

BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

VOLUME 7 NUMBER 6



Monroe & Stanley Concert

Banjo Tab

**Grass Valley
Reviewed**



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 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 315-350). Postmaster, please send address changes to:

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Board meetings are usually held the second Sunday of each month and all members are invited and encouraged to attend. Contact any one of the Board of Directors for details.



A hearty thanks to all who have contributed to this issue. The Bluegrass Breakdown is always pleased to receive articles, photographs, artwork, letters, etc. Send all contributions to the above address, Attn/Editor. A final thanks to Pronto Press of San Rafael for printing this issue.



The cover photographs were taken by Pete Wise at the San Mateo Center for the Performing Arts on October 8, 1981. The lower right picture is of Bill Monroe and Ralph Stanley and the upper left is CBA president, Butch Waller, picking up Bill's mandolin to play a break to rawhide with the "Bluegrass Boys."

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THIS N' THAT

The big news for this issue of the Breakdown is the change in editorship. It's hard to imagine this publication without the personal touch and guiding hand of Steve Pottier. For the benefit of the newer CBA members (or for those who may have forgotten), Steve took over the editorship two years ago and since that time has upgraded the Bluegrass Breakdown into a quality magazine of which the CBA can be proud. He has made the Breakdown a publication that is informative, educational, and entertaining (if not, at times, controversial), all on a very limited budget but with an unlimited amount of his time. Though Steve is retiring from both the board of directors and his duties as the editor, it is hoped that he will still keep his hand in the CBA, for he has been such a motivating force behind so many of the CBA activities and events in the past, and I know we could continue to use his enthusiasm, energy, and concern for the promotion of fine bluegrass in the future.

With the festival season past, and as we head into the winter months, things always seem to slow down in the world of bluegrass. The month of October, however, brought a wealth of bluegrass to the Bay Area. Of course having Bill Monroe and Ralph Stanley on a double bill was a thrill for all. (See Elliot Stewart's review on page 12.)

On October 24 the band "Spectrum"--a rather eclectic group featuring Bela Fleck, Jimmy Gaudreau, Glenn Lawson, and Mark Schatz--gave a performance at Paul's Saloon.

Doyle Lawson, J.D. Crowe, and Bobby Hicks were also in the area for a week or so. They joined in the studio with Tony Rice and Todd Phillips to do a follow-up to their previous Rounder "Bluegrass Album."

After a week of recording, they came out of the studio as a very tight band and gave a knock-out performance at the Great American Music Hall. Such an aggregation

☆☆☆ New Editor ☆☆☆

I'd like to introduce the new editor of the Bluegrass Breakdown--Stan Miller. I had been thinking about retiring from the editorship for some time, but was hesitant to turn it over to just anyone. When I heard Stan was interested, I immediately asked him how soon he could take over, for I can think of no one else that I could be so confident would do a great job.

Stan is the mandolin player for the "New Done Gone Band" and a crafter of superb mandolins. He is also an experienced printer and has worked on the actual printing of the Breakdown for some time. His care, attention to detail, and good sense of taste is evident in all his work, and I'm sure it will carry over to the newsletter.

I imagine Stan will bring in some new ideas and inspire some new contributors to the Breakdown, and I look forward to that. Also, I hope to contribute some as I get the time and inclination. I hope the readers will continue to send those great letters, just to keep Stan on his toes. Best wishes to the new editor, Stan Miller!

--Steve Pottier--

of outstanding Bluegrass musicians is a rare thing indeed, especially on the West Coast, and I'm sure all who saw the show came away feeling very lucky to have experienced it.

Bill Harrel and the Virginians has been confirmed as the headline act for the June Grass Valley festival. Bill's warm voice was teamed with Don Reno for 10 years of wonderful music. Since 1977 Bill has been working with his own group, and the June festival will mark their first appearance on the West Coast.

A number of bands are sporting a new look this fall...Frank Wakefield has been performing with a new group lately. Veteran Joe Deetz continues to play banjo, while Milos Sonka is playing rhythm guitar and singing lead, and Steve Pottier is working as the bass player.

(continued on page 2)

Board Meeting



Board of Directors: Mike Johnson(MJ), Laurie Lewis(LL), Carl Pagter(CP), Steve Pottier(SP), Don Powell(DP), Sue Shelasky-Walters(SS), Kathy Tyler(KT), Butch Waller(BW), Karen Walter(KW).

Meeting of October 11, 1981--LL absent

Board approves ticket prices for Country Gazette concert. \$5.00 for CBA members and \$6.00 for non-members.

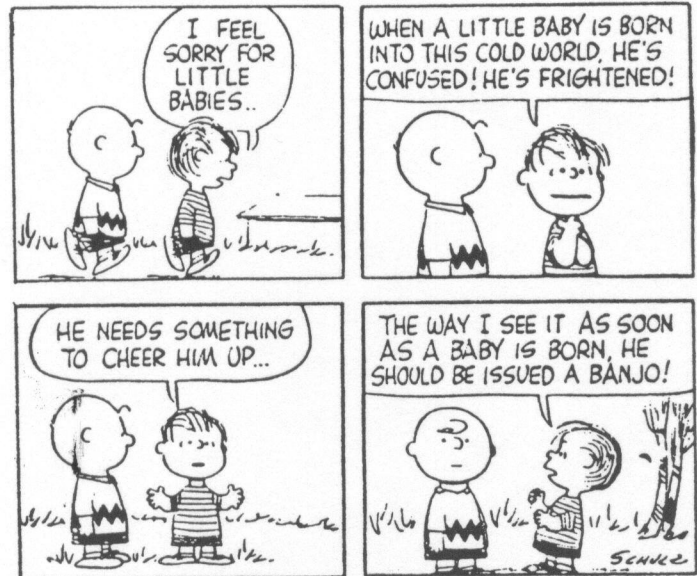
Board approves funds for retention of legal counsel if such action is ever necessitated.

