



A Publication of Your
Nashville Old-Time
String Band Association

ASSOCIATION EVENTS

1st-Thursday Jam
February 1
Slow & Regular Jam
6:30 to 8:30 PM
Two Rivers
Mansion



2nd-Thursday Jam
February 8
Regular Jam
6:30 to 8:30 PM
Buchanan
Log House



3rd-Thursday Jam
February 15
Slow & Regular Jam
6:30 to 8:30 PM
Two Rivers
Mansion



4th-Thursday Jam
February 22
Performance Group
Rehearsal
& Singing
6:30 to 8:30 PM
Buchanan Log House



4th-Sunday Jam
February 25
2 to 5 PM
Hosted By
The Kents

The Old-Time Times

FEBRUARY 2007

In This Issue

Silent Auction at BUW, pg 1 More BUW Information, pg 2 The President's Corner, pg 2 Wanted: Committee Members for BUW '08, pg 3 What Is That Instrument Called? pg 3 A Gathering of Dulcimers in Memphis, pg 4 Dulcimer Classes in Memphis, pg 5 A New Book about Fiddlin' Charlie Bowman, pg 5 Items from the Charles Wolfe Collection Being Auctioned, pg 6 New Notsba Members, pg 6 Notsba's First Renewing Member, pg 6 Directions to the Jams, pg 6 Festivals & Contests, pg 7 Editorial: Please Enter a Contest, pg 7 Hosts for 4th-Sunday Jams, pg 7 A Penny Learned: Tuning Your Fiddle, pg 8 Newsletter and Notsba Info, pg 8 Classified Ads, pg 8 ***The submission deadline for March's newsletter is Sunday, February 25.*** □

Silent Auction Planned for Breaking Up Winter

~Ron Whitlow

Again this year, there will be a Silent Auction at Breaking Up Winter. This event was very popular last year and earned almost \$1,000 for Notsba. It helped us compensate our wonderful presenters and artists as well as offset other expenses incurred with Breakin' Up Winter.

You're asked to consider donating any items you no longer need that are in good condition and may be of interest and value to someone attending BUW. Last year, instruments, stands, and cases were donated. This year, we hope to have more of the same as well as other items including books, CDs, music accessories, services (instrument set up, lessons, etc) or anything else you think an old-time musician would be interested in.

If you're in the market for some old-time music-related items, save your money and bring cash or check with you to BUW. This is a great opportunity for buyers to snag that special thing you've been looking for. Some of last years buyers are now playing the instruments they bought, and of course, books, CDs, etc are valuable in learning some of those old tunes you've always wanted to play.

If you have anything you'd like to donate, please contact me, Ron Whitlow, at rwhitlow@comcast.net or at (615) 373-7914. A successful Silent Auction goes a long way toward holding down future ticket prices.

Please review this list, and if you have any of these items that you no longer need, consider donating them to a worthy cause:

Any acoustic instrument, regardless of its condition:

- Fiddles and bows
- Mandolins
- Guitars
- Banjos
- Dulcimers
- Autoharps
- Bases
- Base boxes
- Harmonicas
- Spoons

Music accessories:

- Capos
- Tuners
- Strings
- Rosin
- Instrument stands
- Cases

Books:

- Music books
- Music history books
- Folklore books
- Appalachian history books

Music related art:

- Posters
- Drawings
- Paintings
- Statues
- Ashtrays

Music related clothing:

- T-shirts
- Caps
- Jackets
- Recorded music
- Performance or instructional CDs
- Videos
- DVDs

Services

- Music lessons
- Instrument set up

Bring any items you'd like to donate with you to Breaking Up Winter. We will have the Silent Auction area already set up. The auction will start Friday morning and will conclude just prior to dinner on Saturday night, so there will be plenty of opportunities to shop.

