

# BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN

MARCH/APRIL 1982

Volume 8 Number 2



**The Osborne Brothers**  
Bluegrass Jam - March 26 - See Page 9



# California Bluegrass Association

*Bluegrass Breakdown* is published bimonthly at 4212 - 25th Street, San Francisco, California, 94114 by the California Bluegrass Association. The CBA is a non-profit organization founded in 1975 by Carl Pagter and is dedicated to the furtherance of Bluegrass, Old Time, and Gospel music. Membership in the CBA costs \$8.50 per year and includes a subscription to the *Bluegrass Breakdown*. A spouse's membership may be added for an additional \$2.50 and children between 16 and 18 years for an additional \$2.50. All children under the age of 16 may be included for an additional \$1.00. Band memberships are available to bands with three or more people for \$5.00 per band member. Subscription to the *Bluegrass Breakdown* is \$6.00 per year. Make checks payable to the **California Bluegrass Association** and mail along with the membership application located on the inside of the back cover to the address below. Second Class postage is paid in San Francisco, California: *Bluegrass Breakdown* (USPS 314-350). Postmaster, please send address changes to:

**California Bluegrass Association  
P.O. Box 11287  
San Francisco, CA 94101-7287**

Board meetings are usually held the second Sunday of each month and all members are invited and encouraged to attend. The March meeting will be held at Fran Mason's, 312 Ethan Court, San Ramon at 1:30 p.m.

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## Board Meeting Summary

**Board of Directors:** Mark Hogan (MH), Mike Johnson (MJ), Carl Pagter (CP), Don Powell (DP), Kathy Tyler (KT), Butch Waller (BW), Karen Walter (KW), Sandy Lipsky (SL), and Sue Smith (SS).

### Meeting of January 10

**Present:** KW, MJ, CP, DP, SS

**Absent:** KT, MH, BW, SL

Board approves holding a mini-event in April or early May if location and coordinator can be secured.

Board elects Fran Mason to replace Sandy Lipsky as a member of the Board of Directors. Sandy has resigned.

Board approved hiring Applied Analysis to handle membership records and production of labels for *Breakdown*.

Board votes to set Grass Valley ticket prices: Friday - \$6.50; Saturday - \$9.50; Sunday - \$7.50. Three day: Members Advance - \$14.; General Advance - \$19.; At the gate - \$23.50.

Board authorizes Carl Pagter to revise and clarify security rules in order to make them clear so there will be no misunderstanding regarding security and their duties.

Mark Hogan and Don Powell named Grass Valley coordinators. Mark to handle ground crew, stage, lighting and sound. Don to coordinate other areas. Mike Johnson and Kathy Tyler to handle tickets.

### Meeting of February 7

**Present:** MH, DP, KW, BW, CP, MJ, FM, KT

**Absent:** SS

Board elects Ray Edlund to replace Sue Smith as director. Sue has taken a job at the University of Hawaii.

Board votes to support Rose Maddox benefit on March 27.

Board votes to pay flat fee of \$350 per musician (up to six members per band) instead of shares at the 1982 Grass Valley festivals.

The April event was cancelled due to lack of a facility and coordinator. Winner of the band contest will be used at next mini-festival in 1982.

The next board meeting will be at 1:30 p.m. on March 14 at Fran Mason's, 312 Ethan Court, San Ramon. Members are urged to attend Board meetings.

## Thanks

Thanks for help on this issue go to Ray Edlund, Robbie Macdonald, and Sandy Rothman for their fine articles. Thanks to Judith Powell for her help on layout.

## Next Issue Deadline

Deadline for the May-June issue will be April 10. Date for mailing the May-June issue will be April 21.



# Board of Directors asks the membership for help in running the Association, festivals

Dear CBA members and friends,

This January the California Bluegrass Association was happy to celebrate its seventh anniversary. In these years we've grown from the handful of dedicated folks whose inspiration and love of the music started the association to the 1200 members we now have. We've put on many concerts, mini-festivals and nine three-day Grass Valley Festivals. In the near future we hope to have an office with the beginnings of an archive and record albums of the Grass Valley Festivals and with the June issue the BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN mailing list will be computerized. If some things have happened slowly (or your BREAKDOWN has been late) remember that all the work is being done by volunteers who also have other obligations. It seems to be the fate of all small (volunteer) organizations such as the C.B.A. that only a few people do an enormous amount of work. From the outside it must appear that we have a staff of a hundred to have accomplished so much but we don't, so periodically we have to appeal to the membership for help. Don't forget it's your organization. Below is a list of direc-

tors, officers and Grass Valley Coordinators. If you would like to offer help in any of these areas (or any other) contact one of these people. If you have questions but want to help come to a meeting - we need your input.

Contributions to the BREAKDOWN are always welcome. Also the C.B.A. is looking for office space to rent in the East Bay Area. Call a director if you know of an available space.

The monthly Board of Director's meetings have always been open to members and we would again like to invite you to attend. Normally the meeting is held on the second Sunday afternoon of the month, but this can vary so it's best to call a Director to confirm the time and place. If there is something specific you'd like to bring up at a meeting you plan to attend, contact the chairman for inclusion on the agenda.

The support of the membership has been invaluable to the successful growth of the association and we look forward to it continuing.

Thank you,  
The Board of Directors

**\*Ray Edlund**, G.V. Entertainment  
33501 S. Hwy. 1  
Gualala, CA 95445  
(707) 884-3195

**\*Mark Hogan**, G.V. Coordinator for  
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7300 Boris Court #7  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928  
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**\*Mike Johnson**, Treasurer/  
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9025 Alcosta Blvd. #233  
San Ramon, CA 94583  
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(415) 776-6713

**\*Karen Walter**, Chairman,  
G.V. Entertainment  
4212 - 25th Street  
San Francisco, CA 94114  
(415) 826-3159

**\*Member of the  
Board of Directors**

## Editor changes for 'Breakdown'

For the third time in as many issues the *Bluegrass Breakdown* has a new editor. Don Powell, a member of the Board of Directors, has assumed the job.

Powell will be contacting various members of CBA to undertake writing parts of the *Breakdown*, with him editing, laying out the newsletter, and doing the mailing. "We need members of the CBA to volunteer to write articles on various aspects of the music we love," states Powell.

This issue features the first of a series on the interviews of Bill Monroe that Ray Edlund broadcast on KPFA. Future issues will be illustrated by more Pete Wise pictures and pictures furnished by others.

The *Breakdown* needs reviewers, people interested in doing articles on bands, styles of playing, clubs, tablature, and other features of interest. Send to: Don Powell, 735 College Street, Woodland, CA 95695. Powell can be reached during the day at (916) 662-2906 and in the evening at 662-5691 or 662-2906.



## 'Contend that bluegrass music is folk music'

Dear Editor:

I usually don't write letters, so this is one of these rare occasions where I'm writing one. The reason is because I have been getting involved with the Bay Area Bluegrass scene for close to a year now, so I figured it's about time I put in my two cents and be heard.

In the past year, I've attended a few CBA events and have been quite pleased with the outcome of their production (though the Bluegrass & Old Time Music Contest in Berkeley last October could've been better organized). I am a musician myself (I play rhythm guitar and sing) and have found your events as incentives for me to progress in my musicianship. I particularly enjoyed the *Hot Rize* concert at Great American Music Hall a year ago. In addition to the concerts, two well-known figures in the bay area Bluegrass scene, Steve Pottier and Butch Waller, have been very helpful in my development as a musician through their criticism and advice. I give these gentlemen my sincerest thanks.

In Steve's last column, I wasn't too clear what he meant by "unknowledgeable masses". Well, I'll just assume that he means masses of people who do not know Bluegrass music or cannot distinguish it from other forms of "country" music. Of course, it is the CBA's job to find quality music and present it, yet I also feel that it should make an effort to reach these "masses" from time to time instead of focusing on a specific audience that mostly listens to Bluegrass. I personally believe that Bluegrass music (without electronic frills) is appreciated by mass audiences more than a lot of us realize. It has been my experience where I've sat in a concert or club with people who knew absolutely nothing about Bluegrass. Shortly after the first set got underway they would stomp their feet and clap. At the end of the show they yelled for more.

