



BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN

Preserving and growing bluegrass, old-time, gospel, and traditional music in California since 1974



March 2026

NEW PODCAST ON WOMEN IN BLUEGRASS

by Jason Dilg, Bluegrass Breakdown Managing Editor

When Los Angeles-based fiddler, songwriter, and producer Carolyn Kendrick first held an issue of Murphy Henry's trailblazing 1994-2003 newsletter *Women in Bluegrass* in her hands a few short years ago, it felt like time travel. The newsletters—photocopied, black-and-white, filled with cut-and-pasted collages, were unmistakably late-20th-century and still carried the feel of the era that produced them. And Carolyn said she saw herself reflected in a physical artifact showing a history that she is "both a product of, and also a beneficiary of."

The full catalog of 33 issues of the newsletter was handed to mandolinist and bluegrass archivist Tristan Scroggins in Nashville through bluegrass performer, songwriter, and historian Jon Weisberger. He remembers flipping through the pages and feeling immediately snagged. "There's something very striking about them," he said. "Because there's not really anything else like that: a women-focused bluegrass

newsletter." Just as striking: "I'd never really heard anybody talk about it."

So Tristan started doing what bluegrass people do when they find a new musical gem: he started sharing them with other folks in the bluegrass community: "Look how cool these are!" Carolyn was one of the people he wanted in on the excitement—partly because she'd care, and partly because she could help solve the problem that came after this discovery: how do you keep something like this from scattering "to the winds of time," as Carolyn put it?

Tristan's instinct was archival—to preserve the newsletters, make them accessible. But he also knew the peril of that route: often, a tradition is documented, then disappears behind the velvet rope of institutional access. "Most people don't know how to access an academic library," Tristan said. "It's complicated. I've seen dozens of dissertations about

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L.A.'s Carolyn Kendrick is teaming up with Tristan Scroggins to produce this new podcast series, out later this year.

MISSY RAINES

CBA Julian Family Fiddle Camp Instructor and Bluegrass Luminary

by Adam "Roscoe" Roszkiewicz, JFFC Camp Director

Missy Raines' life in music has truly defined what it means to be a professional bluegrass musician and bandleader. The 10-time IBMA Bass Player of the Year Award winner has worked, written, and performed with the most acclaimed artists in bluegrass, including Kenny Baker, Mac Wiseman, Josh Graves, Peter Rowan, Laurie Lewis, Dudley Connell, Don Rigsby, Alison Krauss, Claire Lynch, and Bill Evans—and the list just keeps on going. Her career isn't solely defined by collaborators and accolades, however. Her integrity, adaptability, and openness to the world around her make her such a trailblazing and accomplished artist.

Roscoe: Were your parents or others in your extended family musicians?

Missy: Not really. My dad did learn to play the bass around the same time as me. He enjoyed it. But as I started playing it more, he played it less. My parents

weren't musicians, but they loved music as much as anybody I've ever known. They made a lifetime of supporting live music and were going to country and bluegrass shows long before I was born. It was their recreation and their passion.

Did your parents encourage you to follow a path in music? What were the educational opportunities like for a young person starting out learning bluegrass when you were a kid?

Yes, my parents encouraged me a lot. Once they realized how much it meant to me, they dedicated their time and money to giving me opportunities to play, hear, and see music. There were very few, if any, formal educational opportunities for learning bluegrass that I was aware of

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DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

WOMEN IN BLUEGRASS

by Pete Ludé, CBA Executive Director

It's March already, which means it's Women's History Month. The annual celebration of the women's many and ongoing contributions to society started in 1978 as a local initiative right here in Santa Rosa. We like to think that the California bluegrass community, led in part by the CBA, has helped promote and support women musicians in what has historically been a male-dominated genre. We have been captivated by musicians like Rose Maddox, Laurie Lewis, Kathy Kallick, Kate Wolf, Sally Van Meter, Molly Tuttle, AJ Lee, and many more. This month's *Bluegrass Breakdown* focuses on the history and impact of women's paths from the margins to the mainstream in bluegrass. To further celebrate women in bluegrass, we're launching a new sweepstakes to give away a new Molly Tuttle signature Martin guitar donated to CBA by Molly herself.

As we ramp up for festival season, CBA has many events that you won't want to miss. The **Sonoma County Bluegrass & Folk Festival** is March 14 in Sebastopol, a lovely town in one of the most beautiful parts of the state. Last year's festival sold out, and we have another amazing lineup for 2026, so get your tickets now. Next month is the **Spring Campout**, starting Tuesday, April 14, in Lodi. It's a very popular event connecting old and new friends and playing music together. Our **Julian Family Fiddle Camp** is May 6-10 in the hills of San Diego County. Don't let the name fool you—there will be world-class instruction in all bluegrass instruments, and a fun group of folks passionate about leveling up their picking, while having tons of fun.

The highlight of the year is our **Father's Day Bluegrass Festival**, June 18-21 in Grass Valley. Leading up to the festival is our **Summer Music Camp**, at the same location—

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BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN

March 2026 – Women in Bluegrass

The Bluegrass Breakdown is the monthly publication of the California Bluegrass Association, keeping CBA members and the world of bluegrass up-to-date with coverage of CBA events, musicians, promotions, and volunteer opportunities since April 1975. Each issue is published as both a printed and a digital newsletter and distributed to more than 7,500 readers around the world.

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MISSY RAINES

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at that time. But there were so many festivals and jams, and my parents did everything they could to take me to as many of those events as they could. My “schooling” was jamming at bluegrass festivals, albums, and watching the first and second generation (and future leaders of bluegrass) on stages across the mid-Atlantic.

They encouraged me to make a career of bluegrass. But I honestly don't think they realized how challenging that might be.

I read that you started playing bass when you were 10 years old on a bass that your dad originally bought for himself, and that you toured with that bass for years. Do you still have that bass? Do you remember who built it and what year it was from?

Yes, I still use that bass on every show. It's a 1937 Kay, made in Kalamazoo, Michigan. It's a rare and well-made bass. We had no idea of what a great find my dad had stumbled upon. The story is he paid \$90 for it. This would have been in 1972 or '73. I have stopped flying with it because it has been broken too many times and it's quite painful to see it broken, although, luckily, it also seems it's always fixable. But I still tour with it on driving dates. I named it Bob, after my dad.

In 1991 you played on the first IBMA award show in a band with Alison Krauss, Andrea Zonn, Lynn Morris, and Alison Brown. I recently discovered a video of that performance and have been obsessed! Do you remember how that came about? Had you all played together before, or since, in that formation?

Ken Irwin and Rounder Records wanted us to form a band that would record for them, so we had been playing and recording some together. We did record together but, to my knowledge, those recordings never reached the light of day.

When did you move to Nashville? What was it like to be a woman in the bluegrass scene like at that time?

