



A Publication
of Your
Nashville
Old-Time
String Band
Association

ASSOCIATION
EVENTS

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

2nd Thursday Jam
June 8
Regular Jam
6:30 to 8:30 PM
Buchanan
Log House
♫

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

4th-Sunday Jam
June 25
2 to 5 PM
Hosted by
Martin and Beth
Fisher

The Old-Time Times

JUNE 2006

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A Message from Our President

~Don K.

Notsba has certainly covered a lot of ground during the past year. Under Ed Gregory's leadership the previous year, we filed our Charter, and Ed laid the groundwork for our application of 501(c)(3) status. Notsba's 501(c)(3) application was submitted and approved during the winter months.

We relocated our jam site from a local high school to Two Rivers Mansion and Buchanan Log House. Both of these are delightful historic venues for playing old-time music. Along with the new venues, we have enjoyed seeing over two dozen new visitors at our jams, and we have increased the public jam time from three times a month previously, to four times a month now. As a group, we have enjoyed seeing and playing music with some old friends that we have not seen for a while.

Notsba played at approximately 12 different events around Nashville during the past year. These events included crowds numbering from a few dozen to several hundred.

Notsba is no different from other volunteer associations. We local folks have the pleasure of seeing many of our friends from several states each year at Breakin' Up Winter. Sharing traditional music in these settings would not be possible without the participation, preparation, help, and involvement of many, some of whom have pitched in and helped make BUW a success for many years. These participants include musicians and nonmusicians. I would like to additionally extend my personal appreciation to each volunteer who participated at BUW 11, many of whom were recognized in the March newsletter.

Although numerous friends have assisted with our projects, some volunteers were particularly noteworthy. Pam and Bob Hightower of Maryville volunteered to help with any assigned tasks at BUW 11. In a meeting with our caterer following the event, Marcia, owner and chef of Mad Platter, made mention of the help offered her by Bob and Pam as she and her staff were setting up. "This early assistance and friendly, helpful attitude," Marcia said, "helped set the positive atmosphere that continued through the entire weekend."

While several examples could be mentioned, another one that comes to mind is that set by Phil and Kitty Sparks. Phil and Kitty were involved in various tasks, such as arriving early to set out signs, and taking stations at the registration table for the contra dance. For years, Phil has been one of our most active volunteers and has been willing to take on any task that needed attention—in addition to the major project of editing our newsletter.

Bill and Doris Fisher have been a vital part of BUW since the beginning. This year was no exception. They provided supper for all who attended Thursday evening's jam, and they helped arrange the hospitality table.

Randy and Patsy Weiler, once again, helped organize the pot-luck dinner on Friday evening.

While we were in Dahlongega recently, one jammer had great things to say about our Web site, thanks to the volunteer efforts of Ed Gregory.

Additionally, Carl Myers has served faithfully every year at the registration table at BUW.

Lilly Hsu is taking care of many of our administrative matters, Ron Whitlow is responsible for Notsba memberships, and Martin Fisher has recently accepted a new role of leadership within the organization.

Looking ahead, Jim Hornsby will become the president of Notsba in July. I would like to welcome and thank Jim in advance for his willingness to move our old-time music program yet another step forward.

Finally, Mary Lou Durham and Pat Gill will spearhead the BUW 12 project for next year.

For our local folks in particular, I am asking you to consider becoming more involved in our Notsba functions: attending jams, participating in events, and taking on a role in BUW 12. For those folks who do not live near our area, anytime you are passing through Nashville, be sure to stop by on the first, second, or third Thursday, and jam with us.

By working together, we can get things done, and have a really great time. □

Editor's Note: Don Kent has worked his heart out for Notsba. Indeed, it is hard to imagine that this organization could exist without

Don—and Darlyne, his incredibly patient and supportive wife. We who love Notsba and old-time music salute them both. □

More on the Pegram Jam

~Julie Mavity-Hudson

Just thought you all might like to hear a little more about how the Pegram Jams got started.

Back in 2001, Jim Wood decided that his students should play for a dance, so he assigned Eddy Hudson to contact the students and set it up. Eddy called the students and scheduled a first rehearsal, which was held at the home of Barry Jones.

