



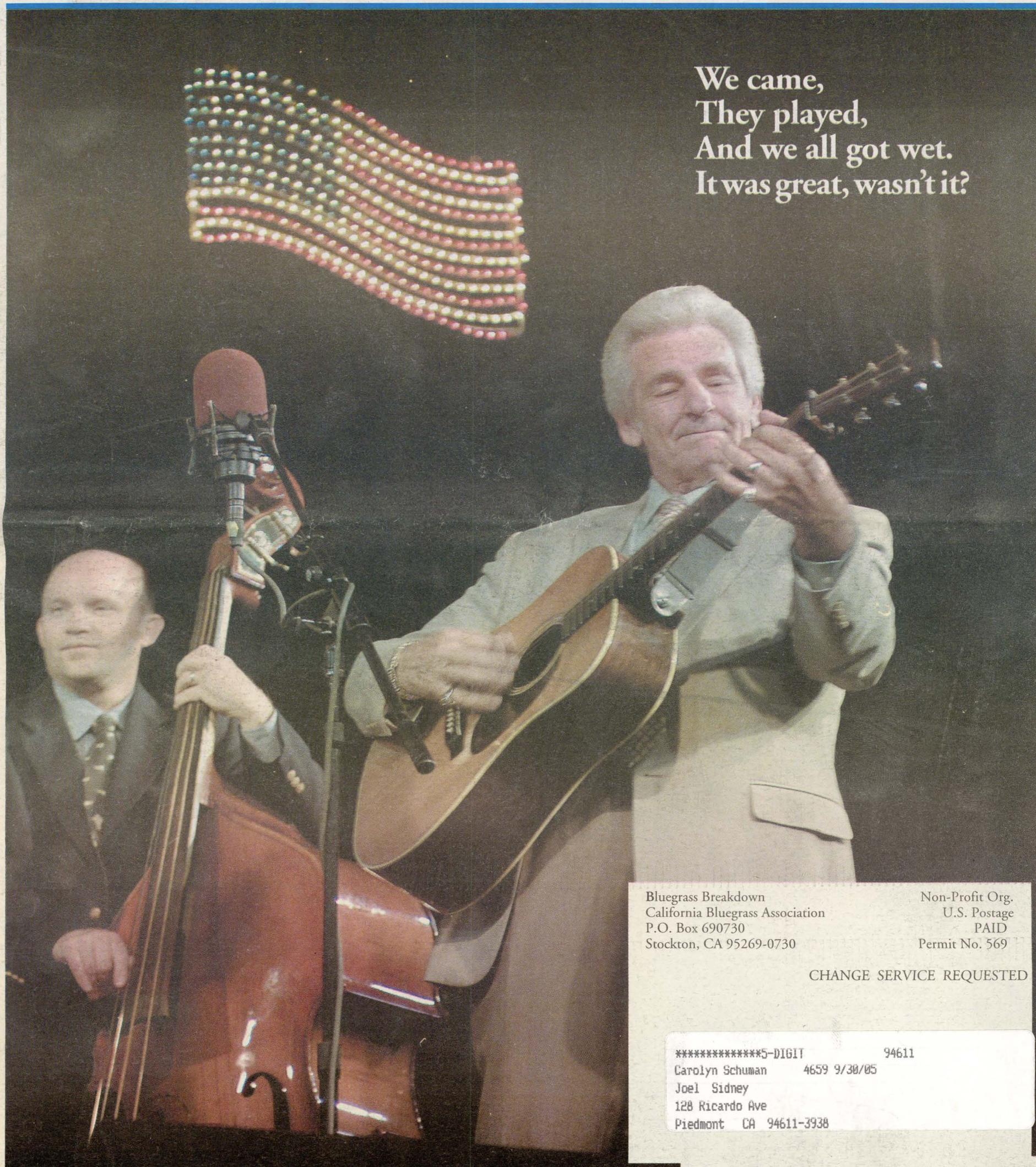
breakdown

Vol. 32 No. 2

Website: www.cbaontheweb.org -- E-mail: breakdown@gbis.com

July 2005

We came,
They played,
And we all got wet.
It was great, wasn't it?



Bluegrass Breakdown
California Bluegrass Association
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**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 completed 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.

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Single Membership	\$20.00
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Band Memberships (3-5 members)	Out of State only \$35.00

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Single - 1 vote for _____ year(s) \$20.00
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 Add _____ non-voting children
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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 \$ _____
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Please make checks payable to California Bluegrass Association (CBA). Heritage Fund Donations are tax deductible.

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For information, call 209-473-1616 or
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Letters of Grief and Gratitude

Zeke Griffin,

For my 30th attendance at the CBA Grass Valley Father's Day Festival, it was a pleasure to see the old groups who began the whole affair back in '76." Though Vern Williams was not there, I remember him and his group playing the whole night. If anyone remembers the first CBA Festival, the seed was planted for the future years.

Outside the unexpected rain and cold, the 30th CBA Festival was an outstanding event.

I am not going to mention groups who performed to their max, but I was truly impressed by a significant number of those who haven't lost their energy nor talent. What added spice to the show were "The Grascals." From them, one can be assured, Bluegrass will have a healthy and vigorous future. One of the most significant and certainly positive elements of the 30 years has been the introduction of new groups who often have their initiation into public view at the CBA festival. This keeps Bluegrass alive.

When the CBA Festival began, rules, if there were any, were not to be had.

Now the whole structure is formalized as it should be, and more and more people enjoy and reap the benefit. I have become sensitive to the careful and conscientious planning for each of the Festivals and have come to appreciate all the effort, energy and dedication the CBA has invested in the production of the event. I look forward to future Festivals.

Sal Compagno
Member # 237

Editor's note: Thanks so much for your kind words, Sal; as you know, it was a huge effort by a great group of volunteers who have over the years learned a lot about how to put on a festival (and about what not to do, but that's another story!). Anyway, I had to post this so that the real credit could go to all the folks who made this Father's Day Festival such a huge success.



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. The views of the authors does not necessarily reflect the views of the CBA or its Board of Directors. 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 is the 1st of the month, one month prior to publication (i.e. February deadline is January 1st, etc).

Members are encouraged to attend all board meetings. Please contact any board member or call the CBA office at 877-258-4777 for information and directions.

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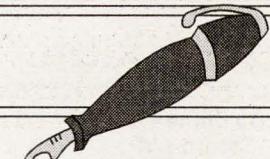
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From the President's Desk



Dear Friends:

Our 30th Fathers Day Festival is now history and the planning for the SuperGrass Festival becomes even more urgent. Over the past years our association has grown remarkably. This growth however has not come without exacting its toll. I am referring here to the toll it has taken on those of us who work to advance the music we love here in California and elsewhere. I have seen many excellent bands fall by the way due to age, health, the lack of enough revenue to provide a living wage, and most especially the fatigue that living on the road, brings.

Our board also has over the years experienced the same fatigue, and has gone through many changes. Most of you all know by now that I will be retiring from my board position at the end of the term this year, and will reduce my volunteer work load to just offering to undertake some small task here and there as soon as this first SuperGrass Festival is over with. What almost everyone does not recognize is that many of the present board will in the future decide to do the same thing. There are key members who because of age or fatigue, will need to be replaced within the next year or two. Some of these members are not even board members, just ordinary members of the CBA that we

have come to depend on to help put on the festival, produce the Breakdown, put on concerts, etc. Where we will find someone that is willing to dedicate almost all of his or her free time over a period of years is a question we need to answer soon.

Success is not just rewarded with excellence, it also raises standards and expectations. While the CBA and its events have been among the very best, the question of how do we maintain and improve on what this quest for excellence has brought us is foremost in the minds of many of us.

Friends, unless we are able to replace our members who labor on our behalf with persons equally talented and committed to excellence, and willing to give of themselves in this effort over a period of years, we will not be able to sustain the level of quality in our association and our events and programs that we have worked so hard to attain. Money cannot buy the dedication, for example, our festival director has given over the years. I worry who will step forward to take up the burdens when the present cadre tires and ages or is unable to continue because of events in their lives.

This summer you all will be hearing about board elections and candidates who want to become board members. I encourage all of you to participate by voting or running for a board seat. More

than this however, I challenge all of our members to do whatever they can to maintain and even advance the CBA in promoting the music and the industry that produces it. Bluegrass Music does not for some reason exit the interests of the masses as other forms of art does.

This is not because of any fault with the art form, but the cause of many factors existing in our changing culture. Whether or not our music is destined to remain a relatively small portion of the music enjoyed by the population in general is another subject, suffice it to say that there is room for growth.

Will you all, the members of the California Bluegrass Association step forward in a sense of dedication to assume the burdens that will be laid down, or will lack of energy, loyalty and dedication cause a decline in the CBA and what we do. I challenge all of you to examine your lives and give as much as you can possibly give in service to the music we all love.

Your Friend

Don



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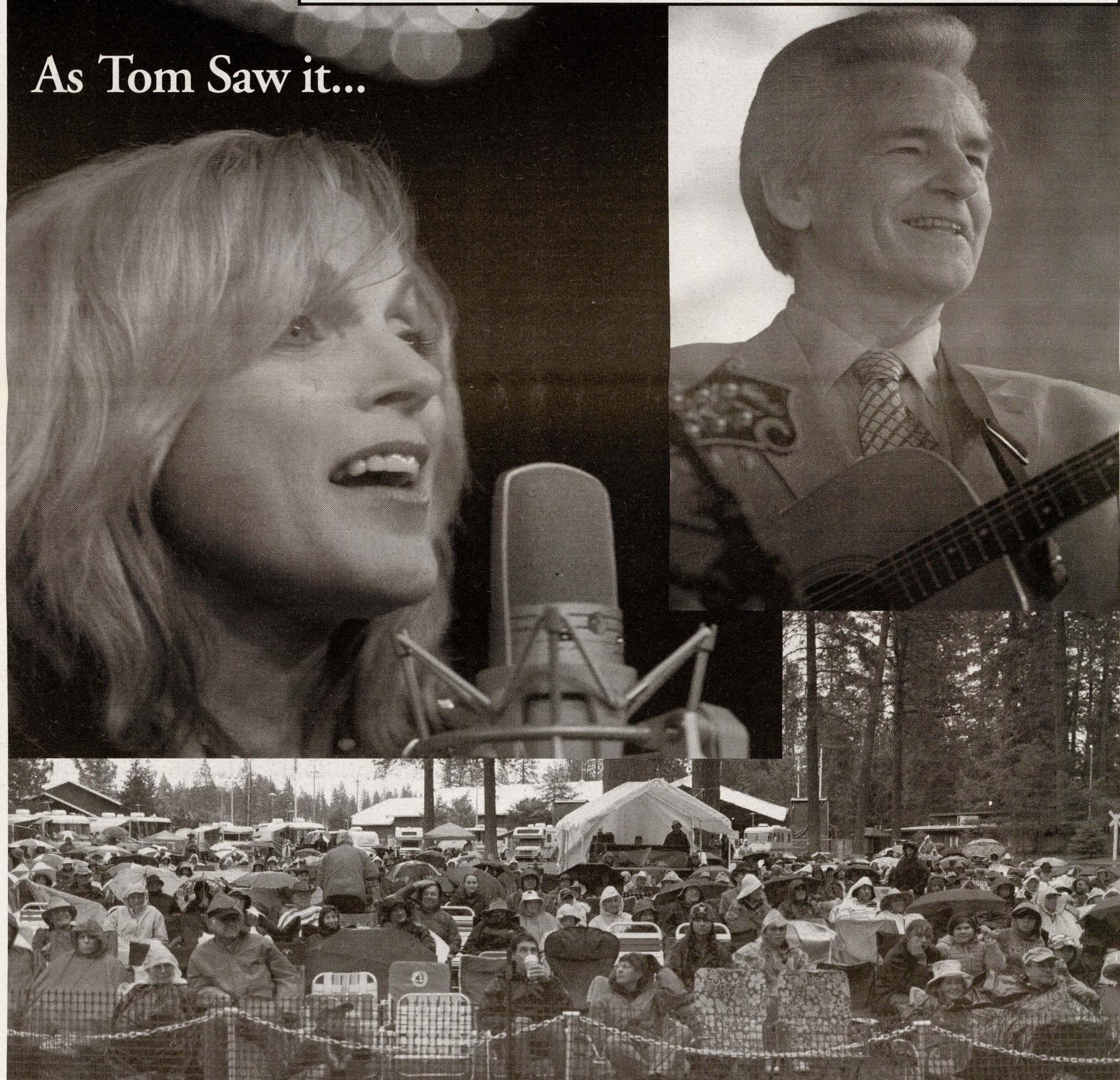
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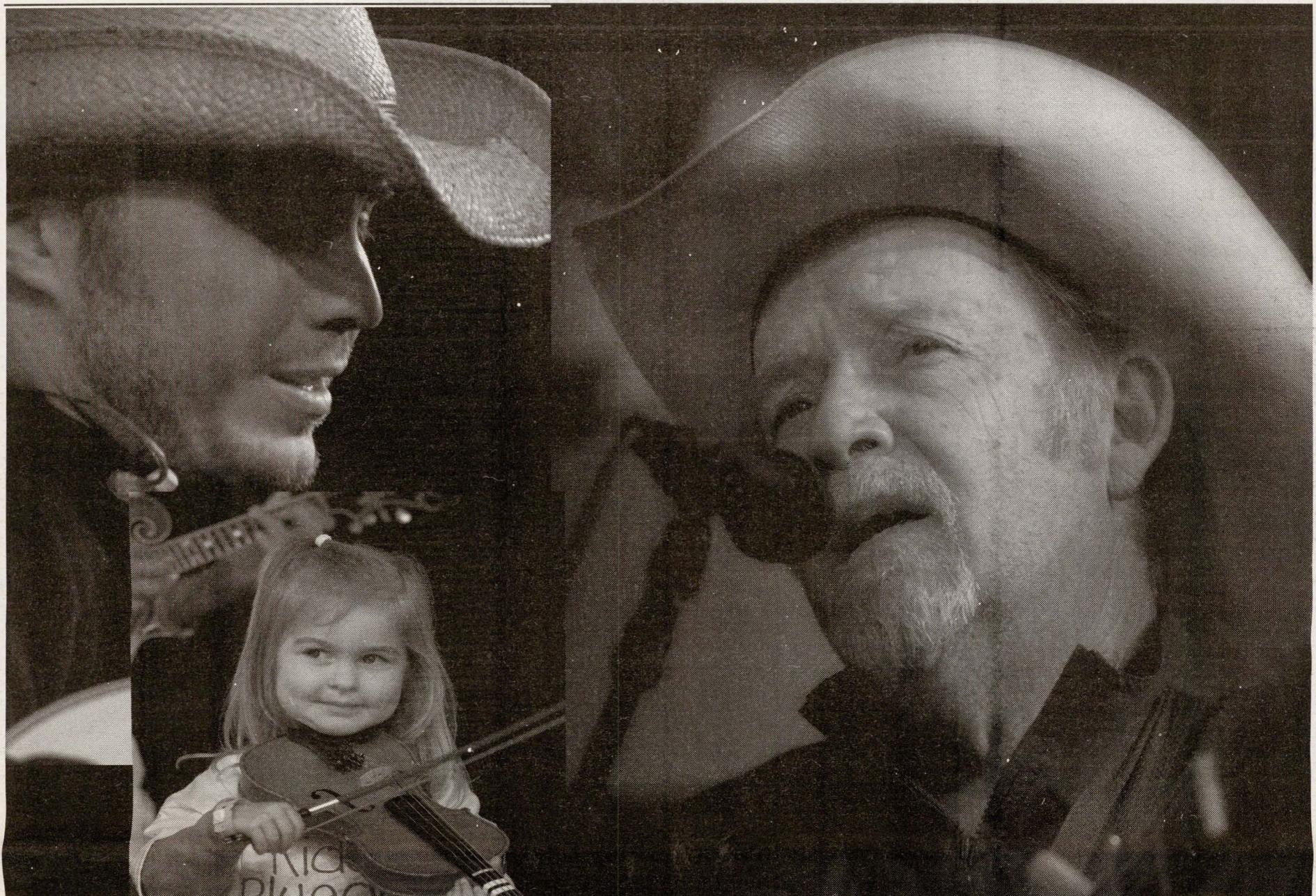
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Well, we had a wonderful time this Father's Day, and as our President Don Denison says: "There's another one in the can." The memories are usually all that we have left when we head back to the lives we left behind for this period of music, mayhem and just plain fun. But we members of the CBA have a few resources at our disposal to help keep those mental snapshots alive and fresh lest they evaporate like yesterday's news: the Bluegrass Breakdown and our very cool website (www.cbaontheweb.org). And two of the most efficient arms of these august bodies are staff photographers Tom Tworek and Bob Calkins. These guys are both fans as well as musicians (Tom even did a tour as the bass player of the Frank Wakefield Band, or is that Wake Frankfield?), in addition to being world-class shutterbugs, and the combination brings an empathy and grasp of their subjects that is truly unique and wonderful to behold. We are very fortunate to have these two dedicated professionals on our team, and we owe them a very huge debt of gratitude for all the images and experiences that they have preserved for us over the years. They are the guys who keep them from fading.

On that note, I thought that it might be good to focus on their work over the next few issues; giving you, gentle reader, a glimpse of our shared experience through their eyes. Of course we will also continue to salt this periodical with their pictures of GV and other events along with many more that are sent in by our membership throughout the year, but I thought that it was fitting to give them a bit of their own space, starting this month with some of Tom's view. I hope that you enjoy it as much as I do.

As Tom Saw it...





Bluegrass Folks

by Bill Wilhelm

CLIFF COMPTON

Not long ago at the CBA Spring Camp Out, I was out under a shade tree in a right decent jam session, enjoying my favorite past time when I suddenly became aware of the earth around me shaking. I looked up at the trees and even they were shaking and swaying. Having spent most of my life in California and being just a few miles from the San Andreas fault at the time, I had no doubt what was happening. Wrong! It was just Cliff Compton approaching our little group with his guitar hanging from his neck and wearing his usual big smile. Well now, that's always a welcome sight. It wouldn't matter to Cliff what we might be playing, 'cause he can just fit right in and play anything, whether he's ever heard it before or not. This six foot seven inch man's size is exceeded only by his great sense of humor. He has fun everywhere he goes and so does everyone around him, 'cause it is contagious.

A native Californian, he abides in Sacramento, but grew up in a lot of other places. He considers Portland, Oregon his home town. His father was a Pentecostal holiness preacher as well as a musician and played almost all musical instruments

very well. In this line of work, he contacted churches in a lot of major cities all over the country, taking his family with him. Consequently, back to when Cliff was just a three or four year old little boy he was on the stage a lot, growing up with the gospel music. Early on, he took lessons on piano, trumpet and a couple other brass instruments. Though enjoying the music, he didn't find any of it that he couldn't easily do quite well without. He found it pleasant, but it just wasn't fun.

"Then when I was fourteen, I saw the Beatles," says Cliff. "That was it! I bought an arched top Harmony guitar at a hock shop and started playing rock and roll. I worked hard at it and before long I was good enough that I played in some bands around Portland, then continued doing that for a lot of years. Some time after that in Yakima, Washington I found the Lord and began doing gospel music. That put me right back to my roots."

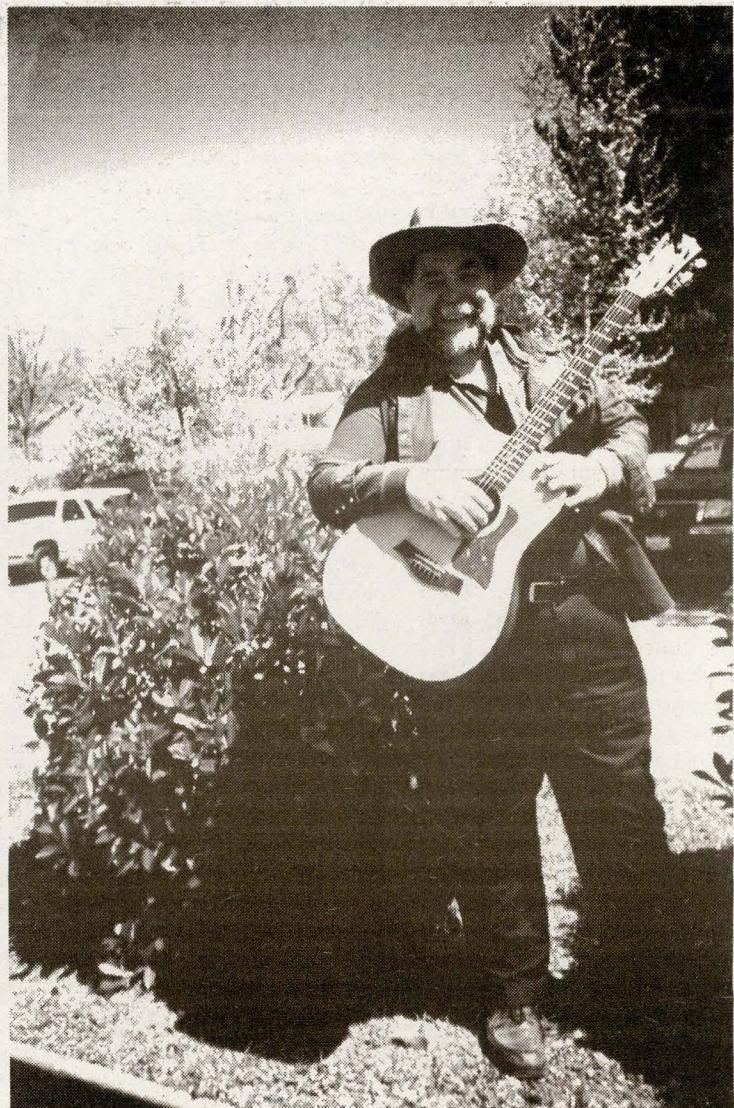
"I remember playing a lot of nights in a band we called 'Rockabye' for ten dollars a night and beer. Then later I was in a band called 'From the heart.' I had a wife and four hungry kids. It became obvious that some-

thing had to give. I went to work for a while doing various jobs including working as a carpenter, framing houses. I had the size for it, but I hated every minute of it. It was always in the way of my music. Then I started doing janitorial work so I could set my own hours and still subsidize my earnings. That evolved into the janitorial supply business and worked out so well that I am still in that business today.

"When I found the CBA Bluegrass Festivals, it was like a homecoming to me. I had found the place I needed to be. I've been going to them ever since, jammin' 'til three am and singin' 'til my tonsils fall out."

Cliff is not only an unusually good musician and vocalist, but knows a lot of various types of music and sings many songs from each type. Music has been so much a part of his life that he is the most versatile of all the musicians I have ever known. He can play it all (yes, including bluegrass) and do it professionally.

He recalls his early years when being on stage terrified him. He says he got over that and now it wouldn't bother him if his pants fell off up there. He says he'd just work it into an act. Knowing Cliff, I have no doubt he would. The thing that bothers him the most, he says is that everywhere he goes, people



continually confuse him with Tom Sellick.

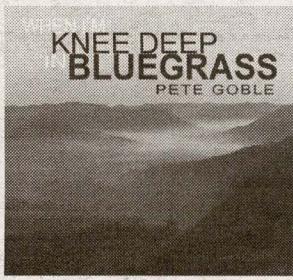
Yeah, Cliff, I can see that must be a very real problem. Tell 'em that there is an easy

way to tell you two apart, that you feel badly for the poor guy, whoever he is, but he just simply couldn't be this handsome!