So why should Bluegrass be presented to "masses"? Well, if you go back to the history of Bluegrass (around the late '40's and early '50's) you will see that the music wasn't geared towards a select audience. Around the Southern states in particular, the music was presented to mass audiences in concerts, clubs, and, of course, the airwaves. Let me say that before I started playing Bluegrass almost a year ago, I spent many years studying folk and country music and in that time, much of what I heard and was interested in was Bluegrass. I'm in no way an expert, but I do appreciate the fact that I have a somewhat "scholastic background" of what I'm doing. I've come to realize that Bluegrass music is a folk art. It is music which was created by common folks to present it to other common folks and not an elite group.

Times, of course, are different now. Since the early '50's, the music industry in America has become so compartmentalized that confusion often results. I cringe when I hear certain country sounds or even groups erroneously labeled Bluegrass. I must admit that even for a time, I was getting confused. In the past year, in fact, I've spent a few hundred bucks in records, books, concerts, etc., in trying to find the exact traditional Bluegrass sound I'm trying to play.

So I still contend that Bluegrass music is folk music (does anyone challenge that statement?). I would urge CBA to try to gear it's events to the so-called unknowledgeable masses (and many are unknowledgeable) in areas they have easy access to instead of us Bluegrass fiends who hang out at Paul's Saloon and the Fifth String and hear about these things. I'm sure you'll get pleasing results. In the meantime, keep up the good work you're doing so far.

David Ruiz Del Vizo, Jr.  
San Francisco

## What happened to our gig?

Dear CBA Directors:

We have a bluegrass band here in Merced, California which travelled to Berkely to play in your amateur band contest in Live Oak Park.

Our name at that time was *Bear Creek Mountain Music*. We placed first in your contest and have been waiting patiently to hear from you to find out when we will have the opportunity to play in your CBA mini-festival which is to be held somewhere in the bay area. Also, we were very disappointed that there was no mention of our winning the contest in the latest *Bluegrass Breakdown*. In fact, there was no mention of the contest at all! I am sure the other folks who placed in the contest were disappointed that no news of this was published.

We joined the CBA as a band last September and were expecting that our band's name, etc., would be published in the *Breakdown's* Field Guide to Western Bands. So, I will once again submit the information you need and hope it will be in the next issue.

Since your amateur band contest we have regrouped, and therefore have changed our name to *Stoney Creek*. If we need to rejoin under a different name please let me know, though three of the members are the same.

R.D. Cole - Fiddle  
Tom Clarkson - Guitar  
Doug Bremseth - Banjo  
Rick Dehn - Mandolin  
Patty Dahlstrom - Stand-up Bass

We are now playing every Tuesday night from 8-11 p.m. at Michael's Restaurant and Saloon here in Merced. Our band can be contacted by calling either:

Patty Dahlstrom (209) 722-9232  
Rick Dehn (209) 383-0875

Thank you for your consideration and we are hoping to hear from you soon.

Patty Dahlstrom  
Merced, California

## Greetings from Northern Nevada

Dear CBA;

Greetings from over the hill! This is a note to let you know about the Northern Nevada Bluegrass Association.

Continued on Page 5



## Field Guide to Western Bands

Field Guide has been abbreviated for this issue to only those bands who sent in updates. Next issue a new, updated, complete Field Guide will return. Field Guide editor will be Karen Quick, 23149 Old Santa Cruz Hwy., Los Gatos, CA 95030. Send your up-dates to her by March 31 or to the CBA Field Guide, P.O. Box 11287, San Francisco, CA 94101-7287.

**Good Ol' Persons (415) 474-5368 [San Francisco]**

Wednesday - Paul's Saloon, S.F.

Thursday - Red Vest Pizza, El Cerrito

March 20 - Paul's Saloon, S.F.

March 27 - Rose Maddox Benefit, Ft. Mason, S.F.

April 3 - Intoto, 1611 Stanford Ave., Palo Alto

University Lutheran Church, 8:30 p.m.

(415) 857-9660

### LETTERS...Continued from Page 4

We are now entering our third year, we are a small but determined group, here in that flashpot of greed and gaudiness, Reno.

We hold a monthly potluck near the University of Nevada, Reno campus and invite any of you Californians who plan to "keep Nevada green" this year to stop by and do some picking. We are no rival to the CBA, nonetheless, we have a good time. And you may need a little snort of "down-home" after you lose all your nickels.

For information on our Potlucks, as well as other bluegrass and old time country music events in the northern Nevada area, I'm afraid you'll have to join our organization and then receive our monthly newsletter. Send \$5.00 for one year to: Judy Donaldson, 9130 Reservoir Road, Reno, Nevada, 89506.

Hope to see you,

Chris Bayer

President

Northern Nevada Bluegrass Association

## Advertising Rates

Current rates for placing an advertisement in the **Bluegrass Breakdown** are as follows:

Full page -- \$40.00

Half page -- \$25.00

Quarter page -- \$15.00

The size of the image area for a full page ad is 7¼ by 9¾; half page - 5 by 7½; quarter page 3½ by 5. Art work should be very clear black and white layout and all photos should be screened.

The current rates for classified ads are based on 3½ inches of typed copy and are as follows: \$3.00 for the first three lines and 50¢ for each additional line. Make checks payable to the California Bluegrass Association and send check and ad to:

Don Powell

Bluegrass Breakdown Editor

735 College Street

Woodland, CA 95695

**Grant Street String Band (415) 548-3021 (East Bay)**

March 6 - Freight and Salvage, Berkeley

March 13 - Paul's Saloon, S.F.

March 26 - Danville Hotel, Danville

April 17 - Freight and Salvage, Berkeley

**High Country (415) 776-6713 (S.F.)**

Tuesday and Friday - Paul's Saloon, S.F.

Wednesday - Red Vest Pizza, El Cerrito

**Spring Mountain Harmony (209) 784-8268 [Porterville]**

Sunday - The Factory, Exeter

**Stoney Creek (209) 722-9232 [Merced]**

Tuesday - Michael's Restaurant and Saloon, Merced

**ATTENTION FLATPICKERS:** Tired of playing the same old standards? Just published, after six years' work: *Granger's Fiddle Tunes for Guitar*. 500 tunes--over 670 titles, in tablature for guitar. Comes with complete explanation and instructions. Send \$20.00 to Granger Publications, Box 14277, Minneapolis, MN. 55414.

**WHERE WOULD YOU GO** to find a 1930 Gibson Mastertone Banjo, a 1915 Gibson F-4 mandolin or a 1945 Martin Herringbone D-28? **MANDOLIN BROS. LTD.**,--the leader in vintage and new instruments since 1971. Send for *free catalog*. Phone (212) 981-3226. Write 629 Forest Ave., Staten Island, NY 10310.



### Did You Know That . . .

- Besides being a record label we are a professional recording studio?
- We handle *all* phases of record production including pressing?
- We understand that most artists do not have unlimited funds and we work with them to keep costs down and avoid surprises?

**Even if you are just curious, please feel free to call or write.**

**1516 Oak St., Alameda, CA 94501**

**(415) 865-2040**



# Bill Monroe - the master speaks

by RAY EDLUND

Bill Monroe was interviewed at the San Mateo concert by Ray Edlund, a member of CBA and popular DJ of the KPFA "Pig in a Pen" Bluegrass show. He was joined during the interview by CBA President Butch Waller.

*Breakdown* wishes to thank Ray Edlund for sharing these moments with the "Father of Bluegrass Music".

The interview will be concluded in the next *Breakdown*.

**Ray:** We're at the San Mateo Center for the Performing Arts, Oct. 8, 1981 and Bill Monroe is here - and welcome, Bill.

**Bill:** Thanks, Ray. It's always a pleasure to come out here.

**Ray:** You started playing professionally with your brother Charlie about what time Bill?

**Bill:** Well, Ray we started trying to get on the radio stations back in 19 and 30. 1930 was the first time I ever got on a radio station in Hammond, Indiana. We worked as the Monroe Brothers, this was back in the early days, there were three of us together, and we had other jobs on the side, you know, because there wasn't a whole lot of money in music.

**Ray:** You worked in an oil refinery, didn't you?

**Bill:** Worked at Sinclair refinery for 5 years.

**Ray:** And then you and your brother Charlie got a record contract with Victor.

**Bill:** Shortly after we left Indiana and went into Iowa and from there to Nebraska, and we was workin' for a company out through that part on radio, you know, they had radio programs and then we moved on to South Carolina, North Carolina and down in that part of the country. I guess in 1936 we made our first record for RCA at Charlotte.