My husband and I moved to Nashville in May of 1990. The scene was as you might expect; it just depended

on who you were around. There was a pretty tight-knit boys club that existed in some circles, but I was welcomed in other scenes. There were bluegrass gigs I wanted to audition for but was told that I could never get them because they didn't hire women. I was told that they would love to have me play with this band or that band, but I couldn't because “what would people think?” “I wasn't married to any of the other players or a sister or something,” so it wouldn't work. This was as late as the late '90s.

You have collaborated with Laurie Lewis over the years; do you remember the first time you met or played music together?

I don't remember the first time we met but I have been a fan of hers since the 80's. It just feels like I've known her all my life.

Another collaborator over the years and more recently on your new album *Highlander* is Dudley Connell. Can you briefly talk about how you two met? Were you around the Johnson Mountain Boys much when you were starting out?

Yes! The Johnson Mountain Boys are from my general neck of the woods, and I saw them perform many many times at small festivals and events in the Maryland/DC area early on. I also had the privilege of jamming with many of them at those festivals. We were buddies.

Later, Dudley and I would record and tour together along with Don Rigsby, and we have collaborated a few times since then. When I recorded “Ghost of a Love” on *Highlander*, there was no question as to who I wanted to sing on that song. 🐘

Missy will be teaching bass May 6-10 at the Julian Family Fiddle Camp and performing with her band Allegheny at the 51st Annual Father's Day Festival.

Register for Julian Family
Fiddle Camp here →



Missy Raines.

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THE BERKELEY BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

by Laurie Lewis, Berkeley Bluegrass Festival Curator

Ten years ago, I had this idea to ask the Freight & Salvage in Berkeley to book a bluegrass “festival.” I use the word “festival” in quotes because it’s not outdoors, there are no campsites, and it happens in the middle of a booming college town, with nary a porta-potty in sight. But it has been three nights of (mostly) bluegrass bands, with workshops and jamming during the day.

This year, I am very happy to say that the Freight will once again open its doors to the bluegrass community, with a very full two days of festival-izing on Saturday and Sunday, May 2-3.

The past festivals have featured outstanding bands from the national scene: the Seldom Scene, The Kody Norris Show, Appalachian Road Show, Danny Paisley and Southern Grass, Mr Sun, Tray Wellington, Sister Sadie, Missy Raines, the Earls of Leicester, and Molly Tuttle, to name a few. Members of the local California bluegrass scene have been featured every year, including High Country, Kathy Kallick, Dix Bruce and Jim Nunally, Broken Compass Bluegrass, Peter Rowan (we claim him as a local!), and host band Laurie Lewis & the Right Hands, among others. It has been a really good run so far! Reading back over this partial list of artists makes me so proud to have been given the opportunity to help present this event to the public.

So what is happening this year? Saturday’s lineup opens with the Bay Area’s own Critical Grass playing a set in the Freight’s capacious lobby. Laurie Lewis & the Right Hands kick things off on the main stage, followed by Chris Jones & The Night Drivers, and ending with the Jason Carter Band—with local-boy-makes-good Josh Gooding on mandolin!

Sunday’s lineup starts with the South Bay’s excellent band Bay Area Special, followed by The Tony Furtado Trio, Caleb & Reeb and the Cali Cutups, and Tatiana Hargreaves Band featuring Michael Daves. Tatiana will be featuring songs and tunes from her new recording inspired by the hair-raising fiddling of Tex Logan.

Allegra Thompson, the programmer of KPFA Radio’s *Pig in a Pen*, returns this year as the festival’s MC.

Even if you haven’t heard of some of these artists, you owe it to yourself to come, listen, and prepare to be mightily impressed.

For the musicians among you, we will have hands-on workshops by Jason Carter (bluegrass fiddle), Tatiana Hargreaves (the intersection of bluegrass and old-time fiddling), Josh Gooding (mandolin), Tony Furtado (banjo), Caleb and Reeb (harmony singing), and more to be announced.

The lobby will be open for jamming in the afternoon, and we will have an instrument lockup so you won’t have to lug your banjo or bass with you to dinner.

It has been a true pleasure to help curate this “festival” in my hometown for the last 10 years. I hope you will all take advantage of the great lineup and the opportunities to jam, learn, and listen, right here in Berkeley—the Bluegrass City by the Bay. 🐻

Visit the Freight’s website to learn more and to preregister for the workshops! Scan here →



WELCOME MESSAGE

cont’d from front page

so it’s an opportunity to immerse yourself in music for a full week. Many Summer Music Camp classes will sell out, so register soon. For the next generation of musicians, the **CBA Youth Academy** takes place during the festival in Grass Valley, and registration is now open. We’ve introduced a new way to level up your festival experience with the **Pinetree Partner Pass**—a full-festival ticket with many perks to elevate your festival experience. One of this year’s headline bands is the Bluegrass Cardinals, who started in California 50 years ago, and were recently inducted into the IBMA Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame. Learn more about these influential musicians in our band profile on page 8. Early-bird ticket pricing is still available for the Father’s Day Festival—so act now to save your space.

Finally, a reminder that CBA has always been about our community—people united by their appreciation of music. We connect through jams, concerts, camps, and festivals, and rely on many volunteers, sponsors, and supporters to keep the music alive. You can learn more at our website, or contact us about what’s on your mind by emailing info@CaliforniaBluegrass.net or calling 844-BLU-GRASS (844-258-4727).



ENJOY FATHER’S DAY FESTIVAL IN STYLE WITH THE NEW

PINETREE PARTNER PASS

All the benefits of our adult general admission full-festival passes, plus a set of exclusive perks including reserved parking, options for reserved camping and stage seating, refreshments at the partner lounge, artist meet-and-greets, merch gift bag, and more.

Most importantly, you’re supporting the bluegrass community—your extra financial contribution allows us to keep general admission affordable for everyone.

A limited number of Pinetree Partner passes are available. For more information, scan the code below, visit FathersDayFestival.com, or give us a call at 844-BLU-GRASS (844-258-4727).

SCAN HERE FOR MORE INFO AND TO PURCHASE →



DON'T CALL ME DARLIN'

cont'd from front page

bluegrass music that people who just play bluegrass don't know about, because why would they?"

That's where the podcast medium became more than a distribution choice—it became the whole point. Carolyn came to podcast production during the pandemic, when gigs evaporated and survival meant learning a new craft, fast. "It was quite literally survival," she said. "I had no money ... I was like, well, I do this, or I become homeless." She learned on the job, producing widely loved shows including *You Are Good* and *You're Wrong About*, plus miniseries work for outlets like the CBC and NPR.

Those chops now serve a bluegrass story Carolyn says deserves a wider doorway. "Bluegrass can be very insider-y, very tight-knit," she said. "So, we wanted a project that invites people into the fold, rather than making it for insiders-only." Now, Carolyn and Tristan are the co-producers and writers behind a new podcast to be released this year: *Don't Call Me Darlin'*.