Remember, Notsba is a 501 (c) 3, not for profit organization, and any donations you make may be subject to a tax deduction, the same as other donations to charities. Discuss this with your tax advisor. □

More BUW Information

Camping (from Pat Gill):

This year, the park plans to open a second campground just for BUW campers. It will open on March 1, barring problems with the plumbing at the bath house

This is an extremely kind gesture on their part, and we sincerely appreciate it.

They do not accept reservations, but more than enough slots will be available for our people.

Right now, we do not know which campground will be ours. *When you sign in at the ranger station, tell them you are there for BUW, and ask them which campground you should use.*

Motel Accommodations (from Patsy Weiler):

The Best Value Inn is on the same road that runs by the entrance to the Cedars of Lebanon State Park. It is approximately 6-7 miles from the park entrance toward Lebanon.

They are offering a room rate of two double beds for \$53 plus tax. The rooms have a small refrigerator, microwave and coffee pot.

This motel has received good reviews from different travel Web sites, and the employees were very professional and polite on the telephone.

For more information, call the motel at (615) 449-5781. □

The President's Corner

~Jim Hornsby

I would like to take a moment to express my appreciation to all of you who have become members of Notsba. The board of directors decided early-on that our Web site, jams, and newsletter would be free and open to the public. So, with no special material benefits, you chose to support the association by paying dues and becoming members. For that, you deserve special recognition.

Memberships are important for a number of reasons. Funding is vital for our future success, and your dues make up a large part of the association's budget for events and functions. We appreciate your contributions to the good cause, but even more, we appreciate that you are involved and want to support old-time music.

We don't get much verbal feed-back about the association's activities, so when someone joins, we consider that to be a vote of confidence and approval for what we are doing. There are currently 89 members, and I

want to thank each and every one of you for casting your “yes” vote. It makes a difference to the morale of the board and committee members to know that their efforts are appreciated, and every person who joins motivates others to do the same.

Increasing membership has been a major goal this year, and we have worked hard to expand our performance and educational activities as incentives for participation. As an additional incentive, the board agreed unanimously that everyone who is a member as of March 31, 2007, will be considered a “Charter Member” and will receive special recognition for that status. I believe that in the years to come, you will appreciate the fact that you were a part of the group that founded The Nashville Old-Time String Band Association and helped it get a good start.

If you haven’t joined yet, or if it is time for you to renew, please take the time to do that now. Although most of our activities will remain free to the public, we are considering some “members only” benefits that you won’t want to miss. You will find membership forms on our Web site or at the registration table at Breakin’ Up Winter.

Old-time music is a wonderful part of our culture, and it deserves your support. If you have joined us, thank you very much. We need your participation and your ideas on how we can improve Notsba. If you haven’t joined, please do, and encourage others to join. It is your organization, and we want you to help build its future. □

Wanted: New Committee Members for Breaking Up Winter ’08

BUW ’07 has not yet been held, and we are already thinking about forming the committee to plan and develop BUW ’08.

If you would be willing to serve on the BUW committee for next year’s festival, please contact Jim Hornsby. Catch him at one of our jams, or call him at 615-650-2328. □

What Is That Instrument Called?

~Marilyn Graves

The question, “What is that Instrument called?” has been asked of me hundreds of times. We never play a gig anywhere that I don’t have to answer questions about the hammered dulcimer and how I learned to play it, and I’m always happy to answer those questions.

I first saw the instrument being played by Grandpa Jones’ daughter on stage at the Ozark Folk Center in Mt View, Arkansas, and I was awed by the beautiful sound. That night, I convinced Coley, my husband, that I could play one of those instruments, so we began asking questions, doing research, and listening to different makes of dulcimers. Finally, we chose one made by Master Works in Bennington, Oklahoma.

During our research, we learned that the hammered dulcimer is an ancient instrument dating back to the time of Christ and beyond. The name *dulcimer* is derived from two Latin words, *dulce*, meaning “sweet” and *melos*, meaning “song.”

