

TBA AREA ONGOING EVENTS

AUSTIN AREA

CTBA
 • **Beginner/Intermed. Jam**
 1st & 3rd Thursday 7-9 pm
 Steve Mangold 512-345-6155
 • **CTBA Jam Session**
 Sunday at Artz Rib House
 3-5 pm, 512-442-8283
ARTZ RIB HOUSE
 • **Live Bluegrass Show**
 2330 S. Lamar, 6:00 pm
 512-442-8283
AAAMS JAM
 Wed, Anderson Mill Baptist
 Church, 10633 Lake Creek Pkwy
 Dinner 5:30 (\$3) 6:30-8:30 pm,
 259-7702- call to join for dinner
 • **AFTM (Austin Friends of
 Traditional Music) Contra Dance**
 3rd Sat., Lutheran church at 3501
 Red River 8-11 pm, \$7, 462-0511
 • **AFTM Jam Session**
 2nd Sun at Threadgill's South
 Barton Springs & Riverside, 2pm
SMITHVILLE
 • **WayStation Opry**
 1st Sat, 205 NE 2nd, 6 pm, Steve
 Boatright, 512-272-8008
BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION
 • **Jam Session**
 Monday: 6:00 to 8:00 pm
 Buppy's Catering 979-690-6951
 • **Jam Session and BG Show**
 2nd Sat: Jam-4pm, Show-7pm
 Wellborn Com. Ctr. 979-690-6951
CHRISMAN
 • **Jam**
 3rd Sat: 7-10 pm

Chriesman Community Center
 Don Cook 979-567-0573
CLEBURNE
 • **Show & Jam**
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 1501 W Henderson (Hwy 67) 7 pm,
 \$3 www.geocities.com/ntbbbluegrass
COPPERAS COVE
 • **Jam**
 Fri-VFW Post 8577 at 1506
 Veterans Ave 7 pm
 254-542-6710 wlangdon@hotmail.com
GARLAND
 • **Bluegrass on the Square**
 Sat- March thru October between
 Main and State Sts. at 6th, 7:30-
 1 am Jim Miller 972-276-3197
GRANITE SHOALS
 • **Bluegrass and Gospel Jam**
 Last Sat: 6:30-10:00 pm
 706 Phillips Ranch Rd.
 830-693-8408
THE GROVE
 • **Outside Pick**
 General Store, 15 mi. west of
 Temple on Hwy 36, 6 pm til...
 M. Anderson 512-282-1215
HARWOOD
 • **Stage Show & Jam Session**
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 Hwy 90, 2-9 pm,
 Ben Buchanan 512-263-7193
LEAGUE CITY (BABA)
 • **Jam & Free Bluegrass Show**
 3rd. Sat: Jam 5pm, Show 6:30
 Jan-Nov, League City Civic
 Center, 300 W. Walker St.
 713-990-5171

PARIS

• **Jam & Stage Show**
 3rd Sat: Jam 5:00, Show 7:00
 Chisum HS, Hwy 19 & 24, south
 of Paris \$5-members \$6-others
 Brenda Burks 903-784-8859
PEARL
 • **Jam & Stage Show**
 1st Sat: Jam 12:00, Show 4:30
 Hwy 183, 7 mi. south of Purmela
 Ronald Medart 254-865-6013
ROCKNE
 • **Bluegrass/Country Jam**
 1st Sat: 3pm til ..., 8 mi. S. of
 Cedar Creek on FM 535
TOMBALL
 • **Spring Creek Club Jam/Show**
 4th Sat: 5pm-jam, 7pm-show
 Oklahoma Community Center,
 NE of Tomball 281 376-2959
SAN ANTONIO
 • **Contra Dances**
 3rd Sat: 7:30 pm, International
 Folk Culture Center at Our
 Lady of the Lake Univ.
 512-434-6711, ext. 407
SOUR LAKE (Beaumont)
 • **Jam & Free Show**
 Southeast Tx BG Music Assn
 3rd Sat: 4pm, Elementary
 School, Hwy 326 S.
 Edy Mathews 409-755-0622
WIMBERLEY
 • **Bluegrass Jam**
 Fri: 7-11 pm, Idle Wild Deli @
 Poco Rio, 15395 R.R. #12, Alex
 Martin - 512/847-0430.

Central Texas BLUEGRASS



Bulletin

VOLUME 25

NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 2003



CTBA COMPILATION ALBUM

The Central Texas Bluegrass Volume One compilation CD is now available for the LOW, LOW price of just \$10.00! This 25 Year Anniversary Collection contains 28 songs from 14 different CTBA member bands. Order your copy today!

