

Central

Texas Bluegrass

IBMA Member

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CTBA Membership Elects New Board Members

The results are in and members of the Central Texas Bluegrass Association have completed their voting for new Board members. As existing board members complete their time on the board, the bylaws of the organization require a vote by the general membership for potential new board members. This year, the members voted in favor of the following new board members. I asked each new board member for his or her plans with CTBA.



Lenny Nichols, Round Rock, TX. Lenny plays Bass and says he's been doing that for the last 49 years.

"I will work with CTBA members and central Texas communities to encourage the appreciation of the bluegrass music of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. I would like to see expanded big events like the CTBA Lone Star Bluegrass Festival, as well as more spaces for bluegrass, including: living room jams, open jams, performances by local musicians and national touring acts."



Jason Pratt, Austin, TX. Jason plays the 5-string banjo and has been playing since January 2011.

"I hope to contribute some ideas and plans on how to increase exposure of the CTBA in the music community and grow the membership base -- as well as help in any way possible to continue the mission to promote bluegrass music, of course!"



Katherine Isgren, Austin, TX. Katherine has been playing guitar for the past 3-4 years and is learning fiddle and stand-up bass.

"I hope to continue to uphold and contribute to the existing traditions and values set by the board members who have served before me. I will work where I am needed and help with the existing events and bring in new members to CTBA. Encourage and introduce Bluegrass to any and all music lovers and musicians young and old."

Congratulations and welcome to the new CTBA board members.

And, of course, a heartfelt **Thank You** to our departing board members for their dedication, commitment, and hard work representing the interests of the association and the support of bluegrass in Central Texas. Leaving us are Stacy Holt, Adam Roberts, Jacob Roberts, Tracie Upham, and Bob Vestal. We'll have more details on the board and the association in the January newsletter. Stay tuned!



CTBA member, **Danny Santos**, for the first time will be taking his band, **Los Bluegrass Vatos**, with him on a tour of Europe in the spring of 2015. Danny has several CDs out on Brambus Records, a Swiss label.

Santos has toured Europe numerous times in configurations anywhere from a solo act to a trio. This will be the first time that the full four-piece band will travel in support of what should be a new, all bluegrass, CD to be released in 2015.

In a creative effort to offset some of the travel expenses, Danny is seeking to hook up with some businesses that might be looking for some exposure in Europe for possible limited sponsorship. Contact Danny if you'd like to discuss any ideas. You can find dates for the tour posted on Danny's site at www.dannysantosmusic.com.

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Meet a CTBA Band - Christy & The Plowboys

by Bob Vestal

Christy & the Plowboys is a band that plays old-time country music, mostly southern rags, sentimental songs, old fashioned dance tunes, blues, and novelty numbers from before the 1940s. Christy Palumbo sings and plays guitar and banjo-uke. The Plowboys include Dan Foster on fiddle\mandolin\banjo and vocals, Jerry Hagins playing banjo, fiddle, and guitar, and the newest Plowboy – Ragtime Willie Webster; not only fiddles on the violin, but also sings, plays a mean slide-banjo, frailing banjo, guitar, and harmonica. Despite what you may have heard, there are presently no Plowboy-Bunnies. So, let's learn a little more about our featured CTBA band - *Christy and the Plowboys*. We'll start with a little regional background.

Christy: Originally from St. Louis, MO. I've been in Austin for 38 years.

Dan: I was born in northeast Texas. I grew up in Van Zandt county and Brazos county, moving to Austin from Denton in 1976.

Jerry: I was born in Port Arthur and lived a couple of places before moving to Arlington, TX, for junior high and high school. I went to college in Philadelphia, PA, lived there about 15 years and moved back to Texas, to Austin, in 1993.

Will: Born and mostly raised in Salt Lake City, UT. Been in Austin just over six years now.

How long have you been playing?

Christy: I've been playing music since I was in the 3rd grade (clarinet). Picked up the guitar in 1968.

Dan: I started playing music as a teenager. My first inspiration was the great songster and guitar player Mance Lipscomb from Navasota, TX. I first heard him play in College Station when I was about 14.

Jerry: I've been playing since 1973 but can't do the math.

Will: Long enough to get to thinkin' I've gotten pretty good, yet I'm always encountering new (to me) musicians like Vernon Worrell recently and old blind Blake recordings that get me thinkin', I still got a lot of work to do!



Christy surrounded by two of the Plowboys, Danny & Will

Has it always been bluegrass for you?

Christy: No, I started playing the popular tunes of the day on guitar...your *House of the Rising Sun*, etc. One of my first tab books I learned from was of Doc Watson tunes. I played old-time, bluegrass, Eastern European folk, and blues after that. Then on to classic jazz!

