

Joan Baez: Waif Or Protest Singer

(Editor's note: The following comment on Joan Baez was written by well-known Carolina folksinger Mike Hall.)

The lights of Memorial Hall dimmed, the curtain parted slightly. She stepped up to the microphone to sing and the one of the few sounds recently to have been heard in Chapel Hill over the throbbing din of combos rang through the auditorium. She was

all they had imagined, the wistful dark-haired waif pleading "don't sing love songs you'll wake my mother..." In a world where artists of any sort from Paul Gauguin to our own time have secured their popularity as much on their personal image as on the quality of their work this "Orphan Annie plus guitar" carved her own niche and bound herself uniquely within it as she slipped off her shoes to continue her program clasped to the hearts of her public.

Unfortunately, at least to some of us, Joan Baez like the frazzled-haired Orphan of the comic strips could not help getting tangled up with her daddy Warbucks (Pete Seeger) and a great social crusade. Her second stage image (not yet projected into her recordings) of the patron saint of world unity and the dignity of man began in her opening song phrase "Last Night I Dreamed the Strange Dream I ever dreamed before, I dreamed the world had all agreed to put an end to war." Her abstracted, disjointed and very unorganized reflections on "life" and "living" might better have not been said, though the majority of uncritical student evaluations of her program insist that at least she was "sincere."

And what about this purist business? There is no denying the pure beauty of her voice nor the rich blend of her voice and the sounds from her aging Martin Guitar, but how does a purist reconcile the

singing of a traditional ballad like Barbara Allen with the fall-out protest "what happened to the rain." The pressure on folk singers today to join protest movements is terrific. This pressure stems from the participation of men like Seeger in labor protest movements through the depression when their only patronage was often from unions or revolutionary political movements.

In the Tar Heel interview printed Friday, Miss Baez is quoted as evaluating folk singers according to "the intent of the individual." The most poignant question raised about her performance must be, what is HER intent? Is she a concert spokesman for the beauty that can be found in traditional music, or has she perhaps decided that her guitar makes a good U.N. flag to brandish across the stage. What if any, was her intent in closing asking for audience participation in the Battle Hymn of the Republic? As I consider this question I ask if it was a masterful piece of programming or merely a faux pas. I concluded, "neither." It was just a young performer tempted to the challenge of whether her personal prestige could right long-stranding wrongs. The permissive participa-

tion resulting was not a testimony to the sudden establishment of a new utopian world and miraculous healing of real or imagined north-south wounds but only to the courtesy of an audience that would cater to her whims out of respect for her musical talent.

The stereotype reaction was why not "Dixie?" But the more reflective and perhaps more let-down only preferred the waif image she was when she first stepped into the lights over the awkward crusader image she left upon her exit.

Aside from the drift into social therapy the rest of Miss Baez's program was filled with high spots. Her "Wreck of Engine 143" was a very straightforward working of a little song railroad song, and her "Black Is the Color" was a most unusual treatment of a song sung so often poorly.

Wade Scholarship Fund Initiated

A scholarship fund in honor of Jake Wade was initiated Thursday by the staff of the Charlotte News.

Wade died Wednesday of an apparent heart attack while driving from Raleigh to Chapel Hill. He was 61.

The fund was launched by sports editor Bob Quincy and staff mem-

ber Julian Scheer of the Charlotte afternoon paper and other contributions have been invited.

The scholarship, in memory of the UNC sports publicity director and long-time figure in North Carolina sports, will go to a male student showing an interest in sports writing as a career.



