

Come join us for the CBA's Fall Campout and Board of Directors election Oct.15-17

By Suzanne Denison

The Colusa County Fairgrounds at 1303 10th Street (Hwy. 20) in Colusa, California will be the location for the CBA's Fall Campout and Board of Directors election on the weekend of October 15 to 17, 2004. No reservations are needed -- just pack up your instruments, family and friends and come join in the fun!

The fairgrounds offers plenty of RV and tent camping at a cost of \$18 per night per unit. There are some electric and water hookups and plenty of trees for shade, as well as bathrooms and showers.

On Friday, October 15, the James King Band will perform in concert after the annual barbecue and potluck dinner. There will be no admission charge for the concert, but donations will be gladly accepted to offset the cost of the hall and dinner supplies.

The CBA will furnish paper plates, plastic ware, soft drinks and coffee, as well as the meat to be barbecued. Attendees are asked to bring a dish to share to feed their family and at least four other people. More details will be avail

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Campers relax and jam on the beautiful fairgrounds in Colusa during the CBA's 2002 Campout. The grounds offer lots of trees, grass and space for camping and jamming. Photo by Rick Cornish

5th Annual CBA Veteran's Day Bluegrass Festival features the best of California's Bluegrass Bands November 12-14

Now is the time to begin your plans to enjoy the best of California's home-grown bluegrass music on the weekend of November 12-14, 2004 at the Yolo County Fairgrounds in Woodland when the California Bluegrass Association presents the 5th Annual Veteran's Day Bluegrass Festival. The CBA is featuring entertainment by twelve of California's best bluegrass bands including several that have never performed at the festival before. And the jamming will be endless as additional areas will be available.

Bands scheduled to perform this year include True Blue, Acme String Ensemble, Cabin Fever, Carolina Special, Circle R Boys, Copper Canyon, Donner Mountain Bluegrass Band, The Earl Brothers, Modern Hicks, Mossy Creek, Mountain Laurel, Sidesaddle & Co., and the Warblers.

Our 2004 Specially Featured band is True Blue, an outstanding quartet of talented Bluegrass musicians. True Blue features veteran musicians whose careers have spanned three decades in various West Coast bluegrass bands. Del Williams, True Blue's lead singer, is the son of Vern Williams who was one of the pioneers of California bluegrass. Del played with his dad in the Vern

Williams Band for 15 years, along with Ed Neff, True Blue's mandolinist, fiddler and tenor singer. Together they recorded one album for Rounder, and two with country music legend Rose Maddox on the Arhoolie label. Ed was among

the first people to play bluegrass in California back in the 60's, and is known as one of the most lyrical and tasteful bluegrass fiddlers anywhere. His mandolin style exhibits the same superb taste and skill, and True Blue provides the perfect

vehicle for both. Avram Siegel is widely recognized in the West for his rhythmic, inventive banjo style. He, too, played with Vern Williams for a time, and prior to that with Laurie Lewis. More recently he has recorded and toured internationally with the Kathy Kallick Band based in the Bay Area. He is baritone vocals fill in the band's powerful, edgy trios for which they are known. Allison Fisher is the fourth member on stand-up bass.

Her energy and drive contribute to True Blue's powerhouse rhythm section, and contributes the tenor vocal on some of the band's duets and trios. True Blue's sound is fresh, yet steeped in the soul of Bill Monroe and the rhythmic feel of Flatt & Scruggs. Together they illustrate what can happen when four people share a musical sensibility and joy in what they are

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True Blue will headline the CBA's 5th Annual Veteran's Day Bluegrass Festival in Woodland next month. Left to right are Ed Neff, Alison Fisher, Del Williams and Avram Siegel.

Bluegrass Breakdown
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California Bluegrass Association Membership Application

Last Name _____ First Name _____ Spouse: Last Name _____ First Name _____

Address _____ Child(ren) _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail: _____

Category

Single Membership	\$20.00
With Spouse Added	\$25.00
Children 12-18 (non-voting)	\$1.00 each
Children 12-18 (voting)	\$10.00 each
Band Memberships (3-5 members)	Out of State only \$35.00

Please sign me up for the following:

_____ Single - 1 vote for _____ year(s) \$20.00

_____ Couple - 2 votes for _____ year(s) @\$25

_____ Add _____ non-voting children

_____ Add _____ voting children

Children's names and Birthdates:

Volunteer Area _____

If Senior Citizens (65 & over), please list birthdates:

Membership includes 12 issues of the *Bluegrass Breakdown*, and discount prices for all CBA sponsored festivals and concerts. Each band member is entitled to receive a copy of the publication. Please list names and addresses on a separate sheet.

New ☐ Renewal ☐ Member # _____

Membership Total \$ _____

CBA Heritage Fund Donation \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Please make checks payable to California Bluegrass Association (CBA). Heritage Fund Donations are tax deductible.

Mail to: CBA Membership Vice President

Kathy Kirkpatrick
P.O. Box 690730
Stockton, CA 95269-0730
For information, call 209-473-1616 or
e-mail: calbluegrass@comcast.net

About Banjo Bob



The banjo player around which the CBA's current logo is designed is the creation of George Callaghan, an Irish artist who lives and works in Tasmania. The Association acknowledges and thanks the gifted Mr. Callaghan for his soulful interpretation of what it means to be a banjo player and to be completely committed to the music we love. We also acknowledge and thank Geoff Stelling, creator of the world famous Stelling Banjos. His beautiful peg head design, long synonymous with the finest of American-made instrument making, was an inspiration for the creation of "Bob's" rather unorthodox banjo. And finally, the California Bluegrass Association wishes to acknowledge and thank Mr. Steve Johnson, long-time CBA member and supporter and a world-class designer. For his creative genius in translating the original art into the CBA's logo the Association is indebted.

Editor's Corner

By Suzanne Denison

Welcome to October – it's hard to believe that fall is here already! It seems like just yesterday that we were hard at work getting everything ready for our June Festival in Grass Valley – and now it's time for the CBA's Fall Campout, Annual Meeting and election of the Board of Directors. We hope to see you there – October 15-17 at the Fairgrounds in Colusa, California.

Come early and stay late – the fairgrounds has lots of camping space, trees and grass. There quite a few RV hookups, showers and bathrooms and an RV dump station on site. It is right on Highway 20 about 15 miles from I-5 and an easy drive from Sacramento, the San Joaquin Valley, the Bay Area and most of Northern California.

On Friday evening, October 15, there will be a free Barbecue and Potluck dinner followed by a concert featuring the James King Band. Admission to the concert is free, however, donations to offset the cost of renting the hall will be accepted and much appreciated.

If you haven't voted – shame on you! Please take a few minutes to read the candidate's statement that start on Page A-12, complete your ballot and mail it in. The CBA even

pays the postage. Or – you can vote at the campout. The balloting will close on Saturday, October 16 at 2 p.m. Election results will be announced Saturday evening after the dessert potluck by election committee chairperson Anne Dye.

Bring your instruments, your family and friends and come join us in Colusa!

I had carpal tunnel release surgery on September 2 and am doing fine. It has been a real challenge to get this issue to press – using only one hand. But obviously, I did it. Thank to all of you who have sent cards and emails – or asked at the

Plymouth Festival. My doctor told me it may be up to a year until I have full use of my left hand, but it is healing and I started therapy in mid-September.

I'll keep this short and just ask you all to support the CBA's upcoming events and all of the others listed in this issue. If we all attend one or more music performances a month, the music will thrive and hopefully increase.

Until next month... enjoy the music!



Come join us for the CBA Fall Campout

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able in following issues of the *Bluegrass Breakdown*.

The annual election of the CBA Board of Directors will be held during the event. Ballots will be accepted through Saturday at 2 p.m. and results of the election will be announced at the dessert potluck beginning at 6:30 p.m. After the 2004/05 board has been introduced, there will be a general membership meeting for members to

express concerns and suggestions and ask questions of board members.

Candidates for the CBA's 2004/05 Board of Directors are: Lisa Burns, Elicia Burton, Bruce Campbell, Rick Cornish, Don Denison, John Duncan, Tim Edes, Montie Elston, Mark Hogan, Hal Johnson, Darrell Johnston, Larry Kuhn, J.D. Rhynes and Suzanne Suwanda. Please read their candidates' statements beginning on page A-12 and complete the ballot on page A-13.

You can choose to vote for all 11 candidates or only one or two, but please VOTE! Postage for the ballot will be paid by the CBA. Simply complete the form, including your name and membership number, fold and staple or tape the top of the sheet, and put it in the mail -- or vote at the campout.

During the ballot counting process, the committee: (1) checks

Ted Irvin's passing

Editor:

I am deeply saddened by the passing of my friend, Ted Irvin. I first met Ted and Ida at a jam in Copperopolis a number of years ago and through the years I have had the pleasure of not only jamming with them but becoming friends. Listening to them play and sing was always a joy. Ted knew a million songs.

Ted and I had a mutual friend in Kodiak, Alaska who was the promoter of the Bear Country Music Festival. Whenever Ted and I got together, we would talk about our friend in Alaska, and when I went to Alaska we would talk about Ted.

Some great stories were told. Wonderful memories!

Ted always loved the "Kids on Stage" program. After each show, he would always compliment the kids, the program and the job I was doing with them. He felt very strongly about preserving this music and felt that the "Kids on Stage" program was an extremely important part of the preservation. Knowing that he felt this way, Ida has generously asked that any donations be made to the "Kids on Stage" c/o The CBA at P.O. Box 9, Wilseyville, CA 95257. I am deeply touched by this.

I will truly miss my friend, and the entire Bluegrass community has lost a very special man.

*Sincerely,
Frank Solivan Sr.*

In Memory of Ted Irvin

Subsequent to Ted's recent passing his family reminded us of his love for the CBA's "Kids on Bluegrass" program and requested that mourners send donations for this program rather than flowers. As of this date the folks that knew Ted and wished to commemorate his departure from among us have generously donated a total of \$1160 to the CBA's Kids on Bluegrass program. The Board of Directors thanks Ted's family and the all the folks that made these donations. They will be well used in his memory.

*Darrell Johnston
CBA Treasurer*

California Bluegrass Association Bluegrass Breakdown

is published monthly as a tabloid newspaper at P.O. Box 690730 Stockton, CA 95269-0730, by the California Bluegrass Association. The CBA is a non-profit organization founded in 1974 and is dedicated to the furtherance of Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Gospel music. Membership in the CBA costs \$20 a year and includes a subscription to the *Bluegrass Breakdown*. A spouse's membership may be added for an additional \$5 and children between 12 and 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 for \$35 for the out of state bands only. Subscription to the *Bluegrass Breakdown* without membership is available only to foreign locations. Third class postage is paid at Stockton, California. *Bluegrass Breakdown* (USPS 315-350). Postmaster please send address changes to: *Bluegrass Breakdown*, P.O. Box 690730 Stockton, CA 95269-0730. Copy and advertising deadline for the 10th of the month one month prior to publication (i.e. February deadline is January 10, etc).

Members are encouraged to attend all board meetings. The date and location of the September meeting of the board of directors had not been set at press time. Please contact any board member or call the CBA office at 209-293-1559 for information and directions.

Please send all contributions and advertisements to:

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Other sizes of advertising are available at \$3.80 per column inch based on a 5 column tabloid size. Please call (209) 293-1559 or e-mail: cbawpn@volcano.net for further information.

A 10% discount is offered for advertising which runs 6 issues or more and is paid for in advance.

Advertisements should be submitted as PDF or PageMaker for Macintosh files either on disc, CD or via e-mail. Advertisements can be produced by the editor upon request if artwork and photographs are submitted in advance. Four color ads available for \$50 additional cost.

Advertising proofs can be FAXed or e-mailed upon request if typesetting and/or layout is required. Please allow at least 5 extra days for production.

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Classified Advertising

The current rates for classified ads are based on 3 1/2 inches of typed copy and are as follows: \$3.00 for the first three lines and 50¢ for each additional line.

All advertising must be paid for in advance unless prior arrangements have been made for billing. A 12% late fee will be charged if advertising invoices are not paid within 60 days of billing.

Make checks payable to the California Bluegrass Association and send check and ad to:

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5th Annual CBA Veteran's Day Bluegrass Festival, Nov. 12-14, 2004

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doing. True Blue will be closing the show on Saturday, November 13 with an extended set beginning at 9 p.m. and will be performing again on Sunday, November 14 at 4 p.m.

The Northern California Old Time String Band, The Acme String Ensemble, based in Sonoma County, has been performing old time southern music since 1988. Featuring Chris

Carney on fiddle and mandolin; Steve Wharton on banjos, Autoharp and harmonica; Michael Harmon on guitar; and new member Sue Walters on bass. They are also all fine singers. The Acme's repertoire is culled from years of dedicated listening to the great southern commercial recordings of the 1920s, 30's and 40s. Their respect for the music is evident, but not scholarly or stuffy. They love what they play and have a lot of fun doing it, and their energy is infectious. You can catch the Acme String Ensemble's performances on Friday, November 12 at 5 p.m. and again on Saturday, November 13 at 11:50 a.m.

Cabin Fever, based in the San Francisco Bay Area consists of three young, high-energy, multi-talented members. The band's performances feature unique material, tight harmonies, and irrepressible musicianship. Cabin Fever is fast becoming a favorite at festivals and venues around the Western United States. Band members are Larry Chung – banjo, guitar, mandolin and vocals, Steve Swan – bass and vocals and Yvonne Walbroehl – guitar and vocals. The dynamic trio will be performing on Saturday, November 13 at 1:35 p.m. and again on Sunday, November 14 at 3 p.m.

John Murphy's Carolina Special is a five-piece traditional Bluegrass Band based in the Bay Area. John Murphy, the band's guitar player and lead singer grew up in the hills of Carolina and started singing and playing guitar when he was seven years old. After more than a quarter of a century John is at the top of his game, bringing that "Carolina" style of bluegrass to a new generation of fans. Dave Earl plays mandolin and sings tenor reminiscent of the classic bands of the 50's. Dave's lifelong commitment to traditional American Roots Music lead him from a blues background to bluegrass in 1998. George "The Hammer" Goodell plays that "Scruggs" banjo that is the perfect fit for Carolina style bluegrass. George started playing banjo in the mid 70's and has played the CBA's Father Day Festival with the Dusty Road Boys, The Caddis River Boys and twice with Carolina Special. Doug Holloway gives Carolina Special the classic mix of fiddle fills, backup and searing lead breaks. Doug also sings the bass part on the Gospel Quartet songs. He has worked with many of the San Francisco bay area's finest bands. Suzanne "Good Rockin'" Suwanda is the band's bass player and newest member of the group. Suzanne brings an enthusiasm and drive that brings the Carolina Special sound all together. Be sure to catch Carolina Special's show when they perform on Saturday, November 13 at 2:30 p.m. and their Gospel set on Sunday, November 14 at 10 a.m.

The Circle R Boys, a bluegrass band based in the San Francisco Bay Area, play traditional bluegrass music in the style of Bill Monroe, Flatt & Scruggs, and the Kentucky Colonels. Band members are Bob Waller – guitar, Steve Pottier – mandolin, Paul Bernstein – banjo, and Josh Hadley – bass. The band was formed in the fall of 1999 and has performed at numerous California festivals and concerts in northern California. The Circle R Boys will be

closing the show on Friday, November 12 beginning at 9 p.m. and will perform again on Saturday, November 13 at 5:15 p.m.

Copper Canyon is a Northern California Bluegrass band that features the talents of several well-known California musicians. Bandleader Rick Jamison is a songwriter, singer and accomplished guitar player with a fast, clean flat-picking style. Phil Cornish is the band's mandolin player, songwriter and lead vocalist who is turning heads with his crisp, tasteful mando style, cutting-edge melodies and "born singin' bluegrass" voice. Pat Ickes makes the five-string banjo come alive with the sparkling sound and hard-driving banjo licks that anchor the band to its bluegrass roots. Jerry Logan, the band's bass player, is an accomplished musician with a rich bluegrass background. The band's latest CD, "Tales From the Canyon" featuring twelve original songs has been receiving excellent reviews in Bluegrass publications. Copper Canyon will be performing on the Woodland stage on Friday, November 12 at 8 p.m. and again on Saturday, November 13, also at 8 p.m.

Donner Mountain Bluegrass Band is a hard driving group of young musicians from northern California. The band began their third season together by performing to a sell-out crowd at the San Francisco Bluegrass and Old-time Festival. Their self-titled debut CD was released in November 2003 and has received excellent reviews. This fast picking, high energy band is comprised of Tom Kingsley of Oakland on mandolin; Annie Staninec of San Francisco on fiddle; Tom Davies, who grew up on Donner Summit, on guitar; Joe Schwab a Donner Summit resident on guitar and Dave Gooding of Elmira on bass. Don't miss your chance to see the future of Bluegrass music on our Woodland stage, Friday, November 12 at 4 p.m.

The Earl Brothers are a 4-piece, all-original string band that stands at the cutting-edge of a movement which is so new, it has yet to be definitively named. Whether one chooses to describe them as "Honky-Tonk Bluegrass", "Hillbilly Gothic", or "Neo-Traditional", there is one thing on which everyone seems to agree. There is something about this band's "less is more" approach to songwriting, singing, and musicianship that makes you stop whatever you're doing and take notice. In the short time since the release of their debut album, "Whiskey, Women & Death", The Earl Brothers have received an overwhelmingly enthusiastic response from music-lovers, festival promoters, radio DJs, and music journalists across the country and abroad. The album rose to the top spot on the WDVX playlist in Knoxville, Tennessee, just a few short weeks after its debut on that station. The Earls are: Bobby Earl Davis (banjo), John McKelvy (guitar), Larry

Hughes (mandolin), and Josh Sidman (upright bass). The Earl Brothers will be opening the evening show on Saturday, November 13 at 7 p.m. and will perform again at 1 p.m. on Sunday, November 14.

The Modern Hicks is a five-piece band, based in the Sonoma, California area. Band members are: Kevin Russell, a Seattle native, is a multi-instrumentalist. Kevin plays guitar, mandolin, 5-string banjo, and resophonic guitar and sings lead and harmony. Layne Bowen, also a founding member of Modern Hicks, who plays mandolin and guitar. In addition to his instrumental and songwriting contributions, Layne sings harmony and lead parts for the band. Gina Blaber sings both lead and harmony parts for the Modern Hicks. Craig Anderson, the band's Dobro and 5-string banjo player, hails from Southern California. Ted Dutcher plays the bass for the Modern Hicks. A veteran of several Sonoma County bluegrass and beyond bands, Ted brings a rock-solid rhythm and a keen sense of harmony to the band. The Modern Hicks will be opening the Woodland festival with a 3 p.m. performance on Friday, November 12 and will be on stage again on Saturday, November 13 at 3:25 p.m.

Mossy Creek, a Chico-based Bluegrass band will be making their first appearance at the CBA's Woodland Festival. The band's three and four part harmonies and arrangements are the cornerstone of its appeal. Mossy Creek is centered around the vocal talents of Erin Haley, a 24-year old Chico State University student. Erin's father, Pat Haley is the band's leader. He plays banjo, guitar and Dobro for the band. Dean Mott plays guitar and Dobro and his melodic tenor voice adds dimension to the band's sound. Christine Hogan, the band's fiddler, was one of the top junior fiddle players in the country. Lancer Hardy plays bass and guitar for the band. His pleasure in playing with the band is evident and infectious. Be sure to catch this exciting new band on Sunday, November 14 at 1 p.m.

Mountain Laurel, an exciting five-piece Bluegrass band based in the Grass Valley-Nevada City area, has entertained audiences at festivals, clubs and concerts throughout northern California for more than ten years. Bandleader, front man and mandolinist Pete Siegfried has been singing and playing bluegrass since he fell in love with the music growing up in rural Pennsylvania. Pete does most of the lead singing in the band and his clear, sweet tenor voice is the centerpiece of the band's rich vocal sound. Acoustic bass player Doug Bianchi anchors the band with his driving and tasteful bass work. In addition to bluegrass, Doug's bass playing shows some western swing influences, a musical side he explores more fully with his other

President's Desk

Dear Friends:

It has been an interesting summer this year. I have discovered that retirement is a busy time, and unless I schedule my days carefully, I am overwhelmed with the number of things that I have committed myself to do. I suppose that my age and energy levels have something to do with this. Things just don't get done as quickly as they used to.

Suzanne is recovering nicely from her surgery although she would like it to be even faster. The human body is a wonderful thing. However, if you don't listen to the doctors and try to do too much, pain ends the self-abuse. Therapy begins Friday and will I am sure involves lots of discomfort. Hopefully we will have all this behind us in a few more weeks.

We attended the second Bluegrassin' In the Foothills festival in Plymouth last week. I suppose we could say that we attended the festival last time as well even though we didn't stay more than an hour or so, we did buy tickets. We had pressing family business in Hanford that last September, so could not stay to enjoy the music. This year we went to the Festival on Wednesday and did not leave until Monday morning. Larry and Sondra Baker are to be congratulated on producing a fine event. There was rain for most of Sunday but the move into one of the buildings was well executed. Suzanne and I were able to relax away from the phone for a few days, visit with friends and listen to some fine music.

Be sure to check out our website. There is always something of interest. Board member Mark Hogan stirred up some activity by announcing that now he had an RV, there was no need for a tent camping area any more. Unfortunately he forgot to end his message board posting with the information that this was a joke, and that he was only making a humorous comment about the fact that entry into middle age has made he and Colleen more appreciative of the creature comforts that an almost 30' long motor home can offer. Mark has been taken to task by many who did not understand his sense of humor. I wish Mark and Colleen many years of enjoyment of their motor home. Suzanne and I began our experience with Bluegrass festivals in a tent, but soon wanted, then needed the comforts of an RV; we both know why everyone cannot be comfortable sleeping on the ground. I have mentioned this matter to illustrate to you why you should log on to

cbaontheweb.org from time to time to see what's happening, this one was a hoot.

You all know that Suzanne is retiring from her position as Editor of the Bluegrass Breakdown. What you all probably don't know is that the Grass Valley Festival in 2005 will be my last as Entertainment Coordinator. I am proud of the show that we put on each June, and have worked hard for many years to make it a pleasant experience not only for the customers, but for all who are involved whether they be musicians, photographers, sound crew, backstage personnel or official visitors. It is however time for me to do other things. I have asked many of you and the board to provide me with a suitable trainee for this important position. To date we have not had a qualified person ask to be trained. Some people when they found out just what the job entailed lost interest. I have made the observation that as long as I continue to do this job, no one else will come forward to learn and make a decent transition.

Please, if you can work with a variety of personalities, will continue to make sure that the experience of working on and around the stage is a good experience for all concerned, if you can devote at least 3 years to this task, contact me by phone, e-mail, or in person as soon as possible. I am serious about this matter, and will not continue in this position just because no suitable person has come forward.

Please don't forget to vote! This year we have a contested election. We usually don't get many candidates, and usually incumbents are re-elected without contest. You can cast your ballot at the Annual General Meeting/election/campout if you so choose, but it is better if you mail your ballots in so that your vote will count if something comes up preventing your voting at the meeting. Please remember that the James King Band will be entertaining us that Friday night.

I hope to see all of you at the meeting in Colusa, or failing that, at the Veterans Day Weekend Festival in Woodland.

Your Friend

Don



Featuring the best in California Bluegrass and old-time music

band, the Stardust Cowboys. Guitar player Ken Nilsson is a creative guitarist who provides solid rhythm playing as well as sparkling, exciting solos that never fail to win applause. Ken shares the lead vocals with Pete and adds tenor and baritone harmonies. The newest member of Mountain is Kathy Barwick, who plays resonator guitar and sings tenor harmonies on the trios. Kathy has toured and recorded with a number of bluegrass artists over the past twenty years, including the Bluegrass Philharmonic, Bill Grant & Delia Bell, the All Girl Boys and the Avocado Brothers. Banjo player Paul Siese has more than twenty years of experience performing and recording with such California bluegrass bands as A Touch of Grass and Past Due and Playable. Paul contributes baritone harmonies and his rich bass singing adds great texture and fullness to the band's quartet vocals on gospel numbers. Paul's droll comments and laconic stage presence are the perfect complement to his explosive and exciting banjo picking. Be sure to catch Mountain Laurel's performance on Friday, November 12 at 7 p.m.

Based in San Jose, California, Sidesaddle & Co. has been captivating audiences with their unique acoustic sound since 1979 when the band was first established. The five member of the band come from an interesting variety of musical backgrounds which come alive in their repertoire of primarily traditional bluegrass music, seasoned with vintage country, Irish, Cajun and Cowboy Western. Soulful harmonies and strong, creative instrumental talents characterize the band's style. All the vocalists in the band share the lead singing, each with a unique personal style that gives the band its appealing diversity. Band members are Kim Elking - mandolin, Rob Horgan - banjo, Lisa Burns - acoustic bass, Glenn Dauphin or Jerry Ashford - guitar, and Lee Ann Welch - fiddle. The longevity of the band is proof-positive that Sidesaddle & Co. lends an air of contagious energy and professionalism to every performance. Sidesaddle & Co. will be performing on Saturday, November 13 at 4:20 p.m. and will close the show on Sunday, November 14 at beginning at 5 p.m.

The Bay Area trio known as The Warblers features the lead singing and guitar playing of Yvonne Walbroehl. A native of Virginia, Yvonne's roots are firmly planted in bluegrass. She has been playing guitar since she was 11 years old, and her favorite singers growing up were Hazel Dickens, Emmylou Harris, Bill Monroe, and the Stanley Brothers. She is one of the hottest flat-pickers around, and her ax of choice is a 1947 Martin D-18. Her major influences on her guitar playing were Clarence White,

Tony Rice, and Doc Watson. Pennsylvania native Claudia Hampe sings and plays rhythm guitar, and it is her beautiful harmonies that make this band sound so good. Larry Carlin is a performer, producer, and writer of bluegrass in the San Francisco Bay Area. Originally from King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, he has been living in the Bay Area for 24 years, and he sings and plays standup bass for The Warblers. Be sure to catch this dynamic trio's performances on Saturday, November 13 at 10:55 a.m. and on Sunday, November 14 at 11 a.m.

In addition to the band performances, the festival offers a Sunday Morning Gospel show, Band Scrambles and a Kids on Stage performance on Saturday. There will be yummy food vendors all weekend, as well as excellent craft and music vendors also on site. There will also be a CBA membership and information booth and a booth offering CBA logo merchandise for sale.

Be sure to stop by the CBA booths to purchase your last-minute tickets for the instrument drawing to be held on Sunday, November 14. Prizes include an F-9 Mandolin and J.D. Crowe model Banjo donated by the Gibson Company; a D-18 Vintage Guitar donated by the C.F. Martin Company; and an Acoustic Bass donated by the 5th String Music Store of Sacramento. The raffle is a fundraiser to support the CBA's presence at the IBMA World of Bluegrass. You need not be present to win one of these wonderful instruments.

One of the great features of the CBA's Woodland Veteran's Day Festival is that it is held indoors, so inclement November weather has not been a major issue for performers or the audience, and there is another heated building for jamming. For those with RV's, there are LOT's of paved and hard packed areas to put your rig with water and power available for 300 rigs. For the hardy tent campers, there are grassy areas with water available. Camping fees are \$15 per night per unit and are in addition to festival admission. Absolutely NO pets are allowed at the festival site.

Advance tickets are on sale through November 1, 2004 and are: 3-day pass - \$40 per person for CBA members; or \$45 for non-members; and \$20 for teenagers (13-18). Children 12 and under are free all weekend with a paid adult admission. Single day tickets are: Friday - \$20; Saturday - \$25 and Sunday - \$15. No member discounts on single day admission. For advance tickets, send a check or money order payable to the CBA to Esther House, 1834 Cooper Dr., Santa Rosa, CA 95404, or call her at 707-573-3983.

Tickets may be purchased on the Internet at www.cbaontheweb.org with a credit card. Admission at the door will be \$50 for CBA members and \$60 for the general public for the 3-day festival.

There is a ticket order form on page A-24 for your convenience. Ticket orders must be postmarked

by November 1 to receive advance discount prices.

For further information, call

Don Denison at 209-293-1559 or email dondbear@yahoo.com.

Tentative Band Performance Schedule

Friday, November 12

3 - 3:50 p.m. Modern Hicks
4 - 4:50 p.m. Donner Mountain Bluegrass Band
5 - 5:50 p.m. Acme String Ensemble
5:50 to 7 p.m. Dinner Break
7 - 7:50 p.m. Mountain Laurel
8 - 8:50 p.m. Copper Canyon
9 - 10 p.m. Circle R Boys

Saturday, November 13

10 - 10:45 a.m. Kids on Stage
10:55 - 11:40 a.m. The Warblers
11:50 a.m. - 12:35 p.m. Acme String Ensemble
12:35 - 1:35 p.m. Lunch Break
1:35 - 2:20 p.m. Cabin Fever
2:30 - 3:15 p.m. Carolina Special
3:25 - 4:10 p.m. Modern Hicks
4:20 - 5:05 p.m. Sidesaddle & Co.
5:15 - 6 p.m. Circle R Boys
6 - 7 p.m. Dinner Break
7 - 7:50 p.m. The Earl Brothers
8 - 8:50 p.m. Copper Canyon
9 - 10 p.m. True Blue

Sunday, November 14

10 - 10:50 a.m. Carolina Special
11 - 11:50 a.m. The Warblers
12 - 1 p.m. Lunch Break
1 - 1:50 p.m. Mossy Creek
2 - 2:50 p.m. The Earl Brothers
3 - 3:50 p.m. Cabin Fever
4 - 4:50 p.m. True Blue
5 - 5:50 p.m. Sidesaddle & Co.

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BANJO LESSONS IN BAY AREA from Bill Evans. Rounder recording artist, Banjo Newsletter columnist and AcuTab author. Beginners to advanced; Scruggs, melodic and single-string styles, back-up, theory, repertoire. Lessons tailored to suit each student's individual needs, including longer evening or weekend sessions for out-of-town students. Over 20 years teaching experience. Albany, 510-528-1924; e-mail: bevans@nativeandfine.com.

BANJO LESSONS WITH ALLEN HENDRICKS of Hendricks Banjos, the California Quickstep, and formerly of the South Loomis Quickstep. I teach all styles of five string banjo playing that can be done with finger picks. All levels from rank beginner to the accomplished player who may need additional direction to take his or her playing to a higher level. Private individual lessons as well as teaching your group to compliment each other's styles and abilities. I teach at my own private studio in the Sacramento Area. I also teach in my home just north of Placerville. I play banjo, I make banjos, and I sometimes buy and sell banjos and other stringed instruments. For further information or to schedule lesson times, please call (916) 614-9145 or (530) 622-1953.

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BLUEGRASS NEWS NOTES

In Memory Charlie Waller 1935 — 2004

On Wednesday, August 18, Country Gentlemen founding member and lead vocalist Charlie Waller was found motionless in his garden by his wife Sachiko. He passed away just prior to leaving for several tour dates at his home in Gordonsville, Virginia. His son Randy believes that his death was due to a heart attack. He was 69.

Since starting the Country Gentlemen in 1957 with Bill Emerson, Charlie has recorded countless Bluegrass hits and has earned a place in the Bluegrass Hall of Honor. Beginning his professional career in Washington, DC in local bars at the age of 13, Charlie quickly progressed into larger venues during his teenage years. From there, Charlie left DC for Baltimore to perform with Earl Taylor. He then met Buzz Busby who was looking for a guitar player and singer. Charlie quickly landed that job and was with Buzz Busby and the Bayou Boys for two years before a twist of fate occurred.