Board votes to negotiate with the Seldom Scene and the Bluegrass Cardinals for the September festival.

Board votes to inquire about the possibility of hiring Bill Harrel for the June festival. If unavailable, approaching the Goins Brothers, the Country Gentleman, Joe Val, and Dave Evans.

Board approves Don Powell as liason person with Golden West Security.

The next Board meeting will be at 1:30 on November 8th at Kathy Tyler's, 36381 Barnard St., Newark.



This n' That (continued)

"High Country" has acquired ex-"Squid" mandolinist, Larry ("Bad News") Hughes as rhythm guitarist and vocalist. Those who might have heard Larry singing with the "Squids" at the September will know what an outstanding singer he is. Also new to the band is bassist, Steve Swan. Steve lives in Sacramento and is getting to know Interstate 80 quite well.

Tom Bekeny is no longer with "Grant Street." He is presently playing fiddle and electric mandolin with a country & western group called "Silver Saddle." Speaking of "Grant Street," they spent a good part of October touring the Northwest and have recently released a 45 record.

"A Touch of Grass" has come out with an album. It is available for \$7.00 by mailing a check to "A Touch of Grass," P.O. Box 62492, Sunnyvale, Ca. 94088.

News Flash!



On October 25th the annual election for the board of directors was held. Only 239 votes were cast, which is not enough for a quorum, but unless the election is contested the new board is as follows:

Butch Waller
Mike Johnson
Kathy Tyler
Karen Walter
Carl Pagter
Don Powell
Mark Hogan
Sue Smith
Sandy Lipsky



LETTERS!

Dear Editor,

I propose that the following rules be rigidly enforced at Grass Valley:

- 1) No inanimate objects over three feet tall within 500 feet of the stage.
- 2) All bluegrass vocalists must first pass the audition at the metropolitan Opera.
- 3) All couples under 21 must have marriage certificates.
- 4) All senior citizens must prove they aren't senile.

Bob Hueneman

Dear Editor,

I would like to make a few comments on the June and September festivals in Grass Valley, '81.

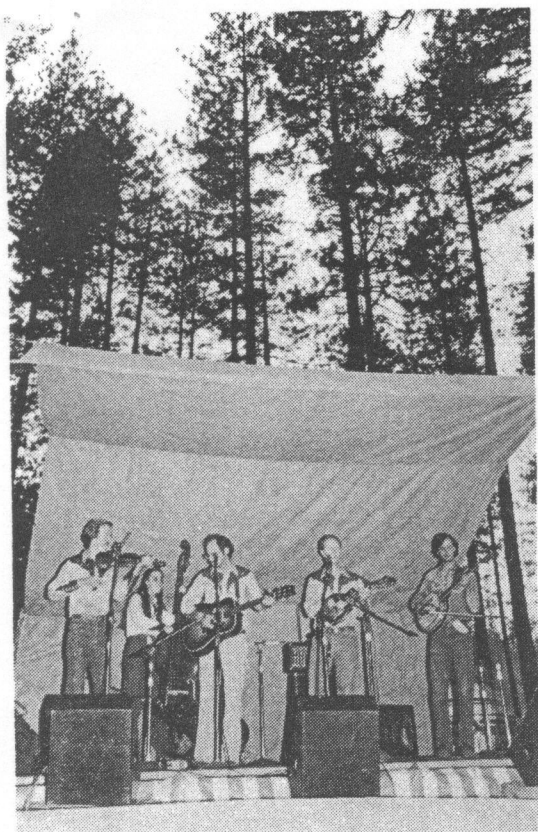
It takes a good audience for a successful event--we sure have that at our festivals. They support the bands and musicians very good. I think the band selections were very good at both festivals. As usual our security was good, clean-up was very good, MC-ing was good, stage management was very good. Sound system was good. Volunteer work was great. The first aid station was very alert. As usual the wee morning jamming in the woods was great. Would like to thank Violet Lankford for coming out in the audience to find me to volunteer to play on the Sunday morning gospel in the September festival--thanks to Keith Little playing guitar for me. Also thanks to Laurie Lewis for the harmonica workshop which was volunteer also, with good help from

Keith Little and Jack Leiderman. Our harmonica workshop has really progressed, everybody playing harmonica and singing together. But the highlight of the harmonica workshop was the playing of two harmonica tunes by a lady harmonica player from Sacramento, Tina O'Sullivan. Tina has played 50 years and I've played 51 years, so that is 101 years of harmonica playing.

I would like to announce my up-coming birthday events: Saturday night, January 2nd at the Freight and Salvage, 1827 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 415-548-1761. Then Sunday afternoon, January 3rd at Wayne and Hazel Williams Friensly Country Bar, 3354 E. Castro Valley Blvd., Castro Valley, 415-582-5575. All musicians welcomed for a bang-up good time. In closing I would like to thank the CBA members and all CBA directors for letting me be a part of the festivals in 1981. If my health will let me keep playing my harmonica, I would like to be a part of the 1982 festival.

A friend to all,
Bill White





WESTERN PACIFIC

IN THE PINES, IN THE PINES...

