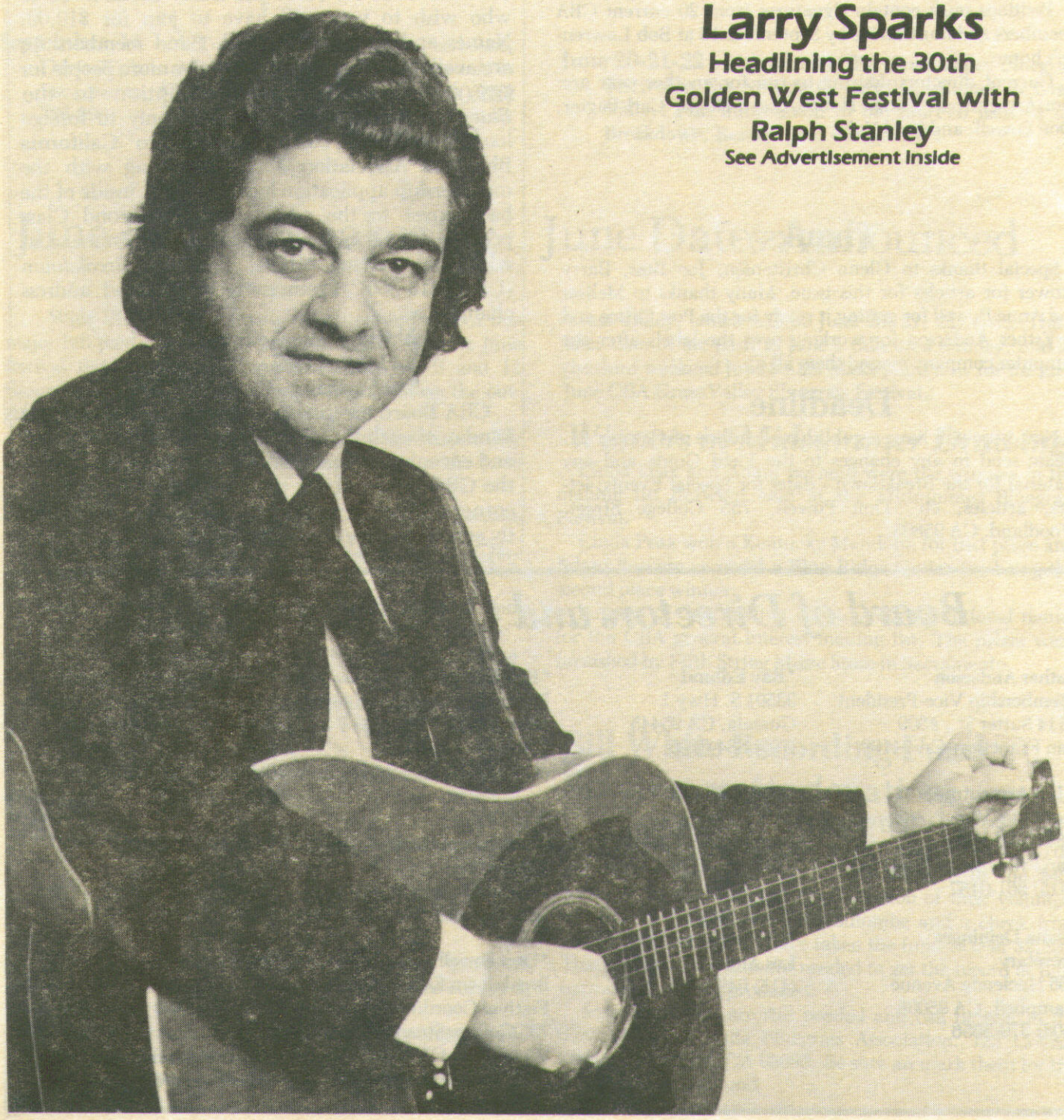
BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN

Volume 11, Number 5 September/October 1985



Larry Sparks
Headlining the 30th Golden West Festival with Ralph Stanley
See Advertisement Inside

CBA Director Election Deadline

Petitions for those interested in running for a director's position on the CBA Board must be sent to: Bob Lawrence, 1624 Candace Way, Los Altos, CA 94022 by September 15.

Elections will be held in October, with the results in the November/December issue of **Breakdown.**

Currently three directors, Ray Edlund, Bob Lawrence and Butch Waller, have indicated they will not be running for the Board of Directors.

One petition has been received nominating Charles Hobbs, longtime festival volunteer and helper to Don Powell, festival coordinator through the June 1985 festival.

Petitions must contain signatures from 20 current CBA members and must arrive by September 15 at Bob Lawrence's home.

Current directors desiring to run for another year are: Jim Armentrout, Midge Hobbs, Steve Hogle, Carl Pagter, Don Powell, and Fred Volz.

Thanks

Special thanks to Glenn Christensen, Joe Ross, Barry Brower for articles for this issue. Many thanks to Melissa and Anne Powell for getting it ready for the Post Office and to Esther Anderson for working over the labels after the computer company messed them all up.

Deadline

Next issue will have a publishers deadline of October 21. Please send in any changes to the Field Guide and any material for the Breakdown - dates for Special Events, letters, articles, etc. Don Powell, 735 College Street, Woodland, CA 95695.

California Bluegrass Association

Bluegrass Breakdown is published bimonthly at 735 College Street, Woodland, California, 95695, by the California Bluegrass Association. The CBA is a non-profit organization founded in 1975 and is dedicated to the furtherance of Bluegrass, Old Time, and Gospel music. Membership in the CBA costs $10.00 a year and includes a subscription to the *Bluegrass Breakdown*. A spouse's membership may be added for an additional $2.50 and children between 12-18 for $1.00 per child. Children 12-18 who wish to vote will have to join for $10.00. Names and ages are required. Band memberships are available to bands with three or more people for $25.00 for the band. Subscription to the *Bluegrass Breakdown* is available only to foreign locations. Make checks payable to **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 and at additional mailing offices. *Bluegrass Breakdown* (USPS 315-350). Postmaster, please send address changes to:

Bluegrass Breakdown
P.O. Box 11287
San Francisco, CA 94101-7287

CBA Board meetings are usually held the second Sunday of each month and all members are invited and encouraged to attend. The meetings are held at the CBA office, above the 5th String Music Store, corner of Adeline and Ashby, Berkeley, CA. Directly across the street from the Asbhy BART station.

Board of Directors and Officers of the CBA

Esther Anderson
Membership Vice-President
1114 Sutter St., #509
San Francisco, CA 94109

***Jim Armentrout**
Activities Vice-President
1844-48th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94122
(415) 661-0157

Diana Deininger
Secretary
735 Hacienda Avenue
Campbell, CA 95008
(408) 379-5056

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

***Midge Hobbs**
2342 Cambridge
Sacramento, CA 95815
(916) 927-7259

***Steve Hogle**
715 N. San Antonio Rd.
Los Altos, CA 94022
(415) 949-2181

***Bob Lawrence**
President
1624 Candace Way
Los Altos, CA 94022
(415) 962-8341

***Carl Pagter**
Chairman of the Board,
17 Julianne Ct.
Walnut Creek, CA 94595
(415) 938-4221

***Don Powell**
Breakdown Editor
Festival Coordinator
735 College Street
Woodland, CA 95695
(916) 662-2906; 662-5691

***Fred Volz**
Vice-Chairman of the Board
Publicity Chairman
8215 Colonial Drive
Stockton, CA 95209
(209) 473-3212

***Butch Waller**
1586 Vista Street
Oakland, CA 94602
(415) 482-0855

***Indicates a member of the Board of Directors**

Special Events

September 7 - Bluegrass Under The Stars at Rogue Community College in Grants Pass, OR. with Rose Maddox Foxfire, and Second Fiddle Band, plus others. Info: (503) 479-5541. There will also be open mike time prior to the evenings entertainment. Call Larry Buleich (503) 479-6789 for getting in on the open mike entertainment.

September 14 - A Touch of Grass, Palms Playhouse, Davis. Tickets at Barney's in Davis, Tower Records in Sacramento, $5.50. Showtime is 8 p.m. Info: (916) 756-9901.