After a life-threatening automobile accident involving most of the Bayou Boys, Charlie was asked to join a band to fill in for the dates the Bayou Boys would miss while recovering. Charlie was then united with the original or "classic" Country Gentlemen: Larry Lahey (bass), John Duffey (mandolin), Bill Emerson (banjo) and Charlie (guitar and lead vocals). They immediately realized they had



something special and knew they had to keep it going. On July 4, 1957, The Country Gentlemen were formed.

For over 45 years many well known artists, such as Tom Gray, Porter Church, Eddie Adcock, Doyle Lawson, Mike Lilly, Ricky Skaggs, and Bill Yates, to name a few, have performed as Country Gentlemen. Together, these members have received innumerable award nominations, garnered nearly 70 prestigious industry awards, and the "classic" Country Gentlemen were inducted into the

International Bluegrass Music Association's (IBMA) Hall of Honor in 1996.

Throughout the years this group of personnel has recorded nearly 40 albums and provided us with many classic songs, which have enhanced the traditional bluegrass sound and repertoire. The latest lineup, which Charlie said, "It's the best sounding band I've had," consists of Greg Corbett (banjo), Darin Aldridge (mandolin, lead and rhythm guitar), Randy Waller (lead and rhythm guitar) and Billy Gee (bass) — all sure to be future legends.

The Country Gentlemen's recently released album, "Songs of the American Spirit" was released on the Pinecastle Records label in August.

Mr. Waller's first marriage, to Mona Waller, ended in divorce. His second wife, Kathy Waller, died in the 1960's. In addition to Randy, of Falls Church, Va., his son from an early relationship, survivors include his wife of 25 years, Sachiko Waller of Gordonsville; a daughter from his first marriage, Dori Lane of Cape Coral, Fla.; a son from his second marriage, Danny Graves of Avon, Colo.; and a daughter from his third marriage, Mina Waller of Gallatin, Tenn.

A memorial service for Mr. Waller was held in Gordonsville, Virginia on August 21. Cards and letters should be sent to Sachiko Waller, P.O. Box 832, Gordonsville, VA 22942 and Randy Waller, 3101 S. Manchester St. #704, Falls Church, VA 22044.

Charlie Waller will be greatly missed by countless fans and friends throughout the world.

Editor's note: Information for this obituary was obtained from an Associated Press article emailed by the family and a press release from Pinecastle Records.



Correction

In the news item about the death of Ted Irwin published in the September issue of Bluegrass Breakdown, Inga Zumwalt was named a member of the Backroads Band. This information was incorrect. The members of the band were Ted Irwin, Ida Gaglio, Joe Zumwalt and Ryan Richelson. Our apologies for this error and any problems it may have caused.

Contributions in memory of Ted Irwin have been steadily coming in the mail. As of press time, a total of \$850 has been received from those who wish to honor Ted. Funds from the donations will be earmarked for the Kids on Bluegrass program headed by Frank Solivan, Sr. If you would like to make a contribution to the Kids program, send your check payable to the CBA with a notation that it is for this purpose, to the CBA office, P.O. Box 9, Wilseyville, CA 95257.



Band and Musician News Modern Hicks the subject of a feature article in Bluegrass Now

Layne Bowen sent an email to let us know that his band, Modern Hicks, was the subject of a feature article in the September issue of Bluegrass Now magazine. "The article includes a short biography of each band member and gives a little band history. If you do not subscribe, you can go to the Blue-

grass Now magazine website (www.bluegrassnow.com) to view a photo and excerpts from the article," Layne said.

"The new Modern Hicks CD, entitled 'Under a Stormy Sky' is now available at live shows and from the our website www.modernhicks.com. The new project features seven originals, as well as songs by Kieran Kane, Daniel Lanois, Dave Alvin, Damon Black and Julie Miller" Bowen continued. A CD release party will be held at New College of California on Friday, October 8th. Showtime will be 8pm. Check the Modern Hicks website (www.modernhicks.com) in coming days for details.

"Modern Hicks performed on Labor Day weekend at the prestigious Strawberry Music Festival near Yosemite Park before a large afternoon crowd. Others performing at the festival were Rodney Crowell, the David Bromberg Band, the Laura Love Band, Guy Clark and the Green Cards (with former Newgrass Revival member Pat Flynn). It was a great weekend of music and the weather was phenomenal. This was Modern Hicks' second appearance at Strawberry," Bowen said.

Modern Hicks band members are Layne Bowen — mandolin, Kevin Russell — guitar, Craig Anderson — Dobro, Gina Blabar — vocals and Ted Dutcher — bass. The band will be performing on Friday and Saturday, November 12 & 13 at the CBA's the Annual Veteran's Day Bluegrass Festival in Woodland, California.



Advance sign-ups for Woodland Kids on Stage

Due to time constraints for rehearsals due to school, please contact me with information on "kids" that would like to participate on stage at the CBA's Veterans Day Bluegrass Festival in Woodland.

The dates for this year's festival are November 15, 16 & 17 2004. The festival is held at the Yolo County Fairgrounds in Woodland, California.

Usually they perform on Saturday a.m. and that leaves Friday night for a rehearsal/organization. So we need to organize our performers prior to the Festival.

You can contact me by e-mail at patcal@napanet.net or my home phone 707-255-4936 or by mail at 783 La Homa Drive, Napa, Ca. 94558 —Thanks,

Pat Calhoun



Uncle Sam needs YOU... And so does the California Bluegrass Association!

Elections are coming on the state, national fronts and CBA's Board of Directors for 2004/05 is too! Please take a few minutes to read the candidate's statements beginning on page A-12 and VOTE!

You only need to complete your ballot(s), fold them in thirds, staple or take the top and put them in the mail. The CBA will pay the postage. *Don't delay -- do it today!*



Tina Louise Barr nominated for MAMA Award

Tina Louise Barr, "Performer of the Autoharp" has been nominated for an award in the "Best Americana" category of the 2004 Modesto Area Music Association (MAMA) awards.

The Modesto Area Music Association is an organization that continues to grow in its support for local musicians and events, with the added benefit of recognition by the professional music industry.

The Best Americana category is sponsored by KAT Country 103.3 of Modesto. Along with Tina, five other local bands and musicians were nominated in this area.

"Voting is open to ALL online, there are no restrictions for residence," Tina said. You can find more information and vote for Tina

at <http://www.ModestoView.com/MAMA/Awards/>. The MAMA Awards presentations will be held on October 21.

Ron Stanley joins Oregon Bluegrass Band

Former Californian Dobro wizard Ron Stanley recently joined The Berke Pearce Band, a bluegrass band based in Eugene, Oregon. Ron says he's pleased to play with "fine Bluegrass pickers who are well known in the Northwest".

Band members are Dennis Berke (guitar and vocals), Suzanne Pearce (string bass and vocals), Rick Campbell (mandolin and vocals) and Mark Thomas (banjo). Ron will be playing Dobro and doing harmony and lead vocals.

"We're already booked for two festivals in the Northwest next year and I feel this combination is a good one that will keep us busy. Nice folks too, by the way," Ron said.

He will also continue performing his solo show, Dobro workshops at festivals or camps and sitting in with the string swing band SWANG "(swing with a twang you know)". For more information on Ron and upcoming gigs, see the band listing in B section of this issue or email Ron at stanley@mail.oregonfast.net.



Pine Mountain Railroad welcomes new members

Former Blue Grass Boy Michael Feagan joined Pine Mountain Railroad in August 04 at the fiddle position. In addition to his tenure with Mr. Monroe, Michael has played fiddle for Larry Sparks, Melvin Goins, the legendary Boys From Indiana and country stars such as Jerry Reed and Doug Stone. Avid horse ranchers, Michael & his wife Diane, a registered nurse, live in the Nashville area.

Cody Shuler, after four years with Raymond Fairchild's Maggie Valley Boys, began his new role as PMRR's mandolinist on August 4, 04. Cody, with two previous solo CD projects to his credit, is far more advanced than his 19-years of age would seem. He will also sing lead and tenor vocals. Cody resides in Bryson City, NC and picks the

Gibson F-5 Varnish model. Cody deals in vintage instruments, especially acoustic instruments. Cody Shuler endorses GHS Strings.

Matt DeSpain, of New Haven, Kentucky, is PMRR's newest member. Matt has worked most recently with The Dean Osborne Band. After taking up the resophonic guitar, Matt found a friend

and mentor in the legendary Gene Wooten, who taught Matt the basics and much of his heralded reso guitar style. Matt enjoys his time at home with his wife Christa and always tries to include a little time for fishing. Matt will sing tenor vocals for PMRR. Matt DeSpain endorses Black Diamond Strings.

Jerry Butler, guitar and lead vocals, Bill McBee, acoustic bass and bass vocals, and Kipper Stitt, banjo & baritone vocals, are glad to welcome these great additions. Founding member Kipper Stitt, sponsored by Gibson Original Acoustic Instruments, also

Continued on A-8

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us
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M-E-M-O
TO: The California Bluegrass Association
FROM: Pine Mountain Railroad

Thank you for naming PMRR the 2004 CBA Emerging Artist of the Year. We enjoyed our special 'homecoming' at Grass Valley this year—and the many friends we have through the CBA. See you all at IBMA Louisville!!

- Kipper, Bill, Jerry, Cody, Matt, & Michael

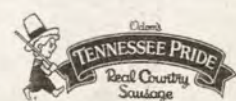
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BLUEGRASS NEWS NOTES

Continued from A-7

endorses GHS Strings and Kyle K. Smith - BanjoSetUpMan. Bill McBee is a Yamaha Performing Artist and, in addition to his acoustic basses, has the Yamaha Silent Bass available when needed. Jerry Butler endorses GHS Strings. PMRR endorses the fine Shure family of performing and recording microphones as well as Shure in-ear monitors. PMRR is also sponsored by AWSI Professional Cases and First Quality Music Supplies.

For more information about the band and a schedule of upcoming gigs, visit www.pinemountainrailroad.com.



The Grascals will open for Dolly Parton

Cambridge, MA — Dolly Parton has invited The Grascals, a bluegrass band newly signed to Rounder Records, to open all of the concerts on her Hello, I'm Dolly arena tour this fall. The six-piece group, which played on Dolly's forthcoming CD, will also join other great musicians to back her during her set for the evening.

Dolly duets with The Grascals on a decidedly bluegrass version of the Elvis Presley classic, "Viva Las Vegas," which the group will release as the first single from their forthcoming CD, due in stores in February. During the recording session, Dolly said, "I'm honored to join The Grascals on their first single. And I'm honored to have them join me on my upcoming tour."

"What an incredible opportunity to introduce our music to all the fans coming to see Dolly each night," said Terry Eldredge, The Grascals' lead singer and guitar player. "We couldn't be more excited, or more grateful to Dolly."

Eldredge, nominated for Bass Player of the Year by the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) and a member of the Osborne Brothers as well as Larry Cordle & Lonesome Standard Time, recorded and performed as a member of Parton's Blue-niques. The Grascals' fiddle player, Jimmy Mattingly has also recorded and performed with olly's Blue-niques, and with country superstar Garth Brooks. Highly acclaimed banjoist/vocalist David Talbot, who has worked with Reba McEntire, Marty Raybon and Larry Cordle & Lonesome Standard Time, also played on and assisted in the production of Cordle's critically acclaimed, Grammy-nominated Murder on Music Row CD. The formidable talents of guitarist/singer/songwriter Jamie Johnson (Wildwood Valley Boys, Gail Davies), bassist Terry Smith

(Osborne Brothers, Mike Snider) and mandolin player Danny Roberts complete the group.



Dobro player Andy Hall releases new solo album

Nashville-based Dobro player Andy Hall celebrates the independent release of his first solo CD entitled "Red Wing". Featured guest musicians on the project include Scott Vestal, Jeremy Garrett, Steve Thomas, Jesse Cobb, and others.

Andy hails from upstate New York, and is currently touring with Dolly Parton and Ronnie Bowman.

Red Wing is a 12 song album of driving bluegrass, haunting ballads, and even some swing thrown in for good measure. Comprised mostly of original material, Red Wing is a fresh look at a traditional instrument. The CD is available at www.AndyHallMusic.com. For information, email Andy at dustypicks6@hotmail.com.



Bluegrass bands sought for RFD network TV show

Tom Seay, the Trailmaster for the upcoming "Best of America by Horseback" trail ride is looking for bluegrass talent to be featured in a series of television specials to air on the RFD Network.

"Any groups that want to be featured or want to be heard should send tapes or CD's to us as soon as possible as we are now shooting pilot and second show stuff," Seay said.

If interested, please send any info or tapes or CD's to Tom at Andora Group, 17275 Germanna Highway, Culpeper, Virginia 22701. For additional information visit: www.bestofamericabyhorseback.com.

Editor's note: The above information was sent to us by several email sources. Additional information stated that this was an opportunity for bands to have their music promoted on a national scale, however, the appearances are not paid.
Suzanne



Gig Fair Planned for IBMA Convention

One of the primary reasons bands attend the IBMA Trade Show is to make contacts that will lead to work. Likewise, event producers are looking for artists to fill slots for their concerts and festivals during the upcoming year. A new event at the convention this year, the Gig Fair, scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 6, 9-10:30 a.m. at The Galt House in Louisville, Kentucky, will serve as an organized information exchanged for artists and talent buyers—the first step in creating and building a business relationship that may lead to bookings.

Forty plus reps from the top bluegrass festivals, concert series and theme parks world-wide will be seated at stations scattered in one to three meeting rooms at the Galt House. Artists may sign up for a maximum of 10 appointments in advance, beginning at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 5. There will be a brief orientation period from 8:45-9 a.m. on Wednesday morning for participating artists and event producers, before appointments begin at 9 a.m.

Participating event producers, showcase bands and Fan Fest bands will be surveyed in advance in order to match up appointment preferences. Artists who are not showcasing or playing Fan Fest are invited to sign up for a maximum of 10 appointments starting Wednesday morning at 8 a.m., in the hallway outside the Carroll Ford room at the Galt House.

Artists who wish to participate in The Gig Fair need to bring business cards and a one-sheet profile of their group. (Email nancyc@ibma.org for one-sheet specifics.) We will have blank forms available on-site at the convention, but bands will probably prefer to prepare one-sheet profiles in advance. Individual appointments will be seven minutes long.



Record Company News Josh Crowe makes his Pinecastle Records debut with "Sincerely"

ORLANDO, FL — Hailing from Maggie Valley, North Carolina, Josh Crowe has not just been playing Bluegrass music his whole life, he has been living it. Whether playing with the King of the Smokey Mountain Banjo Players, Raymond Fairchild, or David McLaughlin of the Johnson Mountain Boys, Josh Crowe has shown the world his talent for singing and

playing guitar.

With songs like "Local Flowers", "Baby Blue Eyes", "I'm a Man of Constant Sorrow", "Wildwood Flower", and other timeless classics, Josh does classic Bluegrass right. Appearing on the album with Josh are Shane Crowe, Zane Fairchild, Kenny Haney, and David Johnson.

The album was recorded at Country Roads Studio in Marion, North Carolina. It was engineered, mixed, and mastered by Fred Rumpf. Josh is currently on tour throughout the Southeast, and will be performing songs from his new album. Sincerely was released in stores on August 24, 2004.



Nothin' Fancy's new CD "Reflections" released by Pinecastle in Aug.

ORLANDO, FL — Since 1994, Nothin' Fancy has been wowing audiences with their flawless harmonies, seamless instrumentation, and immaculate original material. Specializing in their uncanny stage show and great music, they have created a continually growing empire of loyal fans. Whether making you laugh, cry, or dance, Reflections is sure to please!

With songs like "Little Wooden Crosses", "Fly With Me Angel", and "Seeing Nellie Home (Aunt Dinah's Quilting Party)", Nothin' Fancy's fresh approach to Bluegrass excites listeners and proves they are a great Bluegrass talent.

Nothin' Fancy consists of Gary Farris on guitar; Mike Andes on mandolin and lead guitar; Chris Sexton on five string fiddle, viola, and cello; Mitchell Davis on banjo; and Tony Shorter on bass.

The album was recorded at Lakeside Studios in Moneta, VA. It was engineered, mixed, produced, and mastered by Dale Perry. Nothin' Fancy is currently on tour nationwide and will be performing songs from their new album.



Darin Aldridge debuts with "Call It A Day" on Pinecastle label

ORLANDO, FL — Darin Aldridge is no stranger to the bluegrass music scene. He may be best known as a member of The Country Gentlemen as the tenor singer and

Mandolin player. "Call it a Day" proves, however, that Darin is an outstanding singer, songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist.

Darin's mandolin playing is no secret, being nominated three times for Bluegrass Mandolin Player of the Year by "The Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass", but "Call it a Day" exploits Darin's ability to write songs and to cover other writers' material. Appearing on the album with Darin is Tim Stafford, Jaret Carter, Billy Gee, Greg Luck, Shawn Lane, Jason Burleson, Greg Corbett, Amanda Smith, Lou Reid and Chris Bryant.

The album was recorded at Riverside Audio in Mt. Gilead, North Carolina and was mastered at American Mastering by John Eberle. "Call it a Day" was released in late August.

For more information on these or other Pinecastle Records projects and artists, visit: www.pinecastle.com.



The 2005 Copper Creek Bluegrass Calendar now available

A popular and well-received item in the bluegrass community since 1991, the calendar contains the birthdays of literally hundreds of bluegrass performers and personalities as well as the dates of important milestones in bluegrass history.

Praise for past editions of the calendar includes glowing testimonials from a variety of trade publications. Each month in the calendar features a striking photo of one of bluegrass music's brightest stars including: Jim & Jesse; Ralph Stanley; Walter Hensley; Mac Martin; Reno & Smiley; Gloria Belle; Lilly Brothers; Jimmy Martin; Shenandoah Cut-Ups; Revonah fiddlers (Simon St. Pierre, Tater Tate, and Vernon Derrick); Red Allen; and Curly Seckler (note: Curly is the 2004 inductee to the IBMA Hall of Honor!).

The 2005 Bluegrass Calendar highlights the photography of noted bluegrass entrepreneur Paul Gerry. By trade, a professional photographer, videographer, and record label owner, Paul had occasion to photograph a variety of bluegrass personalities over the years in a diverse group of settings. His earliest work dates from the 1950s when he captured on film bluegrass luminaries on stage at outdoor concerts. A devoted fan of bluegrass music, Paul turned his passion into a livelihood in the early 1970s with the forma



BLUEGRASS NEWS NOTES

tion of his record company, Revonah Records. After the founding of his label, a lot of his photographic attention was focused on acquiring images for use on the various albums that he produced and released. Over a 15-year period, Paul produced nearly 50 albums and recorded a lot of fabulous music in the process. Over the years Paul's photographic archive evolved into a treasure trove of pictures of many of the first and second-generation bluegrass bands. The 2005 Bluegrass Calendar chronicles Paul's best photographic work.

The Bluegrass Calendar makes a wonderful gift for bluegrass fans during the upcoming holiday season. The calendar retails for \$11.95. Dealer discounts are available. The calendar is also available at a discount to bluegrass associations for use as a fundraiser.

For information or to order your copy, email info@coppercreekrecords.com; write: Copper Creek Publications, PO Box 3161, Roanoke, Virginia 24015; or call 1-888-438-2448.



Larry Sparks & the Lonesome Ramblers inducted into the Bill Monroe Bluegrass Hall of Fame

Nashville, TN — Larry Sparks and his band, The Lonesome Ramblers, were inducted into the Bill Monroe Bluegrass Hall of Fame in Bean Blossom, Indiana on Friday, Sept. 24. The induction ceremonies were part of the 30th annual Bill Monroe Hall of Fame & Uncle Pen Days Festival.

The honor arrives just as Rebel Records is preparing to release Sparks' newest album, 40, so named because it marks the singer/guitarist's 40th year in bluegrass music. The 16-song collection features guest appearances by Vince Gill, Alison Krauss, Ralph Stanley, Ricky Skaggs, Andy Griggs, Rhonda Vincent, Sharon & Cheryl White, Rebecca Lynn Howard, Tom T. Hall, Dan Tyminski, the Isaacs, Kevin Denney, the Marshall Family, Paul Williams, Jim Hurst, Kenny Smith, Tim Stafford, Don Rigsby, Chris Jones, Russell Moore and Ronnie Bowman.

A native of Lebanon, Ohio, Sparks began performing as lead guitarist with the Stanley Brothers & the Clinch Mountain Boys in 1964. After Carter Stanley died in 1966, Sparks took his place in the band as lead vocalist. He remained with the group for three years, during which time he participated in recording five albums. He then left to form his own band.

Among Sparks' most-requested standards are "Kentucky Girl," "A Face In The Crowd," "Brand New Broken Heart" and "Tennessee 1949." It was his recording of "John Deere Tractor" that inspired the Judds to cut the song and release it, in 1991, as a single. Sparks is currently in contention for the Male Vocalist of the Year and Song of the Year awards from the International Bluegrass Music Association.

Several special guests spoke in Sparks' honor, telling sto-

ries and citing highlights of his career. He was presented with an engraved plaque, as well as a 12 x 20 framed picture that will hang in the museum. Moreover, his engraved name will be added to the Walkway of Stars that leads to the museum's entrance.

Bill Monroe created the Bluegrass Hall of Fame 16 years ago this month to honor those he felt had made a sub-

stantial contribution to bluegrass music. Currently, there are 15 individual artists and/or bands honored in the hall of Fame, including Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs, the Stanley Brothers, Jimmy Martin, the Country Gentlemen and the Seldom Scene.

The event was held in Bean Blossom at the historical Bill Monroe Memorial Music Park & Campground in Brown County, Indiana.



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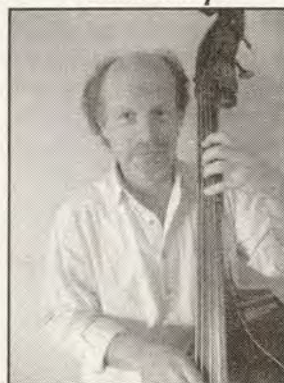
John Reischman & the Jaybirds



Laurie Lewis & Tom Rozum,
Scott Huffman, & Craig Smith



Todd Phillips



Lost Highway



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Bluegrass Folks -- Allen Hendricks

By Bill Wilhelm

Bluegrass festivals have always been my most likely place to find people I want to interview for these stories. At our last one in Grass Valley I went to the luthiers' display building in search of Allen Hendricks. There he was at the Hendricks banjo manufacturing display with his wife, Chris and his brother, Monte. I like to get the wives in on these stories, so I lured them both away with me with the mention of something cold in the refrigerator in my trailer.

It was a hot day and I don't remember doing any coaxing as he left Monte keeping the store and we made our exit.

Interviewing Alan is sort of like climbing a tree — you don't know which branch to grab onto next. Alan has so many branches or stories of his musical background and each one would be complete within itself. First, I'd like to share with you Chris' story, which I found to be likewise quite interesting.

She says that growing up in Sacramento, there were not many TV and radio stations and the ones you were generally confined to were local. Country and bluegrass music were prevalent and early on she found she liked it. She especially liked to hear the five-string banjo. She listened to a local band called South Loomis Quickstep when she heard them on local radio station KRAK and at the state fair.

Therefore, she knew who Allen Hendricks was from hearing him on radio and seeing him on TV. Upon turning twenty one, so she could go into places where music was played and hearing of a night club that had live bluegrass music, she and a girl friend ventured out there to see what that was all about. Sure enough, there was a live bluegrass band and Allen was the banjo player. She got to meet him that night and the rest is too much history to relate here, but these days she is known as Mrs. Hendricks.

Chris remembers a coincidence that they discovered not long ago. She remembers that when she was twelve, her cousin had taken banjo lessons. In recent years she mentioned that and Allen said, "Yeah, I remember him. I was his instructor."

Throughout the years, Alan has been in and organized several country and bluegrass bands. The first of these was Allen and Friends. The second was The Stone County Drifters. Back then there was a nightclub called Forty Grand and they had a talent night once a week. Alan got into that contest several times and was consistently the winner. The owner of the club said that this just wouldn't do and asked him not to play in the contest any more. He was told that he could, instead be a judge. Upon refusing that, he was asked to be

the featured regular banjo player on that show and on their weekend live TV shows. He did that then for a while, but soon decided to give up on the whole thing.

Alan, along with fellow musician, Rob Bonner, bass and Phil Berry guitar played together for about a year as a trio as The South Loomis Quickstep. They were not playing enough bluegrass to satisfy Allen and Rob. They were both bluegrass musicians and wanted to get back into it. They added a couple more instruments and became a bluegrass band. Phil was not bluegrass oriented and did not care for the change, so he left the band. They continued on as South Loomis Quickstep. Their popularity and their recordings all throughout the southwest lasted for the several years they continued.

Comedians in country bands have waned and they never have been popular in bluegrass bands, but Alan is an exception to that. He has a comedy routine that he invented that is a crackup. He puts in a denture with some pretty sorry front protruding teeth and takes on the name of Bucky Whites. He says the name comes from the buck-teeth that are white. He takes on a dialect that doesn't copy anyone. Then his whole personality changes as he does some pretty funny stuff and never cracks a smile. You don't know whether to feel sorry for him or laugh, but you can't help giving in to laughing. This all happens when you'd least expect it and he really is a pretty funny guy.

He went into the US Air Force in 1966 and fortunately was stationed in Sacramento. This en-

abled him to continue playing music with his musician friends. When his tour of duty was completed, he went to work as a civilian employee for the California Highway Patrol as a computer programmer. As he became acquainted with some of the instructors there, he had the rare opportunity to drive on their high-speed driving and skid course. He had driven racecars and dragsters some years back, so he had the natural feel of the cars and their momentum. He did well and surprised those present. As a result, he was offered a two-year contract as a driving instructor, but refused it to go back to trying to build a career in music.

Of the bands Alan was part of throughout the years, his pride and joy was the South Loomis Quickstep. They were a bunch of exceptional musicians, one being Mark O'Connor and in one of their recording sessions was Tiny Moore of Bob Wills fame.

For many years now Alan and brother, Monty continue to produce Hendricks banjos, some of the finest in the business in their little workshop at Pollock Pines, California. Alan teaches music three days a week, dividing his time with his studio in Sacramento and another at Garden Valley. With Monte he builds banjos on the other two days. He still plays a lot of bluegrass and that likewise takes up a lot of his evenings. At the next CBA Festival, stop by their booth in the luthier's building, watch them at work and even have a little chat with these friendly guys, but get away from Allen if he starts to pull that Bucky Whites routine on you!

San Diego Bluegrass Society presents The Kruger Brothers in Concert

San Diego, CA. — The San Diego Bluegrass Society proudly presents The Kruger Brothers, Switzerland's dazzling contribution to bluegrass music, in concert on Friday, October 15, at 7:30 p.m. at the First Baptist Church of Pacific Beach, 4747 Soledad Mountain Road in Pacific Beach.

The Kruger Brothers, made up of Jens Kruger on banjo with a signature banjo model from San Diego County-based Deering Banjo, Uwe Kruger on guitar, and Joel Landsberg on bass, are known for exciting performances that exhibit a sheer joy in playing and singing their special brand of bluegrass, inflected with traditional American folk and classical European musical influences. Their magical musical interaction has garnered The Kruger Brothers appearances at such prestigious events as MerleFest, Grey Fox, the International Bluegrass Music Association convention, and the Oklahoma International Bluegrass Festival.

In 1982, Jens also had the honor of becoming the first European to play the Grand Ole Opry. Permanently moving to the U.S. in 2003, The Kruger Brothers are now performing year-round in the United States. Choices, their newest and first CD produced in the U.S.A., was recently released at MerleFest 2004 in Wilkesboro, N.C.

Advance tickets are \$15 and available for walk-in sales at Acoustic Expressions, 2852 University Ave., by phone or walk-in at Deering Banjo at 619-464-8252, 3733 Kenora Dr., Spring Valley. Tickets at the door are \$18.

The Kruger Brothers will offer a 2-hour workshop on Sunday, October 17 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at Acoustic Expressions, 2852 University. The cost of the workshop is \$30. First hour: banjo workshop with Jens, or guitar workshop with Uwe. Second hour: a band dynamics workshop with The Krueger Brothers. To register, call Acoustic Expressions at 619-280-9035.



Chris and Allen Hendricks

RBA Presents...



**Plus
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Historic Ryman Bluegrass concert to be released on DVD and CD

Nashville, TN — Home viewers and listeners can thrill to the enduring power of bluegrass music, the ongoing strength of its founding giants and the brilliance of today's biggest bluegrass stars in a concert setting when Rainmaker Music releases All*Star Bluegrass Celebration on DVD and CD, Tuesday November 9th. Originally taped at Nashville's historic Ryman Auditorium for PBS broadcast and first aired as one of the public network's most popular fund-raising specials, the discs will be distributed by Welk Music Group.

Hosted by Ricky Skaggs, the show opens the first of three segments with a blistering traditional mountain song, "Shady Grove" from the bluegrass trailblazer and his award-winning band, Kentucky Thunder. Country superstar (and sometimes bluegrass picker) Vince Gill teams up with new Grand Ole Opry member and bluegrass ambassador Del McCoury and his band for a classic gospel number, followed by CMT and Grammy favorites Alison Krauss + Union Station featuring Jerry Douglas, who offer a riveting performance of the video favorite, "Let Me Touch You For A While."

Act Two presents bluegrass legends who continue to make compelling music today. Earl Scruggs, whose 5-string banjo helped to define the bluegrass sound during his years with Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys and Flatt & Scruggs before branching out into pioneering country-rock with the Earl Scruggs Revue, knocks his signature "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" out of the park. The original "Man of Constant Sorrow," Ralph Stanley, brings his haunting high lonesome sound to center stage, much as he did when he first recorded the song more than 50 years ago as a member of the legendary Stanley Brothers and, in a fresh twist, he welcomes country star Patty Loveless, a true Kentucky girl whose coal-miner Dad taught her to love mountain music, for a charming duet on the classic "Pretty Polly," before concluding the set with a spine-tingling accapella rendition of "O Death" that brings the house to its feet.

Act Three captures both the roots-embracing and forward-looking aspects of the genre, opening with a tribute to Monroe (1911-1996), known as the Father of Bluegrass, that includes his immortal "Uncle Pen," performed by Skaggs (who took the song to the top of the country charts 20 years ago), Loveless, and country roots-rocker (and banjo player) Travis Tritt. In a nod to the music's appeal to musicians of every genre, Skaggs brings on pop-rock star Bruce Hornsby to pick some hot bluegrass piano (!) on a traditional number, "Darlin' Corey," popularized by Monroe. Representing an important part of the bluegrass future, Nickel Creek follows with a jammin' "Seven Wonders."

The hour ends with a stage full of pickers for an all-out, all-star jam session finale: Monroe's fiery instrumental, "Rawhide."

Now more popular than ever, bluegrass has much to celebrate. An original American musical style born in the late 1940s when Monroe blended Appalachian moun-

tain music, African-American blues, gospel quartets and more into a new sound, it now attracts millions of fans from across all geographic, demographic, gender and genre boundaries. Enjoying an unprecedented renaissance typified by the multi-platinum-selling success of the O Brother, Where Art Thou?

soundtrack, bluegrass has demonstrated a new vitality through sold-out concerts, major music industry awards, wider media coverage and growing CD sales covering both established and new artists. Underlying it all is a yearning to return to the basics, the spirit and the soul of authentic American roots music all

on ample display in All*Star Bluegrass Celebration.

For more information, visit www.allstarbluegrass.com.



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Redwood Bluegrass Associates Presents

RBA's 2004-2005 Season Starts September 25th

Co-sponsored by the Northern California Bluegrass Society

Save These Dates...

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Buy Tickets Now...

All Winter Long...

Have Bluegrass Fun!

Laurie Lewis' and Tom Rozum's distinctive talents combined make for some of the sweetest harmonies, finest picking, and just plain enjoyable listening this side of musical nirvana. For their RBA performance, they'll be joined by some of their "Guest House" collaborators in what's sure to be a fantastic evening of bluegrass, old time, and original music.

