

BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN



Volume 12, Number 6

November/December 1986



NOTICE - LATE ISSUE

With the permission of the Board this issue is late to get you the latest information on the June festival and to let you have a chance to purchase a Christmas present for yourself and loved ones -- cheaper tickets for the June festival. Also we wanted to tell you who has been hired, and who was elected to the Board and to positions on the Board. All of this information, along with a great story about Chubby Wise, is in this issue of the Breakdown.

Board Elections

All nine candidates were elected and at the November Board meeting all officers were re-elected for 1987.

Deadlines for next issue

We will return to our normal (?) publications schedule with the next issue of the Breakdown. The issue will be put together on December 20, so all schedules, etc., should be here by that time. We will be featuring a story on Courtney Johnson, formerly of the Newgrass Revival. We have room for more stories if you are interested in getting them in for printing. Anything is welcome.

Thanks

To my hardworking students for getting the typing done, my daughters for getting it to the mail and our printer for waiting for so long to get this.

New Address

Into everyone's life some changes occur - the same with your editor. The girls have now left the nest, so mom and dad got a smaller home - privacy at last!!

Send all information, news, etc., to Don Powell, 623 Harvard Ct., Woodland, CA 95695. Phone is still (916) 662-5691.

California Bluegrass Association

Bluegrass Breakdown is published bimonthly at 632 Harvard Court, 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

This is the low point of the winter season for special events - so attend your favorite bluegrass bar or saloon - Paul's especially!!

Upcoming dates to put in your calendar for 1987:

April 24-25-26 - Golden West Bluegrass Festival, Prado Basin Park, near Norco, CA. This is the continuation of Dick Tyner's popular twice (Soon to be three) festivals a year. Full information in the next Breakdown.

April 25 - 2nd Annual Bluegrass Festival at Paradise (near Chico) in conjunction with Gold Nugget Days, Inc. This was a fun band concert last year, attended by almost a 1,000 people. Promises to be bigger and better and with camping this year. Info: Mike Reynolds, P.O. Box 880, Paradise, 95969 or (916) 873-4997.

June 19 - 20 - 21 - 12th Annual Grass Valley Bluegrass Festival. The big June Festival just gets better all the time. This year more bands and a better program for you to enjoy. Early bird tickets are on sale now and will save you big money. See advertisement in this issue

July 24 - 25- 26 - Golden West Festivals, Prado Basin Park, A new festival for Dick Tyner, but should be one of the best of the summer. Plan now to attend.

October 23 - 24- 25 - Golden West Festival, Prado Basin Park, Norco, The annual fall festival at beautiful Prado Basin Park. Great lineup

FIELD GUIDE

(All bands who send in a listing by the 20th of the month preceding the publication will be listed for that publication - NO LETTER, NO LISTING.)

THE EIGHTH AVENUE STRING BAND (916) 343-8173
[Chico]

Dec. 12, 13, 14 - Craft Festival, Colonial Coliseum, Reno, Nevada

Dec. 19, 20, 21 - Craft Festival, Convention Center, Fresno, CA

Thanks from GV Cancer Aid Shop

Dear CBA,

Wanted to let you know that the recycled cans that were saved for us at the June festival brought in \$39.80.

We cannot begin to tell you how much we appreciate the donation and all of the hard work that went into saving the cans.

Told one of my friends about the Blue Grass Association saving the cans for us. If you want the whole of Nevada County to know anything all you have to do is tell her.

Thanking you again so very much,

Rita Ciesa, secretary
Thrift Shop Cancer Aid



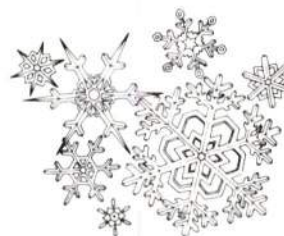
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'J.D.'s Bluegrass Kitchen'

by J.D. RHYNES

Howdy again friends and neighbors!

I would like to apologize for not having time to write the column for the last issue of the Breakdown. Personal problems prevented me from doing so, but hopefully they're all behind me. Also, a big thank you for all of you in my bluegrass family that offered your support and friendship when most needed. I'll never forget a single one of you, ever. Also, I'd like to thank all of the friends and neighbors out there that have voiced their approval of the "Bluegrass Kitchen" column and the recipes that they've tried from it. Thank you for the kind comments, as well as some very useful ideas for future columns. If any of you out there have a favorite recipe that is a real humdinger and you wish to share it with the rest of "the greatest music fans" in the world, just drop it to me at P.O. Box 174, San Andreas, CA 95249 and we'll see what we can do.

