

BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN

Volume 12, Number 3

May/June 1986



Deadline

Next issue will be a follow-up to the annual Festival and will have a publisher's deadline of June 30, 1986. The issue will be a few days late in order to have complete coverage of the festival and pictures. Please send in any changes to the Field Guide, Special Events, advertising for July, August and fall, letters, etc., to Don Powell, 735 College Street, Woodland, CA 95695. We need a reviewer for both the Bethel Island festival and the Grass Valley Festival. A free ticket to June is provided the reviewer and we will also pay for your ticket to Bethel Island. Reviews would have to be in by June 25.

Thanks

Special thanks to Joe Ross for his articles on two of our bands for June. Also special thanks to J.D. Rhynes, Fred Volz, Ken Donnell for articles. An extra special thanks to Rick Cornish for the fantastic article on South Bay bluegrass. We need help from people who would like to do the same for San Francisco area, East Bay, Sacramento and North Bay. Many thanks to Anne and Melissa Powell for getting the mailing ready for the Post Office and to my students for their help in getting it ready for the printer.

Help Needed

From reading the membership applications, it is evident that there are a number of members who are writers, English teachers, in public relations, etc. What I am hinting at is to enlist your aid in getting articles about your favorite band, new or established; favorite place to hear bluegrass music; special article about some style of playing; story about a person famous (or otherwise) in bluegrass - in California or ?. I would like to see more original material coming to the Breakdown, making my job easier in one way, but harder (selecting what to run) in another.

If you have a special story idea, call Don Powell, (916) 662-2906 during the day or (916) 662-5691 at night. Discuss your idea - you just might find a receptive ear - believe me.

California Bluegrass Association

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

Bluegrass Breakdown

P.O. Box 11287

San Francisco, CA 94101-7287

CBA Board meetings are usually held the second Sunday of each month and all members are invited and encouraged to attend. The meetings are normally held at Carl Pagter's home in Walnut Creek at 1:30 p.m. Call (415) 938-4221 to be sure of date and location.

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Special Events

JAMS - Every Thursday Evening - 7:30 p.m., Hank Gibson's, 2300 Louisa St., Napa, CA 94558, (707) 253-1709.

May 9-10-11 - Calico Spring Festival - Calico Ghost Town, Yermo. Bluegrass hootenanny including two day fiddle, banjo, guitar and band contest, clogging, square-dance, and ragtime. Daily admission: adults \$3; juniors (6 thru 11) \$2. Children (under 5) - free. Camping \$6 per unit per day. (Call 619 254-2122.)

MAY 9 - Laurie Lewis and Band, (Greg Townsend, Mark McCornack, Markie Sanders and Keith Little. Featuring songs from Laurie's soon-to-be released album. The Palms, 726 Rd. 103, Davis, \$6.00 at the door. (916) 756-9901.

MAY 10 - Fourth Annual Santa Rosa Fiddle Contest - Veteran's Memorial Bldg., Hwy 12, Santa Rosa. Starts at 10 a.m. 8 divisions. Admission: \$5 adults, \$4 seniors (over 60), \$3 juniors (9-17) free under 9 if accompanied by adult. (707) 545-2218.

MAY 16 - 17 - 18 - Bethel Island Bluegrass Festival on beautiful Bethel Island in the Delta. Featuring some of the finest bands in California and Washington, plus Bill White. (415) 684-2182. Complete weekend ticket is \$22.00, Friday/Saturday ticket is \$11.00; and Sunday ticket is \$10. Camping available.

JUNE 13-14-15 - Huck Finn Jubilee, Mojave Narrows Regional Park, Victorville, CA - featuring Patsy Montana.

JUNE 20-21-22 - Summer Grass Valley Bluegrass Festival at the Nevada County Fairgrounds in Grass Valley. Full details in advertisement on pages 4-5. Tickets are now on sale for this super line-up at the Most Beautiful Festival Site in California.

JULY 5 - 5th Annual Sierra Nevada Old Time Fiddling Championships, Plumas County Fairgrounds, Quincy. \$3,000 in prize money. Seven divisions, 46 places in all. Camping available at the Fairgrounds. Info: (916) 283-2676 or write P.O. Box 3459, Quincy, CA 95971.

JULY 25-28 - Peter Britt Bluegrass and Traditional Music Festival, Medford, Oregon. Featuring (July 25 - J.D. Crowe and the New South, Tony Rice Unit) (July 26 - Norman Blake, New Grass Revival) (July 27) Queen Ida and Jim and Jesse) (July 28 - Doc Watson, John Renbourn and others). Adults \$9.50 per day, Children \$5.00 per day. All concerts begin at 6:30 p.m. Info: (503) 779-0847.

AUGUST 1-2-3 - 2nd Annual California Midsummer Bluegrass Festival at the Nevada County Fairgrounds. (916) 661-3651 or 666-4054 for info: Tickets: 741 East Street, No. 198, Woodland, CA 95695-4144. See discount offered to CBA members in ad this issue. Line-up is in advertisement.

SEPT. 20 - Bower's Mansion Festival - between Reno and Carson City, produced by Northern Nevada Bluegrass Association. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. \$5.00 per individual or \$10.00 per family. Info: (702) 849-0776 or 2435 Brenda Way, Carson City, NV 89701. See advertisement in this issue.

GPI Offers Rewards

GPA Publications, Cupertino, publisher of Guitar Player, Keyboard and Frets, is offering two separate \$2,500 rewards to the persons who provide information leading to the arrest and conviction of perpetrators of crimes of vandalism and robbery against the property of two legendary musicians.

The Goodlettsville, TN home of bluegrass king Bill Monroe was broken into and ransacked in November, with the resulting loss of an almost priceless Gibson 1923 trademark mandolin. The model F-5 mandolin, while thought non-restorable, has been repaired by the manufacturer as a tribute to Monroe.

In an unrelated episode, the Seattle home of James Hendrix, Sr., was also burglarized last month, with the loss of five gold records awarded to the late Jimi Hendrix.

Any person with information on either incident should call or write GPI at 20085 Stevens Creek Blvd., Cupertino, CA 95014. (408) 446-1105.

Ken Donnell

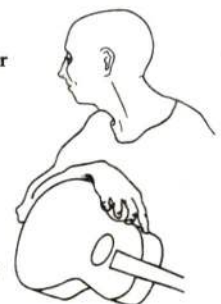
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California Bluegrass Association

GRASS VALLEY BLUEGRASS Festival

**AT THE NEVADA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS
JUNE 20, 21, 22, 1986**

Schedule

The music begins Friday from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m.
Saturday from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m.
and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Gospel music - Sunday morning.



Featuring

**JIM AND JESSE AND THE VIRGINIA BOYS
VIRGINIA SQUIRES
VERN WILLIAMS BAND
ROSE MADDOX**

**Bluegrass Patriots
Country Ham
Eighth Avenue String Band
Good Ol' Persons
Phil Salazer Band
South Fork**

**Spring Mountain Harmony
Bill White
Wild Oats
FOGGY MOUNTAIN CLOGGERS**

along with workshops and clinics with the musicians and
plenty of parking lot pickin'.

**TICKETS: 735 College St. • Woodland, CA 95695
916/662-5691
ATTN: Don Powell**

DAY	FRI ONLY	SAT ONLY	SUN ONLY	FRI & SAT	SAT & SUN	3 DAY AT GATE	3 DAY- ADVANCE
CBA Member Adult	\$11	\$16	\$14	\$27	\$30	\$35	\$24
General Public Adult/over 12	\$11	\$16	\$14	\$27	\$30	\$35	\$30

Children 11 and under FREE

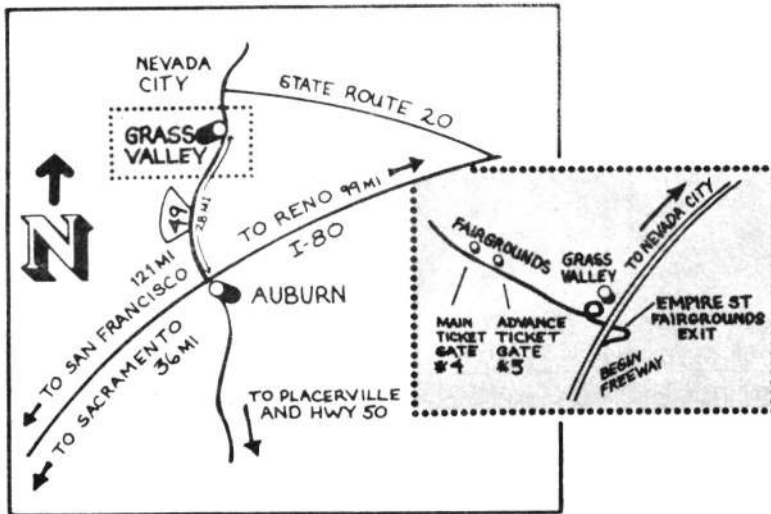
Membership prices through June 4 only.