Quite a few of them showed up. We passed around a piece of paper, and each person wrote down his or her e-mail address. As I recall, everyone there had e-mail, and Kirk volunteered to start an e-mail list, which is still in existence and is the one used to announce the Tuesday jams.

Kirk also offered to host the next rehearsal. Jim Wood made out a complicated set of medleys for us to play at the dance, most with three tunes, which included multiple key changes in almost every medley. (This is when I learned to change keys fast while playing clawhammer banjo!) We met at Kirk's house every week until the dance and did a fine job when the time came.

Kirk then volunteered to continue having jams at his house, and history was made. There have been a few times, especially during the first year or two, when Kirk was out of town. Most of those times, we met either at our house or at Ron and Diane Ault's. It's been a lot of fun. We have enjoyed it, and we truly appreciate all that Kirk has done for old-time music. □

A New On-Line Banjo Magazine

~Agene Parsons

Silver Strings is a new on-line banjo magazine available in PDF format. Is it is aimed at folks who are taking up the banjo later in life, and it deals with old-time as well as Bluegrass. Check it out!

You can subscribe by simply e-mailing Angie Sumpter (angiesumpter@aol.com) and asking to be put on her subscription list. It's

free. The current issue can be viewed at:
www.angiesbanjo.com/E_zine_Files/Subscribe-Ezine/Subscription.htm. □

Oaklands Historic Home Victorian Fair

~Jim Hornsby

Through the recommendation of our good friend Rebekah Weiler, Notsba was invited to perform at the Oaklands Historic Home in Murfreesboro on Saturday, April 1, for their annual Victorian Fair. In keeping with the history of the home and the area, the event is Civil War-oriented. On this picture-perfect spring day, the grounds of the beautiful mansion were filled with authentically costumed artisans, musicians, soldiers, Southern gentlemen, and hoop-skirted belles. President Lincoln was there, looking like he had just stepped off a five-dollar bill and, I might add, remarkably fit for a man his age.

Dennis Jungman, executive director at Oaklands, Mary Beth Nevilles, and the staff were especially gracious. They were busy keeping the event running smoothly, and we appreciate the time they took to welcome us and attend to our needs.

Mary Lou Durham, Martin Fisher, and I initially thought we would be carrying the Notsba banner by ourselves, but we were delighted when Rebekah Weiler, Drew Fedak, and Mike Baugh joined us. Don and Darlyne Kent wanted to be with us, but they had volunteered to work at Buchanan Log House that day.

A special thanks goes to the Rutherford County Stumblers—Evan, Christian, Tiffany, both Brians, Alvin, and Jason—who, despite a scheduled performance that night, came to Oaklands to play with us. Incidentally, if you haven't heard this talented old-time band play, you owe yourselves the treat next time they perform.

We had a great location in a shady spot between the mansion and the festivities on the grounds. We played all day, with some of us moving occasionally to play for the cake walks (a truly fun thing to do). The crowd enjoyed the music, and some brought up lawn chairs to sit and listen. We were inspired by the enthusiastic applause and "yee-haws."

Other bands and performers who were playing at various spots around the grounds occasionally stopped by to join us, and we were also joined by a number of the reenactment soldiers, wearing both blue and gray and playing a variety of instruments. It was a fine old old-time time.

Thanks to Don for making the business arrangements for the performance, and thanks again to everyone who performed and supported the performance. The event organizers were extremely complimentary and invited us back next year. I can't wait. □

Notsba to Play for Zoo Membership Events

~Don Kent

The 2006 installment of Old-Time Tunes at the Zoo is underway. We will be playing for the zoo's "Membership Nights."

We have already performed once at the Zoo, and two more performances are scheduled. The next appearance will be on Saturday, June 10, and another will follow on Saturday, August 5.

The Membership Nights provide special activities for zoo members, and about 1000 to 1500 folks are expected per night.

We will be playing outside "in the round" on a fairly flat grassy area behind the Croft building. Adjacent to our playing area are sidewalks, so we could have some visitors either strolling by or coming up close to hear some old-time music.

Our performing times are 5:50 to 6:30 and 6:45 to 7:30.

The Zoo entrance is on Nolensville Road. After taking the driveway into the parking area, look for our location on the left (south) side of the parking area near two sets of trees that sit on either side of a walkway.

If we could have about 10 to 12 players, that would be great. More would be better. Please join us at the Zoo if you can. If there are any questions, please let me hear from you. □

A New Old-Time Radio Program

~Danna Stamper

Saturday from noon until 2, you can tune in to "From the Roots," a radio program (via your computer, of course) from Appalshop's

radio station, WMMT. They play all old-time music. Remember, they're on Eastern Standard Time. You might want to check out their Web site first (www.appalshop.org). □

Gene Bush with James and Rachel Bryan

~Tim Roberts

Here's a show you won't want to miss. On June 24 at the Station Inn, Gene Bush will be performing with special guests James and Rachel Bryan and also Norman and Nancy Blake. Also appearing will be the Fedora Brothers Geno and Xenon. □

The Jam Session II

~Jim Lawrence

Of all the music genres, old-time and Bluegrass are the most open to jamming. Even down home country music usually involves only a couple of good ol' people being invited over to pick, and it's not generally done in public. If you examine the various advertisements for Bluegrass festivals (all family events), somewhere you will find the note: "Jamming welcome." This note can be misleading to a novice or uninitiated fan. A great percentage of the time, it means "Bring your own group, and play in the campground or parking lot." It definitely does not mean "Bring your instrument and jump in." You may be invited to join in—if someone in the group knows you and needs your ability with a certain instrument. Very rarely do Bluegrass jams include a mass jam where everyone is welcome.

Old-time music is the most adaptive to mass or "everybody" jams, but there is a protocol here too. Dave Cannon has written previously about these protocols. I will only expound generally on his work and make a couple of additions.

Old-time music has always been a friendly form, for both audience and musicians. While it can have a written form, most musicians follow their own or their club's renditions, but everyone is welcome to join in. Quite a few of the real old-time musicians don't let music get in the way of their playing. This can cause some problems with our modern jam sessions because someone's rendition of a certain tune

may clash with what is being done by the group. Dave's piece on jam sessions listed some rules for jams. Some I may repeat so bear with me.

1. Listen to what the players are doing. Try to fit in.
2. Don't jump in until you are sure you are welcome.
3. If you are not welcome, don't try to start your own jam right next to the others.
4. Don't try to jam with the better musicians unless you think you can run with them.
5. Only one bass to a jam. Two don't mix. You can, however, alternate.
6. Stay within the old-time music genre. No Bluegrass, no country, no Celtic, no old-time tunes not known by the group. (Slow jams are for such tunes.)
7. Even in old-time, you may notice a small knot of players off to one side. They are there because they want to play together for whatever reason. You probably are not welcome to jump in.
8. Don't get sidetracked in a discussion with someone about anything other than the session. No one wants to hear about your good guitar deal or some recent adventure.
9. If you don't know the tune, don't play. Listen and learn it.
10. Remember, others are there to play. Don't make them wait while you try to learn a tune or part. Do this after the jam is over.

EXAMPLE: At Breakin' Up Winter this year, Mike Seeger and Roland White were in the lodge for a mass jam, and I enjoyed being a part of it.

After the session was over, Mike said he and Roland were going to do a few numbers together as something like a little show. I was the only bass player in there at the time. I didn't know Mike personally, but I had played on several occasions with Roland and his group. I went quietly over to Mike and Roland and asked if they wanted someone on bass.

Roland immediately said yes and Mike, on Roland's acceptance of me, agreed. I would never have jumped in if they had not welcomed me in advance. In addition, by being quiet and asking, I did not put them on

the spot in public should they have not needed me.

SIGNS OF A JAM IN TROUBLE:

Here's what can happen when someone has interjected themselves into the group and is not fitting in.

- Suddenly, the original jammers start doing something other than playing.
- There is a long, uneasy silence.
- Things come up that one or more musicians have to go and do when five minutes ago they were having fun playing.
- Someone not initially involved in the jam is given the lead, and the original musicians start to fade away.