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Central Texas Bluegrass!

volume 1



www.centraltexasbluegrass.org

25 years and still pickin'
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TEXAS BLUEGRASS LEGACY

The White, Austin Lounge Lizards and South Austin Jug Band will play at The Paramount Theatre in Austin on February 16 at 8 PM. The show is presented by Texas Folklife Resources. Call 512-469-SHOW for tickets.

THANK YOU

The CTBA gratefully acknowledges the generous donation made by the Logos Foundation.

BULLETIN

Beginning with the April issue, the Bulletin will be available as a downloadable pdf file at the CTBA website. Please inform Jacquie Austin (512-345-6155), membership chair, if you prefer to continue to receive a hard copy. We are doing this to reduce the high cost of the Bulletin.

THIS ISSUE

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The Central Texas Bluegrass Association
 P.O. Box 9816
 Austin, TX 78766



For information on CTBA membership and activities, contact:
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 512-261-9440
 email:ctba@centraltexasbluegrass.org
 www.centraltexasbluegrass.org

CTBA is a non-profit, tax-exempt
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RANDALL'S GOOD NEIGHBOR PROGRAM

The CTBA number for this program is 9735. If you sign up, Randall's will donate a percentage of your purchases to the CTBA!

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Central Texas Bluegrass Bulletin

Editor: Steven Zimmet

EDITORIAL THOUGHTS

Thanks to Ken Brown for his interesting article on the history of the CTBA. I know it took many hours to write. We hope you enjoy it.

sez

CTBA Artists and Bands BOOKING INFORMATION

Austin Lounge Lizards: Tom Pittman 512-454-8254
Blackland Prairie Boys: Clayton Elliott 512-898-2580
Blazing Bows: Mary Hattersley 512-873-8925 blazingbows@lycos.com
Brazos Country Grass: Gary Potter 979-690-6951 gdpotter@startel.net
Eddie Collins: 512-836-8255 eddiec@constant.com
Grazmatics: Mike Landschoot 512-454-7343
Hard to Make a Living: John Hood 512-376-7767 johnhood@grandecom.net
Ledbetters Band: Spencer Drake 210-698-2601 kthdrak@cs.com
Manchaca All-Stars: Buck Buchanan 512-282-2756
New Life PraiseGrass: S. Boatright 512-272-8008 scmboatright@msn.com
No Strings Attached: Aubrey Skeen banjo6@earthlink.net
Onion Creek Crawdaddies: Trent Shepherd 512-912-9216
Pet Rooster: Jay Richardson 979-297-2709 5rs@quik.com
Shawn Spiars 512-218-3928 sspiars@abac.com
Sieker Band: Rolf and Beate Sieker 512-733-2857 thesiekers@aol.com
The Spurs of the Moment: Joan Chisholm 512-847-1182
Wayfaring Strangers: Willa Porter 512-328-3058 wlbporter@aol.com
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PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU MUST HAVE A CTBA BAND MEMBERSHIP TO BE INCLUDED IN THIS LISTING. IF YOU ALREADY ARE A CTBA MEMBER, SIMPLY SEND IN

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Full Page 7"x9"	\$30.00	1/4 page 3"x4"	\$12.50
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Take \$10.00 off above rates if you are a business member.
 Copy deadline is the 15th of the month.
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LOCAL SHOWS

Feb 6: **Blackland Prairie Boys**, Artz Rib House*
 Feb 7: **Blackland Prairie Boys**, Central Market N.
 Feb 14: **Danny Santos y los Bluegrass Vatos**, Artz Rib H.
 Feb 14: **Manchaca All-Stars**, Manchaca Firehall 7:30 PM
 Feb 15: **Sieker Band**, Artz Rib House*
 Feb 23: **Eddie Collins**, Artz Rib House*
 Feb 28: **Grazmatics**, Artz Rib House*

*Artz Rib House: 2330 S. Lamar, Austin
 512-442-8283

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Feb 14-16: **Frio River Bluegrass Festival**
 Concan, TX 830-232-4006 parkviewrv@hctc.net
 Feb 16: **The Texas Bluegrass Legacy**, Paramount
 Theater, Austin, 8 PM TX 512-441-9255
 Feb 20-22: **Triple Creek RV Pk Dutch Oven Cookout & BG Wkend**, Woodville, TX 409-283-3642
 Feb 28-Mar 1: **Triple Creek RV PK Gospel Wkend**,
 Woodville, TX 409-283-3642
 Mar 14-15: **Paris Bluegrass Festival**
 Paris, TX 903-784-8859

Please email (zimmet@skin-vein.com) or call (512-485-7700) the editor to have your show(s) listed.

