



*Central Texas Bluegrass Association*

# Bluegrass Bulletin

*Serving the Central Texas bluegrass community since 1978*

*Member IBMA*

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December 2016

## Festival Report: Coushatté Ranch 2016

Unlike last year's festival, which was cool and rainy, this year's festival at Coushatté Ranch (near Bellville) was sunny, dry, and pert-near perfect, although somewhat unseasonably warm. Running from October 27-29, it's billed as the "Pickin' and Grinnin' Weekend." I have no statistics on the grinning, but there was plenty of picking. Attendance was high, the park was jammed with RVs in every slot, and there were jam sessions spread all over and plenty of good





**Della Mae** at the record table, Conroe, March 11, 2014. Let's hope this band regroups and gets back on the road. We miss them. Photo by K. Brown.

**December birthdays:** Chubby Anthony, Mike Aldridge, Butch Baldassari, Greg Cahill, Pat Cloud, Jack Cooke, Sally Ann Forrester, Melvin Goins, Rudy Q. Jones, Bill Keith, Joe Meadows, Russell Moore, Bobby Osborne, Red Rector, Curly Seckler, Eddie Shelton, Benny Sims, Ronnie Simpkins, Ronnie Stewart, Buck White, Sharon White, Dempsey Young.

**December board meeting:** Sunday, December 11, 3 PM at Hill's Café (board meetings are open to all CTBA members)

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music onstage. Aside from the jamming opportunities, one of the things I like best about festivals is the opportunity to hear live performances by bands I've never seen before, or have heard only on recordings. At Farmers Branch, it was Sister Sadie. Here, it was the Trinity River Band and Bud Bierhaus.

The **Trinity River Band** is a family band from Callahan, Florida (north of Jacksonville), reminiscent in many ways of Flatt Lonesome, another Florida band. The band consists of Mike Harris (guitar), his wife Lisa (bass), and children Sarah (mandolin, the oldest at 23), Joshua (banjo and dobro), and Brianna (fiddle, the youngest at about 14). Everybody is an accomplished lead instrumentalist, and the instrumental work, the vocal harmonies and arrangements are as perfect as you'd find in any other professional band — and that's what they are, because about six years ago, the Harris family followed the path taken by the Cox Family, the Cherryholmes family, Flatt Lonesome (part of the Robertson family) and any number of other family bands that have gambled on success as a touring bluegrass band. I'm always amazed that families like this seem utterly unable to produce any talentless kids. I don't get it — how can every single one turn out to be a virtuoso? Although the vocal contributions are spread out over the whole band, Sarah, Joshua and Brianna do most of the trios, so there are usually two female voices in the mix, which is another reason this band reminds me a lot of Flatt Lonesome. Lisa Harris has a master's degree in vocal performance from the Cincinnati Conservatory and has trained as an opera singer. Maybe that's why the trios are perfect.

This relatively youthful band has already produced an astonishing seven recordings, and they've done in by issuing, over the past couple of years, two per year. In 2015, they established their own record label, Orange Blossom Records and this year they've built their own recording studio. On the more recent CDs, they do their own recording and mixing. You can get these records from their web site or from the band on tour:

<i>Time to Move</i>	<i>Better Than Blue (2014)</i>	<i>Things We Do for Dreams (2016)</i>
<i>On a Morning Like This</i>	<i>Jump Off the Ship (2015)</i>	
<i>Today Don't Look Like Rain</i>	<i>Heartstrings (2015)</i>	

The material on these recordings is a mixture of originals (about a fourth) and covers of songs by other writers, including some of the best contemporary bluegrass songwriters (Brink Brinkman, Irene Kelley, Brandon Rickman, Kim Fox, Larry Cordle, Leroy Drumm, Carl Jackson). They've also covered "How Blue," which was a hit for Reba McEntire. Pennywhistle played by Sarah Harris adds a Celtic flair to some of the songs.

I was so taken with this band that I bought three of their CDs. The audio quality is perfect, the package design is excellent (although it doesn't tell you who's singing what part), and the repertoire is great, but none of these CDs will play in my car's CD player. So, on these three records, what's the standout cut? For me, it's "Fences," from *Heartstrings*. Written by Brink Brinkman and Dale Pyatt, it's done as a duet featuring the familiar baritone of guest vocalist Marty Raybon and the pellucid tenor of Sarah Harris. It's a perfect matchup of exceptional songwriting, dobro and fiddle work, and it's the kind of cut that has me hitting the "repeat" button time and time again. If these folks come back to Texas, go see 'em.

