

A Publication
of Your
Nashville
Old-Time
String Band
Association

UPCOMING
ASSOCIATION
EVENTS



Thursday
October 7
Slow Jam
6:30 to 8:30 PM
Stratford High
Cafeteria



Thursday
October 14
Regular Jam
6:30 to 8:30 PM
Stratford High
Cafeteria



October 24
4th Sunday Jam
2 to 5 PM
Hosted by
Martin and Beth
Fisher

Old-Time Times

OCTOBER 2004

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EVENTS

Tennessee

Tennessee Fall Homecoming–Museum of Appalachia

Held October 7-10 in Norris , Tennessee. For complete information, See our article entitled "Music in the Mountains," call 865-494-0514, or go to "Festivals & Contests" at www.nashvilleoldtime.org.

Alabama

Tennessee Valley Old-Time Fiddlers Convention

Held October 1-2 at Athens State University in Athens. Lots of the Nashville-area pickers will attend this one. For complete information call Rick Mould at 256-223-8215, or go to "Festivals & Contests" at www.nashvilleoldtime.org.

Kentucky

Celebration of Traditional Music

Held October 29-31 at Berea College in Berea. Rebekah Weiler and the Blue Creek Ramblers will play a prominent role in this one. For complete information, call Gordon McKinney at 859-985-3903, or go to "Festivals & Contests" at www.nashvilleoldtime.org.

Georgia

Georgia Mountain Fall Festival

Held October 8-17 in Hiawassee. For complete information, call 706-896-4191, or go to "Festivals & Contests" at www.nashvilleoldtime.org.

Florida

Florida State Fiddlers Association Annual Convention and Fall Harvest Festival

Held October 15-17 in High Springs. For complete information call 904-454-1853, or go to "Festivals & Contests" at www.nashvilleoldtime.org.

FOURTH-SUNDAY JAMS

Homes have been found for all of 2004's 4th-Sunday Jams, so it's time to schedule your home for a 4th-Sunday Jam in 2005. April and September have been taken, and we don't schedule 4th-Sunday jams in December. E-mail Darlyne Kent at dkent@davidson-academy.com.

DIRECTIONS TO THE SUNDAY JAM FOR OCTOBER

October'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 to 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 has a large "M" on it and will be marked with a bandana.

Bob Carlin Holds Old-Time Banjo Workshop and Concert

Banjoist Bob Carlin will hold an all-levels, hands-on workshop on Saturday, October 16, from 2 to 4:30 PM at Ron and Diane Ault's home. The workshop deals with the claw-hammer style. It will start at the most basic level and work toward advanced techniques.

Bob is probably the best-known clawhammer-style banjoist performing today. He has taken the distinctive Southern banjo style to appreciative audiences all over the US, Canada, and Europe.

He is a three-time winner of the *Frets Magazine* Readers' Poll and has turned out four albums as well as several instruction manuals and videos for the banjo.

In addition, Bob has done a good deal of writing about old-time music and the role the banjo has played in it. He recently published a book entitled *String Bands in the North Carolina Piedmont*. He also works with Dan

Levenson to edit the banjo feature section of *The Banjo Newsletter*. In June, he published "The Banjo in the Civil War" in *Bluegrass Unlimited*. A full array of Bob's materials will be available at the workshop.

After the workshop, from 7 to 9 PM, Bob will hold a concert entitled "From Africa to Appalachia." A jam session will follow the performance, so bring your instruments.

The fee for the workshop is \$35, and the concert is \$15. All proceeds go to the visiting artist.

To register or to find out more about the event, call 615-884-8074, E-mail Ron at fiddletoon@bellsouth.net, or go to www.rondiane.org. ~Phil Sparks

Bob Townsend's Old-Time Fiddle Workshop

On Saturday, September 18, Bob Townsend, the well-known Cumberland mountain fiddler held a highly successful workshop at the home of Darlyne and Don Kent.

We learned several tunes, including "Altamont," "Prettiest Girl in the County," "#3," and "Hey Old Man, I Want Your Daughter."

The workshop also covered bowing patterns (lots of little circles) and cross tuning and gave Bob a chance to share some of the adventures he experienced while learning fiddle tunes from the old-timers.

About 15 fiddlers attended, and the evaluations prove that everyone profited greatly from Bob's instruction.

