

# News

Nashville Old-Time String Band Association : NOTSBA

www.nashvilleoldtime.org

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Post Office Box 160038 Nashville, Tennessee 37216

## ***Breakin' Up Winter XVI - March 4-6, 2011***

That's right, it's mere days away now! We are excited to realize that one week from my writing this we'll have had our first greetings with friends from all over the region and much farther away; we'll have sat with Doris Fisher and friends in her cabin and enjoyed the fine potluck dinner she masterminds; and we will be making our way across the road with our instruments to the Cedar Forest Lodge to join in the glorious din of the big jam as it gathers and grows. We will have arrived at *Breakin' Up Winter 16* in the community of friends with whom we share the love of playing and learning about old-time music.

We aim to bring every sort of old-time player together to share in this fellowship, from the esteemed presenters and artists to the newest and sometimes youngest players who will carry this beloved tradition to the far end of this century. *Breakin' Up Winter* is NOTSBA's yearly party and there are plenty of formal concerts, lectures, and workshops, as well as time to gather with friends to jam.

This year's committee chairs, Mary Alice Bernal and Jim Hornsby, bravely took on this task without having experienced the entire run of *Breakin' Up Winters* with which many on the committee came to 2011—and perhaps that aided their acceptance of the head positions! They've worked hard (are engaged as we speak, I am sure), done a superb job, and will continue to work well beyond the end of the weekend into the planning stages of next year's *BUW*. The committee too is a hard-working body that has evolved with the festival to a place of efficient and knowledgeable design, and we thank every member and the very many other contributors to this task, massive by standards of events planned and managed solely by volunteers.

We pay attention to what you let us know works for you and what you're interested in, and we're constantly shifting to improve how it all comes together for all of us, so please register your thoughts with us again this year.

We are eager to sit with you and play tunes to welcome the 2011 old-time music festival season. Further on in this newsletter, you'll see the *Breakin' Up Winter* schedule for a preview of what the weekend holds.

We look forward to seeing you soon at Cedars! ~MLD

We are grateful recipients of grant funding from the **Tennessee Arts Commission** that helps bring our artists and presenters to you for our *Breakin' Up Winter XIV* festival.



## **A New Guitar Chord, Sort Of**

By Phil Sparks

The other day, I was trying to figure out which guitar chords go with a tune called "Walking Boss," an old country blues tune I've learned from a recording by Clarence Ashley. Clarence sings and plays it on the banjo, without any help from his guitar player, Doc Watson.

Clarence plays it in G modal, but I have moved it up to A modal to better suit the range of my voice. The modal tune uses the Dorian scale, and the chords that commonly go with A Dorian tunes are Am, Em, and G major, though finding the right chords for a Dorian tune can be perplexing.

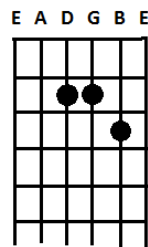
I had all but two or three measures worked out, and nothing I tried seemed to sound right for the remaining few measures, not Am, not Em, not G, not any of the other chords I tried.

If you don't play the banjo, you may not know that banjos are commonly (but not always) tuned in open chords. When I tune my banjo to A modal, the open strings make these notes: AEADE (strumming down) and sounds sort of like an A minor chord—but different. Let's call it an A modal chord. An A minor chord uses the notes A, C, and E, so compared to

an A minor chord, the A modal chord is missing the C and has an extra D. It's just not the same chord as A minor.

When I tried this banjo chord with "Walking Boss," it sounded just right where nothing else had sounded right before.

I then made an A modal chord on my guitar like this: I held the 2<sup>nd</sup> string down on the third fret and held the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> strings down on the second fret. In other words, it's like an A minor chord except that the second string is held down at the third fret instead of the first fret. The chord chart is shown below.



When I strum this chord, starting with the fifth string and going on to the 4<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup>, it makes these notes: AEADE—the same notes found in the A modal banjo tuning. I plugged this new chord into the troublesome measures of "Walking Boss," and it worked just fine.

Why is it a new chord "*Sort Of*"?

If you play guitar, you may be aware of DADGAD tuning. Some guitar players (mostly the Irish, I'm told) sometimes or always use this tuning instead of the standard EADGBE tuning. If you strum the open EADGBE tuning, it sounds like just a jumble of notes. If you strum the open DADGAD tuning, however, it sounds sort of like a minor chord.

You can hear what it sounds like without retuning your guitar. Just press the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> strings against the second fret and strum. It looks like you've made an A chord on the wrong strings. The notes are EBEABE and it sounds like some sort of a minor chord. I call it the E modal chord.