[www.TrinityRiverBand.com](http://www.TrinityRiverBand.com)  
[www.OrangeBlossomRecods.com](http://www.OrangeBlossomRecods.com)

On Saturday afternoon, the Coushatta Ranch stage was made available for an open mike session during the supper break. Several solo acts or bands performed, but the standout performance, as far as I'm concerned, was by **Bud Bierhaus**, from Katy, Texas. He's an excellent vocalist and flatpicker (he won the Texas State Flatpicking championship in 2012), but what particularly impressed me was his ability as a rhythm guitarist as he performed three selections for the open mike. Like some of the best professional bluegrass guitarists, he's raised rhythm guitar to an art form on a par with flatpicking. Despite being a resident of Katy, he's probably not very well known here because he performs mostly in California, where he has played with Herb Perderon, Chris Hillman, and Copperline. He's currently performing as a duo, the **Vintage Martins**, with Eric Uglum. Let's hope they do some shows here in Texas.

And of course, another highlight was the opportunity to once again see **Darin and Brooke Aldridge**, the captivating duo from Cherryville, North Carolina. They've had some turnover in their band, and while I lament the absence of Rachel Boyd and later Becky Buller, they've found somebody just as good. **Carley Arrowood**, a college student from Union Mills, North Carolina, contributes superb vocals and fiddle. She was a first-place winner at the 2014 Union Grove Fiddler's Convention. I think a few jaws dropped at Coushatta when she unleashed the fiddle.

Anchoring the other end of the stage was **Matt Menefee** with his weaponized banjo picking. Texas bluegrass fans will remember when Matt won the 2000 Texas State Banjo Championship at the Fire on the Strings festival, and then went on to win the national championship at Winfield. After that, he became a founding member of *Cadillac Sky* and remained with that band throughout their tenure (2006-2011), participating in three album releases on the Skaggs Family and Dualtone labels. Filling out the current roster for this tour was bass veteran **Mark Fain** (formerly with Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder).



Bud Bierhaus and his vintage D-18 perform at the open mike. One of the best-sounding guitars I've heard in a long time. Photo by K. Brown.

The other headline act was **Chris Henry and Hardcore Grass**, who used up way more than their allotted quota of musical notes during their various sets. With a very tradition-heavy repertoire, this bunch manages to somehow combine *blazing fast* and *intricate* at the same time.



Above, Carley Arrowood (fiddle), Brooke Aldridge (mando), Darin Aldridge (guitar), Matt Menefee (banjo), Mark Fain (bass). Below, Chris Henry and Hardcore Grass at Coushatte Ranch. Photos by K. Brown.



# The CTBA Annual Meeting Defies the Rain (Again!)

Last year, a last-minute reprieve from the rain allowed the annual membership meeting to go on as planned at Hill's Café. This year, you guessed it, more rain, and we didn't really get a reprieve this time because we had intermittent showers all afternoon, but the pickers persevered, and the meeting went on anyway on Sunday, November 6. Jamie Stubblefield conducted what had to be the fastest business meeting ever (if you turned around to flag down a waitress, you missed it), asking for approval of some minor changes to the bylaws, and announcing the three newly elected board members (two of whom are returnees).

Sam Dunn, Mike Hurlbut, Nan Hurlbut, Alice Moore, Jamie Stubblefield, Tim Towell, and Bob Vestal will continue to serve through the end of 2017, while Lenny Nichols, Jason Pratt, and Cheryl Waggoner were elected to serve in 2017-2018. Then the music kicked off with the "Board Band," consisting of most of the board of directors (thanks to Shawn Spiars for helping out when it turned out that nobody onstage knew the words to Fireball Mail!), Followed by *One Eye Open*, the *Texas Honeybees*, *Black Diamond*. *Max Zimmet*, *Out of the Blue*, *Jerry Rabun and friends* (Rachel Hutton, Max Zimmet, Lenny Nichols, and Shawn Spiars), *Sharon and Georgia*, *Tom Duplissey and friends* (looking suspiciously like Jerry's band), *Kid on a Pony*, and *Burnt Orange Bluegrass*. Thanks to Duane Calvin for filling in as photographer for some of the bands.





