

VOL. IV, No. 2

MARCH - APRIL 1978



BILL MONROE RANDY DAVIS WAYNE LEWIS

RALPH STANLEY
CURLY RAY CLINE
KEITH WHITLEY



ABOUT THE COVER:

THE COVER OF THIS ISSUE honors two bluegrass giants, the founding fathers of bluegrass music, BILL MONROE and RALPH STANLEY. Of course, it was Bill who wrote the birth certificate, giving bluegrass its name, but Ralph wasn't far behind to lend shape and definition to this music. Both these superstars performed, on different evenings, last October at the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco. Since both played to packed houses of enthusiastic listeners, it is probably safe to assume they'll return relatively soon, with The Bluegrass Boys and The Clinch Mountain Boys, respectively. Between northern and southern California appearances by Bill, Ralph, The Country Gentlemen, Jim and Jesse, and The Bluegrass Alliance, we ought to have convinced the Eastern Bluegrass-Rooted Establishment that this music flourishes in the West and welcomes traveling bands from the bluegrass motherland. IN THIS ISSUE we are fortunate to have an interview with Ralph Stanley, done by Ray Edlund between the sets at the Music Hall. Special thanks to Ray and Ralph for this interesting, entertaining story. And very special thanks to Ralph and Bill for two exciting evenings. (Both photos were taken by Ray Edlund.)

WHO'S WHO IN THE CBA?

BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN is published bi-monthly at 357½ Valley Street, San Francisco, CA 94131 by Burney Garelick, Editor. It is the official publication of the California Bluegrass Association, which was founded in 1975 by Carl Pagter and is dedicated to the furtherance of bluegrass, gospel, and oldtime music. Membership in the Association costs \$7.50 per person per year; a spouse may be included for an additional \$2.50, and all children under 16 for \$1.00. \$3.75 of the initial \$7.50 is for a subscription to BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN for one year. Band memberships are available at \$5.00 per member per year; each band must consist of not less than 3 persons and not more than 7 persons. Nonmembers of the Association may subscribe to BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN for \$5.00 per year. Each member family or band is entitled to receive a copy of each BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN newsletter, as part of their dues, and to reduced admission charges to all CBA activities. Direct all membership applications and inquiries to the California Blue-Grass Association, P.O. Box 11287, San Francisco, CA 94101. Second-class postage paid at San Francisco, California. Publication number 315350.

Officers and Directors of the CBA are listed below; (*) designates member of the Board of Directors. Board meetings occur the 3rd Sunday of each month and members are invited; for details contact any of the following. Next meeting March 19 at Burney Garelick's house. Potluck and picking usually follow the meeting.

President
Jay Quesenberry(*)
3637 Snell, #303
San Jose, CA 95136
408/227-2819

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P.O. Box 1
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95470
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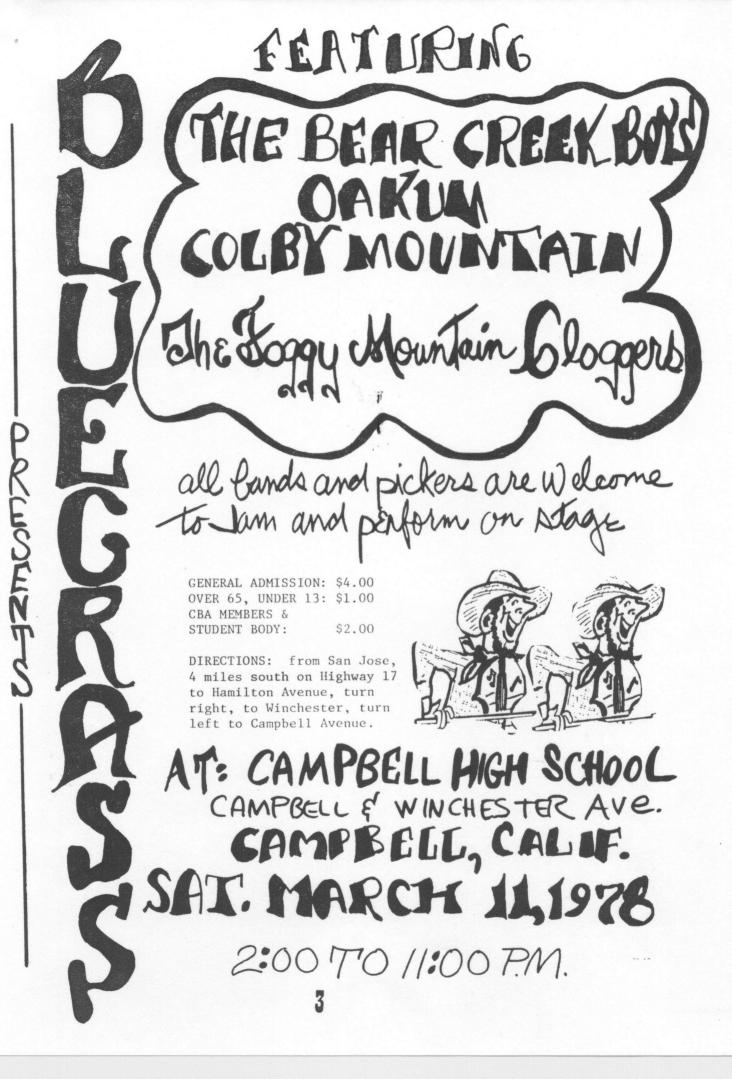
Secretary Ed Pagter (*) 967 Perreira Dr. Santa Clara, CA 95051 408/296-3123

Judie Cox (*) 1809 Meadow Lane Walnut Creek, CA 94595 415/938-4221

Sue Shelasky (*) 7161 Elmwood Rd. San Bernardino, CA 92404 714/888-9066

Jay Shrum (*) 2622 Sumac Stockton, CA 95207 209/951-7341

BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN is (and has been) printed by SIR SPEEDY, 23 Main St., San Francisco, CA.



special events

- March 3 & 4 (Friday & Saturday) FIDDLE
 AND GUITAR CONTEST, Municipal Auditorium, Oroville. (Guitar contest usually on Friday evening, fiddle contest all day Saturday.) Cash prizes and trophies. Sponsored by the California Old Time Fiddlers
 Association. For further information contact CSOTFA (new) President (and CBA member) Ray Ratliff, 5101 53rd Ave., Sacramento, CA 95823.
- March 4 & 5 (Saturday & Sunday) PHOENIX

 3RD ANNUAL BLUEGRASS AND OLD TIME

 MUSIC FESTIVAL, Phoenix, Arizona.

 Banjo and fiddle contests with cash

 prizes. Camping, no hookups. Prices:

 \$2.50/day, \$4.00 both days, children

 under 10 free. Featuring: TRADITIONAL

 BLUEGRASS, LAST CHANCE, SAGEGRASS (from

 Las Vegas, Nevada), PACIFIC..LY BLUE
 GRASS, SMOKEY MOUNTAIN BLUEGRASS. In

 case of rain, the festival will be held

 one week later. For further informa
 tion, contact Doug Piper, c/o Western

 Saddle Club, 12225 N. 7th St., Phoenix,

 Arizona 85022, phone 602/278-0532.
- March 11 (Saturday) CBA'S FIRST SATURDAY ALL DAY AND INTO THE NIGHT BLUEGRASS CONCERT-JAMBOREE, 2:00-11:00, Campbell High School, Campbell. Featuring: THE BEAR CREEK BOYS, COLBY MOUNTAIN, OAKUM, and THE FOGGY MOUNTAIN CLOGGERS.
- March 11 (Saturday) SAN CARLOS FOLK FESTIVAL. For information, contact the Peninsula Folk Music Club President Alan Rockhold, 415/595-1567.
- March 18 (Saturday) BLUEGRASS CONCERT,
 Old Nevada Theatre, Nevada City.
 8:00 PM. Featuring THE VERN WILLIAMS
 BAND and SOUTH LOOMIS QUICKSTEP.
 Another in the series of excellent
 concerts organized by Vi and Gil
 Lankford and the second one in Nevada
 City. For further information, call
 916/487-9761. Special guest appearing
 with South Loomis Quickstep will be
 Mark O'Connor, extraordinary young
 fiddler and guitarist.
- March 18 & 19 (Saturday & Sunday) PITCHIN' COOKIN' & SPITTIN' HULLABALOO, Barstow. (Calico Ghost Town, Ghost Town Road off Interstate 15, 10 miles north of Barstow). Open Horseshoe Pitching Championships, sanctioned by National Horseshoe Pitching Association. Starts Saturday with 50 shoe qualifying for A, B, C, and D division, and continues through Sunday; \$300 plus all entry fees awarded, \$2 qualifying fee. Entry fee for Division A is \$10; for Division B \$5; and \$3 entry fee for both Division C and D. Old Miner's Stew Cook-Off limited to 36 contestants begins Saturday with judging at 3:00 PM. \$5 to enter and cook secret recipe. World famous prospector Tumbleweek Harris will head panel of four judges in determining winners. Tobacco Chewing & Spitting Contest Saturday and Sunday at noon will determine who can chew the most tobacco and spit it the farthest. Other weekend activities include gunfight skits and country western dance Saturday night at 7:00 PM. Information and registration for Horseshoe Pitching Championship contact Jack Stermo, Calico Ghost Town, P.O. Box 638, Yermo, CA 92398. Other events, contact Regional Parks Department, 157 W. Fifth Street, San Bernardino, CA 92415.
- March 24 & 25 (Friday & Saturday) CALIFORNIA FIDDLE CHAMPIONSHIP CONTEST,
 Convention Center, Visalia. Cash
 prizes and trophies. Sponsored by the
 California State Old Time Fiddlers
 Association. For further information,
 contact Ray Ratliff, President, 510153rd Ave., Sacramento, CA 95823.
 (This is the BIG ONE, fiddlers and
 fiddle followers--and it's about a
 month earlier this year--rosin up your
 bows, practice your licks, and don't
 miss it!)
- April 1 & 2 (Saturday & Sunday) SOUTHLAND BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL, Devonshire Downs, Northridge. Featuring THE COUNTRY GENTLEMEN, MARTHA & EDDIE ADCOCK, etc.