Dan: I've never really considered myself a bluegrass player. I started off learning all I could about country blues and later seeking my own roots in English, Scottish, and Irish music. Over the years, I gravitated towards old-time Appalachian music. My Dad's people came to Texas from Wilkes County, NC, prior to the Civil War. Through written correspondence, the Texas and North Carolina Fosters have remained connected. Back in North Carolina my

cousin, Tony Jones, hosts an annual old-time fiddler's convention on his farm there near Ferguson, NC: The Happy Valley Fiddler's Convention. This was its 10th year. The fiddlers convention is held on a remote hillside above the Yadkin River, near where both Tom Dula and Laura Foster are buried. Subjects of the famous folk song *Tom Dooley*, both are Foster kin. Among my mother's people were Captain James Cunningham and his wife Aunt Suzie. They came to Texas from Tennessee in

1839 and moved as far west as you could go back then, all the way out past Comanche, TX. James played music and brought a fiddle with him from Tennessee, a fine Italian instrument that resides in south Austin today with my cousin who runs Westbank String Shop.

Jerry: Kind of. The person I bought the banjo from, Mr. Oral Griffith, also gave me lessons and he knew a lot of old songs but he didn't really know any accepted banjo technique. He played in a unique style that combined three-finger picking (no picks) and a brush stroke that he said he got from listening to Maybelle Carter's guitar style. I got the Scruggs book and the Pete Seeger book and learned a few licks from each. I figured out the clawhammer stroke from a combination of watching Stringbean and Grandpa Jones on Hee Haw, and seeing a brief snippet of Kyle Creed on a PBS documentary (this was before VHS so I only saw it once). There was also some footage of Highwood String Band so I also saw Mac Benford's right hand briefly. Right after I figured it out I cut my hand badly at my job at Taco Bell and couldn't play for a week, that was really frustrating.

Will: No, but in the past, there have been periods of heavy doses of nothing but bluegrass.



Christy & Dan with Steve Ashley

If not, why did you switch and how is playing bluegrass different from what you were playing before?

Dan: We play some bluegrass tunes, in an old-time kind of style. I'm working on trying to improve my fiddling by playing in closed positions and flat-keys, and getting more comfortable with second and third position up the neck, skills necessary for bluegrass fiddling. Playing old-time tunes with another fiddler is all about weaving your versions together simultaneously, listening and adjusting two settings simultaneously in to a multi-threaded voice. Bluegrass tends to favor the individual break where spontaneous creativity is not necessarily bound as close to the melody line, but is more geared to the chord progression

and the open framework it provides for improvisation. Those are some bluegrass skills I'm trying to work-on (at least when I'm not busy leaning another weird, crooked Narmour & Smith tune from Mississippi in the '20s!).

Jerry: I've always kept a foot in both old-time and bluegrass. What I love about being a Plowboy is that I get to play both styles and a few in between.

Will: My dad plays a lot of old-time music. I kinda stated there and have been all over the map since. When I was younger I played a lot of rock 'n roll music. So many times after gigs there'd be a party somewhere and a group of us would take over some room in the house and get to playing bluegrass, songs like *Workin On A Building*, *The Hobo Song*, *Blackberry Blossom*; so many tunes. Playing acoustic instruments keeps you honest.



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Working or retired? What do/did you do for a living?

Christy: Retired. Worked as an administrative associate for 32 years at the University of Texas. I do put hours of community work in as board member of the Austin Friends of Traditional Music and also involved with the organizing committee of the Happy Valley Fiddlers Convention in North Carolina.

Dan: Working fool. I grew up carpentering and maintain great respect and admiration for the trade. I've been working as a software engineer since 1988, web developer since 1993.

Jerry: I'm a worker bee for the State of Texas.

Will: Definitely working. Different sideman gigs around town, running a screen printing business, and being a dad.

What is your personal practice regiment like? What do you do to stay in shape musically/artistically?

Christy: I try to keep breathing and sing a lot. Yoga and exercise help with keeping the arms and wrists in physical shape. Artistically, I listen to a variety of music at home and out in the scene.

Dan: Listening first and foremost. I've been long-time tape-trader. Very thankful for the Web and how much easier it is to find recordings of the masters of old-time (and other kinds of) music these days. I like to focus on learning classic versions of a tune. Learning a tune note-for-note (or as close as you can get) from fiddlers like Tommy Jarrell, Daniel Williams, or Ed Haley is not "copying". It is schooling. I've come to believe that in order to really make a tune your own, you first have got to figure out how it goes. I like to take a tune I think that I've got pretty well in hand, then spend some time really listening and learning from versions of the tune by some the old masters and find out just how little I really know about that tune after all. It's like listening for buried treasure.

Jerry: I play a little each day. I have a skin-head open back Harmony with nylon strings that's funky and quiet and I can almost play it undetected.

Will: Juggling fiddle, banjo, guitar, and singing; there's not enough hours in the day.

What do you like most about playing with other folks and with the band?

Christy: I like to harmonize and love the camaraderie of playing with the folks who are of the same frame of mind and musical tastes; especially with the Plowboys. We get together, laugh, make some satisfying sounds and that makes me happy!