I still have some plans available for the camp/cookbox at \$4.00 a set for those of you who are interested. All the folks that have purchased a set are busy as a bunch of little beavers getting ready for the next festival season! Thank you for the nice comments on the plans. May you cook many a memorable feast with this versatile piece of equipment.

Before we get down to some good "rib stickin'" recipes, I'd like to discuss some cooking utensils with you. First, while cruising the cooking utensil department in the BEST department store in Stockton, I came across a utensil set that is a real gem! It consists of a large spoon, meat fork, large and small spatula, and a ladle. They are stainless steel with hardwood handles, are made in England and were only \$13.50 in the Stockton store. An excellent buy! I'm sure that they're available in most of the BEST stores. Give them a looksee.

Also in the GEMCO Department Store (get there before they are totally sold out in closing) I found a 20 cup coffee pot (this is in the sporting goods area of the store) that's made in the good ol' USA. For around \$10 bucks. It's just like the one that John Lytle and Lance "The Flasher" Gordon bought for me, and it too is an excellent buy for the price. Speaking of John and Lance, in my last column I thanked them for their gracious gift of the coffeepot, and kind of wondered aloud, "If I could only get them to buy the coffee now!" Well folks, not only did they buy some of the finest coffee beans ever, but they also presented me with a fine coffee mill, made in England, too! These two know no end, when it comes to making a person feel humble. Gee fellas, the transmission in my Cad is starting to act up, and....., I think I'd better get back to the subject at hand.

Also this last month I found some coffee cups that really fill the bill when it comes to outdoor cookin and eatin! They are made by Aladdin, are plastic, and they are insulated. Not just a double wall plastic cup, but filled with foam insulation. They are virtually unbreakable and they keep your coffee HOT. On a real cold morning in the mountains it seems like there is about a 30 to 45 second time span, between when your coffee's too hot to drink and then it's too cold to drink. I'm sure we've all experienced this most perplexing of phenomena's with a regular cup. With these in-

sulated cups, the hot's stay hot and colds stay cold. I'm sorry that I don't have a source for these other than they are made by Aladdin, Inc. I'm sure any sporting goods or hardware store that carries Aladdin products can get these. Try some, I know you won't regret it. These are the perfect companions to the fine coffee mill that my two "Compadres" gave me at the June Festival. A coffee mill is an excellent addition to the camp/cook box too! You just can't beat the flavor of fresh ground coffee. Especially on a chilly mountain morning, with the sun starting to pink the sky, and a far off you can hear the tinkle of a banjo or mandolin as the early pickers are gettin warmed up for the days pickin!

I have looked at several small hand mills in specialty shops that would fit right in with your basic cooking gear. I bought a small brass bodied one some years ago that grinds just enough for a pot. It's small enough to fit in the drawer of the cookbox and you can use it at home as well. A good one is rather expensive, but they'll last a lifetime, so they are a rather inexpensive investment when you really think about it. After all, you're worth it when you come to think of it, aren't you?

Another fine piece of cooking equipment I've been wanting to acquaint you with it a "Camp Dutch Oven". For those of you folks not familiar with one of these, I'll do my best to describe it. It is a cast iron pot or vessel about 4 to 6 inches deep and anywhere from 8 to 16 inches in diameter. The body has three legs on the bottom. The body has a large bail handle, so it can be carried when hot. The lid has a flange of about one inch in height all around the top, to hold hot coals. There is also an "eye" in the middle of the lid so you can lift it off with a hook or poker to check on how your biscuits or roast or whatever you're cookin' is doing. The legs hold the oven above the coals, so that the weight doesn't snuff the fire and lets the heat circulate under the bottom evenly. With one of these you can cook a virtual feast, but with two of them, one for bread, and the other for the main dish, words just cannot do justice to the results that an experienced "Cocinero" can obtain. I have never had a bad meal from a Dutch Oven! The toughest old rooster that ever lived, cooked in one of these with some taters, carrots, celery, chili peppers, Oregano, sweet Basil, butter, salt and pepper and a dash of white wine, makes pheasant under glass taste like something from a street vendors cart on a Tiajuana street corner!

There are several stores in Northern California that handle Dutch Ovens. One of the better selections I've found in Stockton at Herb's Surplus on East Main. For you folks that can't find one in a store, you can write to Cabela's at 812-13th Avenue, Sidney, Nebraska, 69160, and they will send you a free catalog. They carry all kinds of outdoor equipment and are a very reputable firm and are nice folks to deal with.

To use a Dutch Oven, you really don't need an instruction book, but if there ever was one written I would have to say that it was the one written by Mr. Don Holm of Portland, Oregon. It is titled, *Old Fashioned Dutch Oven Cookbook* and sells for \$5.95 and is available from Caxton Printers, Ltd., Caldwell, Idaho 83605. This is a worthwhile

addition to any "Cocinero's" vittle's library. I ran across a copy of this fine volume on a magazine bookstore shelf about 15 years ago, and was really what taught me how to cook in a Dutch Oven. I keep it in my cookbook at all times.

Biscuits cooked in a Dutch Oven are manna from Heaven! I'm sure that Charlie Waller, Bill Yates, Dick Smith and Norman Wright of Country Gentlemen fame would testify to this as fact. It was my pleasure to have them to breakfast when they appeared at our June Festival in 1985. Along with ham steaks, fried taters, and eggs, we had biscuits and gravy. I'll never forget Bill Yates proclaiming himself as THE world expert on biscuits and gravy. When he had properly dismantled two biscuits, gravied 'em and took one bite, he grabbed that plate of biscuits with one arm while eating all the time with the other. Charlie had to grab the skillet of gravy, just so he could trade some of it for some of Bill's biscuits! Norman said he sure was gonna hate to tell his momma that her biscuits weren't the best in the world anymore, but I'm sure that if she's using a Dutch Oven they probably are once more. There's also the stories of what Alan Munde, Roland White, Billy Joe Foster and Vern Williams and Ray Park tink of Dutch Oven fare, but that's another time.

Here's a recipe for what I call "Cocinero Apple Pie". (High Country thoroughly enjoyed this when served as a dessert at Steve Waller's 1984 pickin' party in Peedee Creek, Oregon).

Take six to eight green apples (Granny Smith, Golden Delicious, etc.), wash well, don't peel, cut in half, core and grate up on hand grater into Dutch Oven. Sprinkle in large handful of brown sugar, juice of half a lemon, a small spoon of cinnamon, one cube of butter or margarine cut up, handful of raisins if desired. Pour in half a can of canned cow. Mix up a dough with bisquick to which you've added ½ cup sugar or so. Make enough dough to cover apple mixture about one inch thick. When it's cooked it will be nice and fluffy. Brush top lightly with melted butter. Put on lid, set on medium hot bed of coals, cover top with coals and cook until crust is nice and brown and a fork comes out of the crust clean. Spoon crust out, cover with hot apple mixture,

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

pour a little canned cow or cream over it and stand out of the way, fer yer about to get trampled! Of course you greased the oven first, before building this great dessert.

The secret of learning how to use a Dutch Oven is exactly just that. Buy one and start using it. In no time at all you'll be turning out biscuits, bread, roasts and anything else that you care to try. It is truly one of the most versatile pieces of cooking equipment you'll ever own.

In my next column I'll discuss the tools needed for your Dutch Oven as well as some more good recipes for same.

Recently, after many months of searching, I've come up with a supply source of *true* corn meal. For you folks that were born and raised here in the west, you really haven't had good cornbread unless you've had the good fortune to travel our great southern states. The junk that is foisted off on the public out here as corn meal, is anything but. After they get through bleaching it, degerming it, milling and forming it, they dye it! Not very appetizing sounding is it!

I order my corn meal from C.&C. Supply at P.O. Box 386, East Flat Rock, North Carolina 28726. They take the whole kernel of corn and grind it in an old fashioned, water powered grist mill, there in the Blue Ridge Mountains. That's all they do to it, is simply grind it. This corn meal makes the best corn bread I've had since I left Arkansas with my momma and daddy in 1941. They carry yellow and white meal. The white is my favorite. The UPS costs as much as the cornmeal but it's worth it once you taste what cornbread is all about. Drop these folks a line for the prices, you won't be disappointed if you try it. Next month I'll feature my buttermilk cornbread recipe, and how to cook it in a Dutch Oven. Sonny Hammond of Portland, Oregon

Continued on Page 9



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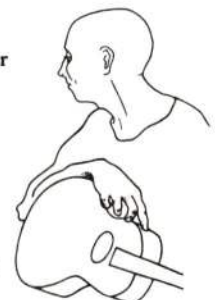
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Chubby Wise, Smooth, Soulful Fiddler

by JOE ROSS

No story of the early formative years of bluegrass music is told without reference to that great fiddler and entertainer, Chubby Wise. The late 30's and early 40's were an exciting and exhilarating era for the bluegrass sound, and it was the creative contributions of Chubby Wise that defined and solidified the bluegrass fiddle style.

Chubby Wise was born Robert Russell Wise on October 2, 1915 in Lake City, Florida. Chubby says, "My stepdad was a hoedown fiddler who played in homes for square dances," and at an early age Chubby would accompany his father, using a clawhammer banjo style or Riley Puckett guitar style. In his teens, Chubby's musical interests turned to the fiddle, and he names Bryan Purcell, a 7 or 8 time Florida state champion, as his major inspiration. Chubby remembers "going to Purcell's house one day for what we called a frolic...an old fashioned square dance in the living room." Chubby also admired the fiddling of Curly Fox, Clayton McMichen (of Gid Tanner's Skillet Lickers) and "Fiddlin'" Arthur Smith, one of the most influential fiddlers in country music with his jazzy, swingy stylings, modern for that day. Surely, the blues fiddling of the southern blacks (e.g. Mississippi Sheiks) also must have played a role in the molding of Chubby's fiddle style.

Chubby began his fiddling career in Jacksonville, Florida, driving taxi by day and fiddling by night. It was here in the mid-30's that he and Ervin Rouse, another find Florida fiddler, composed the "Orange Blossom Special" about the Seaboard Air Line's impressive new streamliner train. Ervin and his brother, Jack, eventually added lyrics to the tune, copyrighted and recorded it.

In early 1938, Chubby landed work with the Jubilee Hillbillies in Gainesville, Florida. That band kept busy with personal appearances, shows, dances and radio work on WRUS (Gainesville, Florida). In this group, Wise played in a variety of styles from hoedowns to swing. Chubby also acquired his nickname here, when the Hillbillies' piano player one day jokingly called him "Chubby".

One Saturday evening in late 1942 when the Jubilee Hillbillies were off, Chubby was listening to the Grand Ole Opry and heard Bill Monroe announce that his fiddler, Howdy Forrester, would be leaving to join the Navy. The following Monday, Chubby was on the train to Nashville and by Saturday had landed a job with Bill Monroe. Chubby recalls how he reported backstage and auditioned for Bill by playing "Katy Hill" and then backing Monroe on "Footprints in the Snow" and "Mule Skinner Blues". This was the start of a creative era for bluegrass, an association with Bill Monroe that would last for seven years. Chubby recalls his fondest memories of this period. "I was thrilled to be on the Opry, and I also liked the personal appearances. I loved Uncle Dave Macon, Kirk and Sam McGee, Stringbean, Clyde Moody and also Robert Dunn." The McGee Brothers, of course, toured with Uncle Dave Macon, their banjo and guitar forming a part of Uncle Dave's Fruit Jar Drinkers prior to their joining "Fiddlin'" Arthur Smith as the

Dixieliners in 1930. Stringbean (Dave Akeman) was Bill Monroe's first banjo player. Clyde Moody was a bluesy guitarist that recorded with Bill Monroe on Victor in 1940 and played as a Blue Grass Boy from 1942-45. Bob Dunn of Milton Brown and his Musical Brownies, was the first to attach an amplifier to a steel guitar.

During his first few years as a Blue Grass Boy, Chubby Wise found Bill Monroe very helpful as he converted from his swingy style to the bluegrass style. When Chubby joined the group, he was much more adept at western swing and pop music than he was in the mountain fiddle style of previous Monroe sidemen like Tommy Magness, Art Wooten, Howdy Forrester and the Stanley Brothers' Fiddle, Leslie Keith. Chubby attributes "a lot of practice" with his making the grade with the Blue Grass Boys.

The bluegrass band that Chubby joined in 1943 consisted of Bill Monroe, Clyde Moody and Cousin Wilbur Westbrook. By late 1945, the group would be the classic configuration of Bill Chubby, Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs, and Howard Watts ("Cedric Rainwater").

(NOTE: Chubby and Rossi say 1943 for the above date, eventho a couple of other published sources on Chubby say 1942???)

Bill Monore had begun recording vocal duets with his brother, Charlie, 1936. Although Bill Monroe's first solo recordings for RCA Victor in 1940 introduced a developing bluegrass sound to records (e.g. Mule Skinner Blues, Tennessee Blues, Honky Tonk Swing, Cryin' Holy Unto The Lord, In the Pines, Six Whhie Horses), it was the group's Columbia sessions beginning in 1945 which presented a solidified bluegrass sound.

The band's first Columbia session at Castle Studios in Nashville on February 13, 1945 featured Banjo and accordeon as lead instruments, a strong bluesy ingredient, and a hit with "Kentucky Waltz." The group included Bill, Chubby, Tex Willis on guitar, David Akeman ("Stringbean") on banjo, Wilene "Sally Ann" Forrester on accordion and Bill Westbrook on bass. Songs recorded were the Rocky Road Blues, Kentucky Waltz, True Life Blues, Goodbye Old Pal, Footprints in the Snow, Blue Grass Special, Nobody Loves Me and Come Back To Me in My Dreams.