The show's eight episodes aren't structured as a parade of artist profiles. Instead, Carolyn describes it as theme-driven, woven from interviews, readings from the newsletter, and archival texture—closer to *This American Life* than a Q&A feed. "We are writing essays," she said, "and interspersing segments from interviews,

readings from the newsletter, audio, things like that."

Their interview list spans generations and geographies: California mainstays Laurie Lewis and Kathy Kallick; songwriter and fiddler Kate Brislin; musician and historian Alice Gerrard; bassist Missy Raines; plus more contemporary voices including Sara Watkins, Kaia Kater, Maddie Witler, Brittany Haas, Kristin Scott Benson, Valerie Smith, Sierra Hull, and Bronwyn Keith-Hynes. Henry herself appears, fittingly, as both origin point and living through-line.

One of the richest themes, Tristan said, is how quickly "normal" changes—and how easily communities forget the fight it took to get there. He pointed to a newsletter-era discussion about the scarcity of women in true "sideperson" roles in bands. "At the time, there were almost no women playing just, like, a truly side-person role," he said. "It was either a family band or an all-girl band, or you were fronting a band."

Compare that to what younger players Carolyn and Tristan talked to track today. "It was so normal for them to see one woman in a band that they were asking, 'Why aren't there two women in a band?' They didn't have a concept that it used to not be a thing that there was even just one woman in a band—not very long ago," Tristan said.

Kendrick's own surprise came from the inside. She describes herself as a musician who never saw her place in bluegrass as automatic.

"I always kind of felt like I was an outsider," she said. Working on the project changed that. "Going through this process—interviewing these women, interfacing with this history—was transformative for how I define what it means to be part of a living folk tradition and part of a folk history."

What she found in these conversations wasn't only musical guidance. "I found deep meaning interviewing women who were playing out in the '60s and '70s," Carolyn said. "It's been emotionally fulfilling to connect with these women—and also to see myself while interviewing them. In the middle of asking questions, I'm realizing why I have the questions. I'm asking about bluegrass, but I'm really trying to figure out how to be a human being."

Kendrick's hope points outward: that listeners—bluegrass and not—will recognize what this music does unusually well. "Bluegrass does really well... it creates active community members," she said. She wants her non-bluegrass audience to see that model up close, then carry it home. Not necessarily to start listening to Lynn Morris, she joked, but to ask better questions about their own scenes, like: "What does it mean to be actively involved in the communities I'm in? How do I interface with that conscientiously?" 🐘

Listen to the podcast preview and stay tuned for episodes here →



PULSO DE BARRO AT SONOMA BLUEGRASS AND FOLK FESTIVAL!



Son jarocho—Spanish for "music from Veracruz"—took off as a genre about the same time bluegrass did. Both revolve around jamming with friends and have deep African, European, and Indigenous roots. Most of all, they're a lot of fun, and it's easy to get started! New York-based, internationally-traveled Pulso de Barro will introduce you to son jarocho through a high-energy, main-stage set followed by an afternoon workshop at the Sonoma Bluegrass and Folk Festival Saturday, March 14, in Sebastopol.

For more info and to purchase tickets, scan here →





Kicking off the jams on the train to Bakersfield. Photo by John G. Woodworth.



Jamming in the Marriott lobby. Photo by Robin Frenette.

GREAT 48 JAM Kicking off 2026 in Bakersfield

by Debbie Wendt, Great 48 Co-Organizer

The Bakersfield Great 48, CBA's first bluegrass event of 2026, put the "hoot" in hootenanny! On the MLK holiday weekend, hundreds of pickers and grinders convened at the Bakersfield Marriott, with some jamming on Amtrak on the way there.

Six regional bluegrass associations joined us, and the 9th-floor suites were non-stop fun. Uberhosts Danny "Hootenanny" Clark and Loren Safdie exceeded a jam-packed (pun intended) program in the CBA suite. This was on top of the event's full program that included an epic band scramble, and workshops and hosted jams that included fiddle, mandolin, bluegrass harmony, guitar, banjo, slow jam, gospel, old time, and even music business.

As one of the event's organizers, I was pleased that the \$20 wristband contribution we asked for this year was well-received by attendees. With rising costs, it's a challenge to break even, despite much of the work being done by volunteers—who earned T-shirts with the new Great 48 logo designed by volunteer Jonathan Grenier. Thank you to our volunteers!

The Friday night program was back, with the open mic, workshop instructors concert, and the showcase band the Soda Crackers—a local band with the vintage Bakersfield sound. With our usual Saturday-night concert venue, Buck Owens' Crystal Palace, closed pending its sale, the Stars Theater was a cozy site for the John Jorgenson Bluegrass Band, with great seats and

close enough to that my husband and I walked from the Marriott. A highlight for me was hearing Herb Pedersen sing his composition "Wait a Minute."

Congratulations to Becky Lynch, who won the raffle for the 1949 Kiesel lap steel guitar, previously owned by none other than Doc Watson!

I saw smiles everywhere, from young and old, hotel staff, and visiting locals, and I got to listen to and play some great music. I hope it was the same for you or that you can share that experience in 2027.

As we begin planning for 2027, we're open to all suggestions—we truly wish to bring you the best we've got! 🐻



Amtrak jam. Photo by John G. Woodworth



Danny "Hootenanny" Clark serves up late night snacks in the CBA suite. Photo by Robin Frenette.



John Jorgenson Bluegrass Band. Photo by Ted Kuster.



Tarah Williams teaches flatfoot dance. Photo by Robin Frenette.



Band scramble in the CBA suite. Photo by Alan M. Bond.



All-star showcase presenters concert. Photo by David K. Cupp.



Sunday gospel jam. Photo by David K. Cupp.

To see the many photos from the Great 48 Jam in our online gallery, scan here →



Murphy Henry Digs for the Real Mother Maybelle

by Jason Dilg, Bluegrass Breakdown Managing Editor

Near the end of 2019, Murphy Henry—professional bluegrass performer, banjo teacher, founder of The Murphy Method, and writer—was sitting at her computer when an idea arrived with unusual force. “I really did hear a voice in my head that said, ‘Why don’t you write a book about Maybelle Carter?’” she recalled. “I promise, it was like a ‘voice from on high,’ to quote Bill Monroe.”

Murphy, the author of *Pretty Good for a Girl*, called her editor at the University of Illinois Press, Laurie Matheson, to ask a practical question: Was anyone else already working on a Maybelle Carter biography? When Matheson came back with no, Murphy took it as a green light.

Laurie then connected Murphy with the University of North Carolina’s Wilson Library. “And I just went to work,” Murphy said.

This work will no doubt prove to do more than polish the old legend; she’s building a source-driven account to help separate Carter Family lore from the record.

“Maybelle and the Carter Family were instrumental in pointing music in general in that country music direction with the old tunes: collecting them, saving them, rewriting them, writing some of their own, so now we have those tunes.”