CBA Members: Adults, Seniors (over 65), Juniors (11 & under). Purchase any type of ticket from Woodland address above. Make check or money order to: California Bluegrass Association. (CBA Seniors & all Juniors free upon request)

Include: Self-addressed, stamped envelope. No tickets will be held at the gate. Deadline for mail order tickets is one week prior to festival. Members may buy same number of adult tickets as there are adults (12 yrs. & over) on membership card on file. *Discounts available only on 3-day advance tickets (limited quantities available).



Charge by phone:
415/762-2277, 408/998-2277
916/395-2277, 707/762-2277



Seating Compliments of Mother Nature ... so bring blankets, lawn chairs, etc.

Camping The 3 Day Ticket includes camping from Friday at 8:00 a.m. until Monday at 10:00 a.m. Overnight camping is not available with a single day ticket. Camping is in the rough; there's no additional charge for camping DURING the festival. Camping area opens Thursday, 5:00 p.m. Camping Thursday night is \$7.00, payable at gate on entry.

Food There will be food concessions at the festival or you can prepare your own; No Open Campfires: Off-ground campstoves or hibachi-type cooking only! There are also a number of good eating places in nearby Nevada City and Grass Valley.

Facilities Rest rooms with flush toilets, sinks, showers, plus portable restrooms throughout the festival site. Hotels & Motels throughout the area. **MAKE RESERVATIONS EARLY!!!**

NO DOGS WILL BE PERMITTED AT FESTIVAL.

For more information call: Don Powell, 916/662-5691; Fred Volz, 209/473-3212; Steve Hogle, 415/949-2181 or the CBA Office 415/937-2470.

The Virginia Squires Have Arrived

by JOE ROSS

California, meet the Virginia Squires or the Squires, as they prefer to be called. This youthful, talented bluegrass group characterizes the current contemporary and progressive trends in bluegrass music. With energy, showmanship, versatility and virtuosity, the Squires have quickly developed a name and reputation for themselves. Simply put, these guys are exciting! In June, the group will make its first appearance on the West Coast at the CBA's Grass Valley Festival. You'll be sorry if you miss this dynamic group.

The Squires are Mark Newton, Sammy Shelor, Rickie and Ronnie Simpkins, all natives of the Old Dominion State. All four members were born and raised on bluegrass and country music and are guaranteed to bring an accomplished sound with polished picking and singing to the Grass Valley Festival stage. According to Rickie Simpkins, "Each member, although young in age, is a veteran of his instrument and has played with various groups through the years."

Mark Newton primarily plays guitar (on his Rushing or Martin herringbone re-issue) with the Squires, although he will occasionally grab the mandolin for a blazing up-tempo Bill Monroe instrumental. Mark also MCs the show and handles a good share of the lead singing, including high lead parts. When Rickie Simpkins sings lead, Mark is there with the tenor part. Raised in Fredericksburg, Virginia, Mark's early musical experiences included playing in his father's band and for about a year with a group called Cabin Hill. One of this Virginian's favorite bluegrass pickers is, of course, Ralph Stanley. In the late 1970's and early 80's, Mark played with the Knoxville Grass and the Heights of Grass, two very solid, contemporary bluegrass bands. He can be heard on the Heights of Grass' impressive

Louisiana Saturday Night album (Outlet 1017) and *Live* album (HOG 001), as well as on the Knoxville Grass' tasteful *Painted Lady* album (LBG 8103).

Sammy Shelor, of Stuart, Virginia, is a multi-instrumentalist but primarily plays banjo (a 1940 Gibson RB-12) and sings baritone with the Squires. Both Sammy's grandfather and greatgrandfather worked with Charlie Poole, an old-time string band leader (the North Carolina Ramblers), 3-finger style banjo picker, singer and recording artist. When Sammy was five, his grandfather gave him a homemade banjo constructed from a pressure cooker, and the following year he got a real banjo. Sammy played mandolin for about a year with the Dominion Bluegrass Boys and also picked with Interstate Exchange before joining the Heights of Grass in late 1981. That group eventually disbanded in April, 1983.

Rickie Simpkins, and his younger brother, Ronnie, hail from Christiansburg-Radford, Virginia. Rickie plays fiddle and mandolin with the Squires and occasionally guitar or banjo. Rickie uses 8-string or 10-string Rushing mandolins and a Conner 5-string fiddle. Rickie also handles about half of the lead singing for the group. As a youngster, Rickie would listen to Flatt and Scruggs' early morning radio and Reno and Smiley's 6 a.m. television shows. At age 6½, Santa brought him a fiddle for Christmas. At age 9, Rickie fiddled "Boil the Cabbage Down" with Flatt and Scruggs in a show in his hometown. In 1979, Rickie won the Galax, Va. Old Time Fiddlers' Convention, the world famous contest started in 1935. During the late 1970's, Rickie performed and recorded with Upland Express (Leather Records LBG 7709) before moving on to play with the McPeak Brothers. Upland Express played traditional bluegrass as well as songs

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by the Beatles, Rolling Stones, Stephen Stills and The Band. The McPeak Brothers are a "crossover" band still performing their stylistic modern bluegrass. In early 1982, Rickie joined the Heights of Grass.

Rickie's brother, Ronnie, plays bass and sings bass with the Squires. Ronnie plays on a Music Man Stingray bass or will use his 1958 American Standard upright. At age 5, Ronnie started on mandolin, and he would frequently jam with his parents at fiddlers' conventions and contests. At age 12, he took up bass. With his brother, sister Tammy on mandolin, and mother, the Simpkins formed a group. In 1976, Rickie and Ronnie formed Upland Express. When Upland Express disbanded in 1980, Ronnie became the first to play electric bass with the Bluegrass Cardinals. He recorded with the Cards on their *Where The Rainbows Touch Down* album (CMH 6259). Ronnie joined the Heights of Grass in July 1982.

In April 1983, Don Grubb, guitarist with the Heights of Grass, left the group, and the four remaining members reorganized as the Virginia Squires. Rickie describes the Squires' sound as "contemporary/progressive with a feeling of the traditional bluegrass." In 1984, the Squires released their first album (*Bluegrass With a Touch of Class* - VS-10001) which features seamless music, solidly arranged and skillfully played. The album, produced by Sonny Osborne, includes a tasteful variety of unconventional (Charlie Daniels' *Devil Went Down To Georgia*, for example) and new songs (originals by Tim O'Brien of Hot Rize, the prolific Randall Hylton, Sonny Ludlam of Fredericksburg, VA. and Larry McPeak of the McPeak Brothers.).

The Squires' second album (*Mountains and Memories* REB-1634) released in 1985 (also produced by Sonny Osborne) further highlights the clean picking and precise vocal harmonies of this dynamic group. The contemporary material is well-chosen and ranges from tunes by the Rolling Stones (*Honky Tonk Women*) and Beatles (*Ticket To Ride*) to traditional bluegrass numbers (*The Girl I Left in Sunny Tennessee*) and originals by Randall Hylton, Sonny Ludlam, Larry McPeak and others. Billboard Magazine (May 1985) recommended the LP saying, "These boys sing with the mesmerizing fervor of the old bluegrass masters. To add to the delight, there are some new songs worthy of becoming standards."

The Squires' third album (*I'm Working My Way* REB-1642) is an all-gospel album just off the press. I'm looking forward to hearing it. I'm sure you'll be able to buy one at the Grass Valley Festival (along with one of their other albums, tapes, t-shirts or caps).

Rickie Simpkins describes a typical set performed by the band as "traditional along with contemporary bluegrass, or newgrass, acapella singing, instrumentals, a few show tunes, and some original gospel numbers. We try to mix it up to appeal to all audiences." Whether they're playing material from Bill Monroe or Dan Fogleberg, Flatt and Scruggs or Jerry Garcia, the Stanley Brothers or Billy Joel, you can bet on one thing--their festival show will be exciting and enjoyable. One audience favorite, I'm told, is when Rickie and Sammy will pick all four instruments during a speedy instrumental. As Rickie profoundly says, "We feel that in order for something to grow it has to take new directions and have new ideas. Traditionally, bluegrass is, of

course, the basis for the music, but from that basis new ideas and new sounds must come forth. Hopefully, from those new ideas many more will become acquainted with bluegrass and learn to appreciate it all!"

Playing in the Virginia Squires is fulltime work for each member. They have opened for the Osborne Brothers on national tours and have performed twice on the Nashville Network. The group has completed three Department of Defense tours, two in the Caribbean and this past January in Alaska. The Squires won Best Bluegrass Band, an award given by the Country Music Association of Virginia. According to Rickie, their schedule for the upcoming year "looks very promising. Up and down the East Coast. We have tours in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Tennessee, Michigan, and Ohio."

Impeccably dressed in their tuxedos, the Virginia Squires will take the Grass Valley Festival stage in June and delight the audience with their talent, enthusiasm and showmanship. The band will perform their tasteful repertoire with balance, blend and dynamics. With their stylistic contribution to the development of the contemporary bluegrass sound, the Virginia Squires are following in the footsteps of such great bands as Quicksilver, the New South, Seldom Scene, Boone Creek and the Osborne Brothers. With continued dedication, perseverance and a lot of hard work, the Virginia Squires will soon be as well-known, and very possibly as influential, as the older, more established and experienced super groups that preceded them.

