

**A Publication  
from Your  
Nashville  
Old-Time  
String Band  
Association  
and the  
Stratford  
Community  
Education  
Department**

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**UPCOMING  
ASSOCIATION  
EVENTS**



Thursday  
July 1  
Slow Jam  
6:30 to 8:30 PM  
Stratford



Thursday  
July 8  
Regular Jam  
6:30 to 8:30 PM  
Stratford



July 25  
4th Sunday Jam  
2 to 5 PM  
to be held at  
Edwin Warner Park

# Old-Time Times

JULY 2004

## \*\*\*EVENTS\*\*\*

### Tennessee

#### **Tennessee & National Championship Fiddlers Jamboree**

Held in Smithville, July 2-3. For complete information, call Neil Dudney at (615) 597-8500, or go to "Festivals & Contests" at [www.nashvilleoldtime.org](http://www.nashvilleoldtime.org).

#### **Uncle Dave Macon Days**

Held in Murfreesboro, July 9-11. For complete information, call (800) 716-7560, or go to "Festivals & Contests" at [www.nashvilleoldtime.org](http://www.nashvilleoldtime.org).

#### **Cedarfest Fiddle and Dance Competition**

Held at the James Ward Ag Center in Lebanon, July 16-17. For complete information, call (615) 641-0566, or go to "Festivals & Contests" at [www.nashvilleoldtime.org](http://www.nashvilleoldtime.org).

### Kentucky

#### **Kentucky State Championship Old-Time Fiddlers Contest**

Held at the Rough River Dam State Park near Litchfield, July 16-17. For complete information, call Brent Miller at (270) 259-3578, or go to "Festivals & Contests" at [www.nashvilleoldtime.org](http://www.nashvilleoldtime.org).

### North Carolina

#### **Alleghany County Fiddler's Convention**

Held in Sparta, July 16-17. For complete information, call Trever Nichols at (336) 372-8809, or go to "Festivals & Contests" at [www.nashvilleoldtime.org](http://www.nashvilleoldtime.org).

#### **Shindig on the Green**

Held in Asheville, July 31 and August 1. For complete information, call The Folk Heritage Committee at (828) 258-6101, Ext 789, or go to "Festivals & Contests" at [www.nashvilleoldtime.org](http://www.nashvilleoldtime.org).

### 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Jams

We are pleased to announce that homes have been found for all of this year's 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Jams. It's never too early to schedule your home for a 2005 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Jam. E-mail Darlyne Kent at [dkent@davidsonacademy.com](mailto:dkent@davidsonacademy.com).

## MEMBER NEWS

### **Melmac Lickers to Perform on July 3**

The Melmac Lickers will perform at Music in the Village, Alabama Constitution Village, 109 Gates Avenue, in downtown Huntsville.

Open jamming will be held from 1 to 5 PM, followed by a free Melmac Lickers concert from 6 to 8:30. The performances are outside but will be moved indoors if it rains. Bring lawn chairs or a blanket and your own picnic and cooler. Soft drinks and snacks will be available for purchase.

The Melmac Lickers are Tim Wilson, fiddle; Mike Baugh, guitar and mandolin; Scott Harrison, bass; and Dave Cannon, banjo.

For more information call (256) 564-8100 or contact any member of the band.

~Trish Cannon

### **Rebekah Weiler to Appear on Fox 17**

Rebekah is slated to appear on Channel 17 to promote Uncle Dave Macon Days in Murfreesboro.

As soon as we know the time and day, we notify you by E-mail.

### **NOTSBA Members Compete in Dickson**

Saturday, June 12, At the Arthur Smith, Robert Spicer Memorial Fiddler's Contest in Dickson, NOTSBA was well represented. Rebekah Weiler's band, the Blue Creek Ramblers, took first place in the Old-Time String Band category. In the Old-Time Banjo category, Nic Andal took first, Dave Cannon took second, and Rebekah Weiler took third. Phil Sparks took sixth in the Senior Fiddle category.

The contest was a pleasant one, held indoors with air-conditioning and plenty of room to jam or warm up.

~Phil Sparks

### **25<sup>th</sup> Annual Sea Music Festival: Old-Time Music All Washed Up**

When Jim Hornsby was editing the *Old-Time Times*, he contributed a fine quote from John Hartford (which I am unable to locate).

It was something to the effect that old-time and mountain music originated in the Celtic lands and Western Europe, migrated down the East Coast of the United States, traveled over to New Orleans, came up the Mississippi River, migrated to the Appalachian Mountains, and settled there. I thought it was a very appropriate recognition that the old-time genre was dispersed, scattered, and all mixed up. No wonder we have so many variations of tunes and songs with similar lyrics.