There are many stories that have become accepted as the truth about the Carter Family over the years. One is the portrayal of Mother Maybelle as a demure, reserved person, “all of those things that are stereotypically often associated with women,” Murphy said.

“I’m trying to tease this out, and this is hard—this persona that either she created, or she helped create, or it was created for her—and she accepted it because it worked,” Murphy said. The longer Murphy studies Maybelle’s life, the harder it is to square that image with the grit the record shows. “What about this steel rod that she had for a backbone, where she’d drive 24 hours and smoke cigarettes the whole way in order to get to the next gig?”

Murphy notes that from the time Maybelle was an early teenager, she always played music. From the time that she and the Carter Family started

recording, she played professionally until she died. “They’ve never found a time when she wasn’t performing. That says so much about her drive, her tenaciousness, and who she was,” Murphy said.

Take for example, a period in Maybelle’s career that some might think of as a relatively dry time in her musical career. The Carter Family as a performing act was done, and her renaissance in the folk revival was still years away. She’d not yet joined the Johnny Cash Show, after June married Johnny.

“But yet, she’s hooking up with one of the Grand Ole Opry shows headed by the Duke of Paducah and Little Jimmy Dickens,” Murphy said. “They’re touring all the way from Florida to Michigan to Iowa, doing the county fairs—night after night after night after night. And it was mostly her and her eldest daughter Helen...just pounding the road all the time.” For Murphy, that stretch is the kind of detail that changes how you understand Maybelle’s career. “And that just blows me away. Most people have a good run and then they kind of quit, or then they start to play locally. That did not seem to happen with Maybelle.”

Murphy said that “the overarching focus is to give the best history I can of Maybelle’s life; to document as much correctly as many things as I can, so when other people want to go off to find other things, they’ll have this as a foundation.”

Part of this work is documenting the role Maybelle and her cousin Sara played in selecting—and shaping—the repertoire the Carter Family became known for. Murphy points to Maybelle’s practical musicianship: choosing keys that fit their voices, using capos, and managing the nuts-and-bolts of making songs work.

“It’s the whole really intricate business of arranging the songs,” Murphy said. “I don’t know what language she used to talk with Sara, and A.P. ... just played a very basic guitar, which you can hear on some of the recordings they made [on the air] when they went to Texas, but he didn’t play guitar on any of their [studio] recordings. He just sang.”

Murphy is quick to point out the important role A.P. played in the group’s commercial success as a song collector and the businessman in the group. This frontman role, perhaps, is what led to many of the articles in the 60s and 70s about the family giving him much of the credit for the musical arrangements. “His name’s on all the records and he holds the copyrights. And I think that’s the only way it could have been done back in 1927,” Murphy said.

Murphy is also working to unpack some of what we might think of as the Carter’s musical genesis story: their appearance for Ralph Peer’s sessions for the Victor Talking Machine Company, which have long been treated as a cornerstone event in early country music history.

“What propelled them to go to Bristol for that recording session? There’s the standard story, which is not researched very well, that it was A.P.’s idea, and he headed everything up and made that happen. But when you hear Sara tell about it, and you hear Maybelle tell about it, there’s way more nuance to that. Even the standard story that’s told—that A.P. drove his car, had a flat tire, and missed the second day of the session because he was out looking for a new tire for the car—doesn’t hold water.”

Murphy points out that they arrived in Bristol in Maybelle’s husband Eck’s car. “He almost certainly did the driving, and he’s not the kind of guy that would not likely let his car have a flat tire.”



Paul Menard, Helen Carter, Maybelle Carter, Dougal Trineer, Anita Carter, June Davey, Angus Walker. Photo by Jpenny01, CC BY-SA 4.0.

The other story about the family that Murphy's research is shining new light on the idea that the Carters were outsiders to the Bristol scene, a story that Murphy says can be traced to the bluegrass musician and early festival pioneer Bill Clifton.

"You've got the hillbillies from Maces Spring going to the big city of Bristol ... They come in their hillbilly clothes and they're embarrassed because everybody else is all dressed up." Supposedly, the story goes, so embarrassed that when they showed up for the recording session, they got in the building by climbing up the fire escape. Murphy can't help but wonder if A.P. did share that tale as part of their adventure in Bristol, if he wasn't pulling Bill Clifton's leg.

"Maybelle was eight months pregnant at the time; I cannot imagine her choosing to go up the fire escape and come in a back entrance carrying a guitar. I mean, there's just so much stuff that makes great myths. And they're very exciting and glamorous in a backwards kind of way. 'The hillbillies come to town; the hillbillies make good.'" But Murphy's research shows why this may be more fanciful storytelling than historical inheritance. "Maybelle and her mom and dad used to live in Bristol. A.P.'s sister, Virgie, who was Maybelle's husband's twin sister, lived in Bristol. They visited there. They worked on the railroad that went to Bristol. I mean, they were not unacquainted with Bristol. So, they didn't just come down out of the mountains."

In explaining why these tales became Carter Family gospel, Murphy said that many of the stories were based on family members' 40-year-old memories, and that because there has been no well-documented history of the family, people have been hungry for anything that helps fill in the gaps; "they just wanted to know about the Carter Family. I get that. But it's time to look beneath that and see if, in fact, I can get a little closer to what the story might have been."

Murphy says that having access to the collections at UNC have been foundational to her research, which, perhaps ironically, adds a California connection to the story. In addition to Mike Seeger's records, also at UNC is the work of one of the earliest researchers on the Carter Family, Los Angeles-based folklorist Ed Kahn. After asking his parents to stop in at border radio station XET on a trip to Monterrey, Mexico, they found 17 transcription discs of the Carter Family's performances on border radio. "People were actually using them to roof houses," Murphy said.

Ed Kahn also did extensive interviews with Sara Carter. "He was out in California, as she was, at the time," Murphy explained. Ed would go through lists of songs that had been recorded, and would ask Sara who wrote them. Sometimes, the response was, "No, I've been knowing that one all my life." "Did AP write this?" "No, it's one Maybelle and I knew"

"You know, just giving the sources." Murphy said. "And when he would come to something like 'The Cyclone of Rye Cove,' she said 'yeah, now, AP wrote that one.' And then she'd say: 'I think we got this from a holiness preacher.' He was really a musicologist and was interested in documenting where the songs came from. If they came from the oral tradition, he would try to trace that back."

Talking with Murphy, it's clear that it's not only bringing some of the old stories about Maybelle and the Carters into focus, but showing the hard work that Maybelle put in to keep her musical career afloat in the mid-50s that motivates her work. "The girls were starting to get married and start their own families, and, I think, basically wanting to play less. So, when the girls got too pregnant to play on stage, Maybelle would have to find substitutes—other women to play with them."

As the lineup shifted—Anita moving to Alabama, June touring on her own—Maybelle kept the act going with whomever was available. "From '55, maybe to '60, is when Maybelle was a little bit on her own and trying to cobble it together."