RBA was responsible for Bob Paisley & the Southern Grass' first California tour several years ago, and we're delighted to welcome back one of the most exciting and vital groups in bluegrass. The Southern Grass brand of "Galax bluegrass," which combines elements of old-time music with hard-driving bluegrass, is distinctive and dynamic. Their "no holds barred" instrumental work perfectly compliments some of the most exciting singing in bluegrass today, the rhythm has a relaxed solidity that is possible only through years of playing together, and the band's personable approach makes for a highly satisfying evening.

The Kathy Kallick Band celebrates the release of its second album with what Dave Higgs (WPLN, Nashville) says is "a wonderful mix of classic bluegrass, fine country tunes, original instrumentals, and some killer Kathy Kallick pieces. A stellar showcase for Kathy's superb vocal talents, arranging abilities, and sublime tunes." The band now includes ace fiddler Brian Wicklund, along with Bay Area faves Tom Bekeney, Avram Siegel, and Amy Stenberg. The evening starts with a set by fiddler Megan Lynch & guitarist Larry Chung — and they just might return for a gang twang at evening's end. Big Fun tonight!

For over fifty years, Mac Martin has led a high quality traditional bluegrass band in the Pittsburgh area. Although Mac and his Dixie Travelers have not made a large number of personal appearances outside of the region of western Pennsylvania, their many recordings have won them a dedicated audience among fans of traditional bluegrass throughout the world, in part because Mac's songs have been recorded by the likes of Open Road, King Wilkie, Longview, James King, and Bob Paisley. It's all too rare to have a regional musician of Mac Martin's stature perform on the west coast, and RBA is proud to sponsor his first visit to California.

October 23rd

Laurie Lewis

Tom Rozum

& Guest House

\$15 Adv. \$18 Day of Show

November 20th

Bob Paisley &

the Southern Grass

\$15 Adv. \$18 Day of Show

January 15th

Kathy Kallick Band

PLUS

Megan Lynch & Larry Chung

\$15 Adv. \$18 Day of Show

March 12th

Mac Martin &

the Dixie Travelers

\$15 Adv. \$18 Day of Show

Doors open at 7:00. Shows start at 8:00.

So come early, enjoy some pie and coffee, and shake and howdy with all your bluegrass pals!

\$15 in Advance, \$18 Day of Show

13-18 Half Price

12 and under Free

Tickets are available from TicketWeb and at Gryphon Stringed Instruments, 211 Lambert St., Palo Alto. (see our web page at www.rba.org or call 866-468-3399 (toll-free). Season tickets ONLY available mail order. Mail order tickets are available from Redwood Bluegrass Associates, P.O. Box 390515, Mountain View, CA 94039-0515. Please enclose a business-sized self-addressed stamped envelope along with your check or money order and a note indicating what you want to order. More info at 650-691-9982.

**Bluegrass in
Mountain View
at the
First Presbyterian
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1667 Miramonte Ave.
at Cuesta Dr.**

**Doors Open at
7:00
Shows Start at
8:00**

**Keep an eye out. There are
More Shows TBA**

2004/05 CBA Board of Directors Candidates' Statements



Lisa Burns

I am excited about the opportunity to serve for a third year on the CBA Board of Directors. This past year has been fantastic and we are growing in many areas. We completed our second year of industry sponsorship for our organization from luthiers, record companies and music stores, raising over \$14,000 for the organization. We have expanded attendance at the CBA Music Camp and added a new children's program to the Festival aimed at young children with no instrument experience. We continue our collaboration efforts with Northern California Bluegrass Society, the San Francisco Bluegrass and Old Time Festival and other bluegrass organizations with concert co-sponsorships and publicity assistance.

This past year was the best ever for the organization — we have increased our membership to record levels. We are doing more and more important work for Bluegrass in California. I look forward to continue these important efforts — I hope you will elect me for a third term.

Elicia Burton

The California Bluegrass Association has had a wonderful group of dedicated leadership throughout the years, making the CBA great. Throughout the years of my involvement with Bluegrass as a Fiddler, I have been a member of the New York Bluegrass Association, the Washington Bluegrass Association, the Oregon Bluegrass Association, and the Northern Washington Old Time Fiddles Association. I have been a 6-year volunteer at Wintergrass Bluegrass Festival. I have been interested in event planning, leadership and organizations for a long time studying festivals and events. I have been involved most recently in Fundraising for my friend Greg Davis. I grew up in California. I have returned to become more involved in the music I love so much, Bluegrass. It was obvious to me that the California Bluegrass Association would be the place for me to take my talents, due to a few kind words and a push from some of my friends; I am taking on a late application to this position.

If I were to pin point the one passion in my life it would have to be Music. Bluegrass music is an opportu-

nity to be part of a family, a huge family of enthusiasts who spend their weekends, and vacations in the pursuit of making, listening to and being involved with friends in these splendid bluegrass festival events. The bluegrass family is my family; a web of musical notes, jams, relationships, and events is what makes for all the fun!

As I am a Master's student pursuing a degree in Educational Leadership, being interested in Organizational leadership, I would most be of use in my area of passion, Bluegrass. I have been in the past been entrepreneurial, as an owner and operator of my own Catering service and later as a Manager of a large multi-dealer Antiques store as well as many other successful business pursuits in that field. As an owner and operator of these businesses, I was able to bring together many different talents, ideas, and creative problem solving to make everyone feel involved and satisfied. I would like to bring my talents as a spokesperson, hostessing and of promotion and fundraising to this organization.

As a member of the board, I would do my best to listen, and offer ideas that would represent your ideas, as I would like to be open to hearing about your concerns, I would like to represent you. I want to give my new energy to building the Heritage Fund so we might have a permanent space eventually to call our own. I would like to represent the spirit of inclusion and be an ambassador to the world of bluegrass from our fantastic California Bluegrass culture. I would like to coordinate and articulate a wide perspective that members can relate to and be able to explore new ways for people to feel involved. I am extremely interested in Education and would help the organization expand its educational resources as a historian, an educator to all ages, and keep the Kids on Stage program happening and expand opportunities for the youth of our organization.

If you elect me, I will stay the course, have the energy and promote the CBA. I would listen to you and your ideas, and use your voice as a resource in my participation. You are allowed to change you vote if you have already voted, as I am a late arrival. I would love your support this year. Thank you!

Editor's note: No photo was provided before press time.

Bruce Campbell

Overall qualifications: 30+ years of business, 30+ years of music, and 30+ years of the business of music. Background in marketing, was a partner in a successful startup business. I understand organizations, and know how organizational structures change as the



organization grows to maintain operational efficiencies.

As a newcomer to the CBA board, I would bring this real-world experience. I want to make sure that every member's voice is heard in the CBA.

The majority may rule, but minority opinions are important, too, and we must ensure that all reasonable input is carefully considered.

I also realize that as a newcomer to the Board, I think my influence would be limited. I have a lot to learn about the inner workings of this organization. But I will listen a lot, with the ears of a newcomer, and I will ask thoughtful questions. I will seek to work with the other Board members to further ideas that I think will help the CBA, and earn their respect so that my suggestions will merit their consideration.

The CBA is a well-established and well-run organization, and the challenge is to preserve the parts that work best, but still consider new ways of adding value to the organization. We live in an age where close worldwide collaboration is easy and inexpensive — how can we use that technology to improve and strengthen the CBA?

Members are the lifeblood of the CBA. How can we improve our member signup rate? How can we increase the members' involvement? How can we improve our membership renewal rate?

How can we ensure that the CBA festivals and campouts appeals to bluegrass fans of all generations, and that all ages have a great time at CBA events?

I love the music, and want to make sure there's a constant influx of new energetic members, and new ideas. Let's keep the CBA vibrant, and ensure the CBA's growth for the future. Even while embracing new ideas, we can ensure the preservation of bluegrass and old time music, and the promotion and documentation of the California bluegrass scene as part of that preservation.

Please, if you have questions or comments about this statement, contact me via e-mail at

bc@bluemoonbros.com. If you want to talk, include your phone number and I will call you.

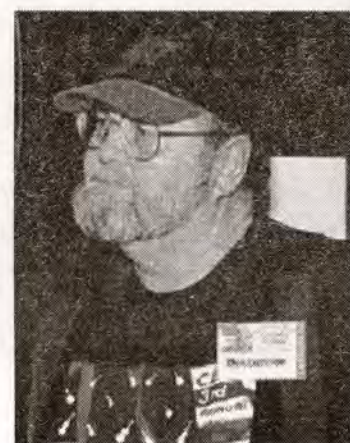


Rick Cornish

At a recent CBA board of directors meeting it happened that both Carl Pagter and Jake Quesenberry were there visiting. For those new to the Association, Carl and Jake are, respectively, CBA members #One and #Two. It's funny — I know both these guys pretty well, yet I felt a little awkward, even silly, moving through the routine agenda items one at a time. I remember a few times wanting to just stop in the middle of a business item and ask, okay, so guys, is this how it's supposed to be going after thirty years. Are we doing it right? Give us some feedback here.

Of course I didn't ask, but I think what made me want to was knowing that when these two men, Carl Pagter and Jake Quesenberry, helped create the California Bluegrass Association, they really did know where they wanted it to be in thirty years. The clarity of their vision and the enormous effort both put into achieving it, go a long, long way toward explaining why the CBA is the organization it is in 2004.

So, unbelievably, I sit here writing my fifth candidate's statement. My four years on the board have gone by so quickly. Yet, in another sense, I feel like I'm just now beginning to bring into focus what Carl and Jake had in mind back in 1975. It's a vision worth chasing, and I'd like to chase it another year.



Don Denison

I am Don Denison, candidate for the California Bluegrass Association Board of Directors. I have held various offices with the CBA including President, Festival Coordinator, Woodland Festival Coordinator Activities Vice President, Entertainment Coordinator, and Tent Camping Coordinator.

If I am re-elected I would like to continue, at the Board's pleasure, as Entertainment Coordinator. I have had 19 years service with the CBA in some capacity beginning in 1985. I have seen many board members come and go and have witnessed most of the problems that we have to deal with, many of the difficulties don't go away, and we just deal with them as best we can. There are always for instance, controversies about rules and regulations at the festival, how we select bands for the Grass Valley Festival, dogs at the festival, high and low chairs, and many others. I offer historical perspective on the recurring problems and the solutions that were adopted, as well as those actions that were tried but failed.

We should not be stuck in past patterns of thought on how we do business; we should remember how we dealt with the various problems, and look for new solutions. It is obvious that if there are recurring difficulties, the previous solutions did not work. There are of course issues that most likely have no good solutions.

I believe that the CBA should continue to be a good steward of the member's money; that we should continue to improve our support of the California Bands, adopting new programs to promote them as opportunities arise. I strongly believe that our members should be heard, and that all issues they bring to us should if possible be acted upon. I also believe that we as directors should be actively involved with communicating with the membership. I have for years made a point of writing a President's Column for that very reason; to date, except for one article by one past president, I have been the only one to do so.

I believe that we should be active in the Bluegrass Community at large; this means an active role with the IBMA and other entities as appropriate. This activity beyond the California Bluegrass Community should be directed to supporting Bluegrass in California, and the bands that play it. We co-sponsored a band at the IBMA Showcase once; we should do this again as opportunities present themselves. We should also be using our hospitality suites at the IBMA meeting to promote California Bands more than we are now. I am not sure how we should proceed on this last task, but I am sure that we can find a way.

2004/05 CBA Board of Directors Candidates' Statements

As the CBA continues to expand, the operations of the organization become increasingly complex. When Suzanne and I began our involvement with the association, there were less than 700 members; we are now approaching 3,500 paid up memberships. The Grass Valley Festival was the only event at that time other than the Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers that was held regularly. We now have campouts, concerts and produce three festivals. The Bluegrass Breakdown has gone from 2-3 double-sided pages to the award winning publication we now publish, it is a major source of information for Bluegrass Music in California and across the country. We have several area vice-presidents and have been instrumental in assisting others in their efforts to produce events in areas in which we have no strong presence. Bluegrass Music is alive and well in California due in large part to the efforts of the CBA. I also support cooperation rather than competition with other producers. Even though there is a lot more Bluegrass Music in this state than there was 29 years ago, the Bluegrass Music Business is not large enough to support a "family fight". This is why I believe that we as an organization should support other producers of Bluegrass music when it is possible to do so.

I would also like to thank the membership of the CBA for their past support, and ask for their vote in the upcoming election. Whether or not you vote for me, please participate by voting. The CBA is your association; you should support it by voting even if you do not go to in any other event than the Grass Valley Festival.



John Duncan

My name is John Duncan, and I am a candidate for the board of directors of the California Bluegrass Association (CBA). Many of you know me, since I have been active in CBA activities for a number of years. For those of you who may not, I retired in February, 2000, after serving 39 years as an auditor and tax administrator for the State of California. At my retirement party, the master of cer-

emonies observed that if anyone has known me for very long, they would have to know that my first love is bluegrass music.

The fact is, I'm a huge fan of bluegrass music, and I support efforts to bring music to the area whenever I

can. I attend most of the concerts and shows in the Sacramento Area, as well as others within traveling distance. I have sponsored house concerts and hosted picking parties in my home. I am a devoted festival attendee, not only through-

out Northern California, but in other states as well. For several years, I have served as the CBA's Goodwill Ambassador. In addition, I have either chaired or co-chaired the band selection committee for a number of years. I play

the bass, and I have played in area bands, most recently with Carolina Special.

My interest in the activities of the CBA Board is not new. I've made it a point to attend most of

Continued on A-14

Cut Below This Line

California Bluegrass Association Election of the 2004/2005 Board of Directors OFFICIAL BALLOT

DIRECTIONS: There are two (2) ballots on this page. If you have a single vote membership you should complete one (1) ballot. A membership plus spouse entitles both people to cast a ballot — please use the second ballot. Those with band memberships are entitled to one (1) vote per band. You may vote for up to eleven candidates. The candidates with the most votes are elected to serve as the Board of Directors. Space has been provided on this ballot for write-in candidates, however, signed and valid petitions [signators must be current CBA members in good standing] must be received for each such candidate to be eligible for election to the CBA Board of Directors. The address of the principal office of the California Bluegrass Association is P.O. Box 9, Wilseyville, CA 95257.

Please complete your ballot(s), fold so that the address is outside, tape or staple, and mail to have the postage paid by the CBA. You can also put your ballot in an envelope and mail to: Election Committee, CBA Business Office, P.O. Box 31480, Stockton, CA 95213. Ballots must be postmarked by October 10, 2004 to be valid. Ballots may also be cast in person on October 15 or 16 at the Fall Campout to be held at the Colusa County Fairgrounds in Colusa, CA. Election will close at 2 p.m. on Saturday, October 16, 2004.

Ballot #1 (principal member)

Membership # _____

Name _____

Ballot will be verified and cut here before counting.

- ☐ Lisa Burns
- ☐ Elicia Burton
- ☐ Bruce Campbell
- ☐ Rick Cornish
- ☐ Don Denison
- ☐ John Duncan
- ☐ Tim Edes
- ☐ Montie Elston
- ☐ Mark Hogan
- ☐ Hal Johnson
- ☐ Darrell Johnston
- ☐ Larry Kuhn
- ☐ J.D. Rhynes
- ☐ Suzanne Suwanda
- ☐ Other _____

Vote for up to eleven (11) candidates

Ballot #2 (spouse or other)

Membership # _____

Name _____

Ballot will be verified and cut here before counting.

- ☐ Lisa Burns
- ☐ Elicia Burton
- ☐ Bruce Campbell
- ☐ Rick Cornish
- ☐ Don Denison
- ☐ John Duncan
- ☐ Tim Edes
- ☐ Montie Elston
- ☐ Mark Hogan
- ☐ Hal Johnson
- ☐ Darrell Johnston
- ☐ Larry Kuhn
- ☐ J.D. Rhynes
- ☐ Suzanne Suwanda
- ☐ Other _____

Vote for up to eleven (11) candidates

**Come join in the fun -- October 15, 16 & 17, 2004 for the
CBA's Fall Campout, Election, Annual Meeting & Jammer's weekend at
the Colusa County Fairgrounds, 1303 10th Street in Colusa, California!**

On the back of this page is a Postage-Paid address for your ballot to be mailed to the C.B.A. Fold the ballot in thirds with the return address on the outside, staple or tape the edge, and drop in the mail.
Mailed ballots must be postmarked by October 10, 2004 to be valid.

2004/05 CBA Board of Directors Candidates' Statements

Continued from A-13
the meetings in recent years and provide input whenever I can. Having grown up listening to bluegrass music (and deriving a great deal of pleasure from it) and being associated with others who also enjoy the music, I am very interested in seeing it continue to grow and survive. The CBA has been a

major influence in promoting and bringing bluegrass to California in large doses. I'm proud to be a part of it. I support the effort to create an influential presence at the national level and the CBA's association with IBMA. Most importantly, I believe in CBA's goal to get youth more involved in bluegrass.

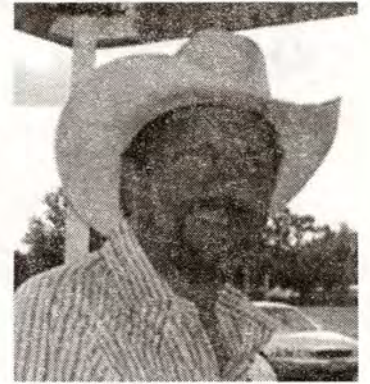
I also believe that the association belongs to its members, and that the Board's responsibility is to act in the best interests of its members. Ideas from the membership should be sought out and considered. If elected, I pledge to lend an easy ear to member concerns and ideas. I would appreciate your vote.

Tim Edes

Hi all!

Has it really been another year? Wow, time really does fly!

Well, first of all I would like to thank the membership for allowing me to serve this past year. It has been a *great* one for the California Bluegrass Association. Member-



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ship is climbing steadily which to me indicates a success in promoting interest in bluegrass music. This can be attributed to an outstanding website, a world-class bluegrass newspaper and the many, many members that put on concerts, festivals, jams and little "get-togethers". It is the total membership that makes a great organization, not individuals.

However, I am one individual and I have tried to make a difference.

Last year in my candidate's statement, I spoke of increasing the electrical hook-ups at Grass Valley. This year we served 72 RV's. This is an increase from 54 the year before.

I mentioned to some people during the campaign last year that we needed more bluegrass in the South Bay. In March, I promoted a concert in Morgan Hill with The MacRae Brothers and Lost Highway. It was on a Monday night, and was a sellout! Talk about great bluegrass fans!!!

I could go on with a resume, but that is really not my platform. The message and campaign I want to convey is the value of Bluegrass. I would like to remain on the board in order to better promote the good works that Bluegrass breeds. Bluegrass is more than music. It is family, ...it is values ... and it is pure. Just look at the kids that are playing and attending festivals. They have a chance in this world because they are surrounded by good people; good, wholesome music and community. You don't find that at a rock concert.

These are the reasons I would like your vote again.

Thank you in advance for your support.



Montie Elston

2004/05 CBA Board of Directors Candidates' Statements

Hello, I am Montie Elston and I am running for re-election to the Board of Directors of the California Bluegrass Association. I have been involved in the CBA since 1998. I volunteered at the 1999 Father's Day Festival, I served as Gate Coordinator at the 2000 Father's Day Festival, and have been the Festival Director at the Father's Day Festival in Grass Valley since 2001.

If you were to ask me why I've chosen to be so involved with the CBA I might just tell you it's because it pays so good (which is nothing) or it is for the glory (Arnold calls me every day! Ha!). But truthfully it is because I feel that I get so much from bluegrass that I owe it to others to give some of it back, and in some way, hopefully, insure that the music will continue on into the future so that my grandchildren's grandchildren can enjoy it as much as I do.

I believe that the CBA needs to continue on the road to perpetuating bluegrass by continuing several programs we already have started.

1. We need to keep involving our members in all our activities by using volunteers whenever and wherever possible. Volunteering is the heart of an organization like the CBA. Almost every job that needs done, has to be done by a volunteer. The Father's Day Festival, the Woodland Veterans Day Memorial Festival, the President's Day Festival, the many concerts sponsored by the CBA, none of these would exist today with out volunteers. Without volunteers, the CBA can not go on

2. Continue publication of the Bluegrass Breakdown. This is our primary communications media. Along with this, we need to continue our website, as the media will only continue to grow. Both have the goal of letting not only members, but everyone, know what's going on in bluegrass in California.

3. I believe we need to continue the California Showcase slots at the Father's Day Festival. This allows us to show off some of the many high-quality bands that are in California.

4. Continue through our festivals and concerts to promote bluegrass, gospel, and old-time music.

5. Continue our annual Music Camp. This camp is becoming one of the best in the United States and is one way the CBA can help perpetuate our music. And in future years, we want to add a "kids" music camp to the program, a place where non-playing kids can pick up and instrument and learn how to play. Let's teach the next generation as they grow.

6. Continue our involvement with and support of the International Bluegrass Music Association. The IBMA helps to focus the perpetu-

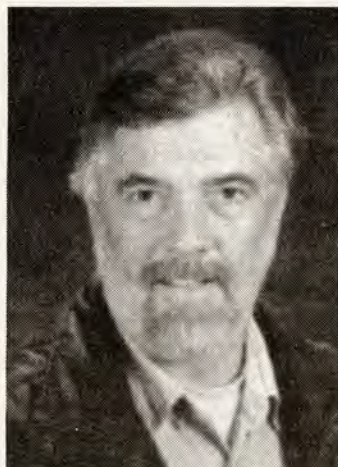
ation of bluegrass all over the world.

I would also strongly advocate that each member be involved in the CBA. Be involved by voicing your opinion about the leadership and the future of the CBA by voting. Vote for me, vote for someone else, but vote. You are responsible for the success of the CBA. Commit yourself. However you vote or don't vote, is how the CBA will be run.

Continue your involvement by talking to the directors. Let them know what is on your mind. The directors represent you. So let them know what you want. It is your organization.

Well, enough said, I believe. Just let me finish by saying that for me, bluegrass music speaks of life, living, and the heart. I believe it is not only part of our heritage, but is also part of what we are today. It is good for the individual, the family, the musician, the listener, the heart. We need to do our best to preserve and promote it while we also enjoy it.

It is because wonderful people like you – people that I have met and seen at festivals and campouts, people enjoying music and life, folks that have fed me, hugged me, and mentored me – that I am running for the board of directors. I will work hard to serve your best interests and the interests of bluegrass music and the California Bluegrass Association. Thank you.



Mark R. Hogan

Well another year has passed and it is time to declare my intention to run for the Board of Directors of the California Bluegrass Association. Membership willing I'd be happy to serve for another year.

I intend to continue to direct the Presidents Day Bluegrass Festival and be an advocate for including more "Old Time" music at all of our events. Having just had my only child leave the nest, I expect to have more time to devote to the job.

Thanks in advance for your support.



Hal Johnson

Hi Folks,

My name is Hal Johnson and I'm a candidate for the Board of Directors of the CBA. This is not something I expected to be doing at this time but I just learned my good friend Bob Thomas is retiring from the Board. I have always admired Bob's contribution both as a Board Member and Bluegrass aficionado; I would like to throw my hat in the ring to pick up where he leaves off.

I have had a rich career in business serving as CEO in eight different businesses. I now coach CEO's part time. In addition I have served on several boards of directors, so helping organizations achieve their mission is a familiar role.

Bluegrass became a passion for me just after graduating from college in the '60's. My wife and I got to see the original Kentucky Colonels and I was hooked. I started playing banjo and guitar but ended up playing mandolin upon joining a band that had guitar and banjo already covered. My career has kept me on the move so I have played in 6-7 bands over the past 30+ years, including a couple while living in England. Bluegrass gospel is my favorite and I currently am a member of the Golden Gate Boys, a predominately gospel band focusing on preserving the gospel music of the '40's and '50's. We have had the honor of opening for a couple of CBA concerts featuring the Pine Mountain Railroad and Lonesome Road. Another musical high point came while living in Hawaii; my band got to open for Bill Monroe at the University of Hawaii – that was a hoot.

Now comes the important stuff. The CBA has demonstrated, in addition to perpetuating Bluegrass, excellence in producing family oriented events. I want to be a part of this team. Yes, I know it takes a lot of hard work and commitment. I have had the privilege of getting to know many of the CBA volunteer work force as well as Board Members. As a CBA member, I have enjoyed and admired the results of this dedication and focused effort. With both my love of the music and my business

experience, I believe I can make a contribution to the continued excellence of our CBA activities.

In short, I would be honored to be your representative to become a part of the CBA team. I am asking for your vote to allow me to join the Board in working hard for continuing excellence in all we do. Thank you.



Darrell Johnston

Hello you all, Darrell Johnston here. I am a candidate for reelection to the California Bluegrass Association's Board of Directors. I have served as the Treasurer and as a member of the Board for the past year and respectfully ask that you reelect me for another term.

The past year has been exciting and seems to have simply evaporated. I have served as your Treasurer through a full cycle of Festivals, Music Camp, Campouts, Concerts and a trip to Louisville, KY for the IBMA Trade Show and Fan Fest. While this has involved a lot of hard work and at times taxed my endurance to the point of exhaustion, it also has been very rewarding as we continue to produce successful festivals and concerts and make our Music Camp the envy of many.

The trip to Louisville exceeded my wildest dreams. I met almost every one of my living bluegrass heroes at this single event and found many new ones to boot. I will return again this year and expect to find even more bluegrass heroes.

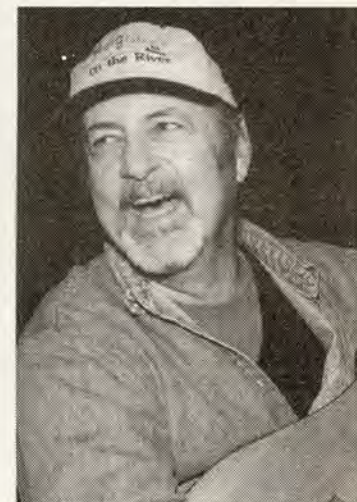
During this first year, as your Treasurer, we put a new accounting program in place and worked at standardizing some of our important accounting practices. Plans have been laid to continue with these efforts including better tracking of mercantile inventory and more accurate reports of revenues and expenses.

I continue to be very interested in the CBA Music Camp and the Heritage Fund and assist in these areas to the extent I can with scholarships and other contributions. This past year we put up a challenge to all members that we would match the first \$1000 of donations to the Heritage Fund. Through June 30, 2004 more than a dozen members have taken me up on this challenge. There are still some matching funds available though so don't hesitate to send in what you can.

The election process we have the privilege of enjoying in this great land called America is very

important. The annual CBA election might not seem too important in the overall scheme of things we face in life but believe it or not it is where our freedom begins. So please take the time to cast your vote this year. We pay the US Postal Service for special permits to make this process as painless as possible. Just cut the ballot out, put your member number on it, mark your candidates of choice and fold and mail it in. Make your vote count!!! Do it today!!!

Thank you for the opportunity to be considered again this year for a position on the Board of Directors.



Larry Kuhn

I am running for a fourth term as a Director of the CBA. Here is a summary of some of my contributions to the CBA in recent years:

✓ *Publisher and editor of "Sacramento Area Bluegrass News" from June 1999 to July 2002.*

✓ *"Entertainer's Workshop Coordinator" at year 2001 Grass Valley Festival. Documented the entire process in the form of a "Job Description" handbook.*

✓ *"Membership Vice President" from January 2002 to October 2002.*

✓ *"Music Camp CBA Board Liaison Officer" for year 2002 and 2003 Music Camps. CBA Officer representative involved in budget, scholarships, contracts, and much more.*

✓ *"CBA Hospitality Suite Manager at IBMA" for year 2002, 2003, and 2004. CBA Team Leader. Developed budget and final expense report; managed all monies; coordinated staff and volunteer support activities; booked and scheduled 90 to 100 separate band performances over six nights. (Carl Pagter was and remains a mentor for me in many of these endeavors.)*

✓ *Managed year 2003 and 2004 CBA Raffle Manager. (Purpose is to raise money to support CBA presence at IBMA.) Negotiated with Gibson, Martin, and other representatives for high-end musical instrument donations. Prepared monthly (and final) sales and revenue reports to CBA Board.*

✓ *"CBA Hospitality Suite Manager at Wintergrass 2003 and 2004". Together with Frank Solivan and*

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2004/05 Board Candidates' Statements

Continued from A-15

Rick Cornish, officially represented CBA's "official" presence at Wintergrass in Tacoma.

✓ *Author of a comparative analysis of existing CBA membership rates and categories.* Developed recommendation to upgrade membership rates, categories, and policies, including a provision for "CBA Life Membership". Approved by the Board in 2003.

✓ *Nominated and presented to the Board formal recommendations for "Honorary Life Membership" award for several well deserving California bluegrass music pioneers.* Awards presented in 2003 and 2004.

I am blessed with two wonderful adult daughters and a supportive and fun loving family. After service in the U.S. Navy and time spent in college, I enjoyed a diverse and successful 37-year career in the telecommunications industry, much of it devoted to the initial design, ongoing management, and subsequent upgrading of land-line and wireless 9-1-1 emergency response networks and systems throughout all of California. I began to play bluegrass music on the guitar and mandolin about 15 years ago, and have been a CBA member since those days. I pursue my fourth term as a CBA Director with the full support of my wife Bobbie who also loves and plays our special music. Please

take the time to cast a thoughtful vote for the leadership candidates of your choice. Thanks for doing so, and thanks for reading all of our statements.

Larry Kuhn,



J.D. Rhynes

Howdy Folks:

Once again its time to elect the directors of your organization. Please take time to vote. It is important that you do.

It has been my pleasure to serve the CBA as a director since 1991. During that time I have seen this association grow into the virtual leader among the associations involving Bluegrass music in this country. This is due to the fact that we have members that are involved with association and are very active in its affairs. That is the reason that

we are the largest association in the world!

Having members that are involved is the most important facet of any successful organization. Another very important facet of the CBA is a board of directors that has the Association's interests first and foremost in their minds. I can honestly say that has always been the way I have made decisions during my tenure as a director.

It has been a pleasure over the years to serve the CBA in various ways. I have served as Entertainment Coordinator for our Grass Valley Festival, and Back Stage Coordinator as well as Emcee for several years. Since August of 1986, I have written the column "J.D.'s Bluegrass Kitchen" for the Bluegrass Breakdown, which starts its 19th year this August.

I was also fortunate to be able to donate the initial funding for the Heritage Fund, of which I'm very proud. This is a project that is very dear to me and one that holds the future of a permanent "home" for the CBA. I could go on for hours on this subject alone. I promised our editor that I wouldn't get long winded on this year's election statement, as I've

been prone to do in the past. So with that said, I would appreciate your vote. There's still a lot that I want to get accomplished for our organization. Together we can do it.

Thank you.



Suzanne Suwanda

Why run for CBA Board? Because organizations don't remain static, they change. They either grow or shrink, blossom or decay. Which way will CBA go? I'd like to join the effort helping CBA develop and improve.

My background includes a degree in music and more than twenty

years of publicity, marketing, writing and editing. Unfortunately I wasn't listening to a lot of bluegrass during those years so I'm trying hard to catch up, attending as many concerts, festivals, camps and workshops as I can. I play bass with John Murphy's Carolina Special, sing and play guitar a bit and have just started learning to play the fiddle.

I've been a volunteer board member for a number of organizations in the past, such as Tamalpa Runners and the San Francisco Boardsailing Association, back in a time when bluegrass did not consume most of my free time. I've also volunteered for the Northern California Bluegrass Society and periodically host an event recognizing outstanding Bay Area bluegrass volunteers. In between festivals, I live in the Santa Cruz Mountains with my banjo-playing boyfriend, Robert Cornelius.