The four young men comprising the Squires, with their good taste, expertise and audience appeal, have developed a distinctive style which holds much promise for the future of the bluegrass sound. As bluegrass devotees become younger and more urban, subtle changes are taking place in the music. With much respect for the rustic simplicity of traditional bluegrass music, the Virginia Squires have developed a sound for today's bluegrass market. With quiet, unassuming confidence, the Squires are quickly rising to accept the charge to develop the bluegrass tradition. With youthful exuberance, Rickie Simpkins facetiously predicts that by the year 2000, the bluegrass sound will be "cosmic". With the Squires in the forefront and leading the way, bluegrass could truly become a music with universal appeal. When asked about their being labelled as a "rising newcomer super group," Rickie modestly states, "We will try hard to live up to that. Our plans for the future are to continue to grow, to play as much as we can and to simply entertain as many folks as we can."

Steak Dinner Reservations

One of CBA's best concessionaires will again be serving a fantastic steak dinner at the June Festival. He will also have the meal for the Midsummer festival. It is one of the best bargains and tastest, at the festivals.

The only catch - you need to contact Daddy Dave Cadieux ahead of time to insure that you will have a reservation. He will be taking them at the festivals as well, but only up to the limit of the steaks.

Contact Dave or his daughter, Lana, at (209) 462-5694 or write at 545 E. Channel, Stockton, CA 95202.

The meal is "out-of-this-world" good!!!!

Sacramento Area Fire Fighters 6th Annual Country & Bluegrass Picnic

at Beach Lake Preserve

Saturday, June 28
from 10:30 a.m. - 7:40 p.m.

Tickets: Adults \$5.00

Children 10 & Under - Free

Tremendous variety of Food &
Beverages available.

Proposed Entertainment Schedule

- 10:30-11:00 - Way Out West
11:05 - 11:25 - Fire Mountain Cloggers
backed by Way Out West
11:35 - 12:15 - 8th Avenue String Band
12:25 - 1:05 - California Cajun Orchestra
1:15 - 1:45 - Touch of Grass
1:50 - 2:10 - Foggy Mountain Cloggers
backed by Touch of Grass
2:20 - 3:00 - Way Out West
3:10 - 3:40 Overlook Mountain Boys
3:45 - 4:05 Fire Mountain Cloggers
backed by Overlook Mountain
4:15 - 4:55 - 8th Avenue String Band
5:05 - 5:45 California Cajun Orchestra
5:55 - 6:35 Touch of Grass
6:45 - 7:15 Overlook Mountain Boys
7:20 - 7:40 Foggy Mountain Cloggers
backed by Overlook Mountain

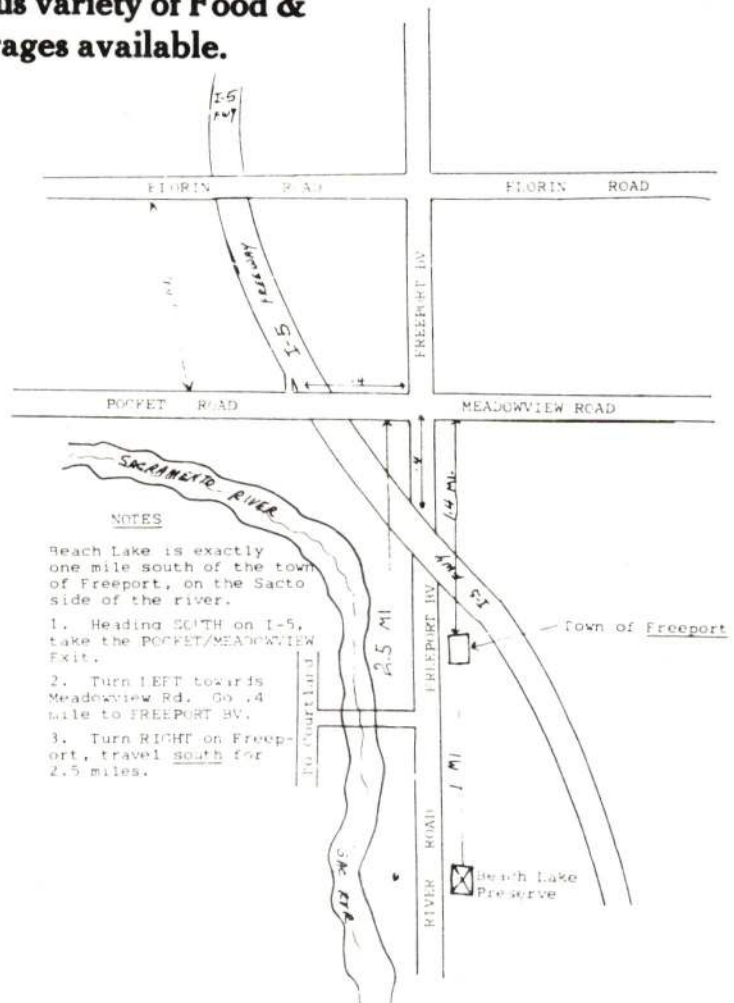
TICKETS:

487-9761

447-2343

by mail:

5000 Pasadena
Sacramento, CA 95841



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1140 am

Colorado's Bluegrass Patriots

by JOE ROSS

The *Bluegrass Breakdown* in the January/February 1986 edition mentioned that the CBA's June Grass Valley Festival would feature the Bluegrass Patriots from Colorado. According to the band selection committee for the festival, the band has some of the tightest harmonies they've ever heard.

Now that is quite a compliment. But, a little research will indicate that the Bluegrass Patriots are one group that has got its act together! In early 1984, this Fort Collins, Colorado band released its first album ("*The Bluegrass Patriots*," BGP0863). Unlike many first recording ventures, the album is an enjoyable one which emphasizes tasteful instrumentation, good singing, drive and enthusiasm on a number of lesser-known traditional bluegrass tunes (Loggin' Man, Rebecca, Pathway of Teardrops, Don't Do It, No School Bus In Heaven, Roll On Blues, Theme Time, Ramblin' Around Your City, Willy Boy). Two originals by mandolinist Willie McDonald are also featured (Bound In Sorrow, Bringing My Baby Back). If anything like their first, I can hardly wait for their second album which, I'm told, is due out soon. In my case, I am looking forward to seeing this band live at a festival. From all indications, they are bound to be crowd-pleasers.

To help you get to know these out-of-towners a bit better, I conducted an interview with Ken Seaman, banjo player with the Patriots.

Joe Ross (JR)-How would you define the type of bluegrass as played by the Bluegrass Patriots?

Ken Seaman (KS)-We play traditional bluegrass, to be sure, but try to have our own sound emphasizing close harmonies and instrumentals played with "drive."

JR-Who are the band's current members? Tell me a little about each. What does each play? Do they have other jobs?

KS-Glenn Zanke is our lead singer and plays guitar. Glenn works as a carpenter when he's not playing music. Willie McDonald sings lead and harmonies and paints houses when not picking his mandolin. Rick Broadstreet plays dobro and guitar for the group. The works with Glenn as a carpenter. Danny Rogers sings lead and tenor, plays bass and owns a carpet cleaning business in Fort Collins. Ken Seaman plays banjo, sings baritone and teaches in a small mountain elementary school west of Fort Collins.

JR-Give me a brief history of the group.

KS-We started playing as a group in 1980; for over a year just playing around Fort Collins at weddings, parties and a college pub occasionally. Then we slowly started booking midwestern festivals and my 1982 most of our summer weekends were being spent doing what we love--playing bluegrass!

JR-What accounts for the popularity of the Bluegrass Patriots today?

KS-Well, we have been asked back to a lot of festivals a second time, I think, because all of the members of the band like people, like to jam, and love bluegrass music. We like to camp in tents, pick until 3 a.m., and meet new friends!

JR-Who are the group's major musical influences?

KS-Del McCoury, Doyle Lawson, Vern and Ray, Ralph Stanley and J.D. Crowe to name a few.

JR-What have been some of the group's major accomplishments in the past?

KS-We recorded our first album in 1983 and it has sold quite well. We are in the process of recording our second album now. We were thrilled to get to play for former President Ford in Vail two years ago and for Senator John Glenn in Boulder last summer.

JR-How would you describe a typical set performed by your band?

KS-We try to play a mixture of material and keep our show varied and moving. We also like to throw in a few novelty tunes from time to time. All members of the band like to sing so there are always new faces in front of the mic.

JR-What would you say are your band's strengths? Any weaknesses?

KS-Our band likes to play, sing and jam. We work as hard as we can for the promoters who are nice enough to ask us to play. Our group probably has the same weaknesses as any band whose members have day jobs. We wish we had more time to devote to the music than we have now.

JR-Where do you primarily play? How does your schedule look for the upcoming year?

KS-During the summer we play the festival circuit. Last summer we played festivals in Colorado, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota. During the winter we stay close to home--a monthly gig at the Hungry Farmer Restaurant in Colorado Springs and a few parties, weddings, clubs around Fort Collins.

JR-Is your music more traditional or contemporary? Why?

KS-I grew up in the Missouri Ozarks listening to traditional sounds and that is the sound I still love today. We always look for good and different material but try to play it with a traditional flavor.

