

# This Year at the Festival

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Festival Co-Directors

Each year brings talented new participants to the Festival of American Folklife. It is indeed fortunate for the Smithsonian, but even more fortunate for our Nation as a whole, that traditional culture still survives and even thrives in places, and that some of its practitioners are generous and brave enough to come to Washington to demonstrate and perform their cultural legacy before national audiences. Every year these keepers of tradition come to speak with their own voices under the aegis of our National Museum. We are honored by their presence and grateful to them for maintaining, often in the face of powerful totalizing forces, a cultural and aesthetic richness on our planet.

This year marks a change in Festival administration, noteworthy not because of any change in goals or policies, but because the transition gives us opportunity to remember publicly that it was Ralph Rinzler who began the Festival in 1967 and directed it until last year when he became the Institution's Assistant Secretary for Public Service. Ralph devised the model for scholarly research, planning and production that has made the Festival unique and worthy of continued support by the Institution and of emulation by other folklife festival planners around the Nation. He also created an environment in which innovation has been encouraged, and cross-fertilization of ideas has led to healthy growth. This steady development in the cultural ideas presented in our free, outdoor, festive, educational entertainment has happened under Ralph Rinzler's careful supervision and with his guidance at important turning points.

In future years, be assured, the same goals will continue to inform the Festival project, not only because we remain committed to them, but also because Mr. Rinzler remains our boss in the Smithsonian administrative structure. We hope to continue to benefit from his guidance and encouragement.

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