If you have any questions for me, please feel free to give me a call at 408-353-8347 or send an e-mail to Suwanda@surfnetc.com. I hope you'll remember to vote in the upcoming election, and I also hope that you'll give me your favorable consideration and vote for me to join your board. Thank you very much.

THE LUTHIER'S CORNER

By Roger H. Siminoff

Q: I've heard a lot about some kind of submerged wood they call "Timeless Timber." Does it really make any difference and what's the story about this wood?

A: The story began 150 years ago in the heyday of timber harvesting when lakes, rivers, and their tributaries were the main conveyance of raw logs on their way to awaiting sawmills. The freshly sawn timber was what the industry calls "green," still laden with high water content and not yet kiln- or air-dried. These harvests included just about every species of wood — oak, cherry, poplar, ash, elm, maple, and more. These "green" timbers were heavy, and the sap-laden maple was one of the heaviest and many of the logs found their way to the bottom of the rivers and lakes before getting too far down stream. During the past 20 or so years, various local and government organizations sought to clean up the waterways and began dredging these old, soaked logs. Somewhere along the way, someone got the idea of trying to turn this waste into an asset and cure the logs using both kiln and open air-drying methods. And, as a result, the wood has been harvested from the deep and used for everything from crates to furniture. About 10 years ago, some luthiers sought to try this wood for musical instruments. I've tried this material for necks and banjo rims and have carved, bent, and finished it. And, for various consulting projects, I've had the opportunity to test its struc-

ture and evaluate its physiology. While this wood claims to be the be-all, end-all, I am not as impressed with this material for general musical instrument use as other luthiers seems to be. Because of its mass* I believe it can serve a vital function for banjo rims as the maple "timeless timber" weighs about 48 pounds per cubic foot compared to regular maple at about 36 pounds per cubic foot (and for banjo rims "mass" is important). However, I certainly would not use this wood in thin sections (as on guitar or mandolin ribs or mandolin backboards). Although it finishes well, the material is subject to checking and cracking in thin section, and it is much too dense for mandolin backboards. It also chips rather easily along the edge when shaping, so one must be careful when working it. Lastly, it is very porous and the open-cell structure of this wood is often revealed by glue oozing out in the strangest places under clamping pressure.

From my vantage point, timeless timber is a great material for furniture, and I'm glad the lumber industry is taking advantage of this almost wasted natural resource.

(If you're interested in learning more, I show a side-by-side microscopic photo of "timeless" maple next to regular maple along with an explanation of why this wood is physically different, in my book *The Ultimate Bluegrass Man-*

dolin Construction Manual available at most music stores and luthier supply houses.)

Q: What do you think Orville [Gibson] was up to when he put the scroll and pointed corners on the mandolin?

A: This is a very interesting subject about the shape of F4's and F5's (as well as other instruments in Gibson's early product lineup). The two body points were actually practical innovations to

allow the instrument to rest at two different orientations on a musician's leg (for classical performers who did not use a shoulder strap). There has been a lot of supposition about what Orville had in mind when he began using scrolls.

One of Orville's earliest instruments was this lyre-shaped mandolin (which also became the focal point of the early Gibson labels). This instrument featured two very long scrolls and many Gibson historians (Julius Bellson included) suggest that Orville was enamored with the echoing sounds of the conch shell. While Orville's scrolls (inside) were not as convoluted as the walls of a conch shell, he very well may have been seeking to employ the phenomenon of the conch shell to help amplify his instruments.

While the conch shell may have influenced Orville's structural designs, I think there was "prior art" which may have influenced his decorative ideas. The early Swiss zithers (we call them zithers) featured two body points and a scroll that is almost identical to what Orville applied to the first F-model three-point mandolins. Many years ago, while at the Frankfurt Music Messe in Germany (an international music trade show), I saw an early Swiss zither (ca. 1800) that had white/black/white binding, a body scroll, two body points with bone on the edges just like the F4 and F5, and it had an



This is one of two lyre-shaped mandolins build by Orville Gibson around 1900. A similar instrument was featured as a graphic element on the Gibson Company's early instrument labels.

Photo by Roger Siminoff



amazing similarity to the body scrolls and points on Gibson's instruments. So, one can only surmise what was in Orville's mind at the time.

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If you have questions you would like answered, please email: RSiminoff@aol.com, or write to Roger Siminoff, PO Box 1138, Arroyo Grande, CA 93421.

Roger Siminoff was the founder of *Pickin'* and *Frets* magazines and has written several books on instrument set-up and construction. His latest text, *The Ultimate Bluegrass Mandolin Construction Manual* (Hal Leonard Publishing) is now available at most music stores and luthier supply houses. For more on Roger Siminoff, Siminoff Banjo and Mandolin Parts, Gibson and Lloyd Loar history, visit his web site at: www.siminoff.net.

Music Matters -- Music in Your Life?

By Elena Corey

As technology boosts productivity and ease of communication, it may seem that we also need regular internal psychological boosts to keep up. People run on treadmills, both literally and figuratively. More and more people report feeling never caught up—feeling guilty about taking time out for pleasure and non-productive activity.

Whoa—a great big whoa there! We all know and can parrot the health wisdom that unless we take care of ourselves, we won't be able to do other things. So we add that to our already long list of things to feel guilty about. We make resolutions to exercise, even when our schedules are already over-full.

We cast around mentally for any superfluous activities we can jettison, and too often, our music gets shunted into the background. Then we feel guilty about that, too, because we know that a life without the arts, without beauty, loses its vitality. We know that we need both bread and roses to sparkle. Nevertheless, we keep pushing harder, even while we're reminding ourselves to take care of ourselves.

Are we allowing our circumstances to rule us rather than letting our dreams guide us toward the lives we want to live? Perhaps we need to shake up our schedules and reaffirm our priorities. That needn't entail quitting our day jobs.

Back as early as the 60s, researchers in industrial psychology demonstrated in numerous vocational fields that short breaks, periodically spaced, improved workers' productivity and morale. More recent research confirms that conclusion. Perhaps we need more music breaks.

Big business created weekend-long retreats for harried executives so that when they returned to work they could envision the bigger picture and redirect their attention to the important and not merely the urgent. Such relaxation retreats have enough rationale laced into their presentations that the participants don't feel guilty of availing themselves of time outs.

Quick to jump in on trends that might prove profitable, a number of entrepreneurs in large cities such as New York City and Washington D.C. have set up their own versions of re-freshening options for workers. Some offer sleek looking 20-minute sleep pods; others market therapeutic mini-massage for tense workers. All advertise that these can be incorporated within a lunch break.

We already have wonderful weekend music festivals available to us, and they replenish our vim and vigor periodically. But what about smaller increments of music relaxation? With a little support, you

can create small music retreats for yourself. You already know that music helps you have a better life. You already know that when you let yourself be carried away by music, you emerge a better person for it. Reminding yourself of

Continued on A-18

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Two Bluegrass Gold shows on tap at Sweetwater in Mill Valley this month

There will be two editions of the Bluegrass Gold show at Sweetwater in Mill Valley in the first week of October. The shows are produced by Larry Carlin and Carltone Music and co-sponsored by the Northern California Bluegrass Society. On Friday the 1st The Waybacks, with special guest fiddler Darol Anger will headline, and Corinne will open. On Tuesday the 5th it will be The Hot Buttered Rum String Band with Pam Brandon opening.

The Waybacks are back! Possessed of dazzling instrumental chops and an absolute mastery of acoustic musical styles, The Waybacks have taken North America by storm recently. Whether mesmerizing audiences at intimate venues or creating a sensation at major festivals, the band has brought its onstage alchemy to enthusiastic fans far and wide. From newgrass and western swing to jug band and jazz, from folk and fiddle music to improvisational excursions that defy categorization, Waybacks music is

wild, energetic and unpredictable. With their stellar musicianship and innate sense of adventure, they stand in good company with the few bands at the forefront of New American acoustic music. Based in San Francisco, The Waybacks are Stevie Coyle, James Nash, Chuck Hamilton and Joe Kyle Jr.

Sittin' in on fiddle for this show will be the amazing Darol Anger. Opening the show will be Corinne, who is an Americana artist originally from Quincy with the ability to write good music and deliver an engaging show. An up-and-coming alternative/folk/blues/country talent, her songs are evocative, painting vivid images of open roads and everyday heroes. The Waybacks played on her recent CD release *Body and Soul*.

On Tuesday the 5th the show will feature the popular Hot Buttered Rum String Band. They are a young band that plays what they call "high altitude bluegrass," and they have been causing quite a stir in bluegrass circles in and around the Bay Area. It has been one busy



Darol Anger

summer for the boys, touring around the country and playing at least ten festivals. They feature hot pickin' and singing with a mix of original and traditional songs played with lots of energy. A couple of the members grew up in Mill Valley. The HBRSB is Aaron Redner sawing the fiddle, Zac Matthews on mandolin, Nat Keefe picks the guitar, Bryan Horne holds



The Waybacks

down the bass, and Erik Yates plays multiple instruments. Their most recent CD is titled *In These Parts*.

Opening the show will be Bay Area singer/songwriter Pam Brandon. Pam has been winning over audiences around the world with her strong, bluesy bluegrass and swing style vocals for the last 15 years. She is a veteran of the San Francisco folk, swing and roots music scenes, being the lead singer

in The Chazz Cats as well as fronting Belle Monroe & Her Brewglass Boys.

Sweetwater is Marin County's premier nightclub as well as the home for bluegrass music in the North Bay. The club is located at 153 Throckmorton in Mill Valley. For more information call the club at (415) 388-2820, or go to www.sweetwatersaloon.com.

Music Matters

Continued from A-17

such things can give you to create a musical retreat for yourself.

It's time for a music retreat (of any duration) if:

- You listen to other folks play music and instead of being inspired, you feel discouraged, missing the joy music offers.
- You interrupt your designated music practice time for trivial things, like talking to telemarketers, revealing that your practice structure needs overhauling.
- You constantly re-schedule your playing time because 'something else came up.' (same problem, just a different symptom)
- You don't seem to find the time to even listen to music anymore.
- You don't feel relaxed or in control of your own life most of the time.
- You feel guilty even fantasizing about playing music.
- The music in your memory runs together, depriving you or special retrospective treats.

Why a retreat?

- A structured retreat is optimum because it can create a barrier for you, to keep the clamoring world outside while you rediscover the joy of playing music. If it is evident that you're not at present keeping the world at bay by yourself, you can use a retreat's structure to show you how to create a space for yourself.
- A retreat can help you focus on music that creates passion within

you.

- A retreat can offer silence within which you can hear your own music.

If a weekend retreat is absolutely impossible for you at this time, then consider an occasional weekday lunch hour devoted to discovering or rediscovering your joy of playing music. Once a week, a dear mechanic friend in Tennessee stops work promptly at 11:30 AM to prepare for guests. Music friends in the vicinity pour in quickly and excitedly to jam for an hour in his garage. Everyone goes back to work refreshed and exhilarated.

Right in my neighborhood, in Southern Modesto, Ken Van de Kieft hosts a long-standing jam at his work place, Capital Door. People area-wide know that when they are free on Friday noon hours, there will be welcoming people joining them to jam.

At Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, for a few years, a weekly jam also was scheduled around noon for workers to play music as a way of getting a wider perspective and regaining some vigor.

Are there other work sites or public parks near you that could offer a weekly noon time jam? How about your workplace? Could you and your employer/employees benefit from a weekly noon jam? Are you waiting for someone else to come in and arrange such a marvelous thing for you?

By Michael Hall

The 7th NCBS La Honda Bluegrass Festival, the last outdoor camping festival of the Northern California season, will be held October 15-17, 2004 at La Honda Gardens in "downtown" La Honda. The event is a revival of the beloved festival held at this location by the Northern California Bluegrass Society each October, 1995-2000, and by others back in 1983. Facilities have been dramatically improved since the 2000 event.

Bands run the gamut from traditional to progressive bluegrass, newgrass and old-time music and include Belle Monroe & Her Brew Glass Boys (San Francisco), REO Haywagon (Santa Cruz), Wild Oats'n Honey (Palo Alto), Chojo Jacques & Friends (La Honda), The Harmony Grits (Santa Cruz), Jeanie & Chuck's Country Round-Up (San Francisco), The Birch Lake Ramblers (Los Gatos), The Sibling Brothers (Boulder Creek), Donner Mountain Bluegrass Band (Dixon), Foggy Mountain Jam (La Honda), The Smith Brothers (San Ramon), NormalFlora (Seaside), and The Marty Varner Band (Boulder Creek).

The Saturday October 16 day program (11:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.) makes a fine one-day bluegrass outing from the San Francisco Bay Area and the Santa Cruz area. The Saturday day ticket is only \$20 for adults and \$18 for NCBS members purchasing in advance at <http://ncbs.us>. Weekend camping tickets are only \$30, \$27 for NCBS

members on the website. Youths (ages 13-18) are half-price, and children 12 & under are free. Tickets will be available at the gate.

Camping is available for both tents and RVs. Onsite services include a restaurant, market, and bar. Mid-October (usually!) offers perfect weather in coast-side San Mateo. Additional camping is available in nearby San Mateo Memorial Park. Gates open at 5 p.m. on Friday and close on Sunday at 5 p.m. Music begins Friday

evening at 7 p.m. and ends Sunday at 2 p.m. There will be plenty of time for jamming.

La Honda is located on Highway 84 about a half-hour west of I-280 on the San Francisco Peninsula. Highway 84 runs from Redwood City (Highway 101) at the Bay, through Woodside, then La Honda, and then to the coast (and Highway 1) at San Gregorio Beach.

For more information visit <http://ncbs.us>; email hallmw@juno.com; or call (650) 596-9332.

New Deering Banjo tailpiece announced

Deering Banjo Company's new tailpiece has been pronounced, "The best tailpiece ever built!" by world-renowned banjoist Jens Kruger of the Kruger Brothers. Unlike the popular traditional tailpiece, the new Deering tailpiece is truly fully adjustable without the string cover that has been a major complaint of many banjoists.

Utilizing a tone specific alloy, the new Deering tailpiece provides ease of adjustability without increasing weight or adding tonal interference. This tailpiece will become standard on all Deering models and is also available retail for only \$97 by calling the Deering Banjo Company at their toll free number 800-845-7791.

Several years ago when Greg Deering reevaluated and redesigned a traditional style tailpiece for his Goodtime line of banjos, he took a major step toward a new concept in tailpiece construction.



Drawing on the features of the most popular tailpiece in the bluegrass field, blending features from his already popular Goodtime tailpiece, adding true adjustability and a look of overall elegance, this latest innovation from the Deering Banjo Company is engraved with the Deering name between a sleek double-line design.

For more information about the Deering Banjo Company, log on to their web site, www.Deeringbanjos.com, or call them at their toll free number, 800-845-7791.

J.D.'s Bluegrass Kitchen

Howdy, Howdy, Howdy!

Well folks it's that time of year again when the days start to cool down some and the nights start to get a little chilly and the nip of fall is in the air. I just love to see my beloved mountains of Calaveras County start putting on their fall coat of colors! When the leaves start to turn I know its time to put my summer kitchen up for the winter that's sure to follow.

Cooling outside all summer is one of my favorite things to do and makes life here in the mountains so enjoyable.

But when it starts getting cold, this ol' country boys knows when its time to head for the house! I don't think there's anything more comforting on a cold fall evening than to come into a warm kitchen that's filled with the aroma of food that has been cooking very slowly on the stove for most of the day,

Even the aroma of a simple pot of beans will give me a huge case of "the slobbers"! (Probably because I know that there's gonna be a big skillet of hot cornbread to go with 'em!) I think I was around 20-years-old before I found out you could rat beans without cornbread!

As I write October's column, it's a cool, beautiful September day here on Bluegrass Acres. We've got

time to sit and palaver some, so come on out to my summer kitchen here under the Black Oaks. Pull up a chair while I pour you a cup of cowboy coffee from my big ol' speckled coffee pot, and we'll swap some vittle fixin's.

When I was a little redneck one of my favorite things to have for supper was Swiss Steak with "smashed taters and gravy". Mom usually made it during the fall and winter months. I can still see that big, old, cast iron skillet with a lid sitting there on the stove with little wisps of steam escaping, and my nose would be sucking up that wonderful aroma! That was long before the term "comfort food" was invented, but we sure knew what it was at our house.

Well, here last week I got to remembering all of that, so needless to say, I threw together one of my favorite recipes for Swiss Steak and here's hoe it came out!

Swiss Steak

1/4-cup flour
1 tsp salt
1/4 tsp pepper
1 1/2 to 2 lbs. Beef Round Steak, trimmed
2 TBSP cooking oil
1 cup chopped Celery
1 cup chopped Onion

1/2 lb. Fresh sliced Mushrooms
1-cup water
1 clove Garlic, minced
1 TBSP Steak sauce

Cut steak into serving-sized pieces. Combine flour, salt and pepper; dredge steak in flour mixture and brown in the hot oil in a large skillet. Drain the meat and place in a 2 1/2 quart casserole. Top with celery, onions and mushrooms. Mix water, garlic and s Steak sauce and pour over the steak and vegetables. Cover and bake at 350f for 1 1/2 hours or until meat is tender. Serve this dish with mashed potatoes and hot biscuits and you'll sleep like an old hound dog lying in front of the fireplace!

Here's another of my favorite fall and winter suppers – a big pot of hot, homemade soup. Soup is good to have with any meal or serve as the main course when accompanied by a hot bread of some kind. It can be cornbread, biscuits, tortillas, garlic bread, etc. – as long as it's hot and preferably homemade.

You can make soup out of just about anything. Like my mom used to say, "You just keep adding things until it tastes good!"

Now to make a really good pot of soup you just have to have

some good broth or soup stock as some folks call it. Making soup stock isn't hard, it just takes time. Here's one of my favorite soup recipes of all time. It makes some wonderful broth, and you can use the broth as a base for other soups as well.

Black Bean Soup

Broth Base
3 lbs. Beef bones
1 lb. Beef shins
3 lbs. Ham shanks, with rind
2 1/2 cups Black Beans, picked over and cleaned
3 Cloves
1 tsp. Black pepper corns
1/4 tsp Celery seed
1 cup chopped Onion
1/2 cup chopped Celery
2 tsp. chopped Garlic
1 bottle of Spanish Sherry

For soup stock: brown the bones for 20 minutes in a 400f oven. Put the browned bones, beef shins and ham

Continued on A-20



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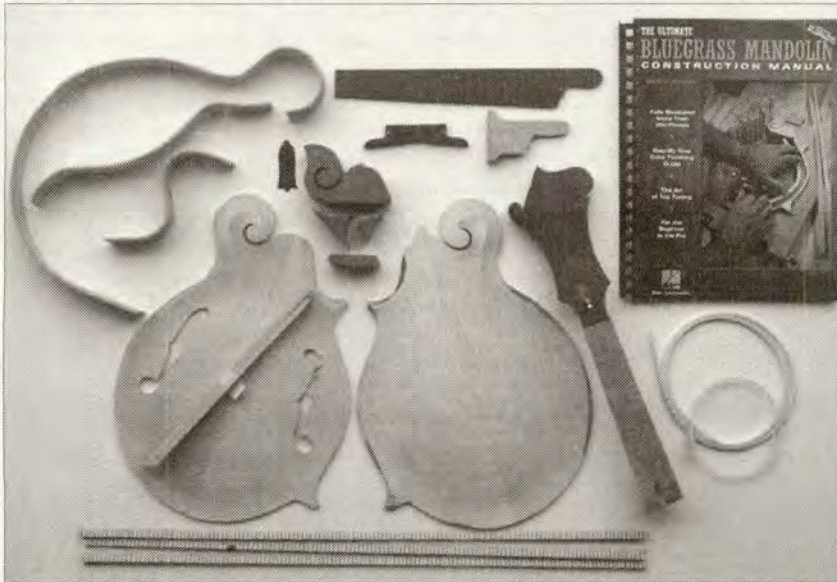


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The James King Band – in concert Orangevale Grange Hall - August 13, 2004

By Rob Shotwell

On a pleasantly warm August night at the Orangevale Grange Hall, the James King Band paid a highly anticipated and quickly arranged visit to the Sacramento area, from where they would continue on to gigs in Carson City and points east. J.D. Rhynes carried out his reliably excellent emcee work; an evening with J.D. wouldn't be complete without his customary exhortation, "Folks, get up and shake and howdy with your neighbor..." which we all did. With the audience now sufficiently acquainted it was time for some bluegrass, James King-style.

Kevin Prater' barking mandolin kicked off the headline portion of the show with *I Just Want To Go On Lovin' You*, garnering raucous applause in response. With hardly a pause, the band continued right into *I'll Get By*, and Ben Greene's banjo made us all thump time in our seats. Greene followed with a sharp rendition of *Flint Hill Special*, inspiring a killer mando break from Prater. After these first three, James then said 'hello' to everyone and chit-chatted with the audience in his personable style before going into the next tune.

During the evening's first set, he took time to especially acknowledge the California Bluegrass Association and how much the organization and all of its volunteers mean to him and most every bluegrass picker he knows. "They all want to come out and play for the CBA!" he said. He already had us in the palm of his hand, and his comments just swelled everyone's heart.

Next came the strong harmonies

of Prater and bass man Jerry McNeely joining King's lead on Ralph Stanley's *I Just Think I'll Go Away*, with Prater on guitar. The sound provided by Paul Knight was excellent as usual and allowed everyone to hear the nuances of both lyrics and instrumentation. This was especially critical for the next song, which James introduced as a selection from his new CD and is one of the toughest for him to sing every night. He wasn't kidding; with a lead vocal breaking with emotion he gave us *Echo Mountain*, the story of a family's faithful bloodhound, the dog's "righteous blood" and how it's always the "innocent that pay". There were plenty of lumpy throats after this one.

He wisely called on fiddler Adam Haynes for a barn-burning *Sally Gooden*, and all the pickers released some energy on this one. McNeely's moving bass line spurred Haynes' fiddle to the further reaches of the melody, and Greene gave us a very Crowe-like break. A young man of about 12 years was sitting next to me and my wife, and was unable to contain himself on this one, bouncing every movable body part. I hope he ends up a fiddle player, he had plenty of bounce.

James mentioned to the crowd that he usually wants to bring just enough merchandise to sell in order to get to the next gig. As we chuckled Prater chimed in that "After last night's unfortunate incident in Reno, we're in the hole! Please see us at the CD table!" — and then sang a heartfelt version of *I Over-*



Adam Haynes pulls his bow as Kevin Prater, Ben Greene and James King harmonize on a song during the Orangevale Grange concert.
Photo by Bob Calkins

looked An Orchid.

James told us that the band will visit Australia in November, and had traveled to parts of Europe and the British Isles last November. Their Ireland gig began quite an ordeal for them; when they arrived in London's Heathrow International Airport they were informed they weren't going to Ireland without work permits, which the promoter had failed to mention or arrange. They were detained for 7 hours, and then had to return to New York! The promoter "must have known somebody in the government", as James relates, because three days later

they were back on a plane from New York to Heathrow with work permits in hand, and had one of their greatest band experiences in London and Ireland.

The band then jumped into the hopping tempo of John Duffey's *Wear A Red Rose*, sliding the harmony part on the chorus up a couple of steps in perfect intervals. James paused to wipe his brow and take some water, and commented that he was "getting dry from all this community we're having here tonight". They wrapped up the first set with the hilarious gospel number (yes, there are those) *It's Hot Down Here*, about a befuddled sinner who, after recently assuming room temperature, is surprised to learn that he has graduated to the 'basement' instead of 'upstairs' like he expected, and would like his own drink of water. Most bands would kill for the ovation James earned for this one.

During the break James and the guys couldn't have been friendlier or more accommodating to all who approached them. Several folks commented later that if they wanted to talk with James or the guys, ask questions, shake hands, buy CD's, etc., all were received warmly, especially by James. (When speaking with Ben Greene on the break, I learned that he was touring with his tarnished gold-finish 1928 Gibson Granada, serial #9115, with a Frank Neat neck and Huber tone ring. This is stuff that will find its way into articles written by banjo players.)

They opened the second set with a one-two punch of *Days Of Grey And Black* and his famous *Crazy Heart*, with many of us singing along on that one. He fondly introduced Hazel Dickens' *A Few Old Memories*; his strong, heartfelt vocal and the band's performance may have surpassed his recorded rendition of this weeper. He told

of the day that Dolly Parton made her bus driver pull over immediately when she first heard King's version. Ample inspired, she recorded *Memoirs* on her 'The Grass Is Blue' project. Kevin Prater grabbed the guitar again and ripped a great guitar break on *It Takes A Worried Man*, a song relevant to some highs and lows in James' past, as he tells it.

A nice moment occurred in the night's performance when Kevin Prater dedicated *Hemlocks and Primroses* to CBA co-founder Jake Quesenberry. He let the crowd know of the very high regard in which he holds Jake, and then proceeded to hit some beautiful high

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J.D.'s Bluegrass Kitchen

Continued from A-19

shanks in a large kettle with 15 cups of water, cloves, peppercorns and celery seed. Bring to a boil; turn down to a simmer with the lid slightly ajar and simmer for 8 to 10 hours. Strain the stock, remove the meat and save for other recipes. Refrigerate the stock.

Cover the beans with 10 cups of water and soak over night. Next day, remove the congealed fat from the stock. Melt 2 tablespoons of the fat in a heavy pot and cook onion and celery in it until soft. Add drained beans, 2 cups of water and 7 cups of stock. Add the garlic, bring to a boil, and reduce to a simmer. Cook uncovered for 2 1/2 hours. (Add water as needed to keep the beans covered.) Puree the soup coarsely. Heat the soup again, just before serving, swirl in a dash of real Spanish Sherry. Top each serving with a thin slice of lemon and chopped parsley, and that's what Black Bean Soup is all about!

As you can see, there's very little labor involved to make some of the finest bean soup you'll ever wrap a lip around. You just add stuff to a big pot and let it cook a long time.

Some soups are meant to sim-

mer for hours and hours, and that's all well and good, but sometimes when I get the cravings for homemade soup I don't want to wait for two days before I can eat it. Here's a real tasty Chorizo soup that you can whip up on a moment's notice and boy is it good! This one is especially good with fresh, hot tortillas.

Chorizo Soup

1 lb. Chorizo sausage
1 large Onion, chopped
1/2 cup Masa Harina or corn meal
7 oz. chopped green Chiles
7 cups of Chicken broth or Beef stock

3/4 cup shredded Jack Cheese
1/2 cup fresh Cilantro, minced

Remove sausage from casing; crumble into a skillet with onion. Cook over medium heat until done and browned. Mix in Masa, chilies and broth. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly; reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Add cheese and Cilantro and serve. Salud!

When you light into a big bowl of this for supper you'll leave the table with no wrinkles in your belly, that's for sure! I get the slobbers

just sitting here writing about it. Guess what's for supper here on Bluegrass Acres tonight?

Well folks, that's about all the news here in the Bluegrass Kitchen this month. I'm still waiting for John Murphy to come up the mountain and show me how to fix some of his world-renowned (his words) cream gravy. He's been promising to do it for the last ten years. I hope it ain't another ten years before he does it, cause this pan of biscuits I made for him are starting to get kinda stale! (Could this be chance be a case of a duck flatulating in H2O?) Only time will tell.

I'll see a lot of you folks along with the rest of the "faithful" as we once more gather together on the banks of the Ohio in Loooeeyville, Kaintucky to celebrate the greatest music in the world! Safe travels to you all.

Please pray for the safe return of our servicemen and women from wherever they may be and may God grant us all peace and health.

Yer friend,

J.D. Rhynes



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Gibson F-9 Mandolin

The F-9's no-frills design gives it a sleek look that is unique among traditional mandolins, with black binding on the top of the body, no fingerboard inlay and a Vintage Brown finish - a hand-stained light chocolate color with an extremely thin satin lacquer outer coat. The F-9 has all the design features that give the F-5 its legendary tone, including a hand-fitted dovetail neck joint, solid maple neck, sides and back, solid spruce top, and a hand-tuned tone chamber.

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- Satin finish
- Shaped Hardshell case



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John Green has generously donated an acoustic bass for our fund-raiser drawing. The bass is to be a 3/4 sized Cremona bass (or better). More details on this instrument will be published in future issues of *Bluegrass Breakdown*.



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Drawings to be held during the 4th Annual CBA Veteran's Day Bluegrass Festival, November 12-14, 2004 at the Yolo County Fairgrounds in Woodland, CA. Need not be present to win.

The James King Band – in concert Orangevale Grange Hall - August 13, 2004

Continued from A-20

tenor 7th's in his outstanding vocal.

Showing he could pick too, James took the band into *Wildwood Flower*, demonstrating his flair for crosspicking with considerable skill. His poignant *Bed By The Window* followed, in which elderly protagonists Joe and Bill pass time in the convalescent home with Joe describing the scenes of life outside to Bill, who is bed-bound. When Joe passes on, Bill is moved to his friend's former bed and realizes that Joe's window faces a brick wall. Joe's descriptions of the vibrant life scenes outside were provided by his memories and imagination, easing Bill's condition. Of course, Bill realizes he must perform the same good turn for his new roommate.

From one emotion to the next; he gave a deeply felt recital of his recent *Thirty Years Of Farming* (another performance as good as or better than the recorded version), and then said good night. The band didn't even make it off the stage before the tidal wave of appreciative applause and exhortations for "five more!" hit them in the heart. With smiles on all the band's faces and a sincere 'Thank You all' from James, they wrapped the night with a gospel number, *Just As The Sun Went Down*, which will be included on their upcoming CD.

With Jerry McNeely on bass, Adam Haynes on fiddle, Ben Greene on banjo, and the outstanding Kevin Prater on mandolin, guitar and soar-

ing tenor, the audience of approximately 150 were treated to a show worthy of larger stages and venues. The James King Band picks with the cohesiveness of a road band that plays up to 200 dates per year, and is led by one of bluegrass music's most distinctive voices and brightest personalities in King himself. As we discovered, Prater, Greene and Haynes know how to place their fills and accents flawlessly in each song, leaving no holes in the music and simultaneously avoiding any intrusion on the lead vocals. Prater showed himself to be a tremendous match for King's blues-inflected vocals, and he likely will achieve some higher level of prominence and recognition in his career. The band's performance was not only enjoyable for listeners, but instructive for all other pickers in attendance.

During our pre-concert interview, James told me "The Bower's Mansion festival in Carson City and a private party that ended up getting canceled was what got me out here in the first place. That party would have been good money but it didn't happen, and I already had some other dates booked. You know, once more, it's CBA to the rescue. They saved the day by booking us here".

He also talked of his great fondness for Longview and the

material they have produced on three CD's, and of his great respect and friendship with Dudley Connell, now singing with Seldom Scene. As a testament to Dudley, James said, "I'll tell you a story. This certain icon bluegrass god of mine that I worship, the greatest tenor singer and banjo picker ever, Ralph Stanley O we was back in Fairview, Virginia back in '96 where it done rained on us, ruining our gig and Ralph, he said (*James imitating Ralph's whispery voice*) 'Let's get outta here, there ain't nothing going on here!' I said, 'OK, Ralph, I'll get us a car and we'll take off'. Now Ralph and I are good friends,

and we got to talking in the car. I said, 'You know Ralph, those two records you done with me are really good, I really appreciate you lettin' me sing with you, you've always been a hero of mine.' Ralph said, 'You know, we done pretty good but the best tenor singer ever sang with you, James, is Dudley Connell.' Ralph had me and Dudley out to play for him at his festival the next year, too." James also informs us that the new Longview lineup consists of original members Don Rigsby, Marshall Wilborn and himself, plus new recruits Lou Reid, Ron Stewart and J.D. Crowe. They are planning to record Longview 4

this coming fall.

