

Old-Time Times

APRIL 2005

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EVENTS

Tennessee

Old-Time Fiddlers' and Bluegrass Jamboree

Held in Holladay, April 16, at a school near the center of town. For more information, E-mail them at holladay@netease.net.

North Carolina

A Black Banjo Gathering Preview

Held in Charlotte, at the Charlotte Museum of History on Wednesday, April 6, 7:30 PM. Several of the performers who will be at the Black Banjo Gathering will appear. Entrance is \$10. It'll be a great evening! For complete information, contact Harry Taylor at hataylor@ccim.net.

Hosts Needed for 4th-Sunday Jams

Please E-mail Darlyne Kent (dkent@davidsonacademy.com) to schedule your home for a 2005 4th-Sunday Jam. We still need homes for the following months: June, July, and August. Some of the summer 4th-Sunday jams may be held in area parks. We tried that last summer, and it was well received.

Directions to April's 4th-Sunday Jam

The Cornbread Festival is held in South Pittsburg, located just off Interstate 24 and about 25 miles west of Chattanooga. Take Exit 152, (the Highway 72 Exit). Follow Highway 72 West for about 1½ miles, and then follow the signs to downtown South Pittsburg, where the Festival will be going on.

When you arrive, tell the parking guys (who will charge you \$2) that you want to jam in the jam tent and would like to park near the foundry parking area, which is closest to the jam tent. No need to bring snacks. There will be an abundance of cornbread. For more information, go to www.nationalcornbread.org.

Breakin' Up Winter Is a Great Success, Thanks to the Volunteers

A festival like Breakin' Up Winter is only as successful as the volunteers. Many jobs are done behind the scenes and oftentimes in advance of our festival. Our festival could not take place without all of us working together to assure our guests that they will have a wonderful weekend.

Thank you to all who attended, danced, jammed, and just visited. Let me apologize in advance if you helped make our festival a success and I failed to mention your name.

Thanks to Dave Cannon for chairing this year's Breakin' Up Winter Committee and emceeing. Thanks to Pat Gill for handling registration. Thanks to Mary Lou for designing this year's buttons and for preparing the flyer, as she has for many years. Thanks to Carl Myers for using a vacation day to handle the registration process. Thanks to Don Kent for designing and preparing the meal tickets. Thanks to the meal ticket takers, Dave Cannon, David Carpenter, Michael Ann Carpenter, Janine Chamorro, Lilly Hsu, Don Kent, and David Voltmer. Thanks to Phil Sparks for being in charge of putting up and retrieving the signs. Thanks to Mary Durham, Pat Gill, Lilly Hsu, Carl Myers, and Kitty Sparks for manning (or "womaning") the registration table. Thanks to Mary for organizing the dance bands. Thanks to Martin Fisher for helping John Hatton move all of his tapes and CDs into Cedar Forest Lodge, and especially for his wax cylinder recordings. Thanks to Dorris and Bill Fisher for their hours of preparation for Friday's lunch, as well as for feeding some early birds on Thursday night. Thanks to Mike Baugh, Phil Sparks, Ed Gregory, Rick Fretter, David Carpenter, Don Masters, and Jim Lawrence for arranging chairs and tables. Thanks to Nic Andal, Tyler Andal, Janine Chamorro, Jim Hornsby, and Don Kent for leading the slow jams. Thanks to Dorris and Bill Fisher for preparing a breakfast snack on Friday morning, as well as Friday's lunch, along with the help of Bob and Pam Hightower, Kitty Sparks, Trish Cannon, Pat Gill, Mary Durham, and Joy Andal. Thanks to Randy, Patsy, and Rebekah

Weiler, Mary Dean Wolfe, Don and Mary Ann Masters, Joy Andal, and Trish Cannon for helping with Friday night's covered dish dinner. Thanks to Don Kent for assisting the presenters with their audio needs. Thanks to Dave and Trish Cannon for sponsoring and hosting Mr. Charlie and Mrs. Dorothy Acuff. Thanks to Pat Gill, Mary Lou Durham, and Ed Gregory for hosting Alan Jabbour. Thanks to Phil and Kitty Sparks for arranging chairs for the Sunday Hymn and Shape Note Singing. Thanks to Christy, Butch, Quida and her family, and Michael Ann for joining us at Saturday's dance. They cancelled their Bowling Green Saturday night jam to join us!! Thanks to Nic Andal for helping us load equipment. A special thanks goes to Buddy Ingram and the staff at Cedars of Lebanon State Park, and Ken and Alice, and other Friends of Cedars of Lebanon for assisting us with parking and hikes. Thanks to Tim Reynolds for organizing our shape-note singing on Sunday and to the Harpeth Valley Sacred Harp Singers for participating.

