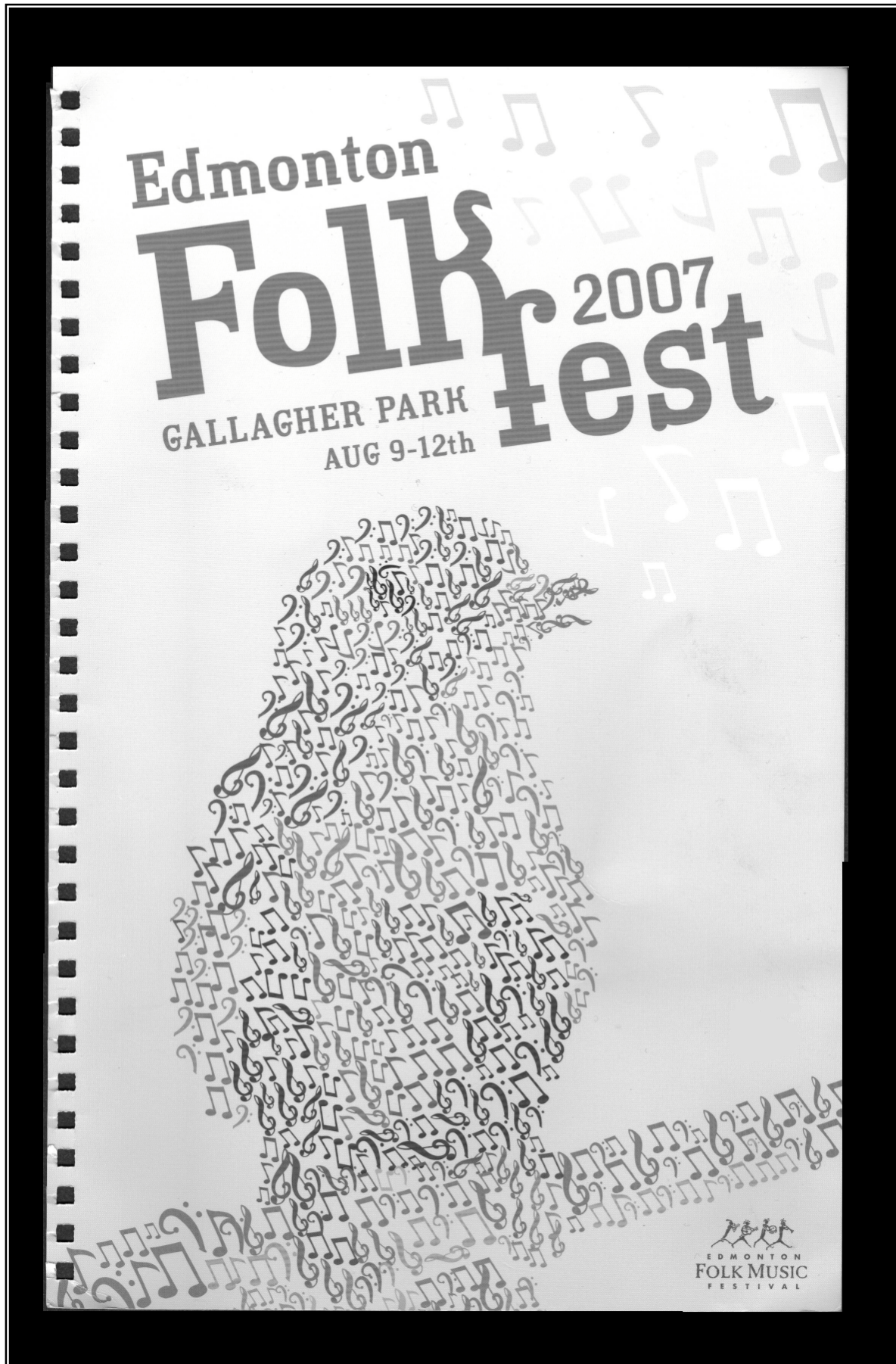




Ken Blacklock

Ken Blacklock hails from Wabamun and Glenevis, Alberta. He is a very prolific poet who composes hundreds of poems every year. He will write a poem at the drop of a hat, so don't drop your hat or anything else when he is around. New friends are warned about his magic pen.