- April 1 (Saturday) BLUEGRASS CONCERT, Tolenas Hall, Fairfield. See ad Page 6.
- April 8 (Saturday) LAKE COUNTY COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL. The Lake County Center of the Mendocino Community College will present a one-day Country Music Festival on April 8 at the Lake County Fairgrounds in Lakeport. An evening concert-dance featuring THE CAFFREY FAMILY, a bluegrass band, and LATE NITE RADIO, a Western Swing band, will conclude a full day of music and workshops. Starting at noon at the Fairgrounds, there will be workshops in fiddling, banjo, dobro, songwriting, square dancing and others, all FREE of charge. The evening concert-dance will begin at 8:00 PM and cost \$3.00 at the door. In addition to The Caffreys and Late Nite Radio, another country band will also perform, a band not yet selected. The workshops will take place in different areas of the Fairgrounds, but conclude in the main Exhibits Hall for some introductory square dancing led by local caller "Sparky" Sparks. For more information about the Festival, contact the Lake County Center, 707/ 263-4944, or David Garelick, 707/ 279-8149.
- April 27-30 (Thursday Sunday) GOLDEN WEST BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL, Silver Lake Park, Norco. Featuring THE BLUEGRASS CARDINALS and super fiddle champions BENNY THOMASSON and DICK BARRETT. See two-page ad this issue.
- April 30 (Sunday) BLUEGRASS CONCERT, Santa Clara County Fairgrounds, San Jose. Featuring RAY PARK, OVERLOOK MOUNTAIN BOYS, BEAR CREEK BOYS, NEW TONTO BASIN BOYS-- all just like last year! Sponsored by the American Lung Assoc.
- May 12-14 (Friday Sunday) CALICO SPRING FESTIVAL, Barstow (Calico Ghost Town, Ghost Town Road off Interstate 15, 10 miles north of Barstow). Mother's Day Weekend. An 1880's music festival in honor of "Mom," the flag, and apple pie opens with the Starlight Show Friday night at 7:00 PM. Saturday will kick off amateur competition in Calico's 6th annual fiddle, banjo, guitar and band contest at 10:00 AM. Old-fashioned

- contests will take place throughout the day, including singing for apple pies, wheelbarrow racing, greased pole climbing, and tobacco chewing. Evening activities will begin with the American Musical Concert, featuring an array of ragtime, barbershop, country and bluegrass music. "Spooky" movies at the Medicine Wagon and a country western dance will round out the evening's activities. Sunday morning will host professional competitions in Calico's fiddle and banjo contest, where over \$600 in cash will be given to winning entries. The contest begins at 10:00 AM and is followed by another full day of events, music, and colorful Calico characters. Campground space is available at \$2.50 and \$4 per night; parking is \$1 per car, and dayf long contests are mostly free to enter. Information is available by calling Calico Ghost Town, 714/254-2122, or San Bernardino County Regional Parks at 714/383-1912.
- June 3 & 4 (Saturday & Sunday) JACK
 RAMSEY'S BLUEGRASS MUSIC FESTIVAL,
 Chuck's Hidden Lake, Porterville.
 Camping, food on site, no hookups.
 (Campground with hookups nearby,
 motels and food stores nearby.)
 Featuring: LOST HIGHWAY, HIGH IN THE
 SADDLE, MUSIC FARMERS, PACIFIC..LY
 BLUEGRASS, SAGEGRASS, THE RAMSEY
 FAMILY, THE GLORY LAND STRING BAND,
 DAMASCUS ROAD and GOLD RUSH. For
 further information, contact Jack
 Ramsey, 16425 Ave. 352, Visalia, CA
 93277, phone 209/798-1256.
- June 16, 17 & 18 (Friday Sunday) CBA'S 3RD ANNUAL GRASS VALLEY BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL, Nevada County Fairgrounds, Grass Valley. See this issue and the next for further information and details.
- June 19-24 NATIONAL OLD TIME FIDDLERS CONTEST, Weiser, Idaho.
- July 7, 8 & 9 (Friday Sunday) 3RD
 ANNUAL SALT FLATS HOEDOWN CONTESTS.
 Salinas. In conjunction with the
 rodeo and sponsored by the California
 Rodeo Association. Information
 forthcoming



1390 E. TABOR ST.

\$3.00 adults \$1.50 under 12 take hwy. 80, exit Travis blvd. E. left on N. Texas, right on E. Tabor for 2 mi. 1st bldg. on left past R.R. tracks.

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This concert has been organized by the musicians involved, and this page is a paid advertisement.

ATTENTION! GRASS VALLEY '78

Yes, folks, Grass Valley will be here before we realize-- and the sounds and sights, laughter and cheer from last year are still on the tip of memory's tongue. The CBA is very proud to present its 3RD ANNUAL GRASS VALLEY BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL, June 16, 17, 18, at the Nevada County Fairgrounds in Grass Valley. Thanks to the initiative and diligence of our Festival Coordinator (and Treasurer) Ron Masters, preparations for the festival are proceeding relatively smoothly to ensure another, even greater success. Ron has prepared an elaborate festival guideline, setting up committees and coordinators to handle the many and varied duties, in order to establish a basic design for the event. Those committees are headed by the following persons and any members wishing to serve in any of these capacities are urged to contact the respective chairman: Ground Crew (Carol Masters), Security (Ed Pagter), Sound and Entertainment (Bob Brittain), Concessions (Carmon Brittain), Publicity (Lars Bourne), Membership and Information (Burney Garelick), Stage Facilities (Steve Hogle), and Medical/First Aid (Brady Pryor).

Tickets are available in advance. To procure them, write to Ron Masters, 1245 Crompton Rd., Redwood City, CA 94061. Ticket price structure is as follows:

Individual days:

Friday, June 16 - \$5/adult, \$3/child Saturday, June 17 - \$6/adult, \$3/child Sunday, June 18 - \$5/adult, \$3/child

3-Day Advance Only:

(under 13)

Nonmember adult - \$14, child - \$7 Member adult - \$10, child - \$5

Dogs are discouraged; if you must bring them, charge will be \$4/day, and they must be leashed or confined at all times.

There will be no special rates, either in advance or for members for tickets purchased for individual days. Price of 3-day tickets purchased at the gate will be \$16/adult, \$9/child for everyone. Member discount on advance 3-day tickets is available to members themselves; members ought not to purchase tickets for friends at the discount price--rather, encourage those friends to join the CBA!

For further information, the official CBA Grass Valley phone number is 415/366-3754 (at the Masters' residence).

The following bands/performers have been selected and confirmed (alphabetically):

THE BEAR CREEK BOYS BILL WHITE & FRIENDS THE CAFFREY FAMILY COLBY MOUNTAIN COUNTRY BUTTER COUNTRY HAM DONE GONE

FOGGY

MOUNTAIN CLOGGERS

HIGH IN THE SADDLE

GLORY LAND STRING BAND

JAY QUESENBERRY & FRIENDS KATE WOLF & WILDWOOD FLOWER LOST HIGHWAY (San Bernardino) OVERLOOK MOUNTAIN BOYS PACIFIC..LY BLUEGRASS (San Diego) PAUL SHELASKY & FRIENDS

RIVER CITY RAMBLERS SOUTH LOOMIS OUICKSTEP A TOUCH OF GRASS

All bands/performers who have not been hired for the Grass Valley Festival but wish to be there in a performing capacity may elect to play on the new, open, unamplified stage-in exchange for free admission. There is room in the schedule for only 15 bands/ performers on this stage, so if you are interested, please contact Bob Brittain no later than May 25.(707/485-0258)

There will be no extra charge for camping; hookups are available on a first-come first-served basis. A list of local motel/ hotel accommodations follows:

(* RESERVATIONS required/recommended)

AIRWAY MOTEL Nevada City, 265-2233 *\$10/single - \$20/double no pets

BRET HARTE INN Grass Valley, 273-9648 \$12/single - \$14/double

COACH & FOUR MOTEL Grass Valley, 273-8009

FEIL'S MOTEL Nevada City, 265-2245 * \$12 - \$20 kitchenette facilities

GOLD COUNTRY INN Grass Valley, 273-1393 * \$15/single - \$20 double

GOLDEN CHAIN RESORT Grass Valley, 273-7279 * \$18/single - \$20/double

HOLIDAY LODGE MOTEL Grass Valley, 273-4406 \$18 - \$24/ double

RANCHO MOTEL Nevada City, 265-2253 * \$13 - \$18/double

SHADY REST MOTEL Grass Valley, 273-4232 \$14/double

SIERRA MOTEL Grass Valley, 273-8133 * \$14 - \$19/double and up kitchenette SWEETLAND GLEN MOTEL North San Juan

WELCOME MOTEL & TRAIL-ER COURT Grass Valley, 273-4511 \$35/week - overnight: \$4/hook-

MITCHELL'S MOTEL Grass Valley, 273-8433 * \$16/single - \$19/double

ups

NATIONAL HOTEL Nevada City, 265-4551 *\$18/single - \$30/double

NORTHERN QUEEN MOTEL Nevada City, 265-5824 \$14/single - \$22/double

BLUEGRASS BILLBOARD

ALLEN BROTHERS

every Friday & Saturday - Pizza Machine, Danville. For further information, contact Peter Allen, 415/935-4458.