November 1-2-3 - 30th Golden West Bluegrass Festival, Prado Basin Park, near Norco. featuring Ralph Stanley and the Clinch Mountain Boys and Larry Sparks & The Lonesome Ramblers. See ad this issue for complete details. 3-day advance $20, plus $5 per day for camping. Daily fee: Friday - $7; Saturday - $10; and Sunday - $9.

June 20-21-22 - 11th Annual CBA Grass Valley Bluegrass Festival at the Nevada County Fairgrounds in Grass Valley. Full information in the Jan/Feb issue of the **Breakdown.** Reserve your dates NOW!

June Festival Makes $$; June Dates Announced

With all the money finally deposited and all but one major bill paid (the bill still hasn't been figured), the June festival did make a small profit of between 9 and 11 thousand dollars. The final figure will depend on the outstanding bill.

While the current plan is to not have anymore Labor Day Festivals, CBA has already hired headliners for the June Grass Valley, which will be June 20, 21, 22, 1986. This is later than in the past, as June 1 falls on a Sunday, making the third weekend June 20-22. Make plans now for the great June CBA Grass Valley Bluegrass Festival.

LETTERS

Thanks from Del Norte Council

Dear CBA,

Thank you so much for your generosity, support and work that made "Bluegrass in the Redwood Country" possible. The crowd enjoyed some of the best food and the finest bluegrass music available, and we succeeded in our goal of bringing additional tourism into the county. Visitors came from such diverse places as San Francisco, Redding, Eureka, Ashland, and Chowchilla.

Thanks for advice and for help with the Bluegrass Breakdown.

Yours,

Del Norte Association for Cultural Awareness

Thanks from Cancer Aid

Dear Editor,

Don Schmidt presented us with another generous check representing proceeds from the sale of cans collected after your recent concert at the fairgrounds.

We are very grateful for your continued cooperation with Don in support of our organization.

Grass Valley Thrift Shop - Cancer Aid

Winners in Midsummer Drawing

Linda Peak and Adam Bernero were the winners in the mailing list drawing held at the Midsummer Bluegrass Festival.

Linda Peak won a Kentucky Mandolin for first place and Adam Bernero received a Blue Ridge Guitar for being the second place winner.

Purpose of the drawing was to secure additional names for the CBA general interest mailing list. The prizes were furnished by Fifth String Music Store in Sacramento.

Bill White Recording Fund Receives major donations

Thanks to the efforts of the Bethel Island Festival, headed by Jim Keltner, approximately $2,000 has been added to the Bill White Recording Fund. This along with the $450 currently in the fund, plus the donation of their volunteer work check by Bill and Pat Coulombe and a check from John and Carol Barrett have taken the fund to over $2,500. That is close to the amount needed to get the record of Bill's harmonica playing produced.

Some donations are still needed and can be sent to the Treasurer, California Bluegrass Association, 735 College Street, Woodland, CA 95695. Be sure an mark them for the White Recording Fund.

30th GOLDEN WEST BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

Californias First and Worlds Most Repeated Professional Outdoor Bluegrass Music Festival

NOVEMBER 1,2,3, 1985

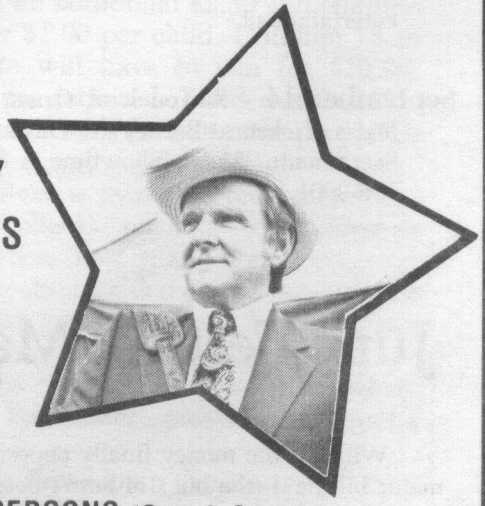
At...

PRADO BASIN PARK
(near Norco, CA) 14600 River Road

featuring...

RALPH STANLEY
& the CLINCH MOUNTAIN BOYS
(Sat. & Sun.)

LARRY SPARKS
& the LONESOME RAMBLERS
(Sat. & Sun.)



and...

The VERN WILLIAMS BAND (Fri., Sat., Sun.)...**GOOD OL' PERSONS** (Sat. & Sun.)...
CHEYENNE (Sun.)...**HARVEY WALKER & The SWINGRASS BAND** (Fri. & Sat.)...
COUNTRY HAM (Fri. & Sat.)...**RAINTREE COUNTY BOYS** (Fri. & Sat.)...
LATE FOR SUPPER (Fri. & Sat.)...**FOOTLOOSE CLOGGERS** (Sun.)...**GUEST BANDS**

MASTERS OF CEREMONY: Jim Cox, Hans Kraker & Ken Tennesen **SOUND BY DAVE STOUGH**

2½ Hours of Gospel Music on Sunday by Ralph Stanley & the Clinch Mountain Boys, Larry Sparks & the Lonesome Ramblers, Good Ol' Persons, Cheyenne and the Vern Williams Band.

3 FUN-FILLED DAYS FOR ALL THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS!

DAILY SCHEDULE: Friday 4:30-9:00; Saturday 10:00-9:00; Sunday 10:00-5:00.
ADMISSION & CAMPING FEES: Friday: $7; Saturday: $10; Sunday: $9; **DAILY CAMPING:** $5 per unit; TEN YEARS AND UNDER, SIXTY-FIVE AND OVER, 100% PERMANENTLY HANDICAPPED will be admitted **FREE OF CHARGE.** (Minors must be accompanied by an adult.) Daytime Parking is FREE.
ADVANCE TICKETS: 3-DAY ADVANCE TICKET $20. No camping or other daily combination tickets sold in advance. **SPACES RESERVED** until 8 A.M. SATURDAY (Strictly Enforced). **TICKET PRICE REFUNDABLE** until October 1. **DAILY TICKETS EXPIRE AT MIDNIGHT.**
For **ADVANCE 3-DAY TICKETS** Send self addressed stamped envelope and a check or money order, to: GOLDEN WEST BLUEGRASS, P.O. BOX 341, BONSALL, CA 92003.
ADVANCE TICKET SALES CLOSING DATE: 10/15/85.

IMPROVED FOOD CONCESSION, LIGHTING, RESTROOMS, WATER AVAILABILITY...Absolutely **NO PETS** allowed...**CAMPER GREY-WATER TANKS** must remain capped...Bring **LAWN CHAIRS**.. limited built-in **BARBECUE STANDS AVAILABLE**...**DRINKING LAW** strictly enforced...**DUE TO BROKEN GLASS**; wading in stream and brook **PROHIBITED**...**PAY PHONE AVAILABLE**...**HAYRIDES AVAILABLE** from distant daytime parking areas.

GATE OPENS 4:00 PM THURSDAY

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

GOLDEN WEST BLUEGRASS
P.O. BOX 341
BONSALL, CA 92003
619-758-7205

CBA Membership - Behind The Blue Curtain

By ESTHER ANDERSON
Membership Vice-President

When I assumed the Membership Vice-President position, I realized that I knew absolutely nothing about how CBA membership worked. I only knew that I sent my check to the magic P.O. Box, and sometime later my membership card arrived in the mail and the **Breakdowns** started arriving. It also occured to me that the rest of the membership was equally in the dark. These realizations have prompted me to write this article so that members may be better informed and thereby save themselves frustration and hassles. There are two points that I feel are the most important:

1) A very frequent gripe is: "I just sent you my renewal check, but I didn't get the last **Breakdown**. Why not?" The answer is that your check reached me after the computer list for the next issue was already in the mail. *The updated computer list for the labels for the next issue of the* **Breakdown** *is mailed on the 15th day of each even month* (February, April, June, August, October and December). Renewals and address changes should be submitted before the 15th of those months if you wish to receive the next issue of the **Breakdown.** However, we do try to allow a one issue "grace period," especially if we receive a notice of address change for the previous issue and it appears that the last issue didn't reach the member at his/her new address.

