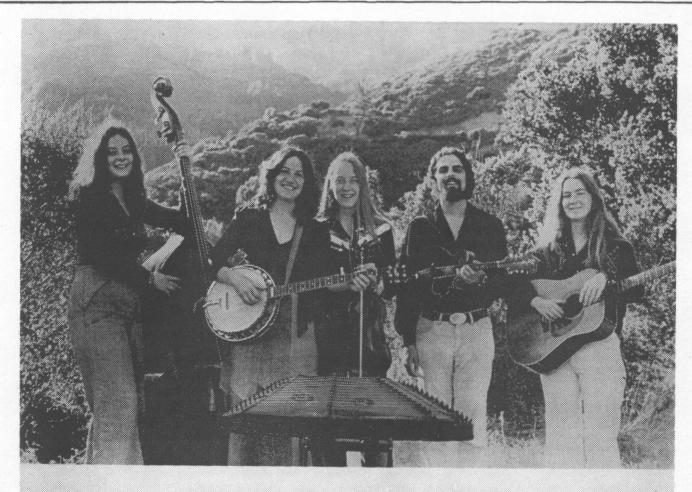


Vol.II, No.2

March-April 1976



THE GOOD OL PERSONS

The California Bluegrass Association, founded in 1975 by Carl Pagter, is dedicated to the furtherance of Bluegrass, Gospel, and Old-Time Music. Membership in the Association costs \$7.50 per person per year; information on family memberships is available on the application form on the last page of this issue. Each member family is entitled to receive a copy of each BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN newsletter without charge and to reduced admission charges to all CBA activities. Direct all membership applications and inquiries to the California Bluegrass Association, P.O. Box 11287, San Francisco, Ca. 94101. Officers and Directors of the CBA are listed below; (*) designates member of the Board of Directors.

President Steve de Haas (*) 903 W. 3rd Street Benicia, Ca. 94510 (707) 745-4683

Activities Vice-President

--See Page 6--

Membership Vice-President Jay Quesenberry (*) 1780 Via Flores San Jose, Ca. 95132 (408) 262-8083

Secretary Carol Masters (*) 1245 Crompton Road Redwood City, Ca. 94061 (415) 365-0198

Treasurer
Ed Pagter
967 Perreira Drive
Santa Clara, Ca. 95051
(408) 296-3123

Editor
Burney Garelick
357½ Valley Street
San Francisco, Ca. 94131
(415) 282-5833

Roscoe Keithley (*) 3633 - 57th Street Sacramento, Ca. 95820 (916) 452-2467

Keith Little (*) 8174 Center Parkway Sacramento, Ca. 95823 (916) 392-4546 (school address) (home address) Georgetown, Ca.

John Murphy (*) 2151 Old Oakland Road, Space 229 San Jose, Ca. 95120

Ray Edlund (*) 1000 Elbert Street Oakland, Ca. 94602 (415) 530-8887

Art/Publicity Director Lars Bourne 469 Savstrom Way San Jose, Ca. 95111 (408) 227-4640 (408) 289-5502

ABOUT THE COVER

The photo, courtesy of The Good O1' Persons, illustrates one of the most popular bluegrass bands in the Bay Area. For a story, see Page 9. BACKSTAGE MEMORIES of The Caffrey Family Benefit Sunday, January 11, 1976



Paul Shelasky

Vern Williams and Jimmy Caffrey

Tom and Brenda Caffrey



Patty Caffrey

Photos by Bill Britton

South Loomis Quickstep

BLUEGRASS BILLBOARD

(To be listed in Bluegrass Billboard, please contact the Editor at 415/282-5833 or drop a note to Bluegrass Billboard, California Bluegrass Association, P.O. Box 11287, San Francisco, Ca. 94101. Remember, if your band is not listed here, or is listed incorrectly, it is your responsibility to remedy the situation. The CBA exists for you and your input is not only appreciated but necessary.)

Regular Gigs:

BEAR CREEK BOYS

every Friday - Straw Hat Pizza Parlor, 41st & Capitola, Santa Cruz.

THE GOOD OL' PERSONS

every Thursday and Saturday - Paul's Saloon, 3251 Scott Street, San Francisco.

FULL KENTUCKY LOAD

every Friday and Saturday - Straw Hat Pizza Parlor, Mathilda & Maude, Sunnyvale.

HIGH COUNTRY

every Wednesday & Friday - Paul's Saloon, 3251 Scott Street, San Francisco.