**Ray:** And what was that, do you remember?

**Bill:** I believe it was *What will you give me in exchange for my soul and This world is not my home*.

**Ray:** Those were pretty big hits back in those days weren't they?

**Bill:** Down there they really loved them.

**Ray:** They sure did. What was your audience mostly like back then?

**Bill:** They were just good country people, just down to earth good people, they were just hungry for music, singing - they loved it.

**Ray:** There were a lot of brother duets at the time, the Bolick Brothers, the Callahan Brothers. But you guys seemed to have an intensity about your music, a real drive, something that the other groups didn't seem to have. Can you get into that a little bit, why you were so different from the other groups?

**Bill:** Well, I wanted to play instrumentals you know. Some of the songs I wanted to speed up so they wouldn't be the same. So they kind of worked that way. It seemed like a lot of the duets, the brothers acts, they were really good, the Callahan Brothers, I really liked their singing and the Delmore Brothers - people like that. They really had good duets.

**Ray:** People were just kind of amazed by your mandolin

picking, especially, and Charlies - they hadn't heard guitar runs like that and mandolin runs like that and the high tenor. Did you guys work on that a lot or did it just come naturally? Did you actually feel that that's what you wanted to do?

**Bill:** To start out with, I tried to learn to play the mandolin. That's what I came up with. I like the old time fiddle music - the way people would play numbers on the fiddle, and so I played a lot of those numbers like "Soldiers Joy" and numbers like that. Played like you played on the fiddle, you know, that kind of style. Like you said a while ago, a lot of the duets just sung, they didn't do any playing, it was all slow.

**Ray:** That's right - you guys sure led the way into what later became known as Bluegrass music. You left your brother Charlie in 1939 or so, and formed your own group.

**Bill:** I guess it was in 1938 when me and Charlie broke up. When I worked with Charlie I had one style of tenor and when we broke up I changed my style of tenor singing altogether. People like Brother Oswald took that style of tenor and carried it on. My style of tenor now is altogether different from when I sang with Charlie. Bluegrass is different from the way me and Charlie sung. We sung the old country way of singing string music, playing string music and singing back in the hills of Kentucky. It came from years ago - the way they would have probably sung it. Bluegrass was a different type of music, different timing to it and everything. Different style from what Charlie and me done.

**Ray:** You added a banjo, it was Stringbean, or Dave Akeman who was your first banjo picker and why did you decide to put a banjo in your band?

**Bill:** To start with when I orginated the Bluegrass Boys I took the guitar and the fiddle. I had to have a fiddle, with a fiddler in it and bass. And then I got started doing tent shows and the bass man was a comedian, Cousin Wilbur. Then I got to thinking I wanted two comedians and I needed the sound of the banjo in the bluegrass. Stringbean was a good comedian and played a good banjo and was a good singer, so I hired him - he was the first banjo player for me.

**Ray:** Then later on you hired a young banjo picker named Earl Scruggs and things started happening especially over WSM Grand Ol Opry. Could you explain just a little bit about your reactions during those years when Earl was with you on banjo and the new sound of the banjo was happening, and the new sound of Bluegrass music?

**Bill:** Well, the bluegrass music had already taken hold when I started there in 1939, before Earl Scruggs ever came in the picture. Right in 42-43 was my greatest years in bluegrass, in the early days, and they were hungry for it and demand for it and we had big crowds back there in the wartime. Stringbean had to go in the service. Don Reno would have had the first chance, but he had to go in the service, so that gave Earl Scruggs the chance to come in and be a Bluegrass Boy. He was 19 years old. Earl Scruggs was the kind of a banjo picker that learned from





Snuffy Jenkins, that's where Earl's style came from.

**Ray:** But you knew what you wanted. You wanted that particular style of picking didn't you?

**Bill:** I kenw that it would be all right with my music. Without bluegrass the five string banjo would have never survived - no way! And the fiddlers would have been mighty scarce without bluegrass, because about that time the electric instruments came in and they didn't need a fiddler, they didn't need nothing but somebody to play the guitar and take breaks and the steel guitar. So, if it hadn't been for bluegrass the fiddlers would be hurting and the

banjo pickers - there wouldn't have been any.

**Ray:** You had some mighty fine fiddlers with you and also - well, anybody in bluegrass who's gone on has played with the Bluegrass Boys at sometime or another. Bill, how do you pick the guys that work with you?

**Bill:** Well, If I think they are good enough to work with me I can learn them a lot as they come along, and make them play the way I think it should be played. Keep out everything that doesn't belong in bluegrass. That's the way I done all down the years with different people. Like Chubby Wise on the fiddle wanted to play swing and jazz



and I wouldn't let him, cause he was in bluegrass and he needed to play my style. That was the way it was with a lot of different people, in their music. They had to play bluegrass. When they played it like I wanted it played, they learned how to play bluegrass right and then they could go out on their own and people would hear about them, and know they had been on the Grand Ole Opry and to give them a name. I tried to feature them every Saturday night like Earl Scruggs and Lester Flatt, I gave them a chance to do a number where a lot of people would never let them do it. It would have been a group and nobodies name would have been called. I wanted to help them and I knew that I would build them up. People all over the country would like to hear them and to give them a chance to help them on the front gate too.

**Ray:** What sort of times were those back in the 40's? Was it hard to get jobs in those days - was it pretty rough for the musicians playing bluegrass music?

**Bill:** Well, there wasn't a whole lot of bluegrass you see. When I started with this music, I guess the Stanley Brothers were the first to follow behind me in my way of playing it. Then people like Jim and Jesse was coming along and the Osborne Brothers and Lester and Earl. I guess they worked with me three and a half or four years and then they went out on their own. Lester had been working with Charlie Monroe and he was a tenor singer and played a mandolin. So they didn't know nothing about Lester until he come to me on the Grand Ole Opry. And Earl Scruggs had never been heard of either; Stringbean had never been heard of either; and Chubby Wise. But to be on the Grand Ole Opry it helped me a 100% because people would listen to it all over the whole country, and back in the early days. It would reach out a long ways, so it was good for the bluegrass music and the people that played bluegrass. It helped all the way around. And when I went to the Grand Ole Opry and tried out and they accepted me, they said to me, that if I ever left I would have to fire myself. So the last Saturday in this month it will be 42 years at the Grand Ole Opry.

**Ray:** Congratulations!

**Bill:** Thank you - thank you a lot.

**Ray:** It's amazing! There was a time when, well, competition got pretty fierce in the 1950's or so when people started listening to other kinds of music and it wasn't so easy to get a job. Could you tell us a little about those years and the Bluegrass Boys?

**Bill:** Well, back then, when music began to come into the picture, like rock-n-roll - bluegrass you know was, I don't know how many years ahead of rock-n-roll and if you listen to rock-n-roll they play the same time as we play - their time was taken from bluegrass. And, of course, they would write their songs and put a lot of swing in it, or however they wanted to do it. Bluegrass, I think, well, we could still have crowds you know, and had work, because back in those days we had tent shows that we booked ourselves all over the country. But rock-n-roll really got big there you know. It really hurt a lot of the country singers - the old time country singers that had been on the Grand Ole Opry for years, it tore them plumb down to where they couldn't have no crowds any place they would go hardly. But bluegrass was a new music too, so it survived. It went through the hard days and now it's a great music.

**Ray:** It sure is. Let's jump up a few years, Bill, to right now where you are recognized as being the creator of this

style of music and it wasn't always that easy, I am sure. What do you feel now when you know that people recognize you for the genius that you are as far as creating this style of music and that so many people are so devoted to this type of music. How does that make you feel?

**Bill:** Well, it makes me feel good to know that I done something with what I set out to do with the music I orginated and started. To know that it will grow down through the years and so it's on up to where it is today. It lets me know that I have done something that will be here, so I am proud of that. I really think - if you really think back over it, bluegrass has made more friends than any music in the world. Now you, if you went to a country show or a rock-n-roll show, you might never see the people there again, but bluegrass is a music that's festivals all over the country. They have festivals and you will meet people there and you will plan on going back the next year and meet them again and hear the music.