THE 1981 FALL

GRASS VALLEY FESTIVAL

IN RETROSPECT

by Robbie Macdonald
photography by Pete Wise



The September Grass Valley festival is by far my favorite of the two CBA events. It has much less of the frantic, claustrophobic feeling of the last few June festivals. The campground fills more slowly and the level of activity and noise builds at a less jarring pace. There is still a sizeable enough crowd to provide an ample audience for the increasingly high quality music. I heard a lot of good music through the weekend and was impressed with the level of performance of nearly every musician on stage. There are so many able pickers around compared to ten or twelve years ago that the CBA's selection committees must choose more or less equally among fifty "local" bands for eight or nine spots per festival. It would be interesting to speculate that the resulting competition for working space in the Northern California scene is at least in part responsible for the professionalism of the local musicians. Almost all of the emerging and longstanding bands have put together strong presentations these days, a topic which will come up in many of the reviews.

Weather is an obvious factor in the success of any outdoor event; the combination of pleasantly warm days and

chill-free nights provided an optimum environment for the festival. The heat in June seemed to leave a lot of people in a semi-permanent stupor (why else would anyone sit in the hot sun for six hours?). The weather in September was much easier on the energy supply of the audience.

I want to spend most of my time in this review talking about the music. Every band had something interesting to offer and there was quite a diversity of styles and sub-styles to listen to. There were four bands new to the festival- Lone



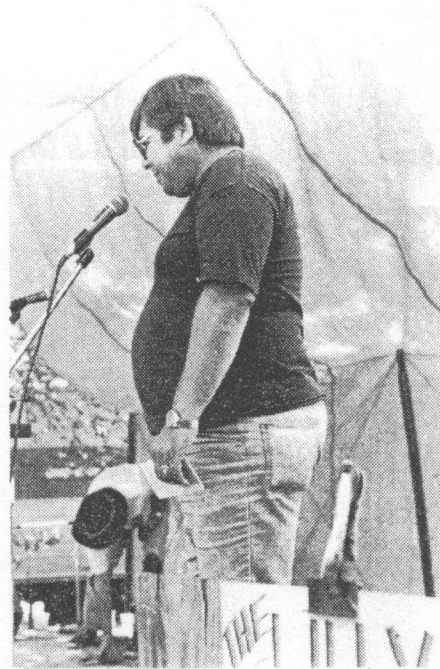
DON STOVER, MARK, EV, AND BEA LILLY



OVERLOOK MTN. BOYS



BETH WEIL AND COUSIN AL CUT FINE FIGURES AS MC'S



Star, The Blue Mountain Boys, The Squids, and The Lilly Brothers and Don Stover. (I might include The New Done Gone Band in this list since they have just one survivor from the original five.) I am going to categorize my comments loosely by style- the order is generally random and not meant to imply any rating.

* TRADITIONAL STYLES *

-The Lilly Brothers and Don Stover-

This band put on the best West Coast show of any Eastern band I have yet seen. I don't know of any two people besides Ev Lilly and Don Stover who could have talked about half of each set and not disappointed anyone. Both talked to the crowd like it was a living-room conversation and showed great senses of humor. They seemed totally at ease with the untested western audience and put everybody in a relaxed state. Their stage presence was a life saver, as neither Bea nor Ev was in strong voice and a lot of requests had to go unfilled. this was a shame as their recordings have contained some classis powerhouse bluegrass putting them in the top ranks of the original bands. The band sound was impressive, however, as instrumentally

and rhythmically everyone played strongly. It was interesting to watch Bea Lilly's thumb and finger style rhythm guitar playing; it was a bit different from anybody else's- he built a comples, sometimes rather syncopated rhythm that filled the sound nicely. I've always been impressed with Don Stover's banjo playing. He uses a highly imaginative version of a Scrugg's style and displays a right hand touch that puts him in a league with the likes of Sonny Osborne and J.D. Crowe. You might not realize the power of his attack unless you heard him beside other banjoists. His tendency is to be rather playful and sometimes free-form, but the core of his playing is most musical. The Lilly Brother's show is a wonderful example of what it must have been like at country music parks twenty or thirty years ago.

-The Blue Mountain Boys-

I remember the Blue Mountain Boys from a bluegrass band contest in Costa Mesa, Calif. around 1976. The top prize was around \$1500.00 (won by High Country) and they might have won but for a few technical errors. They were the only southern band there and were resplendent in their matching blue suits. They were a better band at Grass Valley. They had a tight sound and they performed the old songs with feeling and

strength. The fiddler had a soulful, straightforward style reminiscent of some of the Stanley Brothers' recordings. It's good to have this kind of working man's band at the festival- much of the traditional music in the country is kept alive by such bands.

-The Sawtooth Mountain Boys-

The Sawtooth Mountain Boys are among the finest traditional bluegrass on the West Coast. Steve Waller and Mike Eisler have kept a vintage-Country Gentlemen/Jimmy Martin sound alive since I can remember. The show is presented much like some of the old time bands: Steve's animated front work and his obvious belief in the band combined with their expert music are an unbeatable combination; their show really moves! While Steve's great en-