You will never know how many jobs, which may seem small and insignificant at the time, are so important to having a smooth festival.

Thank you again to each and every one of you for your dedication to NOTSBA and your willingness to volunteer.

~Darlyne Kent

The Origin of "Hog-Eyed Man"

You've probably heard all you care to hear about that nasty hog-eyed man, but I have some information from Mac Bellner who is with the Indianapolis group, Hog-Eye Navy. The hog-eyed man comes out somewhat better in her explanation.

Here's what Mac had to say: There are some shanties that refer to a hog-eyed man that are explicitly racist, and understandably, no one sings them anymore. Somewhere along the line, most likely during the minstrel era of the 1870s to 90s when white men performed in black face with their eyes all emphasized, someone just had to relate the words in those shanties to Black people.

We also know that the man who guided the mule pulling a canal boat in the mid 1800s

was called a "hogee." We have knowledge of a road named "Hogeye Pike" in southern Ohio that runs right along the river, perhaps relating to the towpath that the "hogee" walked with the mules pulling barges on the river.

The story I tend to stick with was told me by a fellow from California. He said that in the late 1800s, during the Gold Rush era, there were big barges that worked up and down the coast of California and a bit inland on the rivers. These barges were called "hogeys" because of the large D-rings that were on either side for ropes and cables to be attached for towing. The D-rings, apparently to some, resembled hog eyes. Men who worked these barges were called "hogeye men" or "hogeye sailors" and were somewhat ridiculed because they were not courageous (or foolish) enough to brave the high seas. It's likely that many of these hogeye sailors were, in fact, Black men.

When I was out in Long Beach for a conference I went to the local historical society to research this a bit and found that there were, in fact, these barges, though no reference to them as hogeys. However, one shanty has as its first line, "Oh the hogeye sailors roll and go when they come down from San Francisco."

In short, a "hog-eyed man" works with boats that are called "hogeys" because they have large metal rings, which resemble a hog's eyes, attached to their bows so they can be towed.

~Suzanne Keldsen

The Passing of Joe Carter

We lost Joe Carter on the second of March. He was the son of Sara and A.P. Carter. I talked to Don Jett (Janette Carter Jett's son) around Christmas, and he told me Joe's cancer would likely take him home soon. Soon came too soon.

Anyone who frequents the Carter Fold on Saturday nights is well acquainted with Joe Carter. He never met a stranger. One of my favorite memories of Joe was one summer when he was sitting at the side door of the Fold holding a "gravel flipper," as he called it. He was pretty good at flipping gravel with what most people call a slingshot. He told me

stories about the need to use good "shot" and how he enjoyed hunting with it.

Joe was a delightful man. His animal imitations at "half time" at the Fold were classic country. He had some of the most unusual animal imitations imaginable. He would have the place in stitches every time he did them no matter how many times you had heard them before.

This has to be rough on Janette. The number of descendants of A.P., Sara, and Maybelle is getting slim. Thank goodness for Janette, her son Dale Jett, and her daughter Rita Forrester for keeping the Carter Family tradition alive. We're gonna miss you, Joe! Thanks for all the musical memories

~Bob Cox

Dear Friends of the Banjo:

We are at an urgent moment in the Black Banjo Gathering's construction. We are sure that with the registration at the Gathering itself, we will receive sufficient funding to cover our performers and presenters. However, for many artists, the funds they receive at the end of the Gathering are inadequate because they must get TO the Gathering.

Moreover, one of our most pressing financial problems is not only paying these artists the compensation they deserve—actually most are accepting less than they would ask elsewhere and one could be making thousands more on the weekend of the Gathering just staying in his home town—but providing them with accommodations.