An ongoing problem is that members are renewing shortly after they have been dropped from the computer list. The computer company charges the CBA 15¢ to remove and 15¢ to add back each name. Since the number of lapsed renewals keeps increasing, this will eventually result in an increase in the membership dues. Renewing on time will prevent this.

2) Another frequent gripe I get is: "I always forget to renew in time, and I don't like to miss the **Breakdown.** Can't you send out renewal notices?" The answer is that, as a nonprofit organization staffed by unpaid volunteers who do the work in their "free time," we have neither the extra time nor money to spend. However, the Editor does try to stamp **Renewal Reminder**, with a message about expiration on **Breakdowns** for memberships that are about to expire. I have a solution for this one: *Make your CBA membership your birthday present to yourself.* This way, you will be reminded each year that your renewal is due. It will also help spread the membership expirations out more evenly over the year which will enable the staff to process your memberships and tickets more efficiently. As it is now, about 67% of the membership expires between April-August, with the majority falling due in May or June. This places a heavy time and work burden on the Membership Vice-President and impedes processing renewals efficiently and promptly during festival season.

It is much appreciated when members put either an application blank from one of the **Breakdowns** or a short note in with their check, such as "renewal for me (us)," or "gift for my father," etc. It's easy for mistakes to occur when I have to guess at what the check is for.

Other information you should know:

3) Children from ages 12-18 need tickets for the festivals and therefore save money by being CBA members. Each child age 12-18 may join at the rate of $1.00 per year without voting or ticket rights, or may pay $10.00 per year with full voting and ticket rights. Any person over the age of 18 must join as an individual (adult) member, even though he/she is still living with the member parent(s). Children under 12 years of age should not apply for membership.

4) Senior citizen membership status is available to any person who is AGE 65 or over. A spouse is **NOT** given senior citizen status because the other spouse is over 65. Each spouse must notify the CBA when he/she reaches his/her 65th birthday. Senior members pay the regular dues, but they are entitled to free festival tickets. These are not sent out automatically. They must be requested with a self-addressed, stamped envelope included.

5) Bands of *not more than 6 members* may join at a rate of $25.00 per year. Each band member receives a vote and is entitled to ONE membership rate ticket per festival per person in the band. Two band members are entitled to receive the **Breakdown**. This $25.00 rate is for *band members only*. If the spouse of a band member wishes to belong to the CBA, he/she must join as an individual member, and children over age 12 must be attached to the spouse's membership if they wish to belong. Band memberships stay with the band. A person who leaves the band forfeits his/her membership in the CBA; i.e., if Joe Blow joins with ABC Band, quits the band thereafter and is replaced by Jane Doe, his membership automatically transfers to Jane Doe. However, if a band in good standing adds a new member to the band, the new member will be given CBA membership status as soon as we are notified. For example, if XYZ Band joins the CBA in March with 4 members and then adds a fifth member in July, the new member is entitled to band membership until XYZ Band's membership expires the following March. Band membership applications should list the NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER and INSTRUMENTS PLAYED for *each* band member, and also indicate which *two members should receive the* **Breakdown.**

6)Subscriptions are available only to persons living out of the United States. However, membership dues are set to cover the cost of printing and mailing the **Breakdown**, so persons wishing only to receive the newsletter but who do not plan to attend the festivals do not pay more than persons who receive both the newsletter and reduced-price membership tickets.

And, finally, I would like to mention that the CBA does have problems with the post office from time to time. To illustrate, an item was returned marked "No longer at this address--unable to forward." The person lived just down the street from me, so I picked up the telephone and called him. When I asked if he had indeed moved, he said, "Nope, we're still here. We've lived here for 18 years." So if you do not receive a **Breakdown** or your membership card, please send a note to the P.O. Box as soon as possible, so it can be checked out.

Another Success In Norco

by JOE ROSS

(Editor's Note: With the 30th Golden West Bluegrass Festival coming on Nov. 1-2-3, this review of the 29th tells it like it is at the new home of the Golden West Festivals. Joe Ross, who now lives in Las Vegas, was a member of the Rogue Valley Boys in Medford, Oregon and has written several articles for the Breakdown.)

Dick Tyner could easily be called the "Father of Southern California Bluegrass" for he has done more to promote bluegrass in that region than many others combined. When I heard rumblings last year of his Golden West Bluegrass Festival having to find a new site for the 1985 spring festival, I became worried. But, in January, 1985, Dick wrote to explain that "Norco is alive and well." And he confirmed that on April 26-28, 1985 when the 29th Golden West Bluegrass Festival was held in Norco, California at the Prado Basin Park, about three miles from its previous home (since 1973) at Silver Lakes Park in Norco. Armed with a mailing list in excess of 8,000 bluegrass fans, Tyner got the word out and the result was approximately 8,000 pickers and grinners at this year's spring festival.

In 1972, Tyner decided to put on an authentic weekend bluegrass festival, and he travelled to Bean Blossom to speak with Bill Monroe about his plans. In October, 1973 Tyner's dream became a reality. That first Golden West Bluegrass Festival featured Bill and James Monroe, Ralph Stanley, Lester Flatt and a half dozen local bands. Only about 1,000 people attended this momentous occasion which, according to Tyner, was also the first professional bluegrass festival in California. The following year Bill and James Monroe, Stanley, Flatt and the McLain Family performed at Norco and with them came the crowds. These festivals were held at Silver Lakes Park, where plenty of grass and trees made the setting ideal for a bluegrass festival. When Silver Lakes Park became a private membership campground after 28 successful festivals there, a determined Tyner managed to find another equally grassy (no pun intended) and shaded park amidst the high chaparral of Riverside County. As "Golden West Bluegrass Festival" is definitely a mouthful, the festival is more commonly referred to merely as "Norco" (e.g., When's Norco? or Who's playing at this year's Norco?). And, regardless of its location, fans continue to flock to Norco.

We arrived at Prado Basin Park at 3 p.m. on Friday, April 26 - a great gift for someone celebrating their birthday. The 3-hour drive across the desert from Las Vegas had been uneventful as usual. As we entered the gate, we heard strains of parking lot pickers, and we were surprised to find so many campers already there (gates had opened at 4 p.m. Thursday). We immediately walked the area in search of familiar faces and the ideal campsite. Detours took us to the country store (to view the T-shirts) and into the record/book shop operated by the Blue Ridge Pickin' Parlor. Camping areas near the stage had long been occupied, but we were fortunate to find a spot for our tent next to friends from the Southern Nevada Bluegrass Society.

The Friday evening show featured bands from California and Nevada, the Raintree County Boys, Bluegrass Flyers, Bluegrass West and Sagegrass. They all provided spirited and infectious music to set the mood for the festival. Following the show, jam sessions continued around campfires and potbelly stoves throughout the chilly night and into the wee hours of morning. While making the rounds, I heard many reminiscent and nostalgic references to "Norcos" of years past. People compared the two sites, but no clear majority favored one site over the other.

Saturday's show ran from 10 a.m. to 8:20 p.m. and featured, in addition to the groups listed above, Blue Skies, the Footloose Cloggers, Sherbrook Family, Damascus Road, and the headliners, Jim and Jesse McReynolds and the Virginia Boys.

Sagegrass was a big hit, performing in a contemporary bluegrass vein with tunes such as "Highway 40 Blues," "Heartbroke," "Dancin' With the Angels," "Can't You See," and "Fire on the Mountain." I also particularly enjoyed Damascus Road, their vocal harmonies giving them a unique relaxed, contimporary southern California sound. Their set included such songs as "Blue-eyed Boston Boy," "Statues Without Heart," "Practice Makes Perfect," and "Boogie Grass Band."

When Jim and Jesse and the Virginia Boys took the stage in mid-afternoon, the crowd was ready. The band had arrived a few hours earlier in their bus, has set up their record stand, signed autographs and chatted with fans. They opened with "Worried Man" and followed with "Boys in Love." Next, Alan Shelton, long-time Virginia Boy, and his five-string dobro were featured on "When You're Smiling." Two songs from their latest album–"East Bound Freight Train" (a Grandpa Jones number) and "Jimmie Brown the Newsboy" followed. "Live and Let Live" came next followed by a tune featuring Jesse–"Somewhere Down South."

To the delight of my wife and I, their next song was one we had requested hours before, "I Hear the Bluebirds Sing." Banjoist Mike Scott was featured on "Farewell Blues." A gospel number, "Are You Washed in the Blood of the Lamb?" was offered next. A Jim and Jesse standard, "Air Mail Special" preceeded their closing number for the set, "Sugarfoot Rag," featuring Jesse on his fiddle. It' sets like these that characterize stars of the Grand Ol' Opry. How to best describe Jim and Jesse? How 'bout smooth, professional, great harmonies and brilliant instrumental work? And, their three additional 40-minute sets on line for the weekend were no different.

Sunday's show began promptly at 10 a.m. with the gospel music hour. Another band, Cheyenne with John Hickman, was added to the lineup. They were another

Continued on Page 8

Stanley Brothers

by Matt Thompson

Part Two

In this second half of my article on the Stanley Brothers, I would like to continue with the work they did for the King label. Many of their recordings have also been released on "various artists" records. Some of them have *only* been released on these VA records. As far as I can tell, however, most, if not all, of them are currently available on various reissues.

The Remarkable Stanley Brothers Play and Sing Bluegrass Songs For You (King 924) is an out of print album with a rather long title and twelve songs. Four of them, "Rollin' On Rubber Wheels", "I See Through You", "Our Darlin's Gone", and "What About You", are currently not available anywhere. The other titles have all been released again on other albums, with seven of them being on Gusto 0105 alone.

A Collection of Original Gospel and Sacred Songs (King 963) contains twelve gospel songs. Although it is out of print, all but three of the songs, ("I Feel Like Going Home", "Pray For The Boys", and "He'll Save Your Soul Yet") have been re-released on no less than four other albums.

The Best Loved Sacred Songs of Carter Stanley (King 1013) contains twelve more beautiful gospel songs by the Stanley Brothers. This album too is out of print, but fortunately all of the songs have been released on various other albums which were mentioned in Part One of this article.

How Far To Little Rock (King 1046) is out of print. All of the album's twelve songs can be found on various reissues.

In the early 1960's the Stanley Brothers made some recordings on the Wango label which were released on four albums:

Wango LP 103
Wango LP 104
Wango LP 105
Wango LP 106

All of this fine material has been re-released on the following series of albums by the County label:

Vol. 1—That Little Old Country Church House (Country 738) consists of twelve gospel songs.

Vol. 2—Long Journey Home (County 739) is a collection of sixteen fine songs.

Vol. 3—Uncloudy Day (County 753) consists of twelve more beautiful gospel songs.

Vol. 4—The Stanley Brothers of Virginia (County 754) contains yet twelve more

equally fine gospel songs. All four of these albums are highly recommended.

The following two albums were recorded in the early 1960's for the Rimrock label:

An Empty Mansion (Rimrock RLP 153) This album has also been re-released on the Old Homestead label as (OH-118). It contains fourteen gospel songs. These albums may have been released under other titles as well.

A Beautiful Life (Rimrock RLP 200) This album has been re-released on the Old Homestead label as (OH 119). It contains eleven gospel songs.

The remainder of this article will be devoted to various live recordings.

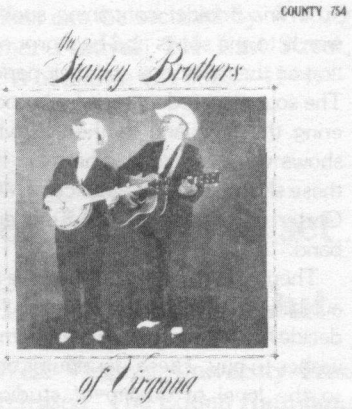
On Radio-Volume One (County 780)
On Radio-Volume Two (County 781)

These two albums contain portions of live radio programs recorded by the Stanley Brothers. Each album is handsomely packaged and contains nice liner notes. The sound reproduction is very good and the music very enjoyable, with good MC work by Carter Stanley. Most of the songs, however, are available on other Stanley albums.

Recorded Live (Rebel 1487)
Recorded Live-Volume 2 (Rebel 1495)

These albums contain live festival recordings by the Stanley Brothers. The sound is good on these albums also.

Together For The Last Time (Rebel 1512) is another live recording on the Rebel label. According to the liner notes, written by Ralph Stanley, this was the last show they did together—recorded at Bill Monroe's Brown County Jamboree on October 16th, 1966. The album contains fourteen songs, some of which



have never been released on their albums before.

The Stanley Brothers On The Air (Wango 115) contains live material from their work on radio. Most of the songs have previously been released—with better versions—on earlier albums. This album may still be available and is recommended only for the serious collector.

Live at Antioch College: 1960 (ZK 002) is a very enjoyable recording of a performance by the Stanley Brothers at Antioch College in Ohio. It is, however, out of print and no longer available. I believe it is a bootleg recording.

THE STANLEY BROTHERS—

"SHADOWS OF THE PAST"

Shadows of the Past (Copper Creek CCLP 0101) is yet another live recording by

Continued on Page 8

Stanley Brothers - Part Two

Continued from Page 7

the Stanley Brothers. The nice thing about this album is that it mainly contains songs that do not appear on other albums by the Stanleys. It also contains MC work by Carter.

THE STANLEY SERIES is a special series of live recordings by the Stanley Brothers. When purchased on a subscription basis, the albums come quarterly. Each album is accompanied by a fine booklet containing such things as words to the songs and background information on the musicians and their performances. The sound reproduction is fairly good, considering the time and method in which these shows were recorded. The main highlight of these shows is the abundance of MC work by Carter and the lively stage presence of the band.

There are a great number of live recordings available by the Stanley Brothers. One must decide how many of these live albums he or she wishes to buy. These live albums are not near to the level of quality of studio-recorded albums. They are valuable for interested fans, however, as examples of the stage presence and personalities of the performers. This is especially true for performers such as Carter Stanley, who are no longer with us. The release of live recordings also serves as a seemingly limitless supply of "new" material for those collectors who already have all of a particular group's other recordings. I'm sure that there are a whole lot of other live recordings of the Stanley Brothers out there and that we will see them being released on albums in the future.

Carter Stanley died on December 1, 1966, and he is greatly missed in the world of bluegrass music. Ralph Stanley, however, went on to carry out the Stanley tradition, making many more fine recordings. For a complete listing of these recordings, see **RALPH STANLEY & the clinch mountain boys—a Discography by John Wright**.

At this point I would also like to mention a book entitled **The Stanley Brothers—A Preliminary Discography by Gary B. Reid.** This work, which has just recently been made available to the public, covers in great detail all of the recordings of the Stanley Brothers (excluding live recordings). It covers record labels, master numbers, recording personnel, dates, etc. This is an invaluable source for the Stanley/bluegrass fan. All of their recordings from 1947 through 1965 are covered here. Check this book out. I only wish that books such as this were available for all of the major bluegrass artists!

I hope that my two articles on the Stanley Brothers have been helpful to some of you in forming your collections. (Again, for all the details, see Gary B. Reid's new book.)

Yours in bluegrass,
Matt Thompson

(Reprinted by permission of the author and the Minnesota Bluegrass and Old-Time Music Association, Larry Jones, President.)

Norco Reviewed...

Continued from Page 6

crowd-pleaser.

I was sad to see the 29th Norco wind down to its enthusiastic ending. But, the 30th Golden West Bluegrass Festival is on for November 1-3 and will feature Ralph Stanley and the Clinch Mountain Boys, Larry Sparks, Vern Williams, Country Ham, Good Ol' Persons, Harney Walker and the Swingrass Band, Late for Supper, Raintree County Boys, Cheyenne and the Footloose Cloggers. With Dick Tyner in the driver's seat, there's no question that it will be just as great, if not better, than the 29 festivals before it. Tyner is to be commended for keeping this fine event going, as it is only through his dedication, perseverence and fine planning that a southern California bluegrass tradition lives on.