Pete Goble “When I’m Knee Deep in Bluegrass”

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Stuart Duncan & Nashville Bluegrass Band Headline Summergrass 2005

Summergrass San Diego — Southern California's most exciting new bluegrass music festival is returning for a third great year on August 26, 27, & 28, 2005 at the nostalgic Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum in Vista, Ca. While always providing everything from world-class entertainment to great local talent,

Summergrass is pulling all the stops this year and bringing the Grammy award winning Nashville Bluegrass Band to be the festival headliners. This stellar band is uniquely fitting for Summergrass. Besides NBB's impeccable sound, fiddler great Stuart Duncan is a former local boy who grew up in the San Diego area before moving to Nashville and becoming one of the most well-respected musicians in bluegrass today. In this issue of the inTune, we'll take a closer look at Stuart Duncan, the Nashville Bluegrass Band, and Summergrass San Diego 2005.

Stuart Duncan

Stuart Duncan's powerful influence and widely-acclaimed musical prowess is succinctly captured in this quote by Fiddler Magazine:

"Stuart Duncan, the most influential and virtuosic bluegrass fiddler alive, has crystallized a style, rendering it transparent, deep, and faceted with such brilliance that he has spawned a legion of imitators. As a young fiddler, his abilities impressed the bluegrass world, but his subsequent incorporation of all the great fiddlers' styles into a personal meta-style is only surpassed by his clarity of phrasing, dynamics, groove, and intonation." Fiddler Magazine, Fall 2002.

Reminiscing on his early years in San Diego, Duncan remembers his musical beginnings in North County. His father was a Marine, the family lived in Vista, and he began playing music at age seven. Being self-taught, Duncan received very little training on the fiddle as a child. "There was a classical teacher in Vista that I went to for a couple of weeks. At one point, she called my mom and said, 'You know, Stuart just doesn't have the discipline to continue with violin lessons. He almost refuses to play the part with me. He wants to play the harmony lines.' Apparently, I was already a bluegrass tenor player at a very early age. I couldn't stop playing the harmonies."

A year later Stuart found himself in a band. "There was a band based out of Vista and Oceanside that all of our fathers were Marines at Camp Pendleton and it was called the Pendleton Pickers. I was eight years old and the ages in the band ran

from eight to 15 years."

Stuart's parents were local musicians who were also volunteers in the local folk club in Escondido. As a youngster, he frequently saw many great groups perform for the club like The Dillards and fiddle legend Byron Berline.

"Byron was the biggest influence on me in those early years. I kind of followed him around. He was my beginning inspiration. After that, it was all the bluegrass legends, traditional and contemporary. Thanks to my father, I also had a large record collection to delve into. Jazz, Django-era swing, Dixieland, and Irish were all in the mix. Everything from Doc Boggs to Frank Zappa."

Stuart played in various other local bands as time went on. "I teamed up with Alison Brown from La Jolla and we were a young teen banjo and fiddle duo. Now she's in Nashville like I am. She and her husband head up Compass Records."

Other bands included The High Window Boys with Walden Dahl and Gold Rush with John Hickman. "Alison played the dobro in Gold Rush and I played fiddle and mandolin. Later on, I also did two east coast tours with Lost Highway."

Stuart has gained respect in both the bluegrass and country genres. He has been the winner of the International Bluegrass Music Association's Fiddler of the Year for seven consecutive years, awarded the 1999 Academy of Country Music Fiddle Player of the Year, and a three-time recipient of Music Row magazine's "Top Ten All Stars."

"After the seventh IBMA award for Fiddler of the Year, I was retired to the Hall of Shame, along with Jerry Douglas," muses Stuart. Like himself, Douglas also received IBMA's Dobro Player of the Year award for many years. Besides playing with NBB, he is busy working a few other projects. He has just finished participating on a CD produced by jazz saxophone maestro Bill Evans that also included Jerry Douglas, Bela Fleck, Vic Wooten, Vinny Calutti, Sam Bush, Mark Egan, Pat Bergeson, and John Scofield. "Bill wrote a lot of the arrangements. This was a major effort and a departure for me to learn the music. The CD should be out soon."

Stuart is also busy working on his second solo project. "It's been 12 years since my first one. I'm not done yet but it's taking shape and will have a couple of tunes I've written. It's a Rounder release." No stranger to songwriting, he wrote three tunes

on his first solo effort; Thai Clips, The Passing, and G Forces.

He has recently finished a tune for the Appalachian Pickers Society, who is releasing a CD on the Windham Hill label. "I wrote a tune for the clawhammer banjo and the fiddle named Overbellow Reel. Dennis Crouch and Mike Compton played on it with me." Self-describing his musical style, Stuart elaborates, "I'm a mixture of both traditional and progressive. I like jazz that's really outside except when it gets so far outside that I forget what the melody is. I always like to be reminded of the melody so I try to keep that in mind in my playing. That part of my playing is traditional."

"I'm also influenced by a world of different styles. When I think of traditional, I'm speaking before bluegrass - back to Eck Robertson, Clayton McMichon, and Clarkensinger - those great players. Before the Orange Blossom Special and before the fiddle was a show instrument."

"I'm also just as influenced by Kenny Baker playing with Bill Monroe in the 1970's, too. Darol Anger calls me the 'Bluegrass Traffic Director.' When I play, he'll say 'Okay, now here comes Scotty Stoneman. Oops, here's Benny Martin for a little while. Okay, now, Kenny [Baker], you can come on in.'"

Stuart comments on other current efforts. "I'm proud to have recorded a couple of tunes on Alison Brown's new CD "Stolen Moments" on her Compass Records label. Also on the CD are Mary Chapin Carpenter and John Doyle, the great left-handed Irish guitarist, along with many other great musicians. I believe it is available now."

"I've been doing a monthly show with the Hot Club of Nashville at the Station Inn. It has a revolving cast of guitarists but the core guys are Richard Smith from England on guitar, Charlie Chadwick on bass, John Jorgenson (another former Southern Californian) and Pat Bergeson



are there a lot, too. We occasionally have swing mandolin players hop up on stage. It's exciting and on my road to knowing more about music in general. I'm just seizing the opportunity to sharpen my claws."

"I'm growing, learning new ways. The more I'm learning, the simpler I'm playing some things that used to be hard. That's where the real growth is. When you figure out a simple way to do something that's more musically effective than what you have done before."

Stuart also has some advice for young players getting into the music business today. He advises them to have a back up plan to fall back on if times get rough. "I knew I could always go back home if things got really bad. I also think learning music theory earlier is a good thing. It may help you land a better paying job sooner rather than later."

Being a proud family man, Stuart is married with three children; Joshua, age 14, Jonathan, age 10, and Darcy, age 7. He proudly reveals that "Josh is the math genius and future engineer in the family. Jonathan is active in the Nashville Opera, having already participated in three operas in full costume, complete with speaking parts in French

and Italian. He's still walking around the house whistling the parts a month later. And Darcy is taking piano lessons and doing real well."

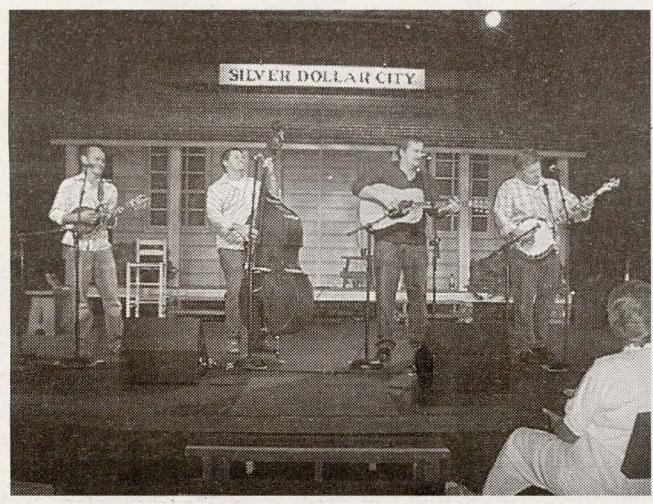
With Stuart's demanding career schedule and the needs of the family, his understanding wife Dieta keeps things running smooth on the homefront. Jokingly, Stuart explains that, "She sees so many other wives of musicians in the same boat, she figures that's the way it's supposed to be. But, seriously, she's a big part of making it all work."

Stuart occasionally finds his way to Southern California for business and family. "I get out there to do sessions with Lyle Lovett or to do "The Tonight Show," things like that. I also have family out there. My uncle lives in Laguna Beach and my grandfather is out there, too."

So mark your calendar for August 26-28 and come on out to San Diego and see Stuart Duncan at Summergrass. Experience his talent live as he plays with the Nashville Bluegrass Band and a special Fiddle Extravaganza performance. Don't miss it!

by Yvonne Tatar





CBA's Sacramento-area gospel series continues in August with NewFound Road on Saturday, August 20 at 7:30 p.m. at the First Baptist Church of Fair Oaks (4401 San Juan, corner of Winding Way) in Fair Oaks.

Opening will be On the Loose from Nevada County.

One of the South's top touring gospel/bluegrass bands, NewFound Road is totally committed to using the talents and desires that God has given them to send a clear message of faith and hope. The band has already produced two gospel CD's (the self-titled 2002 debut and "Full Heart" in 2003), plus a new project, "Somewhere Between."

Blue Highway's Tim Stafford states, "NewFound Road is one of the best new vocal groups to come along in bluegrass in years." And Nashville Public Radio's David Higgs wrote that "When it comes to gospel music, the group is in a league of their own, but they do an equally fine job on such unforgettable numbers as "It's Raining the Blues" and "Love at First Light."

Given the band's credentials, such praise is no surprise.

Rob Baker, lead and harmony vocals and mandolin, recently won IBMA Entertainer of the Year as a member of Rhonda Vincent and the Rage.

Tim Caudill, bass, is a promi-

GOSPEL CONCERT IN FAIR OAKS NewFound Road Comes to California

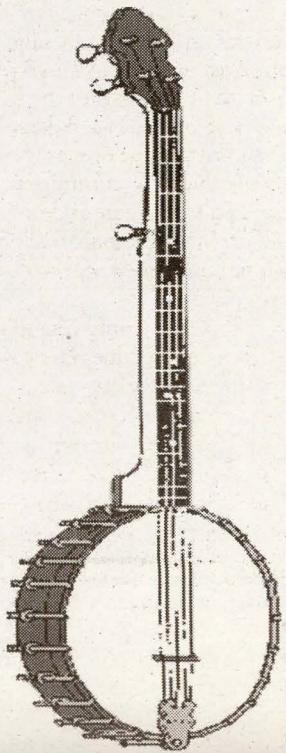
nent session player in the tri-state region of Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana and has shared the stage and appeared on recordings with some of the most well known names in Bluegrass and Southern Gospel such as The Bishops, The Isaacs, The McKameys and Larry Sparks. Tim Shelton, lead and harmony vocals and rhythm guitar, has a solo CD Bluegrass Unlimited Magazine called "a bluegrass gospel masterpiece." Tim's special guests on the recording include John Bowman, Ben Isaacs, Adam Steffey and Tim Surrett of the Isaacs with guest Joe Mullins of bluegrass group Longview.

Carl Williams, Jr., banjo, lead and tenor vocals and lead guitar, spent the last six years touring with The Bishops, one of the most popular Southern Gospel groups of the last decade. "Jr." (as he is known to thousands of Southern Gospel fans across the nation) has been featured on The Grand Ole Opry, Music City Tonight, TBN programs that include Praise the Lord, John Hagee Ministries and many of the popular Gaither Videos.

Local favorite On the Loose features Rob Shotwell on banjo and vocals, Craig Moseley on bass, Randy Allen on mandolin and vocals, Penny Allen on guitar and vocals, and Ron Gaynor on resophonic guitar and vocals. Their 2002 album titled "Know Better Than To Bother" was heard over KVMR radio and the band performed on the radio as well.

Advance tickets are \$18 for adults, \$16 for seniors (65+), \$15 for CBA members, and \$9 for teenagers, available at the Christian Book Center, 7975 Greenback Lane in Citrus Heights (next to Marshall's) across from Sunrise Mall. Children 12 and under admitted free with a paid adult admission. Tickets by credit card are available online at www.cbaontheweb.org. Also, advance tickets are available by mail. Send check and SASE to Bob Thomas, 8532 Cumulus Way, Orangevale, CA 95662. At the door ticket prices will be \$20 for adults, \$17 for seniors and CBA members. For more information, call Bob Thomas at 916-989-0993 or visit www.cbaontheweb.org.

NewFound Road also performs at 7:30 p.m., Friday, August 19, 2005 at the Orland Evangelical Free Church, 614 A Street, Orland, CA 95963. Call (530) 865-2453 for details and tickets.



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Craig Wilson & Hal Johnson
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1. It's in early February – right smack-dab in the middle of winter when most of us died-in-the-wool bluegrassers are suffering from serious withdrawal of enjoying live bluegrass. The CBA leadership thought we ought to be doing something significant to bring together a serious festival mid-winter. Craig Wilson, our Area Activities VP in Bakersfield, brought a proposal to the Board that it could happen in Bakersfield in a great venue – the downtown convention center. A committee was appointed to evaluate and *voila* – it was determined this could really be a great venue, and a great time to do it. It was approved.

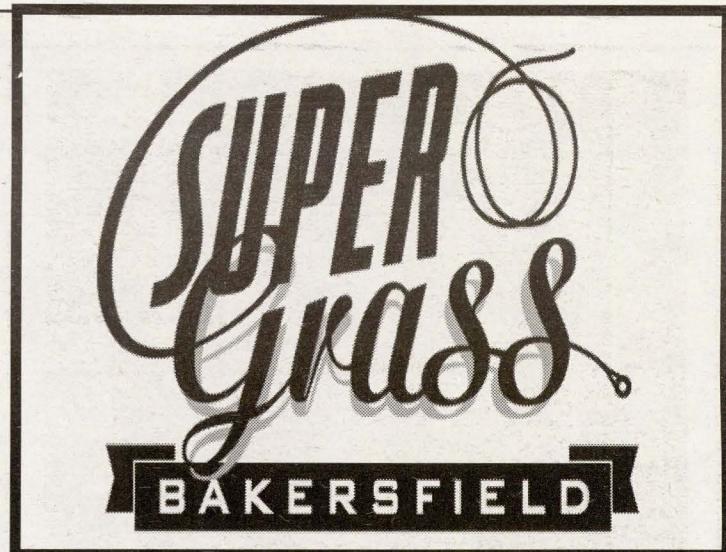
2. The CBA would like to sponsor/support more bluegrass toward the southern end of our state. In case you haven't noticed, there are a lot of people in the southern part of our state. There are five active bluegrass associations in Southern California. Wouldn't it be grand to pull our

resources together, really produce an outstanding event that we all could get behind, work together and have a great bluegrass celebration? Yes. We thought so too. So, at this very time our Board member and Publicity Director, Suzanne Suwanda, is orchestrating a marketing get-together with all the California bluegrass associations to assure we have maximum support, involvement and attendance. Oh, by the way, that's "SuperGrass Suwanda" in case you didn't know. Suzanne suggested the name SuperGrass – it's the same weekend as the Super Bowl. And yes, there will be a big screen TV for the Super Bowlers.

3. The CBA has a wonderful team of festival directors and coordinators with the experience to get the job done. After thirty years of producing the fabulously successful festival at Grass Valley, just think of what our bench looks like. You cannot believe how many wonderful people have participated, providing unselfish, committed support – and hard work

– in all aspects of festival production. We were even recognized by the International Bluegrass Music Association as the overall award winning festival in 2003. We have an incredible resource in our volunteers and coordinators. So, let's capitalize on our experience base and produce another great festival.

4. The availability of great bands during the winter is superior. You can imagine what the competition is like during the summer when the top touring bluegrass bands are being approached for dozens and dozens of festivals. It's almost a bidding frenzy. Top bands are booked a couple of years ahead. And it's still tough to get the kind of line-up you want. This is not the case for winter festivals. The pressure is off and the fees are a bit lower. More talent is available. Better line-ups are possible. Our friends up in Washington State (Tacoma) have done a superior job on producing WinterGrass – a home run of a bluegrass event up north. So, we know it works. There are enough people in the southern part of our state to support this kind of event



mid-winter (and won't impact negatively our friends in Tacoma). More bluegrass in California is a good thing.

5. That's our purpose; that's what we are here to do. So, what are we here to accomplish as a bluegrass association? Support more bluegrass, gospel and old time events. The June issue of *Bluegrass Unlimited* reports a significant growth the past two years in the popularity of bluegrass, thanks in part to the "Oh,

Brother" movie and the subsequent "Down From the Mountain" tour. More people are being drawn to our music. So, we need to support that trend with more opportunities to enjoy the best of the best – live bluegrass performances. That's our mission and our commitment.

If you want to get involved in this great event, give us a call – Craig Wilson 616-589-8249 % Hal Johnson 916-391-3042. Don't miss SuperGrass! Visit us on the web: www.supergrasscalifornia.org

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A Visit With Dr. Banjo

by Brenda "I'm asking the questions" Hough

Pete Wernick, banjo player extraordinaire for Hot Rize, has been involved with bluegrass music since the 1960's. He has been a band member and leader, instructor and was president of the IBMA (International Bluegrass Music Association) for 15 years. While he is known as Dr. Banjo for his musical skills, his background includes a doctorate in Sociology so he is well qualified to be an observer of the bluegrass scene. The following interview was conducted via email with Pete and his answers have fascinating insights into the urban bluegrass scene in New York and his years with Hot Rize. Pete is also dedicated to spreading the "joy of bluegrass" and banjo playing to as many folks as possible through his instructional videos and camps.

So Pete, let's start at the beginning. What was your first musical memory and when did you discover bluegrass and the banjo?

No one's asked me that before. I would dance around by myself to classical music, till my mom caught me in the act and thought it was cute. After that I was too embarrassed. My dad made me a crystal radio set, and I started listening to the radio so I could hear the Davy Crockett song, in 1955 when I was 9. That led to Fats Domino, Webb Pierce, and Elvis. I lost interest in Davy. My first record purchases were a full DOLLAR of 1950s money for a single song on a 78 record, plus an unknown B side. "Don't Be Cruel" and "Hound Dog" on the same 78 seemed like a great bargain.



Pete and Joan Wernick
(Dr. and Nurse Banjo)

www.drbanjo.com

When I was 12, my friend Jake there in the Bronx put on a record of Scruggs doing Shuckin' the Corn. I flipped out. It sounded like the best possible music, which I still think it is. I still remember where I was standing in his living room. That definitely changed my life.

I started playing folk style banjo when I was 14, thanks to my neighborhood buddies who were into Pete Seeger and the Weavers and the various folk groups of that time.

In New York you met some of the folk music and bluegrass founders and followers. Who did you meet in those early days? Peter Rowan? Pete Seeger? David Grisman? Marc Silber? Jody Stecher?

All of the above. Grisman and Jody and the banjo player Winnie Winston were my biggest heroes. All were very nice to me and helped me learn "the real stuff". By the time I was 17 I had a radio show on my college station, that could be heard all over the New York metropolitan area. David was concerned that I liked the Country Gentlemen more than Monroe. He had me over to his apartment and played some of the best of Monroe (then only available on singles) until I "got it". I "got it" on "You'll Find Her Name Written There". Jody would call me up to let me know which names I mispronounced on the radio and other errors I would make. Winnie made sure I appreciated Reno at least as much as Scruggs. I delighted in the attention, and actively studied all the

records to serve the listeners better, and because I'd grown to love it.

Was there a distinct urban bluegrass scene or was it part of the folk music revival?

There was definitely some overlap, and more interaction than now. My first band was a folk group, but whenever I could find bluegrass people to play with, I'd jump at the chance. I like to say it was one in a million. The metro New York area had about 16 million people, and there were about 16 of us who were dead serious about bluegrass. We'd find each other and pick. A carload of us went to the first bluegrass festival, Finncastle, VA in 1965.

When I was 17, I was in Palo Alto for a summer when my dad was at Stanford working on a math textbook. I went looking for folkies or anyone to play banjo with. I was quite fortunate to be steered to the late Cheney Otis, who was quite into bluegrass, and introduced me to Eric Thompson. I ended up in a band that summer with David Nelson on guitar and Jerry Garcia on mando, the Godawful Palo Alto Bluegrass Ensemble. That summer was my first exposure to the California bluegrass scene — 1963. I was considered special because I was a real Easterner, even if not a Southerner. Jerry used to ask me what it was like back East.

Did your move to Colorado follow a professional or musical path?

That happened after I was fortunate enough to have the chance to write *Bluegrass Banjo* for Oak Publications. I did that on the side while working for Cornell in the International Population Program. The academic milieu had less to offer my soul than I'd imagined, and though I had a secure job, I decided to quit

The Doctor and his Nurse are in...

and use my first rush of book royalties as a safety net while I tried to launch a music career. Colorado seemed like an ideal spot. The year after we moved there, I put out, *Dr. Banjo Steps Out*, and following that, I put Hot Rize together. Our first gig was January 17, 1978, same day as the last Sex Pistols gig.

Of course, the Denver Folklore Center was one of the acoustic music beacons at the time. Did you meet your wife Joan or any of the Hot Rize band members there?

Joan and I had met in 1969, when I was still in grad school. I passed through Colorado on my way to California that summer, where I played with both High Country and Vern & Ray. I went back to Colorado in mid-summer and brought her back to Berkeley. At the end of the summer, we went back East so I could finish school. I tried to move my thesis work to Stanford but it didn't work out, and I wound up at Cornell.

Meeting Charles, Tim, and Nick happened later, around when we moved to Colorado in 1976. The Folklore Center was a hangout for a lot of us. Charles and I had a band that played every week there, and Tim and Nick were among dozens of musicians who'd sit in with us.

Describe the early days of Hot Rize and the roles that the different members assumed in the band.

Well, we were pretty green, but very enthused. I was the only one with much recording experience, having been on both Flying Fish and Rounder with Country Cooking. Tim was only 23 and mostly known as a fiddle player, but I knew he had the singing talent to go very far. Charles was a veteran of bands, and had an excellent sound company.

