

Free Old-Time Music Workshops Planned For *Uncle Dave Macon Days*

Notsba will once again be organizing free, old-time workshops and a jam session at *Uncle Dave Macon Days*, July 10 - 12 in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

On Saturday, July 11, Rebekah Weiler will be leading a hands-on beginning banjo workshop for those with little or no experience in playing the instrument. Rebekah and fiddler Anna Roberts-Gevalt will co-lead a fiddle/banjo presentation on how the two instruments work together in old-time music. Thomas Maupin and Jay Bland will do a demonstration of traditional buck dancing steps. A relaxed old-time jam will be hosted by Ray Mathes in the afternoon.

Presented on Saturday, this year's Heritage Award Winners are Bill and Janice Birchfield of the *Roan Mountain Hilltoppers*. Thomas Maupin, buck dancer, will be presented the Trailblazer Award on Friday. Both of these honors are awarded to individuals who have dedicated themselves to the preservation and promotion of traditional folk arts.

Watch for the July newsletter for more specifics on our events. For more information on the festival visit www.uncledavemacondays.com ~Ray Mathes

Playing For Our Supper

Notsba is fortunate to have a close relationship with the folks at Buchanan Log House that dates back to early 2006 when it became one of our first dedicated jam sites following our charter as a non-profit organization in 2005.

While users of Buchanan Log House normally pay a rental fee, *Notsba* and BLH instead have an agreement of mutual respect and benefit. In return for using the log house we do two things:

- Provide musicians to play for planned BLH events

- Provide help in the periodic clean up activities at BLH

We were able to assist in both areas within the last couple of months. On April 18, Buchanan had their annual spring cleaning. Bill Eickmeier, Mary Alice Bernal, Rick Fretter, Don Masters, Mary Lou Durham, and Ron Whitlow assisted from *Notsba*. The Log House usually has two of these a year and you are always more than welcome to join us lending a hand for part of a day of honest labor. Please plan to join us there. More details will be posted in the newsletter.

On May 15, they held their annual Fish Fry. This event helps raise money and awareness for BLH. Don and Darlyne Kent, Ray Mathes, Jeff Cales, Mary Alice Bernal, Don Masters and Ron Whitlow provided music for the event. We literally played for our supper and ate some mighty fine catfish.

Notsba will play for the Fall Folk Festival September 19 from 10 am until 5 pm. Consider playing for this very relaxed and social event. We usually have a big time. If you're interested, let us know.

In case you haven't read the history of the Buchanan Log House, below is a brief overview quoted from their Web site. You can also visit www.buchananloghouse.com. -RW

"This charming two-story log house was begun in 1807. It has evolved through the years into a unique historic property which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The house is built of chestnut logs with poplar floors. Original limestone fireplaces provide focal points for the parlor and Lucinda's room.

James Buchanan, an early settler in Davidson County, married Lucinda East in 1810. The first log addition to the home was necessitated in 1820, to accommodate their growing family, which eventually numbered 16 children. The next addition to the house occurred in 1900.

Two historical prominent residents were Judge Thomas N. Frazier who purchased the home in 1867, and his son, James Beriah Frazier. Judge Frazier was Criminal Court Judge for Rutherford and Davidson Counties, and was impeached during the Reconstruction Days because of his so-called interference in the ratification of the 14th Amendment (he was restored to office in 1870). James Beriah Frazier spent his teenage years in this home. He was a popular Governor from 1903 to 1905, and was a United States Senator from 1905 to 1911. cont.

Guests enjoy the ambiance of days past melded with today's modern facilities. The Buchanan Log House is the property of the Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities and is operated by the Donelson-Hermitage Chapter.”

Notsba Business

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER!

We'd like to welcome one new member this month:

Jerry Cauthen

Kansas City, Missouri

Thanks for joining us, Jerry. We enjoyed meeting you at the Fort Negley jam and hope you get back to Nashville soon.

THANKS TO OUR RENEWING MEMBERS!

This month, we have seven renewing members:

Mike Baugh

Nashville, Tennessee

Lilly Hsu and sons, Ben and Daniel

Nashville, Tennessee

Carl Pagter

Walnut Creek, California

J.T. and Joy Pigg

Goodlettsville, Tennessee

Thank you for your continued support. We're glad you're renewing your memberships.

Notsba Board of Directors to Meet

The regular meeting of the Board of directors will take place at 6:30 PM at the Buchanan Log House, 2910 Elm Hill Pike. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Notsba Performance Group at Carnton Mansion

The Performance Group is slated to play this summer each Saturday at Carnton Mansion in Franklin, Tennessee, during the height of their tourist season. Small groups will provide old-time music designed to enhance the historic home's tours during the months of June, July and August. Part of Notsba's mission is to educate people about old-time music and this effort places us in a beautiful historic setting in which to do that.

For more information, see one of the Performance Group Workgroup folks, Mary Lou Durham, Don Kent, Jim Hornsby, Andy Shivas, or Ron Whitlow.

Notsba Performance Group at the Nashville Zoo at Grassmere

The Performance Group is slated to play from around 5:45 until 7:30 PM at the zoo on June 13th. Check with Performance Group Workgroup folks to be sure times are accurate.