We are in a situation where some artists must request compensation or expense money NOW if they are to perform at the Gathering. We need your help urgently to do this.

Please register for the Gathering NOW if you possibly can. If you can make a donation, please make it, no matter how small, no matter how large. If you can send out a fund appeal to your friends, to organizations you belong to, to your jam, please do so. If it is a question of calling friends, relatives, and enemies as I have, please do. Don't think a \$50 or \$100 donation is too small!

Please go to <https://ssl1.appstate.edu/confinst/blackbanjo.php> to register.

To make donations make checks payable to "ASU" or "AppalachianState University."

Send them to:

Black Banjo Gathering
Center for Appalachian Studies, LLA
Appalachian State University
Boone, NC 28608

Four National Champions to Play at MTSU Dulcimer Concert

The Ultimate Dulcimer Concert will take place on the Middle Tennessee State University Campus at 7 PM, April 2, in the State Farm Lecture Hall of the Business and Aerospace Building.

The program will feature four former National Dulcimer Champions, including David Schnauffer, with nationally recognized mandolin player Butch Baldasari; Lee Rowe; and Gary Gallier and his brother Les, the only brothers to separately win the national title. Also, joining the talented lineup will be the Nashville Dulcimer Quartet, which is comprised of Lee Rowe, Sandy Conatser, Natasha Deane, and Linda Sack.

Mary Nichols, organizer of the event, said, "To have four performers who are National Dulcimer Champions all playing in the same place is incredible. I've heard them all play, and they are absolutely amazing. This show is going to rock the place!"

Starting at 2 PM, three, 90-minute dulcimer workshops, all taught by National Dulcimer Champions, will be held in the Mass Communications Building. The workshops are free and open to the public. A few loaner dulcimers will be available.

The beginning workshop will be taught by David Schnauffer, adjunct assistant professor of dulcimer at Vanderbilt University. Schnauffer has recorded with Chet Atkins, Johnny Cash, Emmylou Harris, the Judds, and others. He has released his own recording projects, written instruction materials, and taught workshops throughout the United States.

The Advanced Beginner/Novice workshop will be taught by Lee Row. The Advanced/ Experienced workshop will be taught by Gary Gallier and will focus on Boogie Woogie and Blues styles.

According to Schnauffer, the dulcimer traces its roots to Europe and was an instrument that had from 8 to 12 strings stretched across a box having no neck, as do guitars and violins. The mountain or Appalachian dulcimer that is popular today was forged in the melting pot of the American frontier. The Scots and Irish settlers could hear the drone of the bagpipes in this sturdy and easily constructed instrument. The English found it to their liking to accompany their ballads. They reduced the number of strings to just three or four, as wire was a precious commodity in the wilderness, and added a raised fingerboard to allow the playing of quick jigs and reels.

For more information, contact Nichols by calling 615-898-5677. Her E-mail address is mnichols@mtsu.edu. ~Patsy Weiler

Rebekah Weiler Joins Charlie Acuff at the Laurel Theater

Although it meant not getting to defend her title in the State Old-Time Banjo Championships at Clarksville, Saturday, March 19, found Rebekah Weiler on the road, headed toward Knoxville. She was on her way to play in the Jubilee Festival at the Laurel Theatre with the great left-handed fiddler, Charlie Acuff.

Following an afternoon of practice, food, and fellowship, Mr. Charlie and friends played to a full house overflowing with a warm and appreciative audience.

On Saturday's bill was fiddler Danny Gammon and National Heritage Award winner Will Keys, who plays a captivating old-time two-finger style. Mr. Will said he is self-taught and the first strings he had for his banjo were wires he pulled out of his family's screen door. Also appearing were Roy Harper, an old-time balladeer and painter from Manchester, Tennessee; fiddler Fletcher Bright and the Dismembered Tennesseans, a band Mr. Fletcher first organized in the late 1940s; David Ball, a banjo historian, maker and performer; and the fun-loving Mumbillies, an energetic old-time string band that has been making music in the Knoxville area for at least 25 years.