**Ray:** And it's a family type music, too.

**Bill:** It really is and Ray, it's a clean music. It's a decent music. There's no smut in it, nothing like that - no sex in it, so if you get right down to what's in it, it's a great music and just like I said it's respectable and I'm really proud of that. Bluegrass gospel, you'll never beat it today man. The gospel quartets all over the whole world will never beat bluegrass gospel singing. A lot of singing has gone with the drums and all this and that in it, but bluegrass is still right down to earth with the fiddles, mandolin, banjo and guitar. So, I think that it's really wonderful gospel singing.

**Ray:** You work your boys pretty hard. What do you ask of them when they're up there on stage, when they're a Bluegrass Boy and they're playing for you?

**Bill:** I ask them to get up there and play it the best they can. To work hard. If we're up there for 45 minutes, to give the people the best they can. I want them to get up there and be sober. I want them to get up there and respect the people. And that's what I expect out of them and they know that they have to do that. I don't like to make it rough on anybody, any musicians, if you're paying the man, you want the best out of him you can get out of him. So that's the way that I am. It will help them in the long run. If Kenny Baker's fiddling, he better give them the best he's got because if he don't, people will say, "Oh, Kenny Baker isn't as good as he used to be." So he's go'in to have to get in there and do it like I said and really work hard at it. The banjo players and all of them needs to do that. That's the way they've done it all down through the years, so there's nothing wrong with that.

**Ray:** What do you see as sort of the trend of bluegrass over the next, say 20 or 30 years or so. Do you think it will just keep gaining in popularity and etc.?

**Bill:** Well, now you know yourself that bluegrass is different people playing and they are going to play it their way, the way they think should be. If they want to put blues in it or jazz or want to jazz it like that or however they want to go, people will still know that it is a copy off of bluegrass music. That's them for it. Now out in this country here, I've been coming out here for how many years and a lot of people out in this country plays the pure bluegrass music and sings it.

**Ray:** Butch (Waller) for one.

**Bill:** Yes, sir, on up through Oregon, Washington and up through that country there. Their staying pure with it

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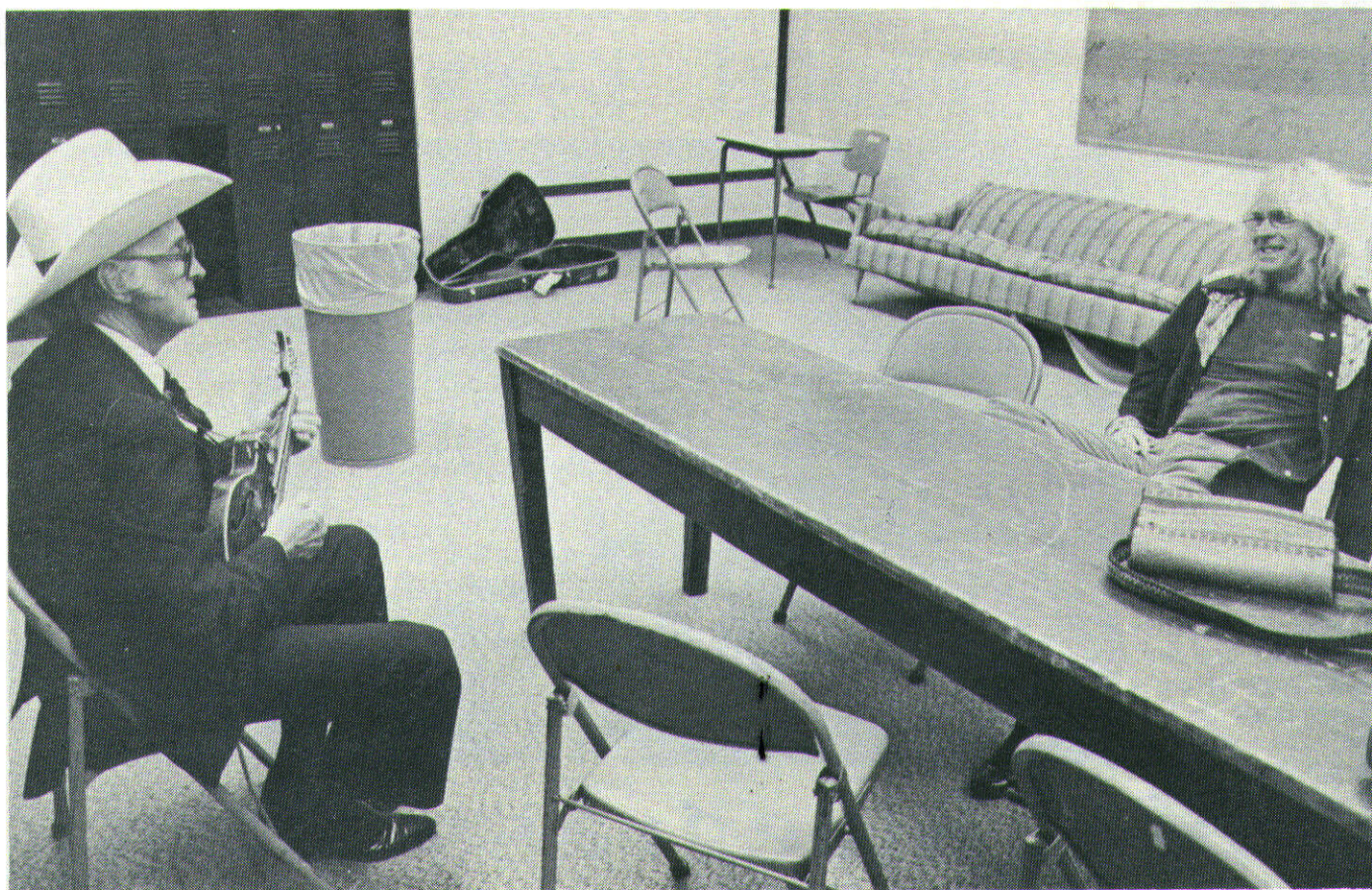
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and a lot of people are still staying that way. That is really wonderful. It ain't a thing to be ashamed of. It's the way you want to hear it. You get good out of bluegrass music when you play it. You're just not playing it for the crowd out there, you get something good out of it yourself. It pays you down through the years to hear yourself play bluegrass music and to know that you're trying to play it where the people like it.

**Ray:** Bill, how many songs have you written? Do you have any idea? It must be hundreds!

**Bill:** Ray, I'd say I've hit around better than a hundred instrumental numbers and right around a hundred or better gospel songs. And numbers like "Uncle Pen" and "Blue Moon of Kentucky" I don't know how many numbers I have put together and written. I'd say that I'd get up close to five hundred, or so.

**Ray:** All the tunes you've written, which are the ones that you are really proud of that you think will last for generations and that you yourself like to sing over and over - tunes that you really like.

**Bill:** Well, numbers like "Uncle Pen" tells the story about my uncle, you know, that I learned from, the first fiddler I ever heard, and "Blue Moon of Kentucky" is a really great number to me. A lot of instrumental numbers I love, like "My Last Days on Earth". It's really done awful good.

**Ray:** That's on your new album.

**Bill:** That's right....and it really tells a story and you can think back over it say when you get up in years, way on up there, and you're not able to work much and you know you don't have a lot of time left. You think about what I'm telling you and listen to that number there and it

will really tell you. It's got a story about it. But it's really so good and I'm proud of that number. And the mandolin album, that I ever had that's the first I've ever made. I'm glad I did because it's really done fine. And a lot of the numbers, like, "Old Ebenezer Scrooge". I love that kind of number or "Come Hither To Go Yonder", I love that. It's just like I told you. You get a lot of good out of playing your notes, your melody the way you want it to go - the sound you put into it.

**Ray:** So you really have a feeling for the songs you write - it's obvious to me. You mentioned to me a couple of years ago about "Crossing the Cumberland" - I got that feeling of the pioneers and the hardship that they had. It's true your songwriting is wonderful. I don't think a lot of people are aware of the fine songwriter you are - they love you for your mandolin pickin', your singing, but they don't guess you write your own songs.

**Bill:** I really get a lot of good out of writing, I really love to write, I like to put a song together and I like to write a true song. I wrote a good many of them like "My little Georgia Rose" is a true song, "Uncle Pen" is a true song - numbers like that. I love them. I search for sounds and tones that go back hundreds of years in the way of the sound. I know there back there when people was learning to play fiddles and they must have heard that sound years ago. And I know that the fiddlers today don't do that. They play a number that has already been wrote and they write a few but they write the way they think it should be today. I search for sounds and tones to put in my numbers and I love to do it that way. I like numbers like that.