THE BEAR CREEK BOYS

March 11 - CBA Saturday Concert-Jamboree Campbell High School, Campbell. For further information, contact Joe Kimbro, 408/427-3531.

BUFFALO BOB AND THE COUNTRY BUTTER BAND

March 4 - Record Autograph Party for
newly released "Country Butter"
album, at The Sound Company, Orchard
Plaza, Ukiah. 9:00-11:00 PM.

March 5 - Live KSRO Santa Rosa, 7:30 PM.

March 18 - Rodeo Dance, Ukiah Fairgrounds
Ukiah. 9:00-1:30.

- Harwood Hall Dance, Laytonville. 9:00-2:00. Harwood Park Benefit.

For further information, contact Carmon
Brittain. 707/485-0258.

THE CAFFREY FAMILY

April 8 - Lake County Country Music Festival. See Special Events. For further information, contact Patty Caffrey, 415/564-1464.

CHRISPY CRITTER CLAN

every Thursday - Old Mexico, Clearlake Highlands For further information, contact Dennis Chrisp, 707/994-2901.

COLBY MOUNTAIN

every Tuesday - Nellie's Restaurant, 126 W. 2nd St., Chico. every Thursday - Canal Street, Chico. most every Saturday - Old Navy Inn, Chico. March 11 - CBA Saturday Concert-Jamboree, Campbell High School, Campbell. For further information, contact Larry Mitchell, 916/345-0310.

COUNTRY HAM (JUDIE COX & CARL PAGTER)
No set gigs; for bookings, contact Carl
Pagter, 415/938-4221.

DELTA OLD TIME FIDDLERS & BLUEGRASS ASSN. every 2nd & 4th Saturday - Garden Acres Community Center, 607 Bird Ave., Stockton, 8:00 PM - ?.

DONE GONE

every Thursday - Paul's Saloon, 3251 Scott St., San Francisco. every Friday - Red Vest Pizza Parlour, San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito. For further information, contact Tom

Bekeny, 415/665-6806.

FRESH PICKED

No set gigs; for bookings, contact Joyce Hennessey, 415/526-5027, or George Martin, 415/237-4365.

THE GLORY LAND STRING BAND
No set gigs; for bookings, call them at 916/253-2640.

GOOD OL' PERSONS

every Thursday - Red Vest Pizza Parlour,
San Pablo Ave, El Cerrito, 8-11.
every Friday - Piace Pizza, Appian-80
Shopping Center, Pinole, 7-10.
every Sunday - Paul's Saloon, 3251 Scott
St., San Francisco.
April 15 - Freight & Salvage, Berkeley.
April 28-30 - Blitz Festival, Eugene, OR
For further information contact Paul
Shelasky, 415/892-1265.

HIGH COUNTRY

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

HIGH IN THE SADDLE

every Friday & Saturday (irregularly) & Sunday - Woodfords Station, Woodfords. For further information, contact Dana Mohr, 916/694-2352.

HOT POTATO (A BOOGIE BAND)
April 20 - Freight & Salvage, Berkeley.
For further information, contact Kathy
Kallick, 415/397-0619.

LAKE COUNTY PICKERS ASSOCIATION every 2nd Sunday - Lower Lake Grange. Featuring the Chrispy Critter Clan.

LATE NITE RADIO

April 8 - Lake County Country Music Festival. See Special Events. For further information, contact David Garelick, 707/279-8149.

OLD TIME FIDDLERS JAMBOREE

District 5 - California State Old Time Fiddlers Association every 2nd Sunday - 1:00-5:00, Oakmont High School, Roseville.

OLD TIME FIDDLERS JAMBOREE

District 9 - California State Old Time Fiddlers Association every 3rd Sunday - 1:00-5:00, Crockett Park and Recreation Auditorium, 850 Pomona St., Crockett.

OLD TIME FIDDLERS JAMBOREE

District 6 - California State Old Time Fiddlers Association every 1st Sunday - Old Shasta Elementary School, near Redding. For further information, contact Adrienne Jacoby, 1463 Ridge Dr., Redding, CA 96001.

OLD TIME FIDDLERS JAMBOREE

Santa Clara Valley Old Time Fiddlers
Association
every 1st Sunday - 1:00-5:00
John Muir Junior High School, Branham
Lane at Almaden Expressway, San Jose.

OVERLOOK MOUNTAIN BOYS

No set gigs; for bookings, contact Jack Sadler, 408/354-9359.

JAY QUESENBERRY

No set gigs; for bookings, contact Jay Quesenberry, 408/227-2819.

RIVER CITY RAMBLERS

No set gigs; for bookings, contact Cathy Del Chiaro, 916/457-0640 or 916/457-5755.

SOUTH LOOMIS QUICKSTEP

every Sunday - The Shire Road Pub
(relocated and back in business!)
Auburn Blvd. & Garfield, Sacramento.
every Tuesday & Wednesday - Bitter
Creek Tavern, Arden & Howe, Sacramento.
For further information, contact Ted
Smith, 916/489-2316.

TOUCH OF GRASS

No set gigs; for bookings, contact Bob Lawrence, 415/592-1863.

BILL WHITE

No set gigs; for bookings and latest information, contact Bill White, 415/530-7192.

THE VERN WILLIAMS BAND

No set gigs; for bookings, contact Vern Williams, 209/772-1357.

WILLITS PICKING JAMBOREE

one Sunday, every month - Willits Grange Hall. For information, contact Susan, 707/459-4325.

EASY MONEY

No set gigs; for bookings contact Lachlan, 415/325-1685 or 415/326-6200, x3815.

FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN

No set gigs; for bookings contact Susan Charnett, 916/265-6324 or 916/265-4258.

MINDIGO STRING BAND

every 2nd Friday - Alice's Restaurant, Skyline & Highway 94, Skylonda. For further information, contact Jerry Hagelstein, 415/747-0697.

NEW TONTO BASIN BOYS

No set gigs; for bookings, contact Joe Zumwalt, 415/967-4306.

OAKUM

March 11 - CBA Saturday Concert-Jamboree Campbell High School, Campbell. For further information, contact the band at 415/548-3111.

OLD FRIENDS

March 8 - Freight & Salvage, Berkeley. every Tuesday - Paul's Saloon, 3251 Scott Street, San Francisco. For further information, contact Gene Tortora, 415/981-4396 As I begin what I feel is a longdelayed "open letter" in the BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN, I am reminded of an article by Jay Quesenberry which appeared in our very first newsletter. It was entitled "What the Hell is Bluegrass?" Having survived the birth pains of the CBA, and now beginning my third year as a director, I find that Jay's original question leads me to another --What the Hell is the Bluegrass Association? This question has been asked by a lot of people--members, nonmembers, some musicians, and some not. The words have not, perhaps, been so direct; in fact, the question is artfully disguised in some very oblique forms. But disagreements, misunderstandings, errors in planning and lack of communication all seem to me to be adding up to a predictable sort of "organizational identity crisis."

We have been through the first years, struggling financially, and by virtue of incredible hard work, the generosity of many, and not a little good luck, have scored some major successes in the promotion of bluegrass music. We are established. We have arrived. But I feel it is time to re-evaluate our purpose, how we have carried it out, and how we plan to change or grow.

Let's start from a restrictive sort of viewpoint and move outward. tunately, the CBA Board, which was increased from 7 to 9 members during the first year, has seen lots of turnover. I think it would be difficult to view the Board as a dynasty; only 2 of the original members remain. Every individual who has ever been a Board member contributed unselfishly of time, effort and, in many cases, money. We have rarely been in total agreement -- our differences have run the gamut from mild and transitory to ones precipitating resignation. The Board has been helped by more people than we could ever count--both members and nonmembers, musicians who played benefits, phone-callers, postertackers, artists, and assorted gadflies. There is one thing that the Board has <u>never</u> been, however—and that is a group of professional organizers, of compulsive committee people. We're in it for the music because we enjoy it and want to share it as widely as possible.

We have been very event-oriented which truthfully is about the only way we could have started out. So far, the membership, which has grown from 10 to over 800, has enthusiastically accepted this approach. But we are moving out of our infancy-out of the stage where we can chalk off a lot of those honest mistakes to ignorance and growing pains. We have highlighted a large number of musicians and bands--from "living room pickers" to full-time working groups. By and large, we have given them good publicity and consistently improving pay. However, the CBA's relationship with musicians seems to be an ill-defined and troublesome That's because there's a area. built-in paradox between the structure and rules that an organization such as ours requires--however minimal -- and the subjective, more mellow, <u>less</u> structured world of performing and enjoying music of any sort.