Darlyne and I attended the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Sea Music Festival in Mystic Seaport, Connecticut, at the Museum of America and the Sea. This museum is a campus of several hundred acres, with original reconstructed commercial and residential buildings of the golden years of the sailing ship. The museum is located on the Mystic River and Long Island Sound. It houses several historic and remarkable floating museums, such as the *Joseph Conrad*, the *L. A. Dunton*, and the *Charles. W. Morgan*, the last surviving wooden-hull whaler from some 600 whalers active in the last half of the nineteenth century. The keel of the *Morgan* was laid in 1841, and it is a three-masted vessel of some one thousand tons displacement.

Volunteers can assist in working the ropes and lines of some of these ships to the cadence of the sea chanties (sometimes spelled shanties). We worked the pumps (capstans or windlasses), raised the harpoon boats, and raised the main-top gallants and yard arms to the rhythm of halyard chanties, short haul chanties, and heaving chanties.

Several other tall ships are docked there, as are many other working vessels and vintage boats of all types. The replica vessel *Amistead*, featured in the movie by the same name, was built at Mystic Seaport a few years ago.

This festival is not a jamming festival, but it is a great small-audience performance festival and a singing festival par excellence, featuring the work songs and sea chanties sung aboard ships over the past two hundred years. As with old-time tunes, these songs are different in many respects, but there are striking similar-

ities in some instances. One can hear common lyrics set to different melodies.

We have been to the Sea Music Festival on three occasions. At the first festival we attended, John Hartford was the major featured performer, Jay Unger and Molly Mason were at the second, and Mike Seeger and Tommy Makem, renowned for his performances with the Clancy Brothers, performed at this year's festival.

At two of the three festivals, there were banjo workshops featuring four or five performers. While the songs and sounds of the sea make up a separate tradition, old-time music has "slopped" over into that salty trough as well. For example, some of the old-time tunes played at this year's festival included the following:

"Old Molly Hare"  
"Drunken Hiccups"  
"Roll the Woodpile Down"  
"Southwind"  
"Goin' Across the Sea"  
"What Does the Deep Sea Say"  
"Peg and Awl"  
"The Old Gray Mare" ("Old Yellow Dog")  
"Whiskey before Breakfast"  
"Sail Away Ladies"

At Mike Seeger's performances, he played the following tunes on the fretless gourd banjo: "The Raftsmen's Song," "Roustabout," "Big-Eyed Rabbit," "John Brown's Dream," and "Uncle Joe."

Other songs and tunes included "Stop That Ticklin' Me," "Cluck Old Hen," "Fortune," "Jordan Am a Hard Road to Travel," "Hog-Eyed Man," and the Clyde Davenport tune "The Old Cow Died in the Forks of the Branch." A regular performer at Mystic Seaport is Bob Webb, an acquaintance of Pat Gill's. Bob is a banjo player, among other things, and has just released a CD, called *Cluck Old Hen*. This CD features 7 or 8 other "chicken" songs as well.

Performances and demonstrations occurred all weekend aboard three or four vessels and on five performance stages. Some of the

workshops were Ballads, Sailors in Love, Squeezeboxes, Instruments that Went to Sea, Chanteyblast!, The Blood-Red Flag: War at Sea, and The Banjo. Some 12 or 15 individuals or groups performed during the weekend, including two groups who performed with hurdy-gurdies. We who are fond of the music and songs of the sea would not miss a "pub-sing." A "pub-sing" is the sea music equivalent of the late-night jam session where anyone can sing along or lead in their favorite sea chanty.

Last but not least, bringing this diversion to a close, we enjoyed hearing one of Mike Baugh's favorite sea chanties, "The Golden Vanity." Maybe Mike will sing it again soon. In the words of an old sea chanty, sea music is not all wet . . . but it sure is as "salty as Lot's wife's feet!" We suggest visiting this festival if you can. To learn more about the festival and the museum, visit their website at [www.mysticseaport.org](http://www.mysticseaport.org).

~Don Kent

### **A Report from Mt Airy**

The first weekend in June, Kitty and I attended the fiddlers' convention in Mt Airy, North Carolina. It was our first trip to Mt Airy, and we loved it.

The event is billed as an old-time *and* bluegrass convention, but the vast majority of the pickers were old-time. It took place on a wide, and treeless field used for county fairs. This field was crowded with RVs, campers, and tents.

The contests ran almost nonstop, but jamming was plentiful. I spent most of my time playing guitar behind some excellent fiddlers though I did spend several hours fiddling with some nice Florida folks who, like me, have been playing only a few years.

Kitty enjoyed the commercial row and the quaint, friendly town of Mt. Airy itself.

We saw several of the NOTSBA group there, including Don and Darlyne Kent, Dave Cannon, and Mike Baugh. We also made lots of new friends.

We highly recommend the Mt. Airy festival to anyone interested in old-time music.

