

an exhibition and publication program. Section members with comments or additional suggestions should contact Simon Bronner (Folklore and American Studies, Pennsylvania State University, Middletown, PA 17057). Gary Alan Fine then suggested that the Section consider sponsoring an international children's folklore conference held in the United States but not necessarily as part of the Centennial celebration.

Archivist/Historian Dick Meyer (address above) asked members to send him copies, offprints or xeroxes of children's folklore papers they have published or papers they have delivered at professional meetings. In addition, he asked members to be on the lookout for papers appearing in journals or at meetings outside the folklore field. Finally, instructors are asked to contribute copies of student papers to the Archives.

Priscilla Ord (R.D. #9; Box 511-E, Carlisle, PA 17013) reminded Section members to send her items for the Children's Folklore Bibliography.

In concluding discussion, it was suggested that the Section contact journal editors outside the folklore field who might receive submissions dealing with children's folklore. The editors would be advised of Section members who could serve as resource personnel in the jurying or editing of these submissions. To establish a list of resource personnel, Sue Samuelson volunteered to develop a questionnaire querying Section members on their relevant skills and interests. The questionnaire will be inserted in a forthcoming issue of the newsletter.

The members present then passed a motion to hold the Children's Folklore Section meeting at the 1984 AFS meetings. It was suggested that this be a breakfast gathering, but no formal action was taken on the proposal. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:30 p.m.

Submitted by  
Danielle M. Roemer  
Secretary/Treasurer

## 1983 NEWELL PRIZE

Dean Lapp, a June graduate of Penn State Capitol Campus, recently received a national award for a research paper he completed while he was a student at Capitol.

Lapp, of Akron, Pa., received the William Wells Newell Prize for the best student paper on children's folklore. The prize is awarded by the Children's Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society.

His prize-winning paper reported on a computer analysis he did of children's jumprope rhymes. This analysis was completed as an independent study under the direction of Dr. Simon J. Bronner, assistant professor of folklore and American studies.

Lapp's receipt of the Newell Prize was announced at the annual meeting of the American Folklore Society, which was held in Nashville in October. A cash award accompanies the prize, according to Dr. Bronner.

Lapp was graduated from Capitol with highest distinction and next spring will begin graduate study in educational psychology at Penn State's University Park campus. While at Capitol Campus he served as vice-president of the social science honor society Delta Tau Kappa. At graduation he received the society's Academic Scholarship Award, which recognized him for outstanding academic achievement and for University and community involvement.

## CURRENT RESEARCH: SELECTIONS

### *A Collection of Childlore from Pennsylvania High School Students*

by Simon Bronner and Hannelore Wertz

When Hannelore Wertz, a high school teacher of German, came to me and told me that she wanted to collect folklore, I asked her about the possibilities of questioning her class. Here would be a chance to record the entire repertoire of a class. If the idea that folklore travels in curricular age networks is true, then the form and content of the material should be consistent and common. That turned out to be the case. Every student answered with lore and repeated forms such as "Grosser than Gross" (covered in detail in my "What's Grosser than Gross? New Sick Joke Cycles" for *Midwestern Journal of Language and Folklore*, 1984), dead baby jokes, and other formulaic lore. The material was collected in April 1982 from 25 students in York County, Pennsylvania. They are white, lower middle class, suburban, in what is considered a conservative area politically. The collection captures the breadth of material circulating in the school, and probably other schools. Although the reverence for collectanea has diminished in the published literature, they still help us in grasping the significance of what is being said and how. Lore cycles work more quickly than ever today and textual collections still are a first step to identifying folk behavior, style, and creativity.

Simon J. Bronner  
The Pennsylvania State University

### **BELIEFS**

If you let any limb of your body hang over the edge of your bed past midnight, the hairy hand will get you.

If you play with matches, it means you are sexually frustrated.

If you like to chew icecubes, you are sexually frustrated.

girl, grade 9;  
source: ? "everybody knows that"

Lift your feet off the ground when someone tells a lie.

If you go to bed singing, you will wake up crying.

girl, grade 9; source: not given

If you have sex standing up, you can't get pregnant.

You shouldn't kiss a girl in a bathing suit, she may get pregnant.

If you break a mirror, you'll have seven years of bad luck.

It is bad luck to walk under a ladder.

It is bad luck if a black cat crosses your path.

If you sit in a chair the same color of one a girl sits in, it means you're in love.

boy, grade 10; source: not given

If you set a dead snake on newspaper and burn it, you will never see another snake around the house.

If little kids play with fire, they will wet the bed.

If you cuss when planting tomatoes, they won't grow.

To get rid of warts: On May 1, before talking to anybody, wash your face in the morning dew.

or steal your mother's dishrag and bury it in the garden.

If you kill a toad, your cows will give bloody milk.

girl, grade 9; source: not given  
(the only one of the informers living on a working farm)

## SILLY STORIES

Ladies and jellybeans,  
reptiles and crocodiles!

I stand before you to sit behind you,

to tell you something,

I know nothing about.

There will be a meeting tomorrow evening,

right after breakfast,

to decide which color to white-wash the church.

There is no admission,

so pay at the door;

there are plenty of seats

to sit on the floor.

There was this drunken sailor who, when he was walking home one night, heard this bumping noise behind him. He looked behind, and saw a white coffin bumping along, down the road after him. Immediately, he became sober from fright and ran into his house. He locked the door. But the coffin bounced up on the porch, waited a few seconds, then, with a terrible crash, burst through the door. The man ran up the stairs, grabbed a chair, and threw it at the coffin. *Something* knocked it away, and it broke into a thousand pieces. Then the coffin started up the stairs—one step, two steps, three steps, more.

Somehow, the sailor knew that if it got all the way up, he would be doomed! Suddenly, he got an idea. He ran into his bedroom, grabbed a small box and ran back to the steps. He took out a coughdrop, threw it at the coffin, and the coffin stopped!

boy, grade 9  
source: not given

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
hobos and tramps,  
cross-eyed mosquitoes,  
and bow-legged ants:

I come before you to stand behind you,  
to tell you a story, I know nothing about.

Late Thursday night, early Friday morning,

an empty truck full of bricks

pulled into my front yard,

killing my cat in the backyard.

That same night, two dead boys got up to fight.

Back to back, they faced one another.

A deaf policeman heard the noise,

came, and shot the two dead boys.

If you don't believe this lie is true,

ask the blind man! he saw it too.

boy, grade 9  
source: not given

A guy and a girl in a little canoe  
when the moon is shining all around.

They paddled, meddled the little canoe

and they didn't even make a sound.

They talked and they talked til the moon grew dim,

she told, he could kiss her, or get out and swim.

So what cha gonna do in a little canoe

when the moon is shining all around.

Well, I took my guy in a little canoe  
when the moon was shining all around.

We paddled, meddled the little canoe

and we didn't even make a sound.

We talked and we talked til the moon grew dim.

I told him, he could kiss me, or get out and swim.

So what cha gonna do in a little canoe

when your man is swimming all around?

Get out and swim!

girl, grade 9; source: not given

(This Collection of Childlore to be continued in the next issue of the *Children's Folklore Newsletter*)

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