Although the instrument is made in different sizes, the one I have has 58 strings. It is made of mahogany, hard rock maple, rosewood, and walnut. The hammers are mahogany. It is tuned with a chromatic tuner and can be played in any of the major keys except B.

There are so many old-time festivals in our three-state area, and we are asked to play for many of these events just because the hammered dulcimer is such an interesting old-time instrument.

Master Works sponsors the Sawdust Festival in Bennington each year, and we had the privilege of attending this festival a few years ago. We met and jammed with Russell Cook, the owner of Master Works. Russell was the National Hammered Dulcimer Champion in the 1980s. One thing Russell told me was that there is no wrong or right way to play—“Just play what you feel.”

It’s a fun instrument, and I will always be happy to answer your questions about it. □

A Gathering of Dulcimers and Dulcimer Players in Memphis

~Betty Westmoreland

One would imagine that following a two-day dulcimer workshop, the folks in charge might go home and prop their feet up and rest a spell. Not so! Following their workshop on January 12-13, 2007, the Memphis Dulcimer Gathering's **Lee Cagle** (a Notsba member) and **Carla Maxwell**, the two energetic women who presented the project, turned right around and gave a house concert for their participants and a few guests. Furthermore, they hosted a fine hammered dulcimer player and two winners of the Mountain Dulcimer division of the Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield, Kansas.

On January 13, 2007, Carla and her husband Max opened their home for two hours of the most wonderful music one could imagine. Lee opened the concert with her own composition, "Awakenings," followed by "Dagget's Revenge." She continued her portion of the concert with a finger-pickin' song called "Margaret's Waltz." Lee took a moment to explain to the guests that she had spent time in Cullowhee, North Carolina, learning songs from Bill Taylor and others. She then played "Ned of the Hill," which she learned from Bill. Preferring the old traditional songs, Lee explained that her next number, "Peg and Awl," is from the early 1800s and tells of a cobbler who has lost his job and has been replaced by a machine. Lee closed out her solo portion of the concert with "Darlin' Cory," another traditional song.

Betty Dawson is a person familiar to dulcimer enthusiasts everywhere. Betty played her hammered dulcimer and bodhran, accompanied by Lee Cagle on the mountain dulcimer. Betty and Lee began their set with "All the Pretty Horses," followed by "Danny Boy," and "The Water Is Wide," the title of Lee and Betty's latest CD project. It is especially important to mention here that all proceeds from "The Water Is Wide" are donated to the work of the Church Health Center in Memphis. Continuing their program, Betty and Lee performed "Mes Parents,"

followed by a medley of "Nonesuch," an American folk song, and "Tumbalalika," a Jewish folk song. Betty and Lee concluded their portion of the concert with "Amazing Grace."

Quick! Can you name the current winner of the Mountain Dulcimer prize at Winfield, Kansas? Here's a clue: He plays electric dulcimer (yes, you read that right) in his high school marching band. Still lost? He's **Jeff Hames**, a talented young performer from Mississippi. He did only one number, but it stood the room on its collective ear. Jeff played "Dueling Banjos," and the crowd of about 30 people loved it!

The featured performer at the concert was **Larry Conger**, the Paris, Tennessee, native who won at Winfield in 1998. While Conger has performed in many places and to large audiences over the years, he confessed that he loves playing the smaller, more intimate settings such as can be found in a house concert. Demonstrating expertise on a number of different dulcimers, Larry kept the audience entertained with his tunes and little stories. He opened his program with "Home with the Girls in the Morning."

Larry uses the lightest touch on the dulcimer strings, looking around at people in the room and seeming to "talk" to them with his music. His next two tunes originated with the Irish legend, Turloch O'Carolan, who traveled about, playing his harp and singing his songs some 400 years ago. Larry explained the term *planxty* for folks who are unfamiliar with it: A *planxty* is "an Irish or Welsh melody for the harp, sometimes of a mournful character." "Planxty Fannie Power" and "Planxty (John) Irwin" were followed by the much more familiar "Dixie," about which Larry related this story: A commotion occurred out in the audience during one of his concerts in Cullowhee, but due to extremely bright stage lights, Larry had no clue about what was happening. He later learned that during his performance of "Dixie" that night, two very Southern ladies from Georgia arose from their seats and stood at attention during the entire song.

The dulcimer world was saddened in 2006 to lose their friend and mentor, **David Schnauffer** of Nashville. In tribute to Schnauffer, Larry played Patsy Cline's "Walkin' after Midnight," which he followed with an additional tribute to Bill Monroe by playing "Kentucky Waltz" and "Westphalia Waltz."

In "Greensleeves," Larry demonstrated how the song could start out in a traditional vein and wind up as a jig. Switching to a baritone dulcimer to play "Erie Canal," he told aspiring players about a few tips, tricks, and twists he has developed over the years. By simply watching John Denver perform on TV a few years ago, Conger worked out the beautiful "Annie's Song," which he followed with a tune named for his daughter, "Kelly's Fancy."

Larry concluded his program with beautiful hymns, which according to him, lend themselves very well to the dulcimer. His selections were "My Shepherd Will Supply My Need" and "Softly and Tenderly."

Our thanks go to Lee Cagle and to Carla and Max Maxwell, who have now hosted six such Memphis Dulcimer Gathering workshop/house concert weekends, and to Max again for donating the use of his classroom and office space for the events. Many thanks, also, to the other performers who participated in this most enjoyable house concert for and by dulcimer players.

For additional information, check these Web sites:

Lee Cagle, lee@leecagledulcimers.com and www.leecagledulcimers.com

Carla Maxwell, carla@memphis-dulcimer.com

Max Maxwell at Max Maxwell's Advanced Driving Schools, Inc, max@teacherlink.com and www.teacherlink.com

Larry Conger, congermusic@aol.com and www.larryconger.com

Jeff Hames, www.jeffhames.com

Dulcimers, www.memphis-dulcimer.com, www.fiddlersgreenmusicshop.com, and www.everythingdulcimer.com □

Dulcimer Classes in Memphis

~Lee Cagle

February brings new class offerings for the mountain Dulcimer:

CSI. This class will teach songs of crime and passion from early America. Come learn the stories and songs behind some of the most notorious crimes from the 1800s. All levels of players may participate, and loaner instruments will be available.

Another class will be held at Singleton Community Center, 7266 Third Road, on February 5, 12, and 26; 7-8:20 PM. The cost to Bartlett residents is \$65; to nonresidents, \$70.

For more information, contact me, Lee Cagle, at 901-372-0510 or at www.leecagledulcimers.com.

Editor's Note: A recent article in *The Commercial Appeal*, entitled "Laptop Music," featured Notsba member Lee Cagle, dulcimer player extraordinaire! Lee performs, offers classes for people at all skill levels, and participates in countless folk festivals and events. □

A New Book about Fiddlin' Charlie Bowman

~Bob Cox

I am delighted to announce the forthcoming publication of my new book, *Fiddlin' Charlie Bowman—An East Tennessee Old-Time Music Pioneer and His Musical Family*.

The approximately 250-page softback book contains 40 old photographs (some dating as far back as 1901) and is targeted for release in March. Folklorist Archie Green has honored me by writing an afterword to the work.

Feeling that Charlie's illustrious story has never been adequately portrayed in the media, I decided to correct that deficiency. I started work about five years ago and was fortunate to have the assistance of family members and friends who made numerous tangible and verbal contributions to the project. This venture has been one of the more gratifying projects I have ever endeavored to accomplish.

It will be published by the University of Tennessee Press, which is now accepting

advanced orders (\$24.95) on their Web site, <http://utpress.org/a/searchdetails.php?jobno=T01222>.