Then came the folk boom, starting in the early '60s, when Mother Maybelle was rediscovered by people like Mike Seeger, and found herself

"What about this steel rod that she had for a backbone, where she'd drive 24 hours and smoke cigarettes the whole way in order to get to the next gig?"

- Murphy Henry

at the Ash Grove. "She did that by herself, backed up by the New Lost City Ramblers. Those are unbelievable." Murphy said. "She is so good at talking with the audience, kidding with Mike Seeger and the band ... she's so down to earth and the audience just loves her."

It took Murphy about a decade to complete *Pretty Good For a Girl*. As we neared the end of our conversation, we remark on what an incredible career Mother Maybelle had. "You can see why it's taking another 10 years or longer to put all this together," she half-jokingly said.

When asked what she'd like readers to come away with after reading this biography when it's completed, Murphy said: "I would like musicians and people who are really interested in early country music to know that she's a much deeper personality and a much more fabulous musician than maybe we know right now or maybe that we give a lot of thought to ... the best I can present it. I would never say that I'm getting it all right or it's to be all and end all, but I'm gonna try to dig a little bit deeper than anybody has dug before."

Murphy's latest project will be more than a tribute. It will seek to sort Carter Family legend from Carter Family record—and to re-center Maybelle as a working musician, arranger, and architect of a sound that still lives on in our bluegrass repertoire. 🐾

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The California Roots of the

THE BLUEGRASS CARDINALS

by Jon Hartley Fox for the Bluegrass Breakdown

Fifty years ago this spring, a small Pasadena label released a record by a new band from the Los Angeles area. That record, called simply *The Bluegrass Cardinals*, launched a highly successful career that would see the band inducted into the Bluegrass Hall of Fame last summer, an even 50 years after its formation.

The Bluegrass Cardinals grew out of jams held at the Parmley home in Santa Fe Springs, a small city in Los Angeles County. David Parmley remembers jams happening two or three nights a week, with a rotating cast of pickers that included his dad, Don Parmley, Randy Graham, Steve Stevenson, Scott Hambly, Bill Bryson and others.

Eventually, a core group of Don on banjo, Randy on mandolin, and Steve on guitar emerged. David began playing bass with them when he was 12. The group—it didn't yet have a name—played a few dates, including the Norco festival and Paul's Saloon in San Francisco. When the others decided to get more serious about being a real band, Steve left and David switched over to guitar. Long-time friend Bill Bryson came aboard to play bass.

In May 1975, the band heard of an audition for a band at a tourist attraction called Busch Gardens, a theme park connected to the Anheuser-Busch brewery in Van Nuys. Sort of a miniature Disneyland with free beer and no admission charge, the enterprise encompassed lush, manicured gardens, an aviary filled with exotic birds, amusement rides, entertainment and tours of the brewery—hence the free beer.

A gig like that required that the band have an actual name. They decided they would be called the Bluegrass Cardinals. "My Mom came up with the name," says David. "The Cardinal is the state bird of many states where bluegrass music is played, and we liked it because it was different."

Don Parmley was already a veteran musician when he formed the band in 1974. A native of Monticello, Kentucky, Don had worked with Hylo Brown and Carl Story before he and his wife moved to Southern California after Don's discharge from the U.S. Army in 1956. He played in

a band with bass player Roger Bush called either the Smoggy Mountain Boys or the Green Mountain Boys (accounts differ).

When Bush left to join the Kentucky Colonels, Parmley moved over to the Golden State Boys in 1961.

The Golden State Boys, one of the very first bluegrass bands in California, included Herb Poindexter and the Gosdin brothers, Vern and Rex, when Don joined the group. Poindexter left in 1963 and was replaced by a young mandolinist named Chris Hillman. Poindexter "owned" the name and took it with him, so the band rebranded itself, first as the Blue Diamond Boys and later as the Hillmen.

The Hillmen fell apart in 1964, after recording one album—later reissued on CD by Sugar Hill. Vern, Rex, and Don all had families, and playing bluegrass just wasn't paying the bills. Don took a job driving a bus for Continental Trailways, a job he held until 1975.

Don started another job in 1964, one that would help spread his name among those in the know. Don replaced Steve Stevenson, who had held the job for the first two seasons, as

the banjo player for the hit television program *The Beverly Hillbillies*.

People assume that Earl Scruggs played all the banjo music heard on the show's soundtrack, but Scruggs actually is heard only on the theme song, "The Ballad of Jed Clampett," played during the opening and closing credits of the show. All the rest of the banjo within the shows was Parmley, a gig he held until the show ended in 1971.

The audition at Busch Gardens was successful, and the Bluegrass Cardinals took flight. The band played there from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The gig was six hours a day, six days a week, with Thursday off. The band played six sets a day, on a half-hour on, half-hour off schedule. The band was Don, David, Randy and Bill.

It was a great job for a new band, as playing that much honed the chops and made the players what David called "limber." Byron Berline stopped by one day and played a set with the band. At the end of it, when they got off stage, he laughed and said, "Dad gum, you guys sure do play fast."



One of the first band photos of Bluegrass Cardinals, while they were still in California. Left to right: Randy Graham, Don Parmley, Steve Stephenson, David Parmley, and Bill Bryson. Photo courtesy of The Bluegrass Cardinals.

By the end of the Busch Gardens gig, the band felt ready to make a record. They approached John Delgatto, whose small label, Briar Records, had thus far released albums by fiddlers Leslie Keith (*Black Mountain Blues*) and Earl Collins (*That's Earl*) and the Kentucky Colonels (*Livin' in the Past*).

Delgatto took the band into Upside Down Studio in Hollywood and recorded the album in sessions between October through December 1975. Dennis Fetchet played fiddle on the album and then joined the band. *The Bluegrass Cardinals* was released by Briar in 1976; Copper Creek Records reissued it on CD in 1997.

"I first saw the Cardinals in 1974," remembers John Delgatto. "I was judging a Bob Baxter banjo and fiddle contest in Japanese Village. Country Gazette was the main show. The band contest was the first time I'd seen the Bluegrass Cardinals. They were great, and they won the contest. I thought they were the best band I'd ever seen.

"So, I started talking to them off and on throughout 1974. In 1975, I decided I'd better get serious about this thing, so I went to see them at Busch Gardens in Van Nuys. They had it down. They were just a very solid band. We sat down and I said to them, 'Let's get serious. Let's do an album.' Don signed a contract, and then I said that we had to get the material together for the album.

"Don said they had some material they wanted to run by me. They had these songs, some Ian and Sylvia stuff, very folksy. I said, 'Well, it's kind of soft. It's not the kind of bluegrass I thought you guys wanted to do.' I remember sitting in Don's kitchen, and I asked him what his goals were, what he wanted to do with the record.