This was the 36th annual Jubilee Festival, which is a three-day event starting on Friday evening that celebrates the traditional music of the Southern Appalachians. This year, the festival featured three Tennessee Governor's Awards for the Arts winners: Roy Harper, (2003), Fletcher Bright (2005), and Charlie Acuff (2005).

Sunday was a restful day of dinner on the grounds with singing lead by The Epworth Old Harp Singers, who sing from *The New Harp of Columbia*, a manual of sacred songs first published in Knoxville in 1848 and related to the better-known *Sacred Harp* singing tradition.

The Laurel Theatre is home to the Jubilee Community Arts group and is housed in a historic structure that was once a Presbyterian Church. Inside the two-story structure is an intimate atmosphere with a warm, well-worn wood interior, highlighted by large gothic stained windows that provide a perfect setting for acoustic music. Downstairs is a small snack bar, offices, restroom facilities, and a large open area with an outstanding hardwood floor where musicians and dancers gather to jam and do a little fancy footwork.

Along one wall is hung a nice selection of art posters from previous festivals, documenting the wide variety of performers that have graced the festival stage through the years.

The theatre is near the campus of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and is a short distance from a varied selection of chain and local restaurants along Kingston Pike and Cumberland Avenue.

Taking in a concert at the Laurel Theatre should be on your list if you're traveling in the Knoxville area. Brent Cantrell and his friendly staff oversee this venue and work hard to make people feel comfortable and welcome. Also, they provide a talented selection of acoustic acts that you won't find in a lot of other places.

Some of the entertainment coming up in April includes the Sidewinders, based out of North Carolina and headed by Bryson City fiddler David Bass who once played with the Freight Hoppers string band; Songs from

Ireland preformed by Red Haired Mary; Citico, a group out of the Chattanooga area that keeps alive the style of Bob Douglas, Blaine Smith, Hamper McBee, and others; and the Knoxville Scottish Music Club, providing an evening of Scottish music, dance, and song.

A lot of ongoing events such as various dance groups, a writer's guild, and the Epworth Old Harp Singers take place at the Laurel Theatre. For more information about it, contact [Jubilee Community Arts](http://JubileeCommunityArts.org), 1538 Laurel Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37916, (865) 522-5851, info@jubileearts.org

~Patsy Weiler

Traditional Music Well Represented at 2005 Governor's Arts Awards

The lobby of the Bell South Building in Nashville was buzzing with excitement on Tuesday evening, March 15, from the many people who had gathered there to celebrate the 2005 Tennessee Governor's Awards in the Arts. The event was presented by the Tennessee Arts Commission and was made possible by the corporate sponsorship of Bellsouth.

The Arts Commission established these awards in 1971. They were designed to recognize extraordinary arts contributions and achievements and are Tennessee's highest honor in the arts.

Nancy DeFriece, Chair of the Tennessee Arts Commission, welcomed the audience; Rutherford County State Representative John Hood served as master of ceremonies; and Governor Phil Bredesen presented the awards.

The folklife/heritage category was well represented by award winners Charlie Acuff of Alcoa, Tennessee, and Fletcher Bright of Lookout Mountain, Tennessee. Both are outstanding fiddlers and well deserving.

Others who won were Judy Woodruff, executive director of the Tennessee Association of Dance (Arts Leadership Award); Richard R. Ranta, Dean of the College of Communication and Fine Arts at the University of Memphis (Arts Leadership Award); Booker T and the MGs, recording artists (Distinguished Artist Award); Hubert Shuptrine, water color artist (Distinguished

Artist Award); Isaac Hayes, recording artist, actor, and educator (Distinguished Artist Award); and Abby Burke, performing artist (Entertainment Award).

Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Acuff, and Ms Burke all performed for the audience.

It was interesting to note that all the recipients received standing ovations upon the presentation of their awards. However, when the two Folklife winners walked on the stage, the audience erupted with loud whistles, whooping, and enthusiastic applause. One brave soul loudly hollered from the back, "Way to Go Charlie!"

Some of the familiar faces in the crowd involved with Tennessee's traditional arts were Bobby Fulcher, Dr. Robert Cogswell, Dorothy and Charlie Acuff, Fletcher Bright, Rebekah Weiler, Patsy Weiler, Brent Cantrell, Dave Cannon, Liza Zenni, Dr. Nat Winston, Phil Sparks, and Bob Hightower.