Lately, the purposes of the CBA, and the ways in which the Board carries them out, have come under question-as much for clarification as actual challenge. The Board members would be the first to recognize mistakes-for we are the first to feel the repercussions when an error in judgement has been made. More serious, I feel, have been "sins of omission" -failure to consult a wider range of our membership when this might have been advisable; failure to publicize Board meetings on a consistent basis; failure to inform members fully of their access to CBA decision-making through the election process. Certainly none have been deliberate actions; however, mere good intentions do not produce results.

The purpose of the California Blue grass Association, as set forth at its founding, is to promote and preserve bluegrass, gospel, old-time and other traditional American music forms. The vehicles to carry this purpose forward are to be educational and entertainment efforts: to bring information and opportunities to enjoy performance of the music to as many people as possible. The CBA was visualized as an association of those who loved the music, or a way in which new fans could "discover" the music, the history, and the joy of performance. If those lovers of the music also happen to be pickers, it adds a new dimension to our membership. of our unstated goals has always been to boost our California musicians in whatever ways we can--through publicity; by generating interest and hence, more jobs; by turning outside queries into jobs through our band registry; and by maximizing the musicians' pay. Obviously, input from working musicians is valuable to the CBA, though we were not founded as a musicians' association. It is the musicians' ability to produce the sounds we love which links us to them. We have the greatest respect for those bands who struggled to establish bluegrass in the West. And feel a parallel commitment, in line with our stated purpose, to encourage new bands and young pickers.

Throughout I have referred to "we," and "the CBA." The Bluegrass Association is you, the members, and not the Board of Directors, or any indi-I'm expressing my own vidual. feelings, opinions, and hopes--largely in anticipation that I can encourage others to do the same. If there are expressions of support or dissent to be made, they must be presented openly to the membership. We have an obligation to provide more of a forum for such expressions than we have in the past. I believe some of our problems stem from behind-the-scenes "politicking" and bad feelings. More important to the life of the CBA are contributions of effort to induce

change and constructive criticism. Those who propose change should be prepared to work as diligently as those who have preceded them--and we welcome their concern. we must be on the right track in at least some respects, or we would not be eliciting the mounting concern and comments we are receiving. There are small, specific things to be done--and larger, more abstract goals to strive for. We must publicize each Board meeting so that interested parties will know their their opinions can be heard, and that the workings of the CBA are completely open. We must publicize fully the procedure for running for the Board. We must continue to seek contributions to the BREAKDOWN so that it does not consistently represent the work of a few. On a wider scale, we must remember that while we are called the "California Bluegrass Association," our constitution and by-laws charge us to address a wider range of music than bluegrass alone. And that within bluegrass, there are divergencies from what is considered strictly "traditional." We should put more effort into projects which will preserve bluegrass, gospel, and oldtime music in tapes, recordings, publications and eventually an established home for the Association. We must actively reach out for new members, take from them what they wish to offer to the CBA, and give them, in return, full measure for their contribution -- more (and more varied) events, workshops, classes, information, opportunities to hear and meet nationally-known musicians, and to broaden their own horizons in the appreciation of traditional American music.

This is the type of endeavor that I am committed to as a CBA member and as a director. I feel that I am not alone, though others might express themselves differently. I will continue to put energy into the CBA because—despite frustration and fatigue—I believe in the Association

and get a great deal of pleasure from the effort. But nothing matches the joy I feel at Grass Valley as the sun sets and I hear a high tenor, a hot fiddle, some tight harmony on a good gospel number, or a really sparkling banjo break. Even my own, none too skillful, attempts to join in cannot dim my enthusiasm. I love bluegrass music.

Clubs

BLACKSTONE HOUSE, 251 N. Blackstone, Fresno. A variety of activities—folk, blues, bluegrass, jazz, astrology and tarot. A friendly place to go when you're in the Valley. For information and/or bookings, contact Sue Lyon, 209/264-1628.

FREIGHT & SALVAGE, 1827 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. Bluegrass, old-timey, jazz, etc. Tuesday through Saturday. For the current monthly schedule phone 415/548-1761.

PAUL'S SALOON, 3251 Scott St., San Francisco. Bluegrass (and old-timey) any night of the week.

THE PLOWSHARES, Fort Mason, Laguna & Marina, San Francisco. Sunday evening concerts. Sponsored by the San Francisco Folk Music Club. For information, call them at 415/661-2217.

RED VEST PIZZA PARLOUR, San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito. A continuous supporter of bluegrass in the Bay Area.

BLUEGRASS:

an insurance risk?

(Larry Mitchell of Chico, a member of Colby Mountain and a CBA member, writes about a problem encountered by the Old Navy Inn, a club in Chico where the band works.)

We have played at the Old Navy Inn off and on for the last two years. Some time last November or December a representative of the insurance company which handled insurance for the Old Navy Inn's owner, Frank Perry, paid a visit to the bar. Perry was out, but his son Marty was tending bar. When the insurance representative asked what kind of entertainment the place had, Marty, for some reason, referred to us as country-western. The insurance company later told Frank Perry that they would have to cancel his insurance if we continued to play there because they didn't insure clubs that had country-western music. Frank told him it wasn't countrywestern, but bluegrass. But the insurance company said bluegrass and country-western were the same thing and they wouldn't insure the bar if that type of music was being played. They apparently believe that country-western music draws a rougher crowd than other music, and consequently there's more chance of fights and lawsuits. Frank told them he'd never had any problems when we played there, but his arguments were to no avail. Frank was pretty mad. He said it was unfair and unconstitutional. Finally, he ended up cancelling that company as his carrier and found a new company. The new insurance is quite a bit more expensive, however. There were a couple of weekends in December when we couldn't play at the Old Navy Inn. But as of January 7, we started playing there again.

I don't know if this has been a problem with other bands. A few months ago a bar owner told me he was scared to death of the term "country music" because of the insurance problem. I thought I'd tell you about it at any rate.

.... around the cracker barrel

....What more can be said for Fairfield! Except rain brought sunshine inside the Community Center as a huge crowd came out on Sunday, February 12 to enjoy the good pickin' of SCUTH LOOMIS QUICKSTEP, THE OVERLOOK MOUNTAIN BOYS, and THE FOGGY MOUNTAIN CLOGGERS. Other bands included LATE NITE RADIO, MINDIGO STRING BAND, FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN, THE CAFFREY FAMILY. COUNTRY HAM, DONE GONE, and BILL WHITE AND FRIENDS. A very successful event....Incidentally, two brand new albums are now available for your great pleasure: COUNTRY HAM (Vetco 512) with Judie Cox, Carl Pagter, Paul Reed (Berkstresser), Jerry Tuckett, and Jim Sayles. This is their second record and it's even more delightful. By the way, Paul and Jerry plan to round out the band at Grass Valley this June. The other new release and their very first (and long overdue) is COUNTRY BUTTER (Denim Records) featuring Buffalo Bob, Eric and Carmon Brittain and friends. The strikingly handsome album cover was designed by LARS BOURNE....COLBY MOUNTAIN, one of the featured bands at Campbell, March 11, has added a new fiddler, SKIP PARENTE, originally from New Jersey. Looking forward to hearing this fine band....HIGH COUNTRY, venerable Bay Area band, has been honored with an invitation to play BILL MONROE's Bluegrass Festival in Beanblossom, Indiana, this June. Congratulations are in order.... A new band, OLD FRIENDS, has formed featuring the super talents of LAURIE LEWIS on fiddle, KATHY KALLICK on guitar, KEITH LITTLE on banjo, GENE TORTORA on dobro, and NANCY JOSEPHSON (formerly with BUFFALO GALS) on bass. Old Friends plays at Paul's Saloon Tuesdays.... Another new band is HOT POTATO, described as a good-time boogie band. Members include KATHY KALLICK on guitar and mandolin, GENE TORTORA on dobro, RAY BIERL on guitar, MARKIE SHUBB on bass, and TONY MARCUS on fiddle and mandolin. Hot Potato has no regular jobs but will appear April 20 at the Freight and Salvage in Berkeley.... GOOD OL' PERSONS currently includes KATHY KALLICK, PAUL SHELASKY, SALLY VAN METER, JOHN REICHMAN, and MARKIE SHUBB. Occasionally DAVE BURCH (formerly of GOOD 'N' COUNTRY) plays guitar and sings lead in Kathy's absence. Understand Dave is thinking of returning to Oregon; if he does, his super singing will certainly be missed....THE