HIGH ON GRASS

every Saturday - Straw Hat Pizza Parlor, 440 Capitol, San Jose.

MOUNTAIN GRASS

every Saturday - Straw Hat Pizza Palace, North Abel, Milpitas.

SKUNK CABBAGE

every Friday - The Square Rigger, 65 Moraga Way, Orinda.

SMELLS LIKE HOME

every Thursday - Bohemia, Jackson & Amador, Hayward. every Friday and Saturday - Straw Hat Pizza Parlor, Capitol & McKee, San Jose.

SONOMA COUNTY LINE

every Sunday - Paul's Saloon, 3251 Scott Street, San Francisco.

SOUTH LOOMIS QUICKSTEP

every Monday - The Shire Road Pub, corner of Winding Way & Sunrise Blvd., Fair Oaks.

SWEETWATER

every Thursday - The Soup Kitchen at The Factory, Campbell. every Friday - Straw Hat Pizza Parlor, Hamilton & Meridian, San Jose.

MORE BLUEGRASS BILLBOARD

Jam Sessions:

GRYPHON STRINGED INSTRUMENTS

every Saturday afternoon - 211 Lambert, Palo Alto, 2:00-5:00.

NASHVILLE WEST

every Sunday afternoon - 193 Commercial (off Central Expressway in Sunnyvale). House band, High On Grass. For information about performing, contact Wayne Dye at 415/964-1502.

PAUL'S SALOON

every Tuesday night - 3251 Scott Street, San Francisco.

SCOVILLE VIOLIN SHOP

every Wednesday night - 28 Tamal Vista, Corte Madera, 7:00-11:00.

Emphasis on fiddling. Fiddle lessons, all levels, available by appointment. For information contact Bob Scoville at 415/924-5922 or fiddle instructor Mike Drayton at 415/526-1927.

Special Events:

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL OLD-TIME FIDDLERS CONTEST

March 5-6, Oroville, Municipal Auditorium.
Flat-Picking Competition Friday at 7:30 PM. Fiddle Contest Saturday at 9:00 AM. Admission Fee, Entry Fee Fiddlers Only, Cash Prizes.

TRADITIONAL AMERICAN MUSIC RADIO MARATHON

March 7 - KPFA (94.1 FM), 9:00-9:00. The Traditional American Music Collective, made up of interested KPFA volunteers and staff, presents a day of LIVE music. Hosted by Ray Edlund, Chris Strachwitz, and Tom Mazzolini, performers will include the Arkansas Sheiks, The Caffrey Family, the San Francisco Folk Music Club, Cajun, Blues, and Dixieland bands. The program is part of the KPFA Marathon to encourage subscribers to this listener-supported station.

CBA JAMBOREE AND MEMBERSHIP MEETING

March 14 - First Congregational Church, 2323 Euclid Ave., Redwood City, 1:00-6:00 PM, Admission FREE, refreshments available. (No alcohol allowed on the premises.) Plenty of jamming space and plenty of parking space! Important, though brief, membership meeting to confirm the nine nominees for the Board of Directors and to vote on certain CBA policies. All bands and pickers welcome.

<u>Directions</u>: From highway 101, take Whipple Ave. exit to Alameda, turn left to McGarvey and watch for signs to the Church. From highway 280, take Farm Hill Blvd. exit to McGarvey, turn right and watch for signs.

CALIFORNIA STATE OLD-TIME FIDDLERS CHAMPIONSHIP CONTEST

April 16-17 - Sheraton Inn, 2550 W. Clinton Ave., Fresno.

Flat-Picking Competition Friday at 7:30 PM. Fiddle Contest
Saturday at 9:00 AM. Admission Fee, Entry Fee Fiddlers Only,
Cash Prizes and Trophies. Lots of jamming in luxurious facilities.

More Special Events:

3RD ANNUAL SANTA ROSA FOLK FESTIVAL

June 11, 12, 13 - Santa Rosa Junior College. Sponsored by the Sonoma County Arts Council. For information contact Kate Wolf, 434 Piper Street, Healdsburg, Ca. 95448, 707/433-6059.

CBA BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL - THREE BIG DAYS: June 18, 19, 20 - Nevada City.

This is the announcement you have been waiting for. Nevada City is said to be a beautiful location in the mountains, perfect for a bluegrass festival. Details will appear in the next issue. Meanwhile, set aside these days on your calendar for a chance to

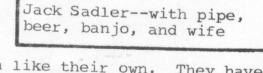
stretch out with a weekend of bluegrass.