Dan: The joyous, happy, fun experience of playing fine old tunes with dear friends is the priceless



Will, Christy, and Dan doin' what they do.



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stuff of which life itself is made. Laughing, talking, and carrying on in between, and always the fine, flying tight-rope conversation of playing together and forming lifelong bonds of friendship through music.

Jerry: I love the diversity of the Plowboy material and the devotion to having fun above all. I think if we're having a good time then the audience will have a good time. My absolute favorite thing about this band is the vocal interaction between Dan and Christy, especially when they sing a capella (Latin for *without banjo*).

Will: I find myself getting drawn to some pretty obscure and far-out bands and tunes from the 78 rpm era of recording. I think the rest of the Plowboys can relate to that on some level, and when we get together it's always an adventure. Christy might sing an old jazz standard or Jerry and Dan might get to sawin' on an old Carter brothers tune. I just lean in and take it all in.



Jerry, Christy, and Dan

How and when did the group get started?

We first got together in 2006 for a gig at the local Odd Fellow Lodge, thanks to Mark Rubin.

Where does the group play and do you have a schedule or website?

We play at the drop of a hat. Our last gig was at the wonderful Pearl Bluegrass get together. We played a mini-set at this year's Austin String Band Festival. Jerry couldn't make it, so we called ourselves the Bat City String Band just for fun. Our website is under construction. It's best to catch us is on my back porch, just as the sun goes down.

When did you get involved with CTBA and why?

Christy and Dan are long-time, sustaining members of the CTBA. It is one of the most important and worthwhile organizations in Austin. We all admire and support the CTBA and appreciate what it does to keep Austin music real.

How important do you think it is to attend one or more of the jams around central Texas?

Nothing is more important than playing music with friends, old and new. Various, we all go to AFTM jams, Rio Rita's old-time jam, CTBA jams, Eddie's annual band-scramble, square-dances, and parties to keep the music going.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start learning how to play an instrument?

Listen first. Listen all the time to the older generations where the music came from. Listen casually and often for your own entertainment, but listen intently when you set out to learn a tune. Find a version you like and dedicate the time and effort to pull from it all the good that you can, note-by-note. Later, you can mix it up with the same from other tunes you've learned in order to make a style of your own.

Reading music is only marginally useful. Very few transcriptions do any real tune justice. Reading music can be helpful, but remember that those are just somebody else's dots; the music they came from is an endless stream. Whenever possible, learn directly from a real live person whose playing you admire and enjoy. That's the best way.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a bluegrass band or perform in public?

Have fun, the rest will follow.

Have fun and the rest will follow. Can't get much better advice than that. And, as usual, it's advice that you hear often in the Central Texas bluegrass community primarily because it's true. Thanks to *Christy and the Plowboys* for continuing the traditions, keeping the music real, and for being in this month's CTBA artist spotlight. You never know...we might just show up some evening on your back porch.



AirCargo CD Release

by Randy Collier and Kevin Willette

Ray Cargo, Randy Collier, and Kevin Willette were fortunate to have been able to record all the songs we grew to love from **AirCargo** before Ray passed away!

The Bluegrass community and all of Ray's friends and family have been so amazing with the outpouring of love and support to help us all get through losing Ray.

The music that Ray created is now on a professionally recorded and mastered CD that became available on Oct. 30th. This recording – **Years** – was made for anyone missing a special someone. He carefully selected songs he sang, conveying them sincerely and honestly. His favorites were about his mom and dad, family, and his beloved wife, Carla.

Ray played in many bands for over 50 years. AirCargo was a name he used when he played solo gigs. He recorded various parts and would play along with his *air* band. At a weekly Bluegrass jam at Artz Rib House in Austin, the three of us decided to meet up elsewhere and play some songs. Although our musical tastes differed somewhat, almost immediately we connected, our voices blended, and the joyous noise took us to places we'd never been. **Years**, the new CD, includes these tunes:

1. Ready for the Times (Allen Reynolds) We re-invent a popular country song, Ray-style. (Ray-Lead Vocal, Randy and Kevin-Backup Vocals)
2. Sweet Sue (Victor Young-music/Will J. Harris-lyrics) A 1928 jazzy swing tune (Ray-Lead Vocal, Randy-Backup Vocal)
3. Take Me Away (Hayes Carl) Always fun to watch our fans reaction to this one and this song took us far away from life's routines and ruts. (Ray-Lead Vocal, Randy and Kevin-Backup Vocals)
4. All About You – The Secret Sisters. We still laugh about learning the lyrics to this cute swing love-song. It's so easy to sub-in other animals and plants. (Ray-Lead Vocal, Randy and Kevin-Backup Vocals)
5. Magnolia Wind – Guy Clark. Ray's vocal track is powerful. Pure Ray. We heard Ray sing this song many times and it takes on a new meaning now ("it's here then it's gone"). Close your eyes-- you might reach out and touch Ray. (Ray-Lead Vocal)
6. Ginseng Sullivan – Norman Blake. Covered by many, from Phish to Tony Rice, this is our take on this classic folk song. (Randy-Lead Vocal, Ray and Kevin-Backup Vocals)
7. Time Has Kept (Windmills) – Ray Cargo. Ray wrote this about West Texas, a land and people he appreciated and loved. We always had requests for this song. (Ray-Lead Vocal, Randy and Kevin-Backup Vocals)
8. Evangelina – Hoyt Axton. A great song in its own right, it contains essential Air Cargo elements: pining for a faraway loved one and interesting melodies and chords, resulting in cool vocal harmonies. (Randy-Lead Vocal, Ray and Kevin-Backup Vocals)
9. Ain't No Trouble to Me – Guy Clark. This is a great example of Ray's sincerity when choosing songs—no matter what, he'd be there for you. (Ray-Lead Vocal, Randy and Kevin-Backup Vocals)
10. Little Bit of This – Ronnie Bowman. A catchy tune about how life doesn't have to be complicated, exactly the way Ray looked at it. (Ray-Lead Vocal, Randy and Kevin-Backup Vocals)
11. A Winter's Night – Gordon Lightfoot. After attending a Lightfoot concert, Leslie said this was one of her all-time favorite songs. We never played this song live, but presented it here for Leslie for all she did for Air Cargo. (Randy-Lead Vocal, Ray and Kevin-Backup Vocals)
12. Years – Michael Tomlinson. Written by Ray's close friend, this song won first prize in the Amarillo College Songwriting Contest in 1979. He seemed proud that we could pull this one off. We put in a little "Devil's Dream" (some of that in all of us). (Ray-Lead Vocal, Randy and Kevin-Backup Vocals)
13. Tattoos of Life – Steve Wariner. A true song, Ray delivers. (Ray-Lead Vocal, Randy and Kevin-Backup Vocals)
14. It's Gonna Be Better Someday – Ray Cargo. Ray said this was one of his theme songs, and "Soldiers Joy" naturally took its place at one of our many jam sessions. (Ray-Lead Vocal, Randy and Kevin-Backup Vocals)
15. Sail Away – Ray Cargo. Ray loved going to the coast, which inspired this one. Challenging to play all the parts live, this one surprised us all once recorded. (Ray-Lead Vocal, Randy and Kevin-Backup Vocals)
16. Pflugerville – Kevin Willette. This song, an anthem to the City of Pflugerville, TX, was recorded live at Hyde Park Grille South (Austin) in 2013. Fans enjoyed singing along with this one.



Meet A Member - Molly Johnson

by bob vestal

CTBA has an amazing diversity of membership; people from all walks of life, experiences, and professions. You just never know who you're talking to or playing next to. Take Molly Johnson - this month's member profile, for example.

Molly completed her Ph.D. in Neuroscience and Behavior at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, with a research interest in human motor control and biomechanics. But, that was after she had already completed a three-year Alexander Teacher Training program at the Dimon Institute in Somerville, MA, and was certified by the American Society for the Alexander Technique in 2001. So, let's get to know Molly.



Photo by Katie Morrison

Where were you born and reared?

After a stint living off the land on a commune in southern Missouri, my parents moved my family to Columbia, MO. My mom and dad were classically-trained musicians (cello and piano) and my step-dad had a passion for old blues, Cajun, and old-time music; together, they inspired my interest in playing music.

How/when did you get to Texas/Austin?


In 2011 I was finishing up a post-doctoral fellowship in MO when I travelled down to LA and met a handsome fellow on the dance floor at the Black Pot Cajun music festival. My (now) husband - a Cajun transplant to Austin - lured me down to Texas in 2012. I am thankful to be in such a vibrant music community.

Tell us about your practice as it relates to music.

I teach the Alexander Technique, which is a method of overcoming bad habits in how we approach our activities. It is relevant for musicians because most of us never learned how to take care of our posture, tension, and movement. The side effect is that we don't truly have control over how we use ourselves when we play. Our fatigue-induced slump shows up in how we sit or stand to play and our pervasive neck and arm tension gets in the way of playing with ease. We try to achieve some technical challenge by just trying harder and repeating the same poor approach over and over. However, music does not need to be a struggle. And it should **never** cause pain. By studying the Alexander Technique, we can develop a more intelligent approach that can shape how we pay attention to ourselves and how we try to meet our musical goals.

Who would benefit most from your method: new, intermediate, or seasoned players?

Anyone can benefit from learning the Alexander Technique. When starting a new instrument, you can adopt basic techniques quickly by learning what aspects of your movement are important to pay attention to. All players can learn to approach practicing more intelligently and to play without the burden of back, neck, shoulder, or wrist pain or tension. Vocalists can learn to sing freely. Performing musicians can gain greater control over their stage presence and reactions to nervousness that might make well-rehearsed music sloppy. Everyone can gain confidence in themselves and develop the ability to move with ease.



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How did your interest in the banjo and old-time music come about?