Above, Out of the Blue back in action; L to R, Ginger Evans, Jamie Stubblefield, Rob Lifford. Below, jam session in the shed. Photos by K. Brown





*Above, Texas Honeybees. Below, Burnt Orange Bluegrass with Eddie Collins on bass. No horns in this University of Texas band, long or otherwise. Photos by Duane Calvin.*

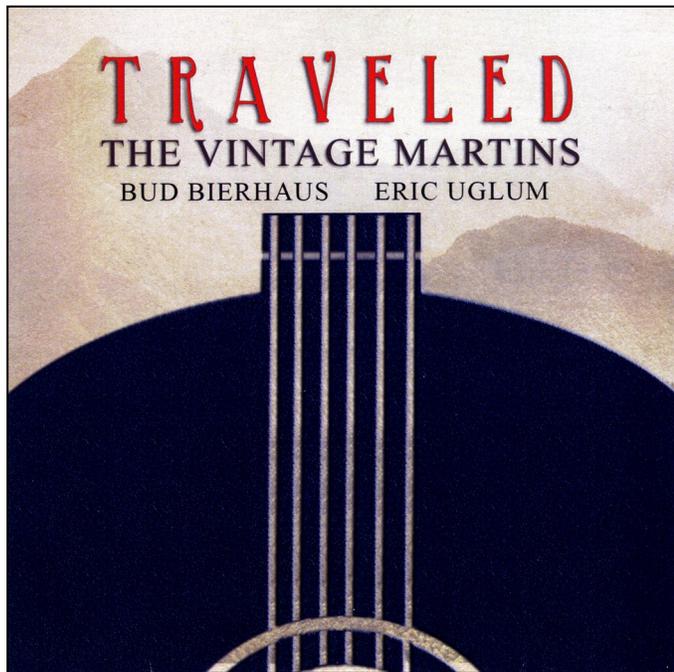


# CD Review: The Vintage Martins, “Traveled” (2015, no label, no number)

Reviewed by K. Brown

*The Unclouded Day / Someday My Ship Will Sail / When the Golden Leaves Begin to Fall / Darcy Farrow / A Mother’s Prayer / Wicked Path of Sin / Silverton Interlude / It’s Only the Wind / Open Pit Mine / On the Banks of the Old Pontchartrain / Ocean*

Eric Uglum and Bud Bierhaus are the *Vintage Martins*, and they are assisted here by Ron Block (banjo), Rob Ickes (dobro), and Eric’s stepsons Christian Ward (fiddle) and Austin Ward (bass). Although born in Kentucky, Eric Uglum is a southern California bluegrass picker who has performed with the *Weary Hearts*, *Copperline*, *Lost Highway*, and *Chris Stuart and Backcountry*. Bierhaus, from Katy, Texas, was the 2012 Texas Flatpicking champion and was also a member of *Copperline*. Although a Texas resident, he performs mostly in California and is probably not as well known here. In 2006, he brought three bands (*Lost Highway*, *Chris Stuart*, and *Eric Uglum and Sons*) to the Sultanate of Oman for a Middle Eastern bluegrass tour.



A little Hank, a little Bill, a Celtic-flavored tune or two, something drawn from the folk tradition, a few songs drawn from more contemporary writers, that’s the repertoire formula used by Uglum for his 2003 solo release *“Shenandoah Wind”*, and it works just as well here. “Unclouded Day” is a familiar standard. “Darcy Farrow,” by Steve Gillette and Tom Campbell, has been done by lots of folks, most notably Ian Tyson and Sylvia Fricker, but in my opinion hasn’t been done nearly enough in bluegrass style, and I’m glad to see it appear here. “When the Golden Leaves Begin to Fall” and “Wicked Path of Sin” are Bill Monroe classics. “On the Banks of the Old Pontchartrain” is a Hank Williams number largely overlooked by revivalists. “Silverton Interlude” is a solo guitar instrumental by Bierhaus. “It’s Only the Wind” is a fine example of the “Mother’s waiting at home” theme written by Tom T. Hall and Louise Scruggs.

