

# BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN

Vol. III, No. 3

May-June 1977



**BILL WHITE**

**GRASS  
VALLEY  
'77**

## 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 old-time 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 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 Bluegrass Association, P.O. Box 11287, San Francisco, CA 94101.

Officers and Directors of the CBA are listed below; (\*) designates member of the Board of Directors. PLEASE NOTE: AS OF THIS ISSUE, WE HAVE A NEW DIRECTOR AND THE OFFICERS HAVE CHANGED.

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### Secretary

Ed Pagter (\*)  
967 Perreira Drive  
Santa Clara, CA 95051  
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ABOUT THE COVER: Let your mind wander back to the freight yards in old Missouri. Picture a wide-eyed small boy in striped overalls and railroad cap, sitting just inside a boxcar, listening intently to the hobos picking guitars and harmonicas. Now let your mind amble forward some 50 years. You're at the Grass Valley Bluegrass Festival, watching a cherubic gentleman in striped overalls and railroad cap, listening intently as he plays "Casey Jones" on his harp, imitating that long, lonesome train whistle that takes you back across the wide Missouri. . . .This "striped demon," as he has been called by one of his great friends, is Bill White, a Bay Area favorite. Life hasn't been easy for Bill--he has recently undergone several cancer operations--but, probably because of his magnanimous spirit of friendship, he always springs right back to play that harp and to support every bluegrass and old-time musician he knows about. He loves them all, and, unequivocally, we love him, too.



**Sunday, May 15**

**CBA Mini Festival & Grass Valley Fund Raising Event**



All other bands and pickers are most cordially invited to participate. Remember, all proceeds go towards the 2nd Annual Grass Valley Festival, so let's make this Mini-Festival a big success!

# **Cloverdale**

**Citrus Fairgrounds**

**1:00 to 6:00**

**admission \$2.50**

**members \$1.25**

Children under 13 - \$1.00  
Member children - 50¢

**featuring**  
**ARKANSAS SHEIKS**  
**COUNTRY BUTTER**  
**COUNTRY HAM**  
**w/Carl and Judie**  
**JAY QUESENBERRY**  
**DONE GONE**

**Dance Caller**  
**Edith Thompson**

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# clubs

## CAFE VALERIAN

4218 Piedmont Ave., Oakland.

Featuring Bill White, Lawrence Hammond, and others.

For scheduling details call 415/654-6321.

## FREIGHT & SALVAGE

1827 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley.

Featuring a great variety of bluegrass and folk music.

For scheduling details call 415/548-1761.

## PAUL'S SALOON

3251 Scott St., San Francisco.

Featuring bluegrass almost all week. Jam Session on Monday nights.

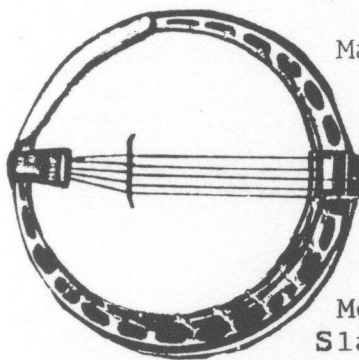
Any Old Time String Band plays Thursdays and Saturdays.

## ROSEBUD'S ICE CREAM PARLOR & TAVERN

433 - 1st St., Benicia

Featuring bluegrass every weekend. For scheduling details call proprietor Ed Forcum, 707/745-9988.

# special events



May 7 - Fiddle Contest, Fiddletown.

May 8 - Bluegrass/Country Benefit Concert for Chris Reed.

Main Exhibit Hall, El Dorado County Fairgrounds  
Placerville. 12:00-12:00.

\$2.50 advance, \$3.00 at the door. Featuring: Herb Pedersen, Dusty Rustlers, South Loomis Quickstep, Sunny Monday, Moonbow, Babe Lamm and Band, Countrymen, Val Pease, Slab Creek Boys with Ray Park, Vern Williams Band. All proceeds go to Chris Reed, an extraordinary 7-year old who was injured in an auto accident. Promoter: Larry Park.

May 14-15 - 3rd Annual West Coast Bluegrass Festival and Contest, Redding Civic Auditorium, Redding. Saturday 10:00-5:00, fiddle, banjo, guitar competition, \$300 first prize each category; show 6:30 & 9:00. Sunday 1:00-5:00 show. Featuring South Loomis Quickstep. For further information contact Doug Broughton, 240 Kay Ave., Red Bluff, CA 96080. Phone 916/527-8892 or 527-9073.

May 15 - CBA MINI FESTIVAL GRASS VALLEY FUND RAISER NUMBER TWO, Cloverdale.

May 28-29-30 - 2nd Annual Jack Ramsey's Bluegrass Festival, Tulare County Fairgrounds, Tulare. See ad next page.

May 30 - Old Time Fiddlers Contest, The Depot, Old Town, Folsom. First Prize \$125 open, \$25 junior. 11:00 AM sharp. \$3.00 entry fee. This contest will be unique: each contestant will judge as well as fiddle. Each contestant will judge the 2 contestants immediately following himself. (There will be 3 regular judges to provide continuity in scoring.) For further information, contact Michael Mendelson, 916/985-3313. Sponsored by California Folk Arts Association.