HOMAGE TO JACK SADLER

This issue of BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN is dedicated to Jack Sadler. Activities Vice-President and a member of the Board of Directors, Jack, who was instrumental in the forming of the CBA, has found it necessary to resign from the California Bluegrass Association. His professional and personal responsibilities and obligations have become too great to be able to devote the necessary time to promoting CBA activities, and, rather than do an inadequate job, Jack has thought it best to let someone else carry on the work.

A native of Oklahoma, Jack grew up in Modesto, California, where he undoubtedly got into picking and singing. Jack is an incorrigible banjo picker; it is reputed that he showed considerable promise for mastering the fiddle but, unable to find time for two instruments, chose to stick to the banjo. He has played with the Overlook Mountain Boys, who, when asked where they play, claim "living rooms." Like many bluegrass devotees, they all have other professions and pick solely for pleasure.

Jack is a dentist practicing in San Jose. He lives in a beautiful, mountaintop home in Los Gatos with his wife Jan, an antique dealer very



much involved in renovating mountain homes, much like their own. They have three grown children--Becky, Roger, and Gary, one daughter-in-law--Patty--(thanks to Gary!), three dogs, innumerable cats, and one rabbit.

Even though he will no longer be part of the administrative end of the CBA, we will probably still see Jack at jamborees and events. Still, it will not be the same; Jack has given the CBA a great deal of hard work and inspiration. We will always remember how his pipe-puffing modesty and charm negotiated various activities at CBA meetings. And who else would help himself to beer and doughnuts, justifying the combination shamelessly with, "It's Okie-style!" Jack will be irreplaceable, and we shall always appreciate his efforts for the CBA.

TURN YOUR RADIO ON.

"Turn your radio on, turn your radio on And listen to the music in the air Turn your radio on, heaven's glory share Turn the lights down low And listen to the Master's radio Get in touch with God, turn your radio on."

(from a song by Albert E. Brumley, 1937)

Over the last month or so the air waves have begun to explode with bluegrass music. And it's about time bluegrass was recognized as music and not just backup for automobile, hamburger, soft drinks, or chicken commercials. Witness the following list and give thanks for the efforts of all these fine folks. Then, turn your radio on, and, to paraphrase Mr. Brumley, get in touch with bluegrass. . .

KEEN (1370 AM) San Jose

every Saturday night - LIVE from The Camelot, 3231 Fillmore Street, San Francisco, 8:00-11:00 PM. BLUEGRASS EXPERIENCE returns to to air! Once again hosted by Mick Seeber, with the able assistance of Carol Masters, the show will feature two bands per night, recorded music, interviews with bluegrass personalities, record reviews, guest program directors, and Bluegrass Billboard. Door charge at The Camelot is \$2.00, but card-carrying members of the CBA will get in for half price. (Bands will be paid from the door fees, so tell everyone and bring your friends!) So far, featured bands include Arkansas Sheiks, Touch of Grass, The Caffrey Family, the New Tonto Basin Boys, and The Good O1' Persons. Week night auditions for the show will be held at The Camelot; stay tuned for details.

KSTN (107.3 FM) Stockton
"Wild" Bill Robertson's Show

everyday - Monday through Friday - 1:30-5:45 PM

An incredible selection of bluegrass, old-time music, fiddling, and country-the good ol' country, unlike KNEW. I just discovered this show, which has been on for a couple of years, and I can't stop raving about it! I recommend it to everyone who is lucky enough to be near a radio during those hours. Bill Robertson, whose low-key, good natured humor gives the impression the show is a labor of love and not duty, appreciates requests, phone calls from bluegrassers and fiddle fans, mail, and hamburgers. It's truly a joy to listen to. (KSTN is easy to find on your radio dial: when it's not playing bluegrass, it's a Spanish-speaking station.) There is one final reason for tuning in KSTN: Bill seems to have a particular preference for the music of Ray Park and Vern Williams, two of the CBA's favorite bluegrassers.

KVRE (99.3 FM) Santa Rosa
every Thursday - 9:00--11:00 PM
 "Uncommon Country" with Kate Wolf
 Lots of good bluegrass and old-time music.