"He said, 'I want to get in my bus and play bluegrass festivals. I want to play every festival.' I said in that case we had to do an album of solid bluegrass, what would come to be called 'industrial strength bluegrass.' I had heard them do this *a cappella* number called 'There Is a Fountain,' and I said that we've got to do that on the record. Don said, 'No, we don't do *a cappella*.' I said, 'Yes, we do. We're gonna do that.'"

The first thing one notices—aside from the dazzling banjo work—when listening to *The Bluegrass Cardinals* is how exceptional the vocal harmonies are on the trios and the two quartets. The hours at Busch Gardens certainly paid dividends; the band's harmonies are tight, precise, creatively arranged and well-balanced, with most songs featuring a trio arrangement.

The band shared lead singing duties, with everyone but Dennis taking a turn. David sang lead on "Where No One Stands Alone," "Leaving Harlan," and "My Aching Heart"; Randy sang lead on "Prisoner's Song" and "There is a Fountain"; Bill sang lead on "Bird Dog," "Girl at the Crossroads Bar," "Baby Rocked Her Dolly,"



The Bluegrass Cardinals, from left: Mike Hartgrove, Larry Stephenson, Don Parmley, David Parmley, Dale Perry. Nacogdoches Bluegrass Festival, Texas, 1986. Photo by Rick Gardner.

and "Rollin On"; and Don sang lead on "I Couldn't Believe It Was True," "Are You Missing Me," and "Never Ending Sea of Love."

The material on the album was drawn from the repertoires of the Everly Brothers, the Louvin Brothers, Southern gospel groups the Inspirations and the Statesmen Quartet, the Osborne Brothers and Red Allen, Frankie Miller, and others. The album also included two excellent band originals, "Never Ending Sea of Love" by Don Parmley and Bill Bryson's "Girl at the Crossroads Bar," the first recording of Bryson's modern classic.

The song on the album that got the most attention was an *a cappella* gospel quartet, "There Is a Fountain," one of the earliest appearances of an *a cappella* gospel number on a bluegrass recording. It's a truly stunning performance showcasing Randy's soaring tenor lead vocal.

"'There Is a Fountain' came from a Southern gospel group called the Inspirations," says David. "Dad loved that group. There was a gospel-singing jubilee TV program on every Sunday morning in Southern California, and Dad watched it every week. He had a tape recorder hooked to the TV so he could record the audio. The Inspirations sang it one Sunday, and he taped it. He brought the tape to our next practice and said 'Man, here's a song we need to work up.'"

David remembers the sessions recording the album as being very enjoyable. "It was definitely a learning experience," he says. "It was great. I was 16, and it was my first experience doing something like that. I was thrilled to do it. It was fun."

"After we finished the record," says David, "we decided to go back East for a spell. We booked a tour and were back there eight weeks. While we were there, we were offered two regular gigs. The Red Fox Inn [in Bethesda, Maryland] wanted us for every Wednesday night, and another place in Annapolis, Maryland, Charlie's West Side, wanted us for every Tuesday night. With those

gigs in hand, we decided to go ahead and make the move."

Bill Bryson and Dennis Fetchet weren't up for relocating, so the band that moved East was just Don and David Parmley and Randy Graham. They landed in Reston, Virginia. Randy and the Parmleys recruited some new musicians and set about achieving Don's vision of playing every bluegrass festival, or at least as many of them as they could.

The move east turned out to be a good one for the Bluegrass Cardinals. The band's second record, *Welcome to Virginia*, was released by Rounder in 1977. It's one of the all-time great bluegrass albums, but, unfortunately, has never been reissued on CD. The Cardinals would go on to record a string of successful albums for Sugar Hill and CMH, while being a top festival attraction for years.

"We moved East," explains David, "because California was no place to be if you wanted to be a full-time bluegrass band. We realized we'd have to book really long tours and be gone for a long time each time to make any money. When you're 2,500 to 3,000 miles away from most of your work, it just didn't make sense to stay in California. All the money you make goes into transportation." 🐻

The CBA's 2026 Father's Day Bluegrass Festival in June will feature a special reunion appearance by the Bluegrass Cardinals, featuring original members David Parmley and Randy Graham and long-time Cardinal Larry Stephenson.

Learn more and get your tickets online at FathersDayFestival.com or scan here →



INTRODUCING CAMP BLUEGRASS PRIDE

A weeklong, inclusive bluegrass music camp on the Oregon Coast

Bluegrass Pride will host Camp Bluegrass Pride June 21-26 in the historic coastal town of Astoria, Oregon. The event promises to be a first-of-its-kind immersive bluegrass and roots music camp welcoming musicians of all skill levels, identities, and backgrounds.

"Camp Bluegrass Pride welcomes all identities, expressions, and skill levels. At Camp Bluegrass Pride, the mission is simple: make bluegrass and roots music accessible to everyone," said Ashley Bradfield, one of the camp's two co-directors.

Set against the stunning backdrop of the Pacific Northwest Coast, Camp Bluegrass Pride will bring together queer and allied musicians for a week of learning, collaboration, and

celebration in a joyful, affirming, and inclusive environment. Space is limited, and early registration is strongly encouraged.

"Having seen firsthand the magic that happens at music camps, I'm thrilled to help bring Camp BGP to life," said Lillian Werbin, Bluegrass Pride's board president and the chief executive and co-owner of Elderly Instruments. "This camp will create a space where people can grow as musicians, but also join a community that celebrates and uplifts each other."

Camp Bluegrass Pride will offer multiple instructional tracks tailored to musicians at all levels, from beginner to advanced. Instruction will be available in fiddle, guitar, banjo, mandolin, upright bass, voice, and songwriting,

with a curriculum that blends hands-on workshops, small-group instruction, collaborative jam sessions, and evening concerts.

The camp is led by a stellar lineup of nationally respected instructors known not only for their musical excellence but also for their dedication to teaching and community building. Highlights include Grammy Award-winning songwriter Melody Walker, whose songs have been recorded by artists such as Sierra Ferrell, Molly Tuttle, Della Mae, and others, and CJ Lewandowski, widely respected both as a master mandolinist and as a highly skilled mandolin builder whose instruments are played by musicians across the bluegrass world. Additional instructors include Cody Bauer, Keith Billik, Kat Bula, Noa Eve, Kaden Hurst, McKain Lakey, Mandy Lynn Danzig, Taylor Shuck, Grace Van't Hof, and Nelson Williams.

The event will take place at the Charlene Larsen Center for the Performing Arts, with additional programming woven throughout downtown Astoria. While lodging and most meals are not included in camp tuition, Bluegrass Pride has secured special discounted room rates for campers at the Hotel Elliott and the Bowline Hotel, and is seeking additional lodging options and local recommendations to provide an accessible and comfortable experience for all attendees.

