



YOU ASKED US

ABOUT THE COLLAPSE OF THE CRYSTAL HALL

ABOUT THE NUMBER OF PUCKS THE NHL USES

Q Could you please tell me about Joni Mitchell, the singer, and how one can get in touch with her?

P.A. Robinson, Scarborough, Ont.

A Joni, now 27, was born Roberta Joan Anderson in Fort Macleod, Alta., moving early to Saskatoon where her mother was a schoolteacher and her father worked for a grocery chain. She started playing the ukulele as an art student in Calgary and moved to Toronto in 1964 to try the coffee-house, folk-singing circuit.

"But it was the same old story," Joni said later. "It's hard for Canadians to

get work in their own country unless they have recognition outside it." She married U.S. balladeer Chuck Mitchell 36 hours after she met him, went to live



JONI MITCHELL

with him in Detroit, learned to play guitar from a Pete Seeger record and got some singing work as a fill-in for no-shows in clubs. And wrote songs. Songs about moods, emotions, love, scenery, or a country girl's clear-eyed reaction to urban life all done with a poet's imagery and choice of words unsurpassed by any songwriter today.

Joni composed and sang the title tune of the CBC's now-defunct *The Way It Is*, which (in 1967) gave her her first regular national audience in Canada. She waited — "because I didn't think I was ready" — before she recorded any of her songs herself. Others had no such compunction: Tom Rush, Bing Crosby, Judy Collins, Frank Sinatra, Ian and Sylvia, and Buffy Sainte-Marie have recorded her songs.

Joni made the first of her three albums (all for Reprise) in 1968, the most recent — *Ladies Of The Canyon* — coming out last summer. All have been big sellers throughout North America, and all are distinguished by a total lack

of political protest, and by the highly personal use of details from her own life. This does not mean — despite her delicate, fluty, singing voice — that she cannot be angry. The New York cab-driver called Nathan La Franeer must have a hard time living down the song Joni wrote about him:

"He asked me for a dollar more

He cursed me to my face

He hated everyone who paid to ride

And share his common space."

But she is best known for Both Sides, Now ("It's life's illusions I recall; I really don't know life at all"), which has every appearance of being one of those classic songs that transcend both time and arbitrary musical boundaries. Her marriage to Mitchell long broken, Joni now lives in Los Angeles' Laurel Canyon and has recently been linked with Graham Nash, of Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young. She can be reached through Reprise Records, 4000 Warner Blvd., Burbank, Calif. 91505.

Q In an old trunk I found a card depicting the collapse of Crystal Hall in London, Ont. in 1907. Can you tell me something about it?

Mrs. O. Anderson, Saskatoon.

A The Crystal Hall was the name of a large china and glassware business owned by W.J. Reid and Co.; the firm was one of two — the other was Hamilton, Long and Co., a clothier's — housed in the Reid building at 197 Dundas St. in



CRYSTAL HALL, LONDON, ONT.

London. On July 16, 1907, the stock was being moved because the Reids had leased their building to a Greek Canadian called Peter Smirlies, who planned to change it into a poolroom and shoeshine parlor. It seems that structural alterations made by Smirlies' construction men had weakened the 25-year-old building — and at 4:12 p.m. July 16 it shuddered briefly, then collapsed, reducing itself and the building next to it to rubble.

The next-door building housed a firm of photographers and a five-and-ten-cent store due to open in three days. Early reports of eight dead were later corrected to seven: three in the five-and-dime, including a 14-year-old working there for the summer holidays, and four in the clothiers of the Reid build-

ing. It took a night and a day to search the rubble for dead and injured, and Londoners bent to the task with a will. As *The Globe* in Toronto reported on July 17: "Nor were [the rescuers] all of the class accustomed to such arduous toil. Begrimed and horny-handed heroes were joined by prominent businessmen, who threw off their coats and vests and buckled to with a strength born of desperation."

Q How many pucks does the National Hockey League go through in a season? **Owen Aldous, Loreburn, Sask.**

A Exact figures are not available, but trainer Joe Sgro of the Toronto Maple Leafs estimates the Leafs use about 1,200 pucks during one season's regularly scheduled games. If you multiply by 14 (the number of teams in the NHL), you get a rough total of 16,800 — at a price of between 90 cents and \$1.20 a puck.

The Leafs also go through practice pucks (between 30 and 40 cents each) at about the same rate, which would mean another 16,800 pucks for the league as a whole. Between games and practices, pucks are kept in a refrigerator — temperature not known.

Q Please tell me where William the Conqueror got the name Domesday for the Domesday Book. **Debra Mackie, Toronto.**

A The name was derived directly from "Day of the Last Judgment," the book being intended as a record from which no appeal could be made. The Domesday Book was the record of a general survey made of England (1085-86) by William the Conqueror, with the object of listing England's economic resources so that they could be more accurately taxed. Descriptions of each piece of land, its present and former holders, the holding itself, and the population on it were included among the facts recorded. As an administrative measure, the Domesday survey is unequalled in medieval history, both for its thoroughness and the speed with which it was made. With time, its importance grew; to this day it is quoted in British law courts.

Do you have a question your encyclopedia doesn't answer? Do you want to know the facts about famous people? The way something is made or how something got started? Write to: You Asked Us, Suite 1100, 401 Bay St., Toronto 103, Ont. Sorry, but the volume of mail makes personal replies impossible.

CORRECTION



In our issue of November 28th, 1970, we wrongly implied that the internationally known opera singer, Jon Vickers, hired professional hand-

clappers for his *United States* appearances and that at Mr. Vickers' performances there was a game of trying to locate these professional hand-clappers. We were in error and we retract the story.

The story arose out of the trial of Mr. Vickers' *United States* accountant who was prosecuted for filing false *United States* income tax returns on behalf of prominent operatic personalities, including Mr. Vickers. The accountant, who was convicted subsequently, was alleged to have falsely claimed expenses for professional hand-clappers in preparing Mr. Vickers' income tax return. Mr. Vickers gave evidence at the trial and denied that he had ever done so.

There is no doubt Jon Vickers enjoys a high reputation that is well deserved, and we sincerely regret any embarrassment our story may have caused Mr. Vickers and fully apologize to him.