- KVRE (99.3 FM) Santa Rosa
 Brian Dahle's Show check station for details.
- KKTU (103.3 FM) Ukiah
 Quinton Kruse's Show check station for details.
- every other Sunday morning 11:00-1:00
 "Folk, Blues and Jazz" with Chris Strachwitz
 New releases in bluegrass, old-time, Cajun, Tex-Mex, and
 related types of music. A pleasant way to spend Sunday
 morning! (Chris alternates his show with Phil Elwood, whose
 specialty is jazz.)
- KPFA (94.1 FM) Berkeley
 every other Friday afternoon 3:00-5:00 PM
 "Pig In A Pen" with Ray Edlund
 Low-key presentation from Ray's fantastic collection of
 traditional bluegrass recordings. Some live presentations and
 theme programs such as the recent "Women in Bluegrass Music,"
 which was informative rather than political!
- KERS (90.7 FM) Sacramento
 every Tuesday afternoon 1:30-3:30 PM
 "High and Lonesome" with Mel Smothers
- KKUP (FM) Cupertino every Saturday morning - 9:30-11:00 AM "Bluegrass" with Casey Walsh
- KRVE (95.3 FM) Los Gatos
 every Saturday afternoon 3:00-5:00 PM
 "My Grass Is Blue" with Phil Silvers
- KUSP (89 FM) Monterey
 every Sunday afternoon 3:00-6:00 PM
 "Hillbilly Heaven" with Paul King
 Traditional bluegrass--Bill Monroe, Jimmy Martin, Ralph
 Stanley, etc. (Paul King plays banjo with the New Tonto Basin
 Boys.)
- KQED (88.5 FM) San Francisco
 every Tuesday evening 7:00-9:00 PM
 National Public Radio's Folk Festival U.S.A. Recorded folk
 concerts from around the U.S. Such events as the National
 Guitar Flatpicking Festival in Winfield, Kansas; the Festival
 of American Folklife; the Indian Springs (Maryland) Bluegrass
 Festival; and a number of other bluegrass performances.
- KALW (91.7 FM) San Francisco
 every Sunday morning 10:00-12:00
 Bluegrass and folk events recorded for National Public
 radio (NPR), often scheduled a week or so in advance of KQED.

WHAT'S SO "GOOD" ABOUT THE GOOD OL' PERSONS?

Just about exactly one year ago-March 26--The Good O1' Persons made
their debut at the Freight and
Salvage Coffeehouse in Berkeley.
Since that time, the band, which has
endured some changes, has become the
most popular, sought after bluegrass
band in the Bay Area. To what do
they attribute this relatively
sudden success?

Probably there are three reasons for their popularity: hard work, musical expertise, and compatible personalities. For dedicated, talented musicians, the first two qualities will be achieved without hassle; it is the third, however, that determines the popularity and therefore the longevity of a band. And these five "persons" suit each other snugly, like five fingers of a glove, creating a single, blended sound. But the personality mesh had been developing before the band was conceived. Each Person was drawn to Paul's Saloon, the bluegrass mecca of San Francisco, where he/she met each other and jammed. Before forming this band, all of the members played together in other groups: the Phantoms of the Opry, The Arkansas Sheiks, or occasional bands for the Dickens Faire or the Renaissance Pleasure Faire. Perhaps their getting their own group together was more than chance. As the I Ching says so often, "perseverance furthers," and for the Persons it certainly did.

Initially, The Good Ol' Persons was an informal picking session among five women. Gradually they decided to get something together and really "wow" them at Paul's Saloon. The name was chosen with tongue-in-cheek to distinguish themselves from an eastern bluegrass band called The Good Old Boys. Also, one suspects a political comment on feminism, women's rights, and the widespread if often silly use of "person" in place of particular gender. But one shouldn't become carried away with

politics; one will quickly discover it is the music that is important—it is the bluegrass and old-time tunes that make their performance so vital.

The original Persons were Laurie Lewis, Barbara Mendelsohn, Kathy Kallick, Dorothy Baxter, and Sue Shelasky. At first an all-women's band was pretty much of a knockout. Then, an all-women's band that was good, too, was incredible! There are not many all-women's bluegrass bands--Buffalo Gals in the East and Witch Hazel in the Northwest--and The Good 01' Persons could have gained considerable mileage from this alone. However, several months later Sue, who had played mandolin, decided to bow dut. With the idea of looking for another female mandolinist, the band temporarily took on Sue's brother Paul, fresh from his stint as fiddler for the Phantoms of the Opry. It wasn't long before Paul endeared himself to the group and became permanent. However, the women, who are all quite versatile instrumentally, determined to restrict Paul to mandolin, with an occasional fiddle tune. (This was not easy, considering he is 1975 California Fiddle Champion.) Paul did become the "token male," making for lively stage banter and audience rapport. Even with the substitution of Paul, the band continued to develop a unified sound. One might quibble that they are not strictly bluegrass, since Barbara plays old-time banjo-style, but their arrangements are bluegrass, and Barbara's expertise on the hammered dulcimer makes one forget academic distinctions. Most important, they continue to fill Paul's Saloon (every Thursday and Saturday nights), the Freight and Salvage (once, sometimes twice a month), and the Cafe Valerian (the newest outlet for bluegrass in the Bay Area).

