

# Seeger's Favorite 4-Letter Word — LOVE

By JOHN R. SULLIVAN  
(NC News Service)

Washington —(NC) He lives in a log cabin his family and friends helped build.

He wears jeans, old shirts, old sweaters, work shoes and drives an old station wagon. His traveling entourage usually consists of his wife, Toshi, and his younger daughter, Tinya.

When strangers recognize him, he smiles awkwardly, mumbles his thanks and, as if wondering what to say next, ambles away.

He doesn't have a press agent.

And that, believe it or not, is Pete Seeger, the man who, at 51, is helping young America rediscover — for at least the third time—the country's folk music tradition.

It's an unlikely portrait of a man whose 25-year career includes thousands of concerts, the formation of an immensely popular singing group (The Weavers), sales of several million recordings, the recording of probably 100 albums.

But then, Seeger is a man of many apparent contradictions: his father, Dr. Charles Louis Seeger, is a musicologist, conductor and educator at UCLA; Pete, a Harvard dropout, is a banjo-picker. He volunteered for the Army in World War II; now he is firmly anti-war.

He was born of a sophisticated family in New York City, lived in Washington and has traveled throughout the world; now he prefers the woods near his home outside Beacon, N.Y.

Not long ago, Seeger sat on a bench in Washington's Mall and talked about some of these things — a little bit about himself, but mostly about the world around him.

Obviously, he's not an easy man to type-cast, and Seeger is the first to admit it: "I try not



Next week "Dateline U.S.A." will take Courier-Journal readers to the "barrio" of Fullerton, Calif., and an offbeat story of a community's love for a dying man.

to get myself put in a box and I try not to put other people in boxes . . . There's a tendency to give a dog a bad name and kill it."

On a recent television show with Canadian singer Oscar Brand, Brand opened a heated attack on Catholic legislators who vote against abortion and for parochial school aid. Seeger quickly calmed him down: "Before we start looking anti-Catholic," he said, "Let me sing a song." It was a New England Irish Catholic protest song, "No Irish Need Apply."

Stories of Seeger's calming interventions abound, but he sees himself as one who stirs up people:

"I don't want to find myself being used by people just to calm things down because, frankly, I'm glad to see people getting stirred up.

"You know the old saying: the only thing necessary for evil

to triumph is for good men to do nothing. And the world is full of good people who are not stirring up enough trouble."

"Of course," he added, "what kind of ruckus it is, is a different matter, and I don't think it's going to be easy for any person — it's certainly not easy for me — to decide exactly what kind of a ruckus, or where or when. You have to kind of argue out each particular situation on its own merits."

Seeger's own ruckus-making these days is focused on the commercial television industry — the same one that banned him from appearing from 1955 until last year. The ban followed his conviction — later thrown out — for refusing to answer questions of the House Un-American Activities Committee during its unproductive probe of "subversives" in the entertainment industry.

But Seeger's ruckus has nothing to do with the ban.

"I'm not mad about that at all," he said. "But I do walk around in a rage that television — the closest thing to face-to-face contact there is — is not available to all the people."

It is a concept that fits Seeger's activist inclinations.

"This is one world and there is going to be no world if we don't learn to share again. I know love is a fine word — it's my favorite four-letter word — but I have an even more favorite word, and that is 'share.'"

"A man says he loves his wife but he keeps her in the kitchen and makes her do all



Sketch courtesy of Ch. XXI

Pete Seeger

the dirty work. A man says he loves his children, but he doesn't give them any say in what they want to do; he tells them what to do.

"Needless to say, you help guide people, but there's a difference. You've got to get sharing. It's a lot more concrete thing."

## 'Variety' Less Charitable

# 'Pieces of Dreams' Gets Kind NCOMP Putdown

### Catholic Press Features

New York — The first film in an expected rash of movies about marrying priests has been put down gently by the national Catholic film office—a kind treatment in comparison with the withering review given the film by the show-business "bible," Variety.

The film is titled, "Pieces of Dreams," based on a novel called "The Wine and the Music," which was written by William E. Barrett, who also wrote "Lillies of the Field."

There are at least a half-dozen other films, either in the planning or shooting stages, about priests and the celibacy issue.

The movie industry, according to the National Catholic Office of Motion Pictures, "is apparently persuaded that it is safe to change the direction of the 'Going My Way' treatment of the priesthood," and NCOMP offers no strong objection to screen treatment of marry-ing clergy.

"Certainly," remarked NCOMP in its Catholic Film Newsletter, "the personal struggle within an individual between his commitment of the past and the conflict of the present can be grist for an enlightening film."