I started playing guitar in high school, performing as a folk duet with my twin sister, Emily. In college, I picked up the banjo, experimenting with different styles. (Little known secret: the first band I played banjo in was a Monkees cover band.) I got introduced to old-time music living in Massachusetts. I was training to be an Alexander teacher and the clawhammer technique fit well with my studies: the more freely I used my right hand, the better I played and the less tension I felt. I was also attracted to the old-time sessions where everyone plays the tune together and where the banjo's role is to play as closely with the fiddler as possible. I learned how to play by jumping into jam sessions and challenging myself to pick up as much as I could.



Photo by Katie Morrison

Who are your favorite/most influential artist/musicians?

I have been most influenced, not by recordings, but by playing with some amazing fiddlers in Massachusetts. Jon Bekoff, who could play any tune on any instrument, brought new players together with seasoned players and built a community where we could all grow musically. Phil Watson challenged me with crooked rags and F-tunes. Ron Grosslein taught me New England contradance tunes. Becky Miller's style elevated my own playing by bringing out percussive and melodic aspects I wouldn't have created on my own.

Tell us about the band you play with.

I sing and play old-time and gospel music with my husband, Ben Hayes (guitar). We recently joined forces with Katie Morrison (cello) and Tim Keough (fiddle, mandolin, ukelele) to create the Redfire Stringband and played a debut set at the Austin String band festival in October. I also play with Katie Morrison in a project called the Rouxbees. We have been composing original tunes for cello and banjo in a range of styles.

How/when did you get involved in CTBA and why?

I first heard about CTBA when I moved to Austin in 2012. My husband and I love bluegrass and gospel jams and concerts. Doing this interview, though, has inspired me to take more advantage of all CTBA has to offer.

What advice would you give someone just starting out with an instrument?

Don't rush your progress. A lot of people want to get further, faster and so skip important fundamentals of learning and playing. I don't believe people should delve very deeply into musicality until basic techniques of the instrument have been mastered and are being attended to. If I could make a priority list where you shouldn't allow yourself to focus on the next step unless the prior steps are solid, it might look like this:

1. Posture - sit comfortably with your back and head upright, both feet flat on the floor, arms not held up nor dragging you down.
2. Hand and arm motion/technique - for clawhammer: free your wrist motion and land the thumb on the 5th string on all down-strokes regardless of whether it will sound on the up-strokes.
3. Rhy-thm, rhy-thm, rhy-thm.
4. Chords - if not playing them directly, have them in your mind.
5. Melody notes - this is what we focus on at the expense of more fundamental priorities - when we stop fixating on getting the notes right and attend to the fundamentals, sometimes we find the notes are available in a new way.
6. Expression of musical qualities – freely available when all other aspects are coming with ease.

See? Ya just never know. Molly has a wealth of training, experience, and advice she'd be glad to visit with you about. Molly teaches Alexander Technique, Alexander-based swimming and banjo lessons in Austin. You can check it all out on her website at www.integratedmotionstudio.com. Thanks to Molly for being in this month's CTBA member spotlight.



Out and About

An incomplete list of who's playing where

The **Carper Family Band** has a busy schedule this month playing at various venues around Central Texas. You can see their schedule at www.carperfamilyband.com/tour-dates.html.

Looks like the **Bottom Dollar String Band** is playing all over the place, from Nacogdoches to Sante Fe and many venues in-between. Check out their schedule at bottomdollarstringband.com/show-schedule.

Joe Sundell and the Show and Tellers are offering up some foot-stompin' entertainment around Austin this month. See their schedule at joesundellandtheshowandtellers.com.

You'll be able to find **The Austin Steamers** dishin' out more fun than you've had in a long time despite rumors of nuptials. Their schedule is at www.theaustinsteamers.com.

Speaking of traveling all over, **Milk Drive** starts off in Horseshoe Bay and travels through four states just to get to the middle of the month. Whew! See their schedule at milkdrive.com/calendar.

Wood and Wire is in the travelling mode this month, too, but close enough for you to catch them at Gruene Hall on the 12th at 6:00. Schedule info is at www.woodandwireband.com.

Oh, in case you're up that way, since **Geoff Union** moved to Colorado he's (re)assembled a "...six-piece, hard-driving bluegrass band..." called Ragged Union and is well-worth your search to find them. You can start here: geoffunion.com/tour.

When you get brunch-hungry, check out Threadgill's north in Austin on Nov. 2nd and 30th to find our own Ginger, Rob, and Jamie, better known as **Out of the Blue**, 11:00-1:00.

The Sieker Band is not letting any moss grow under them this month as they play in Austin, Lockhart, Liberty Hill, and who knows where else? See their schedule at siekerband.com/schedule.htm.

And, **Four Fights Per Pint** plays Threadgill's Old No. 1's Bluegrass Brunch on November 23rd, starting at 11:00.