Bluegrass & Related Music Organizations

CALIFORNIA

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA BLUEGRASS
Joe Quealy
4266 Brentwood Lane
Santa Maria, CA 93455

FRESNO FOLKLORE SOCIETY
C/o Sherron Brown
4135 North Glenn, Apt. G
Fresno, CA 93704

SAN FRANCISCO FOLK MUSIC CLUB
885 Clayton
San Francisco, CA 94117

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA INLAND EMPIRE BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 598
Patton, CA 92369

SANTA CRUZ BLUEGRASS SOCIETY
P.O. Box 2904
Santa Cruz, CA 95063

IDAHO

IDAHO BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION
2003 Summit Drive
Caldwell, ID 93605
Glen Garrett (208) 459-6848

NEVADA

NORTHERN NEVADA BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION
Box 18256
Reno, NV 89511

SOUTHERN NEVADA BLUEGRASS MUSIC SOCIETY
P.O. Box 3704
North Las Vegas, NV 89030

Mid-Summer Festival Proves Big Winner

by DAVID BARTON
Sacramento Bee Reviewer

(Editors Note: This review is run with the permission of David Barton and the McClatchy Newspapers/Sacramento Bee.)

Grass Valley - Over the weekend, Northern California took a giant step into the national bluegrass limelight with one of the country's finest festivals, the first Midsummer Bluegrass Festival.

Presented by the Sacramento Bluegrass Society, the festival at the Nevada County Fairgrounds featured an impressive roster of talen performing from Friday afternoon to Sunday evening. Fans began arriving Thursday afternoon from all over the Western states. An estimated two-thirds of those attending Saturday night's show camped in the pine grove area around the concert clearing.

That grove served as a parking lot as well as campground with access to the concert area. Campers could listen to the continuous performances, cook dinner, watch the kids running among the tents and parked cars or hold impromptu jam sessions.

Friday evening and all day Saturday, a number of California bands and a few national acts played on the tiny stage. Meanwhile, makeshift shops among the pines sold instruments, t-shirts, books and records as well as food and drinks, and performers and instrument makers gave workshops.

It all came to a climax of sorts Saturday night as the big-name acts played one after another from 6 p.m. to nearly midnight. As the sun's rays slanted through the pines and the temperature mellowed, the crowd was treated to successive 50-60 minute sets by J.D. Crowe and the New South, Hot Rize, Tony Rice, Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver and the Seldom Scene.

Crowe, a Grammy-winning banjo player with 26 years of pickin' behind him, led off with his country/bluegrass hybrid, which featured smooth three-part harmonies and his own inventive banjo work. His debt to Earl Scruggs was evident throughout. Applause was respectful.

Hot Rize then proceeded to turn in the most entertaining set of the evening. Led by Peter "Dr. Banjo" Wernick, an influential picker and bluegrass' most popular writer of banjo instruction books, the group played with fire, each member proving himself invaluable. This was particularly true as the group changed, through the help of a few extra cowboy duds and the mutual swapping of instruments, into the hilarious and musically fine Red Knuckles and the Trailblazers.

With Wernick switching to lap steel guitar and bassist Nick Forster switching to electric guitar, the group ran through a number of fine country tunes full of marvelous solos and great wit as they countrified '60's rock tunes such as "Paint It Black" and "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida."

Guitarist Tony Rice who spent time shaping the jazz-bluegrass fusion called "Newgrass" with the David Grisman Quintet, led his latest group through a restrained set that was marred by technical problems such as a poor instrumental mix and feedback. The technical problems persisted until nearly the end of the evening, but nothing could obscure Rice's clean, precise lines.

Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver followed with a fast-paced set of unaffected gospel bluegrass. Rich vocal harmonies (including two a cappella numbers) and Lawson's speedy, staccato mandolin runs highlighted their warm, engaging set, their first in California in more than five years.

Closing the show was the popular traditional bluegrass group The Seldom Scene. Switching from ballads to breakdowns, the group's delicate vocal harmonies were overshadowed, as was most of the evening's instrumental work, by the remarkable slide work of Mike Auldridge, whose dobro playing was awe-inspiring and ended the terrific show on a marvelous note.

(Reprinted by permission of the author and the Sacramento Bee.)

Dates for the 1986 Midsummer Bluegrass Festival will be August 1-2-3. Several groups have already been signed including The Whites, Bryan Bowers, and J.D. Crowe and The New South. Tickets for CBA members will be available from Dec. 1 to April 1 for $28, which is two dollars off the Dec. 1-April 1 advanced ticket price of $30. Festival tickets will be available from April 1 for $34, with the at gate price being $38. Individual day tickets, which do not include camping will be: Friday - $9; Saturday - $14; Sunday - $12. Tickets can be secured by writing Midsummer Festival, 741 East Street, No. 198, Woodland, CA 95695-4144.

Edden Hammons set of Fiddle Tunes Out

The West Virginig University Press has just released "The Edden Hammons Collection," an album of 15 recordings of some of Hammons' best fiddle playing.

Hammons is one of West Virginia's finest traditional fiddlers.

The album is reproduced from folklorist Louis Watson Chappell's recordings, made in August, 1947, when Hammons had reached an advanced age. Hammons lived from about 1874 to 1955 in mountainous east central West Virginia, an area including Randolph, Pocahontas, Webster, Nicholas and Greenbrier counties. He was a member of a self-sufficient mountain clan that migrated from Kentucky to West Virginia at the beginning of the Civil War.

Surrounded by a family of talented musicians, Hammons played the first tunes he learned from his father and uncles on a fiddle made from a crooked-neck gourd.

Among the tunes on the album is "Washington's March," a melody either composed by early family members or at least uniquely preserved by them. Other tunes include "Fine Times at Our House," "Love Nancy," "Shaking Off the Acorns," and "Falls or Richmond." "The Edden Hammons Collection" album may be ordered for $10.95 plus $1.25 for postage and handling, from the West Virginia University Press, Wise Library, P.O. Box 6069, Morgantown, WV 26506-6069.

HARLEY BRAY

A Bluegrass Gentleman

by BARRY BROWER

Traditional Bluegrass music has remained a vital and flourishing musical form because of its faithful and enthusiastic interpretation by younger groups, many of whom are new to the genre. The stories are legion of the impact of Bill Monroe, primarily, as well as Flatt & Scruggs, the Stanley Brothers, and others on the so-called "second generation" of Bluegrass musicians who came into their own in the 1950's. Even today, talented young musicians such as Tony Rice encourage their own admirers to "go to the source" - the early bluegrass performances - for at least their initial musical direction. In fact, many of these bluegrass "offspring" tell a strikingly similar tale of youthful enthusiasm and fanatical devotion to mastery of the musical form.

Such a group of individuals was the lesser-known, but highly talented, Bray Brothers and Red Cravens (A.K.A. "The Bluegrass Gentlemen") who played in and around Champaign, Illinois, in the 50's and 60's.

In many ways, this band had the ingredients for both commercial and artistic success: High, but distinctively soft-edged vocals; richly-toned and inventive mandolin-playing; driving, straight-ahead Scruggs-style banjo; a willingness to explore and tastefully incorporate modern material; and, perhaps most of all, a certain collective excitement and vitality of playing that is the band's trademark.

Unfortunately, however, the progressive development of this band follows an all-too-familiar bluegrass path: an initial "Let's-drop-everything-else" approach to the music; rapid mastery of the essential musical skills; attention from commercial interests in the form of a major recording and booking contract; ultimate disappointment when commercial success proved elusive due to fickle public taste.

This must have been a disappointment to bluegrass fans of the era as well since the **Liberty** album produced during this period was one of the few major label recordings of a lesser-known bluegrass group. Nevertheless, this album and the other surviving home recordings of the Bray Brothers and Red Cravens released by Rounder in the 1970's ring today with the authority of musicians in command of the musical form and caught up in the sheer joy and expression of it.

Francis Leon, Harley Orville, and Jascha (yes, as in "Heifetz") Nate Bray were the last three, in chronological order, of eight children raised by Monty Monroe and Hallie Hazel Bray. Both Mr. and Mrs. Bray loved classical violin and oldtime country fiddle playing and kept a violin, cello and piano around the house. Another older son, Wilson, learned to play both types of music on the violin from his father, who could also play the banjo. Harley says that some of his earliest and most pleasant recollections are of being lulled to sleep by Wilson's violin and sister Wanda's piano playing.

It wasn't long before Francis got interested in the cello and began to bow it and play along with the other family members. Then one day the elder Bray came home with a tenor banjo and Harley took an immediate liking to it. Soon a fifth string had been tacked onto the neck and Harley learned all the tunes his father knew. At this point Nate was'nt involved in the informal sessions at the Bray household but that was to change quickly when he was introduced to the mandolin in 1953.

Harley Bray, who recently moved to Edmonds, Washington, with his wife Shera, and children Kai and Peter, tells what happened then:

HARLEY: My cousin, Ross Bray, played a mandolin and we'd occasionally play with him. Nate really liked that mandolin and so, I don't know, just a whim or out of the blue, I went out and bought him a mandolin for his birthday. A "Kay" I think it was, and boy, I thought, this is a great mandolin! (laughs). I'd never heard of a Gibson, So, Nate started flat-picking the mandolin. About that Time, in 1954, friends of the family convinced us to go out and play for square dancing. There wasn't much happening around Champaign at the time for music, so we went out to play. And that's where we met Red Cravens. He was playing this big Martin guitar and a Gibson banjo. Red lived in Champaign but he was born in Kentucky. He was proud of that, you know, the "bluegrass" state and all.

Barry: Had he experience with other bands?

HARLEY: He was about three years older than me and had played on a radio station in Urbana, Illinois about 1951. He played the banjo on an early morning show. He played with a kind of thumb-style, and he had a straight roll too, but he didn't roll up to the fifth string. He had those big plastic picks and he picked real hard so he got some of the tone out. So anyway, he played the banjo out there that night for the square dancing and I thought that was really nice the way he played it.

Barry: So it appears you had not heard a Scruggs-style banjo player at this time. You hadn't heard the 'Opry late at night?

HARLEY: No, but Cravens had some records. he had a big record collection, and he had been aware of Bill Monroe and Flatt & Scruggs. He even claimed he had heard Earl Scruggs and Don Reno together on stage with Monroe on the 'Opry. They took turns taking banjo breaks. So he was really aware of it, he really liked the (bluegrass) music. And that's where we found out about the music, through Red Cravens. We got together with him after that and played "Pike County Breakdown" and "Bluegrass Breakdown". I'd never heard Monroe before because the radio wasn't strong enough to pick up the 'Opry. I remember hearing Roy Acuff but for some reason I missed Monroe.

Barry: Did you try to learn from these records of Red Cravens?

HARLEY: Oh, immediately! The next day! (laughs) i had a little phonograph and I had my ear right down close to it and I just thought that was the greatest thing I ever heard. It was so neat the way those picks just rolled out of there.

Continued on Page 11

So I just kept working at it until I got it. Red started coming over and at the same time that I started listening to Scruggs, Nate started listening to Monroe playing "Rawhide" and "Bluegrass Ramble." Nate was still playing the Kay, but Red had a little better mandolin, some obscure label, so he loaned it to Nate. Francis got his cello out and it just didn't work, you know, so we went down to the music store and got a half-sized bass. Red thought he knew how to tune it, but he tuned it backwards! (laughs) That's how Francis learned it! (laughs)

Barry: Some of you were working day jobs at the time. Did you have time for music?

HARLEY:

We started playing a lot, and just started working things up. Red knew all these songs so he did most of the singing. Things like "Get in Line Brother" and "Farther Along" and then we started singing trios with Nate taking the high part and me the baritone. That changed after Nate and I got back from the Army in 1960. Red switched from lead to tenor and Nate took the lead on most pieces. Red fit in better as a tenor singer.

Barry: So this period, the mid 50's, must have been an important time in the development of the band.

HARLEY: We were playing all the time. I played the banjo all the time. I don't think a day went by when I didn't play five or six hours. When I wasn't working I played more than that. I wore strings out. Sometimes I'd go through three sets of strings a week. And Nate was playing a lot, too. In 1955 we bought Nate a new Gibson F-12 mandolin. I was playing a Gibson banjo that Red bought in 1952, but it wasn't a Mastertone. It was a "Bow Tie" banjo, but I'm not sure what model it was.

Barry: Nate appears to have learned the mandolin in an amazingly short period of time. You say he got his first mandolin in 1953 and in the space of what amounts to a few years he was able to develop an exceptional facility on the instrument.

HARLEY: It was fast. I remember Nate went to Mattoon, Illinois, in 1956 to look for work, and I was down there too, and Nate was playing "Rawhide" just about as good as he ever did. A lot of the other stuff came along later. He bought an F-5 mandolin mainly so he could keep it tuned to a "D" (Note: the "E" strings are tuned down to a "D") and kept his F-12 in straight tuning. We did quite a bit of playing in "D" tuning. Red would put a capo on just so he could play "d" chords. He did everything in "G" or "D" postion. Things like "Home Sweet Home" and "Walk On Boy," those were in "D" tuning.

Barry: Why do you think Nate progressed so rapidly?

HARLEY: He had a lot of talent. He played the violin in grade school, and he also played fiddle. But most of the time he spent on the mandolin. I remember days we'd both be home and I'd be downstairs working on the banjo and he'd be upstairs working on the mandolin. He used to do drills - up and down, up and down - on the neck. He'd play a lot by himself. I've been told that Bill Monroe once said that there wasn't but two "other" mandolin players p- Frank Wakefield and Nate Bray.

Barry: Young bluegrass musicians today have a number of options available to them for learning that you and Nate did not have in the 50's. Tapes and records were scarce and other musicians virtually unavailable to you.

HARLEY: That's right. I took a one day trip to Nashville in 1955, I think, and I figured, boy, in Nashville there'll be all kinds of bluegrass records, but I went into two or three stores and just couldn't find anything. What records we did learn from were mostly Monroe and old Flatt & Scruggs.

Barry:

Nate seems to have absorbed and mastered a number of diverse styles including the cross-picking approach of Jesse McReynolds.

HARLEY: He had a different style of cross-picking than Jesse somehow. He'd heard Jesse's style and liked it; we'd heard "I'll Always be Waiting for You" off an old Jim & Jesse 78. That was the only record we'd heard by them, though, and I don't remember Nate ever sitting down and trying to learn that style. He just sort of made up his own version of it. I also liked the way Nate cross-picked "Home Sweet Home." It seemed like he never played it the same way twice. I heard it a lot because we used it as a theme song later on WHOW radio.

Barry: Yes, I noticed that Nate did a lot of cross-picking on the various album cuts that are available of the Bray Brothers. "East Virginia Blues" is one I remember in particular. Both of you did a good job on that piece.

HARLEY: Nate's break on "East Virginia Blues" was always one of my favorites, too. After we made that tape (from which the Rounder cuts were taken) I started playing it in "D" tuning which is better on the banjo, I think. I think Don Reno had a version of "Home Sweet Home" tuned down to a "D" and that's the way I wish my solo on "East Virginia Blues" had been, tuned down to a "D".

Barry: In 1957 you and Nate went into the Army. What did the other band members do during this period?

HARLEY: Francis and Red started going to Bean Blossom. They had a regular fiddle contest there and Red would play backup guitar so they'd all be equal (the fiddlers). One time Monroe was playing a county fair or something by himself - it was hard times for bluegrass then - and Red heard he was going to be there and so he got up on stage and played guitar for him and Bill never forgot that. Red said he told Bill afterwards "those old songs are great, you oughta do more," and Bill said, "That's in the past, you gotta keep looking forward...don't look back," he said. He was talking about his own tunes!

Barry: This may have been because Bill was struggling at the time, trying to find a popular sound during those lean years.

