



A Publication of Your
Nashville Old-Time
String Band Association

ASSOCIATION
EVENTS

1st Thursday Jam
November 2
Slow & Regular Jam
6:30 to 8:30 PM
Two Rivers
Mansion



2nd Thursday Jam
November 9
Regular Jam
6:30 to 8:30 PM
Buchanan
Log House



3rd Thursday Jam
November 16
Slow & Regular Jam
6:30 to 8:30 PM
Two Rivers
Mansion



4th Thursday
**Performance Group
Rehearsal**
November 24
6:30 to 8:30 PM
Buchanan Log House



4th-**Sunday Jam**
November 26
2 to 5 PM
Hosted By
Julie Mavity-Hudson
and
Eddie Hudson

The Old-Time Times

NOVEMBER 2006

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deadline for November's newsletter is Monday, November 27. □

Banjo and Fiddle Extraordinaire Dan Levenson to Present Nashville Workshops and Concert November 4-6

~Patsy Weiler

Americana performer and storyteller Dan Levenson will present three teaching workshops and a concert in Nashville, November 4-6, at the new Deering Banjo Showroom, 1903 Omohundro Court (off of Lebanon Road, near the VFW).

In addition, he will be unveiling his new Mel Bay music book, *Old-Time Festival Tunes for the Clawhammer Banjo*, which features more than 100 tunes. It includes basic and advanced tab, standard notation, and two performance CDs.

Banjo Newsletter magazine named Levenson one of the top 10 banjo players in America. *Fiddler Magazine's* Bob Buckingham described him as "an accomplished fiddler and one of the best clawhammer banjo players in the country," and a former workshop student said "He combines superb musicianship with the ability to teach what he knows in a way folks can understand and apply to their own playing."

"An Evening with Dan Levenson," a house concert held from 5:30 to 7:30 PM on Sunday, November 5, will combine old-time fiddle, Appalachian banjo, guitar, dance, and song in an entertaining format. A modern-day troubadour, Levenson has been touring for nearly two decades, delighting his audiences with his keen observations of life and his tales from the road, mixed with traditional Appalachian stories.

The evening concert will follow the old-time banjo workshop, which is slated from 2 to 4 PM on Sunday.

An old-time fiddle workshop will be taught from 7 to 9 PM on Saturday, November 4, and a special workshop, created by Levenson, called "Meet the Banjo," will be presented from 6 to 9 PM on Monday, November 6. No playing experience is necessary to attend this workshop, and a banjo will be provided for those who do not have one. Both clawhammer and Bluegrass banjo styles will be presented.

(Continued on page 2.)

The charge for the evening performance is \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door. To attend either of the two-hour old-time workshops, the fee is \$40, or you can attend both for \$75. The fee, including the use of a banjo, for Monday's three-hour event is \$50.

Checks for any event should be made out and mailed to Todd Wright, c/o Deering Banjo, PO Box 290007, Nashville, TN 37229-0007.

To find out more about Levenson, visit his Web site at <http://oldtimemusic.us>. For information on the Nashville events, e-mail Todd Wright at todd@deeringbanjos.com or call 1-800-332-2656. You can also contact Patsy Weiler at (615) 653-2069 or salt27@aol.com. □

The President's Corner

~Jim Hornsby

I am excited about the prospect of adding a new facet to our Thursday evening jams at the Two Rivers Mansion. I recently sent invitations to a number of talented Notsba members and supporters, asking that they join us on a rotating basis to lead a slow jam. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, and I am grateful that so many people have agreed to share their time.

Some of the more accomplished musicians in our group are, because of their impressive talents, in demand for performances, and that, combined with their family, job, and school obligations, means that we don't see them nearly as often as we would like. My thought is that by coordinating schedules, we can have a guest leader once each month without imposing too much on any one person.

The players I contacted are among the most talented old-time musicians around. They are experienced with various instruments, and you will have a chance to see a variety of instrumental and vocal styles and techniques. They are players who have inspired and influenced me since I first began playing, and I am confident that, whatever your skill level, you will benefit from an up-close opportunity to see and hear them in action.

What I have in mind is for the guest leaders to play a few tunes to demonstrate their technique, give a few tips on playing and progressing, break down a few tunes into parts to teach them to the group, and then just jam with us a bit. I think it will make for some fun and instructive evenings.

We will continue to have two slow jams at the Two Rivers Mansion each month. One will remain as it is now, but the other will have a guest leader.