HAMMING IT UP WITH TOUCH OF GRASS

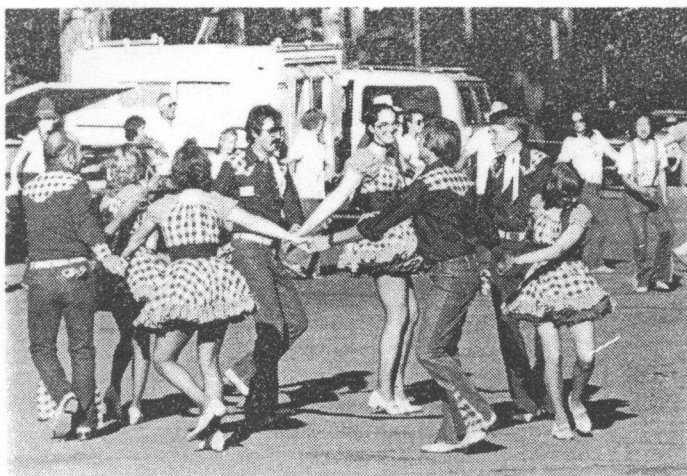


BILL WHITE AND KEITH LITTLE

ergy puts him at the center of attention, the contributions of banjoist Eisler and guitarist Hal Spence should be mentioned. Mike is one of the finest all around bluegrass musicians anywhere. His banjo playing is superb, much in the mold of the now seldom heard Bill Emerson. He is also an excellent fiddler and would be a welcome addition to any band in this capacity. Hal Spence has one of the best tenor voices anywhere- his super high and clear voice makes Sawtooth's harmonies sparkle. Steve, Mike, and Hal have sung together for years and it's a treat to hear such tight, well-phrased trios.

-Lost Highway-

Surely Lost Highway has the most fluid stage presence of any band within memory. They make it clear that their music is all important and they present it with the kind of dignity I like to see. It's a thankless task to present straight bluegrass to a largely indifferent and unknowledgeable public, but Lost Highway acts as if everyone understands its importance. At this festival their already tight sound was nicely completed by the increasingly ubiquitous Ed Neff, black belt fiddler. The band is a well balanced group that works well together at all times. They probably perform more than any other band on the west coast and they work the mikes well and get their sound out wonderfully. Lauren Seapy continues her all around great banjo playing and sounds even better with her recently acquired vintage Gibson banjo.



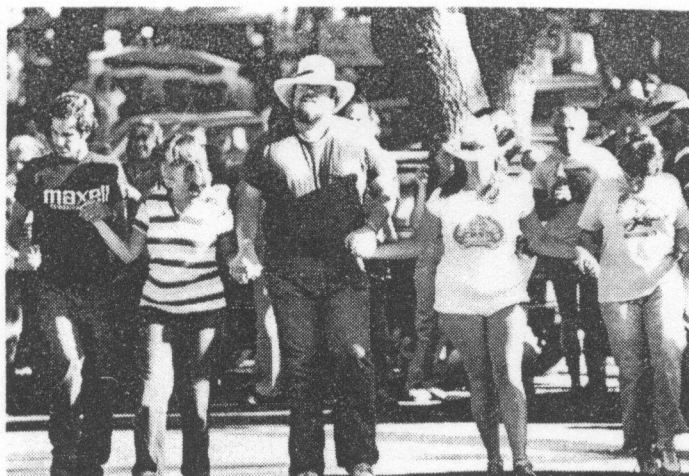
PROFESSIONAL CLOGGING

-Overlook Mountain Boys-

The Overlook Mt. Boys did some of the prettiest singing all weekend. They specialize in sweet harmonies and do a great job on the sentimental numbers. Their version of Ralph Stanley's "Old Love Letters" was a great example of capturing the feeling of old time singing. John Lytle should be recognized for being as good a lead guitarist as there is in the area; he's not flashy but his sense of taste and tone and his overall contribution to the band is tremendous. Like many of the bands at the festival, Overlook has been together more or less intact for quite a while and they've developed a nice consistent sound

-Western Pacific-

Western Pacific has evolved out of the venerable Bear Creek Boys from the Santa Cruz area. They're yet another example of a group of people who have played a lot with each other and are playing good music. They were one of the strongest singing bands at the festival, doing a nice variety of country and bluegrass songs. They have several combinations of voices that work well with each other and have a lot of different sounds. Paul King, Joe Kimbro, and Stanley Meidiger all sing excellent lead; Paul manages to sing with either Stanley or Joe like he was their brother. Stanley sings in a slightly lower pitch and the resulting harmonies have a mellowness of an old C&W duet. They do a lot of songs in F which I think is one of the prettiest



AMATUER CLOGGING

bluegrass keys. Geri King sings on many songs and does a nice high part on the popular C&W song "Amanda." Western Pacific also plays in a light electric mode with expert banjo player Mark McCornack doubling on pedal steel; this version also features a solid traditional country sound.

-The New Done Gone Band-

The NDGB wins the comeback of the year award. After a steady period of change in personel the band has rebuilt into one of the Bay Area's finest. It's rare that a group can achieve such solidarity in under a year, but the NDGB seems to enjoy playing with each other and they have worked hard to get things together. One way to get together quickly is to have a good rhythm section and Done Gone has a good one in Barb Stein (bass), Evan Morgan (guitar), and Stan Miller (mandolin). Their timing and at-



DON STOVER MEETS THE SQUIDS

tentiveness give the band a strong consistent sound. The groups singing is especially strong in their crisp harmonies but Stan Miller's powerful leads on straight bluegrass songs were very impressive. The bands style is based out of traditional bluegrass but they have a more modern bent than the above bands. They are fortunate to have Elliot Stewart emerging as the "Golden Throat of the Haight-Ashbury." Elliot is obviously a closet ham and enjoys the front person role, a role which he picked up very quickly. His droll spiel keeps the audience relaxed and his fellow band members loose, an asset for any band.

Done Gone has put together a great parody of all the most common requests. They cleverly arranged a couple of measures of 6 or 7 songs (Foggy Mt., Dueling Banjos, Fox on the Run, etc., etc.,) so that they flowed from one to another in an amusingly rapid-fire way. Ironically, the audience seemed to take the piece quite seriously.