CAFFREY FAMILY is filling up their summer with delicious festival bookings. Just before Grass Valley, they'll play one in Ohio, and right after, if circumstances work out, they'll be featured at LESTER FLATT's Bluegrass Festival in North Carolina. In case you haven't heard them lately, the Caffrey's become more and more engaging, if that is possible....CHRISPY CRITTERS are organizing the Lake County Pickers for monthly jamborees at the Lower Lake Grange Hall. Everyone is always invited....And speaking of Lake County, don't miss LATE NITE RADIO, an exciting Western Swing-type band, at the Lake County Country Music Festival April 8. The Caffreys will also be there.... That fiddler from Fresno, BOB SADDLER, who recently became the Illinois Champion, more recently transferred to Key West, Florida. He works for the National Park Service in law enforcement and resources management at the Everglades. The position which includes a lot of sailing offers a fisherman's paradise! Not to mention fiddling. Perhaps Bob will become the Florida champion as well!....Heard a rumor ROSEBUD'S in Benicia is reopening. Would like confirmation....Have been informed MEL SMOTHERS' radio show is off KERS.... Those who attended the RALPH STANLEY concert at the Music Hall last October may have heard one of the last concerts with KEITH WHITLEY as a band member. Keith is now with J.D. CROWE and THE NEW SOUTH. Ralph's new man is CHARLIE SIZEMORE....California will acquire a super picker when RICKY SKAGGS moves to the Los Angeles area to join EMMY LOU HARRIS' band as full-time fiddler, mandolinist and singer Perhaps he might be enticed to come our way once in a while, being so close. Ricky is one fine musician....COURTNEY MURPHREE joined the CBA at Fairfield February 12 but neglected to give us her address. If any one knows her, please let us know.... Perennial favorites RAY PARK and VERN WILLIAMS were each sent contracts for Grass Valley, but both were unable to do the festival...Too bad because Grass Valley is shaping up into being a really fantastic festival. All members should take advantage of the discount on 3-day tickets purchased in advance as soon as possible. See Page 7 for details and write for tickets now.... Meanwhile, don't forget our Saturday event March 11 in Campbell

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Advance	_	_	13.00	17.00	- 1			000	11.00	5.00
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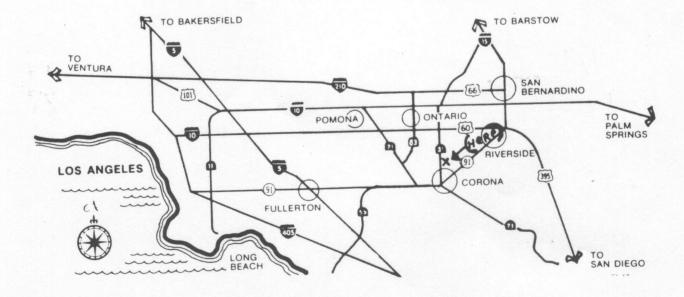
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THURSDAY 1:45 PM - 4:45 4:45 - 5:45 5:45 - 8:45	Featured Performers Break Featured Performers	FRIDAY 1:00 PM - 4:00 4:00 - 5:30 5:30 - 8:30	Featured Performers Break Featured Performers	SATURDAY 10:30 AM - 2:15 2:15 - 3:45 3:45 - 4:45 4.45 - 5.15	Featured Performers Contest Break Featured Performers	9:30 AM - 11:30 11:30 - 12:00 12:00 - 5:15	Gospel Music Workshops Featured Performers
				5:15 - 5:45	Guests		
				5:45 - 9:45	Featured Performers		



between sets

RALPH STANLEY

by RAY EDLUND

The following interview of Ralph Stanley was made by Ray Edlund, host of "Pig In A Pen" (KPFA 94.1 FM), the popular bluegrass show broadcast every other Friday afternoon from Berkeley. The occasion was Ralph's performance, with the Clinch Mountain Boys, at the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco, October 27, 1977. Because of Ralph's hectic schedule, Ray was able to talk with him only between sets. That concert, incidentally, was taped by KPFA and broadcast January 21, 1978. If you missed it, perhaps another broadcast will be scheduled at some time.

RAY: Well, Ralph -- Welcome back to the Bay Area. It's been quite awhile.

RALPH: Good to be here, Ray. It's been too long, I think.

RAY: Sure has—-We sure have missed you. It's been about four years.

RALPH: Well, I-I've missed it too. I'd like to come back a little more oftener than that.

RAY: Ralph, we don't get Tom Henderson's bluegrass shows out here in the West, so I'm going to ask you some pretty standard questions I'm sure you've answered before. But some of the folks out here on the West Coast haven't had the benefit of hearing you answer some of these questions yourself. I'd kind of like to start way back in the early days: You and your brother Carter started playing music at a pretty early age, is that correct?

RALPH: That's right, yeah, around...well, we started learning when I was about probably 10 and Carter was 11 or 12, or something.

RAY: Did your mother have an influence on you?

RALPH: Yes, she did. My mother was an old-time, clawhammer banjo player and she tuned the banjo for me the

first time and taught me to play a tune called "Shout Little Lucy" that I still play a lot.

RAY: That's right. It's on a couple of your records.

RALPH: Right, uh-huh.

RAY: Did you start out on banjo first, or--

RALPH: Yes, yes I did.

RAY: When you and Carter first started playing professionally—I believe that was about 1946—uh, you played the banjo with just one finger and your thumb, is that right?

RALPH: Right, uh-huh.

RAY: Now when did you start to pick up on the three-finger style?

RALPH: Well, very immediately after--I'd say maybe six or eight months I began to, uh, try to learn with the other finger and picked it up from there.

RAY: Did you have any help from any of the early banjo players?

RALPH: No, now I listened to—I heard some banjo players like Hoke Jenkins and of course I heard Earl Scruggs and people like that...uh, I didn't try to pattern after them, I just wanted to use the three-finger style in my style.

RAY: You and your brother Carter played together, I guess for about 20 years professionally.

RALPH: Twenty years, that's right.

RAY: Do you have any particular highlights you would like to talk about—one thing that's stuck in your memory about those years?

RALPH: Well, actually not too many—I know that Carter and me, we really worked hard in this business and we had a hard time, we had some good days and some bad. We played our—usually played daily radio programs and we would play 5 and 6 nights and some—times 7 nights a week. We would drive in and out. Get in at midnight on up until maybe 2, 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning and then we'd play a daily radio program on that day around 12 o'clock. So we kept a busy schedule.

RAY: It sure sounds like it. I guess when Carter died in 1966, were you pretty much determined to carry on the music?

RALPH: Well, I really didn't know what to do. I wanted to carry it on, but, uh--Carter was always sort of the leader and I think Carter was one of the big ones in this business. He wrote some of the prettiest, finest bluegrass songs I think that's ever been written in the history of bluegrass. And him a-being the front man and doin' most of the work, well I really didn't know what to do. But I decided that I did want to go on and all of our fans that we had let me know very quick that they wanted me to go on, so that encouraged me and I said, "Well, I'll go on or bust."

RAY: Well, we're sure glad you did. Ever since Carter's death, you've had three excellent lead singers in Larry Sparks and the late Roy Lee Centers and now Keith Whitley. Did you have to work with these guys a lot in order for them to get the sound you want, or are you just lucky?

RALPH: Well, actually, yeah—I'll tell you what. Now Larry Sparks was my first singer and the first night that I hired Larry and went on the stage he did so sorry that I wanted to just throw down my banjo and quit and never go on the stage again. But I drilled Larry in the car and

showed him how to phrase. Now if we'd sung a song that he had heard Carter do he could sing it. But when it come to a new song he had to learn to phrase it and I showed him how to phrase it, and Roy Lee Centers was a little bit more advanced than Larry was but still...I'll tell you what makes, what makes it still be the Stanley sound. I've always done it, I've done it with Brother Carter and I've done it ever since—I lead the lead with my tenor so they have to follow me or get off, one. And that way it stays the same style.

RAY: That's right--you're about the only tenor singer who does that.

RALPH: Well, Bill Monroe does a little of it, and I--I lead all my lead singers with my tenor. I did Carter.

RAY: Uh-huh. They follow you.

RALPH: Yeah, they follow me.

RAY: Do many aspiring bluegrass musicians come to you for auditions?

RALPH: Oh, yeah--very much.

RAY: What kind of advice would you give these people when they come to you?

RALPH: You mean to try to maybe get a job with me?

RAY: Right. Or just continue on to play bluegrass music professionally.

RALPH: Well, my advice to any young musician or bluegrass musician is to do his best to get something different, not try to sound like the other man. If, uh—in other words—I'll use "Man of Constant Sorrow" as a song that's stuck with me all through my career. I feel like that if most people wants to hear that wants to hear me sing it. And I would advise other, you know, younger musicians to get new songs and sing it different. If they sing "Man of Constant Sorrow", sing it

different to what I do. If they want "Blue Moon of Kentucky", usually they want Bill Monroe. You know what I'm talkin about.

RAY: I sure do. I guess now that bluegrass music is pretty much a part of America, you are spending a whole lot of time on the road, Ralph. Do you enjoy performing now as much as you did in the old days?

RALPH: Well, I-I don't know. I enjoy playing for the people. I like to make people happy. But, you know it's a job and a man has to make a living someway and if the time should ever come that I couldn't make a living, well I wouldn't like it that well. But still--I guess it's born and bred in you and I think it's intended maybe for-people has their occupations that I think it's intended for 'em to do, and I've tried at other things or two during my life, just on the sideline, and I've decided to play and sing as my big'n.

RAY: Well, I think you've picked the right field. You certainly are one of the greatest musicians still performing today.

RALPH: I appreciate that.

RAY: What are some of your favorite festivals, Ralph?

RALPH: Well, of course my favorite festival is mine at the old home place.

RAY: That's in McClure, isn't it?

RALPH: It's between McClure and Coeburn,
Virginia. That's where the Stanley
Brothers was born and raised and I
still own the old home place there.
And this next year will be our 8th
Annual Memorial Bluegrass Festival
there.

RAY: One last question before you get back to your music. When you do come home from your concert and festival tours in the summer and you're on the road a lot, what do you do to relax around your farm?

RALPH: Well, one thing—I'm a coon hunter.