The remainder of the Bill Monroe interview, along with a number of pictures from the Monroe/Stamley concert will be run in the April-May issue.



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# Record Reviews

## BLUEGRASS FROM THE GOLD COUNTRY - The Vern Williams Band Rounder Records 0131

Fans and practitioners of traditional Bluegrass Music are always searching for new life to accompany their favorite prototype bands of the 40's and 50's. On the West Coast this quest is especially difficult given the distance from the mainstream activity in the East and Southeast. Even on record, if one excludes the few old-line bands remaining, there is precious little coming out that can match the performances of the early bands in originality or talent. Just when one might despair that there will be no more fresh interpretations, the **Vern Williams Band** is presenting a record that will rekindle some of the excitement that many of us felt when Bluegrass was a new and compelling discovery.

Bluegrass gets its strength from a balance of emotional and intellectual elements; while thematically, its songs are statements of simple, often sentimental feelings, their presentation is augmented by quite a complex instrumental technique and impressive coordination between the instruments and singers. Much of the new 'traditional' stylings either sacrifice intensity for needless technique or fall short in talent. Happily, Vern's band has all of the vital elements that should make their sound a classic. Every member contributes superior talent and understanding to the music which, together with Vern's unique voice and special material, give the band a sound of its own.

The most important aspect of this band is their brilliant singing. Bluegrass is essentially a sung music and you don't hear many groups these days who possess the elements to do traditional Bluegrass. The singing here centers around Vern's remarkable voice; he sings lead on all but one cut and sings tenor throughout. Vern has the lonesome quality that gives a mountain sound to his music. It is a clear tenor that can shift effortlessly from lead to tenor to seemingly impossible notes in the falsetto range. It seems to gain in strength the higher it goes: this gives the harmonies a spectacular

brilliance - a hard edge that is reminiscent of all of the best singing bands in traditional Bluegrass. Vern's tenor, his son Delbert's lead and banjoist Keith Little's baritone compose quite a trio. All possess exceptionally strong voices but it isn't their way to overpower the music they sing. They have worked out just about perfect phrasing and emphasis so that the trios have a wonderful unity. The parts swell and contract subtly according to the melody at hand and when they power a note they can really power it! The sound can be pyrotechnic without being tasteless or merely flashy. One of the band's signatures is to raise the highest note of the last chorus up an interval - a real tour-de-force coming down the homestretch.

The band's talent is not just in their singing. Instrumentally, both in rhythm and lead, they maintain the strength that makes them a top band. They are led by Keith Little's amazing banjo playing. In this day of increasing notiness on the banjo, Keith has reduced his playing to the bare essence; by using tone, rhythmic subtleties, and excellent note separation he can make a simple melody something special. His backup is equally effective and he puts his full concentration to the job at hand. He is a pioneer in utilizing the old D-tuning; most melodies in D, E and F are played in this mode. This keeps the tone fuller by reducing the amount of capo use and often just seems to work out better on songs like "Climb Mt. Home," "Old Black Joe" and "When The Springtime Comes Again". Keith is indeed one of the country's finest banjo players. He has synthesized a musical, non-imitative Scruggs-style and can play it with touch that ranks with J.D. Crowe and Sonny Osborne.

Ed Neff continues his work as a master fiddler. There are few musicians who can contribute to a band as effectively as Ed. Listen to his transition from lead to backup on this record: as soon as his break is over he resumes the fiddle's complimentary relationship with the voice. He can really hear just what is needed to fill out the band sound. His role adds to the overall complexity as only a bowed instrument can. That sustaining hum blends the other instruments with the voices, a necessary yet elusive quantity in the Bluegrass band. Vern is the most understated instrumentalist. His mandolin playing ranges from an almost Blue Sky Boys melody to a more Monroe-like charac-

ter if the song demands. He plays an especially nice break on "Til The Day I Die".

All this vocal and instrumental prowess would be useless if it were not set off by fine supportive rhythm work by Delbert, Vern, and bassist Kevin Thompson. Rhythm must be a unit playing neither too much or too little and this concept is acted out perfectly by the band. Delbert's thumb-style guitar playing, Vern's great timing, and Kevin's rare concentration on the bass create that "throb" or "pulse" that produces a sound that exceeds the sum of the parts. What impresses me is that they can create a sense of movement and power at quite moderate tempos, probably one of the most difficult aspects of Bluegrass. They sound controlled at all times; on "Black-Eyed Susie", maybe the fastest song on the album, they sound just as settled in as with any of the slower songs. They manage to create a sound or tone on each song and this makes each song an individual entity, interesting in its own right.

The final touch on this album is the material. Vern has come up with songs that have either been seldom or never recorded in Bluegrass. With only one band original (Keith's fine "Till the Day I Die") the band has come up with songs that are new sounding or new within the bulk of recorded material. "Who's Going Downtown?", "Field of Flowers", "Cowboy Jack", "Down Among The Budded Roses" and "Old Black Joe" are all new to my listening experience and fit perfectly with the Bluegrass format. I don't know of any band today who could take Stephen Foster's "Old Black Joe" and make it fit so naturally in the music. Vern normally performs several Stephen Foster songs and has an uncanny memory for interesting songs from his past.

The sole negative aspect of this album is the recorded sound. The overall effect is a bit muddy and several breaks are left too much in the background. The guitar seems to be mixed too low: although the G-runs come through, much of the backup is lost. Knowing the reputation of the 1750 St. Studio, it is possible that these problems are in the pressing. These are minor flaws, however, and shouldn't detract from anyone's enjoyment. This is a fine, long overdue album by one of the country's best traditional Bluegrass bands. The Vern Williams Band is coming along when many of the



original forces are gone or when much of the younger talent is playing newgrass or other styles entirely. The original sounds in Bluegrass have changed or adapted but rarely for the better. This album should provide new hope for those who enjoy these sounds and who have longed for some fresh twists on the old styles.

*Cabin on a Mt.  
When the Springtime Comes Again  
Field of Flowers  
Who's Going Down to Town?  
Cowboy Jack  
Til the Day I Die*

*Down Among the Budded Roses  
Old Black Joe  
Old Home Town  
Black Eyed Susie  
Come Back To Me In My Dreams  
Climch Mountain Home*

by Robbie Macdonald

#### **THIS IS ROSE MADDOX - Rose Maddox with the Vern Williams Band Arhoolie 5024**

It is natural to review Rose Maddox's new record along with Vern's as so many of the same comments apply to it as well. The singing core of the Vern Williams Band performs here and add their special touch to the recording. The band is filled out by the renown Ray Park on fiddle, J.D. Rhynes on bass, and Kraig Hutchens on mostly electric lead guitar. The material is more modern but the music comes from the same country tradition that Vern's does.

Rose Maddox is a legendary figure in country music. With the Maddox Brothers and Rose and later as a solo, she has featured a straightforward, powerhouse style of country singing that works easily within the Bluegrass format. She was one of the first country stars to record a Bluegrass record ("Rose Maddox sings Bluegrass" Capitol T1 799); the record featured Bill Monroe and Don Reno and Red Smiley and stands as one of the best efforts by a non-Bluegrass artist. Her exuberant style has remained unchanged through the years. She was memorable part of my early musical experience as a frequent guest on Cousin Herb's (Herb Henson) Tradin' Post, an excellent country and western show televised daily on Channel 10 in Bakersfield, California. Rose's performances were

electrifying and I have vivid memories of her in a shiny, tight fitting suit belting out some old song in a way that really stood out from the more laid back styles normally featured on the show. I didn't know it at the time, but this was probably the closest thing to Bluegrass available to me at the time.

This record is essentially a Bluegrass performance. All of the material has either been done Bluegrass or fits well into the style. She draws on a variety of older country songs from novelty ("This Old House", "Sally Let Your Bangs Hang Down") to traditional ballads ("Dream of a Miner's Child"). If you like old time country singing you could probably listen to Rose recorded alone in the shower, but when you add Vern et. al. some truly wonderful results occur. Vern can sing tenor above Rose and having the man's voice above produces an interesting sound ("Rusty Old Halo", "Sally...", "Ashes of Love"). Equally effective are the trios in which Keith and Delbert sing two parts beneath. This combination results in a warm rich blend which is especially nice on "Dream of a Miner's Child". For me, this was the most successful cut on the album. Rose, with her bouyant personality loves humorous and novelty, but when she settles into more sentimental songs such as this she can communicate feelings with the best of them. "Dream of a Miner's Child" was a most touching performance. Keith's banjo break (in D-tuning) should be required listening for all banjoists - you can be inventive and tasteful and still be solidly within tradition at the same time!