* MODERN/NEWGRASS *

-Touch of Grass-

Touch of Grass remains one of the big audience favorites with their slick, folky music and largely well known repertoire. The band has gotten very tight in the last few years and with their broad appeal they could play successfully to non-bluegrass or even non-country music crowds. I especially like to watch their mandolinist, Bert Johnson, who was one of the first bluegrass mus-



LONE STAR



SQUIDS!!!(PETER ALLEN)

icians I saw in the Bay Area. He and Rick Shubb were doing a guitar-banjo duet at the MBJ Ranch Room (a pizza parlor in Palo Alto) in 1966. Bert has a great voice and a unique mandolin style that with his on and off stage exuberance makes him quite an entertaining musician.

-The High Window Boys-

The High Window Boys have changed character since I saw them last. They used to be a modern bluegrass band but now seem to be solidly newgrass. They are a talented group with Dave Dias' dobro and Walden Dahl's exquisite tenor standing out. They feature the lower more commercial voice of their guitar player for the most part and their singing has a smooth, folky sound. I was disappointed not to hear Walden's lead more often;



THE HIGH WINDOW BOYS

I'm a sucker for a powerful high clear voice and Walden certainly fills the bill. The only solo I heard him do left me hungry for more. I would conclude that the band pointedly strives to present a modern sound; they were the last band on Sinday and their choice of an encore to close out the festival maybe sums up their attitude. The last songs of Grass Valley were the early 60's pop-rock hits, "Runaway" and "Runaround Sue." They used to be favorite songs of mine in high school but were not enjoyable as the last music at a bluegrass festival. I thought at the time they might be protesting their having to play last to a dwindling crowd; on the other hand, you can always stir up a crowd with a little rock and roll.

* OTHER STYLES *

-Lone Star-

Lone Star is an acoustic western swing



THE NEW DONE GONE BAND

band. This kind of music works well acoustically and Lone Star does an especially nice job of it. The double fiddling of Tony Marcus and Brian Godchaux is beautifully tight and evocative. The sweet soaring sound of twin fiddles is as pretty a tone as you'll hear in country music. Mylos Sonka has always been one of the Bay Area's best country singers and it's good to hear his stylish sounds in such a good band. I like Lone Star's non-imitative but dedicated and respectful treatment of older country music.

-Any Old Time-

Any Old Time showed a bit different look this fall with Agi Bon filling in for fiddle Sue Draheim. Agi also did some singing and further added to the bands already diverse sound with her clarinet



MANDOLIN WORKSHOP

playing. Also new to me was the band dressing in unison--from my sloppy, unshaven, hippy beginnings I'm beginning to like bands with a unified appearance. It adds a little psychological boost to a fan's attitude and might even facilitate the necessary cooperation within a band. Ant Old Time continues to be a strong singing band. Genny Haley, Kate Brislin, and Bethaney Raine all have strong stylish voices which allows them to tackle a myriad of different styles. I think Kate's old time singing and banjo playing are among the Northern California scene's strongest performances. She sings without affectation and beautifully interprets old styles with respect and feeling. It's hard to categorize this band--it would appear to be an old time band but their material runs to

Cajun, Irish, C&W, and beyond. Judging by their two encores on Saturday, they remain one of the most popular groups to play at Grass Valley.

-The Squids-

The Squid's appearance and their use of sound effects to introduce and punctuate their sets made them possibly the most bizarre (no judgement intended) band to play Grass Valley. The Squids dress in a predominantly black, punk to early rock and roll style ranging from T-shirt/leather pants/ gold chain to old suits. Their prerecorded introduction is comprised of a variety of whale and sea sounds mixed in with various other bits and sound effects. It might have seemed long to someone expecting the standard presentation, but it was a fairly engrossing arrangement of mostly identifiable sounds. The band played in a gruff, aggressive manner that moved rapidly from song to song. It was indeed unorthodox, like no other string band I've ever heard (and seen). Their dark demeanor could be disarming but but this was balanced by the straightforward kind of old time music they played. They feature drone, old time and original songs and play them in a throbbing insistent way. The rhythm is very clear and strong and the leads tend to be less notey and more heavy handed than the typical band resulting in quite

a powerful band sound. It struck me that the band with the least countrified stage presence actually bases their sound on very basic country music forms. Especially noteworthy was the lead voice of Larry Hughes and the old timey trio of Larry, banjoist Bobby Davis, and fiddler Peter Allen.

In Conclusion, I'd have to say that this isn't so much of a review as a series of impressions and observations: I didn't watch every band with the same attention to detail. I admit to having a traditional bias but I tried to be objective with the more modern bands and to avoid criticism solely on the basis of style. I do think that the CBA's role is to support the bands who have chosen less commercial sounds--they have a much harder time competing in the public market. Eric West in a letter to the September/October issue of the Bluegrass Break-down disputed my contentions that the CBA should subsidize such groups, but it seems clear that this is exactly the role it was conceived for--if specialized music like bluegrass and old time was a commercially oriented thing, there would be no reason for a volunteer organization like the CBA. They're dedicated to "The furtherance of bluegrass, old time, and gospel music" and it's not necessarily their business to worry that traditional sounds are not palatable enough for a general audience.



