



A Publication of Your
Nashville Old-Time
String Band Association

ASSOCIATION
EVENTS

1st Thursday Jam

October 5

Slow & Regular Jam

6:30 to 8:30 PM

Two Rivers

Mansion



2nd Thursday Jam

October 12

Regular Jam

6:30 to 8:30 PM

Buchanan

Log House



3rd Thursday Jam

October 19

Slow & Regular Jam

6:30 to 8:30 PM

Two Rivers

Mansion



4th Thursday

Performance Group

Rehearsal

September 26

6:30 to 8:30 PM

Buchanan Log House



4th-Sunday Jam

2 to 5 PM

Hosted By

Kitty and Phil

Sparks

The Old-Time Times

OCTOBER 2006

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Dan Levenson to Present Workshop and Concert

~Patsy Weiler

It is now confirmed that Dan Levenson will present three workshops and an evening concert in Nashville, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, November 4-6.

He will teach an old-time fiddle workshop Saturday from 7 to 9 PM and an old-time banjo workshop Sunday from 2 to 4 PM. On Monday, from 6 to 9 PM, he will teach a workshop called Meet the Banjo, sponsored by Deering Banjo. No experience is necessary to attend Monday's workshop, and a banjo will be provided if you don't have your own. Both clawhammer and Bluegrass styles will be presented.

A house concert will take place Sunday evening from 5:30 to 7:30, following the old-time banjo workshop. All events will be at the newly opened Deering Showroom, 1903 Omohundro Court, right off of Lebanon Road, near the VFW. The charge for the performance is \$10 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.

The evening concert, An Evening with Dan Levenson, will combine old-time fiddle, Appalachian banjo, guitar, dance, and song in a storytelling format.

Following the house concert, an old-time jam is planned for folks who are at the concert or have attended the workshop. Others may attend for a \$10 fee.

Checks for this 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 Dan, visit his Web site at <http://oldtimemusic.us>. For information on the Nashville events, e-mail Patsy Weiler at salt27@aol.com or Todd Wright at todd@deeringbanjos.com. You can also call Todd at 1-800-332-2656. □

The President's Corner

~Jim Hornsby

The Notsba Board of Directors is responsible for planning and implementing the association's goals. Much of our work is done through committees. The committees vary in size, and each has a chairperson (or persons) for leadership. Each chairperson coordinates that committee's activities and reports the committee's progress to the board at its quarterly meetings.

The committee system distributes the work load and helps the association function more efficiently. I want to thank all those serving on our committees for their time and effort.

Pat Gill and Mary Lou Durham cochair the Breakin' Up Winter Committee. Planning for the event has become a year-round activity. There is a meeting after the event to evaluate how it went, a meeting in midsummer to set goals for the next event, and a fall meeting to finalize details.

Ron Whitlow chairs the Membership Committee. His most recent report shows that we have seventy-three members.

Ed Gregory, in addition to the time he spends as our Web master, chairs the Grants Committee. The committee is currently working on standardizing our accounting procedures and applying for grants for future community projects.

Lilly Hsu, Phil Sparks, and Don Kent do not technically chair committees, but they do provide the board with reports of their work. Lilly is the association's secretary/treasurer, Phil is the newsletter editor, and Don directs our public performances and outreach.

You don't have to be a member of the board to be on a committee or even to chair a committee. I hope you will consider joining in to share the load. You may not have a lot of time to contribute, but just occasionally helping out would make a big difference.

I know some may avoid volunteering for fear that if they show an interest, they will be hounded to do more. Not so! As president, I hereby proclaim Notsba to be a hound-free zone. You decide what part you want to play,

and we will appreciate that you are doing what you can to move the association forward.

There may be other activities that should have committee coordination, like getting professional old-time performances and workshops in the Nashville area. We are working toward expanding our projects, and we would appreciate your thoughts as to what would best benefit the old-time community. □

Fine Times at the Casey Jones Old-Time Music Festival

~Phil Sparks

On Friday, September 8, Kitty and I loaded up the trailer and headed out for Jackson, Tennessee, with all of our instruments in tow. Our destination was the Casey Jones Music Festival, sponsored by the Jackson Plectral Society.

We reached the site, a large area with plenty of camping space and a first-rate amphitheater, around midafternoon. After we set up next to Dennis Baumgardner's Casita, we sought out our good friends Marilyn and Coley Graves. We visited with them and watched them perform with their friends on stage.

A little later, we joined Dennis and a bunch of his friends in a jam. We jammed all evening and into the night. Then we started all over again the next morning.