The Newsletter

Please send us any newsworthy information. Please email us by the 20th of the month for inclusion in next month's edition.

Ron - rnwhitlow@comcast.net, Mary Lou - mldurham1@juno.com.

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the *Nashville Old-Time String Band Association*.

Notsba is a volunteer organization and as its seen voice, the **News** publishes material from members and others who wish to contribute to the body of knowledge about old-time music.

While we strive for accuracy, we do not label "official" any content found here. We appreciate the generosity of our contributors!

Scheduled Jams:

FIRST THURSDAY SLOW JAM – June 4th, 6:30-8:30 pm, Ft. Negley Visitors Center.

There is a Sounds game tonight starting at 7 PM, so parking is inside the fence and gate at the Visitors' Center.

For June 4th's Slow Jam Jim Hornsby will lead his second of three cross-tune sessions.

He'll review the four basic finger patterns for playing GDGD cross-tunes he taught in May. Old Gray Cat, Hunting the Buffalo, Georgia Railroad, and Huldy in the Sinkhole are the tunes he used to illustrate the patterns. In addition, he will introduce a fifth pattern for minor, or "modal" cross-tunes with a tune called Sally Coming Through the Rye. Then, he will discuss some tunes that combine two or more of these finger patterns.

Keep these tunes taught at previous recent slow jams in mind to request.

D—West Fork Gals, Lady of the Lake, Over the Waterfall, Needle Case, New Five Cent Piece, Shoo! Fly, Martha Campbell, Year of Jubilo and Cherokee Shuffle

A—Booth Shot Lincoln, Hunting the Buffalo, Little Dutch Girl, Red Rocking Chair, June Apple

G—Nail That Catfish to a Tree, Seneca Square Dance (Waiting for the Federals), Shove that Pig's Foot a Little Further in the Fire, Garfield's March, Georgia Railroad, Old Yeller Dog, Cora Dye, Sweet Jenny

C —Tennessee Wagoner, The Darker the Night (& G), Texas Gales

Am—Cold Frosty Morning

SECOND THURSDAY REGULAR JAM - June 11th, 6:30-8:30 pm, Buchanan Log House, 2910 Elm Hill

Pike. Tunes are played from moderate to up-to-speed. All skill levels are welcome and everyone's encouraged to play along. A list of tunes frequently played by the group is available on our website and a copy will be at the jam. New tunes may be brought in.

THIRD THURSDAY REGULAR JAM - June 18th, 6:30-8:30 pm, Ft. Negley Visitors Center. This is a regular jam, so tunes are played up-to-speed. Play the chestnuts or bring in something new!

FOURTH SUNDAY JAM - June 28th - Mary Alice Bernal hosts. Thanks, Mary Alice!

Here are Mary Alice's directions—

My address is:

1307 Sunnymeade Drive
Nashville, TN 37216

We're on a lovely little dead-end street in Inglewood (just north of East Nashville).

If you're coming from the north/west or far east:

From Briley Parkway and Gallatin Road SOUTH -- you go SOUTH on Gallatin Road approx. 1 mile and turn LEFT (EAST) onto Sunnymeade Drive. It's directly across from the bright orange Las Maracas Mexican restaurant (and between 2 churches). Go all the way to Kennedy (approx .5 mile) and keep going straight through the intersection. You will see the dead-end sign. We are the 3rd house on the left.

From the South:

You can take 65 N to Briley Parkway East (to Opryland) and then take the Gallatin Road SOUTH exit. then same directions as above.

Parking is on along the street. You can go past my house and turn around to park anywhere. Please don't block driveways. You can pull over fairly far onto the lawns as our street is somewhat narrow.

Please bring extra seating. As an FYI for anyone with allergies -- we have 2 dogs and 2 cats -- though I sure hope we're outside for the jam.

Call if you have any problems -- 509-0471

In the May President's column, I mentioned I was going to do a two-part column on what I've learned from other old-time players about how to improve my playing. The column below is the first of those and in July I'll conclude. I'd like to thank the many people who shared their thoughts and I will try to mention them all in the July newsletter. -RW

Some Things I've Learned About How I Can Improve My Playing ~Ron Whitlow

First and foremost, it is important to have fun playing music. I've been told that we should play for three reasons: 1. to have fun, 2. to make money, or 3, to learn. In old-time music, we're not making any money to speak of, so learning and having fun are the orders of the day. The way to have fun doing something is to be good at it, and the pursuit of fun includes finding ways to improve our ability to do something well.

I've grouped the things I've learned into five broad categories: Being There and Listening, the subjects this month, and the remaining three, Learning, Practicing, and Mechanics, which I will cover in July.

BEING THERE

1) Attending jams whenever possible has many benefits. Although individual and group lessons as well as practice really help make us better, there is no substitute for getting into a jam with other players and trying out what we're working on. I'm sure everyone can relate to having learned a tune or technique, trying it out in a jam and stumbling or even falling on one's face. There's no test of whether it's solidly learned like being able to play it well in a jam.

2) It's important to make music a priority. We are never too old to begin and to improve. A little bit of time spent with some frequency will yield wonderful results.