Please contact venues for up to date information. Schedules change frequently.



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I can help with Committee work Festivals Newsletter Other _____

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For Family, Band, and Patron Memberships, please append a list of the members of your family or band.

I do not want my name and contact information included in a CTBA Membership Directory or in the CTBA mailing list, which may be exchanged with other music and arts related organizations.

Mail your check and application to: CTBA P. O. Box 9816, Austin, TX, 78766-9816

Contributions to CTBA are tax deductible as allowed by Internal Revenue Service Code Section 501 (c) (5).



GINGER EVANS

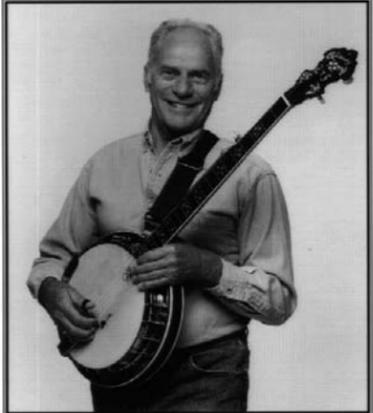
We deeply regret having to report that Ginger Evans lost her youngest son, Shawn, in an auto accident in Hays County recently. She was living in Arizona but has come back to Texas to take care of her other son, Jeffrey, who was injured in the accident. It was determined that Jeffrey required surgery to realign his neck. A fund has been set up. The address is:

Shawn Evans Memorial Fund
Balcones Bank
Kyle, Texas 78640

HYLO BROWN

Hylo Brown passed away on January 17 at the age of 80. Brown's long and distinguished career included playing with many of the top names including Bradley Kincaid and Bill Monroe. He appeared at country music's most important venues. He acquired the nickname of "Hylo" from his ability to sing in both tenor and bass voices and was also a fine guitarist. The full credit that he deserved has eluded him, perhaps because he was born a few years too early. He possessed the ability to sing both bluegrass and ordinary country material equally well, but the general opinion in his day was that one should sing either one or the other. Consequently, he was never afforded the opportunity to demonstrate his full potential. It was not until years later that Ricky Skaggs convinced both record companies and the public that it was possible to sing both genres equally well. Between 1954 and 1960, Brown recorded for Capitol, being especially remembered for the versions of his self-penned "Lost To A Stranger" and the Vagabonds' "When It's Lamp Lighting Time In The Valley". In the early 60s, he recorded several albums for Starday and in the late 60s, a whole series for Rural Rhythm. Other albums have appeared and some 1960 Capitol recordings, with an overdub by the Jordanares, were released for the first time by Bear Family in 1992.

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BY KEN BROWN

Even if you've noticed the "1978" in the association's logo, or if you've noticed that this issue is part of Volume 25, the significance of that may have escaped you. Well, the CTBA is now 25 years old, presumably placing it among the oldest local and regional bluegrass associations in the country. Steve has asked me to write this retrospective essay, perhaps because I'm a relic of the past myself, and in it I intend not only to review some of the association's history, but also to assess where we stand as an organization. We have a distinguished history of faithful support for bluegrass in Central Texas, and it won't hurt to review some past accomplishments. As I type, I'm listening to my favorite Internet bluegrass DJ, Lisa Kay Howard, on <BluegrassCountry.org>, and that helps speed the task along. If you're interested in local bluegrass history, I'd also like to remind you of the comprehensive two-part history of Austin bluegrass bands published by Tom Ellis in the February-March and April-May, 1988 issues of the Bulletin.

Late 1970s: Founding and Early History

The story actually starts seven months before the founding of the CTBA, when Austinite Don Rodgers (1933-1990) started a privately published monthly "Bluegrass Newsletter." The first issue was published in April, 1977. At that time, the chief umbrella organization for acoustic musicians was our sister association, the Austin Friends of Traditional Music (also still going strong, by the way), which hosted an open mike at the old Rome Inn on 29th Street. This was the chief jamming outlet for Austin-area bluegrass pickers. Before that, the AFTM sessions had been held at the Crazy Horse Saloon (on Cameron Road). These places, along with the beloved Split Rail on South Lamar (see photo; now the site of a Wendy's burger joint) were the hotspots for bluegrass jamming. And believe it or not, Austin already had a bluegrass radio show - "Bluegrass Breakdown" on KUT-FM, hosted by Terry Lickona, now the producer of Austin City Limits. The principal Texas bluegrass festivals were at Kerrville, McKinney, Buffalo Gap, Perrin, and Glen Rose (Oakdale Park).