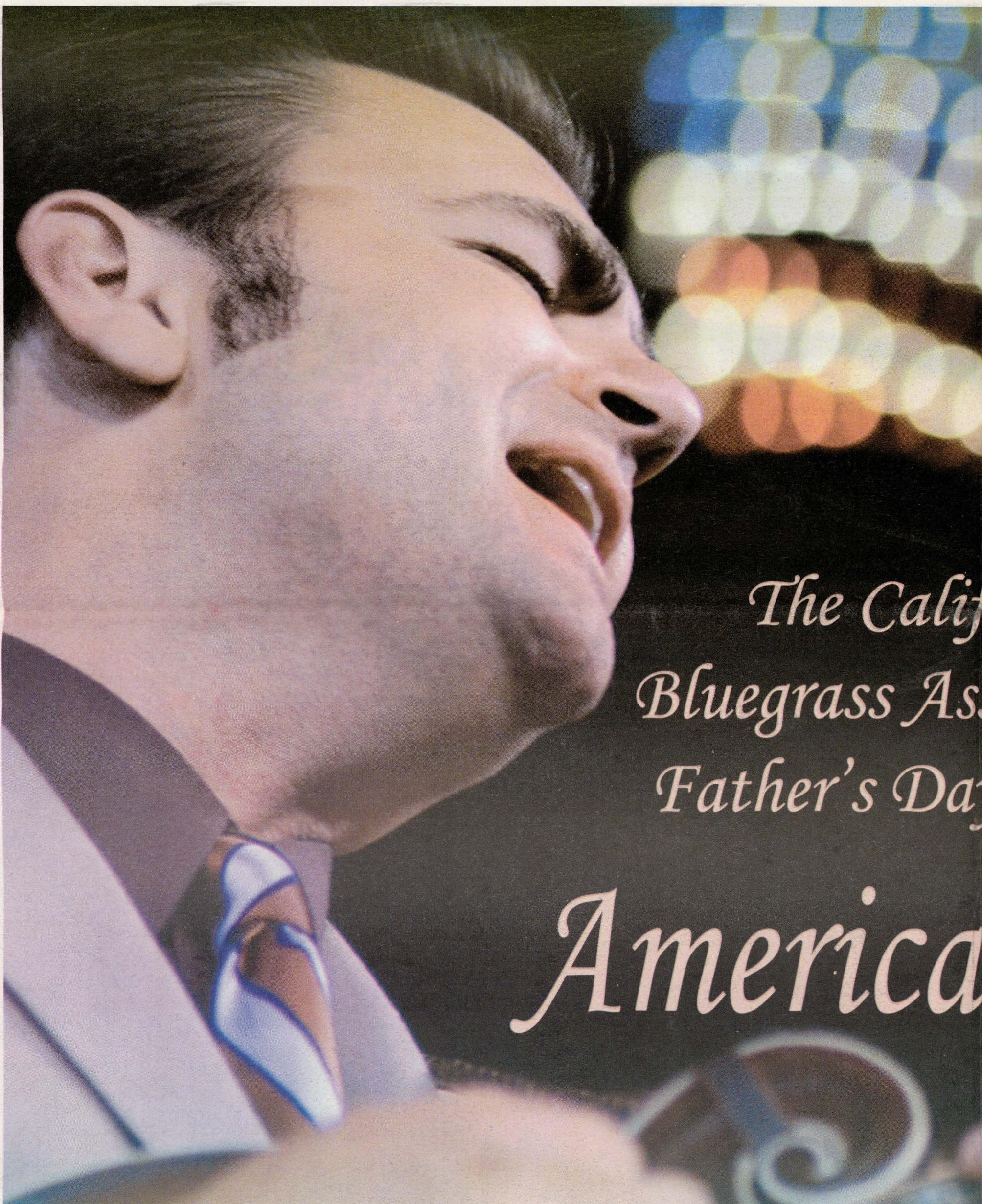
Nick was 22 and still figuring out life, as were we all, but he was a fine musician and knew about cars and fixing things and selling things. We were an interesting fit, from pretty different backgrounds, but all passionate about music, and willing to work hard to be bluegrass stars, though it seemed sort of like a pipe dream at the time. We had a lot of fun traveling all over the country and Europe and listening to all kinds of music, but especially bluegrass, as we drove long distances, crossing Kansas, Utah, and Nevada especially. It was a lot of work but also an adventure, a dream come true.

We four did all the band chores, all of which eventually were delegated. I did the booking and publicity for almost four years, till Keith Case came on board. I saw to it we worked every week, so we could stay afloat. Charles was the sound guru, and he and Nick were both motorheads who eagerly proposed getting a bus when the band was only two years old. Frank Edmonson came on the next year, first as roadie, then sound man and eventually road manager, and he was a gem. We all believed in working hard and doing whatever was the best way. Charles would make sure we polished our boots. We could all make each other laugh. Tim helped the band's fortunes a lot when he started writing so many good songs. I'm proud that I suggested very early on that we should have our own songs. His second try was Nellie Kane.

Do you have any songs that are personal favorites?

I guess my favorite is Tim's pretty recent song, Climbing Up A Mountain. The lyrics are so true about a life of striving for excel-

continued on page 22



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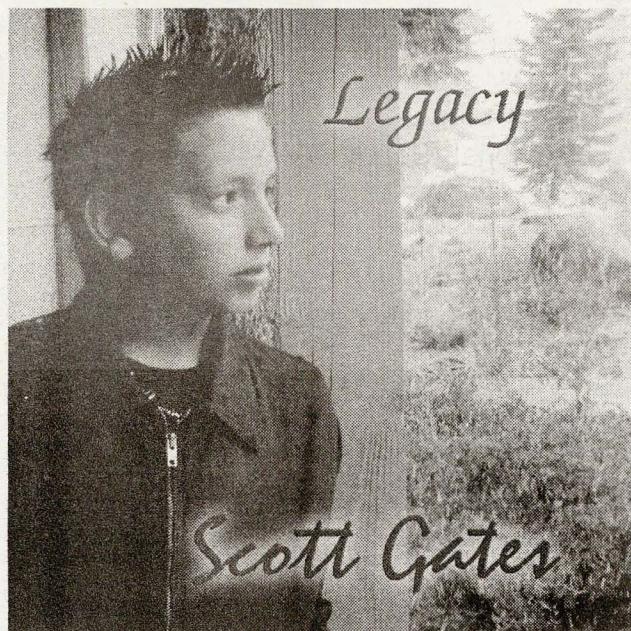


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MUSIC MATTERS

by Elena Corey

Natural Bridge

In three or four places in the U.S., a natural bridge graces the terrain. In every case, this rare phenomenon is prized by local inhabitants and brought to the attention of visitors. The geological forces that permit dirt and smaller rocks to be eroded, leaving the larger arched rock standing in beauty are acknowledged as awe-inspiring. These rare wonders somehow also attract picnickers and school field-trip participants who revel in joy, unmindful of just how rare their surroundings may be. Natural bridges delight and soothe the senses beyond the capabilities of artificial arches, it is quite evident.

A couple of months ago we discussed the term 'bridge' a bit. We

used it in a narrow, specific sense and intended to throw light on its proper usage within the context of a song's structure. But the teacher of fables is not content when we have merely comprehended the most literal interpretation of a meaning of a tale. The muse whispers expectantly, "That's fine, child, but what else do you see?"

So this month let us consider larger implications of the word 'bridge' in the world of music. Could 'bridge' be one of the metaphors illustrating a larger world of meaning for us? If so, can we seize its implications and grow from the insight?

A basic premise, upon which we shall build, is: After a musician gets beyond a basic mechanistically correct stage, his or her ability to progress is linked to his or her capabilities as a human being. Bob Abramson, renowned teacher at Juilliard School of Music said much the same thing, "Once you get to a certain point of proficiency, you know, what you can and can't do musically is directly related to what you can and can't do as in other areas of your life."

This principle applies to a wide variety of personality and character traits. The willingness to pursue a self-disciplined course, for instance, is an obvious application. The emotional readiness to take risks in one's music, also, allows the level of musical rendition to vary. We've all known 'stump people' who have numbed themselves against pain—they just won't allow themselves to feel it. But that numbing process also takes away their ability to feel soaring exhilaration, joy, quiet satisfaction and other human emotions. If we want to experience wild highs, we have to be willing to also feel the lowest blues. This principle can be seen in the way people render music.

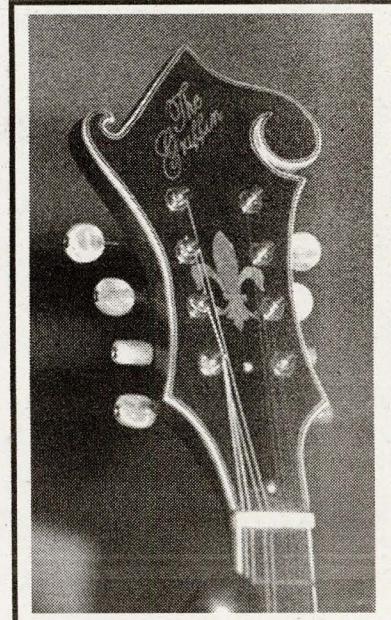
When we are tense and fearful, for instance, we may describe a melody accurately, but not imbue the music with spirit. Robots can play every single note correctly but deliver the total package devoid of nuance. Meaning, color and effective pacing transform mechanistic playing into musical playing. The gift

of music to the world entails suggestions of meaning, passionate renditions and opportunities for listeners to share the feeling of the composer and/or performer.

Flexibility is another personality/character trait that reveals its relevance in music performing—as are a number of other qualities we might consider. If our customary way of functioning in the world is rigid, our ability to progress beyond the artificial ceiling such a behavioral attitude creates is greatly inhibited. (Remember the old willow and the oak analogy here.)

To sum it all up, we as musicians can go to the next level, beyond woodenly producing the right tones; we can blossom into making music when we also allow the conscious awareness of our potential to grow. This process is time and effort consuming and demands full attention. Bit by bit we develop our potential to fill out our aptitude. We then serve (with every sinew of our beings) as natural bridges between the music we play and listeners, seeking to feel, know and understand that music, and we arch over to portray our music to others.

What will happen when people who now play our beloved music are gone? Will there be new 'natural bridges' (developed musical artists) to rise and array their rendition of the music like a giant rainbow for the world? Will the beauty and the precious textures be preserved? Will the next generation of musicians bring new ideas and energy to enliven and re-freshen traditional music to their children and their children's children? The strong pull of a natural bridge is magnetic; visualize it. Be it.



THE LUTHIER'S CORNER #13

Q: In the April column you said the archtop tone chamber replicated the ball bearing tone chamber shape. What did you mean by that? I thought the archtop tone chamber was a brass casting.

A. Yes, you are right. The archtop tone chambers were cast as were the flattop tone chambers. By "replicating the shape," I was referring to the arched shape of the banjo's head.

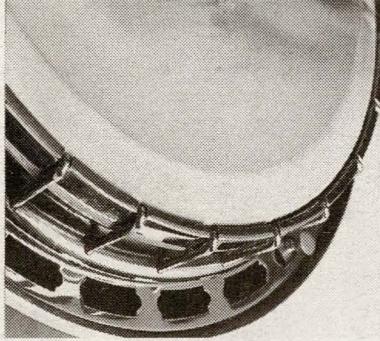


Fig. 1. The head on an archtop tone chamber of a 1927 Gibson banjo resembled the shape of a head on the ball bearing tone chamber.

As shown in last month's column, the tone chamber of the ball bearing design was formed from brass tubing and brass rod brazed together. The brass rod had a 9-1/2" outside diameter, and the tube had an 11" outside diameter so it gave the head an "arch top" appearance in addition to reducing the size of the active area of the head. This smaller active area tuned the head to a higher pitch and provided the banjo with a brighter tone than could be achieved with a full 11" head. When the cast archtop tone chambers were introduced in 1927, Gibson captured the arched design of the ball bearing tone chambers and reduced all of the 150 parts of the ball bearing design to a single casting. The cast archtop tone chamber also had a raised 9-1/2" center portion that, from the outside, echoed the design of the ball bearing tone chamber. (Gibson announced the 11" flattop tone chamber in the early 1930s.)

Q: What's the best way to determine the right gauges of strings to use on my D-28?

A: This is a question that is often taken for granted and since there is not sufficient room in this column for a lengthy, detailed answer, I'll do the best I can.

While string gauge is usually considered for its playing feel, the first concern should be to balance the strings for the instrument and then consider how to work with them from a "feel" standpoint.

For any instrument to work properly, there must be a balance between the gauge of the string and the construction of the instrument. And, more specifically, there must be a

balance between the load (a factor of the gauge) of the strings, and the stiffness and mass of the bridge, soundboard, and bracing or tone bar system.

As shown in Fig. 2, we can measure the load of any given string gauge by placing the string in a fixture with a tuning peg at one end and an accurate tension gauge at the other end. Then, with the string up to pitch at its given scale length, simply read the tension gauge to determine the load of the string. For example, if we placed a plain .010" string in the described fixture set to a 26" string scale, and tune the string to an E, we'd learn that the string delivers 14.5 pounds of tension to the tension gauge. And, if we measured each of the six strings in a set of light gauge guitar strings, for example, we might find that the total load of the strings might be 115 pounds. This is the load the strings place on both the peghead and on the bridge (on a fixed bridge instrument).

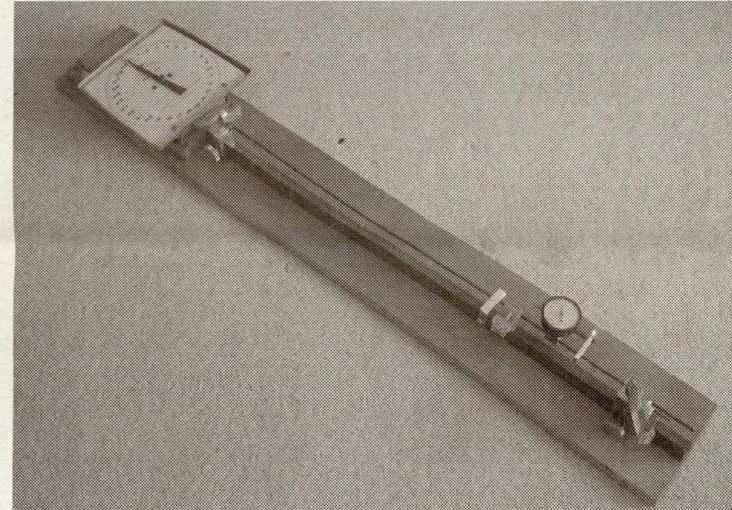


Fig. 2. This string load measuring fixture has a scale at one end and a movable "nut" and tuning machine at the other end. String loads can be measured at any scale length. The dial indicator shows the amount of stretch in the wire when it is brought up to pitch.

Having said this, there must be a relationship between the load the strings place on the guitar and the stiffness and construction of the guitar's soundboard. If this were a 1960s Gibson acoustic with double X bracing and a heavy maple bridge plate, there is a good probability that the 115 pounds of tension would be insufficient to drive the soundboard properly, and one would have to select a heavier if not "heavy" gauge of strings.

If this were a lightly braced Santa Cruz guitar, for example, then the 115 pounds of load might be just fine. Before you select which gauge of strings to use, you must first consider the structure of your guitar, how lightly or heavily braced the soundboard is, does the soundboard show any signs of a belly behind the bridge and hollow in front of the bridge (which is not a bad thing), and so on.

Aside from the total string load, it is really nice to know the load of each individual string with the hope of finding a set that has equally balanced strings. For example, it would be great to find a balanced set of guitars strings whose load – not gauge – from high E to low E had 20 pounds of tension for each string (for a total of 120 pounds).

In some cases, for certain types of bridge designs, it's ideal to have an unbalanced set. For example, on the 5-string banjo where three strings sit over a foot and two strings sit over a space in the bridge, it would be desirable to have a slightly greater load for the two strings over the space since the three strings over the feet have a direct route to the soundboard ("head" in this case) and, thus, automatically produce somewhat greater amplitude than the other two.

Back in the early 1980s, we were conducting rather extensive tests

By Roger H. Siminoff

When I wrote *The Luthier's Handbook*, I included a string gauge selector wheel that helps determine the correct gauge for each string in a set when changing to a lighter or heavier gauge of strings. The string selector wheel was based on a formula for calculating string loads.

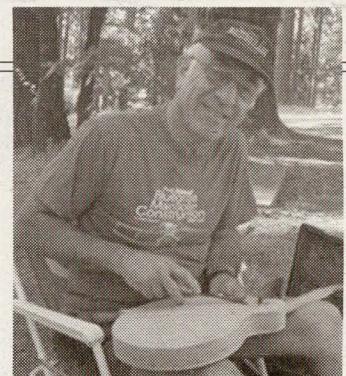


Fig. 3. This string gauge calculator comes with *The Luthier's Handbook* and helps select string gauges with similar tensions.

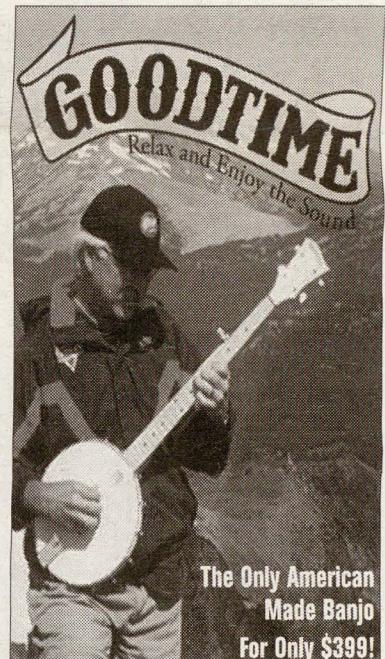
(I don't mean to plug my own book, but if you are interested in more on strings, loads, and string gauges, there is a whole chapter devoted to strings. The book also includes the String Gauge Calculator. *The Luthier's Handbook* is published by Hal Leonard Publishing and available at most music stores.)

See you next month!

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If you have questions you would like answered, please email: siminoff@siminoff.net, 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.



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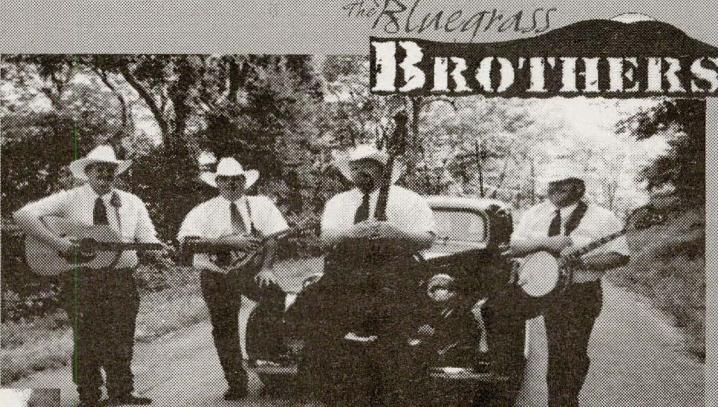
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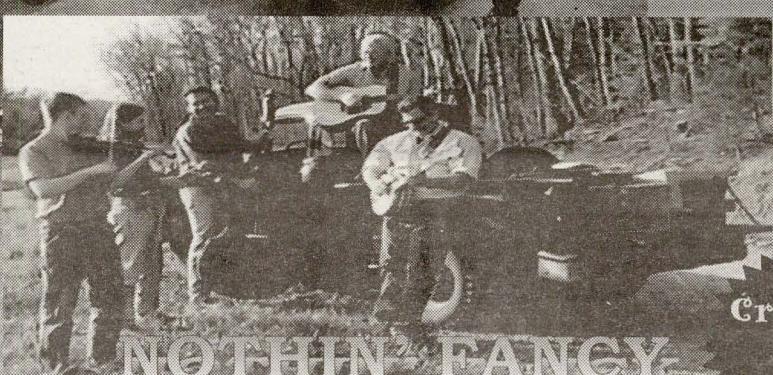


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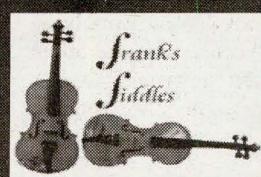
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RECORDING REVIEWS

by Brenda "Golden Ear" Hough

Jesse McReynolds & Charles Whitstein: A Tribute To Brother Duets
Pinecastle Records
PO Box 753
Columbus, NC 28722
©2005

Song List: *Gone But Not Forgotten, Remember Me, Rose of My Heart, Are You Missing Me, When I Stop Dreaming, Blues Stay Away From Me, The White Dove, Kentucky, Somebody Loves You Darling, That's All I Want From You, Which One Is To Blame, What Would You Give.*

Here's great news for fans of the McReynolds Brothers' sound. Jesse McReynolds has joined forces with Charles Whitstein of the Whitstein Brothers and their two voices rise in the soaring, note-for-note harmony blend that makes true duet singing a wonder to behold. Jesse and Charles both lost their singing partner brothers, but their united voices pay tribute not only to their departed siblings but to the great songs popularized by brother groups in country and bluegrass music. Jesse wrote the only new song on the album, "Gone But Not Forgotten," in memory of his brother Jim. "Rose of My Heart" was the classic Whitstein Brothers song and "Are You Missing Me?" is the signature McReynolds Brothers song and both are rendered with the heartfelt emotion that both men must have felt in singing these songs that were so much a part of their musical past.

"Blues Stay Away From Me" is from the singing of the Delmore Brothers, and the song is enhanced by the fine mandolin playing of Jesse McReynolds and some strong guitar from Dale Salyers. "When I Stop Dreaming" has the classic Louvin Brothers high harmonies, and Charles' voice soars in a high tenor equal to Ira Louvin's original. "White Dove" is from the singing of the Stanley Brothers, and "What Would You Give" is a gospel song from Bill and Charlie Monroe. Glen Duncan adds some stirring fiddle to the Blue Sky Boys' song "Kentucky." This is an outstanding album, a tribute to brothers everywhere and one that stayed in my CD player for weeks!

DVD and CD Telluride Bluegrass Festival: 30 Years
Rounder Records
One Camp Street
Cambridge, MA 02140
©2005
www.rounder.com

The Telluride Festival has grown in thirty years to be one of the nation's premier bluegrass festivals. The high air Colorado mountain town has never been afraid to put acts together that cross genres

of rock, folk, jazz and jam artists and the resulting music has always been energized and compelling. As the artists on the DVD mention, the fans come every year and they expect to see something new and different each time.

The CD and DVD have 32 different songs with artists connected only by their love of music and the fact that they produce the music on traditional bluegrass instruments. Beyond this one common parameter, the rest is exciting and pushes the envelope of genre, space and time. Featured artists include Nickel Creek, Sam Bush, Hot Rize, the Waifs, Kasey Chambers, the Yonder Mountain String Band, Emmylou Harris, Bela Fleck, Alison Brown Quartet, String Cheese Incident, and Tim O'Brien.

Hot Rize plays two of its classic songs, "Nellie Kane" and "Blue Night," while Nickel Creek plays its own "Sabra Girl" and the Beatles' "Taxman." Alison Brown's "Going to Glasgow" levitates through The Old Gray Goose, Malinky and Ray Harvey's and includes a incredible percussion performance by Joe Craven on Alison's banjo rim as Alison picks a flurry of notes at the same time. Sam Bush's band plays his monumental "Howling at the Moon" followed by Bill Monroe's "Blue Moon of Kentucky" jammed with 19 musicians in a joyous tribute to the father of bluegrass. The collection is an awesome celebration of all the wonderful things that can happen at Telluride and the DVD is a video experience that rivals the films of the first Woodstock festival.

The Ultimate Pickin' On Jam Session
Jammin' to the Talking Heads
CMH Records
PO Box 39439
Los Angeles, CA 90039
©2005
www.cmhrecords.com

Sweet and sour? Salt and vinegar? Pickles and ice cream? Your taste buds may curl or jump for joy with these food combinations, and your musical tastes may be intrigued with these recordings from CMH Records. For those bluegrass fans who like variety and spice, these compilations feature the musical hits of a variety of artists all done with a bluegrass flavor. The Ultimate Pickin' Session has selections from The Acoustic Tribute to David Grisman, Bluegrass Tribute to David Matthews Band, Bluegrass Tribute to Phish and Pickin' on the Grateful Dead and others. It's worth a trip to the web site to check out the various combinations of songs in tribute to country

and rock stars. CMH also has issued "tribute" albums with original songs from Lester Flatt, Mac Wiseman and the Bluegrass Cardinals and they've done a fine job of bringing the classic songs to the CD format.

Larry Sparks: 40
Rebel Records
PO Box 7405
Charlottesville, VA 22906
©2005
www.rebelrecords.com

Song list: *Georgia Peaches, City Folks Call Us Poor, John Deere Tractor, Blues Stay Away From Me, I 800 Do-U-Care, Where The Sweet Water Flows, Tennessee, I Need Jesus, Sharecropper's Son, Love Please Stay, Listening to the Wind, I Want You To Meet My Friend, Carter's Blues, It's Too Late To Walk The Floor, Brand New Broken Heart, New Highway.*

When someone celebrates 40 years in most businesses, it's time to bring out the gold watch and wish them well in their retirement. Larry Sparks has been playing bluegrass for 40 years, and this album of 16 songs clearly shows that Larry is at the peak of his career, and his guitar playing and singing still have the sizzle and heartfelt emotion that have been his hallmark for these many years.