~Phil Sparks

### **A Penny Learned: Old-time Meets New-Time**

Let *The Amazing Slow-Downer* help you become an amazing old-timer. Learning tunes and techniques from books and charts is a poor distant cousin to learning by listening, but many of us can't make it to every jam session. Even for those who can, three sessions a month might not satisfy the appetite to learn. If you have a computer at home, your next slow-jam is just a quick download away. Simply go to [www.ronimusic.com](http://www.ronimusic.com) and download *The Amazing Slow-Downer*.

Some of you have heard about it, and some might already be using it. If not, this little \$39.95 program can change your music-learning world. The program was written by a musician (not old-time, but we forgive him for that). He wrote it to help himself and friends learn tunes. It was written simply and avoids many of the weaknesses that bigger and fancier programs have.

My own personal computer is loaded with all sorts of music-related software with lots of fancy bells and whistles, but I use this plain little gem more than any of them (except maybe *Windows Media Player*).

*The Amazing Slow-Downer* plays any song on a CD or any song file on your computer at the slowed-down speed of your choice, with no distortion. It also allows you to quickly set start and end points so you can repeat small sections of a song over and over until you get them right before taking on another section or a larger chunk of the song.

It has a simple equalizer, like the one on your stereo, to help you isolate the part you are learning by emphasizing ranges of tones you want to hear and muting ranges of tones you don't need to hear.

With this inexpensive tool, even the fastest and most intricate run of notes can be slowed

down precisely to something your ears, your head, your heart, and your hands can absorb.

Although it's not exactly the way Henry Reed and Charlie Poole learned to play, they learned, in part, by listening to radio—which was, at the time, a new-fangled technology that musicians before them didn't have.

In a way, using *The Amazing Slow-Downer* is just carrying another of the traditions of old-time music.

~Ed Gregory

### **More Playing Opportunities Ahead**

Ed Gregory, our Webmaster, has been working with Hands on Nashville to coordinate opportunities for us to play old-time music for area nursing homes, senior centers, and other community organizations.

If you are interested in these types of activities, watch both the Web site and your E-mail inbox for further information.

### **DIRECTIONS TO JULY'S 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY JAM**

The next Fourth Sunday Jam will be held July 25th at Edwin Warner Park, Picnic Area Five.

The picnic area includes a large shelter with plenty of room for a jam circle. It includes a recreation area with swings and other equipment for your children and grandchildren.

We will have the picnic area reserved for the entire day, from 6 AM until 11 PM, so you can make a day of it and come early and leave late, or you can just come for the regular jam period, 2 to 5 PM.

Directions: Edwin Warner Park is on the West side of Nashville on Old Hickory Boulevard just off Highway 70. Turn onto Vaughn Road, which is at the traffic light just across from the Steeplechase area. Then turn right about 150 yards up at the Picnic Area entrance. Picnic Area 5 is the first one on the left after you pass the tree line.

Watch your E-mail and the Web site for a map.

**CD Review: *The Time's Been Sweet***

**by Jeanie Murphy and Scott Marckx**

Jeanie Murphy is a clawhammer banjo player from Washington State, and her husband Scott Marckx is a fiddle player. Some of their influences were Bruce Green, Charlie Poole and Carthy Sisco. This CD has a number of tunes familiar to our group as well as many not so familiar, and it includes a number of tunes with vocals. All tunes are played with fiddle and banjo only, with a few tunes having a second banjo or fiddle overdubbed.

I like Jeanie Murphy's clawhammer banjo playing a lot. It is melodic at times, yet it still sounds old-timey. She plays cleanly and with good musicality and uses both a fretted and fretless banjo, as well as several less common tunings.

Scott Marckx's fiddle playing is clean and well in tune, but he keeps the old-time sound by not trying to play thousands of notes. The liner notes are well done with sources for the tunes named and tunings for both the fiddle and banjo supplied.

There are a number of interesting tunes on this CD which we don't play in our group, including a medley of two Chinese tunes they learned from a couple of Chinese musicians, one who played the yang chin (Chinese hammered dulcimer) and the other the ruan (short-necked lute). These tunes work well for fiddle and banjo, sounding like good old modal tunes.

The vocal numbers are also worth listening to, including the final haunting tune from which the CD takes its title. This CD is well worth buying and is an inspiration to aspiring banjo players and good listening for anyone interested in old-time music. You can buy the CD directly from Jeanie Murphy at 402 14th St. SW, Puyallup, WA 98371 or you can E-mail her at [muma5@earthlink.net](mailto:muma5@earthlink.net).

~Julie Mavity-Hudson

**Contribute to Your Newsletter!**

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

[kpsparks@msn.com](mailto:kpsparks@msn.com)

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The *submission deadline* for August's newsletter is 9 AM, Tuesday, July 20.

**NEW IDEAS**

Please note that Julie Mavity-Hudson's CD review is new to our newsletter. If you would be willing to review a CD, contact Phil Sparks.

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

More and more fiddlers' contests are including a category for old-time string bands. We need to support that trend by creating more string bands to enter. Anyone interested? Remember, it's a matter of having fun, not of winning or losing. Contact Phil Sparks.