Of course I know a man needs to
spend a little bit of time with his
family which I try to do and then
I try to catch a coon hunt or two.
And I have some horses; I like to
ride horses. I do that some, and
just first one thing and then
another. I can't be still when I
get home, I can't sit down. I need
to do something.

RAY: You have some children, don't you Ralph?

RALPH: Yes, I do. I have two girls.

RAY: What are their names?

RALPH: Lisa and Tanya. One of 'em is 7 years and the other's 5.

RAY: Do you think they're gonna be takin' up the banjo?

RALPH: Well, they're real fine singers now.
They do singin' and uh—they're
wantin' instruments. They're wantin
a banjo and a guitar. And they'll
get up on, uh, we have some fire—
places in our house and they like to
get'em maybe a broomstick or some—
thing and get up on the front of the
fireplace on the hearth and hold the
broomstick and sing for their mother
and me. And that reminds me a lot
of Carter and me. We used to get
kindlin' wood. You know, sticks
that we built fires with and used
for instruments years ago.

RAY: That's how a lot of people got started.

RALPH: That's true.

RAY: Ralph, it certainly has been a pleasure and don't let it be so long before your next trip out here.

RALPH: It's been good to talk to you, Ray, and hope we can come back before too long.

RAY: Thank you very much.

RALPH: Thank you.

GRASS ROOTS, part 2

EARLY BAY AREA BLUEGRASS

BUTCH WALLER

One of the earliest bluegrass musicians in the Bay Area, Butch Waller started out in the seventh grade playing Everly Brothers songs with Herb Pedersen. Then, when the folk boom came along, "We started doing that. . . I was playing folk music (guitar), living in Berkeley, and I heard Scott Hambly and a bunch of people playing and pretty much flipped out over it. So I went and saw Flatt and Scruggs and really flipped out." This was around 1962, about the same time he met Rick Shubb. The span between first hearing Flatt and Scruggs and Bill Monroe was short. Waller heard that Scott Hambly was"'better than Monroe' so that's where I first hear the name. . . I got a Monroe record and listened to it. . .Didn't like his singing. Later on, of course, I grew up. . . I love it now." That initial reaction to Monroe's singing is not uncommon.

The first live bluegrass band Waller heard was the Redwood Canyon Ramblers. He and Herb Pedersen were in a band called the Westport Singers, where he played mandolin and guitar, and later, with David Nelson formed the Pine Valley Boys. In 1968 Waller formed High Country with Miles Sonka. Some of the people who played with High Country in its early years were: Rich Wilbur, Rick and Markie Shubb, David Nelson, Peter Grant, Bruce Nemerov, Ed Neff, Chuck Wiley, Sue Erricsson, and others. High Country has had much influence on the musicians in the area. It has remained over the years traditionally oriented, and it seems that the San Francisco area has had a high percentage of traditional bluegrass bands.

I feel fortunate that, as part of my bluegrass "education," Butch Waller was one of the first mandolin players I heard performing live. He plays in a strong, bluesy, syncopated style, with full, solid tone. High Country can be heard at Paul's Saloon on Wednesday and Friday nights and at the Red Vest Pizza Parlour on Saturday nights.

DAVID NELSON

Raised in San Carlos, David Nelson first learned to play music with Peter Albin around 1960-61 from Peter's brother, Rodney. He was told what he was really interested in was 'bluegrass.' "So the search began. . .The New Lost City Ramblers were sort of bluegrass. They were available; you couldn't find the real hard core country records anywhere, unless you went to Berkeley."

They used to hangout in Palo Alto. "We'd got down to Kepler's Bookstore and we'd see guys like (Jerry) Garcia and Joan Baez . . . sit there and play, and we used to peek through the books and watch them. . . learn how to play their licks." The Boar's wead in San Carlos was another place where there were picking sessions, of many kinds of music: "Blues, country, folk songs, Kingston Trio, everything. . ." Garcia was asked to play there and he brought more people in, including Robert Hunter, and bands started forming.

Nelson then went to art school in Oakland, got involved in the Berkeley folk music scene, and learned more about playing guitar. "I learned that I didn't want a gut-stringed guitar, I wanted a steel string. . . " He also heard 'real bluegrass' for the first time: records by people like Bill Monroe, The Country Gentlemen, and Reno and Smiley. "I just kept digging for stuff, whatever I could get. . . the Bill Monroe records sounded too--'electric' or something. It was so professional. . .if you get a record of Bill Monroe, that will be the music for that time. . .that's the state of the art. So, it goes past you in a way. I dug it, but it was sort of. . . untouchable to me."

The next summer Garcia was learning to play banjo and asked Nelson to play guitar with him. They played small clubs and pizza parlors as the Hart Valley Drifters, which later became the Wildwood Boys with Bob Hunter playing mandolin or bass and sometimes Norm van Masters on dobro. Garcia also would take Nelson to Brooks Otis' house and turn him on to old tapes of people like the Stanley Brothers. The

Wildwood Boys won the talent content at the Monterey Folk Festival in 1962, which was where Nelson says he heard bluegrass live for the first time. The bluegrass music there included Bill Monroe, Doc Watson, The Country Boys, minus Roland White, who was in the Army (they later became The Kentucky Colonels), and the Dillards. He also recals seeing Butch Waller and Herb Pedersen there.

The Wildwood Boys continued to evolve. Hunter decided he wasn't into bluegrass and left the band. Garcia, who was working in a music store at the time, bought a new F-12 mandolin and asked Nelson to play it, while Sandy Rothman played guitar. Then Rothman left and went to Ohio, Nelson recalls, "and we got Eric Thompson to play guitar and then we became the Black Mt. Boys." They went on a folk music tour called the Bay City Ministrels. They would pick up a bass player or play with three pieces. "There were no fiddlers in those days; no body played the fiddle, and that's the basic instrument in Bill Monroe's band, I think." Around the time of the Black Mt. Boys, a jug band formed, called Mother McCrea's Uptown Jug Champions, with Pigpen, one of the people from the Boar's Head, who played harp and sang like Lighten' Hopkins. The band got to be full of people who are in in The Grateful Dead and The New Riders. The jug band evolved into a rock 'n' roll band, The Warlocks, which later became The Grateful Dead.

Around 1964, Nelson went to Los Angeles and while there met Butch Waller and Herb Pedersen. Previously he had seen them at the Westport Singers at the Coffee and Confusion in San Francisco, where they were billed as bluegrass, but seemed to have strong folk influences. He played guitar with them in LA, and when they all eventually ended up back in the Bay Area, they formed the Pine Valley Boys. They played at placed like the Bear'sLair in Berkeley, a workshop at a San Francisco State Folk Festival, and the Greek Theatre. The band broke up when Herb Pedersen went to Nashville with Vern and Ray.

Around 1965, Nelson started playing electric guitar, and Garcia and The Grateful Dead were starting to go on the road. Nelson returned to playing bluegrass in the early



THE PINE VALLEY BOYS c.1963 (1 to r, Butch Waller, David Nelson, Herb Pedersen)

days of High Country, which at that time included Butch Waller, Rick Shubb and sometimes Peter Grant. Then The New Riders of the Purple Sage formed (with Garcia on steel) and David Nelson left bluegrass a second time to play electric music. He currently plays with The New Riders and occasionally plays bluegrass with Frank Wakefield and The Good Ol' Boys.

SANDY ROTHMAN

Many people consider Sandy Rothman to be one of the most skillful, versatile and knowledgeable bluegrass musicians in the Bay Area. He became interested in music at a summer camp where one of the counselors played banjo, probably frailing. "Several of them had guitars, but I guess the banjo caught my ear." By age 13, he was into the guitar, and then became interested in the banjo. He tried to find banjo records but the only thing available were Pete Seeger records.

Around 1958, Barry Olivier's place, The Barrell, was about the only source of near-bluegrass records. Rothman got his first country banjo record there, by Roscoe Holcomb, and learned two-finger picking. He met Rick Shubb at the Barrell, and soon after saw a poster with a banjo shown for The Redwood Canyon Ramblers' concert. He recalls at that time he had

probably heard the Flatt and Scruggs record "Songs of Glory" but not any banjo instrumentals yet.

The Redwood Canyon Ramblers concert in Berkeley in 1960 was the first time a lot of people saw a live bluegrass band. Rothman inquired about banjo lessons after the concert and ended up taking lessons from guitar player Mayne Smith, but basically figured out Scruggs-style picking on his own. After hearing the "Foggy Mt. Jamboree" record by Flatt and Scruggs, he bought it right away. "I think that was a big turn on for me." Then he and Rick Shubb formed a band patterned after The Redwood Canyon Ramblers. "I had no idea what I was doing beyond what I'd seen them do, and they were fairly primitive in some aspects, themselves." They got turned on to Roosevelt Watson, who had a vast collection of bluegrass records, and a Gibson Mastertone banjo. "Before Rick or I ever had a good banjo, we'd go over there and play his banjo." Watson also introduced them to Bert Johnson and James Henley, and the four of them were sometimes known as the Pine Ridge Ramblers.

Rothman saw Bill Monroe for the first time in 1963, and that summer he was enticed into going back East by letters from Mayne Smith who "wrote me this one letter I'll never forget. . . He closed it by saying, 'Well, gotta go now, Monroe will be out at the park in about a half an hour and it's an 18-mile drive'. . . even though I'd seen Monroe one time, just the fact that he could be 18 miles from where Bill was and would be there for the whole day and probably the next. . . by the time the second or third letter came with references to live bluegrass bands all the time, there was no other thing I wanted to do than go back there." So he went out there and spent a lot of time at Beanblossom, helping out with work during the week and listening to the shows on the weekends.