An all star cast of singers and musicians has joined Larry, and these new renditions are tributes both to Larry and the power of the songs. The album begins with the rumbling power of Larry's guitar in a new song, "Georgia Peaches." Larry's guitar playing has always provided powerful punctuation to his singing, and he clearly shows his skill in the instrumental "Carter's Blues" where he is joined by Vince Gill, Kenny Smith, Jim Hurst and Tim Stafford on guitars and Ricky Skaggs on mandolin in a hot, smoking instrumental classic.

"John Deere Tractor" is one of Larry's most popular tunes and Dan Tyminski and Alison Krauss join him in the story of a country boy in the city. Other tributes to the joy and richness of living close to the land are told in "City Folks Call Us Poor" with harmonies from the Whites and "Tennessee 1949," another Sparks classic. Stuart Duncan's fiddle powers the gospel "Where The Sweet Water Flows" with Larry joined by the Isaacs Family. "Sharecropper's Son" is one of the first songs Larry recorded with the Stanley Brothers and he is joined here by Ralph Stanley and Ricky Skaggs on vocals. Each of the 16 songs has a

special story to tell and the detailed liner notes add to the enjoyment of the songs. If you own no other Larry Sparks album, this is the one to get. If you own all of the Larry Sparks albums, this one has the best songs dressed up fancy to go to town, so get this new one too! Larry Sparks, congratulations on your 40 years in music—best wishes for 40 more!

Carol Elizabeth Jones & Laurel Bliss: Ridin' Along
Yodel-Ay-Hee 059
Ashville, NC
©2005
www.jonesbliss.com

Song list: *I Ain't Got Time, The Fugitive's Lament, I Want To Be With You Always, Jealous Hearted Me, Mountain Laurel, Resurrection Day, Stormy Waters, Sit At Home, I Heard The Bluebirds Sing, It's Your Time To Be Blue, The Cyclone of Rye Cove, Wasted, By and By.*

Laurel Bliss and Carol Elizabeth Jones live on opposite coasts, but their lovely harmonies suggest a peas-in-a-pod closeness that often is associated with brothers and sisters. This new CD features classic country and bluegrass duets done with a lopin' country prairie rhythm and a fine harmony blending equal to any ever done by the Andrews Sisters. Laurel's fine resonator guitar playing adds a third voice to the blend as it weaves in and out of the songs and adds flourishes as fine as calligraphy on precious documents.

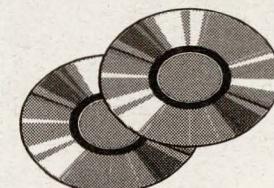
The songs are from a variety of sources, but they all have a story to tell and these gals have added their own spin to the tales. They add a sweetness to Jimmy Martin and Paul Williams' "Stormy Waters" and an extra bounce to the Poplin Family's "Sit At Home" with its eternal question—"why should I cry over you?" "I Heard the Bluebirds Sing" with its call-and-response style is from the singing of Jim and Jesse. "It's Your Time to be Blue" has Dave Keenan's National Duolian guitar adding a bluesy undertone to a song by Curly Fox and Texas Ruby. Blind Willie Johnson's gentle "By and By" is a great gospel sing-a-long to close the album. The cover features western hills and plains and Laurel and Carol in some wonderful cowboy shirts—climb on a horse and go "riding along."

Tom Adams & Michael Cleveland: Live at the Ragged Edge
Rounder Records
One Camp Street
Cambridge, MA 02140
www.rounder.com
©2004

Song list: *Fiddle and the Banjo, Dear Old Dixie, Dance Around Molly, Box Elder Beetles, Cripple Creek, Liberty, Shady Grove, Fireball Mail, Back Up and Push, John Hardy, Sitting on Top of the World, North Carolina Breakdown, Ginny Whitt's, Whistling Rufus, Funky Mountain Special, John Henry, Ricestraw, Going Down the Road Feeling Bad, I Saw The Light/I'll Fly Away, Little Maggie, Sally Goodin, Black Mountain Rag.*

This was the 2004 Instrumental Album of the year, and after listening to the on-the-edge instrumentals produced by Tom and Mike, it's not hard to see why this album was the winner. Tom and Mike played together in Rhonda Vincent's band, the Rage, and were also together in Dale Ann Bradley's band. The two would play banjo and fiddle tunes in small coffee house concerts for the joy of the music and luckily, the tape of this concert was saved. In the liner notes, Matt Glaser notes that "Mike Cleveland makes Jimi Hendrix sound like Lawrence Welk." To be sure, no one else is playing with the energy and depth of sound on the fiddle today and Mike Cleveland certainly deserves every one of the fiddle awards he's already earned.

The 23 songs are done jam session style with Tom and Mike trading leads with high intensity. "Dance Around Molly" is a high-stepping dance tune and Mike's fiddling is fast enough to wear the bow hairs off the stick. Tom easily follows the pace on banjo and you can almost see the dancers twirling. Tom leads off with Earl Scruggs' "Dear Old Dixie" with a great pulsating banjo and then Mike slows down the pace through one break and follows with some fast upper string double stops. The melodic "Box Elder Beetles" is one of three Tom Adams tunes on the album. "Funky Mountain Special" is Tom's take on Earl's "Foggy Mountain." "John Henry" is done at high octane speed with banjo and fiddle notes spilling out as fast as possible. Tom also adds 4 vocals to the mix including a "blah blah blah" forgotten verse to Shady Grove and a very modal "Little Maggie." Sadly, Tom Adams developed dystonia after this recording and he is unable to play currently. Hopefully Tom will recover and once again play with the finesse that is displayed on this album.



More Reviews & Reviews & Reviews & Reviews & Reviews & Reviews

Alison Brown: Stolen Moments
 Compass Records
 916 19th Avenue South
 Nashville, TN 37212
www.compassrecords.com
 ©2005

Song list: *The Sound of Summer Running, The Magnificent Seven, Homeward Bound, The Pirate Queen, Carrowkeel, Angel, McIntyre Heads South, One Morning in May, Going to Glasgow, Prayer Wheel, Musette for a Palindrome.*

Alison Brown was one of the first members of Alison Kraus' band Union Station, and her banjo playing was included in the landmark album I've Got That Old Feeling. Her success as a banjo player included an IBMA award in 1991 as Banjo Player of the Year. Alison's music combines elements of jazz, bluegrass and Celtic styles and the resulting combination is a free-flowing mountain stream with joyous ripples and bouncy rapids of sound. Alison's banjo takes on characteristics of a guitar with its melodic tones and the staccato brightness of a mandolin. Alison is joined on the musical numbers by Stuart Duncan on fiddle, John Burr on piano, John Doyle on guitar, Garry West on bass and Kenny Malone on drums. The tunes have echoes of tunes like Whiskey Before Breakfast or some of the Celtic "road" songs and Alison's "music company" is whimsically called "Brown Knows Music." The delightful "Musette for a Palindrome" (dedicated to her darling daughter Hannah) is a delightful romp with Mike Marshall on mandolin, Kenny Malone on conga and Alison on banjo.

There are four vocal numbers on the album. Andrea Zonn plays fiddle and takes the wistful lead vocal on "One Morning in May" and Beth Nielsen Chapman sings Jimi Hendrix's "Angel." The Indigo Girls harmonize on Paul Simon's "Homeward Bound." The album highlight is "Prayer Wheel," a lover has gone song with a chorus of intriguing imagery – "don't forget about me; spin a prayer wheel for me sometime, don't let me slip out of your mind." The "Boomchicks," female stars in disguise with their groupies "Sexual Vanilla" and "Max E. Pad," should release their own album – they could be the bluegrass equivalent of the Four Bitchin' Babes – you go girls!

Doyle Lawson: You Gotta Dig A Little Deeper
 Rounder Records
 One Camp Street
 Cambridge, MA 02140
www.rounder.com
 ©2005

Song list: *Heartbreak Number Nine, Four Walls, The Girl in the Valley, You Gotta Dig A Little Deeper, Saving Grace, Rosine, Girl From West Virginia, Blues for My Darling, Love Me As You'd Love the Rain, What Ain't To Be Just Might Happen, Oak Valley Girl, When I'm Knee Deep in Bluegrass.*

Doyle Lawson has been one of the pillars of bluegrass music over his long career. He has been a guitar player, banjo player with Jimmy Martin and His Sunny Mountain Boys and mandolin player with J.D. Crowe's Kentucky Mountain Boys. His mandolin talent made him a featured player in the Bluegrass Album Band with J.D. Crowe on banjo and Tony Rice on guitar. His keen ear for vocal and instrumental harmonies have given his bands a signature tiered sound that has wonderfully blended vocals augmented by flexible and organized instrumental bursts of powerful melody. The one instrumental on the album, "Rosine," has the pulsating rhythm of Terry Baucom's banjo matched with Doyle's crisp mandolin playing, Jamie Dailey's guitar and J.W. Stockman's fiddle all blending above the solid bass of Barry Scott.

The song selection includes several written by the band members and others from country sources. All the songs have emotional lyrics, gently telling the stories of folks living lives filled with love and touches of trouble. Porter Wagoner's "What Ain't To Be, Just Might Happen" is a charming song about getting what you didn't wish for, and the classic Jim Reeves song, "Four Walls," has the special soaring vocal trio of Doyle, Barry and Jamie that can send tingles up and down your spine.

True love is another theme of songs in the album. "You Gotta Dig A Little Deeper" is a gentle reminder that love needs to be nurtured and never taken for granted. "Saving Grace" is not a gospel song, but an uplifting song about a loving husband trying to rescue his wife from a memory-losing battle with Alzheimer's disease. With 4 other songs with "girl" or "darling" in the title, you can continue in the valentine-card mood. In fact, this would make a good gift even if it isn't Valentine's Day!

Darrell Webb:
Behind the Scenes
 Lonesome Day Records
 143 Deaton Road
 Booneville, KY 41314
 ©2005
www.lonesomeday.com

Song List: *I Beg You Little Darling Not To Cry, Your Selfish Heart, Thank You Father For My Dad, Close the Door Lightly, Behind the Scenes, Get on the Path, Twin Mountain Loves, The Lonesome Fugitive, Mother's Hand, Cold, Imagine That, Lover's Lane.*

Darrell Webb is a versatile singer and instrumentalist who has been in many bands including Lonesome River Band, J.D. Crowe and the New South and Wildfire. This solo album lets him feature his vocals and instrumental playing. Many bluegrass musicians join him on different songs, and they include Richard Bennett on guitar, Shawn Brock on mandolin, Mike Cleveland on fiddle, Phil Leadbetter on dobro and Ron Stewart on everything else. Darrell covers all the traditional bluegrass themes with songs about dads and moms, star-crossed lovers, and lonesome fugitives. Ron Stewart's banjo playing sparkles throughout the songs, and Darrel's mandolin and guitar work and vocals give the songs the proper bluegrass edge. Dolly Parton also puts in a guest appearance with her song "Cold." "Thank You Father For My Dad" and "Behind the Scenes" are from the talented Jeff Barbra and give credit to the hard working farmers and supportive wives behind the scenes. Darrell and Amanda Webb wrote "Get On The Path," a high-spirited gospel. It's always refreshing to see great band members step out and stand in the spotlight.

The Stanley Brothers: The Complete Rich-R-Tone 78s
 Rounder Records
 One Camp Street
 Cambridge, MA 02140
 ©2004
www.rounder.com

Song list: *Little Maggie, The Jealous Lover, The Little Glass of Wine, Our Darling's Gone, Molly and Tenbrook, The Little Girl and the Dreadful Snake, Are You Waiting Just For Me?, Death Is Only A Dream, Little Birdie, I Can Tell You The Time, The Little Glass of Wine, Mother No Longer Awaits Me At Home, The Rambler's Blues, The Girl Behind the Bar.*

The Stanley Brothers recorded their first songs for Rich-R-Tone Records in 1947. Their first band included Carter and Ralph, Pee Wee Lambert on mandolin, Ray Lambert on bass and Leslie Keith on the fiddle. Even these early sessions featured songs written by Carter. "The Girl Behind the Bar" is on the first session and

"Our Darling's Gone" is on the second. One of Ralph's signature songs, "Little Maggie" is on the second session and Ralph plays it in the two finger style he was using at the time. By the third session in 1948, Ralph had switched to three finger style banjo playing and Art Wooten was playing fiddle with the group. The Bill Monroe song, "Molly and Tenbrook," is part of this session and was recorded by the Stanleys before Monroe's own version. The collection is a fascinating look at the early sound of the Stanley Brothers and a chance to hear their earliest recordings.

DVD: Rainbow Quest with the Stanley Brothers and Doc Watson
 Shanachie Entertainment Corporation
 37 E. Clinton Street
 Newton, NJ 07860
www.shanachie.com
 ©2005

Folksinger Pete Seeger hosted a series of television shows in the 1960s called "Rainbow Quest." He featured musicians and musical genres from all over the world on the shows. This DVD showcases two shows from the series and features Carter and Ralph Stanley on one show and Doc Watson on the other. Pete opens both shows with a song and then the "guests" are introduced and they perform songs in a "back porch" setting. The shows are black and white films and last about an hour each. For those of us who have never seen Carter Stanley or Ralph in their heyday, it's a fascinating look at the harmonies between Ralph and Carter and the innovative guitar crosspicking style of George Shuffler. The Stanleys perform "Clinch Mountain Backstep", "Chicken Reel", "Single Girl" and the fine gospel song "Jacob's Vision". The footage features close ups of the instrumental playing. The show also includes Cousin Emmy a fine fiddle and banjo player whose country humor resembles Minnie Pearl's. Cousin Emmy also performs "Turkey in the Straw" with open mouth notes.

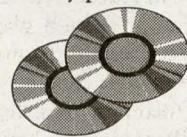
Doc Watson is joined by Clint Howard on guitar and Fred Price on fiddle. The three of them perform some gospel trio songs and Doc solos on "Lee Highway Blues" and "St. James Infirmary". Other songs include "Cackling Hen," "Fly Around" and "Careless Love." Shanachie has produced many other shows from the series and all of them are a

fascinating view of some of the musical treasures of the past.

The Chapmans: Simple Man
 Pinecastle Records
 5108 S. Orange Ave.
 Orlando, FL 32809
 ©2005
www.pinecastle.com

Song list: *Fire in the Canyon, Cold and Lonely, Jeanie and Tommy, Ode to the Simple Man, The Photograph, How I Love You, A Love I'll Never Forget, Pickle Flavored Ice Cream, Runaway Kind, Uphill Climb, Sometimes You Just Can't Win, You'll Be A Lost Ball.*

The Chapmans won the Emerging Artist of the Year award from the IBMA in 2001, and this third album from Pinecastle is proof that their artistry has matured and blossomed. Brothers Jeremy, Jason and John join their Dad Bill in a truly all-family band. The close harmony vocals and the carefully crafted instrumentals give each of the 12 songs a heartfelt rendition that catches the listener's attention and won't let go. John Chapman has one of the most expressive lead voices in bluegrass and his version of the Stevens Sisters' "Jeanie and Tommy" is a classic "don't drink and drive" tale. "A Love I'll Never Forget" and "The Photograph" are also stories of loves lost and treasured memories. "Pickle Flavored Ice Cream" is a hard-driving instrumental to keep things from becoming too sentimental. "Uphill Climb" and "You'll Be A Lost Ball" have the fast-paced instrumental breaks that make bluegrass "country music in overdrive." This is an album with many potential "number one hits!"



Wood & Steel: The Old Ones Are The Best Ones
 For Doggone Good Bluegrass
 Ed Dodson
www.woodandsteelband.com
 ©2005

Song list: *This Weary Heart You Stole Away, The Blues Are Back in Town, Julianne, Old Train, On My Mind, Nashville Skyline Rag, The Flame of Love, I'll Remember You Love, in My Prayers, I'll Be Waiting Right Here For You, It's A Long Way Back to Your Home, Fox in the Henhouse, Please Search Your Heart, You Took the Sunshine and Left the Rain, Darlin' Nelly Gray Revisited, The Old Ones Are The Best Ones, Little Bessie.*

Wood and Steel is a bluegrass band based in central North Carolina and its sound reflects the strong bluegrass roots of the area along with some fine

continued on page 21

J.D.'s Bluegrass Kitchen

Howdy, Howdy, Howdy!

Well, summer's here and I've got my outdoor kitchen set up under the Black Oaks again. Breakfast at daylight with my cowboy pard, Pat Russell, is the highlight of the day here on the mountain. The smell of fresh coffee perkin', a steak sizzling on the fire and some hot cakes and eggs on the griddle; and as my old friend Ron Thomason would say, it don't get any gooder than this!

Life here in the mountains of Calavaras County is still the best: there's a big flock of wild pigeons feeding on the hillside as I write this month's column. Occasionally you'll here the gobble of wild turkeys in the distance, while wood ducks and Canadian Honkers fly over on their way to my neighbor's pond. About the only minus of living here in the semi-wilderness as I do, is the occasional visit of Mr. Mountain Lion (my neighbor USED to have goats!). I had a lion chew up a garbage can and scatter the contents this last winter, but judging from its tracks, it was a young one, and left the area (Hmmm. I wonder what Cougar Chili would taste like?). But, all in all, life here on the mountain is pretty laid back and getting better every day. Especially when I can kick back at evening time with a nice cool one, and smell a big tri-tip cooking over a bed of coals with some roasting ears of corn wrapped in foil laying next to it, getting all nice and sweet and tender. Wow, mountain living is not for the faint of heart! Well, tie your horse up by the woodshed, pull up a chair here in the shade, and I'll knock the top out of a cold one for you and we'll "make medicine" over some vittles.

California is known as the salad bowl of the nation, and rightfully so, as we supply the majority of the vegetables to the rest of our wonderful country. My favorite is fresh asparagus. A good friend of mine, Ronnie Del Carlo raises and markets some of the finest jumbo asparagus to come out of the Delta country of our fair state. Some years ago he showed me how to fix this first recipe, and its as easy as falling off a peeled foot log over old Piney Creek. I named it after my friend, so here's how you fix some...

Asparagus Del Carlo

1 big bunch of asparagus, washed and snapped to length
Extra virgin olive oil
Balsamic vinegar
Soy sauce
3-4 cloves of garlic, minced
Teriyaki sauce

Put a big pot of water on to boil. When boiling, add asparagus to pot. Watch the pot, and when the water starts to boil again, immediately dump into a colander. The asparagus is cooked nice and crunchy tender.

Place the asparagus in a large bowl. Add as much olive oil as you want. Give it a good shot of the vinegar, add some soy sauce and teriyaki sauce to taste. Mix in the garlic and enjoy either hot or cold. The best asparagus ever!

Ronnie also has some wonderful recipes for grilled asparagus that I plan to share here with you next month. These'll make your tongue slap your brains out eatin' 'em! Ronnie not only raises some of the finest asparagus, he knows how to cook it too! In short, he's just a good ol' boy.

Here's a recipe that goes good with some Asparagus Del Carlo on a hot summer's evening.

One of my favorite summertime suppers is a good, substantial sandwich. When you have company, these are fast, easy and are they ever yummy (they're also great festival fare).

Sausage Sandwich

4 sweet Italian sausages
2 tbsp olive oil
1 large onion, sliced thin
1 red bell pepper, sliced thin strips
1 green bell pepper, sliced thin strips
1 1/2 tsp dried oregano
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper to taste
4 rolls
4 tbsp fresh grated parmesan cheese

Cook the onion and peppers in olive oil until onion is golden brown. Stir in oregano and salt and pepper. Remove from pan. Split the sausages lengthwise and cook in the same pan, about 12 minutes until done. Place on roll, top with onion mixture and sprinkle with cheese. Serve hot. Manga!

Add a nice bottle of Merlot, and you talk about a great supper. Now if you've fixed some vanilla sponge cake with last month's recipe for dessert, you be the "King Boss" as my late friend Sonny Hammond used to say.

We who live here in California are really spoiled by the vast array of foodstuffs that are so ready available to us year round. If you don't believe me, just try and buy some Brie cheese in Owensboro, KY. I guarantee you'll get that "deer in the headlights" look every time you ask for it. And if you look in the produce section for some fresh Bok Choy or jicama, why son, you might as well be from Mars. I'm not kidding. They think you're speaking a foreign language; and you know what, you really are.

Which brings me to this next recipe. We take fresh fish for granted here in the Golden State. When you go to the fish market here, you know that fish you purchase this morning was probably swimming in the Pacific Ocean around 10-12 hours ago. I'm talking fresh fish here, folks, not frozen and trucked 2,000 miles, kept frozen for 3 months, then thawed and sold as "fresh". Yuk! I like to see their gills still moving.

Here's a tuna salad recipe that I know you'll love, and it makes a great supper for a hot summers day.

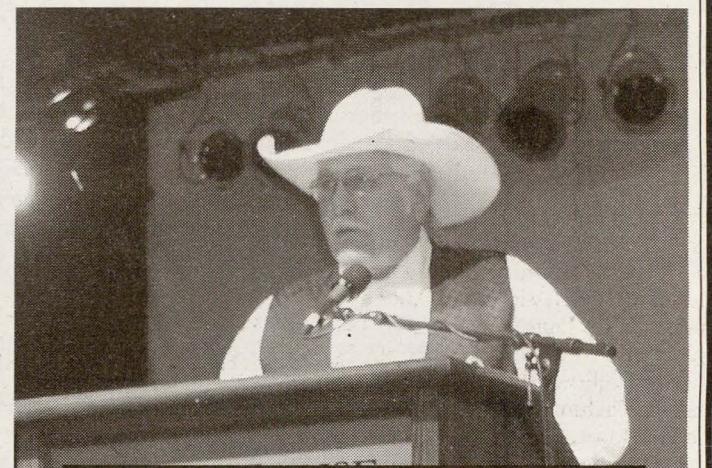
Fresh Tuna Salad

1 lb fresh tuna steak, 1" thick and quartered
3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 tbsp chopped shallots
Fresh ground pepper to taste
1 cup grape tomatoes, halved
1 cup chopped, blanched asparagus
4 cups lettuce, your choice to kind

Vinaigrette Dressing

1 tbsp Dijon mustard
1 1/2 tsp sugar
Salt and pepper to taste
1/4 cup cider vinegar
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
2 tbsp chopped shallots

Marinate the tuna in the oil, shallots and pepper for 15-20 minutes. Over medium heat, sear the tuna in a skillet for 4 minutes until lightly browned; turn and sear the other side 3-



J.D. says:
"I'm a gonna show ya how ta fix it!"

4 minutes or until cooked to desired doneness. Let rest 5 minutes.

Toss the tomatoes, asparagus and lettuce with the vinaigrette and place on 4 plates. Thinly slice the tuna, arrange on the veggies, drizzle with a couple tablespoons of the vinaigrette. Garnish with chives or parsley.

There you have a wonderful summer supper that's not only good eating, its good for you too!

I love tuna steaks cooked on my grill over a bed of coals too. You talk about some great vittles! Just add some fresh French bread, preferably some good San Francisco Sourdough, a bottle of chilled Pinot Grigio and you have some of California's finest eating! I hope that I've thrown a "craving" on you with this month's offering.

Dot honey, I'm sorry,

but you'll just have to use some of that frozen tuna there in Tennessee to fix this one for Les. I'll bet he won't mind (have your Baptist friends bring the wine).

Well folks, I hope that you have a great summer, get out to hear lots of live bluegrass music and enjoy some of my recipes with family and friends.

This is one of my favorite times of the year when the Bluegrass Kitchen is alive and well under the Black oaks here on Bluegrass Acres!

Keep all of our service men and women in your prayers. May God bless America and grant us all peace and health!

Yer Friend

J.D. Rhynes



More Reviews & Reviews & Reviews

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modern embellishments. Most of the 16 songs are written by guitarist Ed Dodson and he taps into the deep well of bluegrass themes: long journeys home, loves lost and found and the special title tune devoted to the sounds of classic guitars and banjos. "It's A Long Way Back To Your Home" is the classic story of the bright lights of the city and the home left behind with some fine lyrics, mellow vocal harmonies, and some stellar guitar, mandolin and banjo leads. Ed also wrote a "Darlin' Nelly Gray" update with a surprise ending. Besides providing some very tasty mandolin interludes in the songs, Joey Lemons sings the lead in the Doyle Lawson song, "Please Search Your Heart" and his own "I'll Be Waiting Right Here For You."

While the band vocals are first-rate, the instrumentation is outstanding. Snuffy Smith is the owner of a fine 1934 Gibson RB-3 and its sparkling tone adds fine framing to the vocals. Snuffy is also well known as a banjo bridge innovator and he has been involved with instrument set-ups for many other bands. Ed Dodson plays a classic 1936 Martin D18 and its punchy rhythm and snappy bass runs help punctuate all the songs and are particularly strong in the two instrumentals on the album: Bob Dylan's "Nashville Skyline Rag" and Ed's "Fox in the Henhouse." Ed is also a guitar instructor at the Swannanoa Gathering at Warren Wilson College. Jacque Smith provides the strong bass foundation for the band and of course is given accolades as the "prettiest member of the band." Great music from an up-and-coming band.

Billy Gilman: Everything and More
Image Music Group
20525 Nordhoff St. Suite 200
Chatsworth, CA 91311
©2004

Song list: *Hey Little Suzie, Everything and More, Peaceable Kingdom, Coming Home, Is Anybody Out There, Looked into the Wings, Three Words, Two Hearts, One Kiss, Pray for Him, I'm Not Me Anymore, Missed You on Sunday, Something Bout Heaven, Awaken the Music.*

Billy Gilman gained fame several years ago as the 11-year old power-house singer with the hit song "One Voice." His career was sidelined with voice problems, but he is now staging a comeback at the ripe old age of 17. Billy has developed a fine country voice with strong true tones and a touch of angst well suited for this collection of lovelorn songs. While the promotional materials claim that the songs are partly bluegrass, the drums and high production embellishments put the songs into the popular country mode. The song

"Peaceable Kingdom," written by Rob Carlson, is a stand out gospel flavor song that would be well suited to any Sunday morning jam sessions. Blessings to you Bill on the recovery of your voice; perhaps you can add more bluesgrass flavor to your next recording.

Mel Bay's Guitar Journals: Sacred
ISBN 0-7866-0790-4 (book only)
Mel Bay Publications Inc.
#4 Industrial Drive
Pacific, MO 63069
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www.melbay.com

Mel Bay Publications has a large selection of musical instruction books, videos and DVDs to help musicians perfect their skills. This particular book features sacred music in seven categories: Shaped Note Songs, Spirituals, Camp Meetings, Gospel Favorites, Praise Songs and Black Gospel style. Guitar chords and solo phrases are featured for each song, but the real value of the collection are the complete lyrics which will be of great benefit for jam sessions or church and worship settings. Some well-known favorites include Old Rugged Cross, Swing Low Sweet Chariot, Great Speckled Bird, Will the Circle Be Unbroken and A Beautiful Life. The 86 song collection would be very useful for guitarists accompanying singers. Other topics in the Guitar Journals series include Chords, Fingerstyle, Blues, Flamenco, Flatpicking, Jazz, Mastering the Fingerboard, Rock, Scales and Techniques.

DVD: Bluegrass Mandolin Taught by Sam Bush
Homespun Tapes
Box 340
Woodstock, NY 12498
1-800-33-TAPES
www.homespuntapes.com
©2005

The original videotape lesson was produced in 1984, but this new DVD version lets the viewer access the separate lessons more quickly for review and learning.

Sam Bush is one of America's premier mandolin players and this lesson is a detailed look at the playing of bluegrass mandolin stalwarts Bill Monroe, Jesse McReynolds, Howdy Forester and John Duffey. Each song is presented with a melody line and then Sam discusses variations by the featured player and then discloses his own variations and techniques to change the tune again.

Sam also explains tuning the mandolin using a tuning fork (pitch fork?) and his hand and pick positions are also shown with close-up sequences. The video also uses a split screen to show Sam's left and right hands playing at the same

time. Sam spends time with the use of the rhythm chop and then explains his "guitar rhythm" strum with downstrokes and upstrokes to give a more exciting rhythm background in playing. Crosspicking is also played slowly and the camera focuses on the pick placement.

A detailed tablature book is included in the package and each tune variation is labeled by style and stylist. Traditional songs include Paddy on the Turnpike in Bill Monroe style, Grey Eagle in Howdy Forester style, Sugarfoot Rag in Jesse McReynolds style, and a John Duffy solo of East Virginia Blues. Sam also plays his versions of Wayfaring Stranger, Bill Cheatham, Banks of the Ohio and Sitting on Top of the World.

Sam Bush is well known for his "newgrass" innovations on mandolin and two of his new (in 1984) tunes are also demonstrated and taught. Tony Rice's "Manzanita" still sounds fresh and innovative, and Sam's "Sapporo" with its Japanese pentatonic scale and minor key is still a marvelous melodic song. The audio quality on the DVD is outstanding and Sam Bush fans will enjoy listening to his playing even if they are not mandolin students!

www.chaonthebeweb.org

Emerging Artists Bluegrass Festival

Clair Tappaan Lodge Benefit – Donner Summit

September 9-11, 2005

This intimate festival will feature bands who are on their way to hitting it big! Come and enjoy sets by the talented **Donner Mountain Bluegrass Band, Moonlight Hoodoo Revue, Dark Hollow and many more!** The weekend will also feature a **band scramble, songwriting contest, kids performances, and constant jamming.** The Festival will benefit and be held on Donner Summit at **Clair Tappaan Lodge.** Bunk rooms, camping, and RV parking are all available on site. On site hiking/biking trails take you to pristine high mountain lakes for swimming, fishing and relaxing. This is a benefit event for the beautifully rustic 1930's Sierra Club lodge, located near Donner Summit in the Sierras, that has been the first woodland and mountain experience for many city kids over the years and is the flagship of so many important programs, and it needs to be preserved for the generations to come. For prices and more information contact Clair Tappaan Lodge – 800-679-6775 – ctl@sierraclub.org www.ctl.sierraclub.org/activities

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Dr. Banjo continued

lence, sometimes just stumbling forward because that's all you know how to do. And the tune and the beat are really catchy! It's hard to find an uptempo bluegrass song that has anything much to say. I just love playing that song.

I also have a lot of feeling about Just Like You, a song I wrote before Hot Rize, that my previous band had rejected, and that took a while to surface in Hot Rize. When it finally did, it was an instant hit, and I felt great that I'd created something that seemed to regularly touch people, and even lead into good personal conversations.

But I have all sorts of feelings about all our songs. Those songs are old friends I've gotten to visit many hundreds of times.

Hot Rize has had several reunions over the years and sadly Charles Sawtelle is no longer with us. Which guitarist is taking his place?

It took us a few years to try Hot Rize again after Charles died. It was weird to even think of it without him. Fortunately, we decided the band was not dead, and asked Bryan Sutton. He had never been in a tight-knit band with a peer-type relationship. He took to the job right away, and as flashy as he can be, his playing is for the band and the song. He's a super nice guy, and he even used to see Hot Rize in North Carolina as a kid, so he knew a lot of the stuff. It's good having a "young guy" in the band now that we're all in our 50s.

Many fans delighted in the "alter ego" band, Red Knuckles. How did this band start and who determined the new instruments for each member?

As far as I know, the members each decided on their own which instrument to play. Of course some of those were limited, by what you can only call limitations. We realized that a bluegrass band benefit by carrying an inferior band that would make us look good. We just would leave the stage, they'd come on, and nature took its course. Of course, we kept all the money.

A lot of bands would do well to bring some of their private humor, at least the publicly consumable part, onto the stage and let the audience in on the fun. Too much dry stuff nowadays. Bluegrass started when vaudeville was still a force. You had to entertain, not just stand there and play. Acuff had a yoyo, Monroe danced. They had some fun.

In the years since Hot Rize disbanded, you've been quite busy with projects of your own. You have several banjo instructional videos on Homespun

Tapes and you have Live Five and your tours with Joan. Give us an update on your band activities.

This Spring has been busier than most. In April, Joan and I performed at a festival in western Colorado, and at Merlefest in North Carolina. In between we did a 4-day bluegrass jam camp at the Merlefest site.

The day after we got home, we had our regular Live Five Tuesday night at a club in Denver, and a few more days later headed off to Italy, and then Israel. In Israel, we played a big folk festival on the Sea of Galilee. Our son Will has picked up mandolin again, and played with us for the first time at a kibbutz..

We have about a week home now, then Joan and I head for east Kentucky for another jam camp and a festival show with Don Rigsby at his home base there in Morehead, KY. Then we scoot over to Connecticut the same weekend and do the first Hot Rize gig of the year, at a nice festival there. Then Joan and I stay on and do yet another jam camp there.

After that, we'll be back in Colorado for several weeks, thank goodness, with some nice Live Five local gigs, and maybe a chance to hang out in Niwot and get the yard mowed.

Later this summer, the Live Five will play festivals in North Carolina and Colorado, and there's a very cool night ahead for me performing in September at the New Yorker Festival with Steve Martin and Earl Scruggs. I'm quite psyched for that one.

Your banjo videos include a very user-friendly "Get Rolling" featuring the Goodtime banjo from Deering. Tell us something about your approach to teaching banjo to beginners and the techniques that are most important to learn first.

Well, after many years of teaching, it became more and more clear that the people who were learning the least, having the least fun, and eventually quitting music, were the ones trying to master written-out solos, all by themselves. In a jamming situation they'd not know what to do, and often clutch when they'd try something.

It became increasingly obvious to me what simple jamming could do for these people. It would not only give them a way to play that's not very difficult, and fun, and involves other people. Once a

person gets comfy playing with others, the person becomes more a musician, and not just a suffering "student". That's how I got into playing, at age 14 and 15. I would work on my own, but I always had friends to play with. And you know, that's exactly how people have historically learned to play this music—from people they knew, not once a week in a teacher's studio, or out of a book or an internet tab.

Tab came along a few decades ago and people started teaching bluegrass like classical music: "Here, learn this note-for-note." That has its place, but it's teaching someone how to recite, and not how to converse, that is, play music with other people. So I'm trying to fill some of the gap with my teaching and the instructional stuff I put out. Two more jamming play-along DVDs including a super-easy one are next, and after that, I'm going to try to finish a songbook I've been working on for over 20 years. Karen Quick gave me a huge amount of help with that, and I still want to show her it wasn't in vain!

I think teachers should start beginning students almost immediately on simple jamming, following simple chords in real time, for both the fun and the foundation. Then as they get comfortable, raise the bar slowly with tabs and such. If they're already jamming, they'll be eager for this and practice more meaningfully. My ideas on all of this are spelled out in two articles I published in *Bluegrass Unlimited* and *Banjo Newsletter*, and which are available to read on DrBanjo.com. I hope ALL bluegrass teachers will read those articles and get their students playing music together before handing them solos to memorize.

This issue is close to my heart, because it really bothers me that most people who take up instruments end up quitting. They started with a lot of desire and interest, and the learning experience frustrated them and made them feel inadequate. We can do a lot better as teachers, and a lot of these folks wouldn't quit, but get into the local networks like you have in the Bay Area, and keep playing for life!

Once that happens, I'll be glad to think of something else to teach. I'm love teaching bands how to be better bands, and have done that twice in the Bay Area in recent years. The Donner Mt. Band and Homespun Rowdy both took my workshop, and they are the two most recent choices by the June CBA festival for their Emerging Band slot. I'm quite proud of them, and the work they did to make it happen.

Please describe some techniques

that are unique to your own playing and the things that you feel are vital to the learning of the art of banjo.

That could certainly take us a while, Brenda! That's one reason why my banjo camps last five days.

I go for soul, and groove, and tone. I make sure to know the melody of the song well enough to play it, but I'll add my own touches. I check out the lyrics carefully, because that's what sets the mood. Some licks or sounds will fit perfectly, some won't. Some songs call for power, some for tenderness, some for smoothness, some for bounciness. Dynamics are important, to help the music breathe, and make it more apt to mean something.

I use whatever knowledge I have of banjo playing to try to bring the song alive, any way I can. It depends so much on the material itself. I especially like bluesy things that may call for bending notes, playing 7ths and flat-thirds and such. Good bluesy songs give a chance for some feeling to let loose.

The tone is your voice, and you want that to just sound appealing and lovable, like Scruggs did for me when I first heard him. Playing clearly and consistently is important, and I strive for that.

My banjo teaching is designed to give people the tools to sound good and play the songs appropriately, and then helping them use the tools.

Another project of yours is the Jam Camp. You've done several in California and participants are always pleased with your approach to jamming. Bluegrass is a very social music and you've made it possible for folks to connect with each other in the jam camps. As a sociologist, what are some of your observations about bluegrass and its current popularity?

All my life I've wondered why bluegrass isn't more popular. It's such great music. It's gaining popularity now thanks especially to a few spearheads like Alison Krauss, the O Brother movie, and people like the Dixie Chicks and Dolly Parton making it "safe" again as a country music instrument. Yonder Mt. String Band is almost singlehandedly opening up a giant new market, the youth/hippie/jamband folks. That's all fine, but I think the really steady long-growth is just as with a tree. It's a good strong tree with deep roots, and it's growing in healthy soil. It knows its worth without having to be "King of the Forest". When people play it, they get to be part of the tree itself, so jamming helps it grow too. As long as people believe in it and keep

it true to itself, it will do fine forever.

The thing I keep my eye on is, is this music that matters? We don't need people just going through the motions, then on to the next fad. If they make the music part of their lives, it will have a home in many places, around the world, as long as there are human beings.

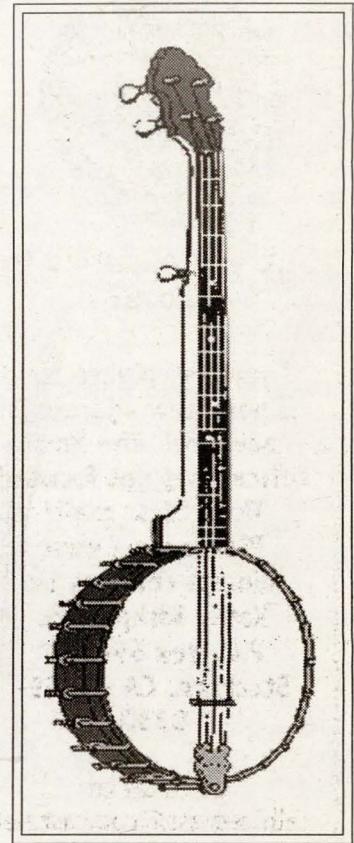
What are your future plans and projects?

The next two jam videos and a songbook, as mentioned. We are getting close to done on the next Pete and Joan album. The Live Five is sounding great, and with Joan singing and Greg Harris, our new young vibes player, I'm excited to get the Live Five back in the studio.

Any predictions on the future of bluegrass music?

Well, it's certainly a mighty big tree, and it keeps growing. I think it's cool that this month I mentored a 9 year old kid who's going to make a great banjo player, met a totally blind banjo player and teacher in North Carolina, jammed and hung out with some of the local Colorado jam grass people, and then played a bunch of old-time music with my favorite local fiddler the same night. Then a few days ago in Israel we got to actually spread the "bluegrass" gospel as well as we could, and I jammed till the wee hours with an English guy, an Israeli guy, and my son. I'm a lucky man.

If I were the only person doing such things, I'd be worried about the future of bluegrass. But as you well know, I'm definitely not alone!



STUDIO INSIDER #91

By Joe Weed

Welcome to July! I hope you were able to attend the CBA's annual Grass Valley Father's Day weekend Bluegrass Festival. I like to write in this column about the issues and questions raised by you during my annual recording workshop at Grass Valley, but I'll have to include that next month, due to the press deadline falling before the festival.

Travels in the Heartland

I'm writing onboard an America West flight to St. Louis, MO, with my wife, Marti Kendall. There we'll take a 20-minute cab ride to St. Charles, at the mouth of the Missouri River. We're planning to bicycle the 225 miles of the Katy Trail, the country's longest rails to trails route, which follows the line of the old Kentucky-Texas (KT) railroad. We'll follow the river for about 150 of those miles, from St. Charles to Booneville. After a visit with musicians Cathy Barton and Dave Para, we'll continue on the trail as it bends south to Sedalia and Clinton. There we'll grab a shuttle back to St. Charles for the flight home. Thanks to UPS online shipment tracking, I know our bikes are waiting for us in St. Charles, and we're eager to get on the trail. I expect there will be some adventures to relate after this trip.

Bike Trails and Data Paths

Fast and widely adopted data pathways into and out of computers (such as USB 2 and Firewire 800) are becoming more univer-

sally available in personal computers. As manufacturers embrace these technologies and respond to the needs of independent recordists, new tools are emerging to make it easy for a small band to use one box as a decent live mixing board and as a digital front end for a computer recording system.

The Remote Scene

When I do remote (on-location) recording, I'm reluctant to pull lots of gear from my studio. Equipment becomes damaged, cables have to be disconnected and reconnected in inconvenient places, things get dirty, studio operations are impacted by the absence of particular tools, and otherwise productive time is lost to installation, removal, and set-up of gear. In a commercial operation, somebody has to pay for that time.

For the last several years, my solution for remote recording has been to use a separate rig that I never install in my machine room. It's a Digidesign 002 Rack, a digital front end for ProTools that works well with my Macintosh laptop, which is also great on location. The 002 Rack includes 4 mic preamps and accepts an additional 4 line-level inputs, for a total of 8 analog inputs. The signals coming into these inputs can be equalized, compressed, effected, and otherwise treated expertly within ProTools, which means I don't have to carry along additional boxes, plug them into questionable power sources, run cables back and forth, etc. Ah, the power and convenience of using plug-ins!

But what if I'm on a job where I need to record more than just 4 microphones? What if I need independent mics for guitar, bass, mandolin, banjo, dobro, and 4 vocalists, along with an announce mic, a feed from the bass pick-up, and a stereo pair of audience/ambience mics? That means I need to have preamps for 13 analog sources!

Oh, no — did I hear ADAT again?

Fortunately, the 002 Rack includes an additional powerful digital input called an "ADAT light-pipe." It has become a convenient industry standard that lives on happily and productively, long after the original ADAT tape-based digital recorders got banished to the junk heap, along with a few expletives in

response to their having eaten so many tapes. The "light pipe" carries up to 8 channels of digital audio at 44.1 or 48 KHz sample rate inside an optical cable. Several manufacturers make boxes that contain 8 mic preamps with digital converters and an ADAT light pipe output. One of these, plugged into the ADAT input on the back of the 002 Rack, provides a system with 12 analog mic preamps (the ADAT 8 and the 002's on-board 4). The 002 Rack also has 4 more analog inputs that can be fed with line-level sources. These 4 sources could include an additional four external mic preamps, or some other combination of audio sources. There's even a separate SPDIF input (SPDIF carries a 2 channel digital signal over regular analog wire with RCA connectors) on the back of the 002 Rack. So with 8 analog, 8 ADAT light pipe, and the SPDIF pair, this rig brings 18 inputs to ProTools at record time! ProTools is a very stable and reliable recording platform, is used all over the world, and has been designed to allow easy inter-operability between systems, even allowing sessions recorded on PC systems to be run on Macintosh rigs and vice-versa.

I can record 18 separate sources into a ProTools session, and all the EQ, compression, delays, reverbs, etc., that I need for the session can be run within ProTools as plug-ins that reside in the computer. And I can burn all the plug-in settings and audio data from that session to a CDR or DVD-R on my laptop and transfer it back at the studio into our big ProTools TDM HD3 Accel system. Wonderful! There we can edit, tweak, and mix in a professional environment until we're done.

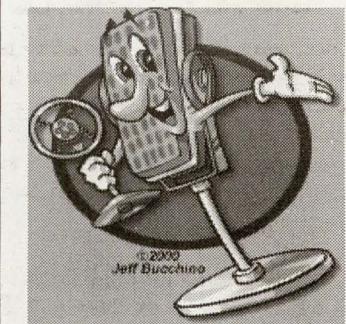
The whole truth, please

Sounds simple, no? But wait — to get those 18 real world (i.e., analog) sources into the system I've described, I need to take several important pieces of outboard gear along in addition to that 002 Rack and my laptop. Now things get complicated and move slower, requiring that I must charge more "remote tax."

To get the 8 analog mics into the 002 Rack over the ADAT lightpipe, I'll need one unit — probably a rack-mounted box. To utilize the 4

analog line inputs on the 002 Rack, I need some more external mic pre-amps, and possibly a direct box or two, in case some of the inputs come from instrument pick-ups. And to be able to use the SPDIF pair of inputs, I need a box that will convert 2 inputs, whether mic or line level, to the SPDIF digital format. And to make sure that the ADAT light pipe, the SPDIF unit, and the 002 Rack all agree on synchronizing their 1's and 0's, (a necessity for a glitch-free, high fidelity recording) I need either highly-specialized and expensive boxes with selectable master clock settings and/or an external master digital clock that can provide all the units with digital clock sync. (And this list does not include expensive specialty cables required as well...) Clearly, this system can be tedious and costly to design, build, and implement.

So, although on paper there are 18 inputs available for this rig at record time, remember that there is an accompanying price tag of gear, connections, cables, set-up and tear-down time, and things to monitor



during the session. Fortunately, some manufacturers (Mackie, for one) are coming out with digital versions of their small 16-channel mixers, and running all sixteen inputs to a digital output on firewire. That might prove to be an effective way to get those 16 inputs into a digital system using just one box!

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 done sound tracks for film, TV and museums. His latest production, for Appleseed Recordings, is "Spain in My Heart." You can reach Joe by calling (408)353-3353, or by email, at joe@highlandpublishing.com.



