

From the Editors

This issue of *Folklore Forum* marks the twentieth anniversary of the journal. All of us—the editorial staff, the subscribers and the contributors—help to constitute a tradition which inevitably involves innovations. This issue's innovations include an exciting new section called "Open Forum" as well as a dramatic change in the journal's physical appearance.

Ironically, although we are calling "Open Forum" a new section, it actually echoes the original purpose of the journal. It is a place for an informal, ongoing conversation, a self-contained, self-sustaining, free-flowing, folkloristic exchange. We have no objection if it should turn into a free-for-all over the provocative issues of the day. It should be a place where people can express views freely and question other views without troubling with footnotes and bibliographies. Appropriately, the first article in the Open Forum section is written by Elliott Oring, *Folklore Forum's* first editor, who reminds us that the original intention of the journal was "to be a forum for communication, exchange, debate, and discussion," . . . "a vehicle for much of what remains unsaid in our discipline." In response to Oring's remarks, Robert Walls, another former *Forum* editor, wonders why folklorists are so strangely quiet about matters concerning their own discipline.

We are also proud to present three outstanding articles in this issue. Deborah Plant shows how Zora Neale Hurston's exposure to folk preaching traditions influenced both her beliefs and her writing style. Interestingly, Plant's discussion of "receiving the call" (to be a folk preacher or, as in Hurston's case, to be a writer) similarly parallels Jongsung Yang's description of the tormenting trials that affect charismatic shamans in Korea. Yang, who lived among and studied these shamans for more than a decade, presents an informative article about how shamans know they are being called by the spirits, and the subsequent arduous training which the novice shamans must undergo. Our third major article is a revealing interview conducted

by Michael Miller with Lawrence Levine, whose work lately has been in the forefront of cultural studies.

The "Topics and Comments" section contains notes as well as responses to articles previously published in *Folklore Forum*. Kenneth Pimple has an interesting perspective on the "You're Going to Die Joke!" which was discussed in Volume 20:1/2; and Martha King discusses "attitos" (orally performed funeral poetry) of Sardinia.

This past year saw major changes in the organization of the publishing efforts of Folklore Forum, Inc., Trickster Press, and Folklore Publications Group. These three publishing entities have operated independently in the past, but because of diminishing resources in staff and money, as well as an outdated publishing purpose (Folklore Publications Group was originally organized to publish pre-release manuscripts which were in press at other publishing houses, in addition to monographs), the need to restructure the three publishing efforts was long overdue. The result was to consolidate the resources (staff and money) into one umbrella group, aptly named Folklore Publications Group, Inc., and to limit the publishing efforts to the journal, *Folklore Forum*, and to book-length manuscripts, Trickster Press.

By automating our circulation, business, and editorial files, *Folklore Forum* is now in a much better position to keep track of subscriptions and back-issue orders as well as to produce current issues on a much more regular basis. Co-editor Adams notes here that George Schoemaker is to be commended for his meticulous work in assessing, reorganizing, and updating the financial aspects of the journal's operations. His work, accomplished in addition to his editing duties, has been key to ensuring a healthy publishing future for the journal.

Finally, we would like to encourage the submission of more articles based on ethnographic fieldwork and analysis. While this journal retains an interdisciplinary approach and certainly will not rule out articles that are based on literary analysis, we want to encourage more submissions based on fieldwork, whether it be manuscripts, controversial discussions regarding fieldwork for Open Forum, or smaller pieces for the Topics and Comments section.

For a future discussion in *Folklore Forum's* "Open Forum" section, we particularly solicit essays focusing on public-sector issues. However, we welcome essays on any topic concerning the discipline of folklore.

Linda Kinsey Adams
George H. Schoemaker