JR-Are you familiar with bluegrass music and fans in the west? How would you characterize them?

KS-No. That's why we're so excited about coming to California. Only two members of the band have ever been in the state. We can't wait to head west to Grass Valley! I have heard High Country and the Grant Street String Band and have really enjoyed their concerts.

JR-How do you feel about the new, non-traditional directions in Bluegrass music today?

KS-I feel the diversity is the strength of bluegrass music. The fact that it attracts such a cross-section of people is evidence of this. I do feel that bluegrass must not lose its identity by "compromising" its sound to appeal to a different market. There is plenty of room for innovation and new directions in the music, but I hope bluegrass always remains an acoustic music with basically the same instrumentation as we have had since its inception.

JR-How do you think bluegrass will sound or will have changed by the year 2000?



Members of the Bluegrass Patriots who will be at June Grass Valley Festival.

KS-I have listened to bluegrass since the 50's. It's developed in many different directions, but there is still room for the sounds of Ralph Stanley to co-exist with that of the Seldom Scene, Hot Rize and even the New Grass Revival. I think this growth will continue, but I think bluegrass fans will continue to demand and support "mainstream" bluegrass as we know it today.

JR-The January/February issue of the *Bluegrass Breakdown* states that you have some of the tightest harmonies that the festival band selection committee has ever heard. Any comment on that?

KS-That is very flattering! We think singing is at the heart of bluegrass, and we work to make our vocals as tight as possible.

JR-Do you have any records, tapes or other products available currently?

KS-One album, "*The Bluegrass Patriots*," t-shirts, and Bluegrass Patriots fans (they were a big hit at Eminence, Missouri last summer when the temperature hit 110° in the shade).

JR-What are the band's plans for the future?

KS-We want to finish our second album as possible and continue to travel and play festivals during the summer--it's what we love most!

Bluegrass still alive and well in the South Bay/Monterey area

by **RICK CORNISH**

Well, for all the readers looking for the bottom line, I'll state my conclusion right off: *there's still lots of good bluegrass music around these parts, but you've got to look a little harder to find it these days.*

No for a few qualifications. First, I will define the "South Bay" as that wide stretch of territory between Palo Alto and Monterey. Second, I won't even try to define "bluegrass". (I find that the leaner the times, the more diverse bluegrass bands become, and the more diverse they become, the harder it is to say what bluegrass is and isn't.) Finally, I will admit out front that my credentials for writing about the state of bluegrass in the South Bay are limited -- I live here, and I love this kind of music.

Bluegrass Bands

I think there used to be more bluegrass bands in the South Bay than there are now--I can think of several that were, but are no more. I've written about seven working bands, though there are probably others I just don't know about.

A TOUCH OF GRASS--Bob Lawrence, guitarist and lead vocals...**Bert Johnson**, mandolin/fiddle and tenor...**Paul Siese**, banjo and baritone... and **Mike Sanders**, bass and

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SOUTH BAY - Continued from Page 9

baritone. If these guys don't hold the Guinness Book of Records for bluegrass band longevity, they must certainly hold the record for the South Bay. Twelve years without a single change in personnel, and you can sure hear it in their music. **A Touch of Grass** is probably best known for its diversity; they're not a traditional bluegrass band and not a progressive bluegrass band either, although they do lots of each. I guess you could say the band does a lot of everything, and everything they do is done smoothly and with tasteful arrangement. Currently **A Touch of Grass** is playing two Saturdays each month at the Danville Hotel in Dublin and intermittently at Paul's Saloon and at the Palm's in Davis.

BLUEGRASS MONARCHS...**Michael Johnson**, guitar and lead singer...**Mike Osgood**, mandolin...**Pat Mahoney**, fiddle and singer...**Larry Popkey**, banjo...and **Marty Lydon**, string bass and singer. The **Bluegrass Monarchs** have been together for five years--they describe themselves mainly as a traditional band. "We play for the tradition of it," explained Mike Johnson, when we spoke recently. "It's the kind of music that just hooks you." Mike, who is the leader of the **Bluegrass Monarchs**, went on to say that bluegrass is alive and well in the Monterey area. The fact that the Monarchs play each Friday at Kalisa's on Cannery Row would seem to be proof of that. (Not a whole lot of bluegrass bands in the South Bay can boast steady gigs these days...more about that when I discuss clubs.) The **Bluegrass Monarchs** also play each summer at the Pacific Grove Good Old Day's.

SIDESADDLE...**Diana Deininger**, guitar and lead vocals...**Kim Elking**, mandolin and tenor vocals...**Karen Quick**, bass and baritone singer...**Lee Anne Welch-Caswell**, fiddle...and **Sonia Shell**, bnajo...**Sidesaddle** is an all female band. I state the obvious only for the seven or eight people reading this article who haven't seen, heard and enjoyed this high energy, highly entertaining band. Without question **Sidesaddle** is the "workingest" bluegrass band in the South Bay. With a repertoire that spans bluegrass, country, western swing and a good amount of original material, these ladies have bookings pretty much non-stop throughout the bluegrass season. This past winter, **Sidesaddle** played weekly at a club called Trad'r Sam's, but, alas, now even Sam's has succumbed to rock 'n' roll. I should add that the group recently released its first album, *Saratoga Gap*. For information about how to latch onto **Sidesaddle**'s album, or about where they can be heard this Spring and Summer, call (408) 353-4408.

BACK COUNTRY...**Doug Clark**, mandolin, guitar and vocals...**Dennis Ben**, base...**Gary Harrington**, guitar and vocals...and **Eric Liners**, banjo, mandolin, dobro and vocals...These four guys started picking together in 1969 and eventually formed a band called Pickin' and Grinning which played on and off for several years. When banjo player Eric Liners went off to study chiropractic in Oregon, the Salinas-based group parted ways. But low and behold, four years later who should show up but Eric, and it didn't take the quartet long to form **Back Country**. A relative newcomer to South Bay bluegrass, at least in its new incar-

nation, the band plays a blend of traditional bluegrass and what Doug Clark, leader of the band, calls "contemporary music played bluegrass style with bluegrass instruments." Recently heard on KHIP's Saturday morning live show, **Back Country** is looking forward to doing a number of benefits this spring, including gigs for Meals on Wheels of Salinas and the Parks Foundation. The band is also scheduled to play a bluegrass Mass at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, also in Salinas.

THE GRYPHON QUINTET...**Bob Kolb**, base and dobro, sometimes singer...**Carol McComb**, dobro, guitar, songwriter and singer...**Ed Johnson**, guitar and string bass, arranger, singer...**Rich Bamman**, five string banjo, dobro, singer...and **Jack Tuttle**, fiddle and mandolin, vocalist. If I'm stretching a point by calling the "South Bay" everything from San Mateo to Monterey, it's probably an equal stretch to call the **Gryphon Quintet** a bluegrass band. And of course, they're not, but it would be impossible to write an article about the good things happening with our kind of music in this geographic area without mentioning this incredible talent. Ah, to describe what it is that the Palo Alto-based **Gryphon** band does...now there's a tough one...swing...folk...jazz...I don't know. Actually, it's a lot easier to describe how the band does what it does. The **Gryphon Quintet** makes music smoothly and effortlessly; each member is an accomplished musician (Jack Tuttle, for example, is one of the best respected fiddle and mandolin teachers in the Valley); their singing can make your head spin and your heart stop; and their arrangements and original tunes make them truly the driving force in their kind of music (whatever that might be). Just recently the band released its second album entitled *Undecided*. They can be heard fairly regularly at the Freight and Salvage in San Pablo and will be playing at the Midsummer Festival at Grass Valley in August.

THE NEW GRASS MENAGERIE...**Rick Cornish**, string bass and lead vocals...**Bill Schniederman**, mandolin and tenor singer...**Rick Jamison**, guitar and baritone singer...and **Jim Hilden**, banjo and sooner-or-later vocalist. Just about seven years ago four other fellows and I had a shakey bluegrass debut at a neighborhood wine and cheese tasting party. We called ourselves the "Half-Assed Bluegrass Band" then, and we weren't far from it. I figure since that party we've had a dozen names and twice as many band members (maybe three times as many). I guess in a way I envy bands that have stayed together for five, ten, fifteen years. But then on the other hand, some of the best friends I've had (and still have) have come and gone during the band's evolution. And evolve it has. Today the **New Grass Menagerie** is playing solid, hard-driving bluegrass music, some exciting big band swing tunes and a lot of whatever else strikes our fancy. For the past four years we've pretty consistently had weekly club dates, first at the Mother Lode and later at the Opry House in New Almaden. Although between weekly dates right now (ain't we all), the **New Grass Menagerie** continues to perform one or twice each month at Paul's Saloon. Special Gigs coming up include the Sunnyvale Art and Wine Festival, the Monterey Squid Festival (we're the featured band this year) and the Palo Alto Chili Cook-Off.