In reviewing "Pieces of Dreams," however, NCOMP strongly suggested that Hollywood had made a poor start.

"Pieces of Dreams," set in New Mexico, tells the story of a liberal priest (played by Robert Forster of Rochester) who meets divorcee (Lauren Hutton) who runs a community center. They become passionately involved after a pregnant teen-ager nearly dies during a hospital miscarriage (the divorcee had earlier suggested an abortion; the priest had argued against it).



Forster, Laura Hutton in "Pieces of Dreams."

Torn between his attraction to the social worker and his commitment to the Church, the priest gets no help at a retreat, or from his priest friends, or his bishop, or his parents. He decides to leave the priesthood and the film ends with him and the social worker walking off together, arm in arm.

"Pieces of Dreams," according to NCOMP's review, "fails to get inside the personal world of its characters and remains floating on the surface of its action," the review continued:

"The elements of spiritual conflict and frustration — the loneliness of life in a rectory with a pastor out of touch with his people and reality, the 'be-

nign neglect' of a chancery, the remoteness of a bishop living in cloistered splendor, the mother agonizing over a son's decision to give up 'their' vocation, the outdated textbook advice of a dotting retreat master, the boredom of hearing the routine confessions of old women — are all paraded before the viewer but fail to convince him that the priest's ultimate decision to marry was motivated by anything more than a tumble in the hay."

NCOMP gave "Pieces of Dreams" a moral rating of A-4, or "morally unobjectionable for adults, with reservations." The movie industry rated it GP, or "all ages admitted; parental guidance suggested."

Variety, the show-business weekly whose reviews are followed closely by theater owners for indications of a film's box-office potential, panned "Pieces of Dreams" as a "Sudsy romantic melodrama" that would require "an inventive campaign" of publicity to draw the public; otherwise, "mixed commercial prospects seem likely."

In addition, Variety thought the film was unfairly "loaded" in order to make the priest's final decision seem totally justified:

"Just to make sure that Forster gets no spiritual help from his colleagues, Ivor Francis makes the role of Forster's pastor insufferable. Richard O'Brien temporizes as a higher-echelon cleric (a monsignor friend of the priest), and Will Geer plays a bishop right out of Reformation politics."

"With this climate, no wonder Forster falls for Miss Hutton, the rich, sophisticated social-worker whose wardrobe — by Halston — and apartment — by art director Herman Blumenthal and set by decorator James Payne — are nice consolations to working by day amongst the poor and needy."

### As I See It

## 'Sesame Street' Best Yet

By Pat Costa



The charges against "Sesame Street" are beginning to be heard. It was only natural — particularly after the lavish praise that had come its way.

One educator has recently pointed a finger at the popular children's program saying that while the 3-year-old ghetto children are able to count up to ten as they are taught in the show, they cannot associate the number with objects — such as 10 pencils.

A "TV Guide" reader slams the program saying her children have learned to make fun of children who make mistakes from watching "Sesame Street's" resident clowns Buddy and Jim. She also alleges that the program is responsible for her youngsters slurping soup with a fork and eating their peanut butter sandwiches inside out.

This mother will probably be happy to know that Buddy and Jim will not be back in the new season. Creators of the show also find the team "disrupting."

Some educators claim the show is all flashy sensationalism, a program which lets parents think it is capable of babysitting their children.

As a mother of a 3-year-old and 5-year-old, my first response to the charges is to point out that "methinks the educators do protest too much." There may be professional envy involved. And, certainly, there is the knowledge that to critic-

ize what everyone else is praising is certain to direct attention to one's self.

There are certain things wrong with "Sesame Street." One is the fact that if the show is attempting to create true parallels with the lives of its ghetto viewers then the childless couple Susan and Gordon must look out of place indeed.

Second, some stories are repeated to the point of boredom — the bakery story which shows how an apple cream pie is created comes to mind.

Third, the show, as its own creator, Mrs. Joan Ganz Cooney, recognizes, does not go far enough with its teaching principles.

I, for one, am sorry to see Buddy and Jim have to go. They provided humor and a chance for a young viewer to feel temporarily superior. Granted, I am no teacher but I fail to see what is so terrible about that.

My 3-year-old who counts beautifully gets confused sometimes too when asked to count, say, eight apples. He does not get confused when asked to distinguish among triangle, square, rectangle and circle.

Possibly, "Sesame Street" is not doing all that it was programmed to do nor helping as many children as it could. But it is still the best show for kids that television has ever presented, bar none.