Retired from the Air Force and mining, has worked at accounting, truck-driving, Search and Rescue, guiding, teaching night school, bartending and fireboss. This varied background has given him lots of material for his writing. His favorite subjects are people, politicians, weather and history. His spiritual or Gospel poetry is often used in Scout's Own or Cowboy Church services.

A dedicated traveler, his road rhymes form an atlas of his wanderings. Wherever he goes he looks for opportunities to share in the music and songs of the district. In 2002 he won a writing contest sponsored by the Dawson City and Yukon Tourist Bureaus with a poem about the "Spirit Of The Northland". He has performed in most provinces and territories of Canada, every state in Australia, as well as Alaska, California, and Montana, at Gatherings, folkfests and community events.

He attends Community Jamborees or "Oprys" several times a week in season, where he has introduced many to an appreciation of Cowboy Poetry. Many of his personality poems are treasured mementos on the walls of homes and businesses.

Ken is active in the construction, direction, organization and production of the Harvest Moon Corn Fest at Rimbey, The Edmonton Folk Music Festival, Stony Plain Poetry Gathering, as well as a volunteer performer at the Bar U National Historic site.

Ken Blacklock

© 2007

Table of Contents

Christmas In July	4
Rainy Tuesday	6
The Night Hawks Lament.....	7
This Meal Was Brought To You By	8
Two Days Left	9
Build Me A Town	9
Please Daddy	11
One Day to Go	12
27 Hours More	13
Count Down	14
Still Counting Down	15
One Hundred Uncles	16
The Folk Fest SideStep	17
I am of the People.....	19
Saturday Acoustic.....	20
Blue Grass Harp!!!.....	21
Tarping Down	22
An Old Soft Shoe.....	23
Enviro Power	24
FOLK FEST (They do it for Fun)- 2004.....	26

Christmas In July

'Twas Christmas in July and all through the place,
Building a Folk Fest is an on going race,
'Tis Sunday lunch and you are welcome,
Unemployed to front deck we have work for some.

Don't forget pinch in pocket and hydrate,
Sunscreen and repellent, don't park by the gate,
Put your car blocks away and your bike by the deck,
Otherwise the forklift will make your bike a wreck.

This meal was brought to you by site kitchen,
With a celery free salad, I could start bitchin',
The three fifty needed a foot-driven tire pump,
I fell apart about the second jump.

A visit downtown to Churchill Square,
Where traffic and roadblocks are stopping us there,
Kim on the forklift doesn't waste a day,
Three trailers and a Honda loaded and on their way.

While we want to get loaded on 96 street,
Some others already loaded we happened to meet,
Some trucks sitting here are parked in the way,
Our nose out in traffic pedestrian in the way.

"Do you need the three fifty?" we radioed Kim,
Give me five minutes I'll check with him,
One hour later they arrived back on site,
Kim's five minutes could be all night.

Go down to the rink they need a hand,
The working conditions there are grand,
Remove the boards and drag them away,
The posts as well, it's such a nice day.

There's a bear in a smart car face down on the seat,
You should never leave your bear in a closed car in the heat,
A car was parked improperly Don was having fits,
At last the culprit was sighted and given lots of ... static.

(Christmas In July)

Supper was delicious and just like mother should make,
Then search for volunteers' dishwashing to take,
Just wait ten minutes before we begin,
Do they measure their time just like our Kim?

So out in the kitchen to wash the plates,
Just like grandma's house on those special days,
As us kids are sent to do the chores,
Splashing water and starting some wars.

So Merry Christmas to all of the crew on site,
May your festive worship last far into the night,
And though July is not really the Yule,
Enjoy your evening still playing the fool.

Ken Blacklock
July 29, 2007

Rainy Tuesday

We built tent frames, it was hissin' down rain,
Trying to stretch cables with might and with main,
We were running out of work but we didn't have luck,
Just as we finished they brought in a truck.

From Calgary, full of tent poles and such,
They had a plan for loading but didn't follow it much,
Tent poles and bent poles, loose tent tops and walls,
Hand bomb it all off and try to count it all,

We loaded a trailer with all of the steel,
Then delivered it around was part of the deal,
She climbed on the truck with great style and grace,
They helped her up 'til she landed on her face.

Then once more we started to build tents again,
But a big black cloud as threatening rain,
So grab the sledges and pound down the pegs,
Hurry but don't miss and break both your legs.

Batten them down then head for the shack,
We'll have our supper before we come back,
And put up those tents but we need more room,
Kim pushed things round with the Zoom Boom.