EV LILLY



KATE BRISLIN AND GENNY HALEY



TONY MARCUS

by Kathy Barwick

Key of Bb
Capo 3rd fret

Frank Wakefield

11

THE MAIN EVENT

**Bill Monroe
and
Ralph Stanley
in San Mateo**

Review by Elliot Stewart

The Bill Monroe/Ralph Stanley concert at the San Mateo Center for the Performing Arts was as memorable an event for the Northern California bluegrass community as you would expect. And expectations were running high, judging from the sizable and markedly excited crowd in attendance--a knowledgeable crowd, by and large, which was attentive as well as enthusiastic. The concert hall was all it should be, small enough to be intimate, affording a good view of the stage from all seats; and the sound system, ably manned by Steve Pottier, was very good, despite some initial difficulty in mixing The Clinch Mtn. Boys. (In Steve's defense, it should be noted that Curly Ray is none-to-careful to address the mike consistently, preoccupied as he often is with his dancing.

The Clinch Mtn. Boys were, as always, high-spirited and fun to watch. Ralph, Charled Sizemore, and Jack Cooke produced the old familiar Stanley Brothers chill down the spine with their part singing, and Curly Ray was Curly Ray, taking time out from his singing and dancing chores to fiddle as only he can. (Take that as you will--I love the way he plays.)

One could complain that the Stanley stage show has become a predictable sort of formula, one that often appeals to the least knowledgeable, most Hee-Haw orient-

ed fan (two Curly Ray vocals in one set, really!). And yet, it is apparently a formula that the band is comfortable with, and one that allows them to present, after all, a fair range of material, from Ralph's medly-favorites (Little Maggie, Pretty Polly, Pig in a Pen, How Mountain Girls Can Love, and so forth) to acapella gospels, to Curly's comedy show. It was nice to hear them do some new material as well.

With all due respect to Junior Blankenship, I didn't think the presence of a second guitar, just for lead work, justifies itself. (I think we can dismiss Junior's one singing venture--an odd, too-high-for-his-voice version of Jimmy Brown the Newsboy with Jack Cook singing and octave below, for some reason.) For one thing I don't much like most of Junior's lead work. He plays fast, but in a muddy jerky style in which many of his notes click or thud more than they ring. (Take this as a minority opinion, his breaks were well received by the audience.) On the other hand, his crosspicking was beautiful--immaculately clean and round toned.

The biggest problem for me with the two-guitar makeup of the band is there is just no off-beat chop without a mandolin, since neither Ralph nor Curly Ray are inclined to chop rhythm. The resulting sound grows drone-y and a little monotonous after a few numbers.

The difference in band sound was immediately audible when The Bluegrass Boys took the stage. Bill still gets the best tone that can be gotten from a mandolin for my money, and his big chunking rhythm chops provided all the driving punch I missed in The Clinch Mtn. Boys. Wayne Lewis was in fine voice, th best I think I've heard him in, though he had a tendency to oversing, in my opinion. It seemed at times that he was determined to twirl and ornament every syllable in a line. His rhythm playing seemed more "on" than the last time I saw him, as well.

Kenny Baker's super-smooth, always beautifully-toned playing was, as always, a joy to hear, the glue that holds the whole band sound together. If I have a

complaint at all with his playing, it's that he tends to approach every tune or song with the same style, a swingy, bouncy style that struck me, in San Mateo, almost perfect for songs like Little Cabin Home on the Hill, or Dark Hollow, but was so out-of-idiom on hard-drivers like Shucking the Corn, Bluegrass Breakdown, or On My Way Back to the Old Home, that at times it seemed like a parody of Kenny Baker by himself.

Newcomer to the Bluegrass Boys Blake Williams did a pretty good job filling the large vacancy left by Butch Robins' departure from the band. His baritone singing seemed a little weak and tentative to me, his banjo playing not as interesting as Robins (hardly anyone's is), but all-and-all his lead and back-up playing fit admirably into the band sound. Given his new-ness to the band, I thought he did a very fine job, as did Mark Hembrey on bass. He had good tone, intonation, and exceptional timing. His work as lone accompanist on Bill's beautiful, strangely dark My Last Days on Earth was perfect--so unobtrusive you forgot he was playing,

yet every note Bill played was supported, and displayed to its best advantage by the bass work beneath it.

The band in general achieved a fine, integrated, ensemble sound, and Bill sang, as he does, with style and feeling. I wish he had honored more requests for vocals, and fewer for fiddle tunes.

Finally the two bands joined for a few numbers. In some ways, this was the best part of all, partly from the sheer excitement of seeing the two immortals together (and in California no less--thanks Butch, thanks Steve, thanks CBA) and also, perhaps, from the fact that in this sort of jam situation, both bands tended to shed some of their formulaic approach in order to play together. The resulting feeling of spontaneity was wonderfully welcome. Best of all for me was Can't You Hear Me Calling--Ralph singing the verses very mountain-y, and Stanley-ish, Bill and Ralph singing the chorus pure bluegrass-style. If you weren't there, you should have been, just to hear that. For those who were there, it was bluegrass heaven.

THE CALIFORNIA BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

Country Gazette

in Concert

Sunday, December 13 at 7:30pm

at the

24th Street Theater

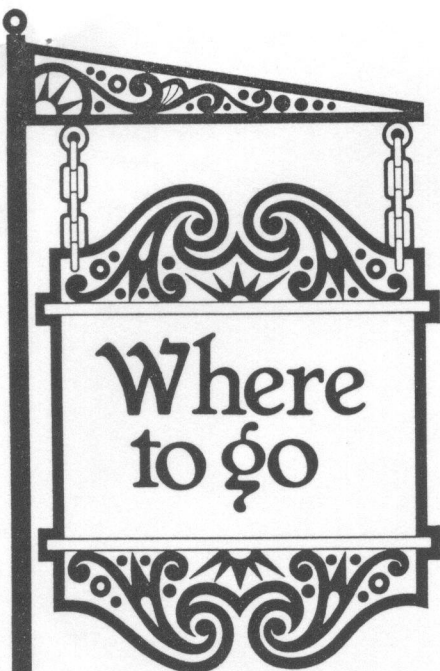
2791 24th Street, Sacramento, Ca.