In general, the backup on the album was top quality. Having Ray Park fiddle was a nice touch as this great musician has been much too seldom recorded. There are few fiddlers anywhere with Ray's knowledge of music - his leads are expressive, tasteful, and forceful and he always seems to be in the right place with his backup. J.D. Rhynes, sometime welder, master metal worker and, here, bassist plays in his usual strong manner. J.D. can really pop a note and if I ever see anyone break a bass string I expect it will be him. I like his almost sound-effect line on "Old Black Choo Choo" just before the lyrics about the "foghorn out at sea...."! Kraig Hutchens is included on mostly electric guitar to at least partially recreate the sound of earlier Rose Maddox recordings. It works quite well, since Kraig is adept at real C & W

guitar, not the Rock and Roll or Jazz styles that typify the current sound. I think, however, I would have preferred straight Bluegrass instrumentation given the people involved. Vern and company are really a unit and the electric guitar, though very well done, still steps on some of the acoustic backup. The backup was frequently doubled - the electric guitar would play a G-run concurrent with the acoustic guitar and some the fills were similarly duplicated. This is really a minor problem, though, and I recommend this record most highly. It will be quite a treat for those who like good singers and pickers playing good country music!

*Philadelphia Lawyer  
Let Those Brown Eyes Smile At Me  
Old Black Choo Choo  
Single Girl  
Dark as a Dungeon  
This Old House  
Sally Let Your Bangs Hang Down*

*Rusty Old Halo  
Dream of the Miner's Child  
Ashes of Love  
Silver Threads & Golden Needles  
Foggy Mt. Top  
Amazing Grace  
Rocky Top*

by Robbie Macdonald

#### **BLUEGRASS FIDDLE SUPREME- Jim Shumate.**

Country Road Studio

There's something almost imperceptible about Jim Shumate's fiddling - if I hadn't been listening to Bluegrass fiddle playing for twenty years and trying to figure out what makes it Bluegrass, his fiddling might have passed by unnoticed.

Certainly Jim Shumate today is not polished up to note perfection like players who perform for a living. After his tenure on the Grand ole Opry with Bill Monroe and his Bluegrass Boys and later with Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs and the Foggy Mountain Boys, Jim decided he would stay on his mountain farm in North Carolina and remain in the furniture business. "I loved those days, but I wouldn't go back on the road again....But I will cut an album occasionally." Still, I have to call it irrelevant that Jim's playing shows the signs of time. It is fiddling that has the

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# CUZIN AL...

by KAREN QUICK

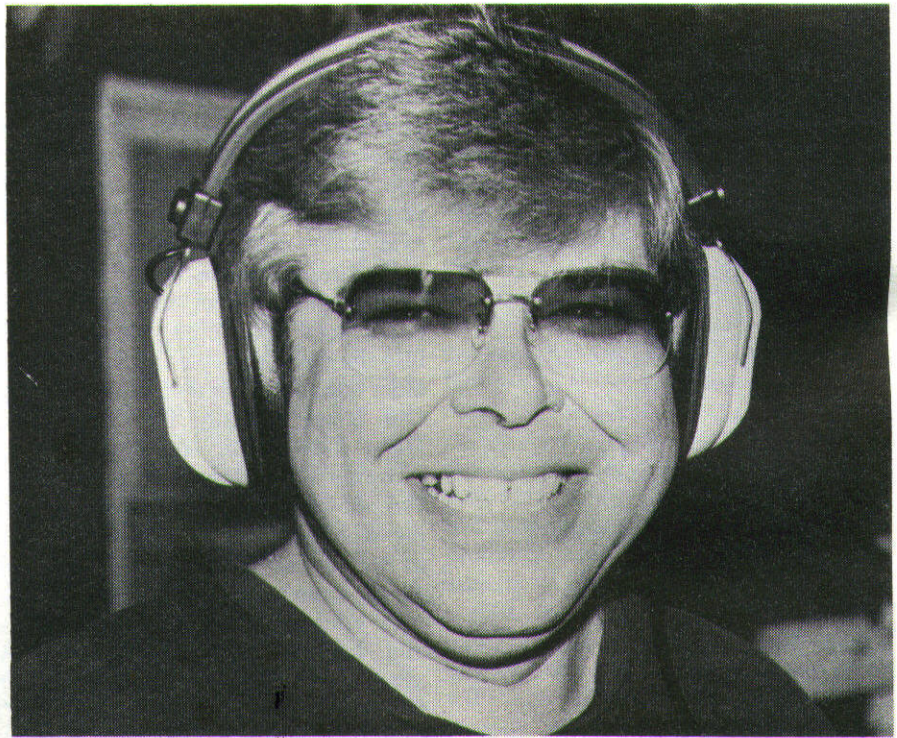
The telephone at the other end of the line rings and rings and rings. Suddenly, it is answered, and with the distorted sound of Bluegrass music blaring in the background, a deep, husky voice shouts into the receiver, "FAT!"

We converse briefly. He says, "You're gonna *love* this next one..." I listen into the phone as he shuffles records, jackets, paper sleeves, 8-tracks, and the ever-present program log. While we chat, he cues the next record. In my phone ear I hear five or six notes of a Stanley Brothers intro through his studio monitor played backwards, forwards, and backwards again, while in the other ear a Touch of Grass instrumental begins to fade over the air.

"Gotta run, baby." He hangs up, and I hear the now familiar six notes burst from my stereo.

This is Cuzin Al's Bluegrass Show. That's how he spells it: C-U-Z-I-N. His family of fans hail from Mill Valley to King City, from Stockton to Santa Cruz. He is one of Northern California's bluegrass gurus - opinionated, undeniably well-versed, witty, outspoken, and wholly lovable.

Between commercial spots and the next set, he back announces what he has just played. He praises Paul Siese's "superb" banjo picking. "I don't hold no truck with a band that doesn't carry a banjo player..." He has just made at least 20 momentary enemies. Undaunted, he continues, "...After all, what's a bluegrass band without a banjo player?" Now his phone lights up. Instead of answering the phone, however, he starts the next record and goes to find an Alan Munde album. Then maybe



some Larry Sparks, he thinks. Let the banjo ring, and the phone, too.

Perhaps one reason he holds no such "truck" is because Al Knoth is himself a banjo player. "I may only know three songs," he laughs, "but they're all *good*, you know?"

Born in 1937 in San Jose, Knoth literally cut his eye teeth on country music. He recalls his mother taking him to dances at local country night spots when he was a boy. "My mother put me up on the bandstand with Bob Wills one night, and I just sat up there and watched her dance." He remembers seeing Dude Martin, Cactus Jack, and the Maddox Brothers and Rose. "I've listened to country music as long as I've been alive."

When he went to college, Al temporarily denounced his country roots in lieu of the then more popular jazz. But

soon afterward he spent two years in the service, stationed much of the time in the South where he rediscovered country music and "developed and authenticated" his country accent. The North Carolina dialect remains his favorite, and he swears that the only true bluegrass (with the exception of Bill Monroe) comes from North Carolina.

In the early sixties he began collecting bluegrass records. His first was the Dillards' live album, followed by Flatt and Scruggs at Carnegie Hall. (Earl Scruggs is still Cuzin Al's favorite banjo player.) Of the 1,500 bluegrass albums he currently owns, one of his most prized is "Folk Music Inside" by the Country Gentlemen on the Mercury label, which he purchased at Gemco for 69¢. Back in those days, with a wife and two small children to support on a

Continued on Page 17

## Record Review - Continued from Page 13

undefinable yet unmistakable stamp of pure Bluegrass.

Lester Flatt, the late great "Baron of Bluegrass", is quoted in the liner notes as saying, "There ain't a man alive that plays the fiddle like Jim Shumate." If Arthur Smith had been alive, maybe Flatt would have grouped them together. But Shumate drew on Smith's inspiration, added the insistent beat and drive taught him by Monroe (he filled in with the Bluegrass Boys when fiddler Howdy Forrester went with the Navy in World War II), and came up with a classic style of fiddling. Shumate

also relates that it was Flatt who "...got me to kick off a tune with the fiddle" (while they were together in the Monroe band). "Nobody kicked off a tune before with a fiddle that we knew of." When Forrester returned from the war and rejoined the Monroe band, Shumate joined Lester and Earl to form the first Foggy Mountain Boys.