Each recipient received a beautiful piece of glass designed by artist Curtiss Brock of Smithville, Tennessee. Brock's creation was a slender, flame-shaped piece of glass with streams of warm blue and green flames and bubbled textures in the center of it. Brock said he worked from the center out, creating the glass sculpture by adding more and more layers of glass on the colored center. He said the glass layers represented the process of years of growing that artists experience to emerge as masters in their field.

Rebekah Weiler and Band to Perform at MTSU Honors College

Delmer Holland and The Blue Creek Ramblers, with Rebekah Weiler on banjo, will perform in the indoor amphitheatre at the Paul W. Martin, Sr Honors College, April 6 from 4:30 to 6 PM on the Middle Tennessee State University campus. The free concert is part of the college's R & R program and is open to the public.

This spring semester series has several free programs that may be of interest to NOTSBA members, including author Billy Kennedy of Northern Ireland on April 15 at 7 PM. He is an authority on the Scots-Irish origins of American country music and culture.

For more information call (615) 898-5645 or 898-5759 or visit their website at <http://www.mtsu.edu/~hcevents/calendar05.htm>.

~Patsy Weiler

NOTSBA Members Compete in Clarksville

On March 18 and 19, several of NOTSBA's members entered the various competitions at the Clarksville Old-Time Fiddlers' Contest.

Friday evening, Rebekah Weiler and the Blue Creek Ramblers won second in the Old-Time String Band contest while Nic Andal's Old-Time Rascals took third.

Saturday, Nic Andal took first in the old-time banjo contest while Tyler Andal took third.

The greatest excitement surrounded Tyler's entry into the fiddle contest. Tyler had to enter in the "Beginner's" category, simply because he is 17. (He will turn 18 in May.) He won first, which sent him on to the championship fiddle-off.

There he was in competition with Joel Whitinghill from Bowling Green, Kentucky, winner of the "Junior" category (18-49). Last year, Joel won the Kentucky championship in Leitchfield (Rough River Dam State Park) as well as the Alabama championship at Athens. Alas, this year he won in Clarksville as well, beating Tyler out by a mere 11 points out of 300. They are two extremely fine fiddlers!

~Phil Sparks

CD Review:

The Fuzzy Mountain String Band

Rounder CD 11571

I'm relatively new to the world of old-time music, so I try to buy CDs that will function as sort of a reference library, recordings I can use to learn more tunes. I try to stay close to the source by selecting the earlier recordings, the ones made by fiddlers like Ed Haley, Tommy Jarrell, and Wilson Douglas.

Recently I ordered *The Fuzzy Mountain*

String Band from Rounder. I won't go into detail, you can read the liner notes, but this CD reissues the two LPs they made in the early 70s. They are not true "old-timers" but are of Alan Jabbour's generation. Still, their music sounds authentic to me. According to Bill Hicks, one of their fiddlers, "Virtually all of our repertoire was learned first-hand, most from traditional musicians we visited, recorded, and got to know."

What amazes me is the number of old-time classics they managed to capture at such an early stage in the game. Here's the list: "Shooting Creek," "Double File," "Old Sledge," "Gal I Left Behind Me," "Sally Ann," "The 28th of January," "Green Willis," "Piney Woods," "Ebenezer," "Old Mother Flanagan," "The Last of Calahan," "Wild Hog in the Woods," "Magpie," "Keep the Ark A Movin'," "Pretty Little Dog," "Protect the Innocent," "Poor Johnnie Has Gone to War," "Frosty Morning," "Camp Chase," "Bonaparte's Retreat," "West Fork Gals," "Fire on the Mountain," "Breaking Up Christmas," "Bonaparte Crossing the Rhein," "Snowbird on the Ashbank," "Roustabout," "Santa Anna's Retreat," "Shortening Bread," "The Falls of Richmond," "Quince Dillon's High D," "Peter Francisco," "One more River to Cross," "Barlow Knife," and "Fisher's Hornpipe."

This CD is clearly "required reading."

~Phil Sparks

A Penny Learned:

Using Your Computer As A Practice Tool, A Review of Band In A Box Software

I have been using Band in a Box (BIAB) for fiddle tunes for about 14 years. Before that, I was using a metronome, and it just wasn't working for me. I saw an ad for BIAB and thought I would give it a try. I was amazed at how easy and fast I was able to generate an accompaniment track to practice with. BIAB generates a midi file that uses your computer's sound card or midi system. The way it works

is you start with a blank song screen and you literally type in the chords using standard chord symbols (C = C major, Am = A minor, G7 = G dom 7th, etc.) You use your computer's arrow key to move to the next 1/2 measure after typing the chord symbol (by clicking on the measure you can put a chord on every beat). After you type the chord, you select a style from a drop-down menu and click the play button. You can set the tempo, then speed it up or slow it down without changing pitch.

BIAB will also transpose it to another key. You simply type the new key in the song dialog box and check the transpose button. All this takes about 1 minute or less.

I usually do all this with a guitar in my lap and the chord charts from the Pegram Tuesday night sessions close at hand. They are the ideal aid.

Just quickly type the chords into the song window and voila, an instant rhythm slave! BIAB is always on time and in tune, and it doesn't drink all your beer!

BIAB generates a 5-part midi track based on the style of music you select. There is an old-time style that works pretty well for reels and hornpipes. It has a string bass, guitar, and a tasteful snare drum. (You can turn off the drum or any of the other sounds.)

BIAB has several waltz styles, my favorite is Piano Reel, a Cape Breton-style backup. There are some 6/8 styles, and some folk styles. Well over 100 styles come with BIAB.

You can make your own style and also enter the melody in standard notation. That's a little more of an advanced feature. You can even type in lyrics (or cut and paste them from a text file).

BIAB will print beautiful charts too. You can save 'em as a pdf and email them to the band.

BIAB is a midi-generated file, not a high-quality audio file the eats up your hard drive. Tunes in BIAB are usually about 6 to 10k in size, about the size of text files, so you can store 1000s of tunes on your computer. They are of good quality, or as good as your sound card/midi system.

It is an ideal practice tool, I don't think I'd ever use it for performance or recording. There are people out there (like me) who have lots of files to share. And it works cross platform, Mac or Windows. It doesn't matter, just as long as it ends in .mgu or a .sgu

A really amazing feature is the Soloist. You can type in the chord progression and tell BIAB to generate a solo based on the playing of Doc Watson, Django Reinhardt, Mark O'Connor, Chet Atkins, Bob Wills, Les Paul and many other musicians and genres. The really cool thing about the Soloist feature is that it is based on real licks played by the artist over common progressions!

The software is made by PG Music, www.pgmusic.com you can download a trial version for either Mac or PC for free. If you want to buy it, it's \$59 at www.zzounds.com

~Ron Ault

WANTED: Newsletter Editor

Friends, I have thoroughly enjoyed editing this newsletter. Through it, I've made some excellent friends and learned a great deal about old-time music. Nevertheless, my year is almost up. Besides, editing this thing is hard work and it's cutting into my practice time—which, as you well know, I desperately need.

Starting July 1, a new slate of officers will take the helm at NOTSBA, and one of those new officers will be the newsletter editor.

If you would like to be considered for the job, let Ed, Don, me, or any other member of the board know. I promise to do everything I can to help you turn out your first issue.

~Phil Sparks

Please Contribute to Your Newsletter!

If you have information you want to submit, or if you have ideas for improving the newsletter, contact Phil Sparks.

If you are willing to review a CD, contact Phil Sparks. If you don't contact him, he will contact you!

If you have a tidbit on picking, learning tunes, caring for instruments, etc, please submit it for the "A Penny Learned" article.

HELP!!!! If you know about an upcoming old-time music event, don't assume that we

already know about it. If it's not posted on our Web site (www.nashvilleoldtime.org), we need the information desperately. ***Please help us keep our old-time community informed.***

You can reach Phil at:

kpsparks@msn.com

or

615-797-4356

or

2020 Claylick Road

White Bluff, TN 37187

The ***submission deadline*** for May's newsletter is ***Monday, April 25.***

Editor's Note: The articles in this newsletter are placed according to when they are submitted. The first article I receive is placed at the top, the second goes next, and so on.