June 17-18-19 - CBA 2ND ANNUAL GRASS VALLEY BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL, Nevada County Fairgrounds, Grass Valley. Details in this issue.

June 20-25 - National Old Time Fiddlers Contest, Weiser, Idaho. For information write the Weiser Chamber of Commerce, Weiser, Idaho 83672. (A week at Weiser is an experience you'll never forget--and it's a logical, beautiful follow-up to the Grass Valley weekend!)

June 24-25-26 - 4th Annual Santa Rosa Folk Music Festival, Santa Rosa Junior College, 1501 Mendocino Ave., Santa Rosa. Noon-7:00 PM each day. Mini-concerts and workshops, square and folk dancing. Outdoors - food available - no onsite camping - no pets. \$7/three days or \$3/each day. For further information, phone 707/433-6056.

July 8-9-10 - 2nd Annual Salt Flats Hoedown Contests, Community Center at the Rodeo Grounds in Salinas. Friday--Flat-Picking Contest; Saturday--Fiddling Contest; Sunday--Bluegrass Band Contest. For further information, write Grace Stewart, 1044 San Simeon Dr., Salinas, CA 93901.

July 16 Fiddle Contest, Pollock Pines. For information write Fiddle, Contest, P.O. Box 1017, Pollack Pines, CA 95726.

September 16-17-18 - National Flat-Picking Championship Contest, Fairgrounds, Winfield, Kansas. For further information write The Walnut Valley Association, Box 245, Winfield, Kansas 67156, or call 316/221-3250.

October 2 - Bluegrass Festival, Santa Clara County Fairgrounds. 1:00-5:00. Sponsored by the American Lung Association. For information call Kevil Smith, 408/998-LUNG.

#### BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN Advertising Rates

Camera-ready copy  
\$30/full page  
(8½ x 11)  
\$20/half page  
\$10/quarter page

Design, Layout  
and/or Unprepared  
Photo(s)

\$40/full page  
\$25/half page  
\$15/quarter page

Classified ads:  
\$2.00 up to & in-  
cluding 3 column  
lines; 50¢/line  
thereafter.

#### SECOND ANNUAL JACK RAMSEY'S

## BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

TULARE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS  
TULARE, CALIFORNIA

3 days - Sat., Sun., Mon.  
May 28th, 29th, 30th

LOST HIGHWAY  
San Bernadino

MUSIC FARMERS  
Fresno

CREAM OF KENTUCKY  
Ventura

ZUILL BROS & THE BLUEGRASS  
RAMBLERS w/ ALLISON BROWN  
Escondido

PAIN IN THE GRASS  
w/STUART DUNCAN  
Vista

DONE GONE  
San Francisco

SAGEGRASS  
Las Vegas

GLORYLAND STRING BAND  
Janesville

Contest - Band & Single  
Sunday Only

\$250  
Prize Money

Acoustic  
Only

Admission: \$4,\$4,\$3.50  
\$9 adv., \$10 at gate  
Camping \$2/night

and  
much much  
more

For tickets/information  
Jack Ramsey  
16425 Ave. 352  
Visalia, CA 93277  
209/798-1256

A Dick Tyner Production

# Dear CBA Members

Whether you are a new CBA member, or a long-standing one, I welcome the opportunity to tell you that your active participation in the Association is appreciated and encouraged. The CBA moves on to new activities by your suggestions. The "establishment" activities like Grass Valley (insofar as anything becomes a tradition in a couple of years!) also get bigger and better when you care enough to give us your suggestions.

I'm happy that a significant, though not total, turnover has begun amongst the Directors and officers of the CBA. I think it's natural that the leadership in an infant organization doesn't change much for several years; the same people work hard and feel some commitment to the organization's progress. By the same token, the membership usually isn't large enough to stimulate participation and bring new, interested leaders to the forefront for the same period. Everyone sits back, waiting to see whether the outfit is really a going concern!

We've had increased attendance of non-Directors at the Board meetings, which we welcome--amazing, in view of the fact that the meetings have not been held at set intervals, and hence are difficult to publicize. The last election featured efforts by at least 6 write-in candidates. I hope this trend will continue, and that a few more of us will be has-beens by the next election! In the meantime, here's a brief introduction to the current Directors of the CBA.

LARS BOURNE lives in San Jose and works in the advertising art department of the Mercury-News. He has been publicity chairman of the CBA for some time and was elected to the Board in January of this year to fill a vacancy.

CARMON BRITTAIN lives in Redwood Valley (Ukiah area). She is also 1st Vice President of the CBA which carries the responsibilities of acti-

vities chairman. She and her husband Buffalo Bob anchor the Country Butter Band, which has appeared at several CBA events, including Grass Valley.

JUDIE COX of Alameda is a newcomer to the West. She joined CBA founder Carl Pagter back east in establishing their band, Country Ham, and is now working hard to spread that good east coast bluegrass sound in California. In this issue, however, she sets aside her guitar and autoharp for a moment to describe her bluegrass roots in Pennsylvania Dutch country.

RAY EDLUND lives in Oakland. He is just coming off a term as president of the CBA and is known for his fabulous bluegrass record collection, his every-other Friday "Pig In A Pen" show on KPFA, and his affinity for Rainier Ale. Ray works for the State of California in transportation planning, particularly bike paths.