By Saturday evening, when things began to break up, our fingers were about worn out. We closed up shop and drove home, just in time to avoid a huge rain storm.

We played lots of music and met lots of good, friendly pickers. The Casey Jones Festival is definitely one of the best we've experienced. I guess we did more jamming there than we did at Mt Airy.

The only bad thing was that I somehow failed to put the festival in our newsletter—in spite of the fact that Kitty and I have every intention of attending it. I own my friends in the Jackson Plectral Society a sincere apology, and a big *Thank You* for a great time.

What a nice festival—and it's so close to Nashville! □

A Report from the Memphis

Dulcimer Gathering and Folk Festival

~Lee Cagle

The Second Annual Memphis Dulcimer Gathering and Folk Festival was held on September 29 and 30 in downtown Memphis. The weather was perfect, and the music was even better.

Organizers Lee Cagle and Carla Maxwell invited a stellar line-up for this year. The two-day event included mountain dulcimer workshops led by Janita Baker, Larkin Bryant, Lee Cagle, Larry Conger, and Don Pedi.

There were also mandolin and banjo workshops with Jim Miller, as well as workshops for guitar and mandolin with Bill Taylor, autoharp with Karen Mueller, and hammered dulcimer with Rick Thum.

Attendees for the Gathering came from as far away as Florida, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin, as well from West Tennessee, northern Mississippi, and Alabama.

Volunteers graciously donated their time to make sure all went smoothly by helping with registration and ticket sales and manning vendor booths during the workshops. The group spent their days learning new tunes and feasting on lunches prepared by Chef Bill Webster of Calvary Episcopal Church, where the event was held.

In the afternoons, there were informal jams throughout the building. An organized jam was held on Friday night and was free to the public. Many players and music enthusiasts participated. Everyone, from small children on up, was included with shakers and drums while others played an array of instruments and sang.

Vendors from across the country were there selling instruments, CDs, instructional books, jewelry, and a variety of music-related items. The Fiddler's Green Music Shop, Memphis' only acoustic music store, sponsored the appearance by Rick Thum and also had a booth in the vendor area.

The event culminated on Saturday night with a concert given by the event's instructors. Rick Thum generously donated a hammered dulcimer to benefit The Memphis Dulcimer Gathering, Inc, the nonprofit corporation that

hosted the event. During intermission, a drawing was held, and Bob Hastings of Memphis was the lucky winner of the dulcimer.

The 2006 Gathering was a fabulous success. The Memphis Dulcimer Gathering is already making plans for next year's event. For information about this and other dulcimer and folk events, visit www.leecagledulcimers.com or www.memphis-dulcimer.com or call Lee Cagle at 901-372-0510. □

Thomas Maupin to Appear at the 2007 Merlefest

Our own Thomas Maupin has been invited to dance at the 2007 Merlefest.

Merlefest, the Americana Music Celebration, is held each year on the campus of Wilkes Community College in Wilkesboro, North Carolina. It commemorates Merle Watson, son of the great guitar player, Doc Watson. The 2007 festival will take place April 26 through 29.

Needless to say, Thomas is thrilled, and we are all thrilled for him. □

Notsba Members to Perform at the Great Southern Old-Time Music Convention

The Great Southern Old-Time Music Convention is set for October 20-21 in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Two of the featured performers at the festival will be our own Thomas Maupin, who will work with Jay Bland, another dancer, and our own Rebekah Weiler.

Several other longtime friends of Notsba will appear at the festival, including The Roan Mountain Hilltoppers, Matt Kinman's Old-Time Serenaders, Bob Townsend and the Firery Gizzards, James and Rachel Bryan, and Robert Montgomery.

For more information contact Kenny Johnson at 770 617 9008 or go to www.oldtimemusicconvention.com. □

CD by Vanderbilt Professors Added to Prestigious NEH *We the People* Bookshelf

Happy Land, the first installment of a collection of CDs based on the world renowned books by Laura Ingalls Wilder, is the first music collection to be added to a National Endowment for the Humanities collection of works designed to strengthen students' understanding of American history and culture.

Produced by two Vanderbilt University professors, *Happy Land: Musical Tributes to Laura Ingalls Wilder*, is part of the new *We the People* assortment from the NEH. This year's collection has the theme of "Pursuit of Happiness."

"This kind of attention from the NEH is humbling," said Dale Cockrell, a professor of musicology at Vanderbilt's Blair School of Music. "Those whose work sits on the *We the People* bookshelf are the heroes of my youth and of my adulthood. It is beyond an honor to occupy any of the space that they hallow."