I hope you will find this publication both entertaining and educational. □

Items from the Charles Wolfe Collection Being Auctioned

~Patsy Weiler

A large amount of the private collection of the late Dr. Charles Wolfe, noted folklorist and author, has been donated to the Center for Popular Music at Middle Tennessee State University. However, due to duplication and other factors, some of Dr Wolfe's things, primarily old 78 records and a few gospel song books, are now being auctioned by Doug Seroff. This is in accordance with Dr. Wolfe's wishes.

Some old-time, Bluegrass, jazz, blues, and ethnic records (78s, 45s, and LPs) are available, as are some older issues of *BU* and *Muleskinner News*.

If you are interested in receiving a booklet of the items, currently for auction, write Mr. Seroff at the following address:

Doug Seroff
2422 Gideon Road
Greenbrier, TN 37073

Mary Dean Wolfe, Dr Wolfe's widow, noted that not all the items included in this auction belonged to Dr. Wolfe. Also, she is not certain that the items in the auction that belonged to her late husband are so indicated. You will need to address any questions concerning auction items directly to Mr. Seroff.

The auction ends on March 7. □

New Notsba Members

This month, we extend a warm welcome to seven new members, several of whom have long been good friends to Notsba:

Jim Lawrence and his daughter
Jewelina Lawrence
Steven Overby
Drew Peacock
Jeff and Sharon Richards
Todd Wright

We thank you all for joining us and for supporting old-time music. We hope you will be active members and will participate in our jams, our performances, and our festival, Breakin' Up Winter. □

Notsba's First Renewing Member!

We are delighted to recognize the *FIRST* member of Notsba to renew her membership (drum roll and trumpets blaring)!

Betty Westmoreland

Way to go Betty! □

Directions to the Jams at Buchanan Log House

From more or less the center of Nashville, take I-40 East. From I-40 East, take the Donelson Pike Exit (Exit 216C), and merge onto Donelson Pike. Go about 0.4 mile on Donelson Pike, and turn right onto Elm Hill Pike.

Go 0.5 mile on Elm Hill Pike to the Buchanan Log House, on the left at 2910 Elm Hill Pike. □

Direction to the Jams at Two Rivers Mansion

From the south or east of Nashville, take I-40 East to Briley Parkway North.

Go about 3.6 miles on Briley Parkway and take the Two Rivers Parkway Exit. (Expect delays. This area of Briley Parkway is under construction.) Follow Two Rivers Parkway East for about 0.7 mile to McGavock Pike, and turn left (north).

Go about 0.4 mile on McGavock Pike, past McGavock High School, to Two Rivers Mansion at 3130 McGavock Pike. It's the second drive on the left past the high school. A large sign and two stone pillars mark the entrance.

From I-65 North, take Briley Parkway East for 5 or 6 miles. (Expect delays. This area of Briley Parkway is under construction.) Exit at Two Rivers Parkway. Then follow the directions given above. □

Festivals & Contests

TENNESSEE

Breakin' Up Winter

Held at Cedars of Lebanon State Park near Lebanon, March 2-4. This festival is strictly old-time and is dedicated to jamming and education. For more information, go to www.nashvilleoldtime.org. □

33rd Annual Old-Time State of Tennessee Fiddlers' Championships

Held at Rossvie High School near Clarksville, March 23 and 24. This event is first of the year that includes contests for fiddle, old-time banjo, and old-time string band.

For more information, call Tad Bourne (931-552-6149), or go to www.tnfiddlers.com. □

Editorial: Please Enter a Contest!

~Phil Sparks

Last weekend, I went back to my hometown, Murray, Kentucky, where I happened to meet some childhood friends. They informed me that *Bill Parker has returned to western Kentucky!*

When I was 15 or so, Bill Parker, a local dentist, took me under his wing and taught me the fundamentals of clawhammer banjo. He was not only an accomplished old-time banjo picker, he was one of the kindest people I've ever known. He and his wife Mary Nell invited me and several of my picker buddies to their home time and again. It was one of the brightest spots of my youth.