BURNEY GARELICK of San Francisco has been editing the Bluegrass Breakdown since before it even had a name. The newsletter is a consistently good product, and Burney can take the credit for a lot of hard work and imagination. This year she is also CBA 2nd Vice President (membership chairman).

CAROL MASTERS - well! after two years as secretary, I get to not take notes at a CBA meeting. This year I am Chairman of the Board which, frankly, may finish me for good. I live in Redwood City.

ED PAGTER lives in Santa Clara, has served as CBA treasurer and is now secretary. Ed is a hard worker and can be identified at CBA events as the loudmouth with the pipe and hat.

JAY QUESENBERRY of San Jose is the new president and vice-chairman of the Board. It is impossible to list all that Jay has done for the Association--he was a founding member, vice-president for 2 years, steady influence--and besides, he's a great picker.



SUE SHELASKY of Novato was elected to the Board in March. She is known throughout the Bay Area as an accomplished bluegrass musician, and she is currently with Done Gone. In this issue, she takes a break from her fiddle to describe the early history of Bay Area bluegrass--the first of a series of articles.

Keep in touch with the Directors--by mail, phone, carrier pigeon, etc. We need your input. Please consider holding an office in the CBA yourself. Though we have all been heard to curse one another's ancestry from time to time, it's been a rewarding experience and a real chance to do something to further bluegrass music. We may not always cover ourselves with glory--but then, where else can you while away 4 or 5 fun-filled hours in a business meeting with sidelines of picking and beer drinking?!

Carol Masters  
Chairman  
Board of Directors

P.S. Despite the sexual majority on the Board, we have no intention of starting a matriarchal organization. Oh, yes, and according to Roberts Rules, "chairperson" is not an accepted form. But I'll forego "madame chairman"--which sounds like Sally Stanford--for "hey, you" or "if I don't get a chance to talk, I'm leavin' this--meeting!"

C.M.



## Fiddle Champions

April 22-23, Fresno

This year the California State Fiddle Champion was decided by a playoff of the winners of the five divisions, as listed:

### Men's Division

- 1st-Dwayne Youngblood, Visalia
- 2nd-Vern Keathley, Manteca
- 3rd-Bob Diefendorfer, Oakdale
- 4th-Coy Daily, Salida
- 5th-Jay Belt, Salinas
- 6th-Paul Shelasky, Novato
- 7th-Tiny Moore, Sacramento
- 8th-Roscoe White, Lakewood
- 9th-Hughey Smith, Bakersfield
- 10th-Rudy Darling, Grass Valley

### Ladies' Division

- 1st-Laurie Lewis, Fairfax
- 2nd-Francis Anderson, Redding
- 3rd-Julie Steiner, Cottonwood
- 4th-Ruby Zang, North Highlands
- 5th-Evelyn Zelazny, Red Bluff

### Junior Division (under 18)

- 1st-Jeannette Beyer, Redding
- 2nd-Marcie Errecart, Citrus Heights
- 3rd-Charlotte Hopper
- 4th-Marcy McCarthy
- 5th-Sherry Neal

### Junior-Junior Division (under 13)

- 1st-J'anna Jacoby, Redding
- 2nd-Heather Bennett
- 3rd-Lisa Procknow
- 4th-Mat Greif
- 5th-Stacey Pagter, Santa Clara

### Senior Division (over 65)

- 1st-Virg Evans, Santa Cruz
- 2nd-Ed Graham, Fresno
- 3rd-Chuck Beall, Rialto
- 4th-Oak Gibson, Citrus Heights

Results of the playoff are as follows:

- 1st & State Champion: Dwayne Youngblood
- 2nd-J'anna Jacoby
- 3rd-Laurie Lewis
- 4th-Virg Evans
- 5th-Jeanette Beyer

Jamming highlight of this year's contest was the surprise appearance of superfiddler and esteemed gentleman, Byron Berline, who inspired an all-night session by the pool of the Sheraton Inn.

# 2ND ANNUAL BLUEGRAS

## JUNE

Nevada County Fair  
ARKANS

BUFFALO BOB AND THE  
COUNTRY HAM • DONE  
GOOD OL' PERSONS • HIGH  
NEW TONTO BASIN BOYS  
BILL WHITE •  
THE FOGGY MO

GENERAL  
Fri. 4.00 • Sat.  
3 Day Advance  
GRAND

FOR MORE  
INFORMATION  
OR ADVANCE  
TICKETS  
(CHECK OR MONEY ORDER)  
WRITE TO:  
BURNETT BARRETT  
35 1/2 VALLEY ST.  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA.

Fri. \$1.00 • Sat. \$2  
3 DAY ADVANCE

Advance Tickets

Dogs are disco  
and a fee of





# GRASS VALLEY FESTIVAL

7, 18, 19

grounds, Grass Valley

S SHEIKS

COUNTRY BUTTER BAND

ONE • GOOD 'N' COUNTRY

COUNTRY • LOST HIGHWAY

• RIVER CITY RAMBLERS

THE VERN WILLIAMS BAND

MTAIN CLOGGERS



## FESTIVAL VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED!

If you would like to participate in the administration of this festival, please contact any of the following committee chairmen to be assigned your duties. If we all work together, we can make this a successful and enjoyable occasion for everyone.