General Admission \$6.00 - CBA Members \$5.00



Advance tickets available from:
The Fifth String
1931 L Street
Sacramento, Ca.
916-447-8282

"Country Gazette" band members will be giving workshops on the day of the performance at the Fifth String in Sacramento. For further information call 916-447-8282.



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.

BLUERIDGE PICKIN' PARLOR, 5221 Reseda Blvd. Tarzana. Everything for the picker and jams two Sundays per month. For information call 213-700-8288.

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.

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.

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.

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

THE TOWN HOUSE, 5862 Doyle, Emeryville. Featuring mostly country music but occasionally bluegrass. Call 415-658-5556.

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

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

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

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.

THE FIFTH STRING, 3501 Adeline, Berkeley. Thursday night jams. Call 415-548-8282.

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

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

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

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.

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.

SPECIAL EVENTS

November 13-15--2nd Annual Wickenburg Bluegrass Festival, Wickenburg, Arizona. Traditional Bluegrass and others. Also, band contest--\$300 first prize; fiddle, bluegrass banjo, and flat-picked guitar--all with \$500 first prize. For further details call 602-684-7379 or 602-684-5479.

November 27-29--Sonora Christmas Festival at the Sonora fairgrounds, buildings 1&2. 150 craftsfolk and music by: Frank Wakefield Band, Stones Throw Jazz Band, Reilly & Maloney, Poney Express Bluegrass Band, Juggler Randy Duncan, Storyteller B.Z. Smith, and more.

December 4--The San Francisco Folk Music Center and Plowshares 4th Anniversary Show featuring Jethro Burns & Tiny Moore, Grant Street String Band, Elizabeth Cotten, Jane Voss & Hoyle Osborne. See full page add in this issue.

December 11-13--Sacramento Christmas Fair at the Community Center, 14th and J St. 300 craftsfolk with music by: Summerdog Bluegrass Band, Queen Ida, Kate Wolf, Hawks & Eagles. Jugglers, children's storytellers, and more.

December 13--The "Country Gazette" in concert at the Songwriters workshop in Sacramento. For details see ad on page 13.

January 2--Bill White's Annual Birthday Party at the Freight & Salvage, 1827 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley.

January 3--Bill White's Annual Birthday Party at the Friendly Country Bar, 3354 E. Castro Valley Blvd., Castro Valley.



"HE JUST FINISHED HIS BREAK TO BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN WHEN IT HAPPENED."



FIELD GUIDE TO WESTERN BANDS

ALMOST FORGOTTEN STRING BAND

408-370-3360 or 408-732-7794 (Bay Area)

ANY OLD TIME

415-653-9061 (East Bay) or 415-387-9648
(San Francisco)

ARKANSAS SHIEKS

415-791-8476 (East Bay)

BACKWOOD BAND

702-849-0276 (Reno, Nevada)

BUZZARD'S ROOST

702-323-8818 (Reno, Nevada)

THE CAFFREY FAMILY

415-564-1464 (San Francisco)

BLUESTEIN FAMILY

209-229-9807 (Fresno)

BOOT HILL

707-938-1326 or 707-833-2133 (Sonoma
County)

COUNTRY HAM

415-938-4221 (Walnut Creek)

DAY LATE AND A DOLLAR SHORT

707-523-3380 (Sonoma County)

FICKLE HILL

707-822-6264 (Arcata)

FOGGY MOUNTAIN CLOGGERS

415-828-9016 (Bay Area) Bookings and
lessons

GOOD OL' PERSONS

415-474-5368 (San Francisco)
Wednesdays--Paul's Saloon, S.F.
Thursdays--Red Vest Pizza Parlor, El Cerrito
November 7-- Freight and Salvage, Berkeley
December 19--Paul's Saloon, S.F.

GRANT STREET STRING BAND

415-488-9724 (Marin County)

November 14--Paul's Saloon, S.F.

December 4--San Francisco Folk Music Cen-
ter's 4th Anniversary Show,
Nourse Auditorium, S.F.

December 5--Freight and Salvage, Berkeley

December 12--Paul's Saloon, S.F.

HIGH COUNTRY

415-776-6713 (San Francisco)

Tuesdays and Fridays--Paul's Saloon, S.F.

Wednesdays--Red Vest Pizza Parlor, El
Cerrito

November 11, 7:30 pm--Sierra Nevada
Museum of Art, University
of Nevada Theater, Reno,
Nevada

HORSIN' AROUND

415-787-3068 (East Bay) or 916-448-0756
(Sacramento)

LOST HIGHWAY

714-996-9177 (Claremont)

LONE STAR

415-752-8035 (San Francisco)

THE NEW DONE GONE BAND

415-592-1038 (South Bay) or 707-795-9471
(Sonoma County)

Fridays--Red Vest Pizza Parlor, El Cerrito

November 7, 4-7 pm--Major Pond's, S.F.

November 21--Paul's Saloon, S.F.

OVERLOOK MOUNTAIN BOYS

408-354-9359 (San Jose)

PACIFIC..LY BLUEGRASS

714-443-1932 (San Diego)

PICK OF THE LITTER

415-849-4023 (Berkeley)

Thursdays--Paul's Saloon, S.F.