THE BEAR CREEK BOYS and **WESTERN PACIFIC**...**Stanley Meidinger**, fiddle and lead singer...**Joe Kimbro**, mandolin and tenor...**Jeff Hawkins**, guitar and lead singer...**Paul King**, guitar and lead singer...**Jerry King**, string bass...**Billy Rudock**, string bass...**Mark McCormack**, banjo. It's hard to tell who's on first and who's on second with these two bands, so I'm not even going to try. Suffice it to say that the aforementioned fellows, and I'm sure a lot of others I've missed, have been playing bluegrass music around Santa Cruz since the early seventies in both bands. Neither **Western Pacific**, the more traditional of the two bands, or **The Bear Creek Boys** have played regularly in recent years, but when they do play, people come to listen. Last September **The Bear Creek Boys** reunited on stage at Grass Valley and brought the house down. This spring they'll be together again at the Opry House Festival (more about that later) and at Badger Pass in Yosemite. **Western Pacific** performs regularly at Roaring Camp and will be featured at the Carmel Forrest Theater Concert Series this summer. You can also catch them at Gilroy's Garlic Festival.

Bluegrass Associations

The Santa Cruz Bluegrass Society was begun in 1981 for the express purpose of promoting and nurturing bluegrass music. Despite what its name implies, the Society really exists for the entire South Bay; its more than two hundred members live from the upper peninsula to the Carmel Valley, and its events, which have included concerts with the Country Gazette, Tim O'Brien and the Seldom Scene, not to mention a host of Northern California bands, Old Mother Logo, Grant Street, and the Good Ol' Persons, have been held in Santa Cruz, San Jose and Saratoga. The Society's most recent concert featured Delia Bell and Bill Grant. But I think my favorite Santa Cruz Bluegrass Society event has been the annual campouts. Start with the tall Redwoods and lush forest of Portola State Park, add some truly great home cooking (I was the chief cook until being fired for serving what was unfairly called famable jamboli), mix in a large portion of the best jamming to occur in the South Bay, and there you've got it; a truly memorable weekend. The Society also sponsors monthly jams on the last Sunday of each month at Geno's Pizza, 6016 Scotts Valley Drive, Scott's Valley. The picking starts at 1 p.m. and lasts until everyone gets too tired to play or their fingers fall off, whichever comes first. Dick Clark (no relation) is the current president of the organization and the fellow you'd want to talk to about joining (only ten bucks a year and cheap at twice the price)...his telephone is (408) 244-2247. I should add that the Society does a darn good job with its newsletter, *Bluegrass By The Bay*, which comes out more or less once each month.

Another not-for-profit organization supporting and promoting bluegrass in the South Bay is the Santa Clara Valley Fiddlers Association. I've been going to their monthly jams for seven years now, and I've stumbled upon more than a few good musicians there, some of whom I ended up picking with for a good long time. The music at the Association's jams varies from country western to western swing to bluegrass to, ah, would you believe, polka. Yes, polka, but done as tastefully as you would ever want to hear. The Santa Clara Valley Fiddlers Association's jam is

held on the first Sunday of every month (1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.) at John Muir Junior High School. That's on Branham Lane near Almaden Expressway in San Jose.

Bluegrass Radio

We may be short on clubs down here, but we've got bluegrass coursing through the air waves on a pretty regular basis. There's Karen Quick, Brother Glenn Christensen and Just Jean, all on Cupertino's KKUP; Leigh Hill at KUSP Santa Cruz and Cuzin' Al (not my cousin) in KCSM in San Mateo. I won't bother giving times and days and frequencies because they are somewhere else in the *Breakdown*, but I would like to mention a newcomer to the scene. Unlike the other stations I've mentioned, KHIP, 93.5 FM, is a commercial station, but before you turn off before you've even tuned on, let me hasten to add that the great majority of its DJ's are former "Fatties". That's right, it's KFAT revisited, complete with rambling format and utter disregard for what's supposed to sell. KHIP is playing very decent-to-listen-to music (almost unheard of in commercial radio), its got a regular bluegrass show on Sunday evenings 6-9 p.m. And, each Saturday morning, from 11:00 to noon, the station does a live show remote from General Feed and Seed in Capitola that features just a whole lot of local talent. (And yes, General Feed and Seed does quite literally sell feed and seed...and chickens and saddles and may dog's favorite dog chewies). Tune in KHIP.

Bluegrass Club's

According to the US Census Bureau, there are 1,382,483 people living in Santa Clara County today. Of them, 925,219 are men and women over the age of 21. Of these adults, 93%, or roughly 860,000 are above the poverty level and presumably have some spendable income for recreational pursuits after paying bills. For the sake of argument, let's now assume that, heaven forbid, only one in 50 of these likes bluegrass music. That leaves a grand total of 17,200 people old enough and well off enough to go out and patronize a club or restaurant or pizza joint that regularly offers live bluegrass music. And, you guessed it, there is no such place in Santa Clara County at this writing, at least to my knowledge and the knowledge of every bluegrass band I interviewed for this article. No one I talked to is quite sure how we've reached this sad state of affairs. Lord knows we've had our bluegrass spots in the past; The Wagon House, The Motherlode, Chuck's Cellar, and most recently, the Opry House Saloon and Trad'r Sams.

A few theories I've heard postulated go like this: bluegrass fans just don't drink enough to be good club patrons; we are in a "bluegrass trough" caused by "Urban Cowboy backlash"; a proliferation of young, pierced-eared consumers makes rock 'n' roll just too lucrative a proposition for most club owners to pass up, even with the headaches inherent in that type of music; and (here's the high tech theory) the increasing and widespread use of home VCR's keep people home watching rented movies on the weekend. There's even a conspiracy theory, something to do with an international Bill Monroe hate group, but I won't go into that one. For me, the bottom line is this--bluegrass bands need to get out and beat the bushes, and they need to work

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J.D.'s Bluegrass Kitchen

Howdy! Howdy! Howdy!

Well folks, its almost that magic time of year again. FESTIVAL TIME! Hot diggety dog! Ah, I can smell the early morning coffee brewing as the morning sun peeks over the pines at Grass Valley, and in the distance you hear the faint tinkle of a banjo. Such fond memories!

With all the nice spring weather we're having, now's a good time for some maintenance on your cook stove and lanterns. (The ones I'm talking of, are the models that use white gasoline, and are manually pumped to sustain pressure.) As a rule the only two things that should be replaced periodically is the generator and the leather cup in the air pump. If your generator on either piece of equipment is bad, it won't work.

The flame on your stove will be yellow and leave heavy soot deposits on your utensils, due to incomplete combustion. Replacing the generator will cure it. If the one in your lantern is bad, it simply will not light properly. Same symptoms as the stove. To replace either one is a simple task, requiring the most basic of hand tools. If there is any doubt on your part as to how to do it, many sporting good stores or hardware stores will have someone familiar with this problem to help you. (As a rule I replace the generators in my stove and lanterns every spring.)

To inspect the leather cup on the air pump, remove the small wire bail on the pump body. If its worn thin on the edges, or its dry and brittle, replace it. Without it your stove is useless.

If you keep the leather cup oiled, they will last for years. I've yet to replace one. One of the worst things that most people do to their stoves and lanterns is to store them with fuel in the tanks. When you let them set for six to eight months with fuel in them, it gets old and gummy and leads to early generator trouble. Before storing, drain the fuel, pump up a small amount of pressure in the tank and open the control valve to blow out all the fuel. Simple huh! It is still a good idea to carry a spare generator for both pieces, because the only time a stove or lantern quits working is when you are 100 miles up the well known estuary with no visual means of propulsion.

I've finally finished drawing up a complete materials list and set of plans on how to build a kitchen cook box. For those of you who are interested, you can send \$4.00 for a complete set of plans to me at P.O. Box 174 San Andreas, CA 95249. The \$4.00 pays for having the plans copies, large manila envelope, postage and my gas. (My time is free, but so far I haven't found any Arab countries that like bluegrass enough to furnish the crude that it takes to conduct everyday affairs.)

With one of these kitchen cookboxes you can keep ALL of your camp cooking gear ready to go at a moment's notice. There is also plenty of room for food storage of non-perishable items. I even use mine on my patio for summer barbecues and pickin' parties.

Recently I purchased a piece of Tupperware equipment that is just about the slickest thing that I've used to make

biscuits on. It's called a pastry sheet. It is listed on the Tupperware order sheet under Baking Aids, and is number 418. It is a heavy plastic sheet for working dough. It cleans easily and rolls up and stores in the cook box slicker'n a button. I highly recommend this for any serious "Cocinero" who demands the best in his outfit. (They're only four bucks and some change.)

This next piece of equipment I'd like to discuss is one that I consider a "specialty" piece of equipment. Its for making toast on top of the stove. The base is round perforated steel, with a wire framework on top for the bread. When folded up they lay flat and store easily. With one of these toasters, you can turn out perfect toast with a little practice. What goes better with poached eggs and fried taters? They are fairly inexpensive too, as I just bought one for my outfit the other day for \$4.25. A welcome addition to your outfit. Try one, I know you'll like it.

At the end of my last discussion with you, I promised to discuss planning menus for a typical festival so let's get to it. To begin with I try to plan for the known amount of people that I'll be cooking for. As a rule if I buy enough supplies for just that amount of people, there's always plenty for an unexpected guest or two (isn't that right John and Lancel!)