The next four Columbia sessions held on September 16, 1946, September 17, 1946, October 2, 1947, and October 28, 1947 were definitive for bluegrass music, presenting a cohesive sound characterized by vocal trios, religious duets, three-finger banjo picking and mandolin harmony parts during fiddle breaks. For these sessions (where 28 historic recordings were made), the Blue Grass Boys included Bill Monroe, Chubby Wise, Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs, and Howard Watts ("Cedric Rainwater").

One interesting footnote to these sessions is that Chubby Wise actually played guitar on those numbers featuring the Blue Grass Quartet (e.g. "Remember the Cross," "That Home Above," "Shine, Hallelujah, Shine," "Wicked Path of Sin," "Shining Path").

The sixth and final Columbia session occurred on October 22, 1949. Flatt and Scruggs had left Bill Monroe in 1948 to form their own group. Chubby Wise had also left in early 1948 to play with Clyde Moody and the Radio Ranchmen on Connie Gay's radio station WARL in Arlington, Virginia, but Chubby rejoined the Blue Grass Boys in the fall of 1949 and participated in this last Columbia session with Monroe, Mac Wiseman on guitar, Rudy Lyle on banjo, and Jack Thompson on bass. For those of you that have not heard these Columbia sessions, I would highly recommend that you order County Records' Country Classic Series CS-104 and CS-105. In late 1949, Bill Monroe moved his affiliation to Decca Records.

In early 1951, Chubby Wise went to work with Flatt and Scruggs as a Foggy Mountain Boy, replacing fiddler Benny Sims. Rounding out the group at this time were mandolinist-tenor Everett Lilly and bassist Chuch Johnson ("Jody Rainwater"). On May 9, 1951, they recorded six songs in a Columbia recording session in Nashville. The tunes included the Carter Family's "Jimmie Brown, the Newsboy", Earl Scruggs' "Somehow Tonight", "Don't Get Above Your Raisin'", "I'm Working On A Road", "He Took Your Place", and the Lilly Brothers' "I've Lost You".

In June 1951, "Somehow Tonight" (the duet featuring Flatt and Lilly) and "Jimmie Brown, the Newsboy" (on which Scruggs picked guitar in the style of Mother Maybelle) were released as a single (Columbia 20803). In August 1951, "Don't Get Above Your Raisin'" (the bluesy novelty tune sung by Flatt) and "I've Lost You" (another Flatt/Lilly duet) were released (Columbia 20854). The two gospel tunes from the session were eventually released in August 1953 on Columbia 21147.

Chubby's fondest memories of his time as a Foggy Mountain Boy were the personal appearances and radio barn dance shows they played, primarily at WVLK in Versailles, Kentucky. In September 1951, Chubby moved on, to be replaced with at first Art Wooten (formerly with Carl Butler and the Stanley Brothers), then Howdy Forrester (for an October 1951 Columbia session) and eventually Benny Martin. On May 19, 1954, Chubby Wise recorded one additional cut with Flatt, Scruggs and the Foggy Mountain Boys at that time (Curly Seckler on Mandolin, Jake Tullock on bass). The song was the bluesy "Foggy Mountain Special," eventually released with "You're Not A Drop In The Bucket" on Columbia 21295 in August 1954.

In 1954, Chubby signed on as fiddler with Hank Snow and The Rainbow Ranch Boys. Nine years later in 1963, Chubby would leave for a year and a half to tour with the Stanley Brothers and to record with Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard, Red Allen and Frank Wakefield. In 1965, Chubby rejoined Hank Snow and remained with him until March 1970. Chubby recalls that the group covered 48 states ("50 if you count changing planes in Hawaii and Alaska"), and 15 foreign countries.

In 1969, Chubby recorded some fiddle tunes for Stoneway Records, and the enthusiastic response he received in Texas gave Chubby the motivation to strike out as a solo artist in 1970. "Maiden's Prayer," released as a single, sold 40,000 copies in six weeks in the Houston area alone. For most of the 1970's Chubby's wife, Rossi was his booking agent and kept him busy at festivals and recording

sessions. According to Chubby, he now has 21 lp's and cassettes on the Stoneway label. "I have an all hymn which is a good seller. Also several uptown, semi-classic, waltz, hoedown and polka tunes on my albums."

Over the years, the list of artists that Chubby Wise has recorded with reads like a Who's Who of Bluegrass and Country music. Besides Bill Monroe, Flatt and Scruggs and Hank Snow, Chubby has recorded with, to name a few, Hank Williams, Red Foley, Wally Fowler, Eddy Arnold, Denver Darling, Clyde Moody, Gene Watson, Mac Wiseman, Red Allen, Hylo Brown, Howdy Forrester, Hazel and Alice, Bill Grammer, Merle Haggard, Charlie Moore, Frank Wakefield, Don Reno, Johnnie Paycheck and Larry Sparks. Now that is one impressive list.