This entire album is an exercise in what happens when you apply good taste to music. The emphasis here is on instrumental tone, good vocals, and finding a thoughtful tracklist. Eric Uglum has a distinctive, easily recognizable voice, and although many of the selections have multipart vocal harmonies, Uglum and Bierhaus are the only vocalists. You can listen to complete sound clips online or buy the whole album at <https://thevintagemartins.bandcamp.com/album/traveled>

# 2016 Mountain View Festival, Arkansas, November 10-12

by Mike Hurlbut

This past November my wife, Nan, and I were fortunate enough to return to Mountain View, Arkansas for our annual “vacation”. Mountain View is a town of 2700 people located about 75 miles north of Little Rock, and is the home of the Ozark Folk Center. Each fall and spring the local bluegrass association, along with the city of Mountain View and the Folk Center, hosts a bluegrass event featuring bands from across the country. This year’s line-up included a national favorite, *Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver*, *Monroe Crossing* from Minnesota; *Lorraine Jordan & the Carolina Road Band* from Raleigh, North Carolina; *The Baker Family* from Missouri; *Gold Wing Express* from Okmulgee, Oklahoma; *Jeff Brown & Still Lonesome* from Galax, Virginia; and the headline act this year, *Russell Moore & and IIIrd Tyme Out* from North Carolina. Also featured was a local group of young people called *The Music Roots Ensemble* from the Mountain View area.



*Monroe Crossing* at Mountain View. Photo by Mike Hurlbut.

The Mountain View Bluegrass Association has a program that promotes bluegrass and old-time music in the local schools starting in the elementary grades, and continues through graduation from high school. Volunteers from the association help the kids learn the songs and learn how to play the instrument of their choice. They teach them how to jam with others, and help with scheduling events so the kids have a place to get together and perform what they have learned, sometimes on the famous courthouse square in downtown Mountain View. The association also has a program where local businesses and individuals can donate to help some of the kids rent or purchase instruments so they can participate in the program. It appears to be successful because there are many local kids who enjoy playing the music.

There was also the usual Saturday afternoon jamming on the courthouse square where local musicians and guests (tourists) get together and play when the weather permits. All stringed instruments are welcome to join in for a day of singing and music, and to check out the activities going on in downtown Mountain View.



The *Baker Family* at Mountain View features incendiary fiddle by Trustin Baker. Photo by Mike Hurlbut.



*Jeff Brown and Still Lonesome.* Banjos, lonesomeness, and cabins, the three essential ingredients of bluegrass (the first two may be correlated). Photo by Mike Hurlbut.

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Ed,

My husband says he wants to take up the banjo and join a bluegrass band. I told him, “To pick the banjo, you got to have fire in yer belly!” and he said “Don’t worry, I eat yer cooking, don’t I?” and I said, “To be in a bluegrass band, you got to be lonesome, real lonesome.” He said, “How do I manage that?” and I said, “Take up the banjo.” I think he’s mad at me now. What do you think about all this?

Hortense Curbfeeler  
Zeekamuskeetas, Texas

*Editor:* Lonesome banjos are important, but there’s more. Do you live in a cabin? Is it on a ridge? Is the ridge blue, or some other color, perhaps cyan or puce? Is the cabin lonesome, or just morose? Did you leave the plow in the fields to look for a job in the town? How big is your spike hammer and does it weigh more or less than 9 pounds? Details are critical.



Josh Graves at the Kerrville Bluegrass Festival, September, 1976. Photo by K. Brown.

**HOWARD BURKETT GRAVES  
“UNCLE JOSH”  
SEPTEMBER 27, 1927– SEPTEMBER 30, 2006**

Somehow, this one got past me. The tenth anniversary of the death of Josh Graves was this past September 30, so this should have gone in the September issue. I still remember the day. It happened while I was at the 2006 IBMA meeting in Nashville, and I still remember the crowd of dobro pickers assembled on stage to play a few classic instrumentals in tribute to Josh. Unfortunately, I don't seem to have any pictures, but the throng stretched all across the stage. Josh had been scheduled to play with Curly Seckler, J.D. Crowe, and Everett Lilly that day. Bartenstein's biography, based on oral history recorded by Barry Willis, is well worth reading, as are all the University of Illinois bluegrass histories. Josh is buried at Hendersonville Memory Gardens, Henderson, Tennessee, plot 115 D-3.

Anonymous

2006 Burkette (*sic*) Howard Graves [obituary]. *Bluegrass Unlimited* 41(6):14-15.

Bartenