

Editor's Note-Folklorica 2013

Folklorica returns after a year-long hiatus during the transition from the former editor, Natalie Kononenko at the University of Alberta to its new home at the University of Kentucky. We had hoped to complete the shift between editors and publish an issue last year, but there were complications beyond our control with the material in the pipeline. We hope that the offerings in this volume help to compensate for the delay. This edition features articles drawing on a range of folk traditions from material culture (Franklin Sciacca's analysis of Ukrainian embroidery from the 19th century to the present and its connection to identity in many social, temporal, regional and national contexts) to vernacular religion (Tatiana Filosofova's study of conceptions of the apocalypse as reflected among Old Believers in Latvia), from personal narrative (Adrienne Harris' examination of the folk elements within the oral histories of women fighter pilots in World War II) to neo-folk ritual (Ana Stefanova's fascinating treatment of the invented tradition of *nestinarstvo* in one Bulgarian village). The various approaches and topics of these articles demonstrate the scope of our discipline and also its relevance in the contemporary societies of the regions to which SEEFA is dedicated.

While this claim seems obvious to those of us who are specialists in folklore and ethnography, we release this issue during a time in which continued research in the field is in jeopardy within the countries our membership studies. The Academies of Science across the region have been facing severe budget cuts throughout the post-socialist period. The most recent and most well-publicized development in this unfortunate trend has occurred in Russia over the last year. While I was in Russia and Belarus this summer, it was the major topic of conversation among my folklore colleagues at the Institute of Philology in Novosibirsk as well as among specialists at the International Congress of Slavists in Minsk. While each of North American who has a connection to the venerable scholarly tradition of folklore in the Slavic, East

European and Eurasian countries has a similar story to tell about our concerns over the threat to the excellent work done by our colleagues there, I want to take this opportunity to address one particular instance of particular concern to SEEFA.

The Folklore Sector of the Institute of Philology in Novosibirsk has been awarded the State Prize for Science and Technology of the Russian Federation (2002) for its series *Pamiatniki fol'klora narodov Sibiri i Dal'nego Vostoka* (*Monuments of the Folklore of the Peoples of Siberia and the Far East*). This 60-volume series (31 have been released, 3 are in press) represents one of the finest collections of folk material (including poetic genres, prose genres and ritual) in the much neglected region of Asian portion of Russia. In addition, the folklore collective has been dedicated to gathering material from native peoples across the region, a rarity in and of itself in much of the country, material which is being lost due to the rapid process of language death in these communities. This dedicated folklore collective (like many others in Russian now) is faced with the potential loss of its institute (and certainly of the series) because the humanities are said out of place within the scientific-technological tradition of Akademgorodok according to the head of the Siberian Division of the Russian Academy of Sciences. This institute, of course, is not an exception; for instance, the distinguished State Institute for the History of Art in Saint Petersburg with its excellent ethnomusicology department has already been dissolved. The discipline of folklore and ethnography faces an uncertain future. The articles in this volume are evidence of how SEEFA has managed to connect a broader range of specialists from North America and the countries of Eurasia since its inception. These authors, two North Americans, relying on the research by and connections with Eurasian specialists, and two Europeans, trained in the system under threat, share a common concern. We are beholden to the Eurasian tradition of folklore studies in fundamental ways and should provide support as we are able if the ties and exchange of ideas SEEFA has achieved are to be sustained.

Since the last issue of *Folklorica* was released, the organization has changed its name to the Slavic, East European and Eurasian Folklore Society. This shift was prompted by a desire to clarify what has long been confusion over the range of articles suitable for publication in the journal. In addition, it reflects a parallel change in the American Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies, with which we have been affiliated since our inception. I am pleased to say that this shift has indeed resulted in submissions from specialists studying Central Asia. Although none of those submissions was ready for this issue of the journal, we hope that some will be published in the next volume. We are still waiting for submissions from those studying the folk life of the Caucasus and we will attempt to get the word out on our interest in material on that region.

In closing, allow me also to express our deepest gratitude to Natalie Kononenko, a founding member of SEEFA, who fostered the development of *Folklorica* in her role as editor. She did yeoman's work to publicize the journal in the countries of Eurasia and is greatly responsible for its reputation as an international peer-reviewed journal. Thanks also go to the authors for their patience during the transition and in their willingness to respond to the reviewers' comments with great care. The reviewers also deserve credit for their thoughtful readings of the submissions; without the SEEFA membership's willingness to take on much of the reviewing, the quality of the journal would suffer immeasurably. Finally, thanks to my editorial assistants, Jason Grant, Melinda Kelley and Benjamin Vogelpohl for all their support.

Jeanmarie Rouhier-Willoughby, *Folklorica* Editor