It was with Clyde Moody that Chubby co-wrote the hit, "Shenandoah Waltz." Moody wrote the lyrics and Wise the music. Chubby has also written "Rossi's Waltz" (for his wife), and "Chubby's Hornpipe," not to mention his involvement with Ervin Rouse on the "O.B.S."

Today, some of Chubby's favorite fiddlers are "Kenny Baker, Tater Tate and Howdy Forrester. Why? Because they're great and under, underestimated." Chubby once referred to Kenny Baker as "old velvet arms" because of his smooth fiddling. He describes Howdy Forrester's fiddling as "turning peas out of a sack," due to the way Howdy rolls his notes. Chubby also usually mentions Johnny Gimble and Keith Coleman as among his favorite fiddlers. And Benny Martin is another favorite because of his long notes and a lot of tone with resemble his own uptown, grassy style.

Chubby describes his own style as characterized by "smoothness and long blue notes." His distinctive, identifiable style features smooth bowing, good phrasing, plenty of vibrato and sweet tone, "wise" use of dynamics and bluesy sliding in and out of notes (usually flatted sevenths and minor thirds). Other trademarks of his style are double stop progressions and swingy licks that have become bluegrass cliches. His legendary work with Bill Monroe usually featured a first break very similar to the song's melody, with a few added syncopations. Then, on his second break, Chubby would usually embellish the end of his solo. In his backup style, Chubby would often play harmony a third above the singer. More on Chubby and his style can be found in the articles by Robert Herridge and Paul Shelasky in *Frets Magazine*, January 1986.

Chubby Wise is now in semi-retirement but he has been "playing festivals and fairs. I only play one or two dates a month. I do a lot of fishing, love TV and taking it easy at home. In the upcoming year, I have about 20 dates at bluegrass festivals in Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Mississippi, Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. I plan to work as long as I am able, fish in my spare time...no jamming." Chubby adds that his health is fair although he does have a bronchial problem and is overweight at 250 lbs. In 1985, Chubby received an honorary PhD degree in music from The Lake City College, and in 1986 the City of Jacksonville, Florida celebrated "Chubby Wise Day" on September 14.

Chubby offers some advice for beginning fiddlers. "Practice. Develop your own style. Don't try to copy Kenny Baker or Chubby Wise, but if anyone is an inspiration, stick with that one style."

RECORD REVIEWS

While the instrumentals are good, the singing isn't!

Summit

Turoquoise Records - TR-5053

The Tall Brown Grass

Personnel: Christopher "Lee" Leske, Banjo, Dobro, Baritone & Tenor vocals; Stephen C. Joseph, Bass and Lead vocals; and Craig Vance, Guitar and Tenor vocals. Special Guests: Danny Gotham on mandolin and bass vocals, and Lazlo Seymour Colos III on fiddle.

Side One: *Back to My Virginia, Little Black Moustache, The Tall Brown Grass, You Two Timed Me One Time Too Often, Ricki The Runner, and Old Brown Case.*

Side Two: *Shenandoah Valley Breakdown, Lucky To Be Coming Home, Grand Oak, Without You Hangin' Around, Life is Like A Mountain Railway, and Airplane.*

by ANNE-ELIZABETH POWELL

The promotional sheet that arrived with this record says that Summit plays to enthusiastic audiences everywhere they go, and they are one of the hottest acts in the Northeast.

Well, if you listen to the instrumental selections on this album you might believe what the sheet says (although I am inclined to think the audiences might be enthusiastic as many are just because they are happy to be hearing bluegrass with friends and a few beers). They are good musicians, everyone of them is terrific on their chosen instrument, as long as the instrument they choose isn't vocal chords.

Once you hear one of the songs of the album that "features" vocals you'll wonder why these people were offered the opportunity to make a record at all and if the recording company was aware that these guys planned to sing on the album.

Words such as "winey" and "nasal" leap to mind when trying to describe the quality of the voices these fellows have. But all is not lost since very often the vocals are so low or mumbled that they are totally unnoticeable.

But let's get back to those instrumentals. I'm not just throwing in a "consolation prize" when I say they are terrific, they really are and no wonder.

Chris "Lee" Leske, who plays banjo and dobro for the band is the 1984 Bluegrass Banjo Champion, after winning the Winfield, Kansas national bluegrass championship.

Craig Vance, Summit's guitarist, has played warm-up sets for such greats as Doc Watson, The Country Gentlemen, and recent Grass Valley Festival headliners Berline,

CHUBBY WISE

Continued from Page 7

Chubby Wise's career has been highlighted by many noteworthy accomplishments and contributions to bluegrass and country music. The name Chubby Wise will be remembered as one of the most influential fiddlers in the bluegrass style. As both a sideman and a featured solo artist, Chubby Wise has made a name for himself and has developed a reputation as a smooth, soulful and sweet fiddler of bluegrass and country music.