The newest James King Band CD is in the can and is targeted for release by Rounder Records in January 2005. James says that the project "is all story songs - sad, pitiful, and morbid. We had straight razors put in the cellophane wrap so you can slit your wrists when you're through listening. Or we might put in a voucher for a fifth of Early Times, whatever you want!" Their new website at www.thejameskingband.com has also been redesigned by McNeely and is far more functional and informative than the previous website.



Stoney Hill Bluegrass Band left to right are Mike Brooks, Gene Mason, Larry Kuhn and Lou Fonte. Not in the picture is bassist Bobbie Kuhn.

Photo by Bob Calkins



Vocalist Angelica Grim singing with Larry Kuhn and Stoney Hill Bluegrass Band. Her sister Christine also joined the band to play fiddle.

Photo by Bob Calkins

The Folsom-based Stoney Hill Bluegrass Band opened the evening featuring the rousing instrumental *Big Sciotti* with fiddler Lou Fonte leading the way, followed by mandolinist Mike Brooks' plaintive vocal on *Red Dirt Halo*, Larry Kuhn's expressive guitar and vocal style on *My Home In The Mountains*, and the Herb Pederson instrumental *Yellowhead* highlighting the stellar five-string picking of Gene Mason. Bassist Bobbie Kuhn did a great job sounding the doghouse tones for the band. Kids On Bluegrass alumni Angelica and Christine Grim were then invited on stage and the band backed the sisters on wonderful versions of *Blue Kentucky Girl* and *Cry, Cry Darlin'*. They finished with Angelica's first-rate vocal on *Walk Softly On This Heart Of Mine* and a great fiddle break by Christine. Angelica's vocals are strong and tonally exceptional, and Christine's fiddle work was fully appreciated when she got close enough to the mic. The band and the sisters Grim all received a great response from the crowd and tons of applause; these are our own and the pride was communicated to them.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are needed in several areas for the CBA's Veteran's Day Bluegrass Festival in Woodland, November 12-14.

- Gate Crew -- Mike McGar needs people to work at the front gate taking or selling tickets and banding people. For information or to volunteer, call Mike at 209-572-3735 or 209-404-4560 (cell) or email: mcmgar@yosemite.cc.ca.us
- Stage crew, security and other duties -- Don Denison needs people to help run the stage, staff the instrument check room, set up and take down chairs and more. For information or to volunteers, call 209-293-1559 or email: dondbear@yahoo.com

STUDIO INSIDER -- Tony Flores

By Joe Weed

I just said goodbye to a dear old friend and musical partner who died this week after a long battle with cancer. I decided to dedicate this month's column to him, both to honor his memory and to remind us all that a successful musical life can be rewarding and inspiring even if it does not involve massive record sales or nationwide recognition.

Tony Flores was born in 1914 in a little fishing village in Sicily. He came to the United States in the early 1920s after his father found work with the growing Italian fishing community in Monterey. The family later moved to San Francisco, where Tony attended high school. His brother and sister were both musicians. Tony started playing violin, but then his sister taught him to play mandolin, the instrument he preferred. By the 1930's, Tony was playing in the Aurora Mandolin Orchestra in San Francisco. San Francisco was a musical melting pot Italian musicians, Spanish, Mexican, Mexican-American and other latin musicians interacted constantly, playing each others' music, and writing and co-writing a growing repertoire for the large and small acoustic ensembles that performed at social functions. Tony's playing blossomed, and he absorbed this great music while perfecting a beautiful, interpretive style on his mandolin.

After Tony married his sweetheart Lorrie, they raised five children, some of whom became musicians too. I met Tony in the early 1970's when my band hired his son Vince as bass player. Our group had been auditioning bass players, but when Vince Flores showed up with his electric and upright basses, we knew that we wouldn't have to look any farther. Vince had a special quality, aside from his remarkable musicianship, and he instantly fit in with the rest of us, creating a strong family vibe.

"I'm Italian," he told us, "and the whole family comes with me. You'll see..." And we did. At the first gig we played with Vince, there sat the entire Flores family in the front row, listening intently, cheering us on wildly and appreciatively. They came to many of our South Bay Area performances, particularly when we played a favorite spot in Los Gatos, Mountain Charlie's Saloon. Our band played original pieces, classical music, jazz, old time, bluegrass, ethnic musics, and a widely eclectic mix of roots based music. The Flores family, with a deep appreciation for artistic and ethnic music, were our unflagging boosters.

Innumerable times they

would haul us all out to "breakfast" after we'd finished our last set and torn down our gear — making sure that we skinny kids had at least an occasional hot, full meal in our bellies. The family included our band at gatherings at their beautiful home, built by Tony on Loma Prieta in the Santa Cruz Mountains. We got to meet Tony's father (nicknamed "il quarararo," or, "the tinker") who had brought the family to America so many years before. Even in his uncomfortable old age, he'd throw down his cane and dance precariously to the old Italian mazurkas that Tony would play on his bowl back mandolin.

Tony held a variety of jobs while raising his family, but none of them turned into a lifelong career with a substantial retirement. So as his children moved on into their own lives and careers, Tony began to play out again, making music his livelihood. In the late 1970's, I went to Santa Cruz to see a trio of Tony on mandolin, his son Vince on bass, and Santa Cruzan Billy Packard on guitar. They were doing many of the tunes Tony had played years before in San Francisco. I was astonished by the caliber of the musicianship, and especially by the dignity, the respect, and the artistic interpretation that flowed from Tony's mandolin.

When restaurant-owner Manuel Santana heard Tony play, he decided that this treasure had to have a musical home. He installed Tony as his regular entertainment at Jardines, his beautiful outdoor restaurant in historic San Juan Bautista. Tony

would play there every weekend for almost 25 years.

In the mid 1980's, I got a call from Tony one morning. "Joe," he said, "I need another guitar player. You know this music, and if you could come and practice a little, you could play guitar for me. You'll love this place, and especially Manny, the owner. He loves music more than anything. And I get lots of playing jobs from all the old Italians I knew when we were kids in Monterey. They're all wealthy landowners now, and love to have the old music for their anniversaries, parties, weddings, etc. What do you say?"

It took me about five milliseconds to say, "I'll be right over." So off and on for the next ten years, I played guitar for Tony. And his playing was as strong and artistic and beautiful as I ever heard.

We drove together on Saturdays and Sundays from Tony's place in Santa Cruz to Jardines restaurant in San Juan Bautista. It's still a beautiful drive through rural Santa Cruz County, past Watsonville, Aromas, and on out to San Juan. Tony taught me to stop the truck, get out, and pick mustard greens from the large fields we'd pass. He showed me how to get the best ones, and how to cook them in a frying pan with a little garlic, olive oil, and salt and pepper. He also showed me how to pick olives from the prolific trees at Sardine's restaurant, take them home, and cure them the old-fashioned Sicilian way with salt, and put them up for storage

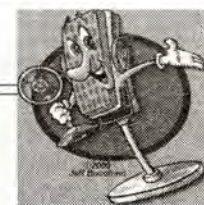
and later treats. Sometimes we'd listen to music on my truck's great sound system, turning it up loud and grooving with Sabicas, Escudero, and many other European masters as we drove through golden hills on our way to play music. Those were times that I cherished then and cherish today.

Most people were surprised to learn Tony's age; since he looked so young and vibrant. He took fast-paced daily walks to the beach and back. Sometimes, even in the dead of winter, he'd wade far out in the frigid waters of Monterey Bay to go fishing, wearing only a bathing suit and sweatshirt. Eventually, though, he developed prostate cancer. Tony put up a long fight against the disease, beating it back again and again so that he could continue playing. Earlier this year, advancing illness forced Tony to move to Sonoma, where he could live full-time with his daughter and her fiancé, Norton Buffalo. Norton welcomed Tony (and of course, the whole Flores family) into his home. There, surrounded by his adoring children and wife, he passed away early Sunday morning.

During his last hours, I played him many of our favorite tunes. I will always feel

honored and lucky that I was swept up into this remarkable family and musical life.

Joe Weed records acoustic music at his Highland Studio in Los Gatos, California. He has released six albums of his own, produced many projects for independent labels, and does sound tracks for film, TV and museums. You can reach Joe by calling 408-353-3353, or by email, at joe@highlandpublishing.com.



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Phone 707-573-3983 or E-mail: msbluegrass@pacbell.net

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breakdown



Jim Pate plays bass as an unidentified fiddler takes a break.



CBA's Board member and Activities Vice President Bob Thomas picks a tune at the September 11 potluck and jam at the beautiful Fair Oaks Park.

**All Photos by
Bob Calkins
Motherlode Photography**

*To see more of Bob's
photos, visit
www.motherlodephotography.com.*



CBA Board member Kris Hare takes a banjo break in the park. Kris is the banjo player for Borderline Bluegrass Band.



Elena Corey Pate and another guitarist play rhythm during a jam in the park.

RECORDING REVIEWS

Lonesome and Blue The Complete County Recordings and Keep On Going The Rebel and Melodeon Recordings Red Allen

Rebel Records
PO Box 7405
Charlottesville, VA 22906
©2004
www.rebelrecords.com

Song list (Lonesome and Blue): *Are You Waiting Just For Me, Whose Shoulder Will You Cry On, My Baby's Gone, Heaven, Summertime Is Past and Gone, That's How I Count On You, Purple Heart, I Heard My Mother Call My Name in Prayer, Seven Year Blues, I'm On My Way Back to the Old Home, What About You, Out On The Ocean, We Live in Two Different Worlds, Bluegrass Blues, Send Me Your Address From Heaven, Milk Cow Blues, Branded Wherever I Go, I'm Lonesome and Blue, If That's The Way You Feel, Maiden's Prayer, Love Gone Cold, I Wonder Where You Are Tonight, No Mother or Dad.*

Song list (Keep On Going): *Don't Lie To Me, Lonesome Weary Heart, Sad and Lonesome Day, I Don't*

Believe You'd Do Me Wrong, Little Birdie, Faded Memory, Froggy Went A Courtin', Sad and Lonesome Day, Journey's End, Those Gone and Left Me Blues, No Blind Ones There, The Family Who Prays, If That's The Way You Feel, Worry My Life Away, Down Where The River Bends, Hello City Limits, Out on the Ocean, I Don't Know Why, Plant Some Flowers By My Graveside, Close By, Purple Heart, Keep on Going.

By Brenda Hough

The 50 selections on these two CDs represent the best music that Red Allen produced. The early sixties were the years of rock and roll and the Beatles and bluegrass took a back seat to other music. If these songs had been recorded a decade earlier, Red would have been honored as one of the founding fathers of the bluegrass sound, and if they had been done a decade later, he would have been part of the bluegrass revival. Now that they are available in CD format, fans new and old will be able to hear the classic tunes and stylings of one of bluegrass music's most soulful singers.

Red Allen's band the Kentuckians played the WWVA Jamboree and made two recordings with the new label County Records.

David Grisman was part of these early recordings, serving as an engineer on one and the mandolin player on the second. The first band configuration was Red Allen on guitar, Bill Yates on bass, Wayne Yates on mandolin, Porter Church on banjo and Richard Greene on fiddle. The second County release featured Red on guitar, Porter Church on banjo, David Grisman on mandolin, Craig Wingfield on dobro and Jerry McCoury on bass. The recordings include standards from Bill Monroe and Curley Seckler as well as songs from Ernest Tubb, Roy Acuff and Mel Tillis. Red's voice is one of the defining voices of bluegrass with the edge of pain and emotional depth that makes each song his very own. Some of the highlights of the County sessions include the war story *Purple Heart, Are You Waiting Just For Me*, and *Heaven* with its call and response harmonies. *Milk Cow Blues* features Craig Wingfield's dobro playing with Red pulling out all the bluesy feeling to match the whine of the dobro. Also notable are *Bluegrass Blues* and *Maiden's Prayer*, two tunes featuring David Grisman with the band.

The second set of recordings was done for Melodeon and Rebel records. Frank Wakefield, a mandolin player with innovative stylings worth a chapter on his own, spent some time in Red's band. Several songs feature Red, Frank with Robbie Robinson on banjo and Jim Cox on bass. *Sad and Lonesome Day* and *Little Birdie* are the best of these sessions and show Frank's mandolin style and Robbie's fast and furious banjo picking. The Melodeon cuts include Red with the Yates brothers and Bill Emerson on banjo. *Down Where The River Bends* and *Hello City Limits* feature Bill Yates, Bill Emerson and Red in some fine trio harmonies. If you haven't heard Red Allen, this is an excellent opportunity to hear his finest work and to see why he may be gone, but not forgotten.

www.chrisstuart.com

Song list: *Silver Quarter, Jimmie Brown Revisited, From Now On, Saints and Strangers, Buckshot, This Body Is A Honky Tonk, Paul and Peter Walked, Lonesome For You, Searching for My Old Kentucky Home, His Glory Will Last, Just Tell A Lie, Twenty Naked Pentecostals in a Pontiac.*

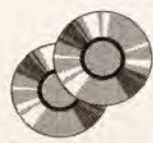
By Brenda Hough

Chris Stuart is a master storyteller with singer songwriter sensibilities matched to a pulsating bluegrass sound powered by the banjo of Janet Beazley and the soaring dobro of Ivan Rosenberg. Chris' guitar and Dean Knight's bass work add to the powerful rhythm drive of the songs.

The album begins with a tribute to Bill Monroe, *Silver Quarter*, and continues with *Jimmie Brown Revisited*, a look at the famous newsboy who dies with "a bottle and a Bible at his side." The title cut, *Saints and Strangers* is a Celtic-flavored story of the Mayflower journey with a haunting melody that is played by Janet Beazley on tin whistles.

Janet, one of the most talented banjo players on the West Coast, adds tasteful vocal harmonies to Chris' leads and showcases her own writing talents in the upbeat love song, *From Now On* and the hopeful *Just Tell A Lie*. *Buckshot* is an instrumental by Ivan Rosenberg that gives his dobro an opportunity to match the fiddle in the rhythms and bounce of a dance tune. Ivan manages to get his Clinesmith resonator to pop out notes as quickly as a banjo and his own album shows his instrumental versatility. Chris' warm baritone evokes a smoky bar and the last song before closing in his classic-to-be song, *This Body Is A Honky Tonk*. Chris and Janet join voices in two gospel songs: *Paul and Peter Walked* and *His Glory Will Last*.

Just when you think you've got all the bases covered, Chris pops out an outrageous *Twenty Naked Pentecostals in a Pontiac*, with drums, fiddle, dobro and accordion in rock n' roll overdrive. With an upcoming appearance at the IBMA as a showcase band, the future is bright for this Southern California band.



Saints and Strangers

Chris Stuart and Backcountry

Backcountry Music
13774 Recuerdo Drive
Del Mar, CA 92014
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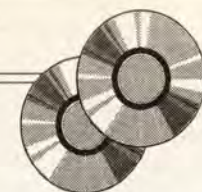


Darkness On The Delta

Kenny Baker and Bobby Hicks
(2004 - reissue from 1980)

County Records
(CO-CD-2733)
P.O. Box 7405
Charlottesville, VA 22906
www.countyrecords.com

Songs: *Roanoke; Darkness On The*



Delta; McHattie's Waltz; Louisville Breakdown; Faded Love; Tallahassee; Westphalia Love; Farewell Blues; Chuck-A-Luck; Silver Bells; Panhandle Country.

Personnel: Kenny Baker - fiddle; Bobby Hicks - fiddle; Alan Shelton - banjo; Larry Sledge - mandolin; Buck White - mandolin; Benny Williams - guitar; Roy Husky, Jr. - bass.

By Rob Shotwell

The quintessential Bluegrass Boy, Kenny Baker was with Bill Monroe longer than any other picker and recorded more than three dozen sessions with Monroe. Baker earned his status as one of the most influential fiddlers in the history of bluegrass music. Combining ancient tones and eventually jazz lines, his smooth, long-bow technique has been replicated by a long list of contemporary young fiddlers.

Bobby Hicks was hired in 1954 (at age 21) as a bassist for Monroe's Blue Grass Boys; he switched to his preferred fiddle when Gordon Terry left, and then banjo when Vassar Clements rejoined the band. He even filled in on mandolin when Monroe broke his collarbone. He was a significant part of the twin or triple fiddle arrangements Big Mon installed in his arrangements. He has been a member of Ricky Skaggs' Kentucky Thunder since 1981 and also participated in five of the six Bluegrass Album Band projects.

Fortuitous circumstances and mutual respect brought the two of them together in September 1980 to record *Darkness On The Delta*. County Records knows a good thing; this wonderful reissue serves as a blueprint for optimizing the styles of two master fiddlers. *Roanoke, Farewell Blues, Tallahassee, Faded Love* and *Panhandle Country* are all examples of model bluegrass fiddle tunes, while the swing sensibilities of each virtuoso performer are satisfied with tunes like *Darkness On The Delta* and *Faded Love*. Likewise, the swinging *Silver Bells* features the modulations with which western swing is associated, and Baker and Hicks make the most of their passing tones and phrases.

Alan Shelton provides fundamentally ideal banjo backup in each number, never intruding but always providing the arrangements with the requisite drive and rhythm of his unique forward roll. He shines especially on his beautiful solo in *McHattie's Waltz*, playing this one as if to convince the listener that the waltz is the only song form suited to banjos; he shows why he is

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— *Bluegrass Unlimited Magazine*, April 2004

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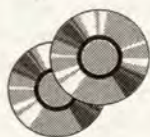
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RECORDING REVIEWS

known as a complete player. Buck White's mandolin is likewise just what the producer ordered for this project, and he helps his old pals out with a straightforward but complementary style.

Baker's *Chuck-A-Luck* is a likely nominee as the album's standout and is a masterpiece of twin fiddling, rivaled by the rousing twin fiddle finish of Monroe's *Panhandle Country*. This is a fiddler's dream album, with the wholesale brilliance of Baker and Hicks represented in the balanced collection of waltzes, swing, and bluegrass hoedown styles; it's a nice place to go back and visit.



Sixteen Gland Slams from Sugar Hill Records Bluegrass All-Stars

Sugar Hill Records
PO box 55300
Durham, NC 27717
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www.sugarhillrecords.com

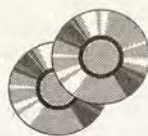
Song list: *Smoothie Song, The Open Road, County Fool, I Don't Believe You've Met My Baby, I Am A Little Scholar, Bear Tracks, It's All My Fault, Blue Train, Stone Cold Blues, Don't Worry About Daddy, Daley's Reel, Maggie's Farm, Highway of Heartache, New Camptown Races, Same O'River, Rose of Old Kentucky.*

By Brenda Hough

This fine collection of "stars" has all the best Sugar Hill can offer. There's top sluggers like Nickel Creek, Jim Mills and Jerry Douglas and the instrumentals are top notch. The *Smoothie Song* is a Chris Thile original with fine fiddle and guitar from Sara and Sean Watkins. Jim Mills has a powerful hit with his banjo and *Bear Tracks* and Bryan Sutton has a grand slam on *Daley's Reel* joined by Tim O'Brien, Dennis Crouch on bass, Tim Crouch on fiddle, and David Talbot on banjo. Fans of Frank Wakefield's classic, *New Camptown Races* will like the high-powered version with Randy Howard on fiddle and Sam Bush on mandolin. Alison Kraus adds her trademark vocal to Jerry's *I Don't Believe You've Met My Baby*, which is worth the price of admission alone. Vince Gill also

pinch hits for Bill Monroe on *Rose of Old Kentucky*.

The computer-generated photo of the 31 musicians on the team should be made into a poster of the top stars in bluegrass today. Sugar Hill certainly has a great team of musicians on their label and fans new and old will certainly find this album hits a "home run!"



The Church of Yesterday Bluegrass Brothers

Hay Holler Records
PO Box 868
Blacksburg, VA 24063
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www.hayholler.com

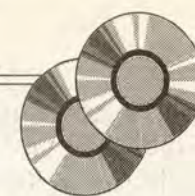
Song list: *Everybody Wants To Go To Heaven, Ask the Lord, The Church of Yesterday, I'm Gonna Go Home, Heaven, Little White Church, How Great Thou Art, Hard Working Pilgrim, There's No New Way Home, Old Rugged Cross, One Big Family, Shouting On The Hills of Glory, Six Hours on the Cross.*

By Brenda Hough

The Bluegrass Brothers are really brothers: Robert and Victor Dowdy along with son Steve give the core brother harmonies that are the strength of the band. The three Dowdys are joined by mandolin player Jack Leonard. All four reside in the Salem, Virginia area and their strong roots in bluegrass have had time to grow deep and strong. The "in the gravel yard" voice of Victor Dowdy gives the band a distinctive sound and the beautiful gospel harmonies are as clear and deep as a mountain stream.

Along with great instrumentals, the band also writes many of their own songs. *I'm Gonna Go Home* is a fine example of the a cappella gospel sound and was written by Victor. Steve wrote *Ask the Lord* and his melodic guitar adds another dimension to the songs. Robert's sparkling banjo gives a hard-driving sound to the popular *Little White Church*. *Old Rugged Cross* and *How Great Thou Art* are given a stellar treatment with all the voices and instrumentals carefully woven together. Jack Leonard's harmony vocals blend in well with the brothers and his mandolin leads are clear and succinct.

The songs are filled with the devotion and sincerity of the best bluegrass gospel and are certainly a tribute to the small country churches of yesterday.



Live From The Virginia Hills Bluegrass Brothers

Dobbie Shea
BB- 1001
P.O. Box 68
Boones Mill, VA 20465

Songs: *Band Intro, Breaking It Down, It's All Over, Country Boy Moves On, Pike County Breakdown, Blue Ridge Cabin Home, Country Poor And Country Proud, Blue Eyed Girl, What's That I Hear, Momma's Gonna Pray, He Will Set Your Fields On Fire, Love Me Darling Just Tonight, Warner, Shady Grove.*

Personnel: Victor Dowdy - bass & vocals; Steve Dowdy - Guitar & vocals; Robert Dowdy - banjo & vocals; Jack Leonard - mandolin & vocals.

By Ken Reynolds

"Live From The Hills Of Virginia" is a very traditional album by a group known as the Bluegrass Brothers, and is put out by the Doobie Shea label.

When it comes to traditional bluegrass, these guys are the real deal. I saw them live at the Grass Valley festival in

Continued on B-4

the Jeanette Williams Band
Get in the Boat
BBR-014

Valerie Smith Liberty Pike
No Summer Storm
REB-0603

Becky Buller
Little Bird
BBR-015

Emily Singleton
Life in the Moment
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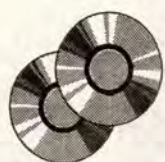
Continued from B-3
2002. They put on one heck of a show, and thoroughly entertained the audience.

This Virginia based group have an intensity to their music that is second to none. Robert Dowdy handles the banjo work. He plays with so much drive that it ought to be illegal. Victor Dowdy is all over the upright bass when he plays, and puts down some great bass leads on selected numbers. Victor's son, Steve Dowdy handles the guitar chores for the group. This young man is an awesome flatpicker. The group is rounded out with Jack Leonard on the mandolin, also a super picker. All of the guys sing, and their vocal harmonies are what one would expect from family members. All of them have that rough "mountain" quality to their voices.

These guys are not only awesome pickers and singers, they are also top notch songwriters. They have included four of their original songs on this project. *It's All Over* was written by Victor. Steve gives us *Country Boy Moves On* and *Blue Eyed Girl*. *What's That I Hear* was penned by Jack Leonard, and is a beautiful a capella gospel song. The harmonies on this one are superb.

I would be hard put to pick a favorite on this album. I did thoroughly enjoy *Momma's Gonna Pray*, and all of the original songs the guys included on this album.

If you are a fan of hard-core, tradition bluegrass music, you just have to add this one to your collection.



Springtime in the Rockies The Bluegrass Patriots

Copper Creek Records
PO Box 3161
Roanoke, VA 24015
©2004
www.coppercreekrecords.com

Songlist: *Wave Goodbye*, *When It's Springtime in the Rockies*, *Indian Council*, *Trail of the Lonesome Pine*, *Free Me From My Misery*, *Streets of Baltimore*, *Winding Stream*, *Why Do You Weep Dear William*, *The Girl I Left in Sunny Tennessee*, *Down in the Valley*, *Eat at the Welcome Table*, *Just As I Am/Country Boy*, *Sparklin' Brown Eyes*, *Paul Bunyan Love*.

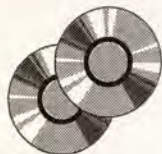
By Brenda Hough

The Bluegrass Patriots have been a much-loved Colorado institution. The band has had the same line-up for 22 years until it lost Rick Bradstreet in 2002. The band has regrouped with fiddler Dan Mitchell and this collection of songs has the Patriots signature

harmonies and interplay of instrumental breaks.

The instrumentals really shine on *Indian Council*, a tune by Denzil Gyles. Dan's fiddle is nicely balanced by the Ken Seaman's banjo and rhythm guitar from Glenn Zankay with tremolos from Willie McDonald on mandolin. The band pulls some old chestnuts from the fire with *Trail of the Lonesome Pine*, *Springtime in the Rockies*, and *Down in the Valley*. Willie McDonald wrote *Free Me From My Misery*, a bouncy tune with a sad tale of love's misery.

The bluegrass smorgasbord is well covered: there's a song about the city lights, a girl left behind in Tennessee, a weeping willow and a gospel song *Eat at the Welcome Table*. Willie and Glenn trade yodels in an upbeat *Sparklin' Brown Eyes* that's an album highlight. For fans of the Bluegrass Patriots, this album was worth the long wait!



Waiting At The Homeplace Big Country Bluegrass (2004)

Hay Holler Records
(HH-1368)
540-552-7959
www.hayholler.com

Songs: *Time To Say Goodbye*; *Larry's Song*; *Kentucky Girl*; *I'm Knee Deep In Loving You*; *John Henry*; *My Cabin In Caroline*; *Welcome Home*; *Take This Hammer*; *Stone Wall*; *Forty Years Of Trouble*; *Lonely Side Of Goodbye*; *Phase One*; *You Don't Know My Mind*.

Personnel: Tommy Sells – mandolin, vocals; Teresa Sells – guitar, vocals; Jimmy Trivette – guitar, vocals; Tim Lewis – banjo, vocals; Billy Hawks – fiddle, vocals; Alan Mastin – upright acoustic bass fiddle; Larry Pennington – banjo on *Cumberland Gap* measures in *Larry's Song*.

By Rob Shotwell

Entering their ninth year with Hay Holler records, Big Country Bluegrass has recorded a total nine projects. They continue their inclination to mix traditional and familiar material with some obscure gems, and it is a formula that continues to work. Jimmy Trivette's versatile and bell-like lead vocal is a recognizable sound in today's bluegrass market and matches well with newcomer banjo man Tim Lewis' and Teresa Sells' harmonies.

For 15 years, Larry Pennington excelled in the five-string role for this band, becoming known

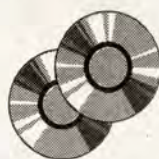
for his vocals as well. Tragically, he succumbed to Lou Gehrig's Disease (ALS) last year. Sue Trivette has penned a beautiful tribute to Pennington in *Larry's Song*, with the attachment of a few short measures of his renowned *Cumberland Gap* from one of the band's previous recordings. The band welcomes Lewis into the fold and he provides a solid banjo style that helps the band to stay the course.

Billy Hawks is so good on fiddle that you almost miss it until he kicks off his own *Phase One*. Listening closely, it is justifiable to consider him in the league of masters such as Glen Duncan, Vassar Clements, Byron Berline, and others, including the swing sensibilities of Johnny Gimble. His tone is as sweet as it gets, and the phrasing and energy he employs can't be taught, you must be born with it.

There are fairly straight readings of *Kentucky Girl*, *John Henry*, *Take This Hammer*, *Forty Years Of Trouble*, and Tommy Sells' version of *You Don't Know My Mind*. While most of the selections avoid setting the world on fire, they still achieve a groove that makes the listener smile and bounce. The exception is the aforementioned Hawks, whose fiddling is on a higher plane.

Teresa Sells never sings enough to suit me, but I guess that's called 'leave 'em wanting more'. She polishes up Sonny Throckmorton's country hit *I'm Knee Deep In Loving You*, and makes us empathize in a delicate version of Randall Hylton's *Lonely Side Of Goodbye*.

Even with the personnel change, the band successfully continues the trademark sound and style present since its formative years. A great addition to your collection.



Little Bird Becky Buller (2004)

Bell Buckle Records
(BBR-015)
P.O. Box 298
Bell Buckle, TN 37020
www.bellbucklerecords.com

Songs: *Save Your Good-bye*; *Little Bird*; *On The South Dakota Wind*; *Clivus Mulchum*; *Opal, Ruby & Pearl*; *You're My Guide*; *Topaz Moon*; *Soddy-Daisy*; *Iris*; *The Master's Garden*; *Where The Rivers Divide*; *Cabin On A Mountain*; *Take Me Over Jordan*.

Personnel: Becky Buller – fiddle, guitar, lead vocal; Patton Wages – banjo; Stephen Mougin – guitar, harmony vocal; Daniel Hardin – bass, harmony vocal; Wayne Benson – mandolin, mandola; Alan Bartram – harmony vocal; Andrea Zonn –

fiddle, viola, harmony vocal; Adam Steffey – mandolin; Rob Ickes – dobro; Amanda Kowalski – bass; Carl Jackson – harmony vocal; Ron Block – guitar; Megan Gregory – harmony vocal.

By Rob Shotwell

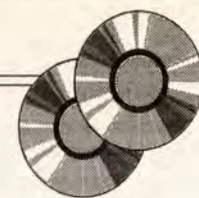
Becky Buller is fast coming on as one of the best and most prolific bluegrass writers, receiving recognition or awards from IBMA, SPBGMA, Billboard Magazine's bluegrass chart, and Bluegrass Now Magazine. Currently serving as fiddler extraordinaire for Valerie Smith and Liberty Pike, she is among the Top 20 nominees for the 2004 IBMA Fiddler of the Year. In addition to her outstanding songwriting ability she is otherwise a triple threat, showing up on these selections with her considerable prowess on fiddle, guitar, and/or lead vocal.

Not just lyrically talented, she gives us three killer instrumentals here; the traditional fiddle sounding *Soddy-Daisy*, and the two tempos (Irish reel – fiddle hoedown) of *Clivus Mulchum*, and *Where The Rivers Divide*, a real player's instrumental. *Opal, Ruby And Pearl* is a personal tome about her mother and two friends who meet at Opal's coffee shop several times a week. *Opal's* is a real place, The Stray Cat Coffeehouse in St. James, Minnesota at the corner of Armstrong and First.

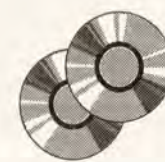
Authoring all but one song on this project, she demonstrates a range extending slightly beyond bluegrass alone and thereby shows she can write for anyone smart enough to want her songs. The title track features former college roommate Megan Gregory's exquisite harmony to Buller's emotional lead, and Shad Cobb's clawhammer banjo provides the fitting mountain feel. The bright and lively sounding five-string patterns from Patton Wages are a delight throughout, and the arrangements are bolstered further with the involvement of Zonn, Benson, Ickes and Steffey. She works well with producer Rich Adler, and the two of them mix and match a considerable palate of harmony singers with the distinct thread and flavor of each of her songs.

On the gospel front, she accompanies herself flawlessly on guitar on the resurrection-affirming *You're My Guide*, the promise of everlasting life in both *The Master's Garden*, and *Take Me Over Jordan* ("to that home beyond the sun, in that land where we'll never die").