We haven't worked out all the details for this new program yet, but more information will be published soon, and I hope that we will start the program by the first of next year.

I would appreciate your thoughts as to how we can make this type of jam, and all our jams, more productive and enjoyable. □

Fourth-Sunday Jams for 2007: An Appeal

~Phil Sparks

Friends, the time has come to sign up for our 2007 4th-Sunday Jams. In the past, we've had a hard time finding enough homes for eleven such jams. (No 4th-Sunday Jam is held in December.) Now, with all of our new members, it should be much easier.

Do I have what it takes to host a 4th-Sunday Jam?

All you need is a room large enough to hold 15 to 20 people and maybe a table to keep the snacks up off the floor.

Depending on what else is going on that particular weekend and how far out the host is, the jam may draw only 8 or 10 people. That's all we had at my house.

If the weather is good, we often play outside, but it's good to have some indoor space in reserve, just in case.

It's also nice if your neighbors are understanding, especially if you live in an apartment or duplex.

How do I sign up to host a 4th-Sunday Jam?

All you have to do is contact Darlyne Kent personally, by phone (615-868-9951), or by e-mail (dkent@davidsonacademy.com) and ask her which months are still open.

Anything Else?

When folks come to the 4th-Sunday jams, they bring along snacks or drinks or something else to eat during our break. The host usually supplies some munchies and soft drinks.

Try it, you'll like it!

4th-Sunday jams are even more fun than the regular Thursday jams, and they provide an excellent opportunity for each of us to make friends with the other members. □

A Report from the Tennessee Valley Old-Time Fiddler's Convention in Athens

~Bob White

It was a long, interesting day Saturday, October 7, at the fiddler's convention in Athens, Alabama. I was there at 8 AM to backup a ten-year-old fiddle student I've had for three months. There were about 16 ten-and-under contestants. Some had been playing for five years or more. At least two played intermediate level pieces. My student got through "Old Joe Clark" with some difficulty, but I was proud of him facing the challenge.

Next I entered the banjo contest as it had been a long time since I'd tried that. I had some trouble tuning my skin-head 1891 Fairbanks Imperial but got through my tune, "Last Chance," moderately well. Brett and Pan Riggs from Chapel Hill were two of the judges. Brett is one of the finest old-time banjo players I know. I was glad I relearned Hobart Smith's banjo only tune "Last Chance" with a special tuning, but it didn't impress the judges.

There was an extra good crop of banjo players this year, and Rebekah Weiler won, playing a rousing rendition of Kirk McGee's "Snow Drop."

I remember a young William Seeh Playing that tune great in the contest years ago, and he didn't even place. Anyone hear from William Seeh? Last I heard he was in med school somewhere.

Fellow bandmate Jim Holland placed 4th and Cole, his son, took 5th with "Mississippi Sawyer."

I wasn't sure about entering the classic fiddle contest as Cathy and Terra (my wife and daughter) were 40 miles west at a track meet, so I didn't have my favorite backup. Also, hearing that the TVFC added a rule of "no cross-tuning" (that's just wrong) confirmed my decision to skip the fiddle contest and conserve my energy and time, allowing me to jam with some old friends.

Dave Cannon was the only Nashville representative I saw. Where was everyone? A big treat was meeting Roy and Melissa Turentine's new baby Jossellen Sophia.

Senior contest fiddler Roy Crawford won the classic fiddler. Adam Hurt was 2nd, and he brought his whole band with him including Jarred Nutter. Marcia Denton, another non-old-time fiddler, took 5th.

That left the old-time band contest. Our band, the Wolves a Howlin', made a valiant effort to defend our title, but the competition was strong. We only changed our tune selection about a dozen times. I was plumb tuckered out, and my back hurt, but our band played well for both "Polecat Blues" and "Tennessee Mountain. Fox Chase." We made the cut from 10 to 5 and then came in 3rd behind Adam Hurt's band, Moonshine Madness, and Ricky Stone's band from Birmingham. 4th was Rob Percy's band, and Jim and Joyce Cauthen's band was 5th. I think the judges did better in this category although Moonshine Madness, while showing lots of virtuosity, didn't sound old-timey to my ears.

Cathy and I went over to the Dowel's for a bit. No party was held inside the house, but Tom Jackson hosted one out in the field with his funky home-built camper, complete with woodstove. Michael DeFosche played some great tunes for us.

A post mortem was made of the convention by us old fogies lamenting that there is not any real difference between the junior fiddling and classic fiddling categories anymore.