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MICHELLE NIXON

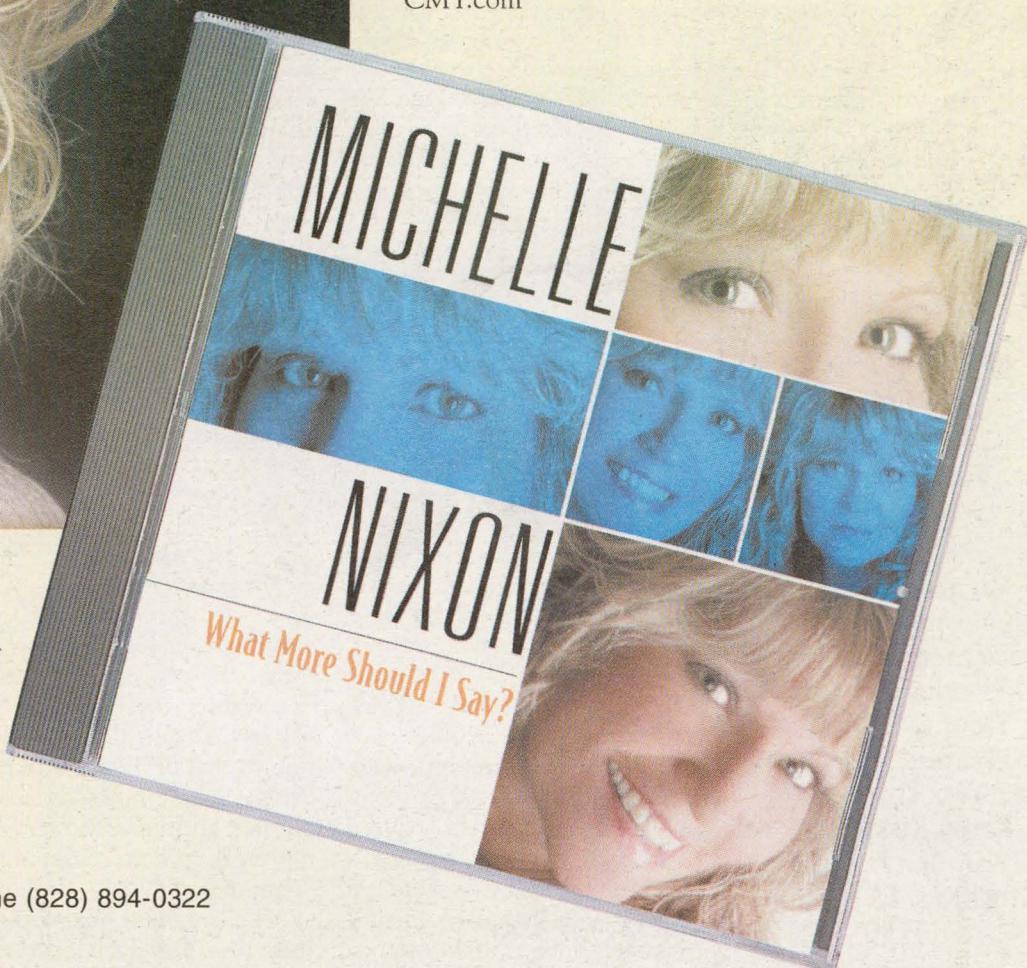


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breakdown

Merlefest – FOMS* outbreak in North Carolina – 80,000 affected

*Fear Of Missing Something

Yup, even the wristbands are better there. I am still wearing my glittering silver and black reserved seat wristband as I fly back from North Carolina and all I can say is, "Wow!" Ten stages, over 100 artists, attendance of 80K or so, 4 days of fun and music. It is pretty difficult to describe something as vast as this amazing festival, but in this article I will attempt to give a flavor of Merlefest.

History

This is the 18th year of the American Music Festival in Wilkesboro, North Carolina. It is named for Doc Watson's son, Eddy Merle Watson. As good or perhaps a better guitarist than Doc, Merle died in a tragic tractor accident 20 years ago. Local folks, spearheaded by Ralph Rinzer, set up the first festival in 1987 as a fundraiser for a memorial garden for Merle, to be planted on the grounds of the local Wilkesboro Community College (WCC). The first festival used 2 stages, one consisting of flatbed trucks parked in front of a cabin on the college grounds and the other a stage in a WCC auditorium. The very first festival drew 4000 people

(about the size of the Strawberry Music Festival).

This amazing event has grown like kudzu (hey, we're in the South) to what it is in 2005: All told, about eighty thousand folks are involved, with daily attendance somewhere around 60,000. Yes, that would be about 10 times the size of our own Grass Valley! The symbiotic relationship with WCC continues: the college uses the Doc and Merle Watson Stage and the field in front of it for their graduation ceremonies, the WCC students man the beverage booths in the food tents and the money raised from the beverages funds scholarships and student activities. Moreover, the Festival currently contributes about 200K per year to the college which is used for new buildings, parking and grounds improvements, and other expansion projects.

Artists

Merlefest is not strictly a bluegrass festival – it bills itself as an Americana music festival. Genres include Bluegrass, folk,

Cajun, acoustic rock and several fusion groups. The bill includes 100 different artists and groups and I certainly won't list them all here. For a complete list, go to www.Merlefest.org.

Highlights for me were

D e 1

McCoury, the Chieftains, the Kruger Brothers (who are locals now, having moved from Switzerland to North Carolina), The Waybacks, The Wayfaring Strangers, The Duhks, Jerry Douglas, Alison Krauss and of course, Doc Watson. In honor of the 20th anniversary of Merle's death, there were some special acts: "Docabilly,"

including Doc Watson, Richard Watson (Doc's grandson), T. Michael Coleman, and Jeff Little as well as a Bluegrass Boys Reunion, which included Peter Rowan, Roland White, Earl Scruggs gd, Peter Greene, and Bobby Hicks, among others.

Highest of the highlights for me were Allison Kraus's angelic sing-

by Intrepid Roving Reporter
Lisa "I wanna be a racoon" Burns



ing, and the Chieftains evening set. Both brought tears to my eyes.

How can they fit this many acts into 4 days, you ask? That's where the Fear Of Missing Something hits hard. There are 10 stages, many of them a good 15 minute brisk walk apart, so you have to have a plan.

continued on next page



The Bluegrass Boys Reunion Band

continued from first page

Everywhere you look people are studying schedules and circling events to attend. I felt that at least I earned the strawberry shortcakes I was eating! But you have to reconcile yourself to the fact that you cannot see everything and everyone you want. I missed the songwriting contest winners, but I did get to see the banjo competition. Such is life at Merlefest.

The two main stages, where the big acts typically play, are the Watson stage and the Hillside stage. If you were a die-hard Bluegrass fan you could spend most of the Festival in a reserved seat at the Watson stage and still die happy, having seen Del, Allison, the Bluegrass Boys Reunion, Jerry, and Ricky. And you might have even caught Loretta by accident! You would have also seen the acts on the Cabin Stage, which is essentially a "tweener" stage operating between the acts performing on the Watson stage.

But if you are more adventurous, don't miss the more intimate settings and catch your favorite acts at the Creekside Stage, the Americana Stage and others. There is also a dance tent for you Cajun, Honky Tonk and Square Dance fans. It is also covered so that if the sky opens up, you have some shelter.

Food

There are 2 large food tents on the festival grounds. Howlarge? At least 50 yards long. Offerings include corn on the cob, Mexican tacos, turkey legs, strawberry shortcake, Thai, chicken dinners and on it goes. And each of the food booths is run by a local non-profit group. The Kiwanis, the Boy Scouts, Special Olympics, local athletic boosters and law enforcement agencies are just some of the groups involved. Each year they raise ??? for their charities. This makes paying \$2 for a 20oz soda easier to take! And most of the dinners are under \$5. Merlefest makes sure the quality is high by surveying attendees on which foods they liked and what they would like to see in the future.

Vendors

One part of the Festival Program jokingly exhorts attendees to "bring all your money!" and certainly there are many things on which to spend it. If your spouse doesn't like Americana music, they will have no shortage of shopping experiences. Outdoor gear (rain gear was a big seller), pottery, t-shirts, jewelry, paintings, and drawings are just some of the items offered in the vendor tents. I bought a beautiful and unique painting of a guitar floating in a night sky, painted on fabric by a woman named Yvette Chappius Kent from Louisiana.

There is a special Heritage Crafts pavilion containing local handicrafts such as broommaking, quilting, spinning, weaving and

pencil sketching. My favorite booth was the pencil sketches done by Willard Gayheart (guitar player with Skeeter and the Skidmarks and now with Alternate Roots). He sells numbered prints of his sketches and subjects include local musicians, Bill Monroe and several of local luthier Wayne Henderson. While in the booth I had a wonderful visit with Willard and he spoke very fondly of playing Grass Valley in the '90's. He noted that he considers us the best Bluegrass Festival in the West.

Finally there is an onsite convenience store, "Flattop's One-Stop," selling sunscreen, Tylenol, chips, film, batteries and other sundries, as well as an operating US post office!

Expo Tent

If you really did bring all your money, you'll want to head to the Expo Tent to check out guitars, banjos, mandolins, resophonic guitars, a few fiddles and even a few upright basses. Big names included Larrivee, Gibson, Martin, Taylor, Deering, Ome, and John Pearse (the tent sponsor). This is a multi-genre festival so you can also get some amps and some electric instruments as well as capos, strings, bridge pins, and assorted t-shirts. Also on the scene are some luthiers not usually seen out West: Nechville banjos, Beard resophonic guitars (Jerry's playing one now) and Kogut violins.

The vendors at this festival seemed to be doing a brisk business – with so many musicians about they were getting good value for their sponsorships. I spent a lot of time in this tent schmoozing vendors for the CBA festivals and ok, I did manage to pick some. Listen, you can't take an upright bass on the shuttle bus, so you have to borrow one, and there they were in the Expo tent! A good time was had indeed.

Merlefest Mercantile

You can't go all the way to NC and come back without a t-shirt, can you? Well, I couldn't – had to get the tie dyed (hey, I'm a Native Californian) Merlefest t-shirt. But the Merlefest gift shop had so much more: T-shirts, rain ponchos, sweatshirts, blankets, beanie bears, raccoons (Flattop the Raccoon is the Festival Mascot). Like they say, bring all your money. There are ATM's available on the grounds, so you need not worry about running out of cash!

And of course you need to buy CD's from Del, Allison, Bela, and the Duhks. They are all available in the Merlefest Mall, the equivalent of the record table. The Mall also stocks instructional videos and other music books.

Kids area

You say you can't see little Johnnie sitting still through Del's set? No worries. There is a kids play area sponsored by Burger King which includes a climbing wall, a big grass area for Frisbee throwing, a crafts program, and a kids

stage with actual kids acts (take notice, Frank Solivan) as well as child oriented musicians like Cathy Fink and Marcy Marxer. My favorite kids act was the Lil' Rascals, all dolled up in their overalls, crisp white shirts and neckties (see photo). The band's MC was a hoot – look out Karl Shifflet. Clowns, magicians and a flea circus were also on hand to entertain. And Flattop, the Raccoon mascot, is on hand for photo ops and hugs.

For the very young ones (and for the overstimulated 40-somethings) there is the R and R tent, sponsored by Lowe's. Cots for little one's naps are provided, as well as a changing table with paper towels and other necessities. This tent is a real necessity since most attendees are not camping and so cannot go take a nap in the RV. I took advantage of one of the larger cots for a quick nap before Allison closed the show – what a great idea!

If you go

So if I've gotten you all ready to go to NC next April, check out the Merlefest web site real soon, since reserved seats go on sale soon and sell out quickly. I do recommend the reserved seats since they have the best views of the stage (and you can see details and close up shots on the big video screen). It also saves you from having to schlep a chair onto the shuttle bus and around the festival.

Be aware that this is not a festival for the faint of heart – if you want to go to several stages, you are going to have to walk some. That said, I did see a few attendees in wheelchairs and scooters, although they stayed mostly at the Watson stage. The Hillside stage requires some climbing up a bank so hiking boots with good tread are recommended. Also, since you may have left your chair back at the Watson stage, bring a blanket or poncho to sit on – the ground can be a little damp.

Did I say, "damp?" We were fortunate this year, apparently, and had to endure only a few sprinkles and a short rain one night. But rain

is ALWAYS expected at this outdoor festival, so dress accordingly. Ponchos and rain slickers are the order of the day. It can be 80 and sunny or it can be 50 and cold so layers are advised.

Raleigh/Durham and Greensboro are the airports closest to the Festival, but both are 2 or 3 hours from Wilkesboro. Music starts at 3pm Thursday, and ends 6:30 pm Sunday, so plan your flights accordingly. Lodging books up quickly, so it helped that I was able to stay with a friend in West Jefferson (thanks, Randy). There is tent camping space as well as RV space available. I have to say that I wouldn't have wanted to tent camp at this festival given the chance of rain. There is an extensive list of lodging (hotels, cabins, RV camping, tent camping) on the Merlefest web site.

Also keep in mind that you will park outside the WCC grounds and be bused in, so allow extra time if you don't want to miss that 10am act.

What I loved

Almost everything. This festival is very well organized. The acts are top-notch, and it is clear that the performers are thrilled to be there. This is a great family-oriented festival – no alcohol allowed and lots of stuff for the kids.

What's not to like

It took some planning to figure out what to put in the knapsack and still keep it light. It is necessary to carry things with you because there is no easy way to get back to your car. With the digital camera (to take the pictures you see), the binoculars, the sunscreen, the poncho

and the ski parka, I sometimes felt like a pack mule.

One other downside: with a festival this size, meeting performers is not always possible, since they do not go to a record table after their sets. However, you see quite a few of them on the grounds and they are friendly with autographs and photo ops.

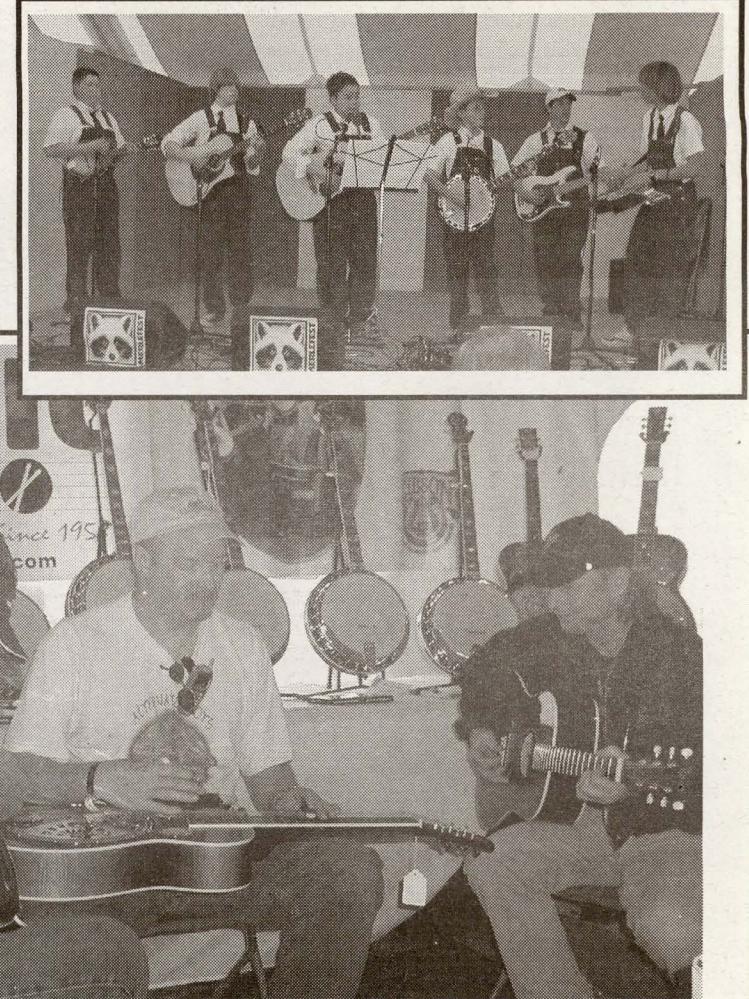
How do they do it

The logistics of this festival are mind-boggling. Parking for 60,000, sound crews on 10 stages, food logistics, yikes! The organizers have had 18 years to get it right, and they certainly have. The key factor in pulling this amazing thing off seems to be community involvement. From the boy scouts organizing the parking shuttles to the WCC students selling pop to the luthier community and corporate community providing sponsors, the support is amazing. The volunteers are everywhere, checking wristbands, checking coolers, directing you to your seats, running the lost and found. And the Merlefest program states that ticket prices would be 15% higher were it not for sponsorships.

Corporate sponsorships include Burger King, Lowe's, Charter Communications (the big video screen), Fleetwood homes and others. Music industry sponsorships include Shure, JBL, SWR, ASCAP, BMI as well as the many luthiers.

So, yeah, I'm exhausted, but what a good time I had. Thanks, North Carolina for showing us how it's done.

photos by Lisa Burns



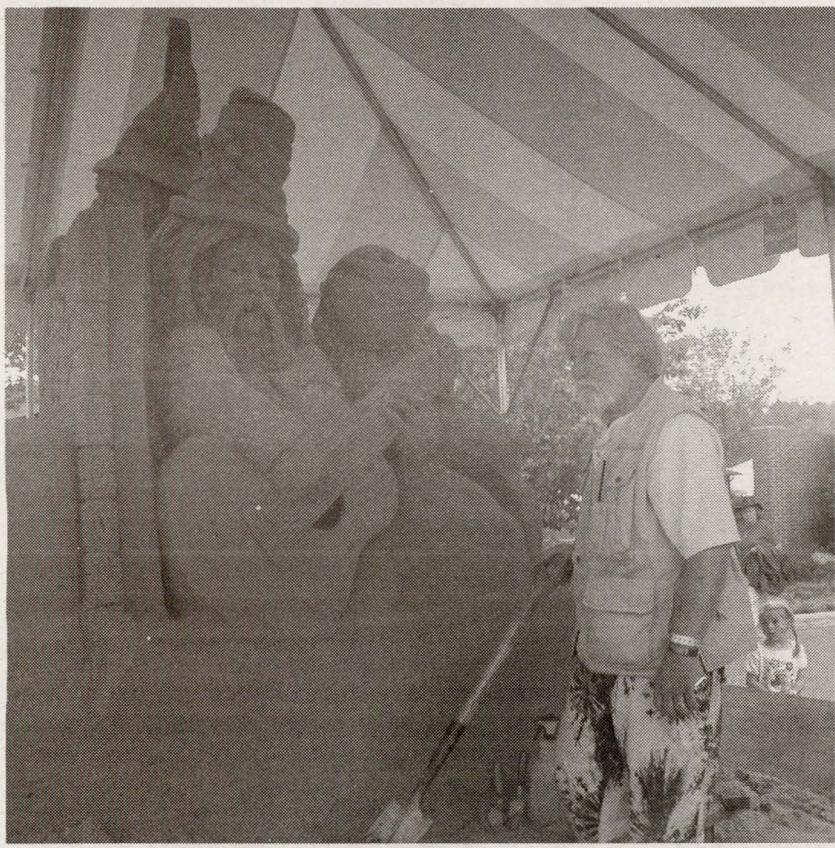
Ron Paisley, Galax Dobro champ, picking at the Gibson booth



The Kid's Climbing Tower

Editor's Notes: You may remember how last year the California Bluegrass Association's Father's Day Festival won the coveted IBMA award for "Best Bluegrass Event". The fierce competition was with Wintergrass up in Tacoma, Washington and the famed Merlefest. I had the opportunity to garner a collection of reviews of Wintergrass earlier this year, but I was loathe to leave this festival out of the picture of just what we were up against. In the never ending effort to bring our faithful readers the whole story, CBA Board member and intrepid roving reporter Lisa Burns was drafted into covering the rest of the story. I want to assure you that we spared no expense (as long as it was hers) to get to this coverage for you, Dear Readers, and we will continue to go to any lengths (especially if its fun) to bring you hard hitting, fact finding coverage such as this. Rest assured on that note. Maybe next year I can go, too.

Opposite page: Li'l Rascals on the Li'l Pickers Stage



Sandy Feat and his sand sculpture

**14th Annual
Bluegrass Festival**

Wolf Mountain

July 30th & 31st

**San Martin
(by Gilroy)**

**Cliff Wagner and Old #7
Bluegrass Redliners
High Country, Lone Prairie**

**Michael Stadler and Mary Gibbons
HeartWood, Bean Creek, Sidesaddle
Mighty Crows, Cash Magnets
Circle R Boys**

We've Moved! The show will take place in the shade on the stage in The Barn at the San Martin Country Park, with dust-free camping on the surrounding lawns. Children will enjoy the Barn Yard Zoo, ghost town, 15' tower slide, windmill, huge ivy maze and rehearsing for Kid's Jam. Vocal and instrument workshops will take place during music breaks. Sunday will feature Bluegrass Gospel, Kids Bluegrass Jam at noon and an open mic in the afternoon. Camping is a favorite part of the festival experience with dedicated tent only area and room for RVs, all on grassy lawns! Breakfast, lunch and dinner will be available.

Free - After Hours Acoustic Show

Tickets (advance by July 10)
\$ 35 includes camping
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If any of that sounds familiar, have I got an answer for you! **Adventure Bluegrass!**

*Adventure Bluegrass: Columbia Gorge Bluegrass Festival
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Rock County Fairgrounds - Stevenson, Washington*

Imagine a weekend with your choice of non-stop jamming, a great lineup of concerts by national/regional/local bluegrass bands and a seemingly never-ending list of mini-adventures to satisfy even the most hesitant family member. Choose from adventures organized by the festival promoters or check out the **Adventure Bluegrass** website www.adventurebluegrass.com for more information about how to arrange your own "do-it-yourself" fun.

Of course, **Adventure Bluegrass** offers stages full of music from a host of old favorites and new discoveries alike; but this festival offers even more. Check out golfing, hiking, biking, kayaking, rock climbing, fishing. If you're into the less strenuous activities perhaps a trip to the Interpretive Center, frisbee golf, a winery tour or shopping the local treasures is more to your taste. Whatever your idea of adventure, we've roamed the gorge from high to low seeking activities to delight the entire family; young or old, timid or fearless, bird-watcher or ultimate thrill-seeker.

Spend your days "adventuring" and return to the campground for an evening of stellar music.. The Grascals, the up-and-coming artists from Nashville and grammy-nominated Claire Lynch are the headlining acts for this year's event and an amazing lineup of Northwest bands completes the bill.

Featured bands include The Ohop Valley Boys (WA), Great Northern Planes (OR), Lost in the Fog (WA), Prairie Flyer (OR), Lonesome Ridge (WA), Roundhouse (OR), True North (OR). Portland's Flat Mountain Girls will make you kick up your heels during Friday night's dance with caller Bill Martin. On Saturday night eclectic and extremely talented String Helix will dance you into the wee hours.

Catch some of these bands on Saturday afternoon at the gorgeous Skamania Lodge which overlooks the festival campground. Go for an afternoon round of golf or just sip a cold drink on the veranda as the strains of bluegrass music wash over the hillsides. The Skamania Lodge is also offering a special package deal for festival goers including a 2-night stay at the Lodge and 2 weekend passes to the festival. Pamper yourself.

But wait – there's more! The town of Stevenson has jumped on the "bandwagon" by tucking bluegrass bands into nooks and crannies all over town during the day on Friday. Imagine, it'll be as though you've stepped into a world overtaken by bluegrass! What's not to love?

For a complete artist lineup and/or for ticket information, call Acoustic Sound at 253.428.8056 or check out the Acoustic Sound website at www.acousticsound.org and **JOIN THE ADVENTURE!**

Golden Old Time Music Festival



Matt Kinman

In November of 2004 CBA members Darrell Johnston, Carl Pugter, Mark Hogan and Gene Bach got together in Sacramento to discuss putting together a new festival. This, however, would not be a bluegrass festival but one totally dedicated to old time music. From the meeting emerged the concept of the Golden Old Time Music Festival. On June 3rd, 4th and 5th of 2005 that concept was put into practical application and the result was three days of great old time music, dancing and jamming at the fairground in Yreka, Ca. You never know what to expect from a first time event and as opening day approached we were all apprehensive about the outcome. Those concerns were greatly eased when folks started arriving on Wednesday morning. When it was all said and done the festival had drawn attendees from Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Utah and Idaho. To say this event was a success would be putting it mildly. Located halfway between Portland and San Francisco Yreka was the perfect place for those two hotbeds of old time activity to get together. I talked with several people who told me they finally had somewhere to meet with friends they hadn't seen in years and they were all very happy at the idea of doing that on a yearly basis. No one was disappointed by the stellar line-up of the Foghorn String Band, The Stairwell Sisters,

the Piney Creek Weasels, Kenny Hall, the ACME String Ensemble, the Roadoilers, Eric and Suzy Thompson, the Mt. Diablo String Band, Matt Kinman and the Old Time Serenaders and Knock'em Stiff. The performers, and the audience, were treated to wonderful sound by Paul Knight and everybody there was impressed by the awesome fairground facilities. Music on stage wasn't the only thing going on at the event. There was also a mountain man camp, a Civil War camp, dances and lots of jamming. People seemed to really enjoy talking with the mountain man and Civil War folks and learning about the way of life during those time periods. The reenactors were also extremely pleased and are looking forward to coming back next year. One of the most popular activities were the dances on Friday and Saturday nights. These dances were held right after the last stage band had performed and drew over a hundred people each evening. Music for the dances was provided by festival bands and the calling for most of both nights was done by Bill Martin from Portland. Bill did an awesome job of walking people through each dance before they started and was an absolute pro caller. My wife and my youngest daughter were there both nights from start to finish and are chomping at the bit to get back out there on the dance floor next year.



