button) and Mary-Jane Field (tim tams ...): thank you for your time and dedication to the Federation. To Margaret Walters: a big thank you for supporting the CD launch so well and for your drive, enthusiasm and huge generosity to the folk movement.

I regret my early departure from the committee. My short time working with you all was joyful and inspiring and my only reason for leaving was to do with overwhelming family commitments (called Tomas).

Wishing you joy and wisdom

Christina Mimmocchi

("Twas like where you're from weren't never there. Where you're going doesn't matter. And where you are ain't no good unless you can get away from it!" – Hazel, *Wise Blood*)