

# ***THE ZOUKI WEEK OF WORKSHOPS, SESSIONS AND ALL-AROUND GOOD FELLOWSHIP***

Since endeavors like those conducted at Swannanoa, East Durham, Elkins, and Miltown Malbay seem to be the source of a lot of joy for so many of you (and disposable income for the organizers), the Zouki Cultural Labs [ZCL] have been busy putting together the first Zouki Traditional Awareness Week. Details are not yet firm, but a rough idea of what can be expected follows:

The location will most likely be the campus of lovely Thelch College of Automotive Training, situated in picturesque downtown Joplin, Missouri. The Thelch site has been chosen both for its cultural strengths and for the fact that one of Thelch's so-called "academic deans" sits on the Zouki Cultural Labs board of directors.

Dates are still being worked out with the Thelch administration, but for now a mid-April date is being looked at, probably during "Tornado Week" when the campus and everything else in the Joplin area shuts down and moves into secure buildings or basements far from trailer parks.

Tentative arrangements have been made for the following courses and instructors:

**"LGBTQ+ Influences in the Hornpipes of the 1956 Kilfenora Céili Band":**  
we realize it's totally unrelated to reality but ensures plenty of government funding for the Zouki Cultural Labs, and don't kid yourself - we're in it for the money!

This course actually consists of listening to a lot of scratchy old céili band music. Just to make sure any government snoops are satisfied, every so often a "student" will stand up and mention Oscar Wilde or Gertude Stein or Rosie O'Donnell or some similar luminary, then will immediately sit back down. At no time will any actual discussion be permitted.

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No instructor has as yet been appointed for this course. In order to ensure that government grant money will really come flooding in, the preferred candidate will be a dyslexic transgendered Navajo. Unfortunately the ZCL Academic Search Committee has simply not had the time to go through the huge pile of resumes they received once word of their requirements had leaked out.

Another hands-on course will be "Diseases of the Bodhrán", which will actually be conducted at the Missouri College of Quadruped Dermatology across town from Thelch. Instructor will be Doctor Yez Preklef, graduate of the Lower Caucasus Institute of the Sheep and Goat, and a world-renowned specialist in ovine skin problems. "Doc", as he has been known to generations of unimaginative students, is well-known throughout mammal academia both for the incisiveness of his research and the impenetrability of his accent. He has his green card and does not mind working for short money, two good reasons that the ZCL are so pleased to have acquired his services for Awareness Week.

Due to the expected high level of interest in this course, anyone interested in registering is advised to do so early, say around 5 - 5:30 a.m. "Accelerated registration" is available for anyone bringing a Wendy's breakfast sandwich into the registration room as an "inducement" for our staff.

In the instrumental area, the ZCL has decided to expand the usual Beginners / Intermediate / Advanced categories to include "Tone Deaf", "No Rhythm", "Is He (or She) Kidding?", "No Talent but Really Cute" (for female students only), and "No Talent But Is Neat and Keeps His Pencils Sharpened" (for male students).

However, to avoid any student's self-esteem being threatened by these somewhat less-than-neutral evaluations, the Zouki Awareness faculty will be instructed that NO student will complete the week at any level less than "Marvelous" or "Incredibly Gifted" or "Hey, You Should Be Teaching this

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Course!" These empty accolades will it is hoped encourage the students to sign up immediately for next year's Awareness Week at impossibly advanced levels (which will be priced accordingly, with no refunds allowed for those who drop the course subsequent to any sudden blinding realization of their own mediocrity).

In addition to instruction on the usual instruments such as flutes and fiddles, the Awareness Week will also feature various workshop levels devoted to weird devices like blenchunks, droibles, nine-stringed and tenor wuppas, and the deservedly neglected octave bohrt-horn. The fact that none of these implements exist outside the pages of the famous ElderlyLarkBrothers catalog (yes, a Zouki Cultural Labs front!) will be nicely counterbalanced by the subtlety with which we make familiarity with them appear to be The Ne Plus Ultra (Etruscan for "kicks serious ass") of Irish Traditional knowledge.

Need we say further that these gizmos - or gizmata - will be ridiculously overpriced, even though they are all made of shoddy materials in our Zouki sweatshops by tiny underpaid foreigners who should be overdosing on "Sesame Street" and "The Teletubbies" instead of working long hours in dimly-lit cellars throughout the Third World? Tough - we have a bottom line to contend with (and besides all that television would hurt their little brown eyes).

More details on Awareness Week will follow at (appropriately enough) odd intervals. Watch this space for further developments!

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