Right to the last minute we worked on the tents,
Over to the beer garden a crew has been sent,
But the fabric for the twenty was a thirty foot top,
So mumbling and cussing we let the work stop.

Ken Blacklock
July 31, 2007

The Night Hawks Lament

They speak in hushed tones of Saturday night;
The Nighthawks saw a show of sound and bright light;
Before the transformer got blown away;
They took shelter until the breaking of day.

Lightning hit the transformer and it lit up the sky;
The Nighthawk crew stared and all wondered why;
Was it a terrorist attack, another 9-11;
Were they all going to Nighthawk Heaven?

Where skies are blue and you don't get tired;
And the moon is so bright it seems on fire;
Where the shifts are so quick, you don't want to quit;
And there's always a soft dry place you can sit.

But on Earth it might rain and ditches will run;
Unit Site Crew comes in for their day of fun;
But until the Folkfest we wake and we walk;
For that is your life if you're a Nighthawk.

Ken Blacklock
July 31, 2007

This Meal Was Brought To You By

There's a wonderful crew they call Site Kitchen;
Half an hour before mealtime our noses start twitchin';
At the wonderful aromas drifting out of that shack;
Our mouths take to drooling and lips start to smack.

For the meals are delicious and match up to our taste;
Gourmet and filling without any waste;
Healthy and nourishing three times a day;
And right on time so we can be on our way.

Without our site kitchen we wouldn't get done;
And all that great food just adds to the fun;
For though A & W could keep us alive;
It takes something special to make Folkies thrive.

Each day we applaud to show appreciation;
On Christmas in July they earned a standing Ovation;
With all of our diets, our foibles and quirks;
It takes kitchen geniuses to be sure Site Crew works.

So please don't get blue, upset or retired;
Keep the Site Kitchen feast forever admired;
Don't let us forget to thank you and never;
Forget that the Site Crew will love you forever.

Ken Blacklock
August 1, 2007

Two Days Left

The schleppers are on site with a Martin Gator.
Delivering stuff around sooner or later,
His English skill are limited, that is true,
With his Scottish burr and a flag of Andrew.

He drives the Gator, she lifts the weights,
But the ice water they bring us is sure tasting great,
Don is a birdwatcher, or else he's insane,
He keeps asking people if they've seen a crane.

Now the crane is here and a skywalker crew,
They seem to know what they're gonna do,
Using the crane and some big steel beams,
Working together on a skywalker scheme.

They double-check their rigging so it don't land on their head,
A mistake can leave you a little bit dead,
Sitting at the gate just putting on lard,
Is he who is called the site crew Bard.

Schleppers on the site are running here and there,
Their job is simple, just be everywhere,
They'll deliver the goods on time you can bet,
Even if you haven't requested it yet.

Golf carts everywhere and all on the run,
Never loaded more than about forty ton,
Don has a new limo, a quad in bright red,
We keep treating him this good; it will go to his head.

Whenever site crew gets to stand around and talk,
Bee Cee gathers them up to take a tent for a walk,
The main stage sound tower was tarped and then,
They took it all off to do it again.

Handy cans are traveling to the left and the right,
Kim took the ATM and withdrew it out of site,
I met Don's wife, Linda, and chased her out of there,
But City T-V arrived and I offered him a chair.

The fire marshal came round; I met him with a smile,
We welcomed him to our site with lots of grace and style,
And when people come to our gate, we try to treat them sweet,
As long as they are nice to me, and park way down the street.

Ken Blacklock
August 7, 2007

Build Me A Town

Please build a small town, in less than three weeks;
We have a town plan; it is something unique;
With seven small stages and a big one as well;
A big shopping center where records can sell.

And clothing, and chairs and all kinds of food;
You've got to build fast, but you've got to build good,
A big staff kitchen to feed volunteers;
A dry dining room to keep them in good cheer.

Twenty-four sound towers and a couple of delays;
A big beer garden where people can play,
About fifty more tents on the big site;
For night time you need a bunch of street lights.

A handicapped center and one for first aid
For roads and streets Cover Master is laid,
There are some needs that we must relieve,
With more plastic biffy's than you would believe.

A green room for performers when not on the stage,
A place for media, electronic or page;
At last you have built a nice little town,
And after four days you get to tear it all down.

It seems like a miracle but it's done every year,
By volunteer workers just having fun here,
And working each day hours by the score;
We know we can do it for we've done it before.