The first planning session for a proposed Central Texas Bluegrass Association took place on October 12, 1977. Attending were Rod and Nancy Kennedy, Bob and Joyce Barton, Ken McCormick, Ted and Carla Miller, Frank Jennings, Don Rodgers, Judy Minshew, and Pete Nichols. Ted Miller was the chief sparkplug for the founding of the organization. The charter membership convention took place on January 22, 1978, at the Tumbleweed Restaurant, (now the County Line restaurant on the hill, FM 2222 west of Loop 360; see photo). Rod Kennedy was the MC for a crowd of 120 people (61 of whom signed up to become charter members), and seven bands performed: Backyard Bluegrass, Grassfire, Southern Select, the Poverty Playboys, the Broken String Band, Southwind, and No Money Down (the band that I was in at the time). There was a general membership meeting, Ted Miller was elected chairman, and a board of directors was elected (including Tom Pittman and Wayne Ross). The following month was marked by the beginning of the official CTBA jam (first and third Sundays), at St. Michael's Episcopal Church, on Bee Cave Road, a jam session that was to persist at the same location for the next 12 years. Since Don Rodgers already had an existing Texas-oriented bluegrass newsletter in existence, the board of directors worked out a contractual arrangement in which Don's publication was to be distributed as a benefit of membership in the CTBA. This arrangement persisted for ten years, until the association started its own newsletter in 1987. Only a few months old, the CTBA co-sponsored (along with the Kerrville Music Foundation) its first public bluegrass concerts in Kerrville (McLain Family Band, Buck White and the Down Home Folks) and at the Paramount Theater in August, where fiddler Jana Jae was the headliner and 600 people turned out. And 1978 also marked the founding of Leon Valley Bluegrass, a longtime CTBA band.

The second annual meeting of the CTBA took place on February 4, 1979 at the Alamo Roadhouse, which is now the other County Line restaurant, the one on Bull Creek. Continuing the precedent set at the first meeting, several bands performed: Lower Forty Bluegrass (from Alabama), Leon Valley Bluegrass, Blue Blazes (featuring among others, Tim Wilson), the Poverty Playboys, and No Money Down. Somewhere, I still have a cassette of part of those shows. Ed Garner was elected as the new president. At this point in the incipient history of the organization, a significant proportion of the members actually showed up at the annual meetings. I can't find any attendance figures, but I seem to recall a decent-sized crowd. The CTBA's charter still provides for an annual meeting (the last one was December 1, 2002), but hardly anyone shows up any more. Of course, we don't offer free beer and pizza. What were we thinking?

On April 1, the association co-sponsored (with KOKE Radio, then a country station) another concert at the Silver Dollar South with Leon Valley, the Poverty Playboys, Grassfire, and Southern Select.

continued from previous page

The 1980s: Bluegrass Boomtown

In January, 1980 the Bluegrass Newsletter went to a bimonthly schedule, and in March, the CTBA held its third annual membership convention at the Opera House in Bastrop. The Board of Directors defined five goals for the association:

1. Buy a sound system to be used at CTBA concerts
2. Buy a banner for a membership booth
3. Build the treasury to \$2000
4. Promote one show per quarter in small towns around Austin
5. Pay bands for playing

The "Bluegrass Breakdown" program on KUT-FM was cancelled, and Bill Monroe played the Armadillo World Headquarters (November 19, 1980); the band included Kenny Baker, Wayne Lewis, Butch Robins, and Mark Hembree. I shot up an entire roll of black and white film and managed to get some good photos of Bill and the Blue Grass Boys. About this time, I moved to San Antonio, and for the next eight years, my knowledge of CTBA happenings is derived mostly from the newsletter. In July 1981, Jamie MacLaggan took over as editor and publisher of the Bluegrass Newsletter, beginning with Volume 5, number 4. The CTBA continued to promote shows at the Bastrop Opera House in the summer of 1981, and it was about this time that the CTBA's logo first appeared in print. The mandolin-shaped logo was drawn by Austin dobro picker Leonard Kasza. During the early 1980s, the events calendar began to expand somewhat, and it's clear that there were more venues supporting bluegrass, and more special events in the Central Texas area. The CTBA continued to promote concerts at the Bastrop Opera House. In October, 1982, Dave Marcum launched a new radio program, "Bluegrass Sunday Morning," on KVET-AM, in effect a forerunner of the current "Strictly Bluegrass" on KOOP-FM.