Happy dancing folks

by Gene Bach

Dances will definitely be part of the 2006 event. One thing that really stood out for me was the amount of jamming going on. At any time of the day or night there were multiple groups of people in small groups picking and having fun. I'd also like to say that the quality of music heard in these jams was absolutely outstanding. There always seems to be some kind of great find at a festival and this one was no different. The buried treasure here was the Mercury DimesÖwinners of the band contest. Hailing from the Bay Area these folks got up on stage on Sunday morning and proved they were the real deal. With any luck at all they'll be part of the main band line-up next year. Speaking of next year make sure you set aside June 2nd, 3rd and 4th of 2006 and come to Yreka, CA to join us for the second annual Golden Old Time Music Festival. It will be held again at the fairground in Yreka which features over 100 sites with electric and water hookups and enough dry camping areas to hold a whole town of campers. Another awesome thing about the fairground is that there is no dirt there to get all over everything. The entire area is covered in beautiful grass with plenty of shaded seating. To keep up to date on the festival during the course of the year check the website at www.goldenoldtimemusic.com. We received many surveys back during the event and rest assured we are going over them all and will do everything in our power to apply your suggestions for improvement to next years' event. I talked with many people and not once did I encounter anyone who said they will not be coming back. In fact, I've talked to quite a few people since the event who couldn't attend that are planning on being there next year. This has a great chance of being one of the best old time events in the country.

Although, due to his untimely passing, Darrell Johnston wasn't physically there his presence was everywhere. I'm sure he'll join us all next June and we hope you will too.



Kenny Hall



Foghorn



Happy dancing kids



The Stairwell Sisters

CBA Calendar of Bluegrass, Old-time and Gospel Events

Band Gigs & Concerts

- 7/1/05** — Grapefruit Ed and Harmony Grits will perform at Don Quixote's International Music Hall, 6275 Highway 9, Felton, CA. Tickets are \$8 advance and \$10 at the door. For tickets and reservations, call 831-603-2294 or visit www.donquixotesmusic.com.
- 7/2/2005** — The Websters w/ Scott Nygaard, Brittany Hass, and Cindy Browne in concert at 8 pm at the West Side Theatre, 1331 Main Street, Newman, CA. Doors open at 7 pm. Tickets are \$14 general and \$16 reserved. For information, call 209-862-4490; email info@westsidetheatre.org; or visit <http://www.westsidetheatre.org>.
- 7/2/2005** — Larry Keel and Natural Bridge will perform in concert at Whiskey Dick's Saloon, 2660 Lake Tahoe Blvd., Lake Tahoe, CA.
- 7/3/2005** — Trailer Park Troubadours will perform in concert at 8 pm at the West Side Theatre, 1331 Main Street, Newman, CA. Doors open at 7 pm. Tickets are \$20 general and \$23 reserved. For information, call 209-862-4490; email info@westsidetheatre.org; or visit <http://www.westsidetheatre.org>.
- 7/3/2005** — Western Swing Thing starts at noon at Pena Pachamama, 1630 Powell Street (between Union & Green) North Beach, San Francisco, CA. \$5 cover charge. For information, call 415-646-0018 or visit <http://www.PenaPachamama.com>.
- 7/4/2005** — Bean Creek will perform at 7 pm at Phil's Fish Market and Eatery, on Sandholt Road, Moss Landing, CA. Other musicians are welcome to join in for a bluegrass picking party for the second set starting about 8 pm. For information, call 831-375-2975 or visit www.philsfishmarket.com.
- 7/6/2005** — Whiskey Brothers will perform at 9 pm at the Albatross Pub, 1822 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, CA. Free admission, excellent beer on tap, all you can eat popcorn for 25 cents. For information, call 510-843-2473 or visit www.albatrosspub.com.
- 7/6/2005** — The Websters w/ Scot Nygaard will perform at the Freight and Salvage Coffee House, 1111 Addison Street, Berkeley, CA. For information or tickets, call 510-548-1761 or visit <http://www.thefreight.org>.
- 7/6/2005** — Mountain Laurel will perform at Latitudes Restaurant & Bar, 130 Maple Street, Auburn, CA. For information, contact Kathy Barwick at (916) 739-6101; email kbar95816@yahoo.com; or visit <http://www.mountainlaurel.us>.
- 7/7/2005** — Ed Neff & Friends will perform from 6:30 – 9:30 pm at the Willowbrook Ale House, 3600 Petaluma Blvd., Petaluma, CA.
- 7/10/05** — Jimbo Trout & The Fishpeople will perform at Americana Farmer's Market at the Ferry Building (Embarcadero @ Market St.) in San Francisco, CA beginning at 5 pm. For information call 415-665-0408 or visit www.ShelbyAshPresents.com.
- 7/8/2005** — Kathy Kallick Band concert at 7:30 pm for Friday Night Live, Downtown Plaza, Cloverdale, CA. For information, call 707-894-4410 or visit www.cloverdaleartsalliance.org.
- 7/8/2005** — Coyote Blue will perform at the Mission Pizza & Pub, 1572 Washington Blvd., Fremont, CA. For information, call 510-651-6858/510-574-1880; email info@missionpizza.com; or visit <http://www.missionpizza.com>.
- 7/9/2005** — Woody Boyd will perform at Ludy's Main Street BBQ, 677 Main Street, Woodland, CA. For information, contact Denise Calhoun at 916.716.4074; email dcalhoun@woodyboyd.net; or visit <http://www.woodyboyd.net>.
- 7/9/2005** — Kathy Kallick Band will perform in concert for the Oaksong Society for Preservation of Way Cool Music, at Grey Pine Farm, east of Redding, CA. For information or tickets, call Barry Hazle at 530-472-3065, email info@oaksongs.com, or visit <http://www.oaksongs.com>.
- 7/11/2005** — Courthouse Ramblers will perform at 7 pm at Phil's Fish Market and Eatery on Sandholt Road in Moss Landing, CA. Other musicians are welcome to join in for a bluegrass picking party for the second set starting about 8 pm. For information, call 831-375-2975 or visit [philsfishmarket.com](http://www.philsfishmarket.com).
- 7/14/2005** — Ed Neff & Friends will perform from 6:30 – 9:30 pm at the Willowbrook Ale House, 3600 Petaluma Blvd., Petaluma, CA. For information, call 707-775-4232.
- 7/15/2005** — Bluegrass Bonanza featuring Belle Monroe & Her Brewglass Boys and the Pine Box Boys, 9 pm at the Plough and Stars, 116 Clement St. (between 2nd & 3rd Ave.), San Francisco, CA. Admission is \$6 per person. For information, contact Shelby Ash at 415 664-2044; email thearms@hotmail.com; or visit <http://pweb.jps.net/~jgilder/plough.html>.
- 7/15/2005** — The Earl Brothers will perform in concert at the Fifth String Music Store, 930 Alhambra Blvd. at J Street in Sacramento, CA. For information or tickets, contact John Green at 916-442-8282; email questions@thefifthstring.com or visit www.thefifthstring.com.
- 7/15/2005** — The Mill Creek Boys will perform at 6:30 pm as part of the Citrus Park Summer Concert Series at the beautiful California Citrus State Historic Park on the corner of Dufferin and Van Buren in Riverside, CA. Admission and parking are free. Bring your lawn chairs blankets and picnic suppers for a great time. For information, call 951-780-6222; email californiacitrushp@parks.ca.gov; or visit <http://www.parks.ca.gov>
- 7/21/05** — Houston-Jones and Blame Sally will perform at Don Quixote's International Music Hall, 6275 Highway 9, Felton, CA. Tickets are \$8 advance and \$10 at the door. For tickets and reservations, call 831-603-2294 or visit www.donquixotesmusic.com.
- 7/21/2005** — Chris Stuart & Backcountry will perform for a Concord Community Concert in Todos Santos Park, Concord, CA. For information, contact Jim Ocean at 925-229-2710; email jim@communityconcerts.com; or visit www.communityconcerts.com.
- 7/22/2005** — Chris Stuart & Backcountry will perform at the Cozmic CafÈ, 594 Main Street, Placerville, CA. For information, call 530-642-8481; email bruce@qnote productions.com; or visit www.cozmiccafe.com.
- 7/23/2005** — Chris Stuart & Backcountry will be performing for an Oak Song Society Concert at Grey Pine Farm, Redding, CA. For information or tickets, contact Barry Hazle at 530-472-3065; email info@oaksongs.com; or visit <http://www.oaksongs.com>.
- 7/23/05** — Bluegrass At The Ford presents J.D. Crowe & The New South in concert with the Lampkin Family Band at 8 pm at the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre, 2580 Cahuenga Blvd., East, Hollywood, CA. Tickets are \$24 in advance and \$30 at the door. For information, contact BASC at 818-705-8870, email harleybg@aol.com or visit www.bluegrasssoutherncalifornia.org.
- 7/24/05** — Bluegrass Brunch" featuring the Lone Mountain Sisters at Pena Pachamama, 1630 Powell St, San Francisco, Ca. For information, call (415) 646-0018.
- 7/25/2005** — Courthouse Ramblers will perform at 7 pm at Phil's Fish Market and Eatery, on Sandholt Road, Moss Landing, CA. Other musicians are welcome to join in for a bluegrass picking party for the second set starting about 8 pm. For information, call 831-375-2975 or visit [philsfishmarket.com](http://www.philsfishmarket.com).
- 7/28/2005** — Ed Neff & Friends will perform from 6:30 – 9:30 pm at the Willowbrook Ale House, 3600 Petaluma Blvd., Petaluma, CA. For information, call 707-775-4232.
- 7/29/2005** — Jimmy Chickenpants will perform at the Espresso Garden, 814 S. Bascom Avenue, San Jose, CA. For information, call 408-294-3353 or visit <http://www.fiddlingcricket.com>.
- 7/30/2005** — On The Loose will perform from 4-6 pm on the Encinal Ave. stage at the Alameda Wine and Art Street Fair, Park Street, Alameda, CA. For information, call Rob Shotwell at 530-273-5879 or email rob5string@lanset.com.
- 7/30/05** — Grace Country (Gospel Bluegrass Band) will be performing at 6:30 pm on the main stage on the Lambtown stage at the Dixon Fairgrounds in Dixon, CA. For information, contact Jim Witt at 530-795-1003 or email jtwitt@praise.com.
- 7/31/05** — On The Loose will perform from 10 am until noon on the Lincoln Ave. stage at the Alameda Wine and Art Street Fair, Park Street, Alameda, CA. For information, call Rob Shotwell at 530-273-5879 or email rob5string@lanset.com.
- 8/1/2005** — Bean Creek will perform at 7 pm at Phil's Fish Market and Eatery, on Sandholt Road, Moss Landing, CA. Other musicians are welcome to join in for a bluegrass picking party for the second set starting about 8 pm. For information, call 831-375-2975 or visit www.philsfishmarket.com.
- 8/3/2005** — Whiskey Brothers will perform at 9 m at the Albatross Pub, 1822 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, CA. For information, call 510-843-2473 or visit www.albatrosspub.com.
- 8/4/2005** — Ed Neff & Friends will perform from 6:30 – 9:30 pm at the Willowbrook Ale House, 3600 Petaluma Blvd., Petaluma, CA. For information, call 707-775-4232.
- 8/7/2005** — The Mill Creek Boys will perform for a Yucaipa Sunday Concert at 6:30 pm at the beautiful Yucaipa Community Park, 34900 Oak Glen Road in Yucaipa CA. Admission and parking are free. Bring your lawn chairs blankets and picnic suppers for a great time. For information, call 909-790-7460; email dcopley@yucaipa.org; or visit http://www.yucaipa.org/City_Parks.html.
- 8/8/2005** — Courthouse Ramblers will perform at 7 pm at Phil's Fish Market and Eatery, on Sandholt Road, Moss Landing, CA. Other musicians are welcome to join in for a bluegrass picking party for the second set starting about 8 pm. For information, call 831-375-2975 or visit www.philsfishmarket.com.
- 8/10/05** — Dix Bruce and Jim Nunally house concert at 7:30 pm in Fair Oaks. Tickets are \$15 per person. For information or to reserve a seat, visit www.craigkincaid.com.
- 8/10/05** — Laurie Lewis, Tom Rozum with the Guest House Band will perform in concert at Hilltop Center, 331 E. Elder, Fallbrook, CA. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$7 for children 17 and under. For information or tickets, call John Maus at 760-723-2563 or email JWM94@aol.com.
- 8/12/2005** — Valerie Smith and Liberty Pike will perform in the Willow Creek Lounge at Black Oak Casino, 19400 Tuolumne

CBA Calendar of Bluegrass, Old-time and Gospel Events

Rd., North Tuolumne, CA. For information, contact Brent Pierce at 209-928-9346; email bpierce@blackoakcasino.com; or visit www.blackoakcasino.com.

8/14/05 — Bluegrass Brunch featuring the David Thom Band at Pena Pachamama, 1630 Powell St, San Francisco, Ca. For information, call (415) 646-0018.

8/18/05 — Dan Crary & Beppe Gambetta will perform at Don Quixote's International Music Hall, 6275 Highway 9, Felton, CA. Tickets are \$13 advance and \$15 at the door. For tickets and reservations, call 831-603-2294 or visit www.donquixotesmusic.com.

8/20/05 — CBA Gospel Concert featuring New Found Road at 7:30 pm at PM at the First Baptist Church of Fair Oaks, 4401 San Juan, Fair Oaks, CA. Advance tickets are \$18 for adults, \$16 for seniors (65+), \$15 for CBA members, and \$9 for teenagers. Children 12 and under will be admitted free with a paid adult admission. Tickets are available at the Christian Book Center, 7975 Greenback Lane in Citrus Heights, across from Sunrise Mall & next to Marshall's. Tickets by VISA card are available online at www.cbaontheweb.org. Also, advance tickets are available by mail. Send a check and an SASE to Bob Thomas, at 8532 Cumulus Way, Orangevale, CA, 95662. At the door ticket prices will be \$20 for adults, \$17 for seniors and CBA members. For more information, call Bob Thomas at 916-989-0993.

8/12/05 — Boulder Acoustic Society (Colorado) will perform at 9 pm at Plough & Stars, 116 Clement St at 2nd, San Francisco, CA. For information, call (415)-751-1122.

8/19/05 — "Bluegrass Bonanza!" with Lone Mountain Sisters, Dark Hollow at 9 pm at Plough & Stars, 116 Clement St at 2nd, San Francisco, CA. For information, call (415)-751-1122.

8/21/05 — Bluegrass Brunch featuring Grizzly Peak at Pena Pachamama, 1630 Powell St, San Francisco, Ca. For information, call (415) 646-0018.

9/23/05 — Laurie Lewis & Tom Rozum will perform at Don Quixote's International Music Hall, 6275 Highway 9, Felton, CA. Tickets are \$14 advance and \$16 at the door. For tickets and reservations, call 831-603-2294 or visit www.donquixotesmusic.com.

Festivals

7/8/05 — 7/10/05 — Good Old Fashioned Bluegrass Festival in Bolado Park at the San Benito County Fairgrounds (eight miles south of Hollister, CA). Bands include Abbott Family Band, Alhambra Valley Band, Barefoot Nellies, Bean Creek, Bill Evans' "Banjo In America," Birch Lake

Ramblers, Circle R Boys, Court-house Ramblers, Dark Hollow, Earthquake Country, Faux Renwahs, Fog Valley Drifters, Grassfault, Grizzly Peak, Highway One, JEDD, Mighty Crows, Mr. Banjo & the Lonesome Wailers, New Five Cents, REO Haywagon, Sibling Brothers, Sidesaddle & Co., Smith Brothers, Stay Tuned, Stony Mountain Ramblers, Wild Oats 'n Honey, Windy Ridge, plus Yodeling Lady Lolita, Kids On Stage, tweeners, and more. For information or tickets, visit <http://www.scbs.org/GOF2005/gofhomepage.htm>.

7/8/2005 — 7/10/05 — Bitterroot Valley Bluegrass Festival, at the Ravalli County Fairgrounds, Hamilton, MT. Again this year, the Festival will present the very popular instrument workshops for banjos, guitars, fiddlers, mandolins and upright bass. Bands include The Donna Hughes Band, Randy Kohrs & The Lites, Special Consensus, Jim Hurst, New South Fork, and Mike & Tari Conroy. For information, contact Larry Milless at 406-381-0135, email Larry@Milless.com, or visit <http://www.bluegrassfestival.org/index.htm>.

7/14/05 — 7/17/05 — California Worldfest at the Nevada County Fairgrounds in Grass Valley, CA. Bands include Tempo Libre, Rani Arbo & Daisy mayhem, Gospel Hummingbirds, Mortal Coil, Charanga Cakewalk, Michael Ramos, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, The Waifs, Linda Tillery & Nina Gerber, Jackie Greene, Jake Shimabukuro, Fruit Trio, Fiamma Fumana, John Jorgenson, Quintet, Don Ross, Marley's Ghost, Quetzal, Alasdair Fraser, Adaa We, Joe Craven, O-Maya, Charanga Cakewalk, Mortal Coil and many more. Other activities include have vocal, instrumental, dance and percussion workshops; a children's program; international artisans and food and drink vendors. Camping available on site. For information or tickets, call 530-891-4098 or visit www.worldfest.net.

7/16/05 — 7/17/05 — Scott Valley Bluegrass Festival in City Park, Etna, CA (between Eureka and Yreka). Bands include Donner Mountain Bluegrass Band, Highway One, Rick Jamison & Copper Canyon, Ryan Holladay, Alhambra Valley Band, and the Piney Creek Weasels. For information or tickets, call 530-467-4144, or visit <http://users.sisqtel.net/svcoc/SVbluegrass.htm>.

7/30/05 — 7/31/05 — 14th annual Wolf Mountain Bluegrass Festival in San Martin County Park near Gilroy, CA. Featuring Cliff Wagner and Old # 7, Lone Prairie, Michael Stadler & Mary Gibbons, HeartWood, Bean Creek, Sidesaddle, Cash Magnets, Mighty Crows, Circle R Boys, and 3 more bands TBA. For information or tickets, call 831-425-2270

or visit www.wolfmt.com.

8/7/05 — American Roots Music Festival from 2 to 7 pm at the Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles, CA. Entertainers include Louise Taylor, John Greene and the Brothers Barton with Jeff Pekarek, The Holmes Brothers, Geno Delafosse and French Rockin' Boogie, and more. Admission is \$15 for adults, \$5 for students (12-23) and free to children under 12. For information or tickets, call 310-440-4500 or visit www.skirball.org.

8/13/05 — 8/14/05 — 15th Annual White Mountain Bluegrass Music Festival at the hon-Dah Casino Resort in Pinetop, AZ. Bands include Lost Highway, The New Five Centers, Just n' Time, The Back Porch Band, Best Family Traditions, Flint hill Special and more TBA. For information or tickets, contact the Pinetop-Lakeside Chamber of Commerce at 928-367-4290 or visit www.pinetoplakesidechamber.com.

8/26/05 — 8/28/05 — 3rd Annual Summergrass San Diego Bluegrass Festival at the Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum, 2040 N. Santa Fe, Vista, CA. Featuring Nashville Bluegrass Band, Fragment, Lost Highway, Hit & Run Bluegrass, Fiddle Extravaganza, Brothers Barton & Overdrive, 117s West, Virtual Strangers, Full Deck and North 40. Other festival features include music workshops, Bluegrass Camp for Kids, and on-site camping. Advance tickets are now available through August 8, 2005. For information or tickets, call 858-679-4854 or visit www.summergrass.net.

9/1/05 — 9/4/05 — Strawberry Fall Music Festival in Camp Mather (near Yosemite National Park), CA. Featuring Rhonda Vincent and the Rage, Special Consensus, Paul Thorn, David Olney and the Others, Teresa James & the Rhythm Tramps, Hot Club of Cowtown, The Subdues. For information visit www.strawberrymusic.com.

9/15/05 — 9/18/05 — The 2005 Berkeley Old Time Music Convention is coming up will be held at various venues in downtown Berkeley, CA. The convention will feature national and local acts, a string band contest, square dance, open cabaret, and instructional workshops-runs. All of the events are open to the public. Performers include Mike Seeger, Rafe Stefani, Kenny Hall, Eric and Suzy Thompson and more. For information, call 510-848-5018 or email suzy@ericandsuzy.com.

9/16/05 — 9/18/05 — 3rd Annual "Bluegrassin' in the Foothills" at the Amador County Fairgrounds, 18621 Sherwood & School St, Plymouth, CA. Featuring: Lost & Found, Nothin' Fancy, The Bluegrass Brothers, The James King Band, Jackstraw,

Michelle Nixon & Drive, Blue Moon Rising, The Alhambra Valley Band, Son's & Brothers, Vince Combs & Shade Tree Grass and The 2004 Plymouth Emerging artist winners "The Donner Mountain Bluegrass Band". 2005 emerging artist performances by: Mossey Creek, Homespun Rowdy, Stay Tuned & Fog Valley Drifters. Other activities to include: Arts & Craft show with music related vendors, excellent food & beverage vendors, Sat. Car Show, an RV Show, Special Raffles with an instrument to be named, 2005 festival ticket giveaways 50/50 drawings and more, band workshops & more. Lots of jamming in all those nooks & cranny's around the fairgrounds, great family fun including "Kids on Stage" directed by Frank Solivan Sr. and the return of Daisy the Clown. Tickets: 3-day: \$60.00 early bird (before 9/1/05) / \$70.00 at the gate. Handicapped parking requests please sign-up before 9/1/05 See our website or call for additional pricing. Camping included in all 2 & 3 day tickets thru Sunday night**CBA member discounts available on early bird 3-day tickets. For additional information call L & S Promotions-Larry & Sondra Baker (209) 785-4693, email roaddog@caltel.com, or

visit www.LandSPromotions.com.
9/17/05 — 9/18/05 — Julian Bluegrass Festival & Banjo-Fiddle Contest in Frank Lane Park, Julian, CA. Featuring Kahana Cowboys Jug Band, Bluegrass Etc., Lightouse, Patchwork Players, High Hills, The Brombies, Castleberry Creek, Grassology and Connie Allen & Bill Dempsey. For information or tickets, call 760-480-0086 or visit www.julianbluegrassfestival.com.

9/24/05 — 9/25/05 — 6th Annual Kings River Bluegrass Festival at Hobbs Grove Park in Sanger, CA. Bands include: Baloney Creek, The Sibling Brothers, Kenny Hall and the Long Haul String Band, Sam Criswell and GroundSpeed, Blind Dog, Evo Bluestein, Heartland Harves, The Kings River Gospel Aires, String Bandits, Buckeye Flatts, The Donner Mountain Bluegrass Band, Boys in the Woods and Stay Tuned. Tickets now on sale. For information or tickets, call Jerry Johnston at 559-225-6016; email tophawker@yahoo.com or visit www.krblue.net.

10/1/05 — 10/2/05 — Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival in Speedway Meadows at Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, Ca. A free-two day festival featuring two stages and 50 bands. Some of the Bluegrass bands slated to perform are Bill Evans String Summit, Dale Ann Bradley & Coon Creek, Del McCoury Band, Doc Watson, Druha Trava, Dry Branch Fire Squad, Earl Scruggs, Hazel Dickens, Hot Rize, J.D. Crowe & The New South, Lauri Lewis, Perfect Strangers, Peter Rowan & Tony Rice Quar-

tet, Ralph Stanley & His Clinch Mountain Boys, Rhonda Vincent, Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder – plus more bands to be announced. For information, visit <http://www.strictlybluegrass.com/>.

10/14/05 — 10/16/05 — 14th Annual Logandale Bluegrass Festival at the Clark County Fairgrounds in Logandale, NV. Bands include The Rarely Herd, Lampkins Family, Digger Davis & Tombstone, Bluegrass Redliners, Silverado, Ridin' The Fault Line and the Roe Family Band. Presented by the Southern Nevada Bluegrass Music Society and co-sponsored by the Moapa Valley Chamber of Commerce. For information, call 702-564-3320 or 702-564-5455; or visit www.snvbluegrass.com.

2/2/06 — 2/5/06 — Supergrass Festival sponsored by the California Bluegrass Association at the Civic Auditorium & Convention Center, Bakersfield, CA. Bands include Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver, Blue Highway, Nashville Bluegrass Band, Marty Raybon, Cherryholmes, Lost & Found, Sawtooth Mountain Boys, Richard Greene & Brothers Barton, Due West, The Wilders, and Journey's End w/ Leroy "Mack" McNees. For information, visit www.cbaontheweb.org.

Jam Sessions Sunday

Alameda — Bluegrass jam session from 6 to 9 pm on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of every month at Alameda School of Music, 1307 High St, (on the corner of Encinal Ave.) in Alameda, CA. Separate rooms are available for different skill levels, and a professional player will always be on hand to facilitate. All skill levels welcome! For information, contact Barry Solomon at 510-501-2876 or email barry6661@earthlink.net.

Berkeley — Bluegrass Jam every Sunday at 7 pm at Jupiter Brewpub, 2181 Shattuck Ave. (between Allston and Center Streets) in Berkeley, CA. For information, contact Kurt Caudle at 510-649-0456 or email weelitz@pacbell.net.

Castro Valley — California Old-time Fiddlers Association Jam from 1:30 to 5 pm on the 4th Sunday of every month at the United Methodist Church, 19806 Wisteria St., Castro Valley, CA. For information, call 925-455-4970.

Crescent City — Bluegrass Jam every Sunday from 6 to 8 pm at the United Methodist Church, 7th & H Streets, Crescent City, CA. Everyone welcome especially newer players. For information, contact George Layton at 707-464-8151 or email ke6tkn@juno.com.

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CBA Calendar of Bluegrass, Old-time and Gospel Events

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Napa – Bluegrass Jam from 2-5 pm the 1st Sunday of every month at The General Store in the Hatt Building at Main and 4th Streets, Napa CA.

Orangevale – California Old-Time Fiddlers' Association Jam Session on the 2nd Sunday of every month from 1 to 4:30 pm, Orangevale Grange Hall, 5805 Walnut, Orangevale, CA. For information, call 916-966-9067.

Palo Alto – Bluegrass Jam session the 2nd and 4th Sunday of every month at Fandango Pizza in the Alma Plaza Shopping Center, 3407 Alma Street in Palo Alto, CA. For information, contact Annie Zaccanti at 650 494-2928 or email azaccanti@pacbell.net.

San Francisco – Bluegrass Jam at 6 pm on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of every month at Progressive Grounds Coffee Shop, 400 Courtland Ave., Sam Francisco, CA. For information, email larrythe241@yahoo.com.

San Jose – Santa Clara Valley Fiddlers Association Jam from 1 to 5 pm on the 1st Sunday of every month at Hoover Middle School, Naglee & Park Streets, San Jose, CA. For information, call 408-730-1034 or

visit www.scvfa.org.

San Luis Obispo – Bread and Jam Session from 5:30 to 8:30 pm the 3rd Sunday of every month at Utopia Bakery, 2900 Broad Street, San Luis Obispo, CA. For information, contact Roger Siminoff at 805-544-8867 or email siminoff@apple.com.

Sebastopol – Gospel, Bluegrass and Old-time Jam from 2 to 5 pm on the 4th Sunday of every month at the Sebastopol Christian Church, 7433 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, CA. Bring acoustic instruments and your favorite Gospel songs to sing. For information, contact Jack or Laura Benge at 707-824-1960 or email bengeatlarge@sbcglobal.net.

Sutter Creek – Old-time and IrishJam session from 1 to 5 pm on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of every month at Belotti's Bar on Main St (Hwy 49) in Sutter Creek, CA. For information, contact Masha Goodman at 209-296-7706; email masha@banjodancer.com; or visit www.banjodancer.com.

Thermalito – Bluegrass Jam on the 4th Sunday of every month from 1-4 pm at the Thermalito

Grange, Thermalito, CA. For information, call 530-589-4844.

Monday

Alameda – Bluegrass Jam every Monday at McGrath's Irish Pub on the corner of Lincoln and Stanton in Alameda, CA. For information, contact Darby Brandli at 510-533-2792 or email darbyandbruno@comcast.net.

Oakland – Bluegrass Jam at 8 pm every Monday beginning at 6 pm at the Baja Taqueria, 4070 Piedmont Ave. (near 41st Street), Oakland, CA. For information, call Joe Howton at 510-547-2252 or email TRman2323@aol.com.

Mountain View – Bluegrass Jam every Monday at 7:30 pm at Red Rock Cafe, Mountain View, CA.

Tuesday

Brookdale – Bluegrass jam session every Tuesday at 8 pm at Brookdale Lodge on Highway 9 in Brookdale, CA. For information, call Eric Burman at 831-338-6433.

Dublin – Bluegrass Jam on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month at Dublin Heritage Center, 6600 Donlon Way, Dublin, CA. For information, call 925-803-4128.

Escondido – Bluegrass Jam every Tuesday from 7 to 10 pm at the Round Table Pizza, Ash and Washington Streets, Escondido, CA. **Gilroy** – Bluegrass Jam at 6:30 pm on the last Tuesday of every month at Happy Dog Pizza, 55 Fifth Street (across from the Gilroy Guitar Shop), Gilroy, CA. For information, contact Jack Stone at 408-847-7575 or email jones@kn.com.

Placerville – Bluegrass Jam on the 2nd Wednesday of every month from 7-10 pm at Hidden Passage Books, 352 Main St, Placerville, CA. For information, call 530-622-4540 or 530-626-8751.

San Francisco – Bluegrass and Country Jam on the 1st Wednesday of every month at the Plough and Stars, 116 Clement St. (between 2nd & 3rd Ave.), San Francisco, CA. For information, contact Jeanie or Chuck Poling at 415-751-1122.

Corte Madera – Marin Bluegrass Jam on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month from 7:30 to 10 pm at the Marin Lutheran Church, 649 Meadowsweet, Corte Madera, CA. For information, visit www.carltonemusic.com.

Granada Hills – Band performance and Bluegrass Jam from 7 to 10 pm on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at Baker's Square, 17921 Chatsworth Street (at Zelzah) in Granada Hills,

CA. Sponsored by the Bluegrass Association of Southern California (BASC). For information, call 818-700-8288 or 818-366-7258.

Los Gatos – Bluegrass Slow Jam at 8 pm on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month at Lupin Naturist Resort, Los Gatos, CA. For information, contact Buck Bouker via email at buck@lupin.com.

Millbrae – Bluegrass Jam on the 4th Tuesday of every month at Sixteen Mile House, 448 Broadway, Millbrae, CA. For information, call 650-692-4087.

San Diego – Bluegrass Jam, bands and open mike from 6 to 9 pm on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at Godfather's Pizza, 5583 Claremont Mesa Blvd, San Diego, CA. Come hungry, as we get a donation from each item sold there; just tell them you're with the San Diego Bluegrass Society. For information, contact Mike Tatar via email at staghorn2@cox.net.

Truckee – Bluegrass slow jam on the 1st Tuesday of every month, 6 pm at Between the Notes Music Store, Truckee, CA. For information, call Matt Milan, 916-276-1899.

Wednesday

Palo Alto – Bluegrass Jam from 7-10 pm every Wednesday from 7 to 10 pm at Fandango Pizza, in the Alma Plaza Shopping Center, 3407 Alma Street in Palo Alto, CA. For information, call 925-803-4128.

Escondido – Bluegrass Jam every Tuesday from 7 to 10 pm at the Round Table Pizza, Ash and Washington Streets, Escondido, CA. **Gilroy** – Bluegrass Jam at 6:30 pm on the last Tuesday of every month at Happy Dog Pizza, 55 Fifth Street (across from the Gilroy Guitar Shop), Gilroy, CA. For information, contact Jack Stone at 408-847-7575 or email jones@kn.com.

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San Francisco – Bluegrass and Country Jam on the 1st Wednesday of every month at the Plough and Stars, 116 Clement St. (between 2nd & 3rd Ave.), San Francisco, CA. For information, contact Jeanie or Chuck Poling at 415-751-1122.

Thursday

Berkeley – Bluegrass Jam every Thursday at the Fifth String Music Store, 3051 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA. For information, call 510-548-8282.

Corte Madera – Marin Bluegrass Jam on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month from 7:30 to 10 pm at the Marin Lutheran Church, 649 Meadowsweet, Corte Madera, CA. For information, visit www.carltonemusic.com.

Napa – Bluegrass and Fiddle Jam session every Thursday night from 7:30 to 10:30 pm in Napa. For information and location, call 707-226-3084.

Sacramento – Bluegrass jam session every Thursday from 7 to 10 pm at The Fifth String Music

Store, Alhambra & Streets, Sacramento, CA. For information, call 916-442-8282.

Ventura – Bluegrass Jam from 6 to 9:30 pm on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month at Zoey's Cafe, 451 E. Main Street in Ventura, CA. All skills welcome. For information, contact Gene Rubin at 805-658-8311 or email gene@generubinaudio.com.

Friday

Jamestown – Bluegrass Jam from 7 to 9:30 pm on the 2nd and 4th Friday of every month at Smoke Cafe, on Main Street in downtown Jamestown, CA. For information, email mandobil@bigvalley.net.

Saturday

Fremont – Bluegrass Jam Session on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of every month at Mission Pizza and Pub, 1572 Washington Blvd., Fremont, CA. For information, call 510-651-6858 or visit www.missionpizza.com.

Fresno – Bluegrass Jam session at Temperance - Kutner School, Olive Ave & N. Armstrong Ave, Fresno, CA. For information, contact Gerald L. (Jerry) Johnston at 559-225-6016; email tophawker@yahoo.com or visit <http://www.KRBLUE.NET>.

Marysville – Regular jam session from 4-7 pm every Saturday at the Brick Coffee House Cafe, Marysville, CA. For information, call 530-743-0413.

Sebastopol – CBA Jam Session every Saturday from 2 to 5 pm at Catz Roastery, 6761 Sebastopol Avenue in Sebastopol, CA. For information, call 707-829-6600. **Attention bands, promoters, venues – if you would like to have your performances, concerts, festivals or jam sessions listed in Bluegrass Breakdown and on the CBA website, please send your information to CBA Calendar Editor Suzanne Denison at bgsbreakdown@volcano.net.**

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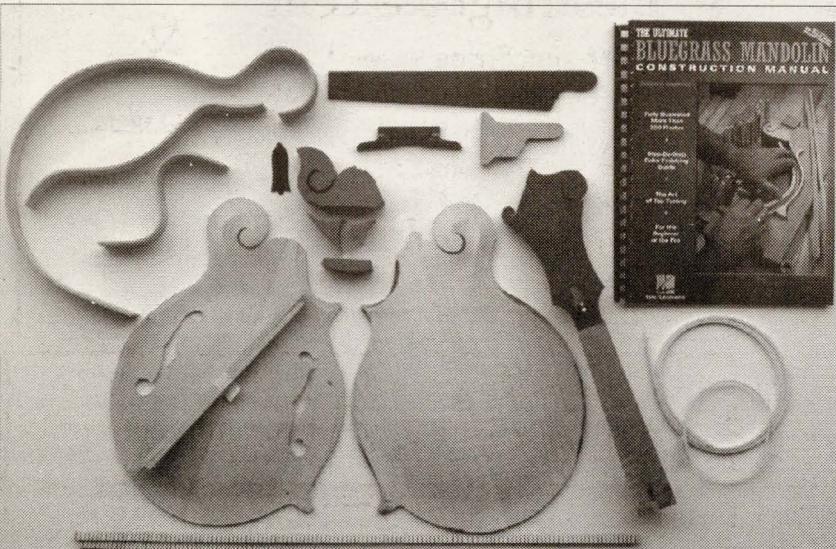
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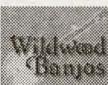
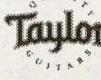
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Bluegrass Nirvana

After the Del McCoury Band closed the shows for Saturday evening, it was time for jamming, and I started out with my basecamp crew on the tenters hill behind area K. After a while I wandered the fairgrounds in search of... bluegrass nirvana. I jammed a few tunes each with several groups, yet had not reached bluegrass nirvana.

Around 1.30 AM, behind the "Music Motel" tent camp, a group was jamming: no camp nor vehicles nearby, just a lone streetlamp, a pine needle trail, guitarists, fiddlers, harmonizing voices, mandolin players, a frailing banjoist and a stand-up bassist. Their sound: a solid notch or two above my level. Could it be that I had found it, bluegrass nirvana?

We had played a few tunes when Suzanne Suwanda stopped by (I recognized her right off, with her unique foot cast /one-foot-wheelchair). After listening to a few more tunes, she said, "My camp is really close by, my husband is there and would love to jam with you guys. We've got

light, heat, chips and COLD BEER" Well that settled it; we were all walking, carrying our cases in one hand, instruments strapped on around us. Well we were all laughing: "Yeah we are a touring band, but we don't have a bus. Keep walking, its only three thousand miles to New York".

At Suzanne's camp, Robert Cornelius was dozing off (surrounded by a few empty chairs, super giant RV, heater, carpets, lights) when we arrived. "Whoa!" he said, startled, "You found a whole band! C'mon guys, let's jam!!! Over the next three hours, players arrived and players left. Playing with these hot players / singers, I had the sense that my own 5 string banjo sound was improving during the jam.

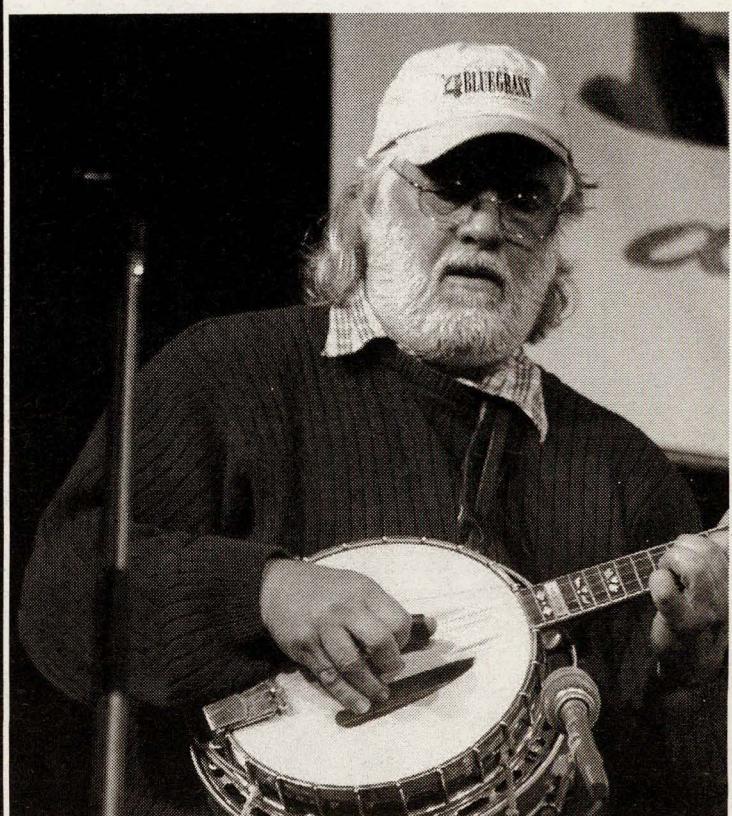
The eastern sky was getting lighter and lighter, the birds were crowing and we ended our set with I Saw The Light and Gloryland. I stumbled back to my tent around 5.30 AM. I was happy, and fulfilled and I had found it: bluegrass nirvana!

I managed to make it back to the main stage for the last two gospel sets on Sunday morning. I saw Rob (?), (great guitar picking and harmony singing, Rob), from the "nirvana jam".

Rob said, "Matt! I was camped right here and I overheard people from that camp right there saying to each other: "Did you guys hear that last night, I heard them from inside my tent...right behind us here, by the big RV? (pointing to where we had been)...There was a really great group jamming all night long...it was the Del McCoury Band I think!!!! when the sun come up they played Gloryland, and when they played I Saw The Light ...well it was just awesome!"

Wow! We were part of the story they were telling their friends. And maybe they also thought it was, if just for a brief moment...bluegrass nirvana...

by
**Matthew R.
 Coleman**



Living proof that Jerry Garcia is not dead, but gone undercover in his new role as CBA board member Hark Hogan (not his real name).

Photos on this and the next page by Phyllis Polito

Candidates sought for 2005/06 CBA Board of Directors

The California Bluegrass Association is expanding at a rapid pace in both our membership and events throughout the state of California. The current board and officers are all working to capacity and are in need of more volunteers to assist with the myriad of tasks necessary to keep our organization running efficiently.

If you are interested in becoming part of the CBA team, please consider becoming a candidate for the 2005/06 CBA Board of Directors. The change in our By-Laws made in the 2002 election allows for up to 13 members on the board. There are presently twelve members and all of them are working to capacity.

The secret of success for any organization is to have a healthy infusion of new blood on a regular basis and/or to actively participate in the internal workings of it.

The first step for any candidate is to begin attending monthly meetings of the Board of Directors. The meetings are usually held on the second Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. in the homes of board members. The date and location are usually announced on page 3 of the *Bluegrass Breakdown* or you



The CBA Board of Directors. Want to be in this picture next year, as a part of this august body? Throw your hat in the ring for this years election this fall.

can contact any board member or the CBA office for information and directions.

Requirements for candidates are:

- *Must be a CBA member in good standing
- *Circulate a petition for candidacy and have it signed by at least 15 CBA members

*Submit the petition to the Membership Vice President for verification

*Write a candidate's statement and send it to the Editor of the *Bluegrass Breakdown*

*Send a head and shoulders photograph to the Editor as well

This announcement is being

published to enable potential candidates to begin getting up to speed on current board activities. The deadline for candidate petitions and statements is July 15, 2005.

The CBA annual election and general meeting will be held at the Fall Campout at the Colusa

County Fairgrounds in Colusa, California on Saturday, October 8, 2004. Candidates' statements and the ballot will be published in the August, September and October issues of the *Bluegrass Breakdown* to give every candidate the maximum amount of member recognition.

www.dbaontheweb.org

The Done Gone Band Reunion

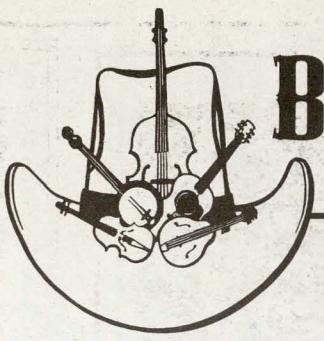


Photos courtesy of Phyllis Polito



The Holy Trinity: CBA members #1, #2, and #3. Carl Pagter, Jack Sadler and Jake Quiesenberry

The CBA Board honored three people with honors this year: Eric Rice for his 20 years of bluegrass broadcasting on KVMR; Suzanne Denison for her 17 years as Editor of this publication and CBA Director of Operations; and early member John Murphy for his years of work and performance history in Bluegrass music. Fortunately, only John Murphy received this particular accolade (center left). President Don Denison seems especially thankful that this is not his duty (or his idea).



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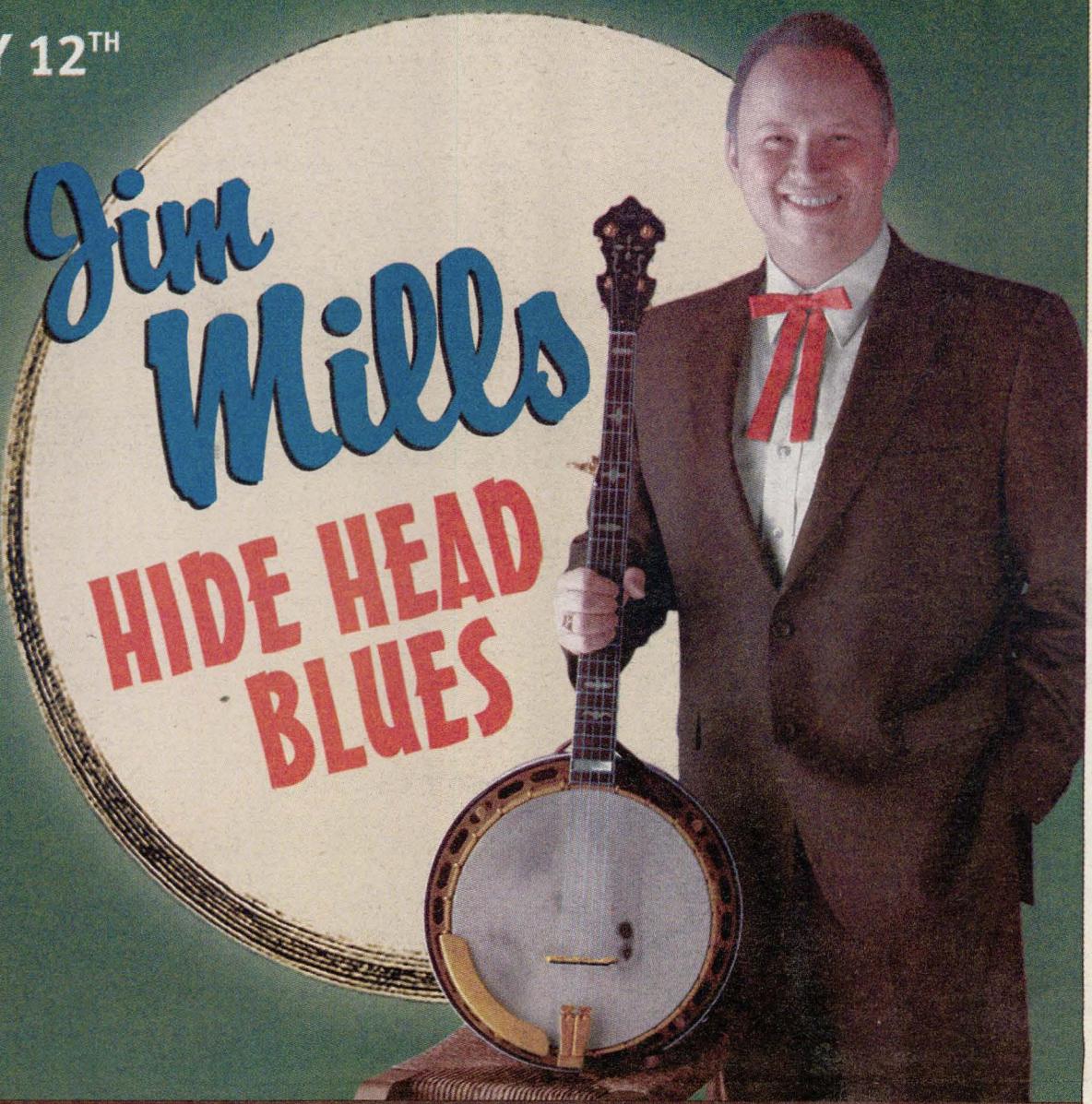
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