Ken Blacklock
August 7, 2007

Please Daddy

Big Top Rentals was building the store,
They pulled a rope starter and we heard a roar,
As peg after peg was driven to the ground,
Just one guy with a putt-putting sound.

So listen to your tent crew and buy one of them,
To drive in our pegs, 'twould be a real gem,
Even if the pegs were in gravel or rock,
Remember some tent men are worn down old corks.

Who when driving pegs moan, groan and creak,
With one of those we'd drive pegs in a streak,
Even those twist pins could be easily tamed,
And the buyer forever in Site Crew would be famed.

Then each shift would need a really tall guy,
To drive those fence posts that stand really high,
Then site crew would be happy girls and guys,
Whose job could be L*A*Z* and a *Y*.

Ken Blacklock
August 7, 2007

One Day to Go

The neighborhood awakens and moves down the road,
Trucks with equipment come in to unload,
The nighthawks are asleep with their heads 'neath a wing,
Folk Fest 07 is getting ready to swing,

'Tis cloudy and cool but we're not getting wet,
It doesn't look like rain or at least not yet,
The site is really starting to look grand,
While Site Crew of course will do miracles on demand.

Main Stage equipment from All Star Show,
Some more carpeting is on the go,
Handi can is still working on sewage on the run,
I have to admire their cause it doesn't look like fun.

We have two curb ramps, we should have about four,
They would line up on the curve quite a bit more,
You need but ask and you shall receive,
Four ramps for those who arrive or leave.

Folks have to set up those video screens,
For folks to be closer to the main stage scenes,
Folks now know that they're under the gun,
Thirty-one hours we'll have begun.

Ken Blacklock
August 8, 2007

27 Hours More

The clouds getting darker, the winds blowing more,
It looks like we'll soon be both wet and sore,
But hope that it passes for we've no time to spare,
For the clock is ticking and the crowds will be there.

There's no sign of panic but we're all working steady,
Those last minute things, so we will be ready,
Piano's and furniture arriving on the site,
Got to be ready before tomorrow night

Twenty -six hours left on the site countdown,
And you hear the first count to check the first sound,
Volkswagens tent was missing a top,
Shift over another it's too late to stop.

They need a fourth person, the new tent to walk,
I'm sorry fella's I got to stay here and talk,
Now there are five to take the tent for a stroll,
Don't quit on us now for you're on a roll.

Great feats of magic are easily in our powers,
Miracles will be done in the next twenty-six hours,
It wouldn't be nice for us to boast,
But it's the best damn site from coast to coast.

Ken Blacklock
August 8, 2007

Count Down

A look of desperation from some concessionaire,
As they start trying to get set up there,
Some arrive here looking quite lost,
And wondering where their equipment was tossed.

Ticket booths go by on the back of the flat deck,
We hope that his truck doesn't get in a wreck,
Kim's Zoom Boom has a beak like a stork,
To haul cover master and that always means work.

Lunch was tasty as it always seems to be,
People grab their lunch and rush off to see,
If a few more minutes can get us ahead a bit,
In twenty-eight hours our show will be a hit.

Folkies drop by to see what they can do,
Even to spare just an hour or two,
We know they are coming and therefore we must,
Build it and be ready that is site crew's trust.

Each car passing by stops to check our progress,
Sometimes the tourists cause truck drivers some stress
As they look at the tents and what's underneath,
You can hear the truck drivers just grinding their teeth.

Maida and Lisa have made a demand,
Two happy volunteers whose services are grand,
Wanted be included in this one to site fame,
And I will write of them for 'tis part of the game.

Ken Blacklock
August 8, 2007

Still Counting Down

Countdown down to eight hours and lots to do,
Rained all night so the site is muddy, too
People carrying loads that would make a Gator cry,
To late to rest the time is drawing nigh.

Fence around the main stage-fence around the gates,
Don is getting calls in-his average load is eight,
The beer garden is tired- take the pissoir for a walk,
Two minutes of radio silence was enough for a shock.

Fence in front of main but please don't bang the posts,
They are trying to do sound checks and our banging causes ghosts,
Look for things that are not done and play radio hopscotch,
The plumbers run from place to place as pumps and seals are botched.

Site has too many radios-you've got to give them back,
Bring them in immediately to the ski lodge shack,
Don's sure they have got plenty-and no time can be spared,
Everybody's busy getting fence and tower's squared.