I thought Jarred Nutter was a bright future star in old-time fiddling, but he plays contest style too and played in the junior category.

The weather was near perfect, and there was a large crowd. There were so many booths that there wasn't much room for jams.

Another highlight for me was meeting senior fiddler Mr. Bud Meredith from Leitchfield, Kentucky, who played with Clayton McMichen and lots of other great musicians in the 30s. □

More on the Contests in Athens

~Patsy Weiler

Notsba's own Rebekah Weiler had never placed at all in Athens, but this year she won. Needless to say, she was thrilled.

Here are the other finalists: 2nd place, Charlie Hunter of Birmingham; 3rd place, Duncan Blair of Birmingham; 4th place, Jim Holland of Athens; and 5th place, Cole Holland of Athens.

Notsba's own Thomas Maupin won the buck dancing competition.

In all, five people from Murfreesboro won 1st place honors: Austin Tipton, Maddie Denton, Rebekah Weiler, Ken Tennpenny (harmonica), and Thomas Maupin. Both Marcia Denton and Rob Percy placed in other categories. A pretty good showing for the 'Boro! □

A Report from the First Annual Traditional Music Festival at Morehead, Kentucky

~Marynell Young

The Jaycee park is grassy, level, and surrounded by fall color. On one side is a creek. It's just a lovely setting. They have lots of space for camping. "Dry camping" is what I call it, no water or electricity, just nature and tunes to play. There were about 20 cars and trucks in the camping area.

Five bands entered the band contest. There were six fiddle contestants and five or six banjo contestants.

The weather was sunny and mild, a little windy about midday. It must have been about 65 degrees in the afternoon and 40 at night. If you come next year, bring the winter sleeping bag, long-sleeve shirts, and light jackets.

Several vendors were on site: Ratcliff Fiddles, Ed the banjo man, and another fiddle trader. Coffee, funnel cakes, and hamburgers were available. There was a jewelry vendor that was setting up as we were leaving.

All in all, it was a nice festival. Let's hope it grows with time. □

Fiddle Prodigy Tyler Andal Performs with Youth Orchestra

~Colleen Creamer

On October 24, the Murfreesboro Youth Orchestra (MYO) launched its new subscription series by hosting fiddle trailblazer Tyler Andal, in an event entitled "Prelude: Music of Land and Sea."

Andal, 18, who is a junior studying sound engineering at MTSU, performed three original pieces written by Jim Wood, five-time Tennessee Fiddle Champion.

"It's the first time I've performed solo with an orchestra. It's a lot different, but it's going to be cool," Andal said just before the concert. "It will be nice to have a section that big to play with because I am used to playing with a band that has five or six pieces."

Accompanying Tyler on guitar and banjo was his brother, Nic Andal.

The works, "The Stolen Child," based on a poem by Irish poet William Butler Yeats, "Cheyenne 1902," and "Periwinkles," were written specifically for Andal.

"They are rather showy for the fiddle. They let him incorporate some of his 'chop style,'" said MYO director Susan Mullen. "'Cheyenne 1902' is based on a dream that Jim had about his uncle who grew up in Wyoming. It's a beautiful, expansive piece that incorporates all these gorgeous waltz melodies. 'Periwinkles,' named after the Periwinkle Snail, is a fast, showy piece."

Mullen said the concert reflected not only Tennessee roots, but also that of the Scots/Irish element that strongly inhabits the Middle Tennessee region.

"Fiddle music is such a strong part of the culture down here, and Tyler is an up-and-coming fiddle prodigy." □

Invitation to Butterfly Gap CD Release Party

~Lee Cagle

Please join us on Sunday, November 19, from 4 to 6 PM, in celebrating the release of our CD, *The Water is Wide*, at a concert and reception hosted by Calvary Episcopal Church and The Episcopal Church Women.

The Calvary Episcopal Church is at 102 North Second Street in Memphis, Tennessee. Refreshments will be served. Proceeds from CD sales go to the Church Health Center. Featured artists include Lee Cagle, Betty Dawson, Steve Newman, and John Albertson.
□

Holiday Dulcimer Classes (Memphis Area)

~Lee Cagle

There will be TWO chances to take my Holiday Tunes for the Mountain Dulcimer class this year—one in Bartlett and one in Germantown. I hope you will be able to join me for one of them. Watch my Web site (www.leecagledulcimers.com) in November for a holiday gift to you of a tune you can listen to. You can also download the tab for this tune. If you have questions, call me at 901-372-0510.