The CTBA probably achieved its high-water mark in 1984 and 1985 with the successful staging (in cooperation with the UT Bluegrass Association) of two "Bluegrass Winterfests" at the Performing Arts Center Concert Hall on the UT campus. The first of these, held February 10, 1984, featured the Doc Watson Trio with Sam Bush, Hot Rize, Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver, and the Fire on the Mountain Cloggers. And remarkably, 2200 of the 3000 seats in the auditorium were filled. On March 2, 1985, the second Winterfest was presented, with the Johnson Mountain Boys and the Whites featured. Since I lived in San Antonio, I was not involved in any of the planning or execution of these concerts, but I can well imagine what a staggering undertaking it must have been to produce two events on this scale. All I can tell you is that both years, when I walked into the auditorium and saw the immense turnout, I was amazed. And the shows themselves were unbelievably good. This was truly the CTBA's finest hour, and the association officers ought to be enshrined somewhere for their efforts. In many ways, the middle and late 1980s were boom times for bluegrass in Central Texas and elsewhere. The newsletter was upgraded and expanded, there were more local events, the Kerrville Bluegrass Festival continued to bring in major talent like Hot Rize and the Whites, and promoter Jane Lancaster staged a series of Nacogdoches Summer Music Festivals with acts like the Seldom Scene, Osborne Brothers, Hot Rize, Newgrass Revival, Nashville Bluegrass Band, Tony Trischka and Skyline, J. D. Crowe and the New South, Jerry Douglas, the Tony Rice Unit, the Bluegrass Cardinals, and others. It seemed that almost every major act in bluegrass was there, and it was at one of these that Pete Wernick ventured out into the campground one evening and spent the night picking with a bunch of us rank amateurs. In the winter, Jane also staged indoor festivals termed "Acoustic Music Conventions." In September, 1988, the final Kerrville Bluegrass festival took place and in October, the first Old Settlers Bluegrass Festival was held in Round Rock, sponsored by the Old Settlers Association, City of Round Rock, and Round Rock Chamber of Commerce. The following year, I saw Alison Krauss and Union Station for the first time at the second festival.

In September 1984, "Bluegrass Sunday Morning" was cancelled. In May, 1984, the CTBA and Ted Miller took over publication of the Bluegrass Newsletter from Jamie MacLaggan, maintaining both the name and the current issue numbering of the publication (the next three issues lack the year of publication). The CTBA also established a new "north" jam at Old Settlers Park on weekends that alternated with the St. Michael's jam. In October, 1986, the "north" jam moved to Cap'n Tom's Barbecue. I believe Rolf and Beate Sieker made their first visit to Austin in January of 1985, and later that same year, the IBMA was chartered (in 1992, the CTBA joined as a member organization). In 1986, the first Tres Rios festival was held featuring, among others, Blue Night Express. Didn't a couple of those pickers eventually become Dixie Chicks?

In 1987, the final issue of the Bluegrass Newsletter was published (April-May, Volume 11, number 2) and in May, the CTBA established the Central Texas Bluegrass Bulletin to fill the void left by the demise of the Bluegrass Newsletter. This is the first publication that the association could truly call its own (and the first to actually sport the association's logo), and Jeanne DeFries was the first editor. The first issue is undated, but was evidently issued in May. Eleven issues in 7 x 8.5-inch format were produced at irregular intervals, the last being the December 1988/January 1989 issue. The date was listed, beginning with the second issue, but no volume or issue numbers were listed. Beginning with the February-March 1989 issue, the Bulletin went back to a standard 8.5 x 11-inch format, very similar in appearance to the Bluegrass newsletter, but with the logo on the masthead. Volume and issue numbers were still omitted throughout 1989, until the February/March 1990 issue was published as Volume 12, number 1. The