SHERA BRAY: It didn't put food on the table to "Look back" then, but now it puts food on the table. Its just reinforcement - you do something and the people clap and applaud and give money so you do it again, right?

HARLEY: The first summer Nate nd I were out of the Army, 1960, was a great summer. We were down at Bean Blossom every weekend. And there were other musicians that gravitated right in there you know. There was always

Continued on Page 12

something going on. The show was on Sunday, and we'd head on down the first thing Sunday morning and we were there until the last thing Sunday night. But it was really nice. They had an old white barn on the property which Bill bought in 1951, I think. That was back when he had that great band with Jimmy Martin and Rudy Lyle. I really liked Rudy Lyle's style. There was a lot of good music played in that old barn. They had this big stage out there, and it had a hole in it, and there was a room behind the stage where there was always musicians. It was just a one day thing at that time. Bill had a lot of 'Opry acts come through there. I remember they had one show, Cowboy Copas and his wife, Jean Shepard, and they would throw things up in the air and it 'em with their six-shooters. The whole crowd went outside to watch that.

The Louvin Brothers were there. I really like them. I always thought they would make a good bluegrass band. They did some Bill Monroe tunes - "Mansions for Me" - and others on the stage, and they would dedicate them to Bill. They had a lot of good things to say about Bill.

Barry: Did Bill participate in the informal jamming at Bean Blossom?

HARLEY: Oh yes, he was back there a lot. He would kind of just come and go. He was kind of like a shadow; you knew he was supposed to be there but he was nowhere to be seen. You knew he must be around in one of those rooms taking a nap or something. I remember a number of times he and Nate would swap mandolins, and it always amazed me that the mandolins always sounded the same, like they were both playing their own instrument. And the stage was informal, too. Nothing would really be set up for a program and the show would go on and we'd just get up there and do it. This was early in the day. Later on there would be some kind of band.

One time we went down to Bean Blossom and Monroe did'nt have a band together. The banjo player he had was mad at Bill. He was there with his banjo and he didn't want to play but he was making himself available in case Bill would apologize and ask him to play. Bill didn't ask him. (laughs) The banjo I owned had the original calfskin head on it but it was completely worn out and actually split on the ring. I tried to borrow this guy's banjo but he was holdin' out. (laughs) He thought he was gonna get to play. There was this big platform at Bean Blossom, I guess they square danced on it. It wasn't there after 1960, but that day cars were parked all around it and Bill was there with a fiddle player from Nashville and Red, Francis and I played with him. It was sprinkling off and on and so Bill told everyone to stay in their car and instead of applauding honk their horns! (laughs) That was the strangest feeling! I was really nervous and Bill asked me what instrumental I wanted to play and the only thing I could think of was "Bluegrass Breakdown", so I started it out and boy, I played it fast!

Barry: Was there ever an opportunity for you to play regularly with Bill?

HARLEY: I had a chance. He asked me if I wanted to. Or, he asked Red, he didn't ask me. I was standing there, though! (laughs) He said, "If you fellas ever break up I could sure use this boy on the banjo," but I didn't want to leave the other guys. I would have just loved to play with Bill Monroe. A little later he started talking to me directly. I guess that was something he kind of did. If he didn't know someone very well, he'd talk to a third person.

We had a chance to play with Jimmy Martin once, too. He tried to hire three of us. 'Course, he couldn't use Red. This was about 1960, and we were playing a big country music show and Jimmy Martin was there, too. J.D. Crowe had just left him and Paul Williams was still with him, and I guess he heard us playing when he pulled up and he apprently said to someone "listen to that mandolin." He got together with us and wanted to know if we wanted to go on the road with him. He was going to hire us right then, but we didn't want to leave Red. We were just starting to put things together.

Barry: What happened after that summer in Bean Blossom?

HARLEY: Well, Johnny Barton from WHOW in Clinton, Illinois, came over in the fall and said he'd like to get us on his show. He had a radio show on Saturday mornings, and then he would play tapes from that show during the week. We didn't have a tape recorder then so we'd drive over to Clinton once every two weeks and record two shows. Most of these tapes he'd erase as he went along and just keep using the same tapes. There were a lot of good things that just vanished. Probably all of them would have been gone, but Red got a good buy on this Crown tape deck, a professional model, so we started doing our own tapes and then send them to John at the station.

Barry: Were you consciously trying to support yourselves playing music at this time?

HARLEY: Yes! That was our intention. We signed with Liberty records in 1962 and they had it in mind for us, I guess, to blend a bluegrass sound, which they liked, with some combination of folk and a more modern sound that would be saleable to the general public. They were aware of the success of the Kingston Trio, who had just split up, and were really excited about the possibility of filling the gap. That's what all the newer material we recorded was about. They were also aware of the success of the first bluegrass festival in 1961 out in the East somewhere. We always liked all kinds of music and Nate could play about anything on the mandolin. Liberty liked the newer stuff, I think.

Barry: How did the band members feel about this musical direction?

HARLEY: Well, we were really serious about playing music for a living. We were just crazy about it, you know, its all we wanted to do. So, after we'd been around WHOW, a guy named Joe Ryder from Champaign got interested in us because of our new material and sort of became our manager. He had a lot of contacts in Nashville - he's the one who got us on the 'Opry for one show - and one thing led to another and we finally got hooked up with Snuff Garrett at Liberty through a booking agent in Nashville.

Continued in the November/December Issue.

Who is playing where -

FIELD GUIDE TO WESTERN BANDS

A Reminder

All bands listed are here because they sent in a note to the editor to insure that the musical group is actually still operational. Last issue contained over 12 listings for groups that no longer are together. If you wish to be listed in the next Bluegrass Breakdown, you must send in your bands name, address, and phone number, along with any engagements you have upcoming, plus any continuing performances, to be listed. Send to: Editor, Bluegrass Breakdown, 735 College Street, Woodland, CA 95695.

Continuing Gigs

Wednesday

Grizzly Peak String Band, 7-9 p.m. at Pizza Magic, 208 Parker Avenue, Rodeo, CA.

High Country, Paul's Saloon, San Francisco

Friday

Heartland, 8 p.m.-11 p.m., Red Vest Pizza, El Cerrito

High Country, Paul's Saloon, San Francisco

Bluegrass Monarchs, Kalisa's, Cannery Row, Monterey

Sidesaddle, The Loft, San Jose (except for May 24 & June 14)

Saturday

Heartland, 7 p.m. - 10 p.m., Red Vest Pizza, Walnut Creek

Bluegrass Monarchs, 1 - 6 p.m., River Inn, Big Sur

Band Listings

BLUEGRASS CROSSROADS, (503) 647-2878 [Hillsboro, OR]

BLUEGRASS MONARCHS (408) 373-0515 [Pacific Grove]

Fridays - Kalisa's, Cannery Row, Monterey
Saturdays - River Inn, at Big Sur, 1 - 6 p.m.

CHARLIE'S BAND (Sawplayer Charlie Blacklock) (415) 523-4649 [Alameda]

8th AVENUE STRING BAND, (916) 343-8173 [Chico]

FIDDLEDUSTERS (707) 429-3193 [Fairfield]

GRIZZLY PEAK STRING BAND (415) 724-0232 [East Bay]

HEARTLAND (415) 935-9295 [Walnut Creek]

THE PHIL SALAZAR BAND (805 653-2380 [Ventura]

SAWDUST, (408) 446-1105 or (916) 626-1937 [South Bay] & [Coloma]

SAWTOOTH MOUNTAIN BOYS (503) 838-4095 [Monmouth, OR]

Aug. 30-Sept. 1 - Labor Day Festival, Grass Valley

SANDY ROTHMAN, ALAN SENANKE & THE BAY RAMBLERS, Box 20451, Oakland 94620 [Bay Area]

SIDESADDLE (408-353-4408 [San Jose]

August 30-31, Sept. 1 - Labor Day Grass Valley Festival, Grass Valley

SMOKEWOOD, (213) 254-3848 [San Gabriel, CA]

Aug. 23 - Sept. 2 - Hi Desert Jubliee (Antelope Valley Fair) Lancaster, CA

SPRING MOUNTAIN HARMONY(209) 784-8268 [Porterville]

WILDROSE, (916) 444-8318 [Sacramento]

WILD OATS (707) 822-6264 [Arcata, CA]

Sept. 6 - Young bergs, Arcata, 9:30 p.m.
Sept. 13 - Youngbergs, Arcata, 9:30 p.m.
Sept. 20 - Silver Lining, McKinleyville, 8:30 p.m.
Sept. 26 - Jambalaya, Arcata, 9 p.m.
Sept. 27 - Youngbergs, Arcata, 9:30 p.m.
Oct. 4 - Youngbergs, Arcata
Oct. 11 - Youngbergs, Arcata
Oct. 18 - Silver Lining, McKinleyville
Oct. 25 - Youngbergs, Arcata
Oct. 31 - Jambalaya, Arcata

WILD OATS BAND (714) 538-3724 [Orange, CA]

Advertising Rates

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

Full Page -- $80.00
Half Page -- $50.00
Quarter Page -- $30.00
Business Card -- $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

Turn Your Radio On

RADIO LISTING

Please send to the Editor, Bluegrass Breakdown, 735 College Street, Woodland, CA 95695.