Founded in 2017 as a CBA side project to broaden the bluegrass audience, Bluegrass Pride encourages and supports LGBTQ+ bluegrass musicians at every level of musicianship, while promoting acceptance, allyship, and equity throughout the bluegrass community. Through concerts, jams, showcases, educational programming, and community gatherings, Bluegrass Pride works to uplift both the genre and the people who make it thrive.



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Christine Wilhoyte

by Jason Dilg, Bluegrass Breakdown Managing Editor

Christine Wilhoyte is a Northern California-based singer, banjo picker, and guitar player. She teaches music and is a familiar performer and instructor at CBA events. We spoke about her musical pathway, current projects, and reflections on bluegrass community.

Jason Dilg: What instruments do you play? What do you like best about your instruments?

Christine Wilhoyte: My Sigma guitar: Easy! The low E string is a total monster, and I heard it from the day I got it, and that's why I bought it. It's a relatively medium-quiet guitar otherwise, it's humble, not loud like a Collings or an old Martin, but it has a nice tone, and that E string just slams and rings and rings. I bought it at Fanny's Music, a great women-owned music store in Nashville.



Christine at 2023 FDF. Photo by Alan M. Bond.

Banjo: Which one? The one I play most often is a 1949 Gibson RB-100 (I think) with a Sloan tone ring (I think—banjo nerds, please don't come asking me questions, I have no further answers for you). Again, humble comes to mind: It's not a loud or over-the-top, crackly banjo, and it isn't going to dominate a jam in a round of nice banjos, but it has this beautiful tone to it. You can crack it and it will respond, but it will also play something resonant and kind, it doesn't have just one mode. I really appreciate that it has that versatility. It sounds so great in double C or open F tuning and yet also totally rocking capo 4 in B. Shout-out to Tyler Stegall for helping me find it!

What music has got your ear lately?

I've put quite a few hours in recently listening to The Onlies' new album. Also, some of the old Hot Rize.

What repertoire are you most excited about developing? What about it draws you in?

My recent project of interest has been honing deeper skill and precision with my rhythm guitar playing. I feel rhythm is the heartbeat of the music and in jams I often don't feel as confident as I'd like to holding it down. I also want other people who I'm playing with to instantly feel like they can connect to the music and interact with it, and I believe you need solid rhythm for that. Same with jamming with other folks and being able to support them taking

breaks—it feels so much better, infinitely different, to take a break over a groove that feels supportive. I'd like to feel solid in this way to be able to make good music myself, but also because I can instantly share the music with others. There's a certain thing about playing with someone who has that feeling of the music so deep in their bones when they play; it's really special.

Tell me about your current musical projects—what's most engaging about them?

My main bluegrass-related projects today are Jesse Appelman's West Coast Stringband Project and B*Craft, with some occasional side gigs with other folks. I've just begun working on a solo project that I'm hoping to get into the world in the next year or so. I've also called a couple more square dances this year and surely hope to do more of that.

Something I feel very grateful for with all of these projects is how they each complement each other and engage my musicianship and music-related skills differently. I get to engage with more traditional bluegrass in some settings, and with more original music in others, all with steady musicianship and really satisfying singing. With these different combinations, I feel like I stay really present with each thing as it happens, whether it's a practice, gig, or hang, because I always feel excited to go to a gig. It doesn't feel repetitive; it feels fresh and exciting.



L to R: Christine, Jesse Appelman, and Yoseff Tucker: Jesse Appelman's West Coast Stringband Project.

I could say a lot about each of these projects, but I've found that the crux of what feels engaging is the way they all allow me to get together with other folks in community for the sake of sharing music that's connective in some way, all while also giving me the opportunity to deepen my musicianship. Jesse writes impeccably beautiful tunes, and Yoseff writes songs that feel just like home to me. With B*Craft, we've leaned less into performing and more into creative collaboration, and the singing is just so fun. With square dances, I get to physically watch the level of joy and connectivity in a room increase to what seems like an exponential level. In all these cases, in the deepest sense, it's healing and it's honest, and in a more casual sense, it's just a beautiful part of human nature.

Not to mention that every single person in these musical projects is someone who I really admire and have learned a lot from as a person. Although I don't play consistently with them, I also want to mention Laurie Lewis and Kathy Kallick as two people who I really admire and have had the chance to play more with recently. I've learned a lot about music and about being a person from playing with them.

I feel really happy that music has evolved in this way for me and hope to always center my participation in music around that feeling of connectivity. Especially in this world, we can always do well to cut past our minds and our ideas of division and into a square dance holding hands! Ha.

It seems like musical collaboration comes naturally to you, judging by the numerous projects you've been involved in. What are you most excited about when getting a new musical project rolling?

I think music is collaboration. There's a part that feels really fun about the period of time when a project is going from seed to sapling to tree. When a seed is underground, it could really be anything, you don't know yet what kind of fruit might come. It's similar with collaborations: when it first starts, you know you're planting a seed, but nobody knows exactly what it's gonna turn into, or how the fruit is going to taste or look, what color it might be. You could have an idea of how you want to shape it and grow it, but you just don't really know until it's in front of you. I imagine it's like looking at your baby and wondering how they're gonna look and what their life will be like when they're older. That's my favorite part—the whole process of nurturing something in that way, and being surprised by and getting to see what comes out of it. And then there's even a bonus when you bring it into the world, getting to see other people experience it and what their reactions are.

Talk to me about your involvement in the California bluegrass community as a force in your musical development.

The California bluegrass community was absolutely, unquestionably, crucially supportive in my development as a musician. Seeing a community of people connected through music, outside with trees, sharing laughter and food, and sometimes a game of ultimate frisbee—I couldn't imagine anything better. To witness that it's even a real way of living and to get to participate completely changed my life and carried me through a lot of trouble. It continues to be a driving force in my musical development—through collaborations with others in the community, but also through the inspiration to share this part of the world with other people and to help anyone see that they can participate, too.

How has mentorship—giving and receiving—played a role in your development as a musician? Has that affected your life in other ways?

Haha! Do you want me to write you a story that never ends? That's what I think about the benefit of mentorship. There's this line in "The Riddle Song" that Doc Watson sings, a favorite of mine. The song is a riddle: in the first verse, it says, "I told my love a story that had no end." The middle verse asks, "How can you tell a story that has no end?" The final verse replies, "when I say I love you, it has no end."

Before I first moved to Nashville, Sharon Gilchrist let me hang out in her house for a couple weeks after I landed there on my bicycle trip from California. I remember her explaining to me how music is a miracle—she said something like, "How can it be possible that someone makes sounds, and we understand how they're feeling, with no language attached? It's miraculous." This completely changed my life; I never looked at music the same, and it helped me break through all the fear I was feeling about listening to that innocent and yearning piece of myself to make a decision that felt big. I retell



Laurie Lewis and Christine Wilhoite on stage at Sonoma Bluegrass and Old-Time Festival in 2025. Photo by Alan M. Bond.

this story often. Where would we be without others to teach us and guide us? The only thing better than someone grabbing your hand and helping you cross a river is when you can turn around and do the same for someone else.