### Overall Festival Coordinator

Ron Masters - (415) 365-0198

### Publicity

Lars Bourne - (408) 227-4640 (home)  
(408) 289-5502 (work)

### Booths & Concessions\*

Bob Brittain - (707) 485-0258

### Stage Management & Band Coordination

Ray Edlund - (415) 530-8887

### Grounds Maintenance (Stage Construction)

Bill Anderson in Nevada City  
via Ron Masters (415) 365-0198

### Membership & Information

Burney Garelick - (415) 282-5833

### Security

Carol Masters - (415) 365-0198

\*ANYONE WISHING TO SET UP A CRAFTS OR RECORD BOOTH OR A FOOD CONCESSION SHOULD CONTACT BOB IMMEDIATELY TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS.

.....  
PUBLIC GBA MEMBERS

100 • Sun 5.00 { Fri 2.00 • Sat 2.50 • Sun 2.50

\$12.00 { 3 Day Advance \$6.00

2EN CHILDREN

1 • Sun \$2.00 { Fri 50¢ • Sat 1.00 • Sun 1.00

4.00 { 3 DAY ADVANCE 2.00

Sales for Three Day Package only.

aged. All dogs must be on leash  
3.00 per day will be charged. ←

GRASS VALLEY BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL  
RULES AND REGULATIONS

Welcome to Grass Valley! The CBA welcomes you and hopes you will enjoy the fine pickin' and this beautiful location. In the interest of a smoothly running festival, the following rules have been established.

1. Only persons with valid membership cards in their possession at time of entry at the Main Gate will receive reduced membership rates.
2. The cleanliness of the grounds and restrooms must be maintained. Deposit all trash in the available bins. Inspect your campsite carefully before you leave, and clear it of any trash or other debris.
3. Fire danger is extremely high. No open campfires are allowed! Maintain a close watch on campstoves, barbecues, lanterns, etc. and make sure they are completely extinguished when they are not in use.
4. Under no circumstances is the water ditch through the fairgrounds to be used for wading, drinking, washing, trash disposal, or any other purpose. Children should be kept from the ditch area. This is a part of the City of Grass Valley water supply.
5. Dogs are discouraged at the festival. A \$3.00/day charge will be made for all dogs on the grounds. Dogs must be leashed and tagged with a festival ID band. Dogs without an ID band, or dogs running loose, will be removed from the grounds. Dogs are not permitted in the area of the water ditch or stage area at any time.
6. Please conserve water and electricity. No bathing in the restrooms, please! Campers and RVs may draw electrical power only from designated outlets.
7. The consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited in the stage area, and elsewhere where signs are posted. The security personnel will enforce this regulation strictly. Violators will be ejected.
8. No firearms and no drugs.
9. Picking sessions at all hours are, of course, a standard fixture at festivals. Please note, however, that there are private residences within shouting distance. Be considerate.
10. Each person (adult and child) attending the festival must wear an ID band issued at the gate. (Exception: Friday night concert goers will not be issued an ID band.) ID bands will be checked on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Those with no ID band on Saturday, or with a white band on Sunday may purchase the necessary tickets at the gate, or leave the premises. Red bands are for those attending on or through Sunday. **DO NOT REMOVE YOUR ID BAND! REPLACEMENT WILL BE MADE ONLY WITH THE PURCHASE OF ANOTHER TICKET.**
11. Problems or questions regarding the grounds, facilities, rules, etc. should be addressed to those at the CBA Membership and Information Booth. Lost and found service and minor first aid (bandaids, etc.) will also be provided at the Information Booth.
12. The security personnel are charged with enforcement of these regulations and any others which may be instituted by the fairgrounds management. The CBA reserves the right to have removed from the grounds any flagrant violator of these regulations, persons becoming violent or abusive, or those conducting themselves in a manner offensive or injurious to others or inimical to the spirit of the festival.



# Doppling in Pennsylvania Dutch

by Judie Cox

Early German-speaking immigrants to William Penn's colony were originally called Pennsylvania Deutsch, later altered to "Dutch". After crossing the Atlantic in the 17th century, they settled in such areas as Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Some were Mennonites from Switzerland and Holland. Others came from Bohemia. Many came from the Rhineland in Germany. Over the years the Pennsylvania Dutch, who in reality are mostly Germanic rather than Holland Dutch, have become synonymous with the Amish. The latter is a religious group named after Jakob Ammann, a Swiss Mennonite leader on one of the first boatloads of immigrants.

Being a born native of Pennsylvania, and having spent my entire life there, I would like to share with you some comments on the Pennsylvania Dutch. My ancestors on my mother's side were all German (that is, Pennsylvania Dutch or Amish). There are two different types of Amish: the plain, still living the ways of their forefathers, and the fancy, having progressed to more modern ways through the years. We are the fancy, meaning we believe in electricity, use automobiles, and have curtains on our windows. But many of my relatives are Dunkards, which is a rather strict religion similar to the Mennonites and the Brethren.