~Phil Sparks

A 'Calloused' Comment

It was just a sentence, but two of our members, Rebekah Weiler and Nic Andal, were mentioned in Donald Nitchie's "Callous Thumb" column (inside front cover, page 2) in the September edition of *Banjo Newsletter*. Donald is the publication's editor and the son of the publication's founders, Hub and Nancy Nitchie. Rebekah and Nic were written about because of their young ages and placement in the top three spots in the National Old Time

Banjo competition at Uncle Dave Macon Days in July.

The column read as follows: "It seems significant to point out that the traditional pickers who took the tree top spots in the National Old-Time Banjo contest in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, this past month were all younger than 21: Robert Montgomery, First (North Alabama), 20; Nic Andal, Second (Middle Tennessee), 17; Rebekah Weiler, Third (Middle Tennessee), 18."

This is a nice honor for Rebekah and Nic as *Banjo Newsletter* has an international circulation and is one of the most popular magazines for banjo players. However, it is not the first time Rebekah has been connected with *BNL*. At the ripe old age of three, she was the 'cover girl' of the April, 1989, edition. Then, she was playing a red plastic Sesame Street banjo, with a clothes line strap and a bathroom plunger for a microphone.

~Patsy Weiler

NOTSBA Performs at Carnton Plantation in Franklin

Saturday, September 25, NOTSBA members gathered at the Carnton mansion near Franklin to perform for their fall crafts festival.

We played one set on the stage behind the mansion and another on the lawn in front of the mansion. Several good friends from afar came out to join us, including Roy Turrentine, Steve Williams, Rebekah Weiler, and Mike Anderson. The most honored picker there was Trish Cannon. She has been struggling with her health but seems to be improving rapidly.

In addition, we made three new old-time music friends from the Bowling Green area: Butch Ross, Christie Burns, and Leo Fernandez. (They are starting a weekly jam up their way. See the next article.)

Two of the many nice folks who stopped to chat with us turned out to be the parents of Bob Townsend. Needless to say, Bob's mom and dad were delighted to hear us sing Bob's praises.

~Phil Sparks

More Picking Opportunities

A number of old-time musicians in and around Bowling Green, Kentucky, have organized a weekly jam session. It takes place every Saturday night from 7 to 9 at the Bread & Bagel on Broadway. Everyone is welcome.

For more information, call me at 267-235-3249.

~Christie Burns

Almaville Music to Start Back for the Winter

During the "get-dark-earlier" months of October through March, the Almaville Community Center hosts a free (collection buckets are passed to pay the electric bill) community picking on the third Saturday of the month. This is both a jamming and performing venue. Musicians gather to jam in the back room, and you can appear on stage via a first-come, first-served sign-up sheet manned by emcee Larry Zachery.

There is a fruit basket mix of all kinds of acoustic music from old time to gospel. It is a lot of fun, and everyone, regardless of talent level, is made to feel welcome. Food is available. The stage music starts around 6 PM. However, if you have an itch to be on stage, note that folks arrive to sign-up as early as 3 PM.

The Almaville community is just outside of Murfreesboro. It can be reached via I-24 or 840. There are exits for Almaville on both roads. If you take 840, turn left coming from Franklin or right coming from Murfreesboro, and go about a mile. From the I-24 exit, it is approximately 7 miles past the McDonald's. For more information, call 615-893-6029 (Ruby and John Taylor) or 615-890-2853 (Bobbie Sexton).

~Patsy Weiler

NOTSBA To Be Represented at the Berea College Festival

Delmer Holland and the Blue Creek Ramblers have been invited to play the annual Traditional Music Celebration at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky. NOTSBA member, Rebekah Weiler is the group's banjo player. The autumn weekend event takes place on October 29-31 on the college campus. Friday evening will feature a jam session and

open mic. Instrument workshops start Saturday morning. A square dance and a symposium on shape-note singing led by John Bealle take place in the afternoon, and that evening, a great concert by the guest musicians will conclude the day. A traditional gospel sing will conclude the weekend on Sunday.

The festival was founded by author and folklorist Loyal Jones, who started the event to "feature strictly old-time traditional music." Bluegrass and other forms were fine, according to Jones, but he felt "that the old styles traditional to the mountains are not heard so much any more, so we want to encourage them."

The weekend is sponsored by the Berea College Appalachian Center. For more information go to www.berea.edu/appalachiancenter, E-mail lori_briscoe@bera.edu, or call 859-985-3140. Berea is located about 35 miles south of Lexington, Kentucky, on I-75.