Holiday Tunes for Mountain Dulcimer (Bartlett) will be held November 6, 13, 20, 27 (Mondays), 7 to 8 PM, at Singleton Community Center; 7266 Third Road, Bartlett. All levels of players are welcome. The cost is \$65 for Bartlett residents and \$70 for nonresidents.

Holiday Tunes for Mountain Dulcimer (Germantown) will be held November 7, 14, 21 (Tuesdays), 7 to 8:20 PM, at Union University (formerly Emmanuel Baptist Church), 2745 Hacks Cross Road. The cost is \$70. All levels of players are welcome.

For more information, contact me, Lee Cagle, 901-372-0510 or www.leecagle.dulcimers.com. □

Holiday Jam at Singleton Community Center (Memphis Area)

~Lee Cagle

If you missed the Summer Jam Sessions, now is the time to make up for it! All those who were there this summer can come back for more fun!

Join us for a Holiday Jam Session for all acoustic instruments at Singleton Community Center on Monday, December 4, 7 to 8:30 PM. We will be playing familiar traditional tunes as well as holiday favorites. Come and request your favorite song. Bring your friends! Listeners are welcome!

Singleton Community Center is located at 7266 Third Road in Bartlett. If you have questions, contact me, Lee Cagle, at 901-372-0510 or www.leecagledulcimers.com. □

Ken Waldman, Alaska's Fiddling Poet, to Appear at Nashville State

On Monday, November 6, at 2 PM and again at 6 PM, Ken Waldman will present two free performances at Nashville State Community College on White Bridge Road. Ken is a renowned old-time fiddler and poet.

The concerts and readings will be held in Room C-209 of the Clement Building, the northern most building on the campus. It faces White Bridge Road.

Mr. Waldman's performances are being coordinated by Randy Rudder, a Nashville State professor and the publisher of *The Country Music Reader*, a compilation of articles about musicians based in Nashville.

For more information about the concert, call Randy at 615-353-3483. To learn more about *The Country Music Reader*, go to www.countrymusicreader.com. □

Second CD Released with Music From the Little House Books

Arkansas Traveler, the second installment of a collection of CDs based on *Little House on the Prairie* will be released on the 14th of November. The release will be kicked off by a one-hour NPR Holiday Special program featuring interviews, readings, commentary, and approximately ten songs from the CD.

This CD includes all 18 songs referenced in *Little House on the Prairie*, the third and most popular book of the Little House series. In

print for over 74 years, the Little House books have become staples of American reading, describing one family's frontier life in the 1870s. Over 100 million readers have treasured these timeless books, and countless more have watched the long-running TV series.

Music is central to Wilder's stories, with 126 great American songs artfully embedded in them. Surprisingly, no professional recordings of this music have ever been available. The Pa's Fiddle Project was launched to give new voice to the unsung music of these beloved and classic books.

Some of the nation's finest musicians have been enlisted and invited to make the music of yesterday fresh, exciting, and vital for today's audiences, young and old. The album features performances by acoustic music soul singer John Cowan, Grammy winning banjo master Alison Brown, Western favorites Riders In The Sky, the talented Andrea Zonn (fiddler and band member with Vince Gill, James Taylor, and others), legendary bluegrass stalwart Mac Wiseman, progressive folk and bluegrass stylist Judith Edelman, Grand Ole Opry favorite Elizabeth Cook, and numerous others.

The songs heard on this CD range widely in style and perspective. "Roll on Silver Moon" was composed by a woman, which was unusual for that time and underscores its unique history. The Blair String Quartet provides the accompaniment. "Oh! California" is a setting of a little-known gold rush text from 1849 to the music of Stephen Foster's "Oh! Susanna." It suggests some of the ways in which women were impacted by important social events of that era. "The Devil's Dream" is performed in a heavenly and ethereal manner by bluegrass mandolinist Butch Baldassari and the late David Schnauffer, the great dulcimer virtuoso, in what turned out, tragically, to be his last recording. And who can resist chuckling along with Mac Wiseman as he chronicles the strange goings-on at "The Monkey's Wedding"?

The Arkansas Traveler follows on the success of *Happy Land: Musical Tributes to*

Laura Ingalls Wilder (released in 2005), a CD that contains all the conflict, humor, hope, and joy that have made the books so beloved.

Happy Land was recently honored with a place on the We the People Bookshelf, a program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. It was the first CD ever to be included in the NEH's highly prestigious program. Two thousand copies, along with other classic texts in American literature, will be sent free to libraries across the nation."