TEXAS STATE BANJO CHAMPIONSHIP AND TEXAS STATE FLATPICKING CHAMPIONSHIP 2003



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TEXAS STATE FLATPICKING CHAMPIONSHIP CONTEST RULES

1. The contestant is to be prepared to play 4 instrumental numbers in traditional fiddle tune or bluegrass style. Two numbers will be played in the first round and the other two in the final round should the contestant be selected as a finalist. Maximum playing time of 5 minutes is recommended. (Medley of tunes is NOT acceptable).
2. ALL CONTESTANTS MUST PLAY WITH A FLATPICK. NO FINGER PICKING WILL BE ALLOWED. NO COMBINATION OF FLAT PICKING AND FINGER PICKING WILL BE ALLOWED. The contestants may take only one instrument on stage
3. The alteration or the tuning of the low E (6th) string will be permitted. The low E (6th) string can be changed to any note desired, not limiting the tuning of the 6th string to "Drop D" or a low D note but to any desired pitch. No other string tuning or variance from the standard E(1),B(2),G(3),D(4),A(5) will be permitted. Some slight, overall variance from concert pitch A = 40 will be tolerated.
4. Standard or traditional style capos may be used, but no capos which will allow the alteration of individual strings, such as the Third Hand Capo, will be allowed.
5. The scoring system is fashioned in such a way that it would make it extremely unlikely to have a tie. However, in case of a tie, the judges will determine the winner by using first round scores. The judges will tally the scores at the end of the contest. All decisions are final.
6. When the contestant's number is announced, the contestant will walk to the mike only. No communication will be allowed. Improper dress will not be tolerated (i.e., torn clothing, cut offs, lewd or suggestive type clothing, etc.).
7. Contestants must be present, accounted for, and registered by 9AM the day of the contest. By 9:30AM, all contestants should be backstage so performing order can be established. Order of appearance will be determined by a drawing.
8. Contestants will not be allowed to re-start a song once he/she has begun. In the case of a broken string, the contestant will be allowed to exit the stage, restring, and come back at the end of the contest. The contestant will then pick up where he/she left off to finish their set.
9. Prizes are awarded to all participants. The first place winner receives a prepaid entry to the National Competition in Winfield, Kansas in addition to other prizes and trophies: 1st \$500, 2nd, \$300, 3rd \$150
10. Although this is an open tournament and all types of players are urged to participate, it should be understood that any guitarist that makes a living of \$30,000 a year or more solely from his instrument is ineligible to compete. TSFPC Champions are not allowed to enter for the next two years after winning the contest.

Contact www.bayareabluegrass.org or Barbara Monroe @ 281-993-1620 or Betty Robertson @ 281-879-9441.



MIKE LONGWORTH

Mike Longworth passed away on January 22. Mike was a guitar technician and an inlay specialist who was asked by Martin to recreate the D45 and other pearl-decorated instruments. He set up the Martin customer service department and was the company historian -- his book on Martin guitars was perhaps the beginning of serious study of fretted instruments.

Mike began doing inlay work in 1955 while he was still in high school, and most of his early jobs included the inlaid letter "L" (for Longworth) and a number designating the sequence of his work.

It is interesting to note that Longworth's third inlay job was done for Buck "Josh" Graves (the dobro player for Flatt & Scruggs), and his fourth inlay job was done for Curly Seckler (the mandolin player and tenor singer for Flatt & Scruggs).

Longworth's fifth inlay job was the famous Lester Flatt guitar, hence the "L-5" inlay at the 17th fret which indicates "Longworth Professional Inlay Job #5." Flatt's first name, Lester, is engraved in block letters into a Mother-of-Pearl panel between the 14th and 15th frets, and larger than standard Mother-of-Pearl notched diamond inlays appear at the 5th and 9th frets, with double diamonds at the 7th and 12th frets.

Lester Flatt and his wife invited the very young and talented Marty Stuart to live in their home in Nashville when Stuart was launching his career as a teenager. Stuart found the guitar in a spare room of the Flatt's house and he immediately recognized it as the Martin that Lester Flatt had played throughout his long and illustrious career. Flatt gave Stuart permission to play it and eventually gave this priceless instrument to him.



JIM MCREYNOLDS

James Monroe McReynolds, a Grand Ole Opry member whose high, clear tenor harmonies helped sibling duo Jim & Jesse to a place among bluegrass music's elite, died December 31 at the age of 75 in Gallatin, Tennessee.

"If Jesse was the instrumental mainstay of the group, Jim was the key to their heralded vocal blend," Bill C. Malone wrote in his highly regarded book *Country Music, U.S.A.*

"I never heard him try to imitate anyone else," Mr. McReynolds' brother and partner, Jesse, said recently. "He just sang what came natural to him."

Jim & Jesse's honors included a National Heritage Fellowship Award from the National Endowment for the Arts, a place in the International Bluegrass Music Association's Hall of Honor and induction into the Grand Ole Opry 38 years ago.

James Monroe McReynolds was born Feb. 11, 1927 in Carfax, Va. His father and grandfather were fiddlers. The brothers performed as the McReynolds Brothers, playing radio stations in the southeast and midwest. They recorded for a small label, Kentucky Records, in 1951 before recording for Capitol the following year.

At this point, they were known as Jim & Jesse. During the '50s, they played on many radio barn dances and later had their own television shows in Georgia, Alabama and Florida.