Remember, jamming is like other things in life—You can spoil the mood. □

Editor's Note: Jim Lawrence has been a musician for about fifty years. He learned guitar in order to play with his grandfather, a fiddler, and an uncle, George Gwyn, who played clawhammer banjo. Jim has been involved in folk, Bluegrass, and commercial country, as well as old-time. He has been working with his youngest daughter, Jewelia, who is an accomplished old-time, Celtic, and Jazz fiddler in her own right. □

A Report from Sam McCracken Days

~Patsy Weiler

The skies darkened, the wind howled, the tents lifted, the clouds boiled, the thunder roared, the lightning crackled, the rain poured, the hail pelted, and yet the contest . . . rolled on.

Anyone who left early from Sam McCracken Days at Lester, Alabama, missed a dramatic finish to the third annual event that is staged to raise funds for the athletic department at West Limestone High School.

Keeping a watchful eye on the gathering storm, organizers had seen a series of dark clouds gather only to drop a few sprinkles and blow on through. Just before dark, Mother Nature decided she wasn't going to miss the music in this north Alabama community and made quite a dramatic entrance—right in the middle of the Bluegrass band competition—by zapping an electric transformer, one hanging on a pole near the stage, with a powerful

lightening strike. For a split second, the sky exploded in a blaze of blinding blue and white light. Rob Percy's goatee curled up like a window shade, and the stage musicians thought for a second that their acoustic instruments had become electric. (Well, two out of these three events actually did happen.)

After a brief delay, scurrying festival organizers had the sound up and the contest running again in the school's old gym and auditorium building. Outside, waves of storms continued to roll through, with the school getting a loud pelting of hail right in the middle of one of the fiddle contests.

Although the contestants were damp and tired, good humor was the rule of the night. One contestant joked that he felt like he was in a musician's storm shelter and expected the Red Cross to show up any minute with cots and hot soup. Another one laughed that if FEMA showed up, he would make a run for it.

Delmer Holland and The Blue Creek Ramblers, with Rebekah Weiler on old-time banjo, took first place honors in the Old-Time String Band Competition, Rebekah took third in Old-Time Banjo, and Delmer took third in Senior Fiddle.

Other familiar Tennessee folks who captured a top spot included Maddie and Marsha Denton, Thomas Maupin, Rob Percy and Josh Philpott. Another young Tennessee fiddler who was there and playing well was Greer Kimbell. □

New CD Released by Delmer Holland and The Blue Creek Ramblers

~Patsy Weiler

Delmer Holland and The Blue Creek Ramblers, with Notsba member Rebekah Weiler playing banjo, released their second CD. Titled *Ain't Dead Yet*, the project includes 12 lively tunes that bring to mind the music from lantern-lit barn dances and church pie suppers. □

Blue Creek Ramblers to play at MountainFest in Gatlinburg

Rebekah Weiler will be going with Delmer Holland and The Blue Creek Ramblers to East Tennessee on Thursday, June 8, to the play on

the Blue Plate Special show at WDVX (89.9 FM), the public radio station in Knoxville.

The noontime (EST) show is live and done before an audience. It can be heard on the radio's Web site at www.wdvx.com/main.html.

The band will then be performing Friday and Saturday, June 9 and 10, at the MountainFest celebration on River Road in Gatlinburg. This is a new event that will kick off the summer season of music and special events planned for the scenic town near the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Two stages of entertainment will be featured along with crafts, food, and the Mountain Strings Competition, a two-hour Saturday morning music contest in guitar, banjo, and fiddle. For more information, go to their Web site, www.gatlinburg-tennessee.com/press/news_detail.html?news_id=33. □

A New Web Site for Old-Time Music

Chris Clark, an avid old-time music fan in California and a member of the Monroe Avenue String Band, has started the Old-Time Cafe Web site. It is full of good information. <http://oldtimecafe.com>. □

New Notsba Members

We extend a warm welcome to two new members:

Laura Blankenship
Anne Williams

We thank you both for joining us and for supporting old-time music. □

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, and exit at Two Rivers Parkway. Then follow the directions given above. □

Directions to the 4th-Sunday Jam

June's 4th-Sunday Jam will be hosted by Beth and Martin Fisher. To reach their home from more or less the center of Nashville, follow I-65 South to the Harding Place Exit. At the bottom of the ramp, turn left (east), and go several blocks to Nolensville Pike.

Turn right (south) on Nolensville Pike, and immediately move into the far left lane. Take the first road to the left, Wallace Road.