When you plan your menu ahead of time, it keeps your cooking time at the festival to a minimum. There's a lot of the chores that can be done even before you leave your house. One trick I learned many years ago is to pre-cook everything that you can, store them in your ice chest and finish cooking when you get there or merely heat it up. One food stuff I precook is potatoes. Scrub and wrap'em in heavy foil and bake them. To use, simply slice up and saute in butter with a little white wine. Only takes a few minutes to cook and perfect results every time. You can prepeel and slice'em too! (Only you have to keep them covered with water in a container or they will turn black on you.) Six to eight baked potatoes go a long way at a 3-day festival. Gravy can be precooked and stored in a closed container in the ice chest, and heat it when you need it.

You can also slice all your vegetables, mix salad dressings, etc. In other words anything that you can do ahead of time, do it. You'll never regret it. Also when you plan your menu, stick to it. Saves a lot of confusion.

Myself, I usually plan no more than two meals a day when I'm at a festival. A typical menu might go like this:

Arrive Thursday night 8:00 p.m.

Friday - Breakfast: Fruit Juice, coffee, poached eggs, potatoes sauteed in butter and white wine, breakfast steak, toast, butter, jelly. Lunch: Chili Verde Burrito at Taco Joe's (Wow!) Supper: Broiled Hamburger, salad, chips, fresh fruit, coffee. Saturday - Breakfast: Hotcakes, eggs, fresh fruit, coffee, fruit juice, milk. Lunch: Too busy pickin'! Supper: Beans, hot cornbread, salad, coffee.

Sunday - Breakfast: Ham steak, fried grits, scrambled eggs, toast, coffee, fruit juice, milk. Lunch: Taco Joe's again (Gotta have my chili verdi burrito fix!) Supper: Barbecued

steak, cowboy taters, salad, wine, coffee, sourdough bread.

Monday a.m. - Cook up rest of taters with eggs and toast, coffee, fruit juice - and then pack up and head for home.

Now out of those seven meals that I fixed on that particular weekend, there was quite a bit that I did ahead of time. All the potatoes were either precooked or peeled and sliced. The salad greens and vegetables were cut and sliced, and the dressings were mixed in individual containers. The fried grits were cooked, sliced and wrapped in foil. The beans were cooked and frozen. You see how much can be done ahead when you work from a known menu. If you haven't done this before, I suggest that you give it a try as it will sure give you more time to enjoy the festival and renew old friendships. I save all my menus from years past too, and after awhile you have quite a collection to draw from.

Now for my favorite part of this endeavor, and that's VITTLES!

See'in as how I gave you the recipe for "Sonny's Hot Cakes" in the last edition of my Bluegrass Kitchen, I figured that I'd give you a couple of recipes that, when used with the first one would cook up a scrumptious breakfast. Here's a recipe for "Chorizo", which is Mexican sausage. I found this one about 20 years ago in an authentic Mexican cookbook. This makes some of the best sausage you'll ever eat, and **without** all the chemicals and nitrates, not to mention the pig lips and ears, commonly used in commerical sausage today.

Chorizo

2 lbs. LEAN ground beef
1 lb LEAN ground pork
¾ cup red chile powder
1 tsp. whole oregano
3 cloves garlic, crushed
1 tsp. salt
1 cup dry red wine

Mix all ingredients together by hand in a large bowl. Cover tightly and refrigerate for three days to flavor to develop. Make into patties. Can be frozen in freezer bags.

(If you think ¾ cup of chili powder may be too hot for you, mix in any amount that you want, then cook up a small patty and taste it. Add as much as you want.)

The other recipe is one that I learned from a friend many years ago, and he called it Cowboy Taters.

Cowboy Taters

Any amount of potatoes, peeled and sliced thin. Wrap potatoes in heavy foil along with a big dab of butter, some fresh minced garlic or onion or both. Seal edges good. Cook over hot coals 10-12 minutes on each side. Keep 5-6 inches above coals. Open, salt and pepper to taste. Absolutely heavenly!

Well folks, that's about it for this edition of the Bluegrass Kitchen. In the next edition or so I hope to be able to acquaint you with Dutch Oven cooking. If you're not familiar with this style of cooking, you're in for a treat. (I have never had a bad meal when its cooked this way.) Oh yes, A "Cocinero" was what they called the early chuck wagon cooks in the southwest. A title not lightly bestowed, and highly revered by those lucky enough to earn it.

Keep on pickin' that good Bluegrass.

Yer friend,
J.D. Rhynes

SOUTH BAY - Continued from Page 11

with club owners to make bluegrass music once again viable in the South Bay. We've had good clubs in the past, and we'll have them again.

Music Stores

There are some very good music stores in the South Bay that cater to bluegrass musicians. Probably the best known is Gryphon's in Palo Alto. Run by several members of the quintet by the same name, Gryphon's specializes in very fine (and expensive) acoustic instruments, high quality and reliable repairs and some of the best stringed instrument instruction around these parts. On the other end of the valley, in Los Gatos, is The Joplin and Sweeney Music Company, run by Greg Burger and Neil Hogan. Years ago I took some guitar lessons from Greg; he's a sensitive and talented instructor, and I hear he's a hot mandolin player to boot. Joplin and Sweeney is located in the Lyndon Plaza, lower level, at the corner of Main and Santa Cruz.

Bluegrass Events

At this writing, I know of two bluegrass events slated for the coming months. The first is the Third Annual Opry House Bluegrass Festival scheduled for June 29. Located in New Almaden several miles south of San Jose, the Opry House is a 120 year-old brick and stone mansion turned hotel, brothel, speakeasy, vaudeville theater, night club and pizza joint, in that order. I'm not sure who's booked for this June, but the Opry House management has picked some winners in the past, and the picturesque and sprawling grounds that surround the hotel make an ideal spot for listening to honest-to-goodness live bluegrass music. Later in the summer, July 19-20 is the La Honda Bluegrass Festival.

Bluegrass Fans

Last, but not least, are the bluegrass fans of the South Bay. These unsung heroes and heroines have braved many a cold and damp bluegrass festival, they've endured more than a few smoke-filled, sleazy clubs where their favorite bluegrass band made that ill-advised one night stand, and they've received bales of bluegrass band newsletters, concert flyers, and "boy-have-I-got-a-deal" promotions in the mail. But these same fans would be the first to admit that they've also heard some very, very good music. South Bay bluegrass music.

So there you have it, South Bay bluegrass. I shudder to think of what or whom I've left out. (I'm sure I'll find out soon enough.) It was about seven years ago that I bough my first bluegrass album--The Stoneman Family Pickin' the Grass. I brought that record home and must have played it two dozen times. And I think it was that very same day that I became part of the bluegrass scene in the South Bay. It's the tradition of it; it's the kind of music that just hooks you.

Puget Sound Guitar Workshop Set

Dates for the 1986 Puget Sound Guitar Workshop have been set for July 27-Aug. 1 and August 3 - August 8. Cost for each session is \$275. This covers tuition, room and board and gives you two college music credits per session.

Contact (206) 671-4511 for full information.

Traveling Luther...

So you want to be a Luther?

by KEN DONNELL

(Ken will have his workshop set up at the coming June Grass Valley Festival to give workshops and provide repairs. He has added a "one day bow repair service" for all of the fiddlers whose horsehair is getting thin.)

I'm often asked, "How can I learn more about lutherie." Besides attending lutherie schools, or finding an apprenticeship position, the best method is to teach yourself. Simply find an instrument in need of repair and fix it. While this may sound quite simple, here is more information which you may find helpful.

A cardinal rule for anyone beginning lutherie is to never perform a repair for the first time on an instrument you don't own. Thus, if the worst possible scenario occurs, you can merely discard the evidence. Even if your best friend says he doesn't care about how the repair turns out, don't run the risk of generating any bad feelings. You don't want to begin your career in lutherie by getting a second rate reputation. Remember this thought: "A cook is never judged by the dishes he doesn't serve."

Be careful of working on the "El Cheapo" models as these can be extremely frustrating. At the same time, don't attempt work on a valuable instrument unless your skill level is sufficiently developed to do the instrument justice. Beginners also need to be careful of getting into extensive restorations as the complexity of the work usually brings discouraging results. So, begin with small projects: action adjustments, bridge regluing, fret work, and others before moving onto more difficult repairs.

It's a good idea to work with instruments which are competently constructed, and whose value is likely to be increased through all of your efforts. It's always disappointing to see someone who has put many, many hours into a cheap and poorly constructed instrument. First of all, even the best workmanship on a cheap instrument usually appears shoddy. Secondly, it's such a waste of energy to invest so many hours of work into a finished product which is essentially worthless.

So, one should seek to acquire instruments which are: inexpensive, competently constructed, potentially valuable, and not damaged beyond reasonable repair. This may at first sound difficult, but is often done quite easily through word of mouth among your family and friends. You'll be surprised at what will come out of attics and basements.

Beyond this lies an infinity of flea markets, pawn shops, and garage sales. I've often found good deals in music stores, particularly ones who don't have a repairman to maintain their inventory. Once I found an old, but rebuildable Harmony Sovereign discarded in a trash bin. The key is to separate the occasional instrument which has potential value from the hoards of junk.