Cockrell produced *Happy Land* with Butch Baldassari, an adjunct associate professor of mandolin at Blair.

This album of string band music, Stephen Foster classics, and hymns and spirituals features song selections from the more than 120 songs that run through the plots of Wilder's eight *Little House* books. Songs including "Oh! Susanna" and "Barbara Allen" were given lively and contemporary acoustic arrangements meant to reintroduce children and adults to the musical heritage of America. The album features performances by Riders in the Sky, Dave Olney, Andrea Zonn, Deborah Pacard, Douglas P. Green, Keith Little, and The Princely Players

The 2nd installment of the *Little House* series, *Arkansas Traveler: Music from Little House on the Prairie*, will be released November 14, kicking off a one-hour NPR Holiday Special program featuring the Pas Fiddle Project and hosted by Riders in the Sky. The special will be broadcast in December with an estimated 150 to 200 NPR stations nationwide carrying the program. *Arkansas Traveler* features performances by John Cowan, Alison Brown, Riders in the Sky, Andrea Zonn, Mac Wiseman, Judith

Edelman, Elizabeth Cook, and numerous others. □

Class to Be Held on Making Gourd Banjos

~David Hyatt

I am pleased to announce that the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View, Arkansas, has asked me to conduct another gourd banjo making workshop starting the evening of Sunday, March 18, and going through Friday, March 23, 2007.

In this workshop, participants will build a professional-grade tack-head gourd banjo. Prior to the workshop, the participants will work with me to select the needed materials and determine the number and type of strings their banjo will use. As an added benefit, there will be lots of music in the evenings.

Contact me for more information about the gourd banjo workshop. To help answer your questions, I have posted a page about the workshop on my Web site, www.dhyatt.com. It has some pictures of the materials, preparatory worksheets, and a rough schedule.

There have been two misconceptions about this workshop that I would like to correct:

1. The banjo will be a piece of folk art, with a broomstick poked through a gourd.

Incorrect: On my Web site, you can see examples of banjos built in earlier workshops.

2. This is easy work.

Incorrect: It's fairly demanding, especially in terms of patience and vision. Physically, it's not overly demanding, but it is challenging. □

Notsba Receives Some Good Publicity

On September 7, *Nashville Today* featured a photo of Notsba members on its front page.

They caught us as we were performing at our Labor Day gig in Centennial Park.

It's always nice to gain a little positive exposure and let people know that we are out there. □

New Notsba Members

We extend a warm welcome to two new members:

Andy Shivas
Tim Jones

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 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. (The construction on Briley Parkway has closed the Two Rivers Exit that serves eastbound traffic. You will have to go on to the next exit and come back with the westbound traffic.) Then follow the directions given above. □

Directions to the 4th-Sunday Jam

October's 4th-Sunday Jam will be hosted by Kitty and Phil Sparks from 2 until 5 PM.

Ed will post a map to our place on the Notsba Web site. If you can't access it, here is

the simplest way to find our home: Take Highway 70 west to White Bluff. As you drive through White Bluff, you will see a McDonald's on one corner. Turn right at that corner, and you will be on State Route 47.

Go about two miles on 47, and you will see where Highway 250 leads off to the right. A sign at that intersection points you toward Ashland City. Turn right on 250, going toward Ashland City. We live on 250.

Follow 250 for about 7 miles. After going about 5 or 6 miles, you start down a long hill. At the bottom of that long hill, you will see a house trailer and a white frame home on the right. Our mailbox is the first one (on the right) beyond that trailer and home. It's a black plastic mail box with "2020" on it. We will mark it with some unnatural orange ribbons.

If you come to Mary Hellen's Grocery, you will know that you have gone exactly ¼ mile too far.

Turn right into our driveway. It is long and steep, and you can't see the house until you reach to top. Just put your car in low gear, keep going about 15 miles per hour, and you will do fine. We do it all the time in a Miata. There's plenty of parking space at the top.

We will serve homegrown pork barbecue, but you may still bring some snacks if you wish. Also, you might bring a folding chair or two. We have only a couple of them.