The Amish are also known for their fine traditional cooking and, I might add, -- eating. Boiled potpies head the list along with famous soups like Chicken Corn Soup, one of my specialties. They also love desserts such as pies, puddings, and just plain down-to-earth sweets. The tale that the Pennsylvania Dutch housewife puts "seven sweets and seven sour" on the table is not really true. No one really counts them; you just keep putting on the dishes till the table is full!

We Pennsylvanians use quite a few colloquial expressions of our own, not familiar to people from other states. Some of the traditional expressions used all over Pennsylvania include "redding up" instead of cleaning up the house, "slippy" instead of slippery, and "nibby" instead of nosy. When at the supper table and the jelly or butter or whatever has been consumed, we say it is "all"--not all gone, just all.

I could go on, but I want to turn to some of the fuller expressions used commonly among the Pennsylvania Dutch, which have passed into folklore. Such as, "Look the window out and see who's comin' the yard in!" (I use that one myself), or "I belled the door but it didn't make so I bumped." (which means the doorbell wasn't working).

Expressions used at the table include "Don't eat yourself full, there's pie back yet." Also, "The apple butter is all and I'm afraid the jelly won't reach." One I especially like is, "Sarah, call Amos from the woodpile in, Mom's on the table and Pa's half et, already."

When young folks get to courtin', there are sayings such as, "Katie, do you want to go for steady or just for so?" Or, "I'd like to get went with but the boys aren't so much for me." Also, "Rebecca wants marryin' she ain't so long eighteen."

When it comes to housework, sayings like this are natural: "Mom's got no time to doppel, she's wonderful busy today." And "Come, let's make the dishes away, and then we'll set ourselves awhile!"

For outside chores, things like this pop up: "Amos, load the wagon off and hitch the horses out." Or, "Go tie the dog loose and don't forget to outen the lights. Then make the gate open and leave the geese loose."

To end my summary of Pennsylvania Dutch dialect, two last expressions are: "The schoolhouse just left itself out" and "Where at does Miss Moore school teach now?"

These are just a few of the humorous and unique sayings that are used from day-to-day back where I come from. I'm proud of these people and happy to write about some of the language and history of these fine folks. If you ever get a chance to go to Pennsylvania, make it a point to visit the Pennsylvania Dutch country--where the "food makes for good eatin'" and the "countryside, nice it is, ain't?"

# GRASS ROOTS

by Sue Shelasky

## EARLY BAY AREA BLUEGRASS, PART I

The state of bluegrass music in the San Francisco Bay Area seems to be healthy right now. Yet, it's still hard to make a living playing this music. One reason is that there are so many bands concentrated in a relatively small area. In any case, judging by the listings in Bluegrass Unlimited, the Bay Area seems to have an above average number of places that have bluegrass music on a regular basis. There are also many music stores specializing in acoustic instruments, books to learn banjo or guitar with tablature, and teachers.

For those of us who have only been interested in bluegrass for the last several years, it is hard to image what it was like trying to learn to play without these resources being so easily available. But for the earliest bluegrass musicians around here, the situation was very different than it is now. They would have to search through Country & Western record bins with the hope of finding a bluegrass record. They would have to send back east to have a banjo neck made because there were no instrument makers here. Since fiddlers and bass players were scarce 15 or 20 years ago, most of the early bands were limited to banjo, guitar, and mandolin.

### THE FIRST BAY AREA BAND: MAYNE SMITH

Mayne Smith was one of the very first bluegrass musicians in this area. He did some singing in church and started playing Pete Seeger-style banjo at age 15 or 16. He performed with Neil Rosenberg as a folk duo, a jug band, and a blues band with Scott Hambly in the last years of high school. Mayne and Neil both went to Oberlin College in Ohio, and it was there, in a friend's room at the dorm, that they first heard what was probably the "Foggy Mountain Jamboree" record by Flatt & Scruggs. Mayne says, "I didn't want to like it--because it was just, technically, so much more demanding than anything that had ever really struck me as being. . .within my realm of musical involvement. It just scared me. I didn't want to want to do it because I knew that it would just involve me in something really heavy, and it would take a long time before I'd be able to satisfy myself or anybody else at it. . ." But within a few months he was "bitten."

In the spring of 1958 Mayne visited Jeremy and Alice Foster (now Alice Seeger), who had connections with the Washington, D.C. bluegrass scene. "There were people like Mike Seeger and others who had been out taping live performances of the Stanley Brothers and other people at the New River Ranch and they had a shelf full of this stuff. . .I lay on the floor for two days and just soaked up the Stanley Brothers. . .The Stanley Brothers are really kind of somehow my center of what bluegrass is about still."

Around this time, Scott Hambly was a student at UC. He started out playing blues guitar, then got into the mandolin. He had records that no one else had at that time--Reno & Smiley, the Stanley Brothers, and maybe even Bill Monroe.

That summer, Neil, Scott, Mayne, and Pete Berg formed a band called the Redwood Canyon Ramblers. They played occasional jobs around the East Bay. Two years later (when Mayne had not gone back to Oberlin that winter), Neil brought back a fiddler, Frank Miller. With Neil on banjo, Mayne on guitar, Scott on mandolin, Tom Glass on bass, and Frank on fiddle, they performed in Berkeley in 1960. It was this concert that was to influence many future bluegrass musicians.