Smile Amazon Program

Remember, you can have a dollar amount donated to CTBA simply by registering and purchasing items through smile.amazon.com instead of just amazon.com. Amazon donates an amount to the charity of your choice based on your purchase price. The donation amount comes directly from amazon.com and is not added on to the item price. Sweet!



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Burnt Ends

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The **Lone Star Fest**, put on by the Bluegrass Heritage Foundation, takes place Friday & Saturday, **March 13-14, 2015**, at the Doubletree by Hilton, 981 North Central Expressway, **Richardson, Texas 75080**.

This is a fabulous two-day festival of bluegrass and acoustic country music, with jamming, friendship, fun, and incredible music all under one roof - the beautiful Doubletree by Hilton - Dallas/Richardson!

Featured performers include Suzy Bogguss (Friday night), the Boxcars (Saturday), Marty Rabon & Full Circle (Saturday), Gold Heart (both days), In Achordance, the Herrins, Dueling Hearts, and Tiger Alley. For more information, see their website at www.bluegrassheritage.org/Events.php.

Johnny Lee Vincent, a bluegrass pioneer and the father of the Bluegrass Heritage Foundation's first Star Award recipient, Rhonda Vincent, and bluegrass star Darrin Vincent, passed away October 5th. You can read the full story at www.bluegrassheritage.org/News.php.



The 2015 **Monroe Mandolin Camp** date has been set for September 9-13, 2015, in Fairview, TN. This camp brings together world class instructors of Bill Monroe's style and music during a 3.5 day music conference camp. This music-packed event will provide you with all of the tools, technologies, and best practices you need to further your Monroe musical goals. For info see monroemandolincamp.com/blurbs/bill-monroe-1.

The Stone Soup Sessions, a collaboration between the **Austin Friends of Traditional Music** and the **Texas Music Museum**, continue November 16th, 2:00-5:00 p.m. The event is designed to offer an opportunity for Central Texas area traditional musicians of all genres to come together and share their songs and tunes. The event takes place at the Texas Music Museum, 1109 E 11th St., Austin, and is free of charge and open to the public. All traditional musicians are invited to participate and interested listeners are invited to enjoy the session. For more information, contact David Polachek at polachekdavid@gmail.com or 512 750 8142.



Hillcrest Bluegrass in Lubbock will take a break in November and December but will start back up in January through September on the last Friday of the month. They usually start around 7:00 p.m. at the Hillcrest Country Club, 4011 N Boston Ave. However, they do have **Jeff Scoggins** booked for the last Friday night in March. There's no admission at the door other

than the donations they accept to pay for the room. Everyone is invited to come to the show that night. They are even thinking about doing a banjo workshop on Saturday morning but those details are still in the works. For more information you can check out their Facebook page at facebook.com/HillcrestBluegrass or send an e-mail to Tommy Reece at hillcrestbluegrass@gmail.com.



CTBA Bluegrass Bands

Alan Munde Gazette
Bill Honker
bhonker@gmail.com

Allen Hurt & The Mountain Showmen
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The Austin Steamers
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Mac Wiseman: Stories & Songs

by Duane Calvin

Fortune smiled on me last week as I traveled to help a friend near Nashville, TN, while she was recovering from surgery. She had happened to see the marquee on The Franklin Theater before my arrival and its announcement, “Mac Wiseman – Songs & Stories” One night only, on Tuesday, October 21, 2014. She had been recovering well and wanted to treat me to the concert. What a nice thought, and even more so as there were still a half dozen seats available in the theater.

I have enjoyed Mac’s music since I first started listening to bluegrass. His was a different take and often included more than the standard I-IV-V chords in his songs. In “Jimmy Brown, the Newsboy” for example, he adds a tag line to every chorus using the VIIm-IV-I. He was also one of the first primarily bluegrass artists to “grass up” a popular or standard country song. One other peculiarity of Mr. Wiseman’s – he is not a fan of the banjo. Well, how can you have a bluegrass band without a banjo? That’s part of the “different sound” he brought to the music as he made it his. He did boast of being one of the first to employ a dobro with his band and it was Uncle Josh at that (Josh Graves).

I’ll comment on one more thing before getting to the concert itself. Mac Wiseman is 89 years old and his voice is still strong today. He was one of the founding members of the Country Music Association and helped lead it to prominence. So, it seems strange that they would wait this long to acknowledge his place in moving country music into the mainstream. (He has been a member of the Bluegrass Hall of Fame for some years now.) In Mac’s own words, “I wasn’t angry with them because I consoled myself believing that so many of the voters were young people and didn’t know my track record.” (1)



The concert was a sort of “CD Release Party” as it introduced his new album “Songs from my Mother’s Hand” on Wrinkled Records. It included Mac and Peter Cooper, a guitarist and the co-producer of the album. Other musicians were: Thomm Jutz, also playing guitar and co-producer, Mark Fain on bass, Casey Campbell on mandolin, and fiddler Shad Cobb. There you see it – no banjo. Too strident, Mac says.