Back in the Bay Area, Rothman, while working at Campus Music, has met Jerry Garcia and David Nelson, who were looking for a guitar player. He played with them for a while, and the next summer he and Garcia drove back East, following The Kentucky Colonels on their tour. "We both had this fantasy that we would go to Beanblossom. . . and get a job

with Monroe. . .not even noticing that his band was perfectly fine at the time."
At Beanblossom, they found themselves in awe of Monroe and totally unable to approach him. They hung around for a few weeks at a friend's house listening to tapes of old radio shows and then Garcia went back to California.

Eventually Rothman met Bill Monroe and traveled around with The Bluegrass Boys on the bus. He played guitar with Monroe for a couple of months but didn't feel comfortable with the job and came back to the Bay Area. He played again with Nelson and then around 1965 played with various people including Jody Stecher, Fred Sokolow, Brantley Kearns, and sometimes Butch Waller and Herb Pedersen. Around 1966-67 he went pack East and ended up staying in Ohio six years, playing sometimes with Earl Taylor and Red Allen and doing instrument repair work. He has been back in the Bay Area since 1974 and was most recently part of the now-defunct band, High and Lonesome, one of the best bluegrass bands ever heard in this area. Sandy Rothman has been a bounteous source of information and recorded materials, as well as inspiration and guidance, to many musicians in the Bay Area.

There are still more people's stories to be told in GRASS ROOTS, PART III.

LOST HIGHWAY'S MARCH/APRIL SCHEDULE:

March 1 & 4 (possible Wednesday nights) -La Gota Cantina, 26938 Redlands Blvd., Redlands.

March 4- Cal Poly at Pomona, Bluegrass Festival.

March 9 - Freight & Salvage, Berkeley. March 10-11 - Nellie's Restaurant, Chico. March 15 - The Woodshed, 150 Mt. Hermon

Rd., Felton. (408/335-9928).
March 17-26 - Knott's Berry Farm, Buena Park.

April 22 - Chili and Kite Festival, Covina Park, Covina.

April 27-20 - Golden West Bluegrass Festival, Silver Lake Park, Norco.

June 16,17,18 - 3rd Annual Grass Valley Bluegrass Festival, Grass Valley.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: David Dickey is Lost Highway's guitar picker and deserves a special thanks for this Bluegrass Memory. We look forward to more fine contributions from him.)

AUTHOR'S NOTE: While little of genuine new knowledge will be imparted in these articles, I hope that they will, in some small way, serve as a "Thank You" to a number of musicians who have been an inspiration to me (and doubtless others too) by playing the music and living the life at a time when bluegrass music wasn't as popular as it is now. (Some influential northern California musicians will be left out, but only because I never saw them perform. This is not an attempt to be historically complete, but rather my own personal recollections.)

Jon Seger and I built guitars in the summer of 1964 so that we could take the money we made and go across country in the month of August. We had at that time been playing together in a bluegrass group for a few months but our real knowledge of the music was very minimal. A highlight of our trip was to be the Philadelphia Folk Festival. We were excited to see Doc Watson, Judy Collins, Mike Seeger, Tracy Schwartz, et. al. Also slated to appear was Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys. While we liked bluegrass, our main exposure had been Stanley Brothers and Flatt and Scruggs records. Their music was very banjo-oriented, which we liked. Bill Monroe didn't seem to make such a heavy use of banjo then (which I later came to understand as I learned more about the music) so I had mixed feelings as to whether I'd like his music.

The Saturday Evening Concert was quite a memorable one with fine performances by the aforementioned plus the likes of Theodore Bikel, The Beers Family and Phil Ochs. Along about midnight, when I had about decided that the show must be over, Ralph Rinzler came out and launched into an introduction something like "Twenty-five years ago a man brought his music to the Grand Ole Opry and started a new style in country music that has become one of the most imitated around. The man is Bill Monroe and the music is bluegrass." At that point The Bluegrass Boys walked out and started picking for a chorus or so with the fiddle taking the lead. All of a sudden the four musicians parted in the middle and Bill Monroe, appearing as if by magic, stepped up

and "burned it down" with a hot mandolin break. As he reached the end of the break the guitar player practically knocked him over while throwing the guitar up to the mike for a G-run. Talk about high energy! I knew right away that these guys meant business. It also confirmed my feeling that I would have to do this (play bluegrass) for a living some day. I had already made my decision for bluegrass two years earlier after hearing a Stanley Brothers record. But some months later I had been told by Mike McClellan that a person couldn't play bluegrass unless they were born in Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, The Carolinas, or Georgia. Because I respected his abilities and opinions so much, I has been depressed to think that I might not be able to play. When Bill introduced the group the guitar player turned out to be "Sandy Rothman from the from the State of California". While I didn't know Sandy as yet, I sure was proud that someone could get up and "cut it" even though they were from California. That one experience was a true inspiration to me on two counts: the music was "right" and a hometown boy was playing it.

Mere words on a page are poor substitutes for the excitement I felt at that show but perhaps the reader has had a similar experience and can understand anyway. As a guitar player I am constantly inspired by the memory of an almost mystical event in my life where a kid like me showed me that it could be done.

Next issue: Butch Waller, The Father of Bay-Area Bluegrass.



BLUEGRASS IN NEW ZEALAND

One evening last August, when I was collating and stapling the September-October BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN, there was a knock upon my door. Before I opened it. a voice called, "Is this the California Bluegrass Association?" Since I was up to my ears in blue paper, I opened the door and said, "Yes, more or less." Anyway my visitors turned out to be Moggie, a lady from New Zealand, and her friend Vern from Santa Rosa, and they were interested in finding some bluegrass in the Bay Area. I gave them all the addresses I could think of and, in return, Moggie promised me an article on folk music and bluegrass in New Zealand. Well, time passed, the year changed and I had almost forgotten the incident. Then I received the following article, and it all came back.

New Zealand is a small country with a population of only 3 million people. There are 4 main centres: Auckland and Wellington in the north island, and Christchurch and Dunedin in the south island. Folk clubs were few and far between when I first went to live there in 1967 but now the main centres have 2 or 3 clubs each and even some of the smaller towns have their own clubs giving about 25 in all. The largest of these is Wellington Folk Centre with a membership of 300, about half of these being performers. The club has its own premises in the city comprising of a large concert room, performers room (for tuningup, storing instruments, etc.), library (books, records, tapes and cassettes for the use of members), large kitchen and storeroom. The club is run by a small committee who worry about money, food, festivals, concerts, publicity and activities to provide something for everybody. We have classes in guitar and banjo, English country dancing, Morris dancing, pottery and other folk crafts. Friday night is our informal singaround where everyone gets the opportunity to do at least one song each. It's a good chance for beginners to get used to singing in public. Sunday nights we have a formal concert. Performers are booked in advance and they do a bracket of 20 minutes each. The standard is extremely high since New Zealand cannot afford to

support professional musicians. We must have the best amateurs in the world! Even recording artists and television stars have to work the usual 40-hour week in order to survive. Once a month the folk centre has a Saturday night party. We set a theme, e.g. Irish night, Scottish night, sea shanties, etc. A small cover charge at the door includes a lavish buffet supper prepared by our catering manager, and you are allowed to bring your own bottle of beer. A special guest artist may also be brought in from another centre. Whenever an overseas folk group visits the city, the club acts as host and puts on a reception for the visitors. We have met Steeleye Span, the Irish Rovers and the Dubliners. It's a thrill for us to meet these people and they seen to enjoy being looked after. Not all activities are confined to the club, however. During December a group of carol singers does the rounds of the local hospitals. Taking a general view, the folk centre offers a wide variety of music from traditional to bluegrass. The concerts are well planned in such a way as to be of entertainment value to the public as well as to the members. In this way, there is no danger of our ever becoming a "performers club."

The Poles Apart in Auckland is worth a mention. Run by genial Frank Winter, a Londoner with a bushy beard and a mane of frizzy hair. You go up a flight of stairs into a large room filled with comfortable old armchairs (watch out for the springs!). It's a cozy atmosphere like walking into someone's home, which is exactly what it is since Frank lives on the premises. Good music 3 nights per week, toasted sandwiches and coffee. Frank makes dulcimers and lovely instruments they are too, so it's no wonder we have lots of dulcimer players in New Zealand. Most other instruments are imported which means you have to place an order, wait a long time and then pay very high prices, e.g. a Martin guitar will be about \$1,200 plus about \$80 for the case! Autoharps are imported but the cases are not, which strikes me as being rather ridiculous, but there are one or two people in the country who manage to meet the demand. Every long weekend sees a festival in some part of the country. Being such a small place, you never have to travel very far to get to the festivals so you soon get to know people from other clubs. Labour weekend (3rd weekend in October) heralds the start of summer (or so the optimists keep reminding us!) and the festival is in Hawkes Bay, up on the east coast. local showgrounds will be the venue and tents spring up like mushrooms. Hawkes Bay clubs are the organisers for this one and there's 3 days of sunshine and good music, maybe even a hangi (traditional Maori style of baking food in the ground). Over the New Year there are plenty of activities to choose from. Dunedin's festival starts on 27 December, but if you don't feel like going all the way down south there's an informal holiday gathering at Raukawa Falls, a remote, romantic spot in the bush, organised by Wanganui club. Swimming in the river, beautiful bush walks and two picturesque waterfalls in a fairytale setting. Similar informal gathering at Tahora, on a farm, organised by the Tahora club. Auckland anniversary weekend (last weekend in January) and it's all on at Moellers Farm, just outside Auckland. A formal festival with concerts, workshops, etc. but watch out for those mosquitos and sandflies! Easter sees the big bluegrass festival in Hamilton and also a traditional festival in Christchurch. Hamilton this year was the best ever. Special guests were Bluegrass Expedition from Dunedin who have cut 2 albums and done a couple of television series. The country's top fiddle players were there sawing up a storm. Also featured at Hamilton is the bawdy ballads contest with a bottle of whiskey as a prize for the grubbiest song! The biggest festival of the year is held in Wellington every Queens Birthday weekend (1st weekend in June). It's the only festival held in the winter so the atmosphere is quite different from the camping weekends. The venue is Victoria University, Wellington. Visitors are billeted in the homes of Wellington folkies or floor space is provided at the folk centre. There's a creche for parking the littlies and lots of food available from the University coffee bar. There were 3 informal concerts (put your name on the list and you can do 2 songs), lectures and workshops on

fiddle technique, Negro spirituals and gospel songs, black and white string music. harmony arrangement, folk crafts and the opportunity to try your hand at screen printing and batik, and a ceilidh called by Joan Prior (who teaches country dancing at the folk centre). As you can well imagine, the expense of bringing a guest artist out from England or America is often beyond our means. However, we have had Mike and Alice Seeger over a couple of times, and Bill Clifton, to the Hamilton festivals, and A. L. Lloyd and Declan Affley to the Wellington festivals. final concert at each festival is recorded and copies are placed in all club libraries.

Most clubs publish a newsletter for distribution to members and other clubs around the country. However, our main contact with the outside is Sharyn Willard who lives in Wellington. Sharyn collects news from overseas as well as at home and she publishes a newsletter, "Heritage", which is distributed to all clubs.

The traditional music of New Zealand only goes back about 120 years. The pioneers who came and settled the country during the goldrush were mainly English, Scottish and Irish and many were disillusioned and homesick. Many beautiful songs were written about sheep shearing, gold mining, gum digging, and thanks to the work of Phil Garland, Frank Fyfe and other collectors, these songs have been preserved. This is our heritage, the old identity. New Zealand is still a young country and song writers such as Don Toms and Paul Metsers are helping to build our store of traditional songs for the future.

Moggie Wellington Folk Centre P.O. Box 27-191 Wellington New Zealand

by Sue Shelasky

record reviews

THE GOLDEN YEARS/THE GOLDEN ERA Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs with the Foggy Mt. Boys CBS/County P13810, Rounder Special Series 05-P13826.

Those people who have become interested in bluegrass in the last several years have probably discovered that some of the best traditional bluegrass is out of print. Lately, some of this material has been made available, first on the Collector's Classics series (reputedly "bootleg" records), then on the imported Japanese (which include complete discographies). Now, some record companies are starting to legitimately re-issue bluegrass classics in this country.

These records are as their titles imply-the Golden Years of the band that has probably had the most initial influence on bluegrass musicians and on the popularity of bluegrass in general. The polished sound that is identified with Flatt and Scruggs is present, but to a lesser degree. Most of the songs on these records were recorded in the early 50s for Columbia, before Josh Graves (dobro) and the late Paul Warren (fiddle) had joined the band; the sound is different than the later Flatt and Scruggs that most of us are more familiar with. The rhythm is tight, and even includes something that sounds like a snare drum on a few cuts. The mandolin is rarely heard as anything but a rhythm instrument. "Over the Hills to the Poorhouse" is notable for the beautiful duet singing of Lester Flatt and Everett Lilly (who is on several cuts), as well as Howdy Forrester's fiddling and a rare mandolin break.

Scruggs' banjo playing is considered to be at its peak during the years these recordings were made. It seems more dynamic and buoyant than on the earlier recordings for Mercury. His back-up is interesting and lively, his timing precise; what can be said about Earl Scruggs' playing that hasn't been said too much already! His playing on these records is outstanding.

But another treasure these records contain is the fiddling, which is consistently excellent and includes two of the most influential fiddlers. Benny Martin and Chubby Wise have probably contributed the most toward the development of bluegrass-style fiddling. Also enjoyable is Howdy Forrester's fiddling, especially his back-up. The different fiddlers are identifiable since each song is identified by session, and the session personnel are listed on the Rounder record.

These records are great—vocally, instrumentally, choice of material, liner notes—everything! They make it possible for anyone to hear early bluegrass in its prime, uncovering music that has been difficult to find for years. Let's hope they continue to re—issue more of the classic bluegrass recordings.

Tunes: THE GOLDEN YEARS: Dear Old Dixie,
Somehow Tonight, Over The Hills To The
Poorhouse, I'm Head Over Heels In Love,
I'm Lonesome and Blue, I'll Stay Around,
He Took Your Place, If I Should Wander
Back Tonight, Dim Lights Thick Smoke,
Earl's Breakdown, That Old Book Of Mine,
I'd Rather Be Alone, I've Lost You, The
Old Fashioned Preacher.
THE GOLDEN ERA: Flint Hill Special, Your
Love Is Like a Flower, I'm Waiting To Hear

Love Is Like a Flower, I'm Waiting To Hear You Call Me Darling, Head Over Heels In Love With You, I'm Working On A Road, Till The End Of The World Rolls Round, I'm Gonna Sleep With One Eye Open, Dim Lights Thick Smoke, Don't This Road Look Rough And Rocky, Randy Lynn Rag, The Old Home Town, Brother I'm Getting Ready To Go.

NEW RELEASES:

COUNTRY HAM (Vetco 512)
Featuring Judie Cox, Carl Pagter, Paul
Reed (Berkstresser), Jerry Tuckett, Jim
Sayles.

COUNTRY BUTTER (Denim Records)
Featuring Buffalo Bob, Carmon and Eric
Brittain and Friends.

SOON TO BE RELEASED:

THE GOOD OL' PERSONS (Bay Records)

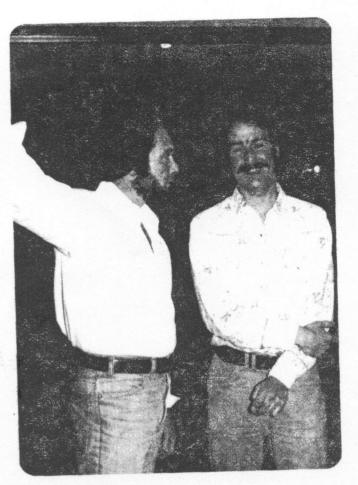
Fiddler's Dream

(Frances Anderson of Redding is a violinist turned fiddler with many trophies to her credit. Over the years she has been very much involved with the California State Old Time Fiddlers Association, District 6. She is responsible, to a large degree, for teaching and inspiring all the fine young musicians in the Redding area. Here are her comments on the occasion of Paul Anastasio's initiation as Merle Haggard's new fiddler.)

During Merle Haggard's recent engagement at Harrah's in Reno /in early December/, I played with the String Section Back-up Group--members of the John Carlton Orchestra --a fine group of musicians. Merle's show was about the same as when I played with him at Harrah's in Tahoe, except that Tigar Bell had been replaced by Gordon Terry, a fantastic fiddler who's played with both Bill Monroe and Johnny Cash. Brenda Lee co-starred with Merle, and I found her to be a delightful person. "You have to really love showbiz to stay in it," she warned. Which reminded me that I'm happiest when taking a minor part, or just observing show folks, who are always interesting characters.

One night Dwayne Youngblood and Jay Belt came down after the show and livened things up with their fiddling; but the high point for me was when Paul Anastasio came down to fiddle for Merle. He really pulled out all the stops, and after jamming with Merle and Eldon Shamblin between shows and into the wee hours, Tiny Moore told me that Paul had been asked to join Merle's band, "The Strangers"! Merle was enchanted with Paul's Venuti-Grappelli jazz style. Later, Paul was sitting in the "bar" room with a look of stunned disbelief on his face. I have a tape of some of the things he played. It was a thrill to be there and watch it happen.

Merle told me that he loves Redding and thinks of it as the place he will eventually settle down. He confided the secrets of catching the bass that are native to Shasta Lake. . . . all in all, a very congenial and relaxed group, and I really enjoyed being part of the show.



MERLE HAGGARD & PAUL ANASTASIO

Don't forget to check your membership card to determine your date for renewal. Remember, you're always due a year from when you joined or last renewed. Renewals-and new memberships--have been arriving nicely--and that's most gratifying to the present and future of the CBA! If your dues are already paid up, ask a friend to join. Tell him/her of the savings a member gets on Grass Valley tickets alone!

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Absolute deadline for ads and all other contributions: 20th of month preceding publication, the sooner the better. Addres all contributions to the Editor, address on Page 2. Checks payable to the California Bluegrass Association.

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KQED (88.5 FM) San Francisco Saturday - 10:00 PM NPR Folk Festival U.S.A.

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KKUP (91.5 FM) Cupertino Sunday - 2:00-5:00 PM Traditional Folk w/Mark Ortiz

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