In addition to these regular gigs, the band's performance credits are

extensive. Some of them include: Stanford University International Women's Year, Palo Alto; The Irish Center, San Francisco; McCabe's Invitational Bluegrass Contest (2nd place 1975), Malibu; Western Bicentennial Folk Festival, Marin County; Petaluma Coast Guard Training Camp; KPFA and KKIQ radio stations; KTVU television; and numerous weddings and parties.

Vital statistics on each Person are as follows, from left to right as each appears in the cover photo. Although they frequently exchange instruments, they will be identified here by the one they are best known for within the band.

KATHY KALLICK, 23, studied piano as a child in Chicago; preferred guitar learned from her mother, a professional folk singer; played the folk scene; moved to San Francisco to study painting at stitute of Art; prolific

songwriter and stunning vocalist; adept at bass, guitar, and mandolin.

BARBARA MENDEISOHN, 30, studied piano and violin as a child in Cincinnati; preferred guitar; learned banjo in VISTA in Appalachia; studied art and English at UC Berkeley; taught at Continuation High School, working with disturbed children; rediscovered banjo, revolutionized spoon-playing, renovated and mastered the hammered dulcimer; otherwise occupied as a freelance advertising illustrator and banjo teacher.

LAURIE LEWIS, 25, studied piano and violin as a child in Berkeley; preferred guitar and banjo; took interest in modern and jazz dancing; rediscovered fiddle, with a little help from Paul, and surprised everyone at fiddle contests with her victories (California Ladies Champion, 1974; 5th Place Ladies Division, National Old-Time Fiddlers Contest, Weiser, Idaho, 1975); reputable bass player, formerly with Phantoms of the Opry,

often freelancing with other groups;

otherwise employed at the Scoville

Violin Shop.

PAUL SHELASKY, 24, studied piano as a child in Petaluma, encouraged by parents, both classical musicians, his mother a pidnist, his father a violinist with the Santa Rosa Symphony; preferred guitar and he is first-rate; taught himself fiddle; became proficient on mandolin and banjo; fiddled with Phantoms of the Opry when they won 1st Place at Bean Blossom, 1973; heavy into jazz violin, particularly Svend Asmussen; otherwise occupied making and selling instruments.

DOROTHY BAXTER, 21, did not study piano as a child in Canada and Mill Valley; strong affinity for banjo; picked up guitar at 17; "hung out" at Paul's Saloon, jamming with Phantoms, High Country and other regulars, eventually becoming the band's "right hand person" playing lead guitar; accompanied Paul's contesting for the 1975 California Fiddle Championship; otherwise employed at Amazing Grace Music Store, San Anselmo.

When I was a child, long before I was consciously aware of the legendary Sons of the Pioneers, I used to love to listen to Roy Rogers sing. vision was new then, and "horse operas," as my father called cowboy shows, were plentiful. These were the days before the adult western, when the good guys wore white hats, the bad guys were no worse than cattle rustlers and always saw the error of their ways, and the hero always sang to the fair maiden. But a song was all she got; invariably, it was his horse he took into the sunset. trails to you. . . " How that Roy could sing. Of course my father said it wasn't really Roy, but Trigger, his horse, doing the singing. I used to get so furious. . .

Lately, I've been wondering if perhaps he didn't have a point after all. When you stop to think about it, the horse was to the old country and western songs what the truck is to modern country. All that romance and mystique. Today it's accepted fact that the trucker takes his big rig into the sunset, just like the cowboy took his horse. And there are even truck songs, so why not horse songs!

There are three songs that come to mind in order to illustrate the relationship of the horse and his man. Since they are all extremely long ballads, I will summarize their plots and import in the following.