Anyway, the format was to sing 3-4 songs, then Peter Cooper would pose questions to Mac to elicit stories, then a few more songs, etc. It worked pretty well. The musicians were very accomplished and the songs were primarily sung by “The Voice with a Heart,” as Mac is known, with occasional harmonies by Peter Cooper and a couple of others.

It was low key and the mostly-gray haired audience really enjoyed it. One could hear other voices singing along with Jimmy Brown, and a couple others, and Mac invited everyone who knew the words to sing along with “T’is Sweet to Be Remembered,” the final number. Casey Campbell was stunning on the mandolin and Shad Cobb played almost exclusively in double-stops. Unfortunately, he “bobbed” as he played and was often out of range of his microphone and we missed some great fiddling on occasion.

The refurbished Franklin Theater is a fantastic venue. It is small enough to feel intimate even if one is seated in one of the rear rows. As the concert progressed, slides of Mac at various times in his life were shown on the brick wall that is the stage backdrop. I plan to buy Mac’s new album just for the history that makes it up and I’ll let you do some reading to discover that! (See the footnote.) Meanwhile, I understand he is working on another album, this time with Merle Haggard. The man just won’t quit! I’m sure glad I finally got to see him, and what a great retrospective it was.

(1) Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/px6lkpp>.



BLUEGRASS JAMS!!!

NOTICE: Be sure to contact the venue and/or host to ensure the jam/show is still active. The only info we have about each of these is what was sent to us. If you find a problem with any venue or need to change your information, drop us a line at ctba@centralbluegrass.org.

Austin

2nd & 4th Saturday, CTBA Sponsored beginner-intermediate jam, 3801 Berkman Drive, 78723, 3:00 - 5:00 pm. Steve Mangold, 512-345-6155.

3rd Saturday, AFTM Contradance, 7:30 - 11 PM, Info: 3501 Red River, \$7, 512-453-8936

1st & 3rd Thursday, beginner/intermediate, 7:00 pm, 512-345-6155.

Every Sunday, Hill's Cafe, 4700 S. Congress Ave, Austin 78745, 2:00 pm

Every Tuesday, Texas Old Time Fiddlers Jam, 8:00-10:00 pm, Scholz Garten, 1607 San Jacinto, 78701. Info: Tom Lindsey, lindseytg@aol.com or 512-301-3856.

Every Tuesday (except the first Tuesday of the month), Waterloo Ice House, 8600 Burnet Road, 7:00 p.m. to closing. Info: Jerry 512-834-1070

Every Thursday, beginner/intermediate jam, Texican Cafe, 11940 Manchaca Road, 6:00-9:00 pm. Info: Dave Stritzinger 512-689-4433

Bandera

4th Friday, 6:30 pm, Silver Sage Corral, east of Bandera. Info: 830-796-4969 (No jam on Good Friday)

Bellville

4th Saturday, Jam & Show (Spring Creek Club Sponsored), Jan-Sep, Jam @ 4:00 pm, Show @ 6:30, Coushatté RV Ranch, 979-865-5250, bluegrass221@peoplepc.com, www.springcreekbluegrass.com

Carrollton

Jam info at: www.meetup.com/bluegrass-142

Clear Lake - First Tuesday, 7-9 at Fuddruckers, 2040 NASA Pkwy, Houston, 77058, Info: http://www.bayareabluegrass.org/Jam_Stacks.html

Corpus Christi

2nd Sunday, 2:00 pm, Heritage Park, Corpus Christi, South Texas Bluegrass Association, Info: Bill Davis 361-387-4552

Dallas

1st Tue., Bluegrass Heritage Foundation jam, 7:00 pm, Charley's Guitar Shop, 2720 Royal Lane, www.charleysguitar.com, 972-243-4187

Dickinson - Every Friday, 7-9 pm, Dickinson BBQ and Steakhouse, 2111 FM 517 East, 77539, Info: http://www.bayareabluegrass.org/Jam_Stacks.html

Fayetteville

2nd weekend, April - November, starts at 6:00 pm, Courthouse Square, info: www.texaspickinpark.com, Tom Duplissey at 512-415-3177

Field Creek

1st Sat, Field Creek Music, 6:00 pm, Field Creek is between Llano and Brady on Hwy 71. Info: Bill Tuckness 325-247-3223

Garland

Bluegrass on the Square between Main & State Streets at 6th from 7:30 - 1:00 AM. Contact: Jim Miller 972-276-3197.

Georgetown

Every Thursday at Dickey's BBQ Pit, 723 W. University Ave, 78626, 5:30 to 7:30 pm, 512-869-8076 or sigi@sigi.us.