In a way, Shumate repeats a lot of the same licks - the old mountain bluesy runs reshuffled one more time for the sake of another tune - but then, so do Earl Scruggs and Bill Monroe. Who cares? It doesn't lose me. Listening to

him fiddle is hearing Bluegrass history as much as it is listening to one man.

The Blue Mountain Boys do adequately for backup - Jim could have done worse or better. But if you like to study Bluegrass fiddling and its roots, lay your hands on this or any recordings by Jim Shumate. (My copy of this album was a poor pressing; each last cut per side was defective.) Recommended cuts: *Paddy on the Turnpike*, *Mean Old Rambling Blues*, *Lost Train*, *Going to Town*.

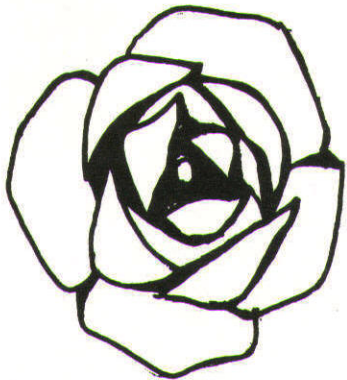
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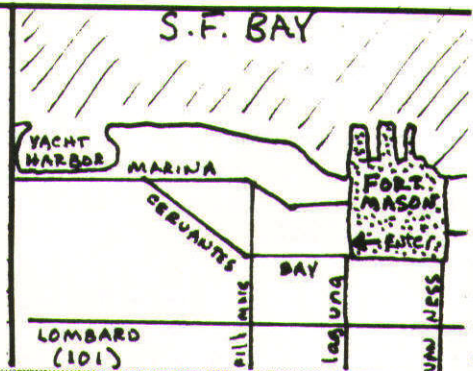
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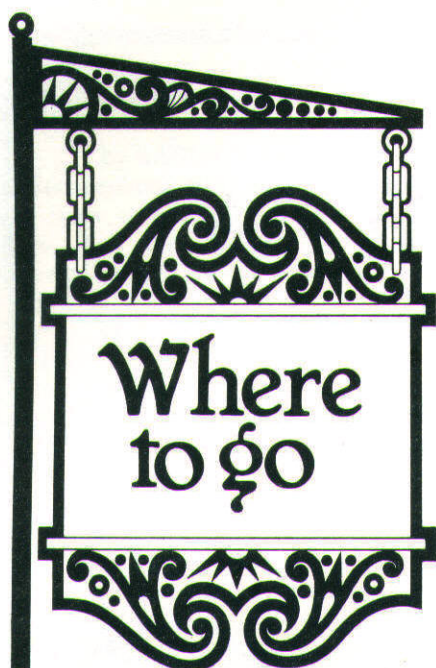
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THE BANJO CAFE, 2906 Lincoln Blvd., Santa Monica. Bluegrass seven nights a week. Monday is hoot night, and a bluegrass jam on Sunday afternoons. Call 213-392-5716.

CULPEPPER'S, 7305 Clairmont Mesa Blvd., San Diego. Bluegrass Wednesday through Saturday with a variety of performers.

DEPRESSION GROCERY & DELI CO., 1036 E. 4th St. Reno, Nevada. Music on the weekends is occasionally bluegrass. Call 702-323-1755.

THE BRATSKELLAR, 1154 Westwood Blvd., L.A. Live bluegrass upstairs on Wednesdays through Saturdays. Call 213-477-9535.

THE FIFTH STRING, 3051 Adeline, Berkeley. Thursday night jams. Call 415-548-8282.

THE FIFTH STRING, 1931 L St., Sacramento. Thursday night jams. Call 916-447-8282.

FREIGHT & SALVAGE, 1827 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. A great place to hear bluegrass, old time, jazz, folk, etc. Call 415-548-1761.

THE OLD TIME CAFE, 1464 N. Hwy 101, Leucadia. Coffee house and restaurant featuring live music nightly: folk, blues, jazz, and bluegrass. Call 714-436-4030.

PAUL'S SALOON, 3251 Scott St., San Francisco. Bluegrass seven nights a week. Monday night jams. Call 415-922-2456.

THAT PIZZA PLACE, 2622-B El Camino Real, Carlsbad. Bluegrass music on Saturday nights. Call 714-434-3171.

THE PALMS PLAYHOUSE, on County Rd. 103 just off Chiles Rd. in Davis. Bluegrass featured fairly regularly. Call 916-756-9901.

THE PLOWSHARES, Fort Mason, Bldg. C, Room 300, Laguna & Marina, San Francisco. Concerts on Thursdays and Sundays: folk, bluegrass, ethnic, jazz, etc. Coordinated by the San Francisco Kolk Music Club. Call 415-661-2217.

RED VEST PIZZA PARLOR, 10616 San Pablo Ave. El Cerrito. Bluegrass on Wednesdays through Saturdays. Good Pizza and bluegrass for over four years. Call 415-527-4023.

SAN DIEGO BLUEGRASS CLUB meets at Organ Power Pizza, 3359 Imperial Ave., Lemon Grove. Meetings (music on stage and jamming) held the second Tuesday of each month, 7:30-10:00 pm.

THE THIRSTY WHALE, 1740 Monument Blvd., Concord. Call 415/798-2266. Bluegrass on Friday and Saturday, 10 PM to 1 AM.

TUBA-MAN'S GRAND SLAM PIZZA, 2551 University, San Diego. Bluegrass every first and third Saturday. Call 714-295-9426.

WILD BLUE YONDER, 1145 N. Fulton, Fresno. A variety of music from rock to bluegrass. Fresno Folklore Society sponsors concerts on Monday evenings. Call 209-222-7103 or write Virgil Byxbe, 4302 E Santa Ana, Fresno 93726.

WINCHESTER WAGON HOUSE, 745 S. Winchester Blvd., San Jose. Restaurant features bluegrass on Friday and Saturday nights. Call 408-246-4451.

THE GREAT AMERICAN MUSIC HALL, 859 O'Farrell, San Francisco. A fairly expensive place to see top name acts: Monroe, Stanley, etc. But well worth it. Call 415-885-0750.

Continued on Page 17



traveling salesman's pay, there wasn't much left in the Knoth budget for records. "But I figured for 69¢, my wife couldn't holler at me."

Knoth credits the sound of a 5-string banjo with sparking his initial interest in bluegrass. In November of 1967, he got his first banjo, an old Kent in a cloth case. "When they raised the price of a pack of cigarettes from 25¢ to 30, I decided enough of this, so I quit smoking and took up the banjo on my 30th birthday. You're never too old to learn to play music."

In March of 1970, his banjo teacher told him of a radio station in Los Gatos that was playing bluegrass music, "...on purpose," an almost unheard-of thing at the time. Al hunted down the station - KTAO, a now defunct listener-supported station.

"I walked into the studio in a tie and a military haircut, and there were all these hippies standing around looking at me kind of funny. Turns out the fellow who was doing the bluegrass show was leaving the area the following week, so I asked for his job. I had always wanted to be on the radio, ever since I learned to talk. I told them I played 5-string banjo and knew a lot about bluegrass. I really didn't know much of anything, but I learned." And Al was given the job.

He continued taking banjo lessons, and was soon playing in a small Los Gatos night club with guitarist Jeff Hawkins. In fact, Al says, "Jukebox' Hawkins groomed me for the stage. I owe my stage presence to him." Today, as well as being an occasional performer, Cuzin Al is also a well-known emcee, and has personally sponsored and produced several bluegrass concerts and festivals in the Bay Area. His unmistakable profile and charming smile are familiar sights to thousands of Northern California bluegrass fans.

Knoth went on to form a bluegrass

band called Silver Creek. He later joined the Cream of Kentucky, with Jay Quesenberry on guitar, John Berg on mandolin, and Tim Short on bass.

Meanwhile, he continued doing his bluegrass show at KTAO for four years. In 1974, KTAO became a commercial station, KRVE, where he remained through the end of 1975. Shortly thereafter, Laura Ellen of KFAT met Cuzin Al, and he's been doing a Sunday night bluegrass show from Gilroy ever since.