Most everyone is familiar with Jimmy Driftwood's "Tennessee Stud." The song describes the exploits of a man and his faithful companion, a horse named Tennessee Stud. Because of his horse, this equestrian is able to escape desperados in Tennessee, Arkansas mud, Indians, Spaniards, gamblers, and a prospective brother- and father-inlaw. Tennessee Stud is rewarded for his efforts. When the hero finds the "girl with the golden hair" she just happens to be riding a Tennessee mare. So, like good buddies, they each get a mate, and, if that weren't enough, the fellow gets a baby and the horse

gets a colt. This shows the intimacy that develops between a man and his horse.

"The Strawberry Roan," (written in 1931 by Nat Vincent, Curley Fletcher, and Fred Howard), describes a different kind of intimacy between a man and his horse. This is a competition, much like that involving a matador and his bull, where one must defeat the other. In this case, the cowboy is conquered; he is unable to break the wild horse, but, in the process of trying, he gains a great respect for the horse. The cowboy picks himself up and leaves the corral cursing, "That sun-fishin' critter's worth leavin' alone/There's nary a buster from Texas to Nome/ Could ride that strawberry roan." (Incidentally, Bill Boyd's Cowboy Ramblers do a super version of this on a two record set for RCA Bluebird AXM2-5503.)

The final story concerns "Molly and Tenbrooks," a bluegrass standard and the height of "horse opera." Based on Bill Monroe's version, the story concerns the love affair between two champion race horses, Molly and Tenbrooks, who were separated by success. Molly was taken to California to racing glory. Unfortunately, she died at the height of her fame. Her body traveled by train back to Kentucky for burial. Tenbrooks was waiting for her and raced the train until it overtook him, and Molly was laid to rest in bluegrass country.

So, in the end, these three horse stories reflect three themes prevalent in country music: marital bliss, strength and independence, and unrequited love. In the final analysis, I guess Trigger made a lot of senseror a horse.

(by Burney Garelick)

NEW RECORDS

At last the first record of The Caffrey Family is available. Simply titled COUNTRY THOUGHTS - THE CAFFREY FAMILY, with a cover photo of an attractive pastorale scene, this fine album, representative of their performances, costs \$5.00 and may be ordered from Tom Caffrey, 1379 - 45th Ave., San Francisco, Ca. 94122.

The Old Master has given us another album-THE WEARY TRAVELER - BILL MONROE (MCA-2173), available in your better record stores, i.e. those that stock bluegrass. It's a good album, of course, but there's just not enough of it. My favorite cut is Bill's "Jerusalem Ridge," a haunting fiddle tune Kenny Baker introduced at Bean Blossom last summer.

Lest we forget, the CBA also exists to promote old-time music; apropos of this, the Arkansas Sheiks, a fine Berkeley-based old-time band, will soon release their first album on Bay Records. Keep in touch with the Sheiks for details.

NEW BOOKS

SING YOUR HEART OUT, COUNTRY BOY, by Dorothy Horstman (E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York), 1975, 393 pages, \$12.95 hardcover. Includes the lyrics to just about every country song you can think of and the inspiration for for each, in the words of each song-writer whenever possible. Also includes many bluegrass songs, although Ms. Horstman's transcription of "Uncle Pen" does leave something to be desired. All in all, a handy reference book for the country music devotee.

BLUEGPASS BREAKDOWN NEEDS YOU!

BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN needs reporters, writers, reviewers, artists, photographers, and publishers--volunteers throughout California who love bluegrass and see big things ahead for the CBA and BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN.

Deadline for the next issue: April 16.

Send all contributions directly to the Editor, at the address on Page 2.

CBA MEMBERSHIP MEETING MARCH 14

Don't forget to attend the CBA Jamboree and Membership Meeting Sunday, March 14 at the First Congregational Church in Redwood City. Since no petitions were received, there was no need to send ballots, and the nine nominees for the Board of Directors, listed in the last issue, will need your confirmation, as will certain other CBA business matters. Remember, this is your organization, and your participation is desired.

STOP THE PRESSES!!!!

LAST MINUTE ITEMS:

Just got word of a new bluegrass band in the Monterey area. . . .

The Long Valley Boys who play every Friday and Saturday night at the Club Moderne, 1551 Fremont Blvd. in Seaside, from 9:00-1:00. They also host a jam session Sunday afternoons from 4:00-8:00.

Be sure to check them out. I understand they have a lead singer who just about outdoes Jimmy Martin!

Mail to:	Carol Masters CBA Band Registry P.O. Box 11287 San Francisco, Ca.					
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