Saturdays--Red Vest Pizza Parlor, El
Cerrito

RAIN TREE COUNTY BOYS
213-633-2132 (Los Angeles)

RAY PARK
916-622-2494 (Placerville)

SAW PLAYER CHARLIE, with ART PETERSON
415-523-4649 (East Bay)

SAWTOOTH MOUNTAIN BOYS
503-838-4095 (Corvallis)

SAGEBRUSH AND OAK
408-637-7810 (Gilroy)

RICK SHUBB BAND
415-637-0924 (Oakland)

SIDESADDLE
415-969-2189 (Redwood City)
Fridays and Saturdays--Winchester Wagon
House, San Jose

THE SQUIDS
415-621-0865 or 415-751-4856 (San
Francisco)

THE SWINGADEROS
415-582-1829 (East Bay)

TALL TIMBER
206-682-6351 days, 206-935-9183 eves.
(Seattle, Washington)

THREE SPEED
415-676-2321 or 415-682-9013 (Concord)

A TOUCH OF GRASS
415-967-4306 (Redwood City)

UNION CREEK
707-429-2616 (Fairfield)

UPTOWN RAMBLERS
415-282-9225 (San Francisco) or 415-525-
9642 (East Bay)
November 6--Meat Market Cafe, S.F.
November 11--Freight and Salvage, Berkeley
November 28--Kafeneo, Berkeley
December 4--Meat Market Cafe, S.F.
December 26--Kafeneo, Berkeley

Notice To All Bands

If your band would like its upcoming performing dates listed in the Bluegrass Breakdown, please send the information by December 15th to:

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

If your band would like to be considered by the band selection committee for either the June or September Grass Valley festival or any other CBA event, please submit a cassette tape (it need not be of studio quality as long as it is listenable) of approximately five numbers that are representative of your sound and style. Any other promotional material would also be helpful, i.e. photographs, biographies, performance history, reviews, articles, etc. Just a short letter describing the band would suffice. The deadline for the June festival is December 1st and for the September festival, March 1st. Send the tape and information to:

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

FRANK WAKEFIELD BAND
415-530-8639 (Oakland)

BILL WHITE
415-530-7192 (Oakland)
January 2--Bill's birthday party at the
Freight and Salvage, Berkeley
January 3--Bill's birthday party at the
Friendly Country Bar, Castro
Valley

VERN WILLIAMS BAND
209-772-1357 (Valley Springs)

WESTERN PACIFIC
408-427-3531 (Santa Cruz)

WILD RYE
415-443-0250 or 415-443-5217 (Livermore)

WINDY GAP
707-923-2603 or 707-923-2857 (Humboldt)

MANDOLIN INSTRUCTION

REVIEW BY DAN BERNSTEIN

HOT LICKS FOR HOT PICKS
by Niles A. Hokkanen

Niles Hokkanen's latest mandolin instruction book and accompanying tape is--in his own words--technically oriented, offbeat and weird, and it opens up your ideas and ears. It is not for beginners and does not contain what you would normally consider hot licks. Rather, it comprises wierd licks which can be used to fake any tune in any key--a la "Pentatonic Mandolin," Nile's first book, right and left hand exercises, and a number of fiddle tunes arranged in non-standard styles. It also contains transcriptions of two of Mick Maloney's tunes, "Tom of the Hill" and "Dwyer's Hornpipe," which are included on his LP, Strings Attached (Green Linnet Records SIF 1027).

The sections dealing with hot licks and exercises are way over done and they are weird. What remains are about a dozen tunes arranged to show that the mandolin is a very versatile instrument having the potential to incorporate sounds and styles not usually played on it. The crossed-picked selections are designed to duplicate the banjo sounds of Keith and Stanley and do not follow the down-up-up-down-up-up-down-up pattern we encounter with McReynolds. There is a tune which gives the feeling of a bagpipe and one of pedal steel. There's some Scotty Stoneman and some Buzz Busby material. There are even two finger-picked ones. And, a nice Clarence White version of "Nine Pound Hammer."

If you can discount all of Nile's hang-ups and eccentricities and concentrate on the tunes, there is much to be learned. It does "open up your ideas."



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

1516 Oak St., Alameda, CA 94501
(415) 865-2040

—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 7½ by 10; 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:

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

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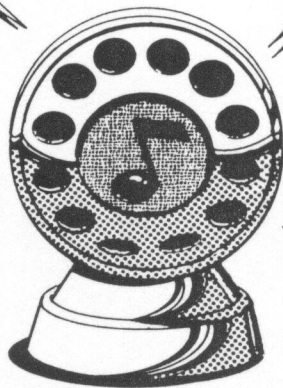
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Turn Your Radio On

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.

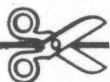
KVMR 89.5 FM Phone: 916-265-9555

P.O. Box 328

Nevada City 95959

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

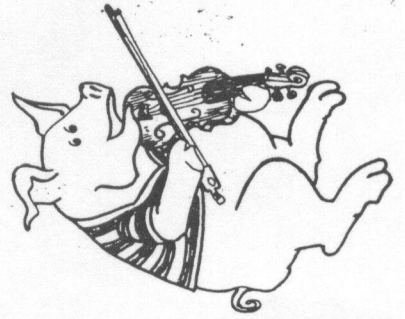
Saturdays, 12 am-2 pm: Country Show with
Tim Brown and Frank Burch.



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ANY HELP YOU CAN OFFER THE CBA (artwork, typing, writing, promotion, etc.)			CHECK IF: New Renewal Subscription to "Bluegrass Breakdown" only (no membership privileges)	SUBSCRIPTION ONLY-\$6.00
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