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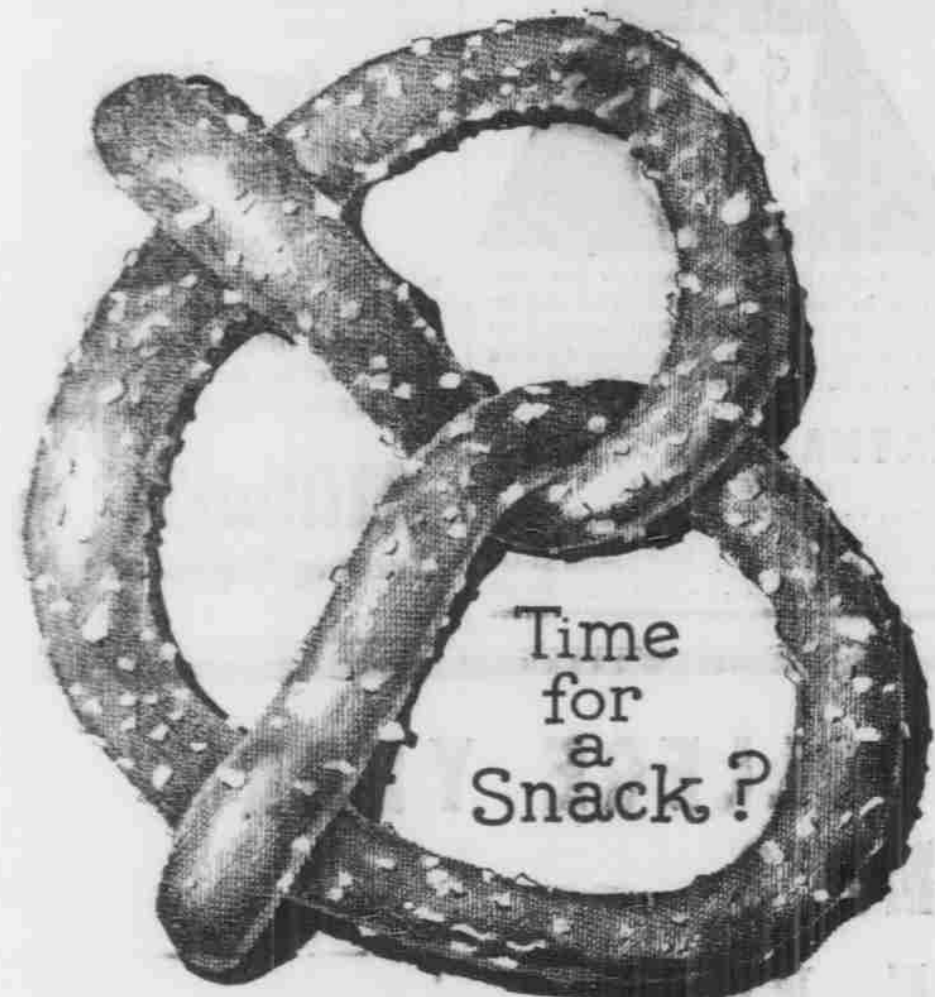
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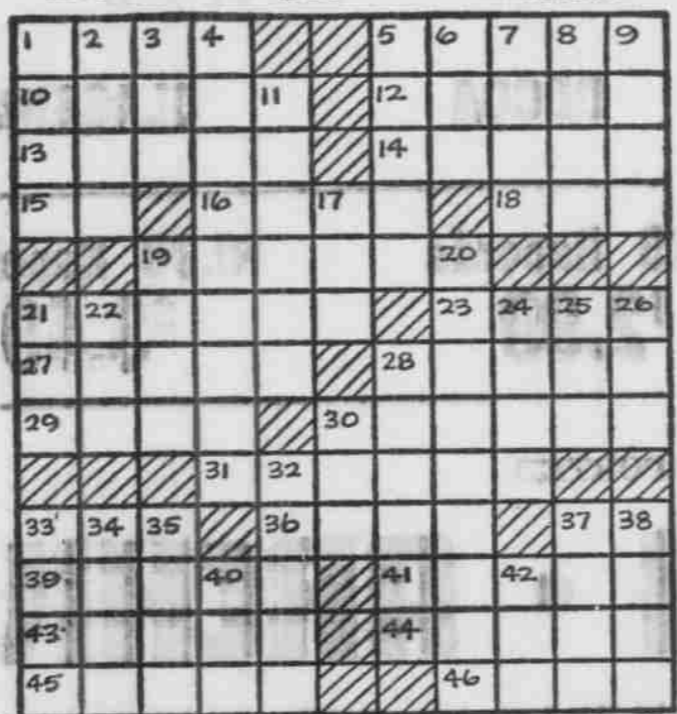
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DAILY CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- At a distance
 - Land points
 - Enticed
 - Heavenly body
 - Serious
 - Abundantly
 - Man's nickname
 - Wicked
 - Half-dozen
 - Statement of relinquishment
 - Quite cool
 - Facilitate
 - Desert garden-spot
 - Brownish-yellow
 - Unroll
 - Photograph holders
 - Child's walker
 - Wing-like part
 - Flat-topped hill
 - Compass point; abbr.
 - Girl's nickname
 - Toll
 - Frosting
 - Extemporize
 - Cassia
 - Flood or ebb, e.g.
- DOWN**
- Seaweed
 - Roll up tightly
 - Macaw
 - Disclosing
 - Balance
 - Small dog; pan
 - Little
 - Plaguers
 - Low caste Hindu
 - Lower-world river
 - Torments
 - League
 - Sagacious
 - Dutch painter
 - Sound, as a dove
 - Gen.
 - Arnold
 - Tough end to
 - Noah's first son
 - Bitter
 - Seward's purchase
 - Tennis stroke
 - Greek letter
 - For sale: river
 - Hotel
 - Full-grown pike
 - Hindu month
 - Slipped
 - German
 - Sanuel's teacher



Yesterday's Answer



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LESSON 8 - Becoming a specialist

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