### BILL MONROE AT THE DREAM BOWL

Around 1959-60 Mayne saw his first live bluegrass band at the Dream Bowl in Napa. Performing that night in the ballroom that was once an airplane hangar was none other than Bill Monroe. Mayne described what it was like being amongst 200-300 people, some of whom tried to dance to the music. "I was right up there--3 or 4 feet from the stage. Jack Cooke was playing guitar with them. . .I learned so much about bluegrass guitar in about 3 bars of "Uncle Pen". . . The banjo player was Billy Ray (who later played with The Kentucky Colonels). He was about 17 years old. His face looked like he had rigor mortis: he looked like he was scared to death! But he played all right. I don't remember who the fiddle player was, which tells you where my consciousness was at then."



## BLUEGRASS VS. THE BERKELEY FOLK SCENE

Of those early days, Mayne says, "We were kind of an embattled and somewhat embittered minority. . .a radical, super-progressive group in relation to the folk music scene. . .where still a great majority of people were playing nylon-stringed guitars and singing English ballads. . ." A major figure in the Berkeley folk scene once objected to Neil's banjo having a resonator because it was obviously not "authentic". And Neil and Mayne played the only steel-stringed guitars around!

After helping to start the bluegrass scene here, Mayne Smith has gone to other areas of music and to writing songs, about 10 of which have been recorded. He has also written about bluegrass; a condensed version of his Master's thesis appeared in the Journal of American Folklore. He now plays steel guitar and is currently playing with Mitch Greenhill; they may have a record out in the near future.

### BERT JOHNSON

Now playing mandolin and fiddle with A TOUCH OF GRASS, Bert Johnson is another one of the earliest bluegrass musicians in the Bay Area. Unlike the others in this article, Bert grew up hearing bluegrass and old-time music; his parents came here from Oklahoma, and two of his uncles play fiddle. Bert started playing mandolin at age 7, singing in church at 8, and later learned to play guitar and banjo. Bert had fairly easy access to learning materials. Besides his uncles, he says, "We had some records, some Bill Monroe records, Flatt & Scruggs, and the Stanley Brothers." He first played music with his uncle, James Henley; then he played on the Black-jack Wayne Show, and after that with Rick Shubb and Sandy Rothman in The Pine Ridge Ramblers. Bert has since played in many bands in this area, including The Hired Hands and, of course, A TOUCH OF GRASS (Tuesdays at Paul's Saloon). However, picking remains an avocation with him, and he has a full time day job.

## RICK SHUBB

Another one of the pioneers of bluegrass in the Bay Area is Rick Shubb. He started out playing finger-picking guitar after giving his older brother (who played folk music) a Merle Travis record for Christmas. "Travis was the very first thing that I heard that made me really sit up and listen and want to really learn to play music." He played guitar for one year. The following Christmas he gave his brother a Flatt & Scruggs album. "The first thing I heard was 'Flint Hill Special.' I just made up my mind right then that I had to learn to do that." Rick started on banjo by sneaking into his brother's room when he was gone and playing on his open-backed banjo. He was discovered when his brother, who didn't use picks, noticed pick marks on his banjo head. Rick's first banjo was an S.S. Stewart that he got for \$110 at Campbell Coe's Campus Music store in Berkeley. At that time, it was nearly impossible to find mandolins or Gibson banjos in local stores.

### HANGING OUT AT CAMPBELL COE'S

The first musician Rick played bluegrass with was Sandy Rothman. "We met at Campbell Coe's. We used to hang out there and wait to see if any other musicians would come in." Of the energy level of 15 year olds, Rick recalls, "We were absolute fanatics, just complete bluegrass freaks. I think that that's a really valuable phase for people to go through. . .maybe not essential, but it sure gave us a push toward maintaining momentum." Nowadays, the need to create that much energy to learn music seems to be optional rather than mandatory.

Rick and Sandy would hang out in Berkeley, trying to find other people who could play anything that was remotely bluegrass. They would play at beatnik parties and maybe find a guy who could play guitar. "The quest in those times, since musicians were so scarce, was to find people who played the right instruments and get a five-piece band. . .It's hard to conceive of that now because it's so easy to find musicians. Nowadays, the main difficulty is finding people at compatible levels, so that nobody's boring the other, or passing the other by. I think that Sandy and I were very fortunate that we were at the same level when we met, and at the same age."

Their first major "find" at Campbell Coe's

store was a transplanted southerner named Roosevelt Watson. It was from him that Rick first learned what a Mastertone was, and who Bill Monroe was. He also turned them on to many "new" records such as those by Jimmy Martin. He also introduced them to Bert Johnson and James Henley.

The first live five-piece bluegrass band Rick and Sandy heard was the Redwood Canyon Ramblers at the 1960 Berkeley concert.

When Rick was about 16, Bert called him to play on the Blackjack Wayne Show. They would practice all Saturday morning; then they would go to the Channel 2 studio and play live--and absolutely cold! they couldn't warm up at all because there was another live show in the studio right before theirs. Then they would usually play at the Dream Bowl. "The job paid nothing! But somehow we didn't care." However, after repeatedly being promised pay for months of performing and never receiving anything, the novelty wore off, and they quit.