She debuted in 2000 with her own CD "Rest My Weary Feet", and then joined Valerie Smith and Liberty Pike in 2001. Fans that pick up this recording will have no trouble embracing her as a top artist in contemporary bluegrass music, and cer-



tainly as a song-writing force to be enjoyed and reckoned with.



A Tribute To Jimmy Martin "The King Of Bluegrass"

J. D. Crowe, Audie Blaylock, Paul Williams, Kenny Ingram

(2004)
Koch Records
KOC-CD-9819
1709 – 19th Ave. South
Nashville, TN 37212
www.kochrecords.com

Songs: *Sophrone*; *You Don't Know My Mind*; *Losing You*; *There Ain't Nobody Gonna Miss Me When I'm Gone*; *She's Left Me Again*; *Doin' My Time*; *I Cried Again*; *Home Run Man*; *Ocean Of Diamonds*; *God Guide Our Leader's Hand*; *What Would You Give In Exchange*; *I Like To Hear 'Em Preach*; *Hold Whatcha Got*; *My Walkin' Shoes*; *Steppin' Stones*; *I'm Thinking Tonight Of My Blue Eyes*; *Tennessee*.

Personnel: Audie Blaylock – guitar, lead vocals; Paul Williams – mandolin, tenor vocals; J.D. Crowe – banjo, baritone vocals; Kenny Ingram – banjo; Michael Cleveland – fiddle; Jessie Brock – mandolin; Jason Moore – bass; Harry Stinson – snare drum; Ben Isaacs – bass, bass vocal; Sonya Isaacs – high baritone vocals.

By Rob Shotwell

The music of bluegrass icon and trend-setter Jimmy Martin is represented well in this release. Making his first mark as the lead singer for Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys in the fifties, we achieved his greatest notoriety and recorded his greatest songs as "The King Of Bluegrass" leading the Sunny Mountain Boys. Four of those boys, J. D. Crowe, Audie Blaylock, Paul Williams and Kenny Ingram (joined by six special guests) have put together a fitting tribute to Martin and the "Good 'n Country" sound.

Of the generous 18 tracks here, *Sophrone* is a great choice to kick off this project with Michael Cleveland's fiddle voicing the well-known Jimmy Martin energy. Blaylock is a natural choice to lead this project since he worked longer with Martin than any other mandolin player and tenor. *Losing You* echoes the original with Blaylock providing some emotional phrasing, and Sonya Isaacs provides fine

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enhancement with her beautiful high baritone above Paul Williams' tenor.

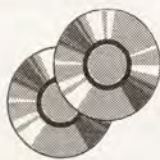
Williams carries *I'm Thinking Tonight Of My Blue Eyes*, *I Like To Hear 'Em Preach*, and *Steppin' Stones* very well, but the most noticeable energy comes from Blaylock's lead vocals with Williams in his usual and historic role as tenor. Crowe has never sounded better, especially on his stellar back-up work featuring banjo licks that 5-stringers have come to know as 'Jimmy Martin' licks. This labeling occurred because originally the identification with the song and singer was stronger than with the picker, although this style has since rightfully been attributed to Crowe. Ingram is no less terrific on his five-string, giving some burn and excitement to *Tennessee* and *Home Run Man*, and especially *Doin' My Time*.

Yes, that is Harry Stinson's snare drum on every track, a sound which long-time Jimmy Martin fans will enjoy, and is really quite an appropriate addition to this music. Stinson adds maybe one more beat than a mando chop would otherwise supply, and is subtle and lively at the same time. Martin was known in his heyday as an envelope-pusher, and regardless of any flak he received earlier in his career for the use of other non-bluegrass instruments (piano, electric guitar and bass, pedal steel, etc.) it is inarguable that he established a bluegrass sound that is given tribute by alumni of his band in this, his 76th year.

Standouts from Martin's famous repertoire include *My Walkin' Shoes*, *Ocean of Diamonds*, *There Ain't Nobody Gonna Miss Me When I'm Gone*, *Home Run Man*, *Doin' My Time* and *Steppin' Stones*. The former Sunny Mountain Boys rise and shine to the level expected by their old boss, and these versions

invite the 'repeat' button to be punched. *Hold Whatcha Got* gives the listener an unusually tentative duet vocal from Blaylock and Williams; although J.D. Crowe's banjo part improves on his original signature licks; overall this one drops off somewhat from the King's energetic version.

The glaring omission in this project is of his famous *Sunny Side of the Mountain*, arguably his biggest hit and most recorded composition. No explanation is given and we can only wish that this collection had been suitably completed with this standard. Nonetheless, this is a CD to own, and it will truly be enjoyed by followers of Martin's performance career.



Long Way Back Home The Gibson Brothers

Sugar Hill Records
PO Box 55300
Durham, NC 27717
©2004
www.sugarhillrecords.com

Song list: *Mountain Song*, *Callie's Reel*, *Dreams That End Like This*, *The Way I Feel*, *Ophelia*, *Any Man in his Right Mind*, *Long Way Back Home*, *It's All Right With Me*, *Alone With You*, *I'm Not Wanted Here*, *I Gotta Get Back to You*, *Satan's Jeweled Crown*, *He'd Take Her Back*

Again.

By Brenda Hough

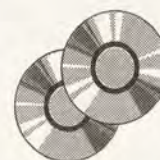
Leigh and Eric Gibson have again produced an album of fine brother harmonies and outstanding original songs. With Eric's banjo and Leigh's guitar joined by Marc MacGlashan on mandolin and Mike Barber on bass, the instrumentation is fine-tuned with a strong rhythmic presence with the vocals taking center stage.

Mountain Song opens the album with a driving beat featuring the banjo and mandolin and the strong voices of the brothers blended in a robust harmony.

Dreams That End Like This is a Leigh Gibson original and Leigh sings the lead with the intonation and emotional impact of a vintage Roy Orbison. *The Way I Feel* is Eric's tribute to the Merle Haggard and the other country songs where "nobody's listening, but they know the way I feel." With twin guitars and percussion, Leigh's song, *Any Man in His Right Mind* has a strong message of regret for the love gone astray. The brothers put on their rockabilly shoes with the rollicking, *It's All Right With Me*, written by Jackson Leap. Eric's *I'm Not Wanted Here* and Leigh's *I Gotta Get Back To You* are the two traditional bluegrass-sounding songs on the album with strong instrumental rhythms and breaks. The opening cut, Kiernan Kane's *Mountain Song* has a revival camp meeting fervor

that doesn't seem to fit any one genre. This is the key to the Gibson Brothers: their music is pushing the boundaries of bluegrass to include country, rock, and folk and magically, it feels right.

This second album for Sugar Hill is a strong follow-up to last year's "Bona Fide" release and further proof that their 1998 IBMA Emerging Artist award was well deserved.



Where the Woods are Cool And Still High Plains Tradition

Independent Label
HPT02
High Plains Tradition
Kenny Pabst
17282 E. Parkside Dr. S.
Commerce City, CO 80022

Songs: *Because Of You*, *It's Just Me*, *Where The Woods Are Cool And Still*, *Brand New Mandolin*, *Clean Getaway*, *Flowers From Emily*, *Trying To Find My Own Way*, *I Knew*, *Sommerville Mine*, *Soldiers Joy*.

Show Me The Way, *Blue Yodel # 4*, *Just How Long Have You been Gone*, *Bonus Track*.

Personnel: Bobbie Vickery - fiddle; Doug Elrick - mandolin; Mark Leslie - banjo; Steve Gilmore - guitar; Kenny Pabst - bass. The liner notes gave no information on which ones do vocals, I'm assuming that they all do.

By Ken Reynolds

"Where the Woods are Cool And Still," by the Colorado based group High Plains Tradition, is one of the better CDs to hit the market lately.

When you start listening to the album, you will quickly discover that these guys can really pick and sing. I have seen them perform on three different occasions. I can tell you that this group really knows how to entertain a crowd. I can also tell you these guys are down to earth and friendly. They are fast becoming one of my favorite bands.

They have a lot of original material on this project. Mandolinist, Doug Elrick does most of

Continued on B-6

THE CALIFORNIA BLUEGRASS HERITAGE FUND

To more effectively meet its mission — the furtherance of bluegrass, old-time, and gospel music in California—the CBA has established a special fund. Per the terms of the fund, monies held in the California Bluegrass Heritage Fund will be used exclusively for activities and projects which directly address the long-term achievement of our organization's mission. (The policy governing the fund would only allow monies to be used for operational expenses in case of an emergency, and then only with a two-thirds vote of the entire board of directors.)

Projects and activities supported by the fund could include:

- a scholarship fund
- a music in the schools program
- creation of a California Bluegrass Hall of Fame
- acquisition of a permanent home for the CBA
- establishment of a CBA music, photograph and manuscript archive

The California Bluegrass Heritage Fund offers members of the CBA the chance to take tangible action in promoting and preserving the music that we love and that is so much a part of all our lives. Donors are reminded that contributions are fully tax deductible.

Make checks payable to the California Bluegrass Association (CBA) with a notation on check "Bluegrass Heritage Fund" and mail to: CBA Treasurer, Darrell Johnston, 13961 Lake Drive, Jamestown, CA 95327.

5th Annual Tucson Bluegrass Festival



October 23 & 24, 2004 10am - 5:30pm
Pima County Fairgrounds, Tucson AZ

featuring JD Crowe & the New South Open Road
The James King Band Titan Valley Burnett Family

Festival Admission:
\$18 Daily, \$25 Weekend
Children under 13 free

Directions:
14 miles east of Tucson, I-10
to exit 275 then south 1 mile

Sponsors:



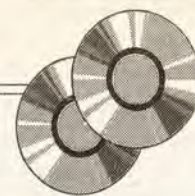
Camping:

Hook up \$15.50, Dry \$10 per night
Reservations: (520) 762-9100

Information:

www.desertbluegrass.org
or (520) 296-1231

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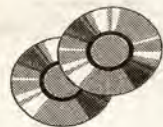
Continued from B-5 the song writing for the group. On the title cut, *Where The Woods Are Cool And Still*, Doug shares the writing credit with Kenny Pabst and Chuck Tinsley. Writing credit on the tune *Brand New Mandolin* goes to "the Band". The only songs on the CD that are not original are, *Solider's Joy*, *Blue Yodel #4*, and cut number 14 which is labeled Bonus Track. The song on the bonus track is the old Bill Monroe song *Blue Moon Of Kentucky*.

For you fans of gospel music, the guys have included a Doug Elrick song titled *Show Me The Way*. This a beautiful, well written song.

One track well worth listening to is *Blue Yodel #4*. This song has the absolute best yodeling harmonies that I have ever heard.

All of the guys are masters of their respective instruments. I don't think you will hear any finer picking anywhere. Vocally they deliver each song with a power and grace that is a pure joy to listen to. Their harmonies are clean, tight and well blended.

If you don't already have this CD, I strongly recommend that you get your hands on this one. This is bluegrass the way it was meant to be performed.



Big Time Rob Ickes

Rounder Records
One Camp Street
Cambridge, MA 02140
©2004
www.rounder.com

Song list: *Machine Gun Kelly*, *Elzie's Farewell*, *Matt Hyland*, *Born in a Barn*, *The Fatal Shore*, *Wayfaring Stranger*, *Fiddler's Dream*, *I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes*, *Like Water*, *I Am A Pilgrim*, *Lonesome Moonlight Waltz*, *Lost Indian*, *Ireland Love of My Heart*.

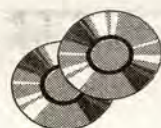
By Brenda Hough

California-born Rob Ickes has certainly hit the "big time" with his starring role with Blue Highway and this latest solo album. The album notes include a great photo of Rob "cooking" on a griddle with his dobro as a frying pan. This would have been a fun cover photo, but the hot stuff is the music.

The album opens with Blue Highway's Wayne Taylor singing a James Taylor song, *Machine Gun Kelly*. This transition from rock song to a bluegrass band song is a natural, free-flowing process as is much of Rob's playing. The traditional tunes on the album are given

a new sound, with the dobro soaring above and within the sounds of Shawn Lane's mandolin and fiddle, Jacob Bruleson's banjo and mandolin, Tim Stafford's guitar and the bass work of Wayne Taylor and Derek Jones. *Matt Hyland* and *Ireland*, *Love of My Heart* have a lyrical quality that bring to mind misty mornings in the interplay of the fiddle and dobro.

Rob brings a warmth and sustain to his playing and his notes are clear and concise without the wavering notes that often characterize dobro playing. *Born In A Barn* is one of Rob's compositions and the speed of the notes sound more like banjo playing. His rendition of *Wayfaring Stranger* begins with a solo harmonies and then an embellished melody line that brings the bluesy feeling of the tune to the forefront. *I Am A Pilgrim* ventures into jazz territory with the playing of Derek Jones trading riffs with Rob. *I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes* is his tribute to Josh Graves, and the Bill Monroe tune, *Lonesome Midnight Waltz* sounds as if were written for dobro. Rob won the IBMA Dobro Player of the year award again in 2003, and it's no surprise given the fine performances of original songs and traditional tunes featured on this album.



Live At Camp Rude Parkfield, CA 2003 Iron Lasso

(self-produced
www.ironlasso.com
©2004

By Brenda Hough

This band boasts of "taking bluegrass where no bluegrass has gone before." This may be true; no other band has quite the mixture of traditional sound cobbled to outrageous versions of *Sweet Caroline* done bluegrass style.

This album was recorded at the "Camp Rude" bluegrass festival in Parkfield (earthquake capital of the world) California in 2003, and has all the spontaneity and quirks of a live performance.

The band hails from Bald Knob Montana often mistaken as Missoula. Sisco Cardanio plays a mean mandolin and he pulls no stops in the traditional Bill Monroe tune, *Kentucky Mandolin*. Pistol Dick Oakland is the guitar player, Rev. Lieut. Eddie Diamond is the pulsating banjo player, Dr. C.J. Lightning holds down the dobro and Mitchel Perez is the steady bass player keeping all this together. Their specialty is the "greatest hits of bluegrass" all played together with enthusiasm.

Sweet Caroline, a smashed version of Neil Diamond's 70s hit, and *Driving My Life Away* are crowd-pleasers. Best enjoyed at the end of a day of full-powered bluegrass!



Beyond the Shadows Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver

Sugar Hill Records
PO Box 55300
Durham, NC 27717-5300
©1986 and 2004
www.sugarhillrecords.com

Song list: *When We Meet To Part No More*, *By the Side of the Road*, *Babylon's Falling*, *Every Time I Feel the Spirit*, *Beyond the Shadows*, *When the World's On Fire*, *When Life Is Over*, *Hiding from the Storm Outside*, *The Wings of Faith*, *The Long, Long Journey*, *We'll Sing in Gloryland*, *My Lord Delivered Me*.

By Brenda Hough

Doyle Lawson's Quicksilver group has been recording for 25 years and this album is a reissue of a classic Quicksilver configuration featuring Russell Moore, Scott and Curtis Vestal joining Doyle. Russell later left to become the lead singer with IIIrd Tyme Out and his distinctive lead tenor adds greatly to the harmonies. There is minimal instrumentation on the songs, but the focus is resonant vocal harmonies with the four voices.

Babylon's Falling is the classic gospel number: wonderful four part harmonies, no instrumentation and the wonderful call and response between vocalists. *The Wings of Faith* is a song from Don Reno and there are several instrumental breaks that show Doyle's fine mandolin playing. *By The Side of the Road* and *The Long, Long Journey* feature Mike Auldridge's dobro playing.

This album has been out of print and gospel fans will welcome the chance to hear the wonderful vocal blendings of this 1986 version of Quicksilver.



Bluegrass The Way You Like It Lost Highway

Hay Holler Records
PO Box 868
Blacksburg, VA 24063
©2004
www.hayholler.com

Song list: *Your Love Is Like A Flower*, *Rank Stranger*, *No Mother or Dad*, *Ghost Stories*, *Paint the Town*, *The Angels Are Singing*, *I Can't Go On Loving You*, *Reynard*

in the Canebreak, *Who Will Sing For Me*, *Over the Hill to the Poorhouse*, *Don't Step Over An Old Love*, *What Would You Give*.

By Brenda Hough

Lost Highway has a magical formula: fine singing, fine instrumentation and fine song choices. All of the songs should please any traditional bluegrass fan who loves fine harmonies, sparkling banjo and songs from the wellspring of bluegrass: mothers, home and hearth, love, and the happy heaven to come. The three part harmonies of Ken Orrick, Eric Uglum and Dick Brown are perfectly tiered and the trio brings back songs of Flatt and Scruggs and the Stanleys. Aided by the fine fiddle flavorings from Paul Shelasky and Marshall Andrews' bass, Ken's guitar, Dick's banjo and Eric's mandolin blend as seamlessly as their voices.

Ghost Stories tells the story of homes abandoned by families and has some fine guitar leads from Eric. *Paint the Town* is Ralph Stanley's classic going-honky-tonking song with hard-driving banjo from Dick. Dick also leads the way in the Bill Emerson instrumental, *Reynard in the Canebreak*. *Who Will Sing For Me* and *Rank Strangers* are two jam classics from the Stanleys and the Lost Highway versions are Bluegrass 101 textbook examples. *Over the Hill to the Poorhouse* has the unforgettable lines - "I'm old, helpless and feeble."

True, bluegrass, true classics - performed to perfection. You can't ask for anything more.



High Lonesome and Blue Del McCoury

Rounder Records
One Camp Street
Cambridge, MA 02140
©2004
www.rounder.com

Song list: *Road of Love*, *Lonesome Wind*, *I Feel The Blues Moving In*, *You'll Find Her Name Written There*, *High on a Mountain*, *I'll Pretend It's Raining*, *Don't Our Love Look Natural*, *Cheek to Cheek with the Blues*, *Old Memories Mean Nothing To Me*, *If You've Got the Money Honey*, *Queen Anne's Lace*, *If You Need A Fool*, *The Bluest Man in Town*, *The Cold Hard Facts*, *Blackjack County Chains*, *Don't Stop The Music*.

By Brenda Hough

Every generation and genre has its own special voice and singer. Easily recognizable are the voices of Bing Crosby, Bob Dylan, Johnny Cash and in the bluegrass field, two voices stand out: Bill

Monroe and Del McCoury.

Rounder has recorded many of Del's songs including the 1987 *Road of Love* which Del wrote and performed with an early version of his band: brother Jerry on bass, David McLaughlin on mandolin, Eddie Stubbs on fiddle and Richard Underwood on banjo. Another of Del's songs, *I Feel The Blues Moving In* showcases Rob McCoury on banjo and Ronnie McCoury on mandolin and has the signature McCoury family harmonies and strong instrumental tags.

The wonderful high lonesome sound that Del can sing is found in *You'll Find Her Name Written There* and Ola Belle Reed's *High on a Mountain*. Fans who have come to love the current band with Del, Ronnie, Rob, Jason Carter on fiddle and Mike Bub on bass will find early favorites like *Cheek to Cheek With The Blues*, *If You've Got The Money Honey* from the singing of Lefty Frizzell and *The Cold Hard Facts* given the McCoury signature dressing-up. *Blackjack County Chains* has a great story line and Del sings it with passion and conviction alongside Jerry Douglas' expressive dobro playing.

There's no question that Del McCoury is the rightful winner of the IBMA Entertainer of the Year award for his soulful and lonesome bluegrass sound and this album has many of his classic songs.



Little Country Schoolhouse Bertye Maddux Band

Self-produced
Box 3087
Colorado Springs, CO 80934
©2004
www.madduxband.com

Song list: *Lonesome Highway*, *Little Country Schoolhouse*, *Colorado Clay*, *Big Sciota*, *Broken Heart*, *No Bounds*, *Road to Columbus*, *Your Selfish Heart*, *Teller County Breakout*, *Eye on the Prize*.

By Brenda Hough

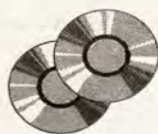
The Bertye Maddux band is one of Colorado's up and coming bands. Their self-titled brand of "grassology" is instrumentally tops with innovative leads and intriguing textures especially with the addition of guests Pete Wernick on banjo and Paul Shelasky on this album.

The band features the singing, mandolin playing and songs of Bertye Maddux with husband Mike on guitar and daughter Ruth on bass along with fiddler Joey Adams. Her tunes have the homey themes of family and life in the nostalgic past. *Little Country Schoolhouse* has wonderful images of pennies on the railroad track and

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fields of tall grass. *Colorado Clay* is a mining family story and *Eye on the Prize* is a gospel tune with the potential to be a favorite standard.

Mike Maddux is an award-winning guitarist and his melodic leads in the album are prize winners of taste and tone. A stronger vocal mix would give this band more emotional impact and balance the more intriguing instrumentals.



Force of Nature Mountain Heart

Skaggs Family Records
PO Box 2478
Hendersonville, TN 37077
www.skaggsfamilyrecords.com
©2004

Song list: *Born on the Wind, Another Day, Life She's Chosen, A Memory Like Mine, Soldier's Prayer, The Old Hometown, #6 Barn Dance, Snapshots and Souvenirs, Twister, Heart Like A Roadsign, Man in the Mirror, Lonesome Fiddle, I Want To Live Beyond the Grave.*

By Brenda Hough

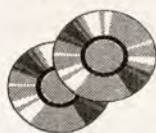
Listening to Mountain Heart makes it hard to believe that the band has only been together a few years. The highly polished sound and vocals reflect years of hard work and some incredible talent. Guitar player Steve Gulley and banjo player Barry Abernathy were both members of Doyle Lawson's Quicksilver band which Doyle often jokes is a farm team for future bluegrass bands.

The band has a high-energy instrumental mix powered by Barry's banjo, Jimmy Van Cleve's fiddle, Adam Steffey's crisp mandolin and the strong guitar duo of Steve Gulley and Clay Jones. #6 *Barn Dance* written by Van Cleve is a rousing performance with lead breaks from all the players. The vocals cut into the heart and soul of human joys and suffering with deeply felt lyrics that span the distance from mountains to city with a universal message of hope, love, joy and sorrow. A

Soldier's Prayer with its Celtic flavor and *A Memory Like Mine* strongly evoke the sorrow of times marred by war. *Life She's Chosen* is a gentle tribute to the women who stay at home to tend the family in contrast with *Another Day* with its tale of a woman trapped in an abusive situation. *Twister* is filled with

strong images of a lifetime's loss in a destructive storm – "in a place where the earth and sky collide." *Heart Like A Roadsign, Head Like A Wheel* has bluegrass reaching warp speed.

This band has it all: hot instrumentals, mellow and emotional vocals, breath-taking harmonies and the heart and soul of all mankind.



Twenty Year Blues Nashville Bluegrass Band

(2004)
Sugar Hill Records
SUG-CD-3959
P.O. Box 55300
Durham, NC 27717-5300
www.sugarhillrecords.com

Songs: *Garfield's Blackberry Blossom; Travelin' Railroad Man Blues; That's All Right; Old Riverman; Pretty Red Lips; Sitting On Top Of The World; Luckiest Man Alive; Hush (Somebody's Callin' My Name); Gambling Barroom Blues; There's A Better Way; Rockin' Chair Money; Crossing The Cumberland; Tell Me Your Love*

Is Still True.

Personnel: Pat Enright – guitar, vocals; Alan O'Bryant – banjo, vocals; Mike Compton – mandolin, vocals; Stuart Duncan – fiddle, vocals; Dennis Crouch – bass, utility man.

By Rob Shotwell

Some twenty years in the business, Nashville Bluegrass Band celebrates with the 10th release of their illustrious group career. Reinvigorated by mandolinist Mike Compton's return and the addition of bassist extraordinaire Dennis Crouch, NBB presents classic-sounding and traditional bluegrass, blues, riverboat laments and African-American tinged gospel.

Speaking of which; on *Hush (Somebody's Callin' My Name)*, Mike Compton leads the group through an outstanding rendition of this traditional gospel number in which the arrangement sounds as if it were inspired by the Fairfield Four. This is not surprising from the four-time IBMA Vocal Group Of The Year, and O'Bryant never ceases to amaze when he dredges up that deceptively deep bass voice of his. Jimmie Rodgers' *Gambling Barroom Blues* highlights what NBB does so well, and that is to take an early 20th century blues ballad and

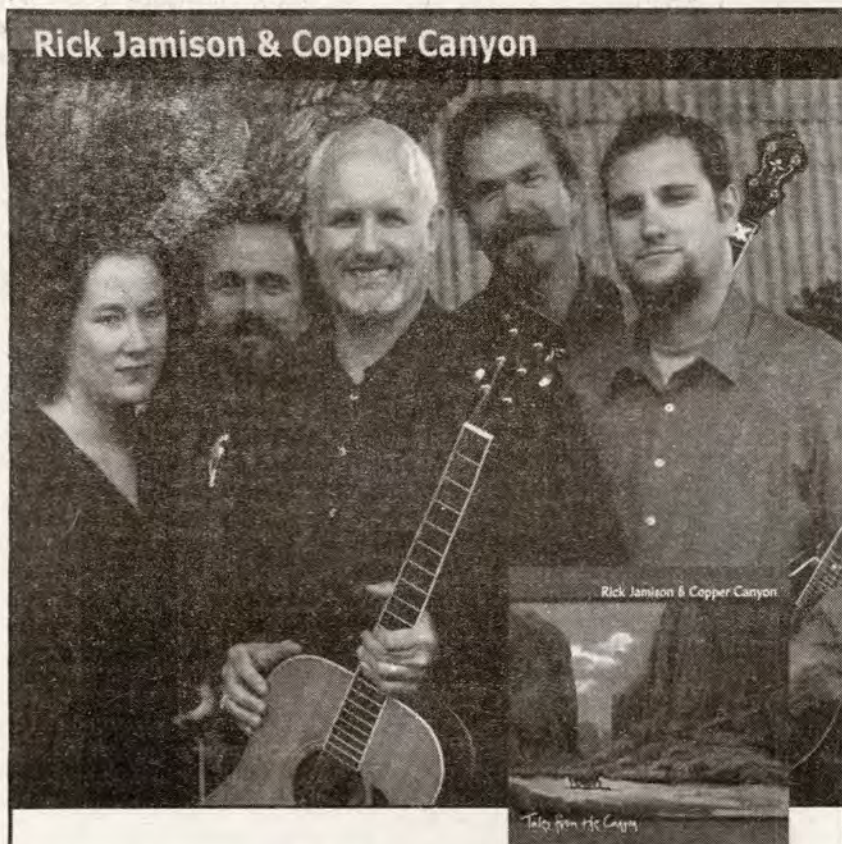
give it new life for the uninitiated. This sad lament of a gambling man is set off by O'Bryant's signature banjo noting, with a sound straight off the 1930's variety review stage.

One of the best pieces on this project is the John Hartford-Bill Monroe collaboration, *Old Riverman*. The sophisticated melody is definitely Hartford, and the blues-bluegrass sentiment is Monroe's, sung very decently by O'Bryant. It's no surprise the subject matter reflects one of Hartford's favorite themes (and his lifestyle), that of working on the river in 3,000 mile stints.

Pretty Red Lips is a joyful ditty, featuring Compton's especially bright picking and his almost impromptu one-verse vocal, and the uplifting *Luckiest Man Alive* follows suit with a son's remembrance of his war-survivor father's counting life's blessings where most people would tally the negative side. *Rockin' Chair Money* bounces right out of Smilin' Bill Carlisle's 1930's repertoire, and *Crossing The Cumberland* features some deft picking from O'Bryant, Compton and Duncan.

Sitting On Top Of The World is rendered by these experts as a surprisingly good blues tune, and Compton

Continued on B-10



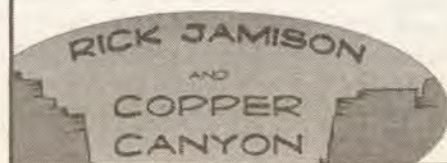
Rick Jamison & Copper Canyon

Rick Jamison & Copper Canyon

Talkin' from the Canyon

"Bluegrass is intimately linked to tradition, but there's a movement afoot to infuse the medium with new material that reflects modern life while staying within the time-honored framework of powerful instrumental work and tight vocals. Rick Jamison and Copper Canyon definitely stakes a spot in that movement with this project, a fine all-original set that reflects the group's strengths and its heart to make music that hasn't been heard before."

Tim Stafford
Blue Highway



To download MP3 samples of the 12 original songs featured on the band's newly released CD, please visit:

www.coppercanyonbluegrass.com

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Photo: Stacey Galtin

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Father's Day Festival 2003 T-shirt
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White on Teal



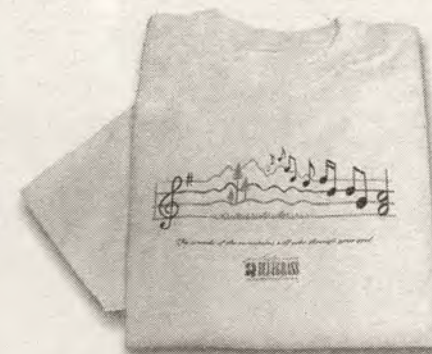
Double Pocket Tote Bag / Black and Royal Blue



Canvas Tote Bag / Natural and Blue
Full Color Logo



Happy T-shirt / Caption: "I picked California."
with small CBA logo. Red or White



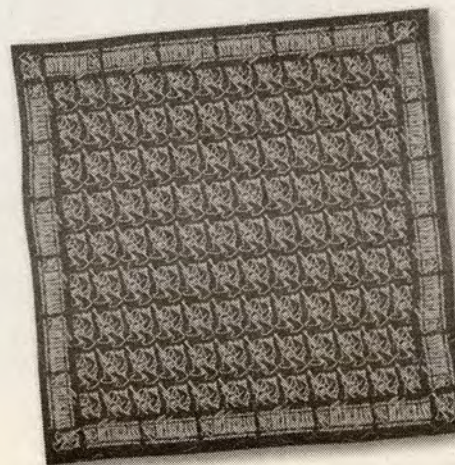
Mountain Music T-shirt /
Caption: "The sounds of the mountains
will echo through your soul." White.



The Jug / 64 ounce / White or Granite



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Bandanna / 22x22 / Black on Teal, or Teal on Natural

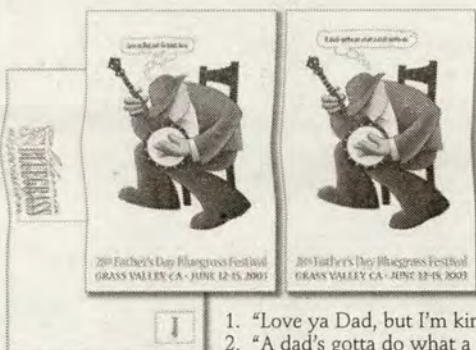


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heart on your sleeve, or your head, or your fridge, or... And, oh, doesn't little Benny need a birthday present?



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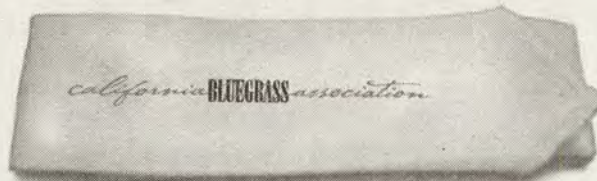
Tire Cover
Fits most RV's



Bumper Stickers / 9x3



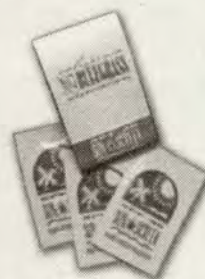
Poster / Father's Day Festival 2003
Full color lithograph / 11x17



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Magnet / Fits most refrigerators



Sunblock / Convenient day packets



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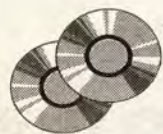
For more information, call 209-368-3424 or Email: jewelsmaple@aol.com. Or visit www.cbaontheweb.org.