When I say potential value, I'm not talking about lots of money. You may get lucky and find the rare sleeper, but most of the time, consider yourself lucky just to break even. This is particularly true when beginning.

I remember one particular instrument well. It was a very

LETTERS

Enjoyed Gospel Show Article

Dear Editor:

I am writing to say how much I enjoyed the article entitled: "Oregon Bluegrass Gospel Show a Success" in the March/April 1986 issue.

Furthermore, I would like to express my interest in having a Northern California annual Gospel Show.

I am a member of a gospel bluegrass group called "Good Clean Fun" and we would really enjoy being a part of a gospel program.

Please let me know if there are plans for an annual Gospel Show.

Thank you,
Ruth I. Francis
Martinez, CA

(Editor's Note: Yes, there are those who are planning a gospel show, including your editor. We are targeting the end of January 1987 for the show and are looking for a site and help. We won't be able to pay lots of \$\$ the first time, but want to get it started. Plans are for a potluck, pickin', and following that a Gospel Show. Let me know if you would like to help, by dropping a note to Don Powell, 735 College Street, Woodland, CA 95695.)

C L A S S I F I E D

One 2 hour Harmonica Lesson is all you need. Bluegrass, Blues, etc. Experienced Teacher. Only \$20. (415) 651-6248.

nice old Montgomery Wards Washburn (circa 1900) that probably sold for \$1.95 new, and I picked up at a garage sale for \$.50. That may sound like a great deal since I eventually sold the instrument for \$300.00, but only after making repairs worth \$450.00.

What makes a quality instrument is a subject that deserves another, if not several separate articles. Name brand, woods, hardware, body styles, etc., all can determine an instrument's potential worth. To get the best deals, you'll almost need a third eye to see past multiple layers of dirt, paint, non-original parts, shoddy repairs, and other distracting elements. And don't even dream about testing the action or listening to the tone. You'll be lucky if the strings (assuming there are any) are less than ten years old.

Tools are a beginning craftsman's greatest expense, and great care should be exercised to make certain the available money is spent wisely. Many items may look beautiful in the catalogue, but will have little use in your work. Wait until you have a specific need for a tool, and then only buy one that is the best quality obtainable. Don't waste your money on cheap tools.

So, don't be afraid to take a chance. Mistakes are merely the tuition for a hard earned education. And someday, when all the pieces come together, and that garbage heap of wood and strings has slowly been reborn on your workbench, you'll begin to understand the joy and exhilaration of being a luthier.

2nd Annual

Midsummer Bluegrass Festival

**August 1 - 2 - 3; Nevada County Fairgrounds
Grass Valley**

featuring

**The Chris Hillman Band WITH Emmylou Harris
Hot Rize**

**Red Knuckles & The Trailblazers
Seldom Scene**

Norman Blake and the Rising Fawn Ensemble

J.D. Crowe and The New South

Tony Rice Unit

Nashville Bluegrass Band

Kate Wolf • Brian Bowers

The Vern Williams Band

Sidesaddle • High Country • California Quickstep • Heartland

Gryphon String Band • 8th Avenue String Band • The Slide Mountain Boys

.....
TICKET ORDER FORM - Midsummer Bluegrass Festival

Early Bird Tickets (Weekend/includes camping)

if purchased by June 1, 1986, \$30.00 per ticket

No. of tickets _____ x \$30.00 - \$ _____

Weekend ticket after June 1, 1986 - \$34.00

Weekend ticket at the gate - \$38.00

Friday Only - \$12.00

Saturday Only - \$16.00

Sunday Only - \$16.00

Good only for:

CBA and SCBS Members

Use membership number

Daily tickets DO NOT INCLUDE CAMPING Children's Tickets:

3-Day - \$10.00

Individual Day - \$5.00

Send to:

**Sacramento Bluegrass Society
741 East Street, No. 198
Woodland, CA 95695-4144**

**Music starts at 11 a.m. on Friday to 11 p.m.
Saturday music 10 a.m. - 11 p.m.
Sunday music 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.**

FIELD GUIDE TO WESTERN BANDS

A Reminder - If you wish to be listed in the next Bluegrass Breakdown, you must send in your band's name, address and phone number, along with any engagements you have upcoming, plus any continuing performances, to be listed. Send to: Editor, Bluegrass Breakdown, 735 College Street, Woodland, CA 95695.

Continuing Gigs

Sunday

California Quickstep, Harry's Bar & Grill, 4th & L, Sacramento, 9 - 12 p.m.

Tuesday

California Quickstep, Harry's Bar & Grill, 4th & L, Sacramento, 9 - 12 p.m.

Wednesday

High Country, Paul's Saloon, San Francisco

Thursday

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

Friday

Good Ol' Persons, 8 p.m.-11 p.m., Red Vest Pizza, El Cerrito
High Country, Paul's Saloon, San Francisco
Bluegrass Monarchs, Kalisa's, Cannery Row, Monterey
Sidesaddle, Tiffany's, Town & Country Village, San Jose
The Twin Sisters Brothers', Harry O'Shortals, Napa 8-11:30

Saturday

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

Band Listings

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

CABIN FEVER (916) 265-6437 [Nevada City]

May 9 - Dixon May Fair, Dixon, CA

June 6 - Thousand Trails Campground, Donner Summit.

June 21 - Art Fair, Grass Valley

July 19 - Opening for Kate Wolfe concert, American Victorian Museum, Nevada City

July 24 - Sonoma County Fair, Santa Rosa

August 14 - Yolo County Fair, Woodland

BRUSHY PEAK (415) 443-5217 [Livermore/Bay Area]

May 17-18 - Bethel Island Bluegrass Festival

CALIFORNIA QUICKSTEP (916) 662-8525 [Placerville]

May 1 - Palms Playhouse, Davis

May 3 - Concert & workshops - Empire Theater, Placerville

May 10-11 - Whole Earth Festival - UC Davis

FIDDLEDUSTERS (707) 425-8146 [Fairfield]

GOOD OL' PERSONS (415) 530-0839 [Bay Area] New address: P.O. Box 20247, Oakland, CA 94620

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

June 20-21-22 - Grass Valley June CBA Bluegrass Festival.

August 1-2-3 - California's Midsummer Bluegrass Festival at the Nevada County Fairgrounds, Grass Valley

HIGH COUNTRY (415) 482-0855 [Bay Area]

THE NEW GRASS MENAGERIE (408) 947-6868 [South Bay]

May 3 - Sunnyvale Art Festival

May 24 - 25 - Monterey Squid Festival

June 7 - Paul's Saloon

June 28 - Paul's Saloon

July 4 - Palo Alto Chili Cook-off

July 26 - Paul's Saloon

SIDESADDLE (408) 353-4408 [San Jose]

May 10 - Paul's Saloon

May 16-17-18 - Bethel Island Bluegrass Festival, Anchor Marina, Bethel Island.

June 1 - Flying Lady, Morgan Hill

June 7 - Strawberry Festival, Los Gatos

June 8 - Swanton Corn Roast, Davenport, 12 noon - 5

June 29 - Club Almaden Bluegrass Festival, San Jose

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

June 20-21-22 - Grass Valley June Festival

THE TWIN SISTERS BROTHERS (707) 422-3727 [Fairfield]

Every Friday, 8-11:30 p.m. - Harry O'Shantal's, Napa

WILDROSE (916) 444-8318 [Sacramento]

Additional Radio Listings for Fresno

Member Ken Chan reports that KFSR has a Folk Show with Evo Bluestein as host from 1-3 p.m. on Saturday. Also on Saturday on KVPR is Stringband Jazz from 5-6 p.m. with host Evo Bluestein (he does get around) and from 6-8 p.m. Prairie Home Companion. KVPR is 89.3FM and KF-SR is 90.5 FM.