Jim & Jesse later recorded for Epic. In 1964, they joined the Grand Ole Opry where they continued to perform for the duration of their career together. Their first song on the country charts was "Cotton Mill Man." "Diesel on My Tail" made it into the Top 20 in 1967. Most recently, the duo recorded for Pinecastle.

McReynolds' wife, Areta, preceded him in death by two weeks.

numbering, in other words, was resumed in such a way as to make it consistent with its predecessor, the Bluegrass Newsletter. CTBA member Buck Buchanan handled the printing of the Bulletin, and would continue to do so for the next ten years, earning himself a place in the CTBA Hall of Honor.

On May 7, 1988, the association celebrated its 10th anniversary and Worldwide Bluegrass Month by staging the first of eleven annual outdoor public concerts at Zilker Hillside Theater. Wrygrass, the Barnburners, the Grazmatics, Texas Prairie Fire, the Buchanan Brothers, Leon Valley Bluegrass, and the Flaky Biscuit Boys played. In 1990, Don McCalister suggested that the CTBA issue a compilation recording representing all the member bands, to raise funds for the CTBA. Now, 13 years later, it looks as though that idea is going to assume concrete form, as the association issues its first compilation CD.

The 1990s: Zilker and Old Settlers

In June, 1990, the CTBA biweekly jam ended its twelve-year run at St. Michael's Church, leaving the "alternate north" jam session at Cap'n Tom's Barbecue on north Lamar (now Ross's Old Austin Café) as the official CTBA jam, and starting a tradition of "barbecue and bluegrass" that continues in Austin to this day. Tom Allen, the North Carolinian ex-tugboat captain, served as our genial host for the next year and a half. Large measures of bluegrass were picked on the wraparound porch, and stage shows featuring acts like the Weary Hearts and Warrior River Boys were often held on a small open stage in the front yard. In about January, 1993, the jam moved to the Travis County Farmers' market on Burnet Road and for the first time was held every Sunday.

In October, 1992, the CTBA sponsored a fall festival (with the Del McCoury Band) at Jellystone Park, near Waller. In December, John Hood became the editor of the Bulletin. In 1993, the association co-sponsored the Old Settlers Festival. This was the only year that the CTBA was formally involved with the festival, but because so many CTBA members continued to volunteer in subsequent years, and because the CTBA continued to hold its own events at Old Settlers Park, the festival was often erroneously associated with the CTBA in years to come.

A show featuring Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys was scheduled for June 12, 1994 at the Manchaca Fire Hall, but had to be cancelled. In July, 1994, the CTBA jam moved from the Farmers' Market to Ruby's Barbecue, on 29th Street. "Strictly Bluegrass," hosted by Keith Davis and Rod Moag, went on the air on KOOP-FM in 1994. In 1995, the Board of Directors began seeking Cultural Arts funding for the Zilker show from the City of Austin. The grant was received and applied to the 1996 festival. In April, 1995, the CTBA jam moved from Ruby's Barbecue to ArtZ RibHouse, where it remains today, and in July, the association began holding its annual "Fun Raiser" garage sale at ArtZ RibHouse to recover losses (about \$500) from producing the Zilker festival and actually took in \$863, far exceeding its goal. Some time around February, 1996, the CTBA web site went online. At the urging of editor John Hood, and beginning with the June, 1996 issue, the Bulletin was considerably downsized and changed from a bi-monthly to a monthly publication. Chuck Interrante became the new editor in November 1996, then Chuck Brodtkin in April, 1997, Doug Stoker in July, 1998, and the present editor, Steve Zimmet, in March 2000.

For eleven years, from 1988 to 1999, the CTBA held its free outdoor concert series at Zilker Park Hillside Theater in May, through years with good weather and bad, subsidizing it through arts funding (in the early years) and the July "Fun-Raiser." Rising use fees and declining city funding led the association to discontinue the Zilker fest in 2000. Instead, an association jam was held at Krause Springs in May, 2000, and a fall festival was held at Old Settlers Park (by this time, the "Old Settlers Festival" promoted by Randy Collier had moved on to Dripping Springs). Unfortunately, a cold rain kept the crowds away in droves, and the audience was estimated at about 90 for the day. A fall "Pick-Nic" for members was also held at Quarries Park in northwest Austin from 1996 to 1999. Board members began to be concerned about the decline in the association membership (see the January 2001 issue of the Bulletin). In March, 2001, the Board met for a retreat to discuss goals and strategies for the association. A monthly meeting with a featured, paid band was suggested, as well as seeking grants and corporate donations for funding. In October, 2001 another fall festival was held at Old Settlers Park.