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RECORDING REVIEWS

Continued from B-7
gives a raucous and soulful reading that draws the listener in. Duncan's fiddle punctuates with double-stops that cry, O'Bryant invents some banjo phrasing never before heard on this song, and Crouch gives a subtle but stellar solo on bass.

Special NBB bonus facts: They were originally formed in 1984 to back Minnie Pearl and other performers on a package tour; NBB was the first bluegrass band to perform in the Republic of China; they have also staged concerts in Egypt, Brazil, Crete, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Qatar, The Azores, Iraq, Israel, Turkey, Japan, most of Europe and the British Isles; collaborated with Johnny Cash on the movie soundtrack *Dead Man Walking*; and were once hired by R.E.M. to play their private party.



In the life Open Road

Rounder Records
One Camp Street
Cambridge, MA 02140
©2004
www.rounderrecords.com

Song list: *Bald Knob Arkansas, What A Change One Day Can Make, Grey Eagle, Pick Me Up, Mandy Jane, One Is A Lonely Number, Suwannee River Hoedown, Southern Track, I'm Not Perfect, Sinkin' Man, Cheyenne Mountain Breakdown, One Teardrop and One Step Away, Mountain Laurel.*

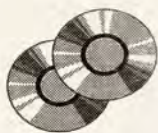
By Brenda Hough

Open Road is a fast-rising band based in Colorado. Their sound is exciting and deeply connected to the roots of bluegrass. Bradford Lee Folk has one of those straight-out-of-the-past voices that sounds heartfelt to the core. He is at ease in writing his own songs with traditional themes but with contemporary humor. His *I'm Not Perfect*, a love song with an attitude is a perfect match to the Harlan Howard classic, *Pick Me Up On Your Way Down*. His other songs on the album feature a gambling man with an unhappy fate and a wandering son setting off to see the world.

Brad also enjoys finding hidden classics and *Bald Knob Arkansas*, from the singing of the Louvin Brothers and more recently Vern Williams, has the ring of authenticity and the ringing banjo of Keith Reed. Keith's rhythm-driven banjo also sparks the *Suwannee River Hoedown* and his own *Cheyenne Mountain Breakdown*. Fiddler Bobby Britt has great balance between the long-drawn notes and the quick-wrist dance notes in the

hoedowns and breakdowns. Fellow band founder Caleb Roberts has perfected the bluesy mandolin styles and his harmonies with *Brad in Mountain Laurel* and *One Teardrop and One Step Away* are in the wonderful country duet style.

This latest CD will satisfy all the Open Road fans who have been waiting for this follow-up to their first Rounder CD.



Mutual Admiration Society Glen Phillips and Nickel Creek

(2004)
Sugar Hill Records
SUG-CD-1067A
P.O. Box 55300
Durham, NC 27717-5300
www.sugarhillrecords.com

Songs: *Comes A Time, Sake Of The World, Windmills, Be Careful, Running Out, Somewhere Out There, Francesca, Trouble, La Lune, Reprieve, Think About Your Troubles.*

Personnel: Glen Phillips – guitar, lead vocals; Sara Watkins – fiddle, vocals; Sean Watkins – guitar, mandolin, vocals; Chris Thile – mandolin, vocals; Jen Condos – bass; Richard Causon – organ, accordion, piano; Ethan Johns – percussion, electric guitar, mandolin, backing vocals.

By Rob Shotwell

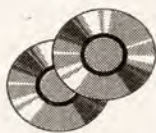
This self-titled project features collaboration between Nickel Creek and Toad The Wet Sprocket's Glen Phillips and remains focused on introspective, indulgent ballads throughout. There are no uptempo breakdown-style numbers here. The melody lines seem to follow contrived multiple chordal arrangements, emphasizing the corporeal feat of forming complex sound clusters over musically creative ideas and statements. Progressive acoustic music fans as well as bluegrass devotees will find this to be homogeneous, mellow, and possibly forgettable material.

The pristine quality of Nickel Creek's vocals and instrumentation is at odds with the undisciplined and monotonous vocals of Phillips. Sometimes rough vocals can be endearing and even artistic when matched with stellar players (Prine, Dylan, Guy Clark, etc.); it doesn't happen here.

Fans of TTWS and Nickel Creek might take exception, but this collaboration didn't enhance the catalogue of either one. Nickel Creek takes a holiday from their trademark improvisational rides and focuses mainly on their role as Phillips' rhythm section. Their vocals are relegated to that of supportive background at a very low-

level in the mix. The appealing *Sake Of The World* displays a little life and is likely the one mutually redeeming song here, with a surprisingly decent vocal by Phillips.

Unfortunately, this project is not nearly the 'special' collaboration it was hyped to be by their respective management and Sugar Hill Records. It's hard to figure who's indulging whom here, but my bet is this project benefited young, hip popster Phillips more than it did the leading-edge, massively accomplished Nickel Creek. For die-hard Creeker's and Toad fans only, and then only to complete their collections.



Field Guide

John Reischman and the Jaybirds

Copper Creek Records
PO Box 3161
Roanoke, VA 24015
©2003
www.coppercreekrecords.com
www.johnreischman.com

Song list: *Lonesome Dove, She Could Have Loved Him, Holy Jumped Up, Darlin' Nellie, Say Darlin' Say, In the Darkest Hour, Arrowhead, Shackled and Chained, Crooked Man, Over the Levee, The Immigrant's Lament, I'm Troubled, Hop High Ladies, Little Willy, Plum Tree, The Train That Carried My Girl From Town.*

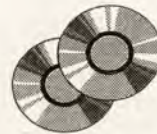
By Brenda Hough

Mention the name John Reischman and bluegrass fans may think of his melodic or jazzy mandolin work with Tony Rice or the Good Ol' Persons. Often called Mr. Taste and Tone, John's playing has a rolling, melodic trill that probably could charm birds out of the trees. No wonder that the album is called "field guide" – it's a great collection of bluegrass classics, new instrumentals and vocals that cover a lot of territory.

The Jaybirds have a focused sound with the instrumentals and vocals blended in a mixture that allows the soloists to step out but never over run the show. Trisha Gagnon's voice is a wonderful solo instrument with the mellow, rounded tones not often found in some female vocalists. Her version of Carol Elizabeth Jones' *She Could Have Loved Him* is diffused with a wistfulness that reaches out and touches the listener and her *Over The Levee* has the feeling of an old classic and a melody that stays in the mind after the song is done. Jim Nunally and Trisha have a particularly nice blend in Jim's song, *Shackles and Chains*. John adds the third voice in *Darlin' Nellie* and *Hop High Ladies*.

The band turns on the high-powered chops with its instrumentals. *Holy Jumped Up* is John

Reishman's tune with strong mandolin punctuation echoed by Jim Nunally's guitar. Jim also has other guitar leads in several other songs and they are always supportive of the song while adding musical textures and tones. Greg Spatz and Nick Hornbuckle add fiddle and banjo to an already rich instrumental mix. Greg and Nick play a very spirited *Arrowhead*, while John's mandolin and Nick's banjo blend in *Crooked Man*. Little hums and snippets of tunes keep appearing in my mind after listening to this album, and that must be a true mark of great music – definitely an album to have whether you wander in fields, forests or are lost on a desert island!



The Good, the Bad and the Lonesome

Ivan Rosenberg
Self-produced
©2004
www.ivanrosenberg.com

Song list: *Pepperwood Hollow, Back to the Pasture, Last Light, Devil's Chute, Out Among the Corn, Split the Switch, Soda Springs, Late Night Ramble, Camp Rude Stumble, Eel River, Carbon County Coal, The Lost Coast, Lolo Trace, Wildwood Ramble, Dead Horse Blues, The Roscoe Special, Dry Lagoon.*

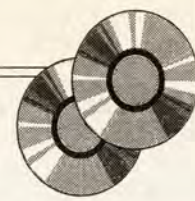
By Brenda Hough

Ivan Rosenberg is a master resonator player and his work with Chris Stuart and Backcountry shows his skill at blending in with a band sound. His solo album gives him a chance to put the resonator dobro sound in the forefront with other instruments adding licks and fills in carefully orchestrated arrangements. All of the songs are instrumental originals and several members of the Lost Highway, Kane's River and Backcountry join Ivan.

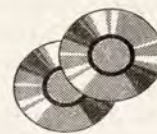
Ivan's skill at evoking moods is particularly evident in the slower paced numbers. At times the Clinesmith has the classic dobro whine and at others it has the sharp staccato quickness that is more of a mandolin or banjo sound.

Back To the Pasture is a sprightly dance tune with Janet Beazley adding banjo and Eric Uglum playing guitar.

Last Light adds a gentle sunset mood starting with mandolin joined with Ivan's melodic resonator. Ivan switches to clawhammer banjo in duets with Chad Manning on fiddle in



Soda Springs and *Devil's Chute*. Introspective, bouncy, moody, – there's a tune to match any mood in this extensive selection of 17 songs.



Carolina Rain

Ron Spears and Within Tradition

Copper Creek
PO Box 3161
Roanoke, VA 24015
©2004
www.coppercreekrecords.com

Song list: *Ocean of Teardrops, Carolina Rain, Darling Please Don't Let Our Love Die, Back to Honky Tonkin' Again, Billsville, Dreams of Rosemary, Don't Blame Me, The Fugitive, Lost in Nashville, Lord Lift Me Up, A Little Ways Down the Road, Kylee's Prayer.*

By Brenda Hough

Ron Spears has been writing fine songs and singing great bluegrass for more than 30 years. He joined Charlie Edsall in 1999 to form Ron Spears and Within Tradition, and their combined sound along with some powerful new band members makes this one of the top bands in the Western United States. With the addition of three fine alumni from the South Plains College bluegrass program, the band has a fire and energy that propel the message and passion of the songs to the forefront.

Charlie and Ron share the lead vocal duties and their harmonies are joined with the vocal talents of Joe Ash and Mike Tater. With fine vocal back-up, Ron was able to change the keys of many of his songs to use the more passionate "high lead" sound. This is particularly effective in "Darling, Don't Let Our Sweet Love Die" with its sorrow of love gone wrong and the "Dreams of Rosemary," a soon-to-be classic prison song.

Ron's mandolin work is always full of verve and his instrumental

Billsville is a swingy tribute to the father of bluegrass, Bill Monroe. Charlie wrote *Don't Blame Me*, a story of the parting of ways with some high-gear banjo work from Phil Bostic and the lean, clean dobro sound of guest Rob Ickes. Mike wrote another instrumental, *Lost in Nashville* which showcases fiddle, mandolin and banjo. Their gospel quartet in *Lord, Lift Me Up* is an album highlight and features Joe Ash taking the lead vocal. There's a lot to like in this album, and this is sure to be fan favorite.

RECORDING REVIEWS

Endless Line

Tim Stafford

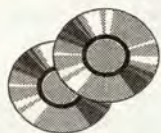
FGM Records
PO Box 2160
Pulaski, VA 24301
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www.fgmrecords.com

Song list: *Cold Harbor, Rider on the Endless Line, The Kid, Methodist Preacher, Bad Reputation, Mamma Llama, Danville Girl, Obsession, Rain, Indigo Blue, Holiday on Mission Street, If Only for a Day, If I Had the Money, I Would Ride That Train, The Reason.*

By Brenda Hough

Tim Stafford is primarily known for his role as guitar player and singer in the Blue Highway band, but he has also been with Dusty Miller and Alison Krauss and Union Station. His guitar playing in all the bands have a fluid, flowing style that were very supportive of the vocals and on this solo album, he has a chance to showcase his own vocals and songs as well as his fine lead playing. An excellent example on this album is Tim's song, *The Kid*, with its story of William Bonney sung on the album by John Cowan.

Obsession is a lovely, flowing guitar piece embellished with the fine cello playing of Rushad Eggleston. *Indigo Blue* has the fresh sound of altered guitar tunings and Tim is joined by Ron Stewart on banjo, Jim Van Cleve on fiddle, and Adam Steffey on mandolin. The fingerstyle *Holiday on Mission Street* and *The Reason* are evocative moody pieces and show Tim's skill on solo guitar. Tim's voice is a cross between Gordon Lightfoot and Bob Dylan and he gets growly on *Rider on an Endless Line* and *Danville Girl*. A great solo album by one of flatpicking's top guitarists.



The Thief

The David Thom Band
(2004)

Swollen Records
(SW84649)
415-499-8466
www.thedtb.com

Songs: *Stone Walls And Steel Bars, Rowan's Run, Ship Of Fools, I Found A Way, Sarah Jane, Fire On The Mountain, When My Blue Moon Turns To Gold Again, The Thief, I Guess I'll Go On Dreamin', God Guide Our Leader's Hand, Blue And Lonesome, Lauren's Lullaby, Memories Of Mother And Dad.*

Personnel: David Thom – guitar, mandolin, vocals; Andy Shaw – banjo, baritone vocals; Mike Tatar, Jr. – fiddle, dobro, tenor vocals; Jon

Mask – mandolin, baritone vocals; Joe Ash – bass; Mary Shaw – bass; Kathy Kallick – tenor and high baritone vocal; David Grisman – mandolin; Sam Grisman – bass; Jim Nunnally – guitar.

By Rob Shotwell

This is possibly the strongest set produced by David Thom and band to date. He and his venerable cohorts shift effortlessly between the contemporary, traditional and gospel styles of bluegrass without ever losing their identifiable sound. This is another great singer and group that seem to be flying under the national bluegrass radar.

Thom's own instrumental *Rowan's Run* receives some crystal clear noting from banjo man Andy Shaw, and Thom and guest David Grisman trade energetic rides. Grisman and Thom display even more interesting phrasing in Thom's and Shaw's ode to heartbreak, *The Thief*, and Kathy Kallick sharpens up *I Guess I'll Go On Dreamin'* and *God Guide Our Leader's Hand* with her crystalline harmonies vocals.

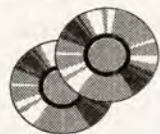
While not out of character for a Grateful Dead tune, *Ship Of Fools* comes in a little long at five minutes plus. The band melds the shift between the minor chord bluesy strains of the verse to the pristine major chord harmonies on the chorus.

The band dips back into their forte with Tatar's exuberant version of *Fire On The Mountain* and the outstanding traditional sound of *I Found A Way*. The tight, balanced harmonies

of Andy Shaw and Jon Mask enhance Thom's mountain-sounding vocal. Shaw's banjo work in combination with Mike Tatar Jr.'s fiddle provides a rich sound. They leap from the traditional to the more contemporary ring of *Sarah Jane*; Shaw throws in some bouncy single-stringing on the banjo, and his tenor almost overmatches Thom's affecting lead vocal.

Thom takes a few liberties with old country standard *When My Blue Moon Turns To Gold Again* with the band providing a great bluegrass treatment. Founding member Jon Mask has returned and his excellent mandolin is the foundation for the Hank Williams-Bill Monroe composition (their only joint effort) *Blue And Lonesome*.

Jim Nunnally, in addition to combining a slam-dunk cross-picked and flat-picked guitar solo on *Memories Of Mother And Dad*, makes his greatest contribution to this project with his stellar co-production (along with Thom). There is a quality imbued within the arrangements and execution that shows listeners that the band has leapt to the next level. Again demonstrating that their forte remains within the traditional sound, Thom's vocal matched by Tatar's tenor on *Memories* navigate the dips and bends of blues inflection with ease. Thom and band have created not just a treasure of a recording here, but the promise for future excellence.

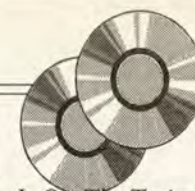


Bluegrass Express

Various Artists

Rounder Records
One Camp Street
Cambridge, MA 02140
©2004
www.rounderrecords.com

Song List: *Riding That Midnight Train, Lonesome Whistle Blues, Passing of the Train, I'm Blue I'm Lonesome, Train Forty-Five, Wreck of the Old 97, Freight Train, Long Train of Fools, Freight Train Boogie, Lonesome Railroad, Reuben, Mr.*



Engineer, Blame It On The Train, gospel Train, Bluegrass Express.

By Brenda Hough

The train is a powerful image in bluegrass, and this album has a collection of 15 classics from groups such as Jim and Jesse, the Osborne Brothers, J.D. Crowe and Ralph Stanley and the Clinch Mountain Boys. The title cut, *Bluegrass Express*, is done by the Osbornes with their trademark harmonies and driving banjo and fiddle sound.

Continued on B-12

Northern California Bluegrass Society's



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a monthly bluegrass concert series in Santa Cruz

www.otteropry.com

Saturday, October 9th 7:30PM

\$13 adv/ \$15 door

a Hillbilly Hootenanny!

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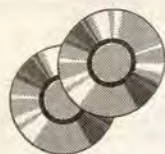
Seedy Otter Productions 831-338-0618

RECORDING REVIEWS

Continued from B-11

Trains seem to go with bluegrass; the journey away or return to home or heaven was often on a train and the "lonesome" whistle of the train was perfect for a soaring tenor voice or a long drawn fiddle note. Other instruments mimic the train sound: Rob Ickes and Jerry Douglas team up for a high-powered dobro sound on *Reuben*. Jimmy Martin's *Train Forty Five* has Paul Craft on banjo and Paul Williams on mandolin and the duo pump out the most spirited instrumental on the album.

Jim and Jesse put the bluegrass spin on Elizabeth Cotten's *Freight Train*. Rhonda Vincent's band speed up the banjo and mourn the *Passing of the Train*, while Lynn Morris joins the *Long Train of Fools*. Even the master of bluegrass, Bill Monroe, wrote a train song with Hank Williams — *I'm Blue, I'm Lonesome*. Another *Freight Train* is the *Freight Train Boogie* featuring Tony Rice and Don Reno on guitars and vocals and the Reno brothers on mandolin, banjo and bass. Rounder has other collections of train songs so if you've got "engineer-wanna-be" friends, here's a great gift and introduction to bluegrass.



Bluegrass Number 1's Various Artists

Rounder Records
One Camp Street
Cambridge, MA 02140
©2004
www.rounder.com

Song list: *Lonesome Wind Blues*, *We're Stepping Out Tonight*, *Who Will Watch The Home Place?*, *Thirty Years of Farming*, *New Fool*, *Waiting for You*, *The Bramble and the Rose*, *Riding the Danville Pike*, *Is The Grass Any Bluer*, *Carry Me Across the Mountain*, *Bed by the Window*, *Duncan and Brady*, *Mama's Hand*, *Grapes on the Vine*, *Tall Pines*, *The Cold Hard Facts*, *So Long So Wrong*, *I've Never Been So Lonesome*.

By Brenda Hough

The popularity of the "O Brother" movie has sent many music lovers in search of bluegrass and this collection of Rounder "hits" certainly would be a good introduction to the depth and quality of contemporary bluegrass. Each of the artists on the album have developed styles that may lean towards the traditional, country or folk stylings, but the common denominator for all the songs is a heartfelt desire to communicate a story about life.

Some of the songs feature solo leaders with poignant stories to tell. Laurie Lewis sings of the leaving of "home place" and James King leaves the land after "thirty years of farming." But for every departure, there's a return. "Tall Pines" is also from Laurie Lewis and James King's "Bed by the Window" is the tale of two men in a nursing home who look back towards the happier times that they can see outside the window. No collection of voices would be without Del McCoury's soaring lonesome and blue tenor and his *Cold Hard Facts* and *We're Steppin' Out Tonight* are fine examples.

But bluegrass also has a band sound. Rhonda Vincent's band shows the strong blend of voices and instruments in *Lonesome Wind Blues* and they also sing a tribute to Bill Monroe in *Is The Grass Any Bluer?* The hard-driving rhythm sound of bluegrass can be found in Blue Highway's *Riding the Danville Pike* and the Johnson Mountain Boys' *Duncan and Brady*. Rounder has been carefully recording bluegrass music for over thirty years and this is a great collection of straight-ahead and contemporary bluegrass.



Randy Waller

Lendel Records
9188 James Madison Hwy.
Warrenton, VA 20186
©2004
www.lendelrecords.com

Song list: *This Ol' Cowboy*, *Love's Tombstone*, *Ballad of Curtis Loew*, *The Vision*, *Daddy's Old Guitar*, *Give It Up or Let Me Go*, *Little Red Shoes*, *Old Rugged Cross*, *Should've Took That Train*, *Daddy's Need to Grow Up Too*, *Blue, Blue Morning*, *Who's Sad and Lonely Now*, *A Sad Song Don't Care Whose Heart It Breaks*, *Rough and Ready*.

By Brenda Hough

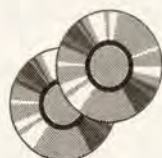
Randy Waller is the son of the Country Gentlemen mainstay Charlie Waller. Charlie is known for his fine rhythm guitar work played on a vintage Martin guitar and his warm, emotion-packed vibrant vocals. Randy started his musical career playing in country bands and his return to bluegrass as a "prodigal son" was celebrated with the gift of his father's treasured 1937 herringbone Martin guitar.

His country and rock influences are apparent in the album. His voice has an emotional depth and he has great skill telling a story. There are some reminders of Charlie's voice and Randy's version of *Old Rugged Cross* cuts into the deep core of the song. The

opening cut, *This Ol' Cowboy* from the singing of Marshall Tucker, has the road-weary sound of a man who has traveled many a road. *Curtis Loew* highlights Randy's own fine guitar playing and the talents of Sammy Shelor on banjo, Jimmy Gaudreau on mandolin, Aubrey Haynie on fiddle and Mike Moore on bass. *Give It Up or Let Me Go* is a Bonnie Raitt song sung with an appealing bluesy growl and Randy's resonator guitar matched with Sammy's banjo.

But Randy's talents don't end with singing songs written by other folks. He has several original tunes on the album as well. *Daddy's Old Guitar* is a tribute to his Dad's music with many melodic riffs played on the treasured guitar that now belongs to Randy. *Little Red Shoes* is a bouncy tale of a father's delight in his daughter's dancing shoes.

Welcome back to bluegrass Randy! You've done your father proud with this debut album. =



The Beginning Evan Ward

Evan Ward Music
www.evanward.com

List of Songs: *Shenandoah Valley Breakdown*; *Jesse James*; *Dickenson County Breakdown*; *Danny Boy*; *Foggy Mountain Chimes*; *Will There Be Any Stars In My Crown*; *Farewell Blues*; *Lonesome Pine Breakdown*; *I Ain't Gonna Work Tomorrow*; *The Beginning*; *I Don't Love Nobody*; *Bending The Strings*.

The Musicians: Evan Ward — Banjo; Glen Duncan — Fiddles, guitar (tracks 4, 6); Ray Craft — Guitar, vocal track 9; Rob Ickes — Dobro; Dennis Crouch — Acoustic Bass; Mandolin — Jesse McReynolds (tracks 4, 6, 11, 12), Ronnie McCoury (tracks 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9), Don Rigsby (track 2), Glen Duncan (track 10).

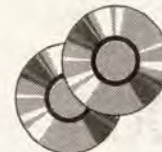
By Al Lubanes

This is a CD put out to showcase the talents of a young bluegrass banjo player named Evan Ward. He is sixteen years old now, but he was only fourteen when this CD was recorded! Despite his youth, Evan is a fairly accomplished bluegrass banjo picker. He is also listed as co-producer of the project. The liner notes, pictures and graphics are tastefully done. The project was recorded at Skaggs Place and Sonic Arts Productions, both in Tennessee.

Evan's notes describe his entry into the bluegrass world as starting with the traditional, as opposed to the progressive, form of the music. And indeed, listening

to his tracks, that seems to be true. The banjo playing seems highly influenced by Earl Scruggs. However, to my ear, most of the banjo breaks sound like one Scruggs lick strung after another. I didn't hear any Evan in there. I just heard him repeating what Earl had to say. His playing is very precise, and there is nary a mistake to be heard. But because he was staying so close to another person's style, the banjo playing seems to lack heart. For this project, Evan is accompanied by a number of other more seasoned musicians who do know how to put heart into their music. In this setting, and I'm sure quite unintentionally, the others seem to be showcased rather than Evan.

The title of this CD is "The Beginning", and that is highly appropriate. This recording is a snapshot of Evan Ward at the beginning of his musical career. He is certainly to be congratulated for reaching this level of skill, and for going through the process of recording and producing a CD. It was probably a great learning experience. Recordings like this gain in emotional value for the performers in later years, when they look back and say, "Yup, that's what I sounded like back then". As for Evan, I hope he goes out and finds his heart, and learns how to express it in his music while retaining the influences of the old masters. Now that will be something we will all want to hear. Keep an ear out for this fellow in the years to come.



Sittin' Here Pickin' The Blues

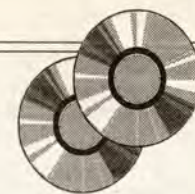
Doc and Merle Watson

Rounder Records
One Camp Street
Cambridge, MA 02130
©2004
www.rounder.com

Song list: *Freight Train Blues*, *Hobo Bill's Last Ride*, *Mississippi Heavy Water Blues*, *Did You Hear John Hurt*, *John Henry/Worried Blues*, *I'm A Stranger Here*, *Talking to Casey*, *Blue Ridge Mountain Blues*, *Any Old Time*, *Sittin' Here Pickin' The Blues*, *Stormy Weather*, *How Long Blues*, *Honey Babe Blues*, *St. Louis Blues*, *Carroll County Blues*, *California Blues*, *Going to Chicago Blues*, *Jailhouse Blues*, *Windy and Warm*, *Deep River Blues*.

By Brenda Hough

Many a guitar player has been inspired by the guitar playing and singing of Doc Watson. This collection of songs from Rounder is a grand collection of 20 songs recorded by Doc and his late son Merle, and includes some of his classic blues recordings from the



Flying Fish label as well. Merle Watson adds some wonderful embellishments on slide guitar to Doc's baritone and innovative guitar playing. Each song has its own story and Doc comments in the liner notes: "whether it's an old-timey thing or whether it's jazz, I'm liable to latch on to the melody if it fits my notion."

The songs come from many sources including recordings that Doc's family and visitors have brought to him. Jimmie Rodgers' popularity spread his songs all over the country and Doc includes *Hobo Bill's Last Ride*, *California Blues*, and *Any Old Time* with a scat singing break. The heavy rhythm of the blues augmented with the swirl of the slide guitar are combined in *Barbecue Bob's Mississippi Heavy Water Blues* and *Talking with Casey*, written by T. Michael Coleman. Doc plays the harmonica in *I'm a Stranger Here*, a song by Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee. Doc also gives warm renditions of the classic *St. Louis Blues* and *Stormy Weather* that will have you hitting the repeat button. Sam Bush and Mark O'Connor add some inspired fiddle playing to the songs and Sam also adds mandolin to *Hobo Bill's Last Ride*.

Doc Watson has often been called an American musical treasure and these tracks with Merle Watson are perfect for Watson fans old and new.



Traditional Bluegrass The Vern Williams Band

(2004)
Arhoolie Records
CD-514
10341 San Pablo Ave.
El Cerrito, CA 94530
www.arhoolie.com

Songs: *Roll On Buddy*; *Close By*; *Montana Cowboy*; *I'm On My Way Back To The Old Home*; *Happy I'll Be*; *Live An Let Live*; *Bald Knob*; *Arkansas*; *When The Golden Leaves Begin To Fall*; *I Hear A Choo Choo Coming*; *Can't You Hear Me Calling*; *Traveling The Highway Home*; *Love Me Darling Just Tonight*; *In Despair*; *I'm Going Back To Old Kentucky*; *Darling Nellie Across The Sea*; *Pig In A Pen*.

Personnel: Vern Williams — mandolin, vocals; Del Williams — guitar, vocals; Keith Little — banjo, vocals; Ed Neff — fiddle; Kevin Thompson — bass.

RECORDING REVIEWS

By Rob Shotwell

There aren't enough good things that can be said about Mr. Vern Williams and his impact within the historical context of California bluegrass; Vern IS California bluegrass history when it comes down to it. He and Ray Park are the equivalent of first-generation California bluegrassers after their separate migration from home state Arkansas. During their teen years Vern and Ray lived about 15 miles apart on the Big Piney River in Johnson County, Arkansas and somehow never met. When each moved to the Stockton area in the mid-fifties, they finally hooked up and began picking and performing together around 1958. The rest is not just history but the beginning of California's bluegrass heritage, the foundation of which was additionally laid by folks like Logan Lamb, Scott Hambly, Pete Berg, Butch Waller, Sandy Rothman, Herb Pederson, Rick Shubb, and including banjoist Luther Riley and guitarist Clyde Williamson, with whom Vern and Ray recorded for Starday Records. California bands that followed from around the 1970's, such as High Country, Good Ol' Persons, Side-saddle, Done Gone, Jack Sadler, Grant Street and others, knew all about Vern and Ray's authenticity and dedication to the sound of bluegrass.

These live recorded performances capture The Vern Williams Band at the 1982 and 1988 CBA Father's Day Bluegrass Festivals in Grass Valley (nine tracks), in the studios of Berkeley's KPFA-

FM during another 1982 performance (four tracks), and three tracks from a Vancouver, British Columbia performance in 1984. The sheer strut and power of the music produced by Vern and this 70's - 80's era band is captured well on this collection.

The trio harmony of Vern, son Delbert Williams and Keith Little was intertwined in a fashion that became common to them; Vern would sing lead on the verse, switching to high tenor on choruses with Del carrying the lead, and then back for the next verse. The resulting sound was electrifying, and is preserved here in crystal clear fashion. Then and now, bluegrassers everywhere (especially California 'grassers) have been inspired to aim for Vern's higher-than-high tenor, that unmistakable traditional style, and his near-perfect phrasing.

Montana Cowboy, which Bill Monroe loved to listen to Vern sing, features Vern's trademark near-falsetto, with Little and Neff providing perfect backup and excellent breaks. The Monroe-Williams respect ran two directions, with Vern including three cuts here from the Father of Bluegrass, including a joyous *I'm On My Way Back To The Old Home*. These versions are of vintage quality and nearly convince the listener that it's Saturday night on an Arkansas dance hall floor.

Fiddler Ed Neff leads off many of the tunes (especially *Can't You Hear Me Calling*) as if he were one of the Bluegrass

Boys, and guest fiddler Mike Eisler twins a sweet sound with Neff on *Close By*, and Vern's soaring and breaking tenor redefines the high lonesome sound.

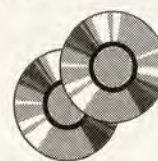
It's great to hear Keith Little sing in a hard-edged bluegrass voice, and his five-string work is strong throughout. He sings a great lead on Ralph Stanley's *I Hear A Choo Choo Coming*, and we are treated to his honest-to-goodness, steam-powered, barn-burning bluegrass picking on opening cut *Roll On Buddy*. Del's heart-rending rendition of *Love Me Darling Just Tonight* portends his future with True Blue (alongside Neff) with Dad Vern providing an ethereal tenor harmony. Thompson's bass work is a little more resonant on the pieces recorded in the controlled environs of KPFA studios, but is rock solid in all performances.

Vern and Ray's composition *Happy I'll Be* (not to be confused with Flatt and Scruggs' *So Happy I'll Be*) incorporates the well-known gospel call-and-answer counterpoint style, giving Del and Keith plenty to do in a style that usually incorporates four voices. To wrap up the CD, we're taken back to the 1982 Grass Valley festival with a definitive version of *Pig In A Pen* and a reminder of how the audiences were accustomed to responding to Vern Williams.

The liner notes include producer Tom Diamant's 2003 interview where Vern describes growing up in Arkansas and meeting up with Ray Park in California. Vern's career is also the subject of a recently completed video interview with J.D. Rhynes which was commissioned

by the International Bluegrass Music Museum in Owensboro, Kentucky for their permanent historical file.