3) We learn by listening to and watching more accomplished players play. Whether it's at a jam, a concert, or on YouTube, it's easy to find great players playing tunes we're trying to learn.

4) We want to be courteous of others' time. Avoiding dominating a jam or spending an inordinate amount of time learning a tune while others are waiting keeps everyone happy. At the same time we don't need to be in a rush to fill every silent moment with notes. Jam sessions have a flow of their own, and the more we can synchronize with that flow, the better able we are to catch tunes as they float through the ensemble.

5) It's good to listen to old-time music as much as possible, whether at home, in the car, at work, etc., particularly recordings of tunes we're working on. With access to a computer, one can tune into several old-time based radio channels. We are picking up much information, some of it quite subtle, by saturating our minds in this way.

LISTENING

1) Listening to our own playing is essential; when we learn what we actually sound like, we discover areas to work on to improve. Recording not only the group sound, but also our parts in the group and then listening to those is a good method for doing this.

2) Listening to the sound that we contribute to the ensemble and adjusting our playing as necessary is critical. We can think of the ensemble sound as a mosaic: What parts are already full, and what areas call out for additions?

3) Paying attention to our volume level allows us to use the dynamic range of the instrument appropriately in ensembles. Not everything needs to be played as loudly as possible. Learning to play at different volume levels helps us contribute what the situation calls for.

4) By repeatedly listening to tunes we are trying to learn, they become such ingrained parts of us that we can hum or eventually play them in their entirety and with ornamentation from memory. It's helpful to be able to "play" tunes in our heads while playing them on our instruments.

5) Re-listening to and re-learning tunes we already know helps us and the tunes grow; it's sometimes surprising to people learning to do this that we play tunes better based on improvement in our playing. While a new player may have to play simpler, less notey versions of tunes, relearning those tunes as we progress in our playing abilities brings those same tunes to our more accomplished playing levels.

6) We set good examples by listening and paying attention to what's going on around us. Does everybody wince when I play a particular tune? Maybe I need more work on that tune alone before bringing it back to the ensemble. Jams are not practice sessions; they are where we go to play together, AFTER we've been practicing

7) When hearing a new tune and listening carefully, we can usually quickly discover the simple song-like melody that is the heart of the tune. All ornamentation and variation stem from this simple core melody.

Trying tunes that have lyrics, like "Soldier's Joy" or "Old Yeller Dog," can be helpful, too, when we are beginning. Many times, lyrics can be found on the internet. The "heart" melody is right there in the voice. If you are working from notation, you can take out as many notes as possible while retaining a sense of the tune. Most fiddle tunes can be effectively expressed in mostly quarter (or "beat") notes.

8) Though it is important to listen to master fiddlers a lot, I don't try to copy them note for note. They are the best of the best and their playing reflects that. It is a good exercise to capture their "essence" with fewer notes and less complicated rhythms. Over time we all develop our own personal styles.

Learning to play old-time music is a complex pursuit. There is always more to discover and making this journey has added much possibility and joy to my life and the lives of the many people who have shared with me what they've learned in their own development.

Again, I'm grateful to the folks who've talked with me about old-time music and learning it. More in July.

Tune of the Month

Rye Whiskey - A few words. Ray Mathes

Sometimes a fiddler really enjoys the tune. He likes the melody and has fun with the words. When Charlie Acuff played “Rye Whiskey” at the 2009 Breaking Up Winter, it was one of those times. You can hear the spark in both his fiddling and his singing. The first two verses are from this performance. The third and fourth verses are from a performance at Fiddle Tunes in Port Townsend in 1994.

The instrumental notation is as close as musical notation can get to his fiddling without being overly notey. Use it as a guide, but listen to the recording to hear the slurs, slides, and staccato as he plays them.

The song itself is old, and one historian (Bayard) says it probably existed as a vocal piece before it was an instrumental one. He links it to tunes from the British Isles and identifies many songs that use the tune, including “Jack of Diamonds” and “Drunk at Night and Dry i’ the Morning.”

Samuel Bayard (“Dance to the Fiddle, March to the Fife” 1982) links “Rye Whiskey” to the tune “The Drunken Hiccups.” (Page 566) In a notation of the tune as played by (Kentucky fiddler) Ed Trimmer’s father, the A-part is very close to the way Charlie Acuff fiddles and sings it.

Ira W. Ford (“Traditional Music of America” 1940) shows the tune “Drunken Hiccoughs” as a 3/8 time tune in the key of A with the fiddle tuned Aea. The lyrics shown are common to many of the sung versions of “Rye Whiskey.”

Rye Whiskey

- A) GGGG GGDG (2X) instrumental**
B) GGGG GGDG (2X) verse & chorus

Old-Time
 As played by Charlie Acuff
 at 2009 Breaking Up Winter
 Nt: Ray Mathes

♩ = 160

- 1..I've
- 2..Rye
- 3..I
- 4..My

Rye whiskey, rye whiskey,
 Rye whiskey I crave.
 If I don't get rye whiskey,
 I'll go to my Grave.

I eat when I'm hungry,
 And drink when I'm dry.
 And if whiskey don't kill me,
 I'll live 'till I die.