After that, Rick, Bert, and Sandy formed The Pine Ridge Ramblers.

"The first southern big-time bluegrass band that I saw," says Rick, "was Flatt & Scruggs. Curley Seckler was still with them, and Josh. . . . They were just great!" This was at Pauley Ballroom at U.C. Berkeley in about 1962. "The Stanley Brothers came out next. They had Vernon Derrick on fiddle and Curley Lambert on mandolin and no bass." Monroe came out again in 1963. "He had Bill Keith on banjo, Del McCoury on guitar, Bessie Lee Maudlin on bass, and Kenny Baker on fiddle. It was the first I heard Monroe live, and I was just at the point of really getting into him. It was a real big night for me. I heard Keith play 'Devil's Dream' and blew my mind. I went home and stayed up all night and learned to play that tune."

Since then, Rick has played in many bands in the Bay Area with the likes of Vern Williams and Ray Park, Doc Watson, David Grisman, Butch Waller, and others.



The Pine Ridge Ramblers w/ (l to r) Rick Shubb, Bert Johnson, and Sandy Rothman circa 1960.

For the past two years Rick has been living in Oregon and plays on a recently released album "Shubb, Wilson and Shubb--Live" for Pacifica records. With guitarist Bob Wilson of the East Bay and bassist Markie Shubb, their music is a unique blend of bluegrass and jazz. As a banjo teacher, Rick has taught many of the best and most promising banjo players in this area. He is also known as a talented artist and inventor.

There may have been some psychological advantage to learning bluegrass in the early days. Rick points out, "Even when I was still playing on my brother's banjo and had the very crudest basic roll, it sounded so great to me, you know, that I would be happy with that. I didn't have people all around me that knew a bunch of hot licks to intimidate me and so anything I had was better than nothing. Anything was a positive factor above zero. It seems to me that that's a really healthy way to learn. You learn slowly; you evolve instead of trying to cram things in. If you learn too fast, you don't develop certain habits that will serve you well in the long run."

Thanks to these pickers, Bay Area bluegrass is more accessible to all of us today. They have provided resources, encouragement, and reinforcement that have helped popularize bluegrass with musicians and audiences, and we are grateful to them.

There are many other people who were playing bluegrass in the early 60s. Their stories will be told in Part II.



# Record Review

by Nevil Kunezra

## J.D. CROWE AND THE NEW SOUTH LIVE: HOLIDAY IN JAPAN

(Side 1) East Virginia Blues, Bugle Call Rag, You Don't Know My Mind, Flint Hill Special, Free Born Man, Nashville Skyline Rag, Molly and Tenbrooks. (Side 2) I'm Walking, Draggin' The Bow, Fire On The Mountain, Take This Hammer, Born To Be With You, Train 45.

I love J.D. Crowe's banjo playing. Classical without being stuffy. Hot and jazzy yet true to the hard-core Scruggs tradition. (How does he do that?) And he has never sounded better than with the musicians he took over to Japan with him in the summer of '75: Tony Rice, guitar and lead vocals; Ricky Skaggs, mandolin, fiddle, vocals, and blabbermouth; Jerry Douglas, dobro (he's a great one); and Bobby Slone, bass, fiddle. This was a high-powered band in every way. No one who saw them at Paul's Saloon prior to their Japan tour will ever forget it. (In fact, they were far better at Paul's than on this album.) They disbanded upon completion of the Japan tour.

The choice of material is excellent. J.D. relies heavily on songs that represent the essence of classical bluegrass, but he always comes up with contemporary material to enhance his repertoire. And when he does this, it works. There's a lesson in the way J.D. selects and interprets non-bluegrass songs that "new grass" bands need to learn.

Thousands of enthused Japanese cheer the New South's every move wildly, even their mistakes. The band starts things out with a spirited though a bit ragged "East Virginia Blues," and then does an even more ragged "Bugle Call Rag." They must have been a little nervous at first because I'm not accustomed to hearing a J.D. Crowe band execute any way but flawlessly. By the time Side 2 begins, however, their music is so tight you can't believe it. The last two songs, "Born To Be With You" and "Train 45," are so fast and clean they scare you to death.

If I had one wish it would be that none of the tacky goings-on between songs had been preserved for posterity, as they will give most people a deep sense of shame. I'm serious. Ricky Skaggs can be the most disgusting, tasteless MC imaginable. His idea

of putting on a bluegrass show for Japanese is to mock both bluegrass and the people of Japan. He does an imitation of Bill Monroe which is witless and mean-spirited. (However, the band as a whole does a very clever Flatt & Scruggs imitation on "Take This Hammer," I must admit.) Skaggs does several imitations of Japanese people saying "ah so" and confusing their Rs and Ls. (Clever, huh? Original too.) He's a real cheap-shot artist, and I find his behavior here disturbing and unforgivable. It is too bad when representatives of our music demonstrate to the rest of the world that they possess no more sensitivity or good judgment than a Kentucky Fried Chicken.

