



A Publication of Your  
Nashville Old-Time  
String Band Association  
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## ASSOCIATION EVENTS

1<sup>st</sup>-Thursday Jam  
March 1

Slow & Regular Jam  
6:30 to 8:30 PM  
Cedar Forest Lodge  
Cedars of Lebanon



2<sup>nd</sup>-Thursday Jam  
March 8

Regular Jam  
6:30 to 8:30 PM  
Buchanan  
Log House



3<sup>rd</sup>-Thursday Jam  
March 15

Slow & Regular Jam  
**With Evan Johnson**  
6:30 to 8:30 PM  
Two Rivers  
Mansion



4<sup>th</sup>-Thursday Jam  
March 22

Performance Group  
Rehearsal  
& Singing  
6:30 to 8:30 PM  
Buchanan Log House



4<sup>th</sup>-Sunday Jam  
March 25

2 to 5 PM  
Hosted By  
Ray and Ginny  
Mathes

# The Old-Time Times

MARCH 2007

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***The submission deadline for April's newsletter is Tuesday, March 27.*** □

## Breakin' Up Winter Slated for the First Weekend in March

Breakin' Up Winter '07, Notsba's own old-time music festival, will be held Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, March 2, 3, and 4. A few folks will show up as early as Thursday, March 1.

The festival takes place at Cedars of Lebanon State Park near Lebanon, Tennessee. The park is about 45 minutes east of Nashville. From Nashville, go about 30 miles on I-40 East. Take Exit 238 onto Highway 231 South, and go about 7 miles to the park entrance, on the left.

The festival includes lectures, concerts, and jams involving such old-time music celebrities as Clyde Davenport, Dan Gellert, Kerry Blech, Joyce and Jim Cauthen, Martin Fisher, George Gruhn, Roby Cogswell, Chrissy Davis-Camp, Rebecca Holbrook, and Timothy Reynolds. Organized slow jams will be held for beginners and anyone else who wants to pick up a new tune. There will also be "casual" jamming galore. (See the next article.)

John Hatton will have his incredible selection of old-time music CDs, DVDs, tapes, supplies, etc set up in the Cedar Forrest Lodge. John has things that are available no where else. Bring your shopping list.

Finally, the Mad Platter, one of Nashville's premiere restaurants, will cater this year's meals. Those of you who ate with us last year will remember how good their food is. □

## Casual Jamming at Breakin' Up Winter

If BUW is anything, it is a chance to jam. We will have scheduled slow jams, designed specifically for learners, and several other scheduled jams with our special guest musicians, but what about casual (unorganized) jamming?

We try to do everything we possibly can to facilitate casual jamming. This article will attempt to tell you where and when you can jam with your longtime or newfound friends.

(Continued on the next page)

**Indoor Jamming**

If the weather is chilly or wet or if you just prefer to pick indoors, here are all the possibilities we've been able to conjure up:

**1. The Cedar Forest Lodge**

This may be the best spot to jam. Jamming goes on there almost all the time! It will be open early and late. You can always have a casual jam there—unless an organized jam or singing is being held.

**2. The Assembly Hall**

It will be unlocked as long and as late as it is needed. The only time jamming won't be allowed there is when a lecture, demonstration, or performance is being held.

**4. The Group Lodge**

It has two sleeping rooms and a dining hall. Please don't jam in a sleeping room. Even if it's empty when you start, someone may want to come in and sack out. ***Jamming is allowed at all hours in the dining room***, as long as you don't interfere with people trying to eat.

**5. The Cabins**

We are encouraging those who occupy the cabins to open their cabins to jamming. We will ask them to post a notice near the registration table or to put up a sign at the cabin welcoming jammers.

**Outdoor Jamming (if the weather is good)**

If the weather is nice, here are just a few of the possibilities:

1. The picnic shelter near the Assembly Hall
2. The rock wall just outside the Assembly Hall
3. The area in front of and to the left of the Cedar Forest Lodge
4. The picnic shelters behind the Cedar Forest Lodge
5. The outdoor stage behind the Camp Store
6. The patio area just outside the Group Lodge
7. The parking lot by the swimming pool
8. The trailer camping area
9. Anyplace else you can stand, lean, or sit.

As more and more people discover Breakin' Up Winter, finding someone to jam with becomes easier, but finding a place to jam becomes more difficult, especially when bad weather interferes. Be patient, and above all, be creative. □

**Silent Auction Coming Together for Breakin' Up Winter XII**

~Ron Whitlow

This year's Silent Auction looks to be a lot of fun for everyone. As mentioned in the February newsletter, we will be holding the auction from Friday morning until Saturday afternoon. Tables will be set up to hold the merchandise, and signs will clearly mark the area as well as what each item is and a brief description of it.