SUNDAY

9:45 a.m. - All Gospel Show with host Ed Bird, **KCVR**, Lodi, (1570 AM) [209] 368-0626

12 noon - 5 p.m. - Bay Area Bluegrass, KCSM, San Mateo, (91 FM), Featuring all types of Bluegrass Music, alternating hosts Pete Lude, Karyn Cap, Barbara Whitaker and Cuzin Al Knoth on last Sunday of the month. [415-574-6427]

2 - 4 p.m. - The Bluegrass Show with Ron Stanley, KERG, Garberville [104.7 FM] (707) 923-2052

2 - 5 p.m. - Bluegrass Express hosted by Marty Warburton, Don Mitchell, Bill Ray and Don Lanning, KNPR, Las Vegas [89.5 FM] (702) 456-6695.

3 - 5 p.m. - Home Brothers Radio Show, KUNR, Reno, [88.7 FM] (702) 784-6591

3 - 5 p.m. - Down on the Fataphysical Farm with Leigh Hill, KUSP, Santa Cruz, [89 FM] (408) 476-2800

5 - 7 p.m. - The Lost Highway [bluebilly music] with Johnny Simmons and Amy Airhart, KUSP, Santa Cruz, [89 FM] (408) 476-2800

6 - 9 p.m. - Cuzin' Al and his bluegrass show, KHIP 93.5 FM, Hollister (408) 637-7600.

9 - 12 p.m. - Cupertino Barn Dance with Stompin' Steve Hathaway [cowboy & country music] KKUP, Cupertino [91.5 FM] (408) 253-0303

MONDAY

2 - 4 p.m. - Trail Mix with Carri Gicker and Jody Fenimore [country & folk] KVMR, Nevada City, [89.5 FM] (916) 265-9073

6 - 9 p.m. - Alternating Mondays - The Quickstep with Karen Quick and Brother Glenn's Mostly Bluegrass Show with Glenn Christensen, KKUP, Cupertino [91.5 FM] (408) 253-0303

TUESDAY

8 - 9 p.m. - Bluegrass with Lee Jenks, KYDS, Sacramento, [91.5 FM] (916) 447-2346

WEDNESDAY

9:30 p.m. - 1 a.m. - Music from the True Vine, alternating hosts Dave Elliott, Gareth Jenkins, Meryle Korn and Jim Seafeldt. [traditional & contemporary bluegrass] KBOO, Portland, [90.7 FM] (503) 231-8032.

THURSDAY

10 a.m. - Noon - Hard Country with Richard Snelson, KVMR, Nevada City [89.5 FM] (916) 265-9073

7 - 10 p.m. - Just Jean Radio Show with Jean Philben [folk & country] KKUP, Cupertino [91.5 FM] (408) 253-0303

8 - 10 p.m. - Basically Bluegrass with Duane Inglish, KCBX, San Luis Obispo [90.1 FM], Santa Barbara [89.9 FM] (805) 544-KCBX

FRIDAY

2:30 - 4:30 p.m. - Alternating: Pig In A Pen with Ray Edlund [bluegrass & old-time]; Panhandle Country with Tom Diamant [country, bluegrass, western swing, cajun, old-timey] KPFA, Berkeley [94.1 FM] (415) 848-6767

SATURDAY

3 - 6 a.m. - Saddle Seat - country with Johnny Western, KKUP, Cupertino [91.5 FM] (408) 253-0303

6 - 8 a.m. [**2nd & 4th Saturdays**] Capt. Nashville and the Sterling Sliver Express bring country & bluegrass to the *Worlds Folk Music Show*, KKUP, Cupertino [91.5 FM] (408) 253-0303

6 a.m. - 5 p.m. - Prairie Fires and Paper Moons with Mitch and Jerri Third, includes Prairie Home Companion from 3-5, KUOP, Stockton [91.3 FM] (209) 946-2582

10 a.m. - Noon - The Bluegrass Show with Ken Crow, KVMR, Nevada City, [89.5 FM], (916) 265-9073

Noon - 2 p.m. - Hillbilly Jukebox with T.J. Meekins, KVMR, Nevada City, [89.5 FM] (916) 265-9073

3 - 6 p.m. - Life's Other Side with Mike Reed, KUNR, Reno, [88.7 FM] (702) 784-6591

3 - 6 p.m. - High & Lonesome, bluegrass with Rick Nagle; alternating with Dave Barnett's Swing Boogie, western swing & bluegrass, KKUP, Cupertino, [91.5 FM] (408) 253-0303

6 - 8 p.m. - A Prairie Home Companion, KUNR, Reno, [88.7 FM], (702) 784-6591

6 - 7 p.m. - 'The Bluegrass Connection', Every Saturday night bluegrass with Brad Johnson, KVML, 1450 AM, Sonora. P.O. Box 578, Sonora 95370, (209) 532-7426.

Record Reviews

Larry Sparks
Blue Sparks
(Rebel REB-1618)

SIDE ONE: *Come Back Darling, I Ain't Holding On Any Longer, Shoe Goes On The Other Foot, On The Old Plantation, Lonesome Ride, Brown-Eyed Darling.*

side two; *Imitation of the Blues, Doin' My Time, When My Blue Moon Turns To Gold Again, Walking On The Blue Ridge Mountains, Mommy Please Stay Home With Me, Lomesome And Blue.*

PLAYERS: Larry Sparks, guitar, lead vocals; Terry Barnes, mandolin, tenor vocals; John Masters, banjo, baritone vocals; Jim Heffernan, dobro; Gene Elders, fiddle; Larry D. Sparks, bass.

by GLENN CHRISTENSEN

This album begins with a rousing old standard with plenty of hot banjo and mandolin work, and the three-part harmony singing that traditionalists love. It doesn't get, as they say, any better than this. Unfortunately on *Blue Sparks*, it doesn't.

There is a trend these days to over-produce bluegrass music to the point of being slick enough to slip and fall on, and I'm a little concerned to find someone as steeped in bluegrass tradtion as Larry Sparks following this trend. An excessive use of dobro is one reason contemporary bluegrass can sound so alien to those of us who were raised on the sounds of Flatt & Scruggs, the Stanleys and Bill Monroe, and the dobro is used throughout this album.

Don't misunderstand me; Jim Heffernan does a remarkable job with his dobro, but to my ears it softens the kick right out of the music (and I'm not even a member of SODA -- the Stamp Out Dobros Association).

As progressive bluegrass albums go, however, you will have to go a long way to find a better one than this. The selections include such things as jazzy fiddle breaks (A-2) minor chord banjo breaks (A-5), "brother harmony" (that is, two-part) (B-5), a couple of nice ballads, and a really haunting version of the great old blues standard, *Imitation Of The Blues*. That's one of my favorites on the album.

This album will, I think, appeal to a wide band of people: progressives, those new to bluegrass, acoustic country fans and dobro lovers. Those seeking a collection of traditional Sparks music will be happier with his earlier albums.

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