Membership: Growth and Decline

Central Texas has never been part of the bluegrass heartland. It is removed both culturally and geographically from the land of the banjo and the mandolin, and despite 25 years of strenuous effort by successive boards of directors, the membership has never grown to any great size. It probably peaked in the mid-1990s, but has declined since then, and we now have fewer than 150 members. I could find very few membership figures; these are all that I was able to locate (some are estimates):

- 1978 61 charter members
- 1988 230+
- 1992 219
- 1993 250
- 1995 312-325
- 1996 335
- 2002 147

continued from previous page

Most of the major festivals are in East Texas, and even when the CTBA maintains a membership table, it is difficult to interest East Texas residents in joining a central Texas club. So far, I have seen no evidence that the Down From the Mountain Tour or the "O Brother Where Art Thou" soundtrack will reverse our declining membership.

Festivals, Concerts, and Workshops

As the above history reveals, the CTBA has presented an amazing array of live music during its 25-year history, beginning with the nascent organization's very first annual meeting. This part of its mission statement has been well executed, with 11 years at Zilker, four years at the Quarries, several festivals at Old Settlers Park, and a variety of concerts by touring bands. The two major concerts at the Performing Arts Center in the mid-1980s were the climax of this effort.

The Weekly Jam Session

The jam session is another success story. It's never been more healthy than it is right now. Pickers can show up at ArtZ RibHouse just about any Sunday and depend on finding an assortment of like-minded jam partners. Dependability and a good host are the key to a good jam session, and we have both. We have been very fortunate in having support from gracious hosts like Tom Allen, Art Blondin, and Zenobia Sutton. If you go to ArtZ to pick or listen to shows, buy something to eat. Art didn't win all those barbecue cookoff awards on the walls for nothing, you know.

In reality, the CTBA doesn't have to do anything to sponsor the jam session. ArtZ RibHouse supplies the location, and all we have to do is show up. For a time the CTBA had a semi-formal "jam coordinator" (Ron Wilbourn, and later Eddie Collins) whose job was to encourage new pickers and to try to break the session into subclusters when the circle got too big. I think the association would do well to reinstate this position. If there's a drawback to the current jam, it's that it's usually too big. It's not unusual to see 20 or more pickers in a circle trying to play the same tune, often without even being able to see one another. Tunes take 15 minutes to rotate around the circle. Someone needs to enforce cell division on the larger sessions.

Education and Promotion Functions

The growth of the association depends on new members, and that means reaching existing bluegrass fans who don't yet know about us, as well as making new bluegrass converts. The CTBA has been struggling towards this goal for its entire life. As I remarked earlier, this isn't really bluegrass territory. Most Central Texans are more familiar with Christina Aguilera than Mountain Heart. Even the sporadic appearance of Alison Krauss on KGSR's playlist hasn't really helped inform the public much, although I do think that radio is the best medium for reaching the public. See "Pitching Bluegrass to Commercial Radio" at <http://www.ibma.org/about.ibma/archived.articles/pitching.bluegrass.asp>

Even as we speak, the IBMA is starting a new "Discover Bluegrass" marketing campaign (details online at <http://www.discoverbluegrass.com/>). Maybe we need to get involved in that.

The Future

At times, it seems as though the CTBA is about to go under, either because bad weather has slammed the attendance at some heavily booked event, or because not enough willing volunteers can be found to do the hard work of the organization's officers, or because not enough people are willing to fork over the \$20 to become a member. But, take heart. It's always been that way, as long as I can remember, and yet the CTBA has survived. Instead of using "In Despair" (the Stanley Brothers) as the CTBA theme song, maybe we should use "I've Endured" (Ola Belle Reed).

Some People to Thank

There are some folks we ought to acknowledge who have contributed more than their fair share to the CTBA. Of course, this is just the short list. It leaves out a lot of important names, but I think special mention should go to Ted Miller, who helped get the whole thing started; Buck Buchanan, who printed the newsletter for so many years; Tom Allen, Art Blondin, and Zenobia Sutton, our hosts; Shawn Spiars, our efficient webmaster; Steve Zimmet, our editor; and especially all of the current and past officers, who devote long hours without pay or even much appreciation from the membership.

Editor's Note: This article was contributed and copyrighted by Ken Brown, 2002. Ken (dobro, guitar) is a native Austinite in the PhD program at UT Austin. Ken plays (mostly dobro) with the Blackland Prairie Boys. He says The Boys don't let him sing in public, and he has the severed microphone cords to prove it.

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