If you loose your way, call us at 797-4356. We look forward to seeing all of you who can make it. □

EVENTS

TENNESSEE

Tennessee Fall Homecoming Museum of Appalachia

Held at The Museum of Appalachia in Norris, Thursday through Sunday, October 12-15. Performers at this event include The Blue Creek Ramblers, featuring our own Rebekah Weiler as well as our own Thomas Maupin. For more information, call 1-865-494-0514 or go to "Festivals & Contests" at www.nashvilleoldtime.org. □

**Harvest Festival at
Cannonsburg Pioneer Village**

Held at Cannonsburg Village in Murphreesboro, Saturday, October 28. Performers at this event include The Blue Creek Ramblers, featuring our own Rebekah Weiler as well as our own Thomas Maupin. For more information, call 615-890-0355 or go to "Festivals & Contests" at www.nashvilleoldtime.org. □

**ALABAMA
Tennessee Valley Old-Time
Fiddler's Convention**

Held on the campus of Athens State University in Athens, Friday and Saturday, October 6-7. This festival is popular with members of Notsba. You may want to check with Don Kent about Jamming opportunities there. For more information, call Rick Mould at 256-233-8215, or go to "Festivals & Contests" at www.nashvilleoldtime.org. □

**NORTH CAROLINA
Halloweenfest in Transylvania**

Held at the Gazebo on the Courthouse lawn in Brevard, Saturday, October 28. This is an old-time music competition sponsored by Celestial Mountain Music. For more information, contact Mary Gordon of Celestial Mountain Music, www.celestialmtnmusic.com. □

**KENTUCKY
Morehead Old-Time
Fiddler's Convention**

Held on the Daniel Boone Jaycees Farm near Morehead, Friday and Saturday, October 6 and 7. This festival will be a celebration of the late Art Stamper and his music. For more information, call Brett Ratliff at 606-356-3315 or go to www.clackmountain.com. □

**FLORIDA
Florida State Fiddler's Convention and
Fall Harvest Festival**

Held at Camp Crystal Lake near Keystone Heights, Friday through Sunday, October 20-22. For more information, call 904-454-1853 or go to "Festivals & Contests" at

www.nashvilleoldtime.org. □

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:
Peghed Geared Fiddle Pegs:
A Postscript**

~Phil Sparks

In August's issue, I wrote about the geared fiddle pegs designed by Chuck Herin and made by Peghed. I still have them on my fiddle, and I'm still glad I have them, but I have one additional comment to make.

If we have four fine tuners on a fiddle, we generally do the best we can to tune it with the pegs, and then we finish the job with the fine tuners. Later we find that the fiddle has gone out of tune a little, and we adjust the fine tuners again. Once a new set of string has settled in and we have tuned them a few times, we may do all of our tuning with the fine tuners and not touch the pegs again for quite some time.

If we use Peghed geared pegs, we throw the fine tuners away and just use the pegs. Alas, this new approach gives rise to a minor problem that we did not have to face with fine tuners: When we tune with pegs, we must cope with the friction at the nut (the piece of ebony at the end of the fingerboard. It has four grooves in it to hold the strings.)

When we tighten or loosen a string, the friction at the nut keeps the string from sliding smoothly across the nut. If we tighten the string, it will gradually tighten more with time and end up ever so slightly sharp. If we loosen a string, it will loosen more with time and gradually become ever so slightly flat.

According to John Darnall, a friend who plays classical viola, these slight variations make little if any difference with the G, D, and A strings because the human ear can rarely make such fine distinctions. With the E string, however, it's a different matter. When the E string is even slightly off, our ears can usually sense it.

That's why even the best classical violinists (experts at tuning with pegs) use a fine tuner for the E string, and that's why, says John, *we should use a fine tuner for our E string even though we have geared tuners.*

NOTE: there are two common ways of minimizing the friction at the nut:

1. Make sure each groove in the nut is smooth and wide enough for the string it holds. You might try pulling an old string back and fourth across the groove or widening the groove a little with a jeweler's file. (Unless you are a bit of a luthier, you might let a professional handle this process.) Old fiddles don't usually have this problem.

2. Each time you change strings, load the nut grooves up with graphite lubricant. Do this by rubbing the tip of a #2 pencil in each groove for about ten seconds. (A pencil "lead" is not lead at all. It is made of graphite, an excellent dry lubricant.) □

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

Jim Hornsby, President

friends@nashvilleoldtime.org

615-650-2328

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 November's newsletter is Saturday, October 28.* □

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. □

RATTLESNAKE RATTLES FOR SALE

If you need a rattlesnake rattle for your fiddle, Phil Sparks has a couple left. The price is \$1.50 per segment, and these rattles have 6 to 9 segments. Contact Phil at 615-797-4356 or at kpsparks@msn.com). □