~Patsy Weiler

In the Woods Performs at the Buchanan House

In the Woods played for the Buchanan House annual fall festival on Saturday, September 25. There were six musicians playing, and we had an excellent response from the audience.

Quite a few people sat and enjoyed our music, though the contra dancers weren't terribly successful in persuading them to join in the dancing.

Four members of the contra dance community put on a number of demonstrations. In addition to the music and dancing, there were demonstrations of crafts like blacksmithing, spinning, and scrimshaw.

In the Woods is a band that was started by students of Jim Wood, a well-known Tennessee fiddler. It has grown to include the families and friends of those students. We meet every Tuesday night in Pegram, Tennessee, at the home of Kirk Pickering. The group's Web site can be found at www.k4ro.net/music/oldtime/index.html.

The Buchanan House is on the National Register of Historic Places and was begun

around 1800, first as a chestnut-log home. It has its original limestone fireplaces and poplar floors.

~Julie Mavity-Hudson

The Laurel Theater

Anyone who travels to the Knoxville area from time to time should know about the Laurel Theater.

Each year, the Laurel Theater offers a series of traditional music programs. For example, October 1 will see Bob Townsend's Fiery Gizzard String Band on their stage, and Clyde Davenport, an 83-year-old fiddler from Kentucky, will perform on October 30.

To obtain a complete schedule of this year's events, go to www.jubileearts.org.

~Bob Hightower

Young Musicians Written Up In Alabama

Jewelina Lawrence and Rebekah Weiler were recently written about in Charlotte Fulton's column "Marginal Notes." The column ran in the Sunday, August 1, edition of the Athens, Alabama newspaper, The News Courier. The column was about rising young talent in old-time music. Also, it mentioned Robert Montgomery and Will McMeans, both from northern Alabama.

Fulton, a fan of traditional music, often writes about musicians with Alabama roots, such as the Delmore Brothers. She ran across our two talented NOTSBA members at the first annual Sam McCracken Days in Limestone, Alabama. For those who might not know, the late Sam McCracken was quite a fiddler and was one of the founders of the Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddler's Convention. Will is McCracken's great-nephew.

Additionally, a great color photograph taken of Jewelina, Rebekah, and Robert appeared in The News Courier on July 27. Both Jewelina and Rebekah wore old-time dresses and hats from the 1930s. However, due to a shoe mix-up, both of them played on the stage bare-footed.

~Patsy Weiler

The Festival at Fall Creek Falls

The weekend of September 11, Kitty and Phil Sparks attended the traditional music festival at Fall Creek Falls State Park.

This time we stayed in one of the lakeside cabins with balconies hanging out over the water. We enjoyed The Blue Creek Ramblers with Rebekah Weiler, The Old-Time Serenaders with Matt Kinnman, The Roan Mountain Hilltoppers, Roy Harper, and Bob Townsend.

Phil spent most of Saturday afternoon picking guitar with Gil Sewell, a fine fiddler from Chattanooga. He and his wife Diane send their greetings to all of their good friends in NOTSBA.

~Kitty Sparks

Music in the Mountains

The silver anniversary of the Museum of Appalachia's Tennessee Fall Homecoming will take place in Norris, Tennessee. The 70-acre living museum, which houses more than 30 log structures, is located 16 miles north of Knoxville on I-75, Exit 122. The festival starts at 9 AM and goes until dark, rain or shine. Admission is \$25

More than 400 musicians on three stages will perform in addition to crafts, food, and historical demonstrations. Three National Heritage Fellowship Award winners Kenny Baker, Will Keys, and Ralph Stanley are in the line-up, which features both old-time and bluegrass music. Others of interest include Jeannete Carter, Roy Harper, Charlie Acuff, Ramona Jones and Family, Doyle Lawson, Rhonda Vincent, and Laura Boosinger.

For more information call the museum at (865) 494-7680 or (865) 494-0514 or go to www.museumofappalachia.com.

A couple notes: Wednesday is school day and the admission is reduced to \$15, but if you go, prepare to deal with THOUSANDS of school children. Also, it is better to arrive as early as possible. If the weather is nice, long lines of traffic can form at the museum's entrance. It helps to have the exact cash in hand to buy your tickets, and don't plan to pay by credit or debit card. Motels around the museum are sold out and are pricey. Good rates can be found in Oak Ridge and especially off I-75 in the edge of Knoxville.