Go about two blocks to Foley Drive and turn right (south). Beth and Martin live at 4816 Foley Drive. Their mailbox is marked with a large "M." □

EVENTS

TENNESSEE MountainFest

Held in Gatlinburg on Friday and Saturday, June 9-10. For more information, go to www.gatlinburg-tennessee.com/press. □

Arthur Smith, Robert Spicer Memorial Fiddlers' Contest

Held in Dickson on Saturday, June 10, at

Dickson Middle School, 401 East College Street. For more information, call 615-446-1087 or go to www.dicksonfiddlers.com. □

Smithville Fiddlers' Jamboree and Crafts Festival

Held on the square in Smithville on Friday and Saturday, June 30 and July 1. For more information, call 615-597-8500 or go to www.smithvilletn.com/jamboree/2006.htm. □

NORTH CAROLINA

Mt Airy Bluegrass and Old-Time Fiddlers' Convention

Held at the Veterans' Memorial Park in Mt Airy on Friday and Saturday, June 2-3. This festival is one of the two major old-time events of the year. Try to be there several days early. For more information, call 800-286-6193 or go to www.mtairyfiddlersconvention.com. □

KENTUCKY

Seedtime on the Cumberland

Held in Whitesburg on Friday and Saturday, June 9-10. For more information, call 606-633-0108 or go to www.appalshop.org/seedtime. □

VIRGINIA

Wayne Henderson Music Festival and Guitar Competition

Held at the Grayson Highlands State Park in Wilson on Saturday, June 17. For more information, go to www.waynehenderson.org. □

Grayson County Old-Time and Bluegrass Fiddlers' Convention

Held in Elk Creek on Friday, June 23, beginning at 5 PM. For more information call Jerry Testerman at 276-655-4740. □

MISSOURI

Old-Time Music

Ozark Heritage Festival

Held in downtown West Plains, Friday through Sunday, June 16-18. For more information, go to www.oldtimemusic.org. □

IDAHO

National Old-Time Fiddlers' Contest

Held in Weiser, Monday, June 19, through Saturday, June 24. Believe it or not, this is one of the nation's most popular fiddle contests. If you go, you may run into Ashley and Fred Sullivan from the Nashville area. For more information, call 800-437-1280 or go to www.fiddlecontest.com. □

Hosts for 2006 4th-Sunday Jams

We now have hosts for all of the 4th-Sunday Jams to be held in 2006. Darlyne will soon be after us to sign up for 2007. □

A Penny Learned

According to Harry Sparks, Phil's brother, the finest banjo tone rings are made of "bell bronze," an alloy of 3, 4, or 5 parts of copper to 1 part of tin, the same alloy used to make fine bells. Most other types of bronze, the US penny for example, have some zinc in the mixture. □

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 or a book, 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. □

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

E-mails for All Members

friends@nashvilleoldtime.org

Don Kent, President

615-868-9951

Shamrock1@mindspring.com

Ed Gregory, Web Master

615-889-5566

edgregory@comcast.net

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

The *submission deadline for July's newsletter* is *Tuesday, June 27.* □

1995 Taylor 810 BR, Brazilian Rosewood, Original owner must sell, \$2250.

This guitar is not in collector's condition, but she's certainly worthy of a collector's attention. She has not spent her life in a case. She's played countless festivals and all-night jams, bringing home her share of dings and scratches.

Without doubt, she's a singer's guitar and has been played frequently, boldly, and lovingly. Her voice is smooth and rich, and she plays like a dream all the way up the neck. She gained volume from being played, and her lovely sustain supports the female voice particularly well in a solo environment. She's won many singing contests for me over the years.

I bought this baby new at the Rock Block in 1995 for \$2000. A new 810 now runs over \$3000 with Indian rosewood. Brazilian rosewood could cost an additional grand, if they can get it. The difference in the quality of the sound between the Brazilian and Indian rosewoods is significant.

It comes with its original case (deep fuchsia interior), which has some wear.

If you are interested in learning more about this guitar, please e-mail me, Susie Coleman, at susieco@comcast.net or call me at 615-662-5577 (Pegram, Tennessee). □

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. □

FINE GUITAR FOR SALE