Crary and Hickman. He also plays mandolin and fiddle.

Bass player Steve Joseph toured with "Shoestring Grass" and the "Goins Brothers Band" as well as having written a major portion of the music included on this album.

A few of the best songs of this recording are "The Old Brown Case", a Norman Blake song done with solid style; "Shenandoah Valley Breakdown" featuring some really stunning banjo playing, and "Little Black Mustache", a peppy tune that was passed from musician to musician so long no one is sure where it comes from.

Summit as a group is a bunch of fine musicians who really know their instruments. They do great stuff as long as they don't rely on vocals. But maybe those enthusiastic audiences know more than they get credit for. This is the kind of album where only one opinion really counts - yours.

Much To Share

Songs of a Farmer

Chuck Suchy

Flying Fish Records - FF-382

Personnel: Chuck Suchy, lead vocals, guitar and harmonica; Carole Jean Anderson, vocals; John Angus Foster, bass; Marya Hart, piano and vocals; Judy Larson, vocals; Dave Moore, 2-row button accordion and harmonica; Peter Ostroushko, violin and mandolin; Eric Peltoniemi, vocals; and Linda Suchy, vocals.

Side One: *Dreams, Country High And Plain, Learning Who You Are, Why'd You Do It?, The Story of Hazel Miner.*

Side Two: *Branchline Blues, It's Great When It Rains, Old '29, Three-in-the-Afternoon, It Ain't All Just For Nothin'.*

"Songs of a Farmer" is an apt title for this record as Chuck Suchy, who wrote all of the songs on the album is indeed a farmer. He and his family live and work on a 1,000 acre farm in North Dakota. He started out performing his music for his family and friends and the nice thing about this recording is that it retains that friendly feeling. His singing style is unpolished and straight-forward.

You picture a large living room full of close friends and family. A warm crackling fire is going, everyone is relaxed and as they sink back into soft sofa cushions someone asks Uncle Chuck to bring out his guitar and sing.

"Learning Who You Are" is a celebration of the little good things that happen during a day. Little things that could be overlooked but are so nice when you notice them.

All of the songs are about things that touch and concern Suchy's life and the people he knows. At best the songs such as "The Story of Hazel Miner", the true story of a young girl who dies in a blizzard saving the lives of her brother and sister, are unforced and natural. At times however, the lyrics are sacrificed to rhymes that are forced and harsh. But that doesn't happen too often and for the most part this is a pleasing record.

There is humor too. "Why'd you do it?" is a hoot, the sad

Continued on Page 9

LETTERS

Wants Bill White Tape

Dear Editor:

I was reading the article that Bill White wrote and it reminded me that I was unable to get with him at the last Festival. I am interested in purchasing one of his tapes. Is there some way I can reach him or could you forward this letter on to him.

Maybe you could put something in your next issue for others who may want a copy also.

Thanks,

Sharon Davidson

Here is Bill's Address:

Bill White

24955 Cypress Avenue, No. 32

Hayward, CA 94544

Bluegrass Kitchen

Continued from Page 5

particularly loves this recipe and only wishes that he could cook it half as good as I can. He sure can eat it though! He and Steve Waller can make a pot of beans and an oven full of corn bread virtually evaporate before your very eyes. Say's they do it with mirrors!

Yer Friend,

J.D. Rhynes

Suchy

Continued from Page 8

tale of the senseless gunning down of the family mailbox.

Chuck Suchy would have every right to use his new found celebrity as a soapbox to bring sympathy to the cause of the farmers who are experiencing bad times, but he doesn't abuse the opportunity. Only two of the songs are about the farming problems. "Three-in-the-afternoon" is about a man who's lost his farm and the feelings, regrets and sense of loss he experiences. It tells the story much better than any pleas or preaching could.

"It Ain't All Just For Nothing" is a request for all of us to show some appreciation to the farmers who've stayed with a way of life that has been so threatened and so hard.

The other songs are like a set of windows into Suchy's life. "Dreams" shows us Suchy taking down a barn his father built, understanding him a little better, "Country High and Plain" like "Learning Who You Are" is about the good things, the occurrences of life that give him pleasure, gathering eggs, star gazing, freedom.

"Branchline Blues" tells us about a town that is no more, where the only trains that pass through are imaginary and boyhood memories are everywhere.

"It's great when it rains" says just that, and gives us a happy look into rainy day pleasures.