He has seen many changes at KFAT over the years - new studios, new owners, formats, program directors, and air shifts. Yet he remains a Sunday night tradition, independent of and immune to KFAT's newly-adopted "commercial" sound. For the station, he represents good Sunday night ratings. And, although he grumbles at the token payment he receives, and bemoans the current program director's criticism of his rather loose handling of the controls, Cuzin Al has what he wants most: an opportunity to play bluegrass music on the radio, and a large and loyal audience to play it to.

KFAT's current program director, Larry Yurdin, declares that Cuzin Al could be a star DJ just about anywhere. Most everyone who has heard him on the air would have to agree that he's a natural. His radio voice is genuinely pleasant as opposed to contrived, his "raps" are relaxed, amusing and clever, and his winsome, infectious chuckle is as much his trademark as his love for bluegrass is.

Cuzin Al's custom-created "format" is a palatable recipe of both traditional and progressive bluegrass, spiced with occasional lapses into comedy, as well as other forms of music he enjoys such as Hawaiian, folk, and even the Santa Monica Pier's calliope. His personal preferences in music, though sometimes arguable, are no secret - he generally reviews each tune he plays as he back-announces. "That was *very* fine," he might say. Or, in a toyful Italian accent, "Nota so gooda, you know?"

A notorious name dropper, he'll then proceed to say hello over the air to those of his many fans who have called during the preceding set - something no other KFAT disc jockey could ever get away with. "I got to say hi to Brother Kimbro out there, and Sister Fat, Dick and Dee, and my good buddy, Frank Wakefield." And sometimes he follows with a dedication: "Here's one for my Dad."

Regrettably, the golden age of radio is gone, but a spark of it lives on as so many of us forego the television to gather instead around the FM receiver every Sunday night. And when he's finished for the evening, with his records packed up in his box and the thought of a drink or two at the Harvest Time restaurant down the street on his mind, Cuzin Al always leaves us with, "Well, friends, until next Sunday night take care o' yo-sef, and remember: Time flies like an arrow, but fruit flies with bananas."

And who can argue with that?



## Where to go...Continued from Page 16

ACCAURDIE'S ITALIAN RESTAURANT, 135 5th St., Portland, Oregon. Bluegrass every third Wednesday, broadcast live on KB00-FM.

CALIFORNIA DOBRO CLUB, corner of Embarcadero Rd. and Newell, Palo Alto. Meets in the basement of the cultural center on the 3rd Sunday of every month from 1-5, for jamming and workshops. For more info, call David Putnam, 415/328-6080 days or 415/327-4447 eves.

GIRARD'S WINE CHEESE AND BOARD CO., 1250 Newell Ave. Walnut Creek. Call 415/944-7008. Bluegrass 5:30 to 8:00 Fridays.

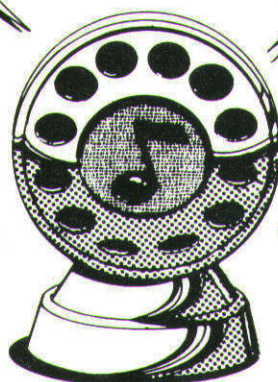
HADI'S RESTAURANT, 1146 S. Saratoga, Sunnyvale Rd., Cupertino. Call 408/252-0952. Bluegrass Thursday nights, 7:30 to 11:00.

THE OLD WORLD CENTER, 341 S. 2nd, Corvallis, Oregon. Call 503-752-8549. Bluegrass, folk, and Irish. Sawtooth Mtn. Boys on the second Friday night each month.



# Turn Your Radio On

Compiled by  
Barbara Stein



If you know of any other radio shows on the west coast that would be of interest to our readers, please send as much information as possible--especially the name and address of the station--to:

California Bluegrass Association  
P.O. Box 11287  
San Francisco, Ca. 94101-7287  
Attn/ Editor

## BAY AREA STATIONS

KCSM 91.1 FM Phone: 415-574-6427  
1700 West Hillsdale Blvd.  
San Mateo, Ca. 94402

Sundays, 2-5 pm: "Bay Area Bluegrass"  
A variety of bluegrass music. The last Sunday of every month is devoted to old time and other forms of traditional music. Alternating hosts: Pete Lude', David Radlaur, and Barbara Stein.

KPFA 94.1 FM Phone: 415-848-6767  
2207 Shattuck Ave.  
Berkeley, Ca. 94704

Fridays, 3-5 pm: "Pig in a Pen" with Ray Edlund. A fine presentation of bluegrass and old time music. On alternate Fridays: "Panhandle Country" with Tom Diamant--western swing, blues, and bluegrass.

Sundays, 11 am-1 pm: A variety of blues Tex-Mex, Cajun, etc. with Chris Strachwitz.

KFAT 94.5 FM Phone: 408-847-0330  
P.O. Box 2033  
Gilroy, Ca. 95020

Sundays, 6-8 pm: "Cousin Al's Bluegrass Show" with your genial host, Cousin Al Knoth. Also occasional bluegrass within the regular format.

KALW 91.7 FM Phone: 415-648-1177  
2905 21st Street  
San Francisco, Ca. 94110

Saturdays, 3-5 pm: National Public Radio presents "A Prairie Home Companion." This show is broadcast live from the World Trade Center in St. Paul, Minn. Garrison Keillor, a wild and crazy kind of guy, features good quality acoustic music (swing, old time, bluegrass, ragtime, etc.) in a format reminiscent of early radio shows. A very entertaining program.

KKUP 91.5 FM Phone: 408-253-0303  
P.O. Box 547  
Cupertino, Ca.

Saturdays, 3-6 pm: "High and Lonesome," bluegrass with Rick Nagle.  
Sundays, 9-12 pm: "Cupertino Barn Dance" with Stompin' Steve Hathaway--cowboy and country music.  
Mondays, 6-9 pm: The "Quickstep" with Karen Quick.  
Wednesdays, 2-6 pm: Bluegrass with "Free-wheeling Fred."

## STATIONS OUTSIDE THE BAY AREA

KAZU 90.3 FM Phone: 408-375-3082  
P.O. Box 206  
Pacific Grove, Ca. 93950

Monday, 9-12 am: "Monday Morning Folk Show" with J.T. Mason.  
Tuesday, 9-12 am: "Folk Music Around the World."



Wednesday, 9-12 am: "Pickin' in the wind"  
with Peter Figen.

Fridays, 9-12 am: "Singing Stone"- trad-  
itional and contemporary folk music  
with Rick Wolter.

KDVS 91 FM Phone: 916-752-0728  
14 Lower Freeborn  
UC Davis  
Davis, Ca. 95616

Saturdays, 9:15-12:15 am: Saturday mor-  
ning folk show featuring folk, blue-  
grass, country, and live music.  
Hosted by Pete Hellmuth, Rich Ellis,  
and Steven White.

KHSU 90.5 FM Phone: 707-826-4805  
Humbolt State University  
Arcata, Ca. 95521

Fridays, 9-12 am: Bluegrass show.

Thursdays, 10 pm-1 am: Folk music with  
Doug the Jitterbug.

Tuesdays, 1-4 pm: Folk and international  
music with Doug the Jitterbug.

KUOP 91.3 FM  
3601 Pacific Ave.  
Stockton, Ca. 95211

Saturdays, 6-12 am: Saturday morning  
folk and bluegrass with Michael  
Bryant.

Saturdays, 7-9 pm: "A Prairie Home Com-  
panion"-see description under KALW.

KUNR 88.7 FM  
University of Nevada  
Reno, Nevada

Saturdays, 3:05-5 pm: "Life's Other Side"  
with Mike Reed. Occasionally live  
performances of bluegrass and other  
acoustic music.

KVMR 89.5 FM Phone: 916-265-9555  
P.O. Box 328  
Nevada City 95959

Saturdays, 10-12 am: Bluegrass with Ken  
Crow.

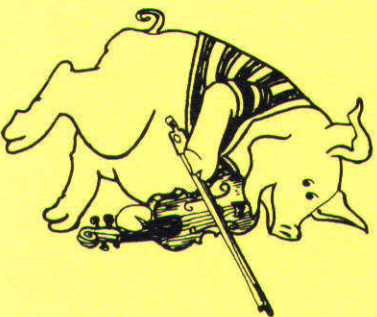
Saturdays, 12 am-2 pm: Country Show with  
Tim Brown and Frank Burch.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION				RATES	
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