The Fall Homecoming is not much of a jamming event, but it is something everyone

should experience at least once. However, there is great jamming off grounds at night at the Golden Girls Restaurant in Norris and the Cracker Barrel at the Lake City exit off of I-75. Ask any of the veteran performers about other jamming sessions after the festival.

~Patsy Weiler

CD Review: *The Boys from North Carolina* by Bob Carlin

The Boys from North Carolina is a truly enjoyably listening experience. Bob takes the clawhammer banjo on a masterful excursion that includes early jazz, minstrel, Tin Pan Alley, and Southern old-time influences.

The title cut, "The Boys from North Carolina," is a beautiful and poetic tribute to Earl Scruggs written by John Hartford. Earl, who is from North Carolina, was one of John's musical heroes. Bob's soulful rendition pays eloquent tribute to both John and Earl and the singers and players of this music we all love.

The first cut on the CD, "You're Bound to Look like a Monkey," brought a big smile to my face. It's originally a pre-World War II jazz swing standard, but Bob and fiddler Kirk Sutphin give it a rollicking Southern Old-time fiddle and banjo face-lift. My favorite line from the song is "I can tell by your fanny that King Kong was your granny." In the same whimsical vein, "I Had but Fifty Cents," is a Tin Pan Alley composition Bob sings and plays solo banjo backup...a toe tapping number you can sink your teeth into!

Another cut that features Bob's minstrel style vocal and solo banjo backup is "I'm Going over the Mountain," an 1843 minstrel song by Dan Emmett. This song has a beautiful and lilting melody. The simple setting of banjo and vocals is gorgeous.

"Banjo Roustabout" is a black banjo song from North Carolina's eastern Piedmont region. Originally it was sung by Dink Roberts and also Fred Cockerham from the mountains above Mount Airy. This selection features Bob on vocals and solo banjo in a version he learned from blind African-American musician Josh Thomas. The minor

key evokes a bluesy tribute to plantation life and the African origins of the banjo.

Bob pays tribute to another boy from North Carolina in the folk song, "Otto Wood, the Bandit." Otto was a native of Wiles County, NC during the Great Depression. A series of petty crimes put him behind bars for most of his life. It's a beautifully sung folk ballad and a sobering retrospective of how our justice system hasn't improved much in over 70 years.

The CD includes two of my favorite traditional fiddle tunes, "Fisher's Hornpipe" and "Cotton Eyed Joe." The tunes are played with just fiddle and banjo. Kirk Sutphin's fiddling is brilliant, and Bob's banjo is truly inspiring. His selection of notes compliments Kirk's fiddling and gives the tunes their own electricity.

The Cover of the CD is a cool painting by artist Greg Krolick. It features Bob as a radio host with an old-fashioned microphone, speakers, and 78 records. Bob is surrounded by fellow North Carolinians Earl Scruggs, Tommy Jarrell, Fred Cockerham, and Charlie Poole as well as African-American string band musicians Joe and Odell Thompson.

The Boys from North Carolina proves Bob Carlin to be the best modern-day interpreter of the banjo and its repertoire. Be sure to check out Bob's website, especially the listening room: www.cartunesrecordings.com.

~Ron Ault

What is the World's Oldest Old-Time Tune and Song?

Do you have any nominations? If so, send your ideas to Phil Sparks, the editor.

Have you noticed that when you tune a string, be it on a fiddle, banjo, guitar, or mandolin, the string tends to slip in jerks, often going above the note you are aiming for?

You can minimize that jerking movement by lubricating the grooves in the nut. Each time you change strings, rub a #2 pencil lead in the grooves of the nut. The lead of the pencil is not lead at all, it's graphite, and graphite is an excellent dry lubricant. Whatever you do, DO NOT lubricate the nut with any sort of oil.

~Phil Sparks

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, 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.

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, we need the information desperately. Please let us know about it.

You can reach Phil at:

kpsparks@msn.com

or

(615) 797-4356

or

2020 Claylick Road

White Bluff, TN 37187

The *submission deadline* for November's newsletter is 9 AM, Wednesday, October 20.

A Penny Learned

Never try to tune a string down. If it's sharp, take it below the desired note and tune it back up. Stings tuned down tend to slip out of tune again. This advice does not apply when you are using the fine tuners found on fiddles.