This generous 16-cut CD is not just for Vern Williams' fans, and is essential to further our appreciation of those who played, broadened and distinguished the California bluegrass music scene. This project is so good it would be easy to commit at least 200 words per song in praise and review, and the message would still fall short. The far better option for bluegrass fans, whether familiar with Vern Williams' legacy or not, is to purchase this CD with all due haste.



Old Roads, New Journeys Wolfe Brothers

Copper Creek Records
PO Box 3161
Roanoke, VA 24015
©2004
www.coopercreekrecords.com

Song list: *Diamond Joe*, *Democratic Donkey*, *Clark Hill Waltz*, *Grey Eagle*, *Gal in the Galax Jail*, *Natural Bridge Blues*, *When I Can Read My Titles Clear*, *I'm Too Young To Marry*, *Honey I'm Ramblin' Away*, *White River*, *On the Other Side of the Mountain*, *New Gal*, *Hills of Mexico*, *If I Lose*, *Jedediah*, *Headin' Up Elk Creek*.

By Brenda Hough

The Wolfe Brothers hail from the hills of Virginia and their songs reflect their old-timey roots. The band started in the 70s with founding member Dale Morris still providing a rollicking banjo background to all the songs. Dale's sprightly banjo adds a bounce and positive energy to the band sound. Jerry Correll's fine fiddle also is an important part of the band sound and he is able to get a warm woody tone in the slow *Clark Hill Waltz* and lively dance rhythms in the instrumental classic, *Grey Eagle*. Jerry and Dale are joined by his Jerry's wife, Donna Correll, on bass and vocals with Casey Hash on guitar and vocals. The generous 16 song selection features some seldom performed classics and some updated versions of traditional songs.

Dale and Casey pair up in duets, *Diamond Joe*, and one from the Delmore Brothers, *Honey, I'm Ramblin' Away*. Donna is from Grayson County, Virginia and her family spent many Sundays at local singings. Her haunting version of the hymn, *When I Read My Titles Clear*, was inspired by the singing of Ola Belle Reed. The group revives the whimsical *I'm Too Young To Marry* from the pen of Jimmy Driftwood, the political *Democratic Donkey*, and the hilarious *Gal in the Galax Jail*. Their title choice of *Old Roads - New Journeys* is apt description of their musical journey - bringing back the music of the past with keen awareness of tradition and new enthusiasm.

Summergrass 2004 -- a great festival and location

By Lisa Burns

Wow! What a lineup, what a venue, what a festival! I just came back from Summergrass, a new festival held in Vista, California, about one hour north of the City of San Diego. The event was jointly sponsored by the San Diego Bluegrass Society and the San Diego North County Bluegrass and Folk Club, and it is a real winner. I'll tell you all about it in this article.

The Venue

Summergrass is held at the Antique Gas and Steam Engine Museum in Vista. I wasn't sure what to expect - would pickers be scattered through stuffy displays of old boilers and greasy gears? Nope! The feel of the festival grounds is not so different than that of a county fairground, except that there are various large OLD tractors and other farm machinery scattered about. Lots of the old tractors work, too, and the museum members demonstrate them at some of the dinner and lunch breaks.

And the stage...Wow! The museum stage was recently com-

pletely rebuilt by students from nearby Mt. Palomar College. Built from huge beams without the use of any nails, this stage looks and sounds better than any other I've played on or seen. It is a work of art and built to last.

Did I mention that the front of the stage was decorated with palms and surfboards? Hey, we're Pickin' In Paradise!

The Lineup

The SDBS and the North County folks did not skimp on the lineup. Highlights included some staples of the So. Cal Bluegrass scene: the Witcher Brothers (with both Gabe and Michael present), Bluegrass Etc., and the Laurel Canyon Ramblers. But there were some real surprises too - Fragment from the Czech and Slovak Republics, Bearfoot from Alaska, Ron Spears and Within Tradition from Nevada. For the folks like me who like a little variety with their traditional bluegrass, there was Chris Hillman and Bluegrass Etc., which also included Herb

Pedersen, and Tim Flannery, a former San Diego Padre (baseball) player turned bluegrass picker and singer songwriter. Finally, there were some favorite local bands, the 7th Day Buskers, Silverado, Lighthouse and newcomers Gone Tomorrow.

One thing I really liked was that the lineup was only scheduled to 10pm on Friday and Saturday nights - lots of time for jamming!

The Music

There were many great magical moments on the mainstage: Fragment proved that real bluegrass can exist in Eastern Europe. The great young band from Alaska, Bearfoot, mixed some New Grass and Blues with their traditional standards and really knocked me out. But the moment that I will always remember was Chris Hillman, Herb eon and Bluegrass Etc's acoustic performance of "Turn, Turn, Turn." Ok, maybe it wasn't strictly bluegrass, but it was still very special to this Folkie turned Bluegrasser.

The Vendors

The museum members staff permanent food booths serving burritos, burgers and other treats for very reasonable prices.



The audience area at Summergrass 2004.

Photo by Ken Burgess

Coffee and homemade baked goods are available in the bakery.

There were event T-shirts which could be made to order right on site, as well as temporary tattoos and facepainting. I saw several banjo tattoos! I bought a beautiful western skirt by Pinto Annie and was tempted by some jewelry vendors. Tired pickers could perk up with massages and never miss a beat of the main stage perfor-

mances.

The Workshops

There were some great workshops including a Get Acquainted Jam, Contest Fiddling, and Vocal techniques. Some of the more unique workshops included one I helped with, an Instrument Petting Zoo. This session allowed children of all ages to get hands on experience with instruments. I think I converted at least one little boy of 40 or so to upright bass!

Continued on B-14

CBA Calendar of Bluegrass, Old-time and Gospel Events

BAND PERFORMANCES

- 10/4/04 — **Homespun Rowdy** will perform from 7:30 – 10:30 p.m. at Amnesia, 853 Valencia St. (betw. 19th & 20th), San Francisco, CA. For information, visit www.homespunrowdy.com; email info@homespunrowdy.com; or call (415) 970-8336.
- 10/4/2004 — **Bean Creek** will perform from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Phil's Fish Market and Eatery on Sandholt Road, Moss Landing, CA. For information, visit philfishmarket.com or call 831-375-2975.
- 10/6/04 — **Victor Barnes Band** will perform at The Music Store, 66 West Portal, San Francisco, CA. For information, call (415) 664-2044 or visit www.AmericanRootsMusicShow.com.
- 10/6/04 — **Whiskey Brothers** will perform from 7:30 – 10:30 p.m. at Amnesia, 853 Valencia St. (between 19th & 20th), San Francisco, CA. For information, visit www.homespunrowdy.com; email info@homespunrowdy.com or call (415) 970-8336.
- 10/6/2004 — **Stoney Mountain Ramblers!** will perform from 7 to 10 pm at Towles Cafe, 1401 Burlingame Ave., Burlingame, CA. For information, visit <http://www.towlescafe.com/> or call (650) 344-1462.
- 10/7/04 — **Stoney Mountain Ramblers** will perform at Half Moon Bay Brewing Co., 390 Capistrano Ave., Princeton-By-the-Sea. For information, call 650-728-2739, or visit <http://www.hmbbrewingco.com/index.html>.
- 10/7/2004 — **Shut-Ins** will perform from 8-11 p.m. at the Prince of Wales Pub (home of the Habanero Hamburger), 106 E. 25th Avenue, San Mateo, CA. For information, visit <http://www.theshutins.com/> or call 650.574.9723.
- 10/7/2004 — **Shut-Ins** will perform from 8 to 11 p.m. at Prince of Wales Pub, 106 E. 25th Avenue, San Mateo, CA. For information, call 650-574-9723 or visit <http://www.theshutins.com/>.
- 10/8/04 — **Acme String Ensemble** will perform at 7 p.m. for a House of Bluegrass concert at Maxfield's, 398 Dolores, San Francisco, CA. For information, call 415-255-6859 or visit www.AmericanRootsMusicShow.com.
- 10/9/2004 — **The Min-Tones** will perform from 7:30 – 10 p.m. at Mr. Toots Coffee House, 221 The Esplanade, Capitola, CA. For information, call 831-475-3879.
- 10/9/2004 — **Harmony Grits** will be performing from 3-6:30 p.m. at San Gregorio General Store, Highway 84 and Stage Road, San Gregorio, CA. For information, visit <http://www.sangregoriostore.com/> or call 650-726-0565.
- 10/9/04 — **Highway One** will be performing from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Mountain Parks Association Lobster Feed at Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park. For more information call (415) 977-5720.
- 10/10/04 — **Earthquake Country** will perform at The Music Store, 66 West Portal, San Francisco, CA. For information, call (415) 664-2044 or visit www.AmericanRootsMusicShow.com.
- 10/11/2004 — **Courthouse Ramblers** will perform at 7 p.m. at Phil's Fish Market and Eatery on Sandholt Road, Moss Landing, CA. For information, visit philfishmarket.com or call 831-375-2975.
- 10/11/2004 — **Courthouse Ramblers** will perform at 7 p.m. at Phil's Fish Market and Eatery on Sandholt Road, Moss Landing, CA. Bluegrass picking party starts at 8 p.m. For information, visit philfishmarket.com or call 831-375-2975.
- 10/13/2004 — **Stoney Mountain Ramblers!** will perform from 7 to 10 pm at Towles Cafe, 1401 Burlingame Ave., Burlingame, CA. For information, visit <http://www.towlescafe.com/> or call (650) 344-1462.
- 10/13/04 — **Poor Man's Whiskey**, 9 p.m. Bluegrass in Rio Nido, CA at the Rios, 15025 River Road (outside Guerneville on Russian River). Admission is \$5 per person. For information, call 707-869-8447, or visit www.AmericanRootsMusicShow.com.
- 10/13/04 — **The Del McCoury Band** will perform at 7 and 9 p.m. at The Palms, 13 Main St, Winters, CA. For information, call 530-795-1825.
- 10/15/2004 — **Squirrely String Band** will perform from 7-9:30 p.m. at Maxfield's House of Caffeine "House of Bluegrass", 398 Dolores Street, San Francisco, CA. For information, visit housegrass@hotmail.com or call 415-255-6859.

hotmail.com or call 415-255-6859.

10/17/04 — **Austin Lounge Lizards** will perform at the Freight and Salvage Coffeehouse, 1111 Addison St., in Berkeley, CA. For information call the Freight at 510-548-1761. For tickets, call 866-468-3399 or visit www.freightandsalvage.org.

10/17/04 — **Sleewoth's String Band** will perform at The Music Store, 66 West Portal, San Francisco, CA. For information, call (415) 664-2044 or visit www.AmericanRootsMusicShow.com.

10/18/2004 — **Homespun Rowdy** will perform from 7:30 to 10:30 pm at Amnesia, 853 Valencia St., San Francisco, CA. For information, call (415) 970-8336; email info@homespunrowdy.com, or visit www.homespunrowdy.com.

10/18/2004 — **Bean Creek** will perform from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Phil's Fish Market and Eatery on Sandholt Road, Moss Landing, CA. For information, visit philfishmarket.com or call 831-375-2975.

10/18/2004 — **Crosstown** will perform from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. at Phil's Fish Market and Eatery on Sandholt Road, Moss Landing, CA. For information, visit philfishmarket.com or call 831-375-2975.

10/20/04 — **Grassholics Anonymous** meets every Wednesday night at 9 p.m. at Rio's, 15025 River Road, Rio Nido, CA (outside Guerneville on the Russian River). For information, call (707) 869-8447.

10/20/2004 — **Lighthouse** will perform at the Golden Goose Coffee House, 10001 Maine Ave, Lakeside, CA. For information, visit www.waynerice.com/lhgigs.htm or call 619-390-1990.

10/20/2004 — **Whiskey Brothers** will perform at 9 p.m. at the Albatross Pub, 1822 San Pablo Ave, Berkeley, CA. For information, visit www.albatrosspub.com or call 510-843-2473.

10/20/2004 — **Stoney Mountain Ramblers!** will perform from 7 to 10 pm at Towles Cafe, 1401 Burlingame Ave., Burlingame, CA. For information, visit <http://www.towlescafe.com/> or call (650) 344-1462.

10/21/04 — **Bruce Molsky** will perform at the Freight and Salvage Coffeehouse, 1111 Addison St., in Berkeley, CA. For information call the Freight at 510-548-1761. For tickets, call 866-468-3399 or visit www.freightandsalvage.org.

10/21/2004 — **David Thom Band** will perform at 9:30 p.m. at Cafe Amsterdam, 23 Broadway, Fairfax, CA. For information, call 415-256-8020.

10/22/04 — **Poor Man's Whiskey** will perform at 7 p.m. for a House of Bluegrass concert at Maxfield's, 398 Dolores, San Francisco, CA. For information, call 415-255-6859 or visit www.AmericanRootsMusicShow.com.

10/24/04 — **Stoney Mountain Ramblers** will perform at The Music Store, 66 West Portal, San Francisco, CA. For information, call (415) 664-2044 or visit www.AmericanRootsMusicShow.com.

10/25/2004 — **Courthouse Ramblers** will perform at 7 p.m. at Phil's Fish Market and Eatery on Sandholt Road, Moss Landing, CA. For information, visit philfishmarket.com or call 831-375-2975.

10/26/2004 — **Sibling Brothers** will perform at 7 p.m. at Towles Cafe, 1401 Burlingame Ave., Burlingame, CA. For information, call (650) 344-1462.

10/27/04 — **Grassholics Anonymous** meets every Wednesday night at 9 p.m. at Rio's, 15025 River Road, Rio Nido, CA (outside Guerneville on the Russian River). For information, call (707) 869-8447.

10/29/04 — **Wire-N-Wood** will perform at 7 p.m. for a House of Bluegrass concert at Maxfield's, 398 Dolores, San Francisco, CA. For information, call 415-255-6859 or visit www.AmericanRootsMusicShow.com.

10/30/2004 — **Fog Valley Drifters** will perform at 9 p.m. at the Ocean Thunder Bar on Lighthouse Ave. in Monterey, CA. For information, email juddb@fosterfarms.com or call 209-667-7279.

FESTIVALS AND CONCERTS

10/2/04 — **Jesse Winchester** in concert at the Palms Playhouse, 13 Main Street, Winters, CA. For information or tickets, visit www.palmsplayhouse.com or call 530-758-8058 or 530-795-1825.

10/2/2004 — **23rd Annual Morro Bay Harbor Festival** in Morro Bay, CA. The festival draws over 50,000 people to see music and events on 4 main stages. Bluegrass headliners sponsored by KPIG 94.9FM and Radio Central Coast: The Chris Cairns Band Sunday 11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. and The Jim Lauderdale Band - Sunday Oct 3rd 1:15 - 2:45 p.m. For information, call Cheryl Wells at 805-772-0328.

10/2/2004 — **2nd Annual Rocklin Gospel Bluegrass Festival** at the Finnish Temperance Hall in Rocklin, CA. This is an All Gospel event. For information, call Terry Miller at 916-257-3717 or email tmiller@ricex.com.

10/2/04 — **21st Annual Fiddle & Banjo Contest** in the gazebo at Columbia State Park presented by the Columbia Chamber of Commerce. Categories include fiddle, banjo, guitar, mandolin, vocal, & miscellaneous. There is a \$7.00 entry fee per category. The grand prize for this event is 1/4 ounce of gold! First prize in each category is \$50, second prize \$25, and third prize a \$20 gift certificate. Come and let your bluegrass or old-time musical talent shine; it will pay you back a little for all those hours of practice. Sign-ups start at 9 a.m.; contest starts at 10 a.m. sharp. Don't forget your lawn chairs, hat, & sunscreen. This event is free to the listening / viewing public.

10/2/04 – 10/3/04 — **The 4th Annual Willow Creek Bluegrass Festival** will still be held at the North Fork Recreation Center, just east of the town of North Fork, California, on Willow Creek, between Fresno and Yosemite National Park. Featuring: Boys in the Woods, Reno & Sheila McCormick, Baloney Creek, The String Bandits, The Smiley Mountain Band, The Kathleen Lane Band, Tocanto, Sugar Pine, and A Full Deck Duo. Festival hours are 10 a.m. until 10 p.m. on Saturday, and 10 a.m. until 7 p.m. on Sunday. For information or tickets, contact Mike Knapp, P.O. Box 550, North Fork, CA 93643; e-mail knapp@netptc.net; call (559) 877-3474 or visit

www.thecraftfair.org.

10/2/04 – 10/3/04 — **"Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival"** from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. in Speedway Meadows, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA. Bands include: Hazel Dickens, Ralph Stanley, Del McCoury Band, Hot Rize, Mt. Heart, Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder, Laurie Lewis & Tom Rozum & Guest House, Dale Ann Bradley & Coon Creek, Ginny Hawker, Tim O'Brien, Perfect Strangers, The Gourds, Gillian Welch & David Rawlings, Dry Branch Fire Squad, Old Crow Medicine Show, John Prine, Steve Earl & the Bluegrass Dukes, Buddy & Julie Miller, Robert Earl Keen, Alison Brown, Nick Lowe, The Waybacks with Darol Anger, many others. For information, visit <http://www.strictlybluegrass.com>.

10/4/2004 – 10/10/2004 – **IBMA World of Bluegrass** at the Galt House Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky. Schedule and registration materials are now available. For more information, contact the IBMA office at 1-888-438-4262; email info@ibma.org or website: www.ibma.org.

10/8/04 – 10/9/04 – **15th Annual Bluegrass Festival** at the Clark County Fairgrounds in Logandale, NV. Sponsored by the Southern Nevada Bluegrass Association. Featuring: the James King Band, The Chapmans, Bluegrass Patriots, Arizona Tradition, Silverado, the Lampkins Family, Around the Bent and Guest Band. Emcee will be Marty Warburton, and sound by Old Blue. The festival also has a Nevada Style Band Scramble, jams, children's events, food and craft vendors and RV and tent camping. For information, contact Al Bess, 6045 Harrison Dr. #2, Las Vegas, NV 89120 or call 702-564-3320.

10/9/2004 — **2nd Annual International Jug Band Festival** in Minnie Provis Park, Sutter Creek, CA. Free!!! All Day from 10 a.m. 'til we drop! For information, call Wayne Hagen at 530-400-8882 or visit www.jugfest.org.

10/13/2004 — **Del McCoury Band** in concert at the Palms Playhouse, 13 Main Street, Winters, CA. For information or tickets, visit www.palmsplayhouse.com or call 530-758-8058 or 530-795-1825.

10/15/04 – 10/17/04 – **CBA Fall Campout, concert and annual election** at the Colusa County Fairgrounds, 1303 10th Street (Hwy. 20), Colusa, CA. Friday evening barbecue and potluck followed by a concert featuring The James King Band. Election held until 2 p.m. on Saturday. Evening dessert potluck and annual membership meeting. Cost is \$18 per unit per night for camping. Limited RV hookups, lots of grass for tent campers. For information, call 916-989-0993 or email: sacbluegrass@comcast.net.

10/16/04 — **All-American Gospel Music Concert**, 6 pm, at the Sonora High School Auditorium in Sonora, CA. Opening will be a local female trio, Faithful, featuring traditional gospel with some country gospel.

Summergrass 2004

Continued from B-13

The Kid's Camp

I heard good reviews of the Kid's Bluegrass Camp, taught by Bearfoot. Cost was \$60 per child, with scholarships offered. There were more than 30 kids enrolled in this first time event, and they performed for festival attendees at a workshop on Sunday. Bearfoot provides a well-tested camp with complete curriculum—they teach at several Festivals across the country.

What's not to like?

The weather was great – in the low 80's during the day and pleasant at night. The jamming was great, with a lot of the folks from mainstage bands playing in the parking lots until late. The organization of the festival was top notch, in fact better than I have ever seen! This is a real feat for an event in its second year. For example, performers were given laminated ID with notes on the back about where to be when: e.g. 6pm Friday set, 3pm Saturday set, 10am workshop. Wow.

You could be a banjo player and still know where to go and what to do.

Ticket prices are reasonable: \$36 in advance, \$42 at the gate for 3 day tickets, plus \$40 for all weekend camping.

The only thing I didn't like – no showers on site. I solved this problem by staying in a nice local motel with special low rates for festival goers. The Festival committee is working to solve this problem for future events.

My hat is off to San Diego Bluegrass Society and Festival Chair, Mike Tatar Sr., Roger Gagos, the Festival Co-chair, North County Bluegrass and Folk Club President, Sandy Beesley and to Yvonne Tatar, who I know had a huge role as well. Great job, all.

The Summergrass Board looks forward to putting on another knockout Festival in 2005. Mark your calendars now!

CBA Calendar of Bluegrass, Old-time and Gospel Events

Other acts include The Herb Henry Family — straight Southern Gospel and Revised Standard Version (RSV), a Southern Gospel male quartet from Bakersfield. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 children under 12. This is a benefit for Mother Lode Christian School in Tuolumne.

10/22/2004 — Laurie Lewis and Tom Rozum in concert at the Palms Playhouse, 13 Main Street, Winters, CA. For information or tickets, visit www.palmsplayhouse.com or call 530-758-8058 or 530-795-1825.

10/23/2004 — Laurie Lewis and Tom Rozum in concert at 8 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 1667 Miramonte Ave., Mountain View, CA. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. and tickets are general admission. For more information, visit <http://www.rba.org/> or call 650-691-9982. Sponsored by Redwood Bluegrass Associates.

10/23/04 — 10/24/04 — 5th Annual Tucson Bluegrass Festival at the Pima County Fairgrounds, I-10 Exit 275, 10 miles south of Tucson, AZ. For information, contact Bonnie Lohman at 520-296-1231; email basslady@att.net or visit www.desertbluegrass.org.

NOVEMBER

11/6/2004 — Sidesaddle & Company in concert at the Yreka Community Theater, 810 N. Oregon St. in Yreka, CA. The concert starts at 7:30 p.m. Advance tickets will be \$8 for adults with tickets \$10 at the door. \$7 for 12 and under. Date of concert may be changed to Sept 11th. For information or tickets, call 530-842-1611 or email thebachs@snowcrest.net.

11/12/04 — 11/14/04 — CBA Veterans' Day Bluegrass Festival at the Yolo County Fairgrounds, 1125 East Street in Woodland, CA. Featuring the best in California Bluegrass Bands, including: True Blue, Acme String Ensemble, Cabin Fever, John Murphy's Carolina Special, Circle R Boys, Copper Canyon, Donner Mountain Bluegrass Band, Modern Hicks, Mossy Creek, Mountain Laurel, Sidesaddle & Co., and The Warblers. Other features are band scrambles, Kids on Stage, indoor jamming, camping and more. For information, contact Don Denison, P.O. Box 9, Wilseyville, CA 95257; call 209-293-1559 or email: dondbear@yahoo.com. There is an ad and ticket order form on page A 24 for our convenience.

11/12/04 — 11/14/04 — 25th Annual Four Corner States Bluegrass Festival at the Bowman Fairgrounds in Wickenburg, AZ. Featuring the Bluegrass Patriots, Hit & Run and Meridian. There will be special appearances by performers from the past 25 years, plus 13 competitive events. Sponsored by the Wickenburg Chamber of Commerce. For information, call 923-684-0977; email: information@wickenburgchamber.com or visit www.wickenburgchamber.com.

11/19/04 — 11/20/04 — 23rd Annual TSBA Land of Mark Twain Bluegrass Music Festival at the Hannibal Inn, Hannibal, Missouri. For information, call 573-853-4344 or email: edspray@marktwain.net.

11/19/2004 — Bob Paisley and the Southern Grass will be featured at an Otter Opry Concert at the United Methodist Church 250 California Street (between Bay and Laurel), Santa Cruz, CA. For information or tickets, call 831-338-0618; email mrvarner@ix.netcom.com or visit <http://www.otteropry.com>.

11/20/2004 — Bob Paisley and the Southern Grass in concert at 8 p.m. at

the First Presbyterian Church, 1667 Miramonte Ave., Mountain View, CA. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. and tickets are general admission. For more information, visit <http://www.rba.org/> or call 650-691-9982. Sponsored by Redwood Bluegrass Associates.

JANUARY

1/14/05 — 1/16/05 — 18th Annual Blythe Bluegrass Festival at the Colorado River Fairgrounds at 11995 Olive Lake Blvd. in Blythe, CA. Produced by the Blythe Area Chamber of Commerce. Featuring performances by Arizona Tradition, Borderline Bluegrass, Flinthill Special, Goldwing Express, John Reischman & the Jaybirds, Kenny & Amanda Smith Band, Lost Highway, the James King Band, the Liberty Bluegrass Boys and the U.S.

Navy Band Country Current. Other events include a National Bluegrass Band Playoff Competition, the 6th Annual Bluegrass Quilters Show, Pete's Husband-Calling Contest and more. Camping is available on site. Advance tickets are now on sale. For information or tickets, contact the Blythe Area Chamber of Commerce, 201 S. Broadway, Blythe, CA 92225; call 760-922-8166; email: blythebluegrass@yahoo.com or visit www.blytheareachamberofcommerce.com.

1/15/05 — Kathy Kallick Band along with Megan Lynch and Larry Chung in concert at 8 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 1667 Miramonte Ave., Mountain View, CA. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. and tickets are general admission. For more information, visit <http://www.rba.org/> or call 650-691-

9982. Sponsored by Redwood Bluegrass Associates.

FEBRUARY

2/11/04 — 2/13/04 — 5th Annual Bullhead-Laughlin Colorado River Bluegrass Festival, at Davis Camp (by the Laughlin Bridge), Bullhead City/Laughlin, AZ. Featuring: Mountain Heart, J.D. Crowe & The New South, the Lost and Found, Cherryholmes Family, Liberty Bluegrass, David Parmley & Continental Divide, Cliff Wagner & Old #7, Colorado River Boys, Just For Fun and Stone Creek. Camping is \$5 per night per unit. Admission is \$13 for adults; \$5 for ages 7-17; and children 6 and under are free. For information or tickets, call 928-768-5819 or 928-201-5819.

MARCH

3/12/05 — Mac Martin and the Dixie Travelers in concert at 8 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 1667 Miramonte Ave., Mountain View, CA. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. and tickets are general admission. For more information, visit <http://www.rba.org/> or call 650-691-9982. Sponsored by Redwood Bluegrass Associates.

19th Annual Bowers Mansion Bluegrass Festival offered a variety of music in a beautiful setting

By Suzanne Denison

One of the events that Don and I try to fit into our summer schedule is the one-day Bowers Mansion Bluegrass Festival produced by the Northern Nevada Bluegrass Association every August. The event is held on the lawn of the historic Bowers Mansion in a Washoe County Park located between Carson City and Reno, Nevada.

We drove over from Calaveras County on Friday afternoon and stayed in a motel in downtown Carson City. We did manage to visit a casino on Friday night for dinner and a small donation to the state of Nevada via the quarter slot and poker machines, but turned in fairly early in anticipation of the next day's festival.

On Saturday, August 14, the weather was beautiful, the atmosphere was relaxed, and the music was both entertaining and enjoyable. The day's program started with a stellar performance of the national anthem by local guitarist Wyatt Troxel, followed by a performance of the NNBA Volunteer Orchestra. This group of local musicians performs at rest homes and other facilities in the Reno and Carson City area year round. The NNBA also has regularly scheduled jams and concerts. Visit their website for more information and a schedule of upcoming events at www.nnba.org.

Randy Wilson was the emcee for the morning performances. I really enjoyed his description of the morning's band names — "Hoodoo, DooDoo and Weasels—Oh My!" At 10:30 a.m. the Midnight Hoodoo Revue got the audience's attention with their eclectic mix of Bluegrass, newgrass and "Hoodoo". The band recently returned from an extensive European tour and entertained the crowd with some of their experiences. Hoodoo Review members are Bill McKean — Lead Guitar, and vocals; Bob Kastelic — Guitar, Violin, and vocals; Zeke Griffin —

Mandolin, Dobro, and vocals; and Reubin Estrada — Bass and Vocals.

Columbia, California's own eccentric duo Doodoo Wah was next up on the bill. Ron DeLacy and Dave Cavenagh are both multi-instrumentalists, vocalists and songwriters. Ron's songs all tell a story — usually a humorous one, and his radio commercial medley is always entertaining.

Old-time music provided by the Piney Creek Weasels closed out the morning's entertainment. The Weasels are a Sacramento-area band that performs traditional Appalachian style music and some original and Cajun-flavored tunes. The Weasels are fiddler Eric Anderson, bassist Rocky Rioux, guitarist Dan Baker and clawhammer banjo player Andy Alexis. All of the band members sing and Rocky does a fine job of storytelling and stage patter.

During the lunch break festival attendees had a choice of Barbecue or Mexican food vendors. They both also offered burgers and hot dogs or sausages and a variety of cold soft drinks. Many people also opted to bring a picnic lunch to enjoy on the lawn. There were a variety of arts and crafts and clothing vendors on site for those who enjoyed shopping before the afternoon shows started.

For the serious musicians, there were a number of workshops. Topics and presenters were: Mandolin — Zeke Griffin, Bluegrass Banjo — Rick Sparks and Bill Van Dyke, Acoustic Sound — Paul Knight, Old Time Fiddle — Eric Anderson, Flatpicking Guitar — Bill McKean, Bass — Bruce Campbell, Clawhammer Banjo — Andy Alexis, Band Dynamics — the James King Band, Dobro — Chris Herald, and Bluegrass Fiddle — Adam Haynes.

The afternoon emcee Gregg Finkler introduced the first band of the afternoon at 2:30 p.m. — Randy Pollard and Rush Creek. We had never heard Randy play before, and were looking forward



CBA's booth at the Bowers Mansion Festival, left to right are Don Denison, Suzanne Denison, Don Timmer and Bob Crowder.

Photo by Pat Phillips

to a great performance — we weren't disappointed. Randy was a National, Nevada and California Fiddle Champion several times over. He lived and performed in Nashville for a number of years before returning to his native state. Although he didn't perform an all Bluegrass set, his fiddling style is flawless and all of the songs were well played. Randy was backed up by guitarist John McClain and our long-time friend Charlie Edsall on the bass (and sometimes guitar).

The Alhambra Valley Band from the San Francisco Bay Area was the next band on the schedule. Alhambra Valley performs both traditional and original Bluegrass music, much of which is a showcase for the vocal and instrumental talents of Lynn Quinones. Lynn is an excellent singer and strong lead and rhythm guitarist who writes much of the band's original tunes. Other band members are fiddler Jill Crucey, Dan Large on Mandolin, Craig Fletcher on Banjo and Bruce Campbell on bass. The band was in fine form and proved to be an audience pleaser.

Nevada's own Wild Creek was next up on the stage. Led by NNBA's president Don Timmer — guitar, harmonica and vocals and ably seconded by his wife Connie Timmer — bass and vocals, the band put on an outstanding show. Other band members are Randy

McKnight — mandolin and guitar and Bill Van Dyke on banjo and fiddle. The band performed a variety of Bluegrass songs and Connie did an outstanding job on the lead vocals of Gillian Welch's "Red Clay Halo".

The final set of the festival featured the James King Band. James has one of the finest bands I've ever heard and is a wonderful, soulful Bluegrass vocalist. The band had performed at a CBA concert in Orangevale the night before and was in fine form. Band members are Kevin Prater — mandolin, guitar, tenor and lead vocals; Ben Greene — banjo and baritone vocals; Adam Haynes — fiddle and back-up vocals; and Jerry McNeely on acoustic bass. If you have an opportunity to see this fine band in concert — don't miss it!

We didn't stick around for the jam sessions that followed the stage music, but I know that those who did had a wonderful time. As we headed back to our motel in Carson City, we had lots of great memories of a wonderful festival, beautiful setting and lots of friendly NNBA volunteers.

I would urge you to add this festival to your summer calendar next year. Check out their website at www.nnba.org for information on this event and other activities planned by the Northern Nevada Bluegrass Association.



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www.cbaontheweb.org