Then targets they start gathering as we're still on the run,
So Ken and Kim and others can still have a bit of fun,
Running over several then back over a few,
Just before the program starts we love to squish a few.

Calling Mike the Electrician, go here go there right now,
Pretty soon Dez came in, sort of an electrician dream and how,
Mike is good at trouble shooting, but is more desired,
But we love both of them, no electrician can be fired.

Ken Blacklock
August 9, 2007

One Hundred Uncles

Now Thursday's program's started and folks are having fits,
The security liaison team is wanting to get lit,
The washstand needs a gate across to protect the drain,
And the freezer truck needs baffling so it don't cause no pain.

The Thursday evening showcase is echoing from afar,
The crowds are filling up the hill and beer garden bar,
There is a bright spot shining in the western sky,
So all those Thursday folkies can sit here safe and dry.

Mary Ann is wandering out for a stroll with Ross and Charles too,
Are they here to protect her or make sure she don't do,
Anything that would distract and keep her from her chores,
That's probably the only way they let her out of doors.

Or maybe trying to impress her with how great he is,
At least by the table, he told us about this,
And those middle aged fellas who are Site folky types,
Each one is a great guy but a bit over ripe.

For poor Mary Ann, it's like a family get together,
Where site types gather whatever the weather,
To do the things they do for the folk fest fun,
And to look out for Mary Ann, like uncles everyone.

Ken Blacklock
August 9, 2007

The Folk Fest SideStep

There is a dance area just stage right of main,
There is one in staff dining, where we dance again,
The "Staff Dining Sidestep" is the dance we do,
Suitable for rubber boots or an old soft-shoe.

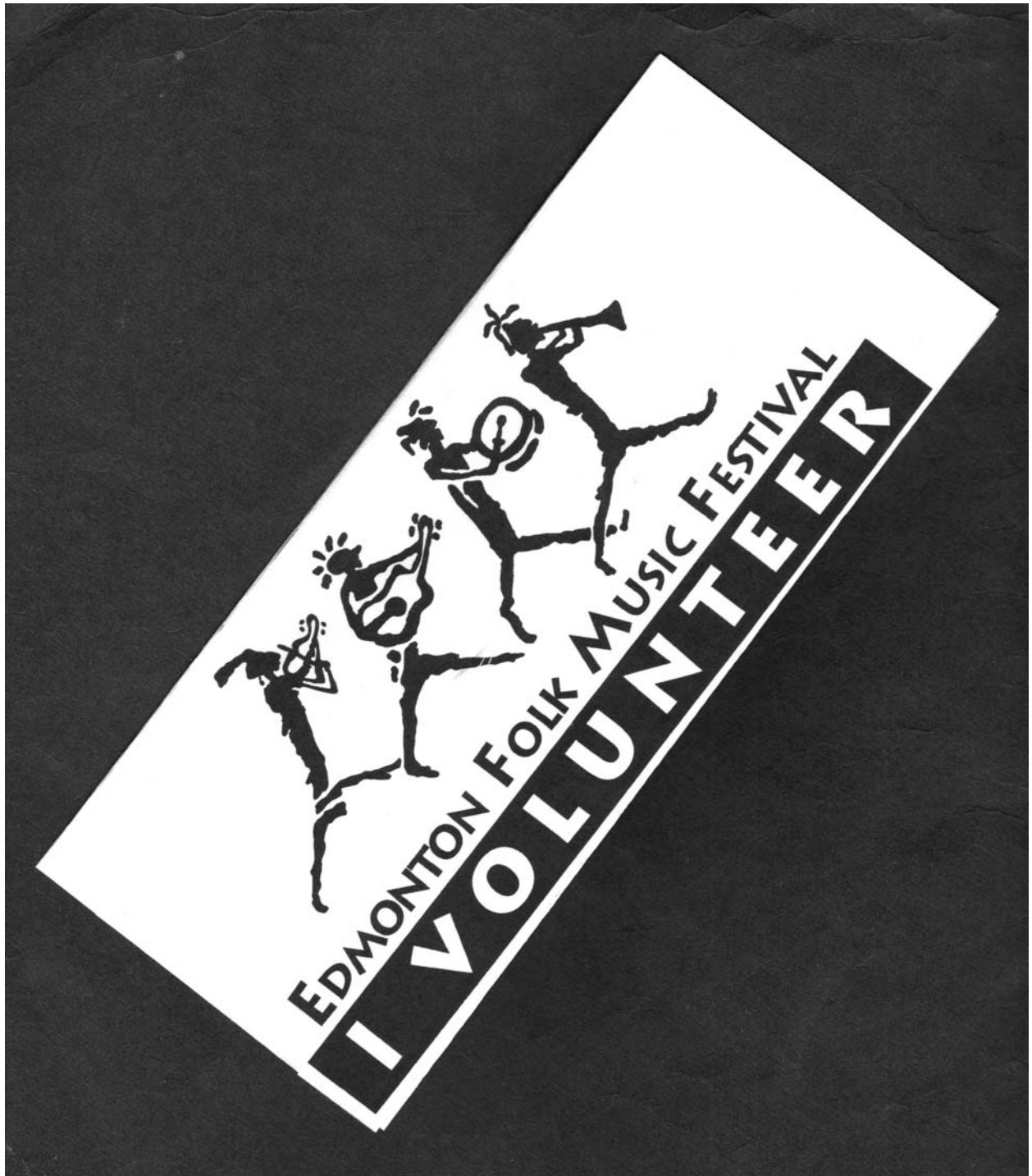
It is most suited to those slim and svelte,
It is far more difficult if your belly strains you belt,
The tables are crowded to keep more people in,
So the best model volunteer is one who's kinda thin.