But that's not the point. The point is that Bill insisted that I enter contests! He believed that every banjo picker (as well as other pickers) should have a couple of contest tunes and should use them to spread the word. To that end, he taught me to play "Under the Double Eagle." Before I could master the tune, Bill moved off to Michigan, and we eventually lost track of each other.

Last November, I entered the first old-time banjo contest ever held in Murray, and I played "Under the Double Eagle." Backing me was John Darnall, one of my childhood picker buddies. I wanted to say "This one's for Bill Parker," but they told us to give nothing more than the tune's title due to "blind judging." It's probably just as well since I lost my nerve and messed the tune up anyway.

Anywho, the point is that it's every picker's responsibility to enter contests. Why? We all enjoy attending the contests and jamming, but unless we enter, we might as well be termites eating away at the contest's foundation. Let's face it, no contestants, no contest!

I know, you're thinking, "What me, enter a contest? I'll never win anything." Well, winning something is not the point. I've been entering contests for several years now, and about the only time I win anything is when only three people enter and I take third. I do it because Bill Parker told me to and because it makes me try harder, not to achieve victory but to avoid making a fool of myself (which I usually do anyway).

I figure it's my job to make the other guys and gals look good. The worst thing about people like Tyler Andal and Bill Jones is that they make it look so easy. When the audience sees me struggle, maybe they can appreciate what Tyler and Bill have accomplished.

Here's my challenge: If you've never entered a contest, enter one this year. It doesn't have to be at a big event like Clarksville or Uncle Dave's Days. It could be someplace quiet like Adams or Dickson. Whatever you do, don't worry about winning. Just try to make it through your two little tunes. No matter how well you do (or don't do) you will have done your duty for old-time music (and it might turn out to be fun). □

Hosts Needed for 2007 4th-Sunday Jams

Please contact Darlyne Kent at 615-868-9951 or at dkent@davidsonacademy.com to schedule your home for a 2007 4th-Sunday Jam. The months of July, August, and October are still open. □

A Penny Learned: Tune You Fiddle . . . Precisely?

~Phil Sparks

Gretchen Priest-May, perhaps the best and best-known fiddle teacher in Nashville, once said that when she has guitar back-up, she thinks the fiddle sounds better if the G and D strings are a little flat, the A string is right at 440, and the E string is a little sharp.

John Darnall, a friend, a classical violist, and a longtime source of excellent practical advice says that some violinists tune each string a little sharp in the belief that it makes the violin sound a bit brighter.

It may well be that precise tuning is not the best tuning. □

Please Contribute to Your Newsletter!

If you have information or an article you want to submit, or if you have ideas for improving the newsletter, 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.

The submission deadline for March's newsletter is Sunday, February 25. □

General Contact Information for The Nashville Old-Time String Band Association:

E-mails for All Members

friends@nashvilleoldtime.org

Jim Hornsby, President

friends@nashvilleoldtime.org

615-650-2328

Ed Gregory, Web Master

edgregory@comcast.net

615-889-5566

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 Sparks, the editor of this newsletter at:

kpsparks@msn.com

or

615-797-4356

or

2020 Claylick Road

White Bluff, TN 37187 □

Classified Ads

STRING BAND MUSICIANS FOR HIRE

Notsba members are willing to perform for the public for a small fee. All of our earnings go to the organization, none to the pickers. If you know of someone who might make use of our services, contact Don Kent at www.nashvilleoldtime.org, or call him at 615-868-9951. □

WANTED, AN UPRIGHT BASS, WILL BORROW, RENT, OR BUY

I am looking for a ¾-size upright bass. I would like to learn how to play the instrument, but I can't find one to rent. If you have one sitting around unused, would you consider lending it to me for a few months? I'd like to borrow and return it or rent it or even buy it. I'm open to any low-cost idea.

Call Ray Mathes at 615/896-2609. □