"Old '29" is a breezy song about a special truck and the way it makes the people who ride in it feel.

This record is a string of happy moments. Little glimpses of everyday life that are familiar enough to be comfortable and yet new enough to give us a taste of someone else's world.

Squires Send Thanks

Dear CBA,

Thanks for being such a great listening audience. You are one of the best crowds we ever played to since we've been together as a band!

Hope to see all of you soon,

Thanks,

The Virginia Squires

Looking for Lost Guitar

Dear Folks,

I attended the Grass Valley Bluegrass Festival last June. I had a wonderful time there. I left immediately for the East Coast for three weeks, so I only just realized that I left without my guitar! I'm contacting you in hopes that someone may have turned it in.

It's a Yamaha FG110 (smallish) in a fairly new black hardshell case. It has a large bolt screwed in for an end pin.

Not a valuable piece of equipment, moneywise, of course, but I've had it many years. If you can be of any help that would be wonderful.

Thanks for your time,

Sam McNeill

251 F

Arcata, CA 95521

(707) 822-8000

(This wasn't found at GV - so we are appealing to our membership to see if we can find it and get it back home!)

**2nd Annual Paradise
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In conjunction with
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*Bands or persons interested in taking
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Mike Reynolds

P.O. Box 880

Paradise, CA 95969

(916) 873-4997

Full Information Available!

A Christmas Present to the Members
of the California Bluegrass Association

Special Price Tickets for the June 19, 20, 21
Grass Valley Bluegrass Festival

Available at this price from Dec. 1, 1986 to Jan. 31, 1987 ONLY

The following ticket categories for the prices shown by mail only. A certificate of purchase will be sent and your tickets will be mailed after March 1, 1987.

3 - Day tickets ONLY

CBA Members: \$22.00 after Jan. 31, 1987: \$26.00

Non-members: \$26.00 After Jan. 31, 1987: \$32.00

CBA Seniors: \$11.00 After Jan. 31, 1987: \$13.00

The line-up as of December 1 - with several more acts to sign:

**The Osborne Brothers
Del McCoury and Band**

**Weary Hearts from Arizona; Sawtooth Mt. Boys from Oregon; High Country;
Sidesaddle; Touch of Grass; Bluegrass Philharmonic; Brushy Peak;
Fog City Ramblers; Fiddlestix; Grass Menagerie; Heartland; Possum Trot;
Mule Shu Clogging Co., and Corn Mashers.**

Enjoy Grass Valley when the grass is green, the temperature just right, and this year with two additional bathrooms, along with additional showers.

June Grass Valley has a size cutoff, so it isn't crowded, just friendly and this year more bands and music than ever before!

Send check or money order to:

California Bluegrass Tickets

632 Harvard Court

Woodland, CA 95695

Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope

Bit's & Pieces

Greg Townsend has retired from the Grant Street String Band. Mark McCornack will be joining Grant Street on banjo, and Keith Little will move over from banjo to guitar.

Rob Ickes has left Heartland to pursue higher education. This won't keep him from being at the festivals and I look forward to seeing (and hearing) him at the June Grass Valley.

Sidesaddle was honored by being named one of the six finalists in the Kentucky Friend Chicken Bluegrass Festival in Louisville, Kentucky. While they didn't win in the top three, they still had a great trip and experience - just ask them.

Winner was Union Station of Urbana, Illinois; second to Loose Ties of Wilson, Wyoming, and third to Northern Lights of Ipswich, Massachusetts.

Good Ol' Persons just returned from a tour of Europe that took them from Oct. 8 - Nov. 5. They have really been hitting the road in the last few months, covering most of the western United States.

Charlie Sizemore is no longer a member of Ralph Stanley's Clinch Mountain Boys. Charlie played his last

show with the band Aug. 16 and has now formed his own group, The Charlie Sizemore Band. The new group also features Buddy Griffin on fiddle, Jeff Roberts on banjo and Charlie's brother Homer Nathan Sizemore on bass.

Latest word is that KHIP-FM has dropped the country format and all bluegrass to go to hits of the 60's and 70's. Cuzin' Al will now be heard only on KCSM-FM.

Johnson Mountain Boys had their second personnel change of the year. Banjo player Richard Underwood left the group in October. He is leaving the music business for good to work in a furniture store chain. His replacement is Tom Adams of the Adams Brothers. He also worked with Jimmy Martin.

Earlier bass player Larry Robbins left the group.

Laurie Lewis releases new album

California singer/songwriter Laurie Lewis of *The Grant Street String Band* has released her first solo album, *Restless Rambling Heart* on Flying Fish Records. Co-produced by Tim O'Brien of Hot Rize, the album features many of Laurie's original bluegrass and country songs.

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:

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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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