The Enviro group are suited best to sidestep all the way,
Site tends to heavy tool belts and the packs they wear each day,
Perimeter Security has no trouble moving round,
It's probably from walking those hillsides up and down.

And if we learn to do the sidestep and learn to do it fine,
We can go into politics in Ottawa down the line,
And sidestep all our problems like gun control and crime,
For we would all be experts when it comes to sidestep time.

And Site Crew needs to practice to side step like a pro,
Cause when we get to the end hours we know we want to go,
And we will try to do unless the boss is faster,
Cause we will try to sidestep that Bloody Cover master.

Ken Blacklock
August 10, 2007



I am of the People

I am of the people; my blood is northern Cree,
I am of the people, for all people they are me,
I sing of people where ever that they may be,
I sing of the people, I am Buffy Ste. Marie.

I sing the songs of protest whenever they may cry,
I sing the songs of suffering whenever people die,
I sing the songs of Dene', I learned them from the sky,
I sing the songs of people, to make your spirit fly.

I sing no songs of government for they don't like my words,
I sing no songs of wealth and fame for they should not be heard,
I sing no songs of hatred for passions will be stirred,
I sing the songs of people and natures beasts and birds.

I sing of people, who have no voice except through folks like me,
I sing the songs of people, who want only to be free,
I am of the people for all people they are me,
I sing of the people, I am Buffy Ste. Marie.

Ken Blacklock
August 11, 2007

Saturday Acoustic

This is how a jam works; you aren't doing a show,
The lady from party committee explained to a performer who didn't know,
A jammer who was starting said he'd get his pass later,
That's just fine the lady said but sooner would be greater.

New strings in the guitar, they did I'll Fly Away,
A bull fiddle did his turn to start the jammin' day,
A case opened and a banjo was tuned in,
The five string opened up and gave the tune a spin.

Three pickers going and the crowds drifting in,
Wasting good pickin' is really a sin,
A quick break for pizza and beer,
To grease the strings on the bull fiddle here

A mandolin and a banjo join the circle jam,
You'd swear their fingers came right off their hands,
They flew so fast you barely could see,
This is a jam as good as it could be.

Ken Blacklock
August 11, 2007

Blue Grass Harp!!!

Into a kind of blue grass jammin' set,
A lady walked in and I can't believe it yet,
As the dobro sang and the banjo played sharp,
This lady sat down and set up a harp.

Not an Autoharp but the real thing for sure,
I saw it there and I didn't believe her,
I can't remember any harp in blue grass,
But with Irish roots I'm sure it has.

Happened before in those Kentucky Hills,
For me it's kind of a different thrill,
The banjo kicked off and she followed along,
Fitted right in on that blue grass song.

A fiddle joined in, in a traditional way,
But then the harpist just ran away,
To solo there in blue grass style,
She fitted right in by country mile.

So if you think you know of blue grass and all,
Come to the Folk Fest acoustic hall,
You'll get a listening treat that's first class,
With a stand up harp playing blue grass.