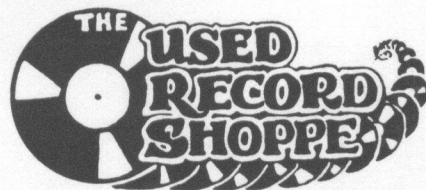
Furthermore, it is only too obvious that the band was on the verge of disbanding. Besides the "loose" MC work, there are a surprising number of mental lapses both, vocal and instrumental, indicating boredom with the material, and lots of musical self-indulgence, such as dragging out certain songs (e.g. "Free Born Man," "You Don't Know My Mind," and particularly "Fire On The Mountain," which is given several undeserved encores) for no apparent reason.

Yes, as great as he is, J.D. comes up with some strange moves, all right. Remember the New South's previous record? If you got a copy early, you received a different album cover than presently available. You see, it was discovered after distribution that J.D. was giving "the finger" to the whole world on the original cover. Weird.

### Highlights:

I'm Walking  
Born To Be With You  
Train 45

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**CALIFORNIA BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION**

**Treasurer's Report**

For the Period

1/1/77 thru 3/31/77

	AMOUNT	PERCENT	BREAKDOWN
<u>INCOME:</u>			
Membership Dues	\$ 776.50	45.3%	
Bluegrass Breakdown Sales	28.00	1.7%	
Events:			
Berkeley - 3/27	905.58	52.9%	Admissions       \$730.25 Refreshments     175.33
Event Totals	905.58	52.9%	
Other Income	3.00	0.2%	Breakdown classified ad
INCOME TOTALS	1,713.08	100.0%	
<u>EXPENSES:</u>			
Bluegrass Breakdown	297.29	42.1%	
Directors' Expenses	61.16	8.7%	
Administrative Expenses	32.36	4.6%	
Events:			
Berkeley - 3/27	291.98	42.4%	Publicity         \$ 24.69 Site Use Fee     130.00 Musicians        0.00 Sound System     50.00 Refreshments     87.29
Event Totals	291.98	41.4%	
Other Expenses	22.81	3.2%	\$15.08 and \$7.73 for publicity expenses for Fairfield (9/26/76) and Stockton (12/12/76), respectively
EXPENSES TOTALS	705.60	100.0%	
<u>RECAP TOTALS:</u>			
Beginning Balance	375.22		
Total Income	1,713.08		
Total Expenses	705.60		
Ending Balance	\$1,382.70		
			Submitted by: Ron Masters Treasurer



## CBA BAND REGISTRY/MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name of Band \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Members \_\_\_\_\_

\$5.00 per person per year  
(minimum 3 persons per band, maximum 7)

Name of Contact Individual \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number(s): Area Code \_\_\_\_\_ Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Area Code \_\_\_\_\_ Number \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:

Treasurer

California Bluegrass Association

P.O. Box 11287

San Francisco, CA 94101

TOTAL ENCLOSED \_\_\_\_\_

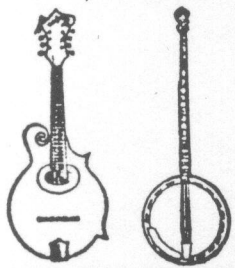
Each band is entitled to receive one BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN; each band member is entitled to a membership card in the band's name, to be retained by the band upon departure of that member. Each member of the band is entitled to one vote and to all membership privileges.

Please indicate the type of music you play:  
☐ Bluegrass  
☐ Old-Time (eg fiddle)  
☐ Gospel  
☐ Other or combination

Specify the instruments played

Please indicate regular playing jobs for listing in the Bluegrass Billboard section of the BREAKDOWN. If you do not have regular jobs, you will be listed as "No set gigs; for bookings contact (Contact Individual you list) \_\_\_\_\_."

California  
Bluegrass Assn.



Founded in 1975 and dedicated to the furtherance of Bluegrass, Gospel, and Old-Time music. Each member family 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. \$3.75 of the \$7.50 is for a subscription to BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN for one year.

## SINGLE OR FAMILY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

This membership application is for single or family application. A family is defined as the two adult spouses and all children under the age of 16 years. There must be a main applicant at \$7.50 per year, and the spouse may be included for an additional sum of \$2.50. All eligible children may be included for the sum of \$1 (no voting right for children).

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KERS (90.7 FM) Sacramento  
Monday - 7:00-9:00 PM  
"High & Lonesome" w/Mel Smothers

KKUP (91.5 FM) Cupertino  
Sunday - 6:00-9:00 PM  
"Folk For You" w/Steve Yerkes

KKUP (91.5 FM) Cupertino  
Sunday - 9:00-Midnight  
"Stompin' Steve's Cupertino Barndance"

KKUP (91.5 FM) Cupertino  
Saturday - 3:00-6:00 PM  
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KLIL (94.6 FM) Ukiah  
Saturday - 9:00-10:00 AM  
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"Pig In A Pen" w/Ray Edlund

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Bluegrass w/Cousin Al Knoth

KVRE (99.3 FM) Santa Rosa  
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"Uncommon Country" w/Kate Wolf

KSTN (107.3 FM) Stockton  
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Bill Robertson's Show - bluegrass,  
fiddling, country, etc.

KRED (14.40 FM) Arcata  
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Bluegrass w/The Wildwood Music Co.

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