The Arkansas Traveler will also honor the 140th anniversary of the birth of Laura Ingalls Wilder, the 50th anniversary of her death, and the 75th anniversary of the first publication of a Little House book.

The recordings from The Pa's Fiddle Project are quickly becoming necessary companions to the Little House books. (Indeed, how can one read these books and not know the music that Wilder heard!) Beyond this, these are recordings of great American music by great American performers and are deeply satisfying for all lovers of American music, from childhood on.

For more information on *The Arkansas Traveler: Music from Little House on the Prairie* and *Happy Land: Musical Tribute to Laura Ingalls Wilder*, go to www.pasfiddle.com or contact Shari Lacy, GoodStuff PR Company, 615.525.5303. □

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. □

Directions to the 4th-Sunday Jam

November's 4th-Sunday Jam will be hosted by Julie Mavity-Hudson and Eddie Hudson from 2 until 5 PM, Sunday, November 26.

From Nashville, go west on I-24 (toward Clarksville and St. Louis). Take the New Hope Road Exit (Exit 31). At the bottom of the ramp, turn left.

Go through a 4-way stop with a flashing light (Clarksville Highway) and on to the next flashing light at a 2-way stop (Old Clarksville Pike).

Turn left onto Old Clarksville Pike, and then take the second road on the left, Park Lane.

Julie and Eddie live on Park Lane in the third house on the left. The house is back in the woods, so look for the number 1015 on their mailbox.

If you lose your way, call Eddie on his cell phone, 415-6931. □

auditorium, and there will be plenty of room for indoor jamming. For more information, call 800-651-1603 or go to www.tourmurray.com. □

Hosts Needed for 2007 4th-Sunday Jams

Please contact Darlyne Kent (615-868-9951 or dkent@davidsonacademy.com) to schedule your home for a 2007 4th-Sunday Jam. □

A Penny Learned: Rattlesnake Rattles and Fiddles

~Phil Sparks

As you may have noticed, I've been selling rattlesnake rattles of late. (They are all gone now.) Several people have asked me, "What's the big deal with deal with rattles and fiddles?" Well, here it is:

For some reason, I've always known that fiddlers often put rattles in their fiddles. I just figured it was tied to some sort of superstition, and maybe for some fiddlers, it was.

Then I purchased Alan Jabbour's VCR instruction tape and happened upon the place where he says he put a rattle in his fiddle because the old-timers did it—though he doesn't know why. That set me on the path of discovery, and here's what I learned. I'll go from least logical reason to the most logical.

1. It keeps the devil out. That one is pure superstition.
2. It makes the fiddle sound "sweeter." I'm no acoustical engineer, but I just don't buy that one. If a rattle would do that, so would a little wad of paper or some other such item, and a rattle is the ONLY thing people ever put in a fiddle.

3. It keeps spiders from moving in and weaving their webs. That one makes sense, but a little piece of wood or wire or some such object would have the same effect. Again rattles are the only objects commonly placed inside fiddles.

4. It keeps mice out. Folks, here's the winner. I read a short article in *Fiddler Magazine* where the author said an old-timer actually told him that was the reason. The theory holds that the rattle carries enough scent of the snake to ward off a mouse looking

EVENTS

KENTUCKY

First Annual Murray, Kentucky, Regional Fiddle Festival

Held in Lovett Auditorium on the campus of Murray State University in Murray, Friday and Saturday, November 3 and 4.

The contests will be held in a huge

for a safe, cozy spot to build a nest.

OK, you keep your fiddle in a nice, mouseproof case, and you don't have any mice in your house anyway. You don't need a rattle. Neither does Alan Jabbour. These days, it's only a tradition.

It was different in times past. Fiddles were often kept in flour sacks and stored in closets, barns, or smokehouses where mice were plentiful. What's more, the fiddles were often left there for months while the hard-working farmer/fiddler planted or harvested his crops. For those folks, mice were a serious concern.

I own a fiddle that has the ends of the f-holes enlarged by some gnawing little critter. It was like that when I bought it (for \$10). I've seen two other fiddles that were similarly damaged.

If an old-timer valued his fiddle, he put a rattlesnake rattle in it. The rattle repelled mice, and if it interfered with spiders too, that was a bonus. □

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 have a tidbit on picking, learning tunes, caring for instruments, etc, please submit it for the "A Penny Learned" article. □

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:

ksparks@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. □

General Contact Information for the Nashville Old-Time String Band

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