So far, it looks like we'll have several instruments available, lessons from some of the top old-time teachers in the area, a number of accessories, such as stands, tuners, capos, etc, and some artwork and books related to Appalachia and old-time music.

This will be a great opportunity to buy some of the items you've wanted but just haven't come across or haven't seen at the right price. Each item will go to the highest bidder, but we anticipate that everything will sell below its market value.

Before you come to BUW, please look in your closet, trunk, or wherever, and if there's something related to music, please consider bringing it and donating it to Notsba. Notsba is a not-for-profit organization and depends on things like the silent auction to help provide funding for BUW. Consult your tax advisor to see if you can deduct the sales value of anything donated, and remember, the money is going to a great cause.

If you have anything to donate, bring it with you, and see Ron Whitlow or any of the Notsba staff once you get to BUW. You can reach Ron in advance at 615-373-7914 or by e-mailing [rnwhitlow@comcast.net](mailto:rnwhitlow@comcast.net).

For the information of you buyers, we will not, unfortunately, be able to process credit cards, but we will be happy to accept your cash or a check. □

## The President's Corner

~Jim Hornsby

One of the pleasures of writing this article each month is the opportunity to recognize and thank the people who go out of their way to contribute to the support of old-time music. This month I want to thank those who have volunteered to lead Notsba's 3<sup>rd</sup>-Thursday slow jams at Two Rivers Mansion. We have a great line-up of musicians scheduled through October:

March 15 — Evan Johnson  
 April 19 — Bill Jones  
 May 17 — Martin Cerjan, Mary Lou Durham, and Mike Baugh  
 June 21 — Roby Cogswell  
 July 19 — Drew Fedak  
 August 16 — Buddy Ingram  
 September 20 — Ron Ault  
 October 18 — Todd Wright

Other players have expressed an interest in participating as their schedules permit, and each guest leader is invited to bring along one or more accompanists, so there may be some surprise appearances along the way.

Our first two events have been great fun, and I look forward to March 15 when Evan Johnson will be our guest leader. Evan is an accomplished fiddle and fretless banjo player and is one of those versatile musicians who can play and sing at the same time. Picking with Evan is always a treat.

Having such talented players involved in the slow jams means a lot to all of us who are learning the music. Beyond getting to hear and play with them, it is an up-close opportunity to ask questions and pick up some tips on playing and progressing. A fun part of the learning experience is interacting with players who have different points of view, playing styles, and perspectives on old-time music.

My hope is that we can make this an ongoing part of our community education and extend the schedule into next year. I am grateful for all those who have volunteered so far, and I want to extend an open invitation to all our pickin' pals to lead a jam or encourage someone you admire to volunteer. Thanks to everyone for participating. □

## Wanted: New Committee Members for Breaking Up Winter '08

As BUW '07 is being held, 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 BUW or at one of our jams, or call him at 615-650-2328. □

## Mars Hill's Old-Time Music Week

~Pam Hightower

Our first exposure to Mars Hill College was a day trip my husband and I made to see if what they were offering during Old-Time Music Week was "for us." We met with the director of Conferences and Events, Loretta Shelton, and from the moment we met her, we were friends. Her enthusiasm for the college and Old-Time Music Week was contagious.

The college sits on a hill overlooking the mountains and valleys of North Carolina. The first week in June rings with the sound of old-time music. The campus is small and intimate, and it is easy to find your way around. All the meals are served in the cafeteria, and the food is plentiful and varied. There are classes offered each morning from 9 to 11:30 in just about any segment of old-time you are interested in (instrumental as well as vocal). There are afternoon workshops that last all week as well as one hour sessions (with several choices) that change with each day. As you walk around the campus, you will find musicians playing in large groups or intimate twosomes. Stopping and listening is irresistible.

The Appalachian Cultural Studies director, Cassie Robinson, wants to share what the college has available about the musical history of the area and has, in the past, held interesting and varied workshops. Part of the heritage is the extensive music collection that Lamar Bascom Lunsford willed to the college on his death.

There is instructor entertainment Monday through Wednesday evening, with a concert

on Thursday night by an outside group, and a student showcase Friday evening before the party that closes down the week.

On Saturday, there is a free all-day old-time gathering in Hot Springs, North Carolina, and if you want to spend the day there and spend another night at Mars Hill, you can do that for the extra cost of a room.

My husband Bob and I have made some very good friends at Mars Hill and feel fortunate that we have been able to enjoy what the college and the Old-Time Music Week have to offer. Each year, we look forward to seeing our old friends and making new ones.

