

**Norm Walker** doesn't call himself a storyteller but rather a "story-singer". Even so, the storytelling communities, locally and nationally, have embraced what he does as within the realm of what they call "storytelling". Some call him a "contemporary folk singer". Whatever you call him, at the very least he is an "entertainer" who uses music and stories as his main vehicles, often with tongue in cheek.

Norm receives much of his inspiration from folk tales, urban legends, true stories and even internet office jokes. He then tries to find the balance of poetic lyrics best suited to an appropriate melody and style based on the musical influences that have most touched him. Those musical influences cover a broad range of styles: British and Irish traditional, old-time, American, western, cowboy, swing and old popular songs (from 78 records). As a result, he is a bit difficult to pigeon-hole in terms of describing his style of music. Generally, horizons are broadened as the songs he writes are sometimes ... unusual.

Norm's approach to music is predominantly acoustic, and he has an uncanny ability to marry words with music to sing true stories, recount folk tales and spin yarns. His ability to weave stories with humour leaves audiences chuckling and humming punch lines long after the concert is over. His songs cover a variety of themes, including urban legends, electrical theory, the Saskatchewan Prairie, gardening, apostrophe abuse, politics, and community. Some of these songs are serious; others are not. The result is that "seldom is heard a discouraging word" and if you can't at least smile at some of these story-songs, there's probably something wrong with your face.

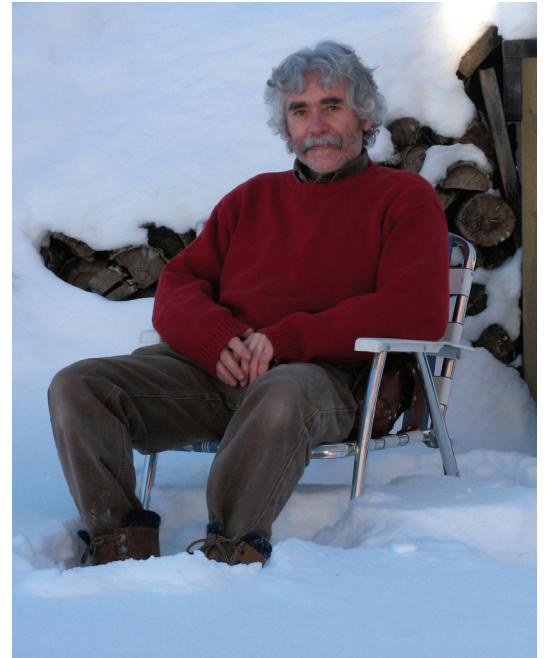
Norm Walker is no stranger to folk music. Not only has he had a long-time association with organizing folk music and storytelling concerts and festivals in Regina and area, but he has also been a performing singer, songwriter and musician, accompanying himself and others on guitar, mandolin and more recently the Strumstick (he calls it the anorectic dulcimer). He has been a featured guest on CBC Radio's Basic Black (with Arthur Black) and also Disc Drive (with Jurgen Goth) and performed from coast to coast but mostly in western Canada.

Over the years, Norm has been a member of various Regina-based Celtic music groups. He has performed solo and with other musician friends at numerous coffeehouses, benefits, political events, restaurants, nursing homes, concerts and events. If you're ever in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan on a Friday night in September or October, you'll likely find him and one of his music partners, Ken Dormer, strolling from table to table as the Ye Olde Wandering Minstrels at Hopkins' Dining Palour for the medieval feast nights where anything can happen musically, from very old to the very new.

He released a music cd in 2002 called **"T" Time - Time Tested Tales, Tall and True** which is mostly a collection of original story-oriented songs, many of which are based on urban legends and folk tales. Penguin Eggs magazine describes him as a "songwriter somewhat in the tradition of a Canadian Tom Lehrer". Since that time he has written many songs (some unrecorded as of yet) expanding on the approaches he began with the "T" Time cd.

2011 now sees the emergence of a new cd, **Dear Friends and Gentle Hearts**, 16 songs and close to 67 minutes of an eclectic collection of stylistically varied and mostly (all but one) original songs. There's country humour, urban legends, true stories, thoughtful reflection, politics, reverence and a bit of irreverence too.

Norm, an electrician by trade, currently teaches in the Electrician Apprenticeship Training Program at the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.



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Dear Friends and Gentle Hearts - by Norm Walker

Prairie Pagan Music - #02

CD Release- February 20- 2011

**Brief Song Descriptions:**

1. **Chicken Strumstick Reel:** A new addition to the barnyard collection of fiddle tunes, this time complete with clog-dancing chickens. The strumstick is a 1930s long, skinny, three-stringed variation of the diatonic Appalachian dulcimer (I call it the anorectic dulcimer).
2. **Sweet Velzoe Brown:** A tribute to my dear friend Velzoe Brown who has had one of the longest professional music careers in the USA, having begun in 1926. In March 2010, she entertained friends and fans with her current band, Velzoe and the Upbeats, at her 100th birthday in Santa Cruz, CA.
3. **Pie Made of Pumpkin:** A rare "recipe song". It is also one in the series of my "prairie pagan" type songs and is set on Samhain, the Celtic New Year, which falls on the day after Hallowe'en.
4. **Dear Friends and Gentle Hearts:** A tribute both to Stephen Foster and also to all the dear friends and gentle hearts whom we all have known.
5. **The Reel Gardener:** A bit of a "how to" summary of gardening on the northern Great Plains of North America.
6. **James and Dorothy:** A short story of Christmas, a holiday cruise, a romance and golf in a capella style.
7. **Ballad of Alex Ronyk:** This is about a local Saskatchewan colourful character who spent most of his life in Bienfait either as a coal miner or as owner/operator of a pool hall/ barbershop serving the needs of area miners.
8. **Guardian Angel:** An eight minute urban legend epic with five of the most common of these modern folk tales. And of course, they are all absolutely true.
9. **Single Malt:** This is about all you need to know about single malt scotch whiskey packed into one song, especially seasonally appropriate for Robert Burns Day, January 25.
10. **Ballad of Ross and Anna:** A very old tragical story from west North Carolina.
11. **The Sun is Returning:** Another in the series of seasonal "prairie pagan" songs, this time focusing on the northern hemisphere's Winter Solstice.
12. **Saskatoon a-Pickin':** A saskatoon berry picking expedition as well as a bit of a nature adventure in the remote coulees and wooded ranch-land hills of southern Saskatchewan.
13. **The Rabbit Died:** Another in my collection of urban legend songs.
14. **The Apostrophe Squad Theme Song:** This is the theme song for The Apostrophe Squad special branch of the Punctuation and Spelling Police Department (P.S.P.D.). Do you have your t-shirt yet?
15. **Magic:** A 9/11 Truth Movement song. If you believe the official version of September 11, 2001 events, then you must also believe that many of the fundamental Laws of Physics were suspended for that day, and on multiple occasions. The real magic is in the mass deception and passive acceptance of the lies.
16. **Will the Circle Be Unbroken (the original hymn):** This is the song that inspired A.P. Carter to write the Carter Family country classic. This was written by Ada R. Habershon and Charles H. Gabriel, apparently in 1905 or 1907.