My dad and stepmom were some of my first musical mentors. Now I'm trying to think of who else I would name, and I almost just want

cont'd on page 15 →

CBA SPRING CAMPOUT

APRIL 14-19 • LODI GRAPE FESTIVAL GROUNDS

by Ted Kuster, CBA Board Chair

The CBA Spring Campout is coming up fast, but slow down and take a breath. Here are a few things you'll be glad I told you before you hit the Lodi Fairgrounds this April:

Don't show up Monday. You'll be lonesome. The fairgrounds open Tuesday, April 14, this year, not Monday, as you might have expected.



Camp "All About The Bass." Photo by Alan M. Bond.

If you've had any trouble getting yourself to practice this year, get over to Jackson Hall to watch the California State Old Time Open Fiddle & Picking Championships on Friday afternoon and all day Saturday. The high spirits are contagious. If you don't come out of there energized and inspired to pick, I don't know what to tell you.

If, on the other hand, you've been hitting the practice hard and you don't care who knows it, go to csotfa.org and sign up for the contest! Lesser talents than you have entered and lived to tell about it.

Campout weather is hard to predict, so pack for a variety of climates. It's usually T-shirt weather in the daytime and cool enough for a light jacket in the evenings, but there are no guarantees.

The CBA merchandise store has a product called "Marriage Savers"—high-quality earplugs designed to protect the domestic partners of bluegrass pickers from constant practice noise. They can be repurposed to help you sleep when late-night jams are roaring.

I know you're an accomplished camp cook, but prepare some prepackaged foods if you can. A few small tubs of pasta salad in your cooler might not sound so awesome now, but they are delicious when you were picking until 3 a.m. and can't face lunch duty.

The campout is a safe space for breaking coffee rules. Having a cup after dinner can really help your stamina. I tend to faceplant in my tent before midnight if I don't.

Try to put a fresh set of strings on your guitar, your banjo, and your mandolin a week or two ahead of the campout weekend. (I know you have all three. Who do you think you're kidding?) Pack a spare set for each in case one breaks. Be ready to change them again when you get home—they will get a beating.

If you're coming from an overpriced big city, don't bother packing wine. You'll find plenty of excellent Lodi reds in the local stores at very friendly prices.

I get it: sometimes you just need a break—the other kind of break. Lodi is surrounded by nice parks and nature preserves where you can get away, such as the Lodi Lake Wilderness Area, which is nice for quiet strolling.

If you have questions about any of these pearls of wisdom, or have some of your own to share, write to us at campout@californiabluegrass.net. Get your camping or RV reservation now!

Purchase your reservation for the CBA Spring Campout! Scan here →



2025 CSOTFA fiddle contest. Photo by Alan M. Bond.



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Christine with B*Craft at Sweetwater Music Hall.
Photo by Robin Frenette.

to name everyone I've ever met and ever played with: friends, peers, younger ones, older ones, they've all taught something. So many adults in the community have supported me deeply. I remember when I was 17 and first went to SPGBMA, and I met Theresa and Johnny Gooding there. I thought I was such a grown up being in my freshman year of college in Boulder, Colorado, but Theresa wouldn't accept my payment for the room we shared. I think she said something like, "Pay it forward later." That's what this community is about, and what I hope to pass on in the way I participate—in music and otherwise. 🐻

Our full interview is posted on cbaweb.org.

Christine is available for music lessons, reach out to her at christinewilhoyte27@gmail.com.

Watch Christine perform her original song "Stomp Around" with B*Craft on Vern's Stage at the 2024 Father's Day Festival here →



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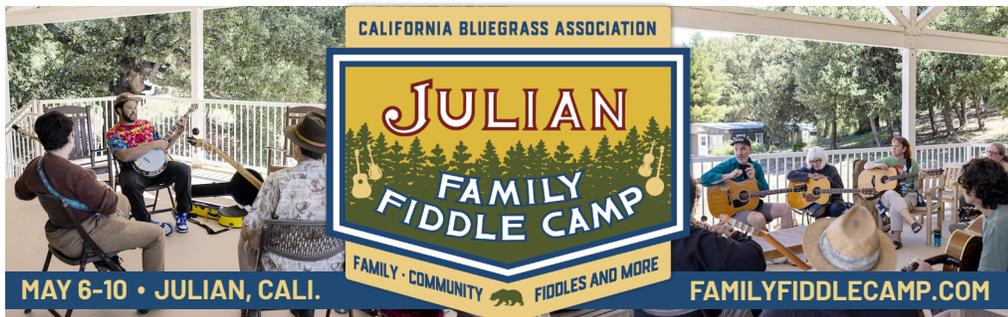
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Ladies Jam at Great 48. Photo by David K. Cupp.

BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN CALIFORNIA BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION 3739 BALBOA STREET, #5090 SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94121-2605	CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED	NON-PROFIT ORG. US PSTG PAID PERMIT NO 1831 WEST SAC, CA
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Pickin' & Singin' with Friends Old & New
Tuesday-Sunday, April 14-19

Together with Annual California State Old Time
Open Fiddle & Picking Championships

Friday and Saturday in Jackson Hall

Lodi Grape Festival Grounds
 413 E Lockeford Street, Lodi

Scan here for details!



Monthly Trivia Quiz

By Bert Daniel, Breakdown Contributor

In January we asked: "What legendary two-finger Appalachian style banjo picker bought his first banjo from Sears and Roebuck for \$10.86 and never performed publicly—until relatively late in life?"

Stan Oberg, Richard Brooks, Jon DeLong, Milo Zarakov, and Jim Lappin correctly identified southeast Kentucky's **Morgan Sexton** as the banjo picker in question.

That banjo was likely a big improvement from the banjo he learned on as a child, which was cut from a lard bucket. After working most of his life in coal mines, he debuted at the Seedtime on the Cumberland festival in 1988. He was 77.

In 1991, Morgan received the NEA National Heritage Award for his "amazingly pure and unaffected singing and playing style," shortly before his death that same year.

Jim Lappin, who often submits correct answers and has not won a prize since April 2023, according to our records, was randomly selected from among our trivia luminaries of the month to win a pair of fine vintage CBA wine classes adorned with the "Banjo Bob" CBA logo in vogue from 2003 to 2019.

MARCH TRIVIA

This month, we pose this puzzler: **The only daughter of a famous big band leader (think "jazz orchestra") was among the first people to perform at Paul's Saloon. Name her.**

Send your answer to:
trivia@californiabluegrass.net
 no later than March 31.

This month's prize is a coveted, limited-edition CBA 50th anniversary denim jacket, in your size, of course—valued at \$175!

Only CBA members are eligible to win; if there is more than one correct response, the prize winner will be selected at random. The winner will be announced in the May 2026 issue of the *Bluegrass Breakdown*.



CBA anniversary denim jackets!