An added incentive for us is that Mars Hill follows right on the heels of the Mt Airy festival, so we start out there and move on to Mars Hill to continue the old-time experience.

I can't recommend the place or the people more highly. If you decide to attend, look Bob and me up. We'd love to see you.

(Mars Hill Blue Ridge Old-Time Music Week will be held June 4 through 10. For more information, go to [www.mhc.edu/oldtimemusic](http://www.mhc.edu/oldtimemusic).) □

### **Erynn Marshall and Company to Perform in May**

~Phil Sparks

Erynn Marshall, a renowned old-time fiddler, will perform at a house concert in Pegram (two miles west of Nashville) on Thursday, May 17.

Erynn is a remarkable fiddler. She is from Canada and represents the best of Canada's fiddling tradition, but her first love is the music of Appalachia. She has traveled and lived extensively there, and has written a book on its people and the tunes she discovered during her travels.

She was friends with Art Stamper until he passed away, and I first heard her play in Morehead, Kentucky, where Art made one of his final appearances. Later I heard her play several times at Clifftop, the old-time music festival in West Virginia. Each time, I was enthralled by her lively and masterful style. Her CD, *Calico*, is certainly one of my five favorite CDs.

Appearing with Erynn will be Chris Coole (pronounced "cool") and Arnie Naiman. Both Chris and Arnie play banjo and guitar, and Chris is reputed to be the best old-time banjo player in all of Canada.

With this tour, Erynn, Chris, and Arnie will be celebrating the release of their second CD, *Meet Me in the Music*, a collection of mostly Kentucky tunes. (Chris and Arnie also play on *Calico*.)

The concert will be held at the home of Kirk Pickering and Susie Colman, hosts of the famous Pegram Jam. Admission will be \$15 person, and all of the proceeds will go to the artists. For directions to Kirk and Susie's, go to [www.peggramjam.com](http://www.peggramjam.com). □

### **Notsba's Web Site Offering Expanded Tune Samples**

~Ed Gregory

Notsba's Web site might not be the prettiest or the fanciest, but it surely is effective—and it's about to get a lot better for Notsba members eager to learn old-time string band tunes.

Our site, [www.nashvilleoldtime.org](http://www.nashvilleoldtime.org), remains the top site Google returns when you search for "old-time string band." If you search for sites containing all of those words, then out of 1.5 million results, our [www.nashvilleoldtime.org](http://www.nashvilleoldtime.org) comes out on top. If you search for sites containing that exact phrase, then out of 48,000 sites containing that exact phrase, we come out, you guessed it, on top.

While we can't go any higher in the Google rankings, we can still work to offer more and better services to old-time string band players and fans.

Thanks to the musical and technical skills of fiddler/guitarist Ray Mathes, we're unveiling a special "Tune Samples" section. Ray has been recording our jams and transcribing the tunes for his own learning purposes and is now ready to start sharing the results with all of us.

Ray's love for the music, his transcription skills, and some slick software give us tidy packages that include:

- Notation
- Chord charts
- MIDI files
- MP3 recordings
- Lyrics (when they are available)

These are tunes as Notsba plays them, not contest or Bluegrass versions. They are tunes that Notsba shares at jams on Thursday nights at either Two Rivers Mansion or the historic Buchanan Log house, and in our 4<sup>th</sup>-Sunday Jams. They are tunes that we play at periodic public performances as well.

The first two are samples. In the future, other tunes will be added in a special members-only section so that we can give an added Web site bonus to those who help us keep Notsba going through their membership fees.

So time's a-wastin'. Visit the top Web site for old-time string band music, and be sure to check that new "Tune Samples" section. □

### **Fiddlin' Charlie Bowman's Biography**

Bob Cox will soon release the biography of his great uncle, Fiddlin' Charlie Bowman.

This new book tells, for the first time, the story of Charlie Bowman, a musician from East Tennessee, who was a major influence on the distinctive fiddle style definitive of country music of the 1920s and 1930s. Charlie, along with three of his brothers and two of his daughters, were part of the Columbia Records "Johnson City Sessions" of 1928 and 1929.

This farmer-turned-musician was one of the pioneers who helped shape and develop a vital American musical genre. Bowman was acquainted with many musical luminaries of that colorful era, including the legendary Carter Family.

But this is not simply the biography of one man. Fiddlin' Charlie Bowman is the portrayal of a large colorful family, a close-knit mountain community, a geographic area, and a specific musical variety defined as old-time traditional Appalachian music.

This volume explores Bowman's musical life, his work with various bands (including

the Hill Billies, the first group to use that name to characterize old-time music), his years on the road touring, and his association with other performers. Beyond that, it chronicles the experiences of Bowman's large family left behind in Gray Station, Tennessee, and details the many hardships caused by his departure and prolonged absence.

Bob Cox provides an insider's perspective on an important but often overlooked musician. For his research, Bob drew on his family's records and memories. In addition to published books and articles, his resources included the family Bible, scrapbooks, diaries, photographs, and taped interviews with family members and friends.

Bob, a retired chemical engineer, is a history columnist with the Johnson City (Tennessee) Press, producing a weekly feature entitled "Yesteryear."

Paperback Edition, \$24.95

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LC 2006039177

Publication Date: 3/1/2007 □

### **Memphis Dulcimer Classes**

~Lee Cagle

Dulcimer classes at Singleton Community Center, 7266 Third Road, Bartlett, Tennessee, will continue in March with "Songs in Minor Keys for the Mountain Dulcimer." Class will meet March 5, 19, and 26 from 7 to 8:20 PM.

In April, we will work with "Songs in the Key of G." May's topic will be "Using Chords on the Mountain Dulcimer."

For more information, call me at 901-372-0510. □

### **Friends of Cedars Launch Their New Web Site**

Each year at Breakin' Up Winter, the Friends Of Cedars, volunteers in support of Cedars of Lebanon State Park, lead tours for those who attend BUW and help us find our way around the park. Now, Friends of Cedars has a Web site, [www.friendsofcedarsoflebanon.com](http://www.friendsofcedarsoflebanon.com). Check it out. It is continually being updated. □

## **An Interesting Web Site**

~Julie Mavity-Hudson

I ran across this site by accident: [www.mne.psu.edu/lamancusa/tunes.htm](http://www.mne.psu.edu/lamancusa/tunes.htm).

It provides the notation and sound for quite a few old-time tunes, as well as tunes from other genres. □

## **New Notsba Members**

This month, we extend a warm welcome to two new members:

Myra Gann  
Anthony Tyler

We thank you 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. □

## **Directions to the 4<sup>th</sup>-Sunday Jam**

March's 4<sup>th</sup>-Sunday Jam will be hosted by Ray and Ginny Mathes at their home in Murfreesboro.

From Nashville, take I-24 East (toward Chattanooga). About 2 miles past I-840, take Exit 76, Manson Pike (also "Medical Center Parkway"). Turn right at the top of the ramp. Travel 2.2 miles west to a stop sign. Turn left onto Beesley Road. Travel 1.2 miles south to Shores Road on the right. (That big subdivision on the left used to be "Old MacDonald's Farm.") Turn right onto Shores Road. Travel 0.5 mile west to **3521 Shores Road**. It's the blue house on the left. The house number is on the mailbox. For parking, the grass beside and behind the garage is car-friendly. If you lose your way, call Ray or Ginny at 896-2609. □

## **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](http://www.nashvilleoldtime.org). □

#### **33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Old-Time State of Tennessee Fiddlers' Championships**

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

For more information, call Tad Bourne at 931-552-6149, or go to [www.tnfiddlers.com](http://www.tnfiddlers.com). □

## Hosts Needed for 2007 4<sup>th</sup>-Sunday Jams

Please contact Darlyne Kent at 615-868-9951 or at [dkent@davidsonacademy.com](mailto:dkent@davidsonacademy.com) to schedule your home for a 2007 4<sup>th</sup>-Sunday Jam. The months of July and October are still open. □

## A Penny Learned: Attacking Hard Tunes

~Phil Sparks

Dave Edmundson, an accomplished fiddler from Ohio, once gave me this excellent advice: "If you are trying to learn a tune but find it too difficult, don't give up—simplify the tune. You'll find that a lot of notes can be taken out of a tune without destroying it."

I love to learn difficult tunes, but most of them end up simplified to some degree. For example, if a tune is in 2/4, it can have eight 16<sup>th</sup> notes per measure. More often than not, the final 16<sup>th</sup> note can be dropped without injuring the tune, and dropping that note makes the tune much easier to play.

Frequently, I find that the tune sounds better after I've cropped some of the notes.

(One of the many advantages of having a tune in tab or notation is that you can examine it carefully and try to figure out what, exactly, is making it impossible to play.) □

## 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 April's newsletter is Tuesday, March 27.* □

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

E-mails for All Members

[friends@nashvilleoldtime.org](mailto:friends@nashvilleoldtime.org)

Jim Hornsby, President

[friends@nashvilleoldtime.org](mailto:friends@nashvilleoldtime.org)

615-650-2328

Ed Gregory, Web Master

[edgregory@comcast.net](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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. □