Turn Your Radio On



RADIO LISTING

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

SUNDAY

- 9:45 a.m. - All Gospel Show with host Ed Bird, KCVR, Lodi, (1570 AM) [209] 368-0626
- 12 noon - 5 p.m. - Bay Area Bluegrass, KCSM, San Mateo, (91 FM), Featuring all types of Bluegrass Music, alternating hosts Pete Lude, Karyn Cap, Barbara Whitaker and Cuzin Al Knoth on last Sunday of the month. [415-574-6427]
- 2 - 4 p.m. - The Bluegrass Show with Ron Stanley, KERG, Garberville [104.7 FM] (707) 923-2052
- 2 - 5 p.m. - Bluegrass Express hosted by Marty Warburton, Don Mitchell, Bill Ray and Don Lanning, KNPR, Las Vegas [89.5 FM] (702) 456-6695.
- 3 - 5 p.m. - Home Brothers Radio Show, KUNR, Reno, [88.7 FM] (702) 784-6591
- 3 - 5 p.m. - Down on the Pataphysical Farm with Leigh Hill, KUSP, Santa Cruz, [89 FM] (408) 476-2800
- 5 - 7 p.m. - The Lost Highway [bluebilly music] with Johnny Simmons and Amy Airhart, KUSP, Santa Cruz, [89 FM] (408) 476-2800
- 6 - 9 p.m. - Cuzin' Al and his bluegrass show, KHIP 93.5 FM, Hollister (408) 637-7600.
- 9 - 12 p.m. - Cupertino Barn Dance with Stompin' Steve Hathaway [cowboy & country music] KKUP, Cupertino [91.5 FM] (408) 253-0303

MONDAY

- 2 - 4 p.m. - Trail Mix with Carri Gicker and Jody Fenimore [country & folk] KVMR, Nevada City, [89.5 FM] (916) 265-9073
- 6 - 9 p.m. - Alternating Mondays - The Quickstep with Karen Quick and Brother Glenn's Mostly Bluegrass Show with Glenn Christensen, KKUP, Cupertino [91.5 FM] (408) 253-0303

TUESDAY

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

WEDNESDAY

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

THURSDAY

- 10 a.m. - Noon - Hard Country with Richard Snelson, KVMR, Nevada City [89.5 FM] (916) 265-9073
- 7 - 10 p.m. - Just Jean Radio Show with Jean Philben [folk & country] KKUP, Cupertino [91.5 FM] (408) 253-0303
- 8 - 10 p.m. - Basically Bluegrass with Duane English, KCBX, San Luis Obispo [90.1 FM], Santa Barbara [89.9 FM] (805) 544-KCBX

FRIDAY

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

SATURDAY

- 3 - 6 a.m. - Saddle Seat - country with Johnny Western, KKUP, Cupertino [91.5 FM] (408) 253-0303
- 6 - 8 a.m. [2nd & 4th Saturdays] Capt. Nashville and the Sterling Sliver Express bring country & bluegrass to the *Worlds Folk Music Show*, KKUP, Cupertino [91.5 FM] (408) 253-0303
- 6 a.m. - 5 p.m. - Prairie Fires and Paper Moons with Mitch and Jerri Third, includes Prairie Home Companion from 3-5, KUOP, Stockton [91.3 FM] (209) 946-2582
- 10 a.m. - Noon - The Bluegrass Show with Ken Crow, KVMR, Nevada City, [89.5 FM], (916) 265-9073
- Noon - 2 p.m. - Hillbilly Jukebox with T.J. Meekins, KVMR, Nevada City, [89.5 FM] (916) 265-9073
- 3 - 6 p.m. - Life's Other Side with Mike Reed, KUNR, Reno, [88.7 FM] (702) 784-6591
- 3 - 6 p.m. - High & Lonesome, bluegrass with Rick Nagle; alternating with Dave Barnett's Swing Boogie, western swing & bluegrass, KKUP, Cupertino, [91.5 FM] (408) 253-0303
- 6 - 8 p.m. - A Prairie Home Companion, KUNR, Reno, [88.7 FM], (702) 784-6591
- 6 - 7 p.m. - 'The Bluegrass Connection', Every Saturday night bluegrass with Brad Johnson, KVML, 1450 AM, Sonora. P.O. Box 578, Sonora 95370, (209) 532-7426.

Paul's Saloon Schedule

Sunday - Lone Star will be playing Texas Swing on Sundays.

Monday - Bluegrass Jam Night

Tuesday - Lost Weekend will play western swing and dixieland jazz.

Wednesday - High Country on all Wednesday's in May

Thursday - Fog City Ramblers - May 1, 15, 22, 29

Cats 'n Jammers - May 8 with country swing

Friday - High Country - all Friday's in May

Saturday - 5/1 Bluegrass Monarchs

5/10 Sidesaddle

5/17 Bluegrass Philharmonic

5/24 Touch of Grass

5/31 8th Avenue String Band

Sorry to see that it isn't live bluegrass seven nights a week at Paul's any longer. It won't be live anywhere unless we get out and support the clubs that still have bluegrass. But dixieland jazz at Paul's!!

Also Paul's now has a \$2.00 cover on Saturday nights.

Grant Street to tour Europe

Grant Street String Band will be touring Europe this summer according to member Laurie Lewis. The band will be over in Europe starting in June, thus they will miss the Grass Valley festival.

Laurie Lewis will be appearing with Greg Townsend, Mark McCornack, Markie Sanders and Keith Little in an evening of original and traditional songs and tunes on May 9 at The Palms in Davis.

On the Cover

One of the headline bands at the Grass Valley June Festival is the Virginia Squires - now known as the Squires. Their latest record, a gospel album has been rated high by all reviewers.

Advertising Rates

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

Full Page -- \$80.00

Half Page -- \$50.00

Quarter Page -- \$30.00

Business Card -- \$15.00

The size of the image area for a full page ad is 7¼ by 9¾; half page - 5 by 7½; quarter page 3½ by 5. Art work should be very clear black and white layout and all photos should be screened.

The current rates for classified ads are based on 3½ inches of typed copy and are as follows: \$3.00 for the first three lines and 50¢ for each additional line. Make checks payable to the California Bluegrass Association and send check and ad to:

Don Powell
Bluegrass Breakdown Editor
735 College Street
Woodland, CA 95695

We Need Help

Volunteers are needed to man the CBA booth at the "Festival at the Lake", at Oakland's Lake Merrit, June 6, 7, and 8; 10 a.m. to Sunset (about 6 p.m.).

We need pickers to lend their musical talent and booth personnel to hand out literature. All contributions to this effort are greatly appreciated. Last year we handed out over 2,000 fliers for the "June Grass Valley" and took about 50 new membership applications. A great return on the CBA's \$75.00 booth fee, plus about one hundred volunteer man hours.

All interested in lending their talents and support, should contact Board members Steve Hogle or Jim Armentrout.

Steve Hogle

715 N. San Antonio Road
Los Altos, CA 94022
(415) 949-2181

or

Jim Armentrout

1844-48th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94122
(415) 661-0157

Publicity Help Wanted

Fred Volz, publicity chairman, needs help in a number of areas to get the work out about the June Grass Valley. It is extremely important that the CBA do well in June, to offset the substantial loss that occurred last Labor Day. We need to get the work out to everyone who could be interested in attending. Help is especially needed in the North Valley areas, Sacramento suburbs and the San Francisco Bay area.

Sacramento DJ Dies From Injuries

On Feb. 10, the Sacramento bluegrass and old-time music community lost a good friend and fellow musician - Lee Jenks. Lee died from massive injuries suffered in a car accident Feb. 4, 1986. He was 24-years-old.

Despite his young age, Lee had already made important contributions to bluegrass and old-time music in the Sacramento area. As the fledgeling Sacramento Community Radio was getting off the ground in 1984 and 1985, Lee hosted a weekly bluegrass program, featuring his favorite music, guest hosts, interviews, and occasionally, live music. Wildrose, a Sacramento-based bluegrass band, was the first band Lee featured on his radio program.

Lee was also an enthusiastic musician, playing both bluegrass and clawhammer-style banjo.

Lee's love for bluegrass was so great that friends and family included his bluegrass affiliations in his funeral notice. At the Feb. 15 funeral and reception, a few of his musician friends paid tribute to Lee by playing some of the music that was so dear to him. (Andy Alexis, who taught Lee to play old-style banjo; Kathy Barwick, who taught Lee bluegrass-style; and Dorothy Hawkinson).

The Bower's Mansion Festival

Produced by the Northern Nevada Bluegrass Association & Washoe Parks

FEATURING

Bonnie & Friends
Comstock Country Cloggers
Classic Country
Dennis Steiner (hammer dulcimer)
High Strung
Jay Riseden (Cajun button accordion)
Leland Smith
Lost Coyote

Mitch
The Sagebrush Stompers
Shirley Benson
The Slide Mountain Boys
Tim and Linda Gorelangton
Master of Ceremonies - Mike Reed
Clogging workshop with Janice Lee
Beginning Banjo with Chris Bayer

Sept. 20, 10 a.m. til 5 p.m.?

Tickets:

\$5.00 per individual

\$10.00 per family

By Mail:

(Make check to: Fran Naylor)

2435 Brenda Way

Carson City, NV 89701

Info: (702) 849-0776

SITE: Bowers Mansion, Washoe Valley

halfway between Reno and Carson City

California Bluegrass Association Membership Application

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Membership Number

No. of votes

Expiration Date

No. of Tickets

Last Name First Name

Address

City State ZIP

Telephone (include area code)

Spouse's Name

SINGLE - \$10.00

Children (Name & Birthday)

SPOUSE - \$2.50

AGE 16-18 (voting privilege)

CHILDREN-
Non-Voting 12-18
(each) - \$1.00

UNDER 16 (nonvoting)

Voting
12-18 - \$10.00
(each)

CHECK IF:

New ☐ Renewal ☐

Foreign

Subscription ONLY ☐

SUBSCRIPTIONS
ONLY -

\$12.00 - Foreign boat

\$18.00 - Foreign-Air

Bands of 3 to 7 members may join for \$25.00 a year

Write for more information to the address below.

Send check or money order for membership to:

Treasurer

California Bluegrass Association

P.O. Box 11287

San Francisco, CA 94101-7287

If a senior(s), OVER 65, list
birth date(s):

Instruments Played

Any Help you can offer the CBA
(artwork, typing, writing, promotion, etc.)

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