Ken Blacklock
August 12, 2007

Tarping Down

The hillside is tarping from bottom to top,
Folks keep on coming, they never seem to stop,
With backpack and tarp and a couple of chairs,
They pick the spot that is perfectly theirs.

With the right slope and just the right view,
It isn't as though just anyplace will do,
Now peg out your tarp and for just a minute sit,
To make sure your spot is a perfect fit.

Patio chairs cut down to right size,
Foam mattresses in a chair like disguise,
Neat fold-away chairs in aluminum or steel,
Top of the line or a garage sale deal.

Then roll up your stuff in a fold of the tarp
So it don't roll away for the drop is sharp,
Then wander the site, where their taste leads,
And until Main Stage, their tarp they don't heed.

Ken Blacklock
August 12, 2007

An Old Soft Shoe

Concession gate to Don at control
Another radio call to take its great toll,
About six hundred decisions an hour to make,
Age and stress must make his head ache.

But he listens and responds usually with a smile,
For screaming in frustration isn't his style,
A soft voice on the mike for a decision for them,
Then thanks them kindly for bringing the problem.

When rain falls, he thinks of the sod,
It's not his decision for that comes from God,
Mothering his crews in sunshine or rain,
Sunscreen, raincoat and be sure to hydrate.

But even Don can't take this stress forever,
And each year has a birthday but no time ever,
To blow out those candles that burn at both ends,
And still take care of his volunteer friends.

But I saw him Saturday and he looked relaxed,
No radio or decisions, no worry to be taxed,
Is it maturity, is he aging that well,
Or just a day off, nobody can tell.

We know we are the greatest Folk Fest team,
Working our miracles for the annual dream,
But he thanks us daily for all we can do,
No chafing or binding –like a well-loved old shoe.

Ken Blacklock
August 12, 2007

Enviro Power

Let us all applaud Enviro Power if you will,
Everyday they scramble for garbage on the hill,
In mud or rain, some times cold or sunshine, wind and dust,
You see them as they do they do their job, for they have earned our trust.

They come here and work hard, they're under sixteen years,
Give them your respect for they are folk fest volunteers,
Any paper, pegs or cans cannot escape their eye,
Each one has a job to do and their standards are high.

They fill their plastic bags with trash, to make the site look neat,
Even though the hill climb could make a billy goat bleat,
And sometimes they pick up some thing's they just hate,
With no pay for effort except sometimes a plate.

So pocket all your waste folks, or drop it in a can,
We know that you can do it for you're folk music fans,
And thank Enviro Power for they are the best,
And welcome them to adult jobs as they join the rest.

Ken Blacklock
August 12, 2007



FOLK FEST (They do it for Fun) - 2004

*Folk Fest Volunteers are like happy slaves;
Working themselves into an early grave;
Discuss and argue but the work still gets done;
And each one insists that they do it for fun.*

*Tall stories told of how things were done here;
Back when the volunteers worked their first year;
Aches and pains from heat and the sun;
And each one insists that they do it for fun.*

*Assemble the stage and level the deck;
Unroll the carpet as smooth as heck;
Then screw like mad, that's the way it is done;
And each one insists that they do it for fun.*

*Un-fence and re-fence again and again;
The girls said Ross was being a pain;
Two days work since this gate was begun;
And each one insists that they do it for fun.*

*Each one takes good care of one another;
A six-footer with a beard acts like your mother;
Drink water, use sunscreen, stay out of the sun;
And each one insists that they do it for fun.*

[FOLK FEST (They do it for Fun)]

*Don, I'm told is having a sixty-second birthday;
He'll wait 'til Monday to celebrate his thirst day;
He doesn't appear a day over sixty-one;
But he still insists that he does it for fun.*

*After eleven or twelve hours they slow up a bit;
Lets call it a day so we can just stop to sit;
Calling out hours 'til your fourty is done;
And they still insist that they do it for fun.*

*Build speaker towers, way up to the sky;
This year they need them to really grow high;
Please don't fall off 'til the tower is done;
And up there they insist that they do it for fun.*

*The crew that I met are a little bit mad;
Blistered and burnt but they'll still be glad;
To see everything ready when the Folk Fest has begun;
And each one insists that they do it for fun.*

*Never again, 'cause a guy has got to be crazy;
And my taste runs more to activities lazy;
There's no way that I would ever be one;
'Til next year when I'll be there doing it for fun.*

*Ken Blacklock
August 2, 2004*