Glen Rose

3rd Sat., Oakdale Park, Paluxy River Bluegrass Assn. Jam @ 2:00 pm, free stage show @ 6:00 pm, Friday night camping encouraged, John Scott 817-525-0558

Harwood

3rd Sat., 2-9 pm, Jam & Stage Show, 9 mi. E. of Luling, Hwy 90, Info: Tony Conyers 512-601-1510 or 512-940-3731

Hondo

1st Friday, Hondo Hootenanny, starts at 11 am, Hondo Community Center, 1014 18th st, Hondo, TX Info: 830-426-2831

Kerrville

2nd Friday, 6-9pm, Unity Church of the Hill Country, 1016 Jefferson St., Kerrville, Info: Sandra Lane, 830-257-9892

League City

3rd Sat., (Jan-Nov) Jam 4:30pm (BABA Sponsored) Show at 7:00 pm, Info: Rick Kirkland 281-488-2244, www.bayareabluegrass.org

Liberty Hill

4th Sat., Jam, 4-9 pm, Hwy 29 West, Info: Teresa Garner 512-963-4612

Llano

4th Sat. (Jan. - Oct.), Bluegrass in the Hill Country Jam, 5:30-10:30 pm, at The Badu House, Info: info@Bluegrass-InTheHillCountry.org

2nd & 4th Thursday, beginner/intermediate, 7:00 pm, First Presbyterian Church, Info: Jeff White 325-248-4114

1st Sat., Field Creek Fiddle Jam, 6-9 pm, Field Creek is between Llano and Brady on Hwy 71, Info: Bill Tuckness 325-247-3223

3rd Sat., Pontotoc Fiddle Jam, 6-9 PM, Pontotoc is between Llano and Brady on Hwy 71, Info: Bill Tuckness, 325-247-3223

Medina

2nd Tue., All Gospel Jam 6: pm, First Baptist Church, Info: Linda Barton 830-589-2486

Montgomery

1st Sat., Jam, 10 am-2 pm, downtown historical District, Discount coupons at local KOA, Info: Mike Davis mld@consolidated.net

Pearl

1st Sat, Pearl Bluegrass Jam & Show, 10 am, Pearl Community Center, FM 183 (not US 183) 7 mi South of Purme-la, Info: Ronald Medart 254-865-6013, www.pearlbluegrass.com

Round rock

3rd Sat., 2-5 pm, Danny Ray's Music, 12 Chisholm Trail, www.dannyraysmusic.com, 512-671-8663

San Antonio - Mondays, The Barbecue Station, 1610 N.E. Loop 410, Harry Wurzbach exit, 6:30pm, 210-824-9191

Shulenburg

1st & 3rd Tue., RV Park Clubhouse, 6:30-9:00 pm, Contact: Loretta Baumgarten 979-743-4388 or Camp@SchulenburgRVPark.com

Utopia

3rd Friday, Jam, 7:00 pm, Senior Citizens Center, Info: Skip Doerr, 830-966-6362

Membership and Advertising Rates



CTBA's Volume 2, \$10.00, (includes shipping to anywhere in the United States).

The printed newsletter costs CTBA about \$26/year per mailed subscription. If you can, please select E-mail Newsletter.

Membership Rates:	with E-mail Newsletter	with Paper Newsletter
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CTBA has 100% pre-shrunk cotton, high-quality t-shirts with CTBA's logo on the front, available in Black, White, and Burnt Orange, S, M, L, XL, and XXL for only \$15.00. The Mona Lisa and Earl Scruggs t-shirts are \$20.00.

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If you would like CTBA to review CDs or would like us to include promo material for artists performing in Texas, please send to our e-mail at ctba@centraltexasbluegrass.org or snail mail to the PO Box listed above.

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THE CENTRAL TEXAS BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION WHOSE MISSION IS TO PROMOTE BLUEGRASS MUSIC IN CENTRAL TEXAS.

Our members range from listeners and lovers of bluegrass music to world-class professional musicians who all have the same desire: to promote the music.

CTBA provides a link between clubs, restaurants, and other venues and Central Texas Bluegrass musicians.

CTBA sponsors jams, workshops, provides scholarships to needy musicians, donates to other non-profit organizations, supports radio stations that promote bluegrass music & musicians, and provides festival venues for our readers and fans of bluegrass music to enjoy.

KEEP ON PICKIN'!



Phil Leadbetter.
Photo courtesy penguinpublicity.com.

At the recent the IBMA Awards in Raleigh, **Phil Leadbetter** was honored as Dobro Player of the Year.

Shortly after, Phil said, "I just won the IBMA dobro player of the year. Still in total shock. So many great players out there. I'm not worthy of such an awesome award, so I give all the glory to God. Thanks to my wonderful family and those who voted. Still lost for words."

Phil, who was diagnosed with Stage III Hodgkins Lymphoma in 2011, released a new CD in October titled *The Next Move*. You can read more at www.unclephilonline.com.



Randall's Good Neighbor Program

The process to get this started is a bit of a pain, but it makes donating to CTBA, your local schools, or your favorite non-profit organizations very, very easy. Just go to the link below, print the form and fill it out, enter CTBA's code 9735, and take to your local Randall's store:

http://shop.safeway.com/corporate/randalls/gn_houston_austin.pdf

You can also request the form from your local store.