If you want to retune to the true DADGAD, tune the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> strings down two half steps. The open strings will then make a D modal chord. The problem with DADGAD tuning, as far as old-time pickers are concerned, is that you have to run your capo way up the neck to play in A modal.

Once I stopped to think about it, I realized that I had made the same chord DADGAD makes, only I had moved it up to A modal. It's not a new guitar chord at all, but a different expression of the DADGAD chord, something guitar players have been using for a long time.

What good is it? Not much, except that I now have the complete chords for "Walking Boss" and will know what to do in the future when the standard chords just don't work with Dorian tunes—and it was fun. I enjoy figuring things out.



Tune Workshop at Mankers Station in February. Don and Darlyne Kent and Mary Lou Durham reviewed tunes.

## ☆ Scheduled Jams ☆

### **March 3, 2011, First-Thursday Jam at *Breakin' Up Winter***

Come on out to Cedars of Lebanon for the first event in our annual music gathering. Starting when folks start to arrive in the afternoon, we'll play until the wee hours, greeting friends from near and far. Doris Fisher, as our unofficial hostess, with her contingent of helpers always welcomes us with a potluck dinner at her cabin across the road from the Cedar Forest Lodge where the jam is held; so stop by, have a bite to eat and say "Hello." You'll know you have arrived and you can relax into the weekend or the evening and prepare to feast on tunes, friends, and fellowship.

### **March 10, 2011, Second-Thursday Regular Jam**

Please plan to join us for a regular jam. All old-time players are welcome to this open jam, 6:30-8:30 PM, at the **Buchanan Log House**, 2910 Elm Hill Pike.

### **March 17, 2011, Third-Thursday Tune Workshop**

Mike Baugh and Ron Whitlow will review the tunes they taught, playing through each tune to allow for a good re-recording, and then we'll play along to refamiliarize ourselves with them. Ron and Mike taught some wonderful tunes and we are gradually nudging them into the repertoire. The workshop is, like all our jams, free and open to all players of old-time music.

We meet 6:30-8:30 PM at **Mansker's Station Frontier Life Center** (Visitor's Center), 705 Caldwell Drive, Goodlettsville.

### **March 24, 2011, Fourth-Thursday Regular Jam**

**Church of the Advent** provides space for NOTSBA to host a regular jam in the Youth Room of their Annex. From 6:30 to 8:30 PM we're banging and sawing away, and we welcome all old-time players of all skill levels to this open jam.

### **March 27, 2011, Fourth-Sunday Jam**

This month's Sunday afternoon jam is from 2 PM until around 5:30 or 6 at the home of Don and Mary Ann Masters. Don and Mary Ann live off Gallatin Road in Inglewood, between East Nashville and Madison, in the northeast part of Nashville.

From Briley Parkway take Gallatin Pike (Road) south a few blocks turning left (east) onto Winding Way at the Inglewood Public Library. The road will soon fork. Stay right, taking Kenwood Avenue. Go about a block and a half, crossing over Eastdale Avenue and passing a few more houses. Don and Mary Ann's house will be on the left with a mailbox out front and the driveway on the right side of the house. It's 1319 Kenwood Avenue, 37216.

The phone is 262-4430 if you get lost.

We always have a good afternoon at the Masters'; Don and Mary Ann are most welcoming hosts. Bring a chair just in case. Bring and partake of snacks at the break. We hope to see you there!

### **March 31, 2011—Fifth-Thursday Specialty Jam**

Beg, borrow, or grab that banjo off the wall and bring it on out to this banjo extravaganza at the Buchanan Log House. Todd Wright will acquaint us with the banjo, the basics of how to play it, and this experience will hopefully light a fire in us to pursue learning how to play this amazing instrument. If you already play the banjo, Todd will have rewarding work for you too as he brings his many years' experience playing and teaching banjo to us in this very special evening. We are delighted and fortunate to present this free workshop to all lovers of old-time music. The banjo workshop will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 PM.

### **Other Area Old-Time Jams**

- ☛ **The Fiddle and Pick** has open old-time jams on the first and third Tuesday evenings of each month in Pegram. Come on out. Gretchen and company welcome music lovers of all ages and skill levels. [fiddleandpick.ning.com/](http://fiddleandpick.ning.com/)
- ☛ **The 5 Spot** has a **Wednesday Night Old-time Jam** each week. This homey tavern/music venue located in East Nashville has been hosting an OT jam for years now. Have a fine brew and play a few tunes. It's on Facebook.
- ☛ **Mansker's Station** has a **Second-Monday Jam** starting at 6:30 PM in addition to the NOTSBA third-Thursday tune workshop they host. It's in Goodlettsville, just north of Nashville. If you have questions, call Laura at 615-720-8829.

# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS – BUW XVI, 2011

## FRIDAY, March 4, 2011

<b>8:30 am</b>	<b>Registration, coffee and rolls</b> .....	<b>Assembly Hall</b>
<b>9:00 am - noon</b>	<b>Lectures</b> .....	<b>Assembly Hall</b>
9:00	Heritage Award Recipient Ceremony – Franklin George	
9:15	Franklin George <i>"My Life and Times in Old Time Music"</i>	
10:10	Dwight Lamb <i>"Missouri Valley Fiddling Tradition"</i>	
11:00	Alice Gerrard <i>"Starting the Old Time Herald"</i>	
<b>12:00 -12:30 pm</b>	<b>Lunch – meal ticket required</b> .....	<b>Group Lodge</b>
<b>1:30 - 4:25</b>	<b>Artist Led Jams</b> .....	<b>Assembly Hall</b>
1:30 - 2:25	Dwight Lamb	
2:30 - 3:25	Franklin George	
3:30 - 4:25	Alice Gerrard	
<b>1:30 - 3:00</b>	<b>Wax Cylinder Recording – Martin Fisher</b> .....	<b>Nature Center</b>
	<i>Discussion and Demonstration</i>	
<b>4:00 - 6:00</b>	<b>Singing Jam – Lee Cagle</b> .....	<b>Camp Store</b>
<b>4:45 - 6:15</b>	<b>Led Jam – Gretchen Priest-May</b> .....	<b>Assembly Hall</b>
<b>6:30 - 7:00</b>	<b>Dinner – meal ticket required</b> .....	<b>Group Lodge</b>
<b>8:00 - 9:00</b>	<b>Artist Concert – Alice Gerrard</b> .....	<b>Assembly Hall</b>
<b>All Day &amp; Evening</b>	<b>Open Jamming</b> .....	<b>Cedar Forest Lodge</b>



## SATURDAY, March 5, 2011

<b>8:00 - 8:30 am</b>	<b>Breakfast – meal ticket required</b> .....	<b>Group Lodge</b>
<b>9:00 - 10:15</b>	<b>Workshop – Christian Wig</b> .....	<b>Assembly Hall</b>
	<i>"Fiddling on the Frontier"</i>	
<b>10:30 - 11:45</b>	<b>Workshop – Alice Gerrard</b> .....	<b>Assembly Hall</b>
	<i>"Singing Workshop"</i>	
<b>12:00 - 12:30 pm</b>	<b>Lunch – meal ticket required</b> .....	<b>Group Lodge</b>
<b>1:30 - 3:45</b>	<b>Artist Concerts</b> .....	<b>Assembly Hall</b>
1:30 - 2:30	Dwight Lamb	
2:45 - 3:45	Franklin George	
<b>4:00 - 5:15</b>	<b>Workshop – Jeff Todd Titon</b> .....	<b>Assembly Hall</b>
	<i>"String Band Workshop featuring Kentucky Tunes"</i>	
<b>6:00 - 7:00</b>	<b>Supper - meal ticket required</b> .....	<b>Group Lodge</b>
<b>7:30 - 9:30</b>	<b>Singing Jam – Marilyn Harris/Cynthia Whitlow</b> .....	<b>Camp Store</b>
<b>8:00 - ???</b>	<b>Square Dance – Roan Mt. Hilltoppers</b> .....	<b>Assembly Hall</b>
<b>All Day &amp; Evening</b>	<b>Open Jamming</b> .....	<b>Cedar Forest Lodge</b>

## SUNDAY, March 6, 2011

<b>8:30 - 9:30 am</b>	<b>Brunch – meal ticket required</b> .....	<b>Group Lodge</b>
<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>Cabin check-out time</b>	
<b>10:30 - 11:30</b>	<b>Hymn Singing – Lisa Ingram/Betty Westmoreland</b> .....	<b>Cedar Forest Lodge</b>

*Schedule subject to change.*

The fine print:



We appreciate significant grant funding from TAC helping to bring presenters to Breakin' Up Winter XVI.

**NOTSBA's Purpose:** ...preservation and promotion of old-time string band music by bringing together persons interested in old-time music...and by reaching out to the community through public performances, workshops, seminars, festivals, and other public outreach, informational, and educational activities.

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the *Nashville Old-Time String Band Association*. NOTSBA is a volunteer organization. While we strive for accuracy, we do not label as "official" any content found here. Have an idea for an article?

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February Performance Group Practice at BLH