

This past weekend the Fort Frances Irish Culturamma Group hosted a St. Patrick's Day Warmup. It was a super evening (even though none of the wonderful and witty limericks I composed won a prize in the limerick contest) filled with song and drink and dancing.

The Irish Tavern Singers from Winnipeg were in town and we all joined in on the rousing pub songs they performed. And as usual Liz became first nostalgic and then philosophical.

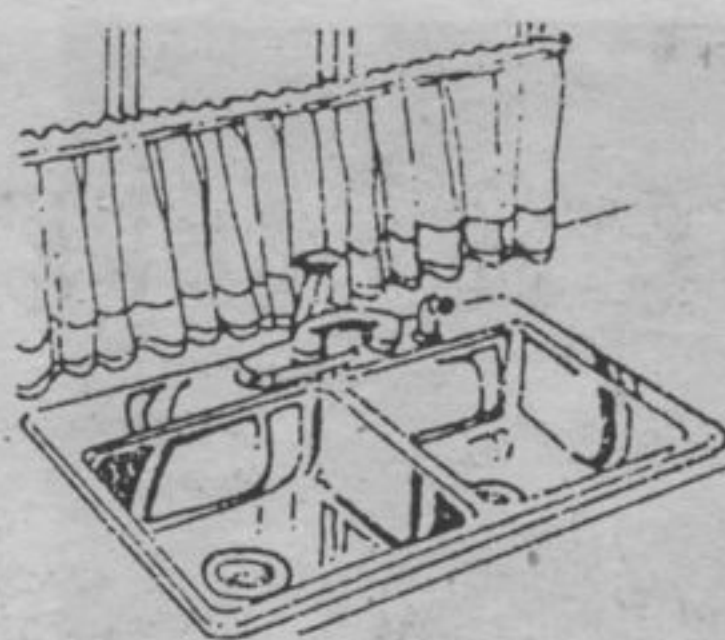
It all started with my brother and his comments upon my dancing. I heard him commenting to his neighbour at our table "I remember when my grandma taught her how to do the reel and the jig and to step dance. Can you believe that Liz taught me all those dances and now can't do the herself" O.K., laugh little brother I thought to myself. See how

well you can stepdance 10 years from now if we only get to practice twice in that time span.

My brother turned to me and said "Remember that, when grandma used to play the fiddle and banjo and we all used to dance and sing and grandma would dance all the French and Irish folk dances?"

As I reflect back on my life almost all my really fine memories include music and dancing, and when I say music I mean the kind where everyone joins in!

First we sang as a family - in church and on car trips (how else do you keep a family, of eight from fighting for the entire journey) when Mom and Dad would lead us in songs for hours upon hours. As we grew older we spent summer at camp where singing around the campfire was a nightly ritual. My father (who does not know how to slow down



## The View from the Kitchen Sink

Elizabeth Harvey-Foulds

and relax) took up playing the guitar in the late 60's and I learned all the Bob Dylan tunes and folk songs from that era while Dad honed his skills. I think he took it up as an alternative to his other hobbies - things like building rock walls and fire places and wiring houses - as a more therapeutic activity.

When we went on family camping trips we always ended the evening with a round of songs. During my University years there were friends who shared big old houses and always there was someone who could pick guitar, mandolin or banjo or play fiddle. Not being patient or dedicated enough to play any instrument very well, I was the one in charge of remembering words, and to this day I find it distressing when I fail in my designated department. But....I still

love to sing, off key or on, singing makes me feel real good.

Finding others who share this feeling is great and it's one thing I can always count on my brother for. I think back on all the hours I've spent listening to and singing folk music, and remember the folk festivals; the ones I've worked on, the summer I made it to almost every festival coast to coast, the years we ran the Folk Factory here in Fort Frances.

I wonder how has it happened that we now so seldom get together and sing? Will our kids grown up with the good memories and feelings that I feel so strongly? When did people stop singing and dancing for the sheer pleasure involved?

In discussing the concept with a friend we talked about possible reasons and decided that it might have to do with the availability of

television and recorded music. At local dances taped music has replaced the home town bands of years gone by. A D.J. just can't get people emotional enough to join in.

My friend commented on how music, like television has become a spectator sport. She's right, we listened to music and maybe we even hum along, but how often do we create it. We're so used to perfection and professionals that we are embarrassed that we don't do it as well as they do.

If we don't teach our kids to appreciate Canadian folk music - all those struggling musicians who will never make the big time and understand that real songs are written by people who feel them and need to say so - not by marketing men and professional song writers - we may end up with a whole generation of individuals who've been deprived of one dimension of living.

We have to teach our kids the joy of songs and give them the opportunity to sing with us, so that they in turn will be able to say some night in the wee hours, after sitting with friends and

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The News own Helene Ballard (standing) and friends enjoyed a St. Patrick's Day Tea held at Birchwood.

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from beginning to end. Mary Roberts gave the Scripture Reading followed by the Meditation by Edna Ramsay. Plans are underway to hold a Living Rosary in May.

On Friday, March 25 at 7.00 pm, a mass will be offered. This is a "Special Catholic Women's League Day of Prayer and Fasting" for all expectant mothers and unborn children.

Due to resignations, we are looking for convenors for Organization and Community Life. The World Day of Prayer was well attended.

Anyone planning to attend the convention in Thunder Bay May 3,4,5, should let Sharyn know by April 11. Father Campbell urged everyone to help make Holy Week a good week by our participation.



### "REEL REPAIRS"

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## Child Care: Opening New Doors

The availability of quality, affordable and flexible child care is a key to opening up the future for many women in Canada.

The Government of Canada has recognized the importance of accessible child care in assuring women's economic equality by introducing The National Child Care Strategy—a balanced mix of program initiatives, offering a

wide range of choices to women who work inside or outside the home.

Highlights of the program include:

- the addition of 200,000 new child care spaces;
- the creation of a \$100 million Child Care Initiatives Fund for developmental projects for child care and special needs groups;

- the increase of the Child Care Expense Deduction from \$2,000 to \$4,000 for children six and under or with special needs;
- the phase in of a \$200 supplement to the Child Tax Credit for children six and under.

As Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, I invite you to learn how you and your family can benefit from the National Child Care Strategy.

Please write to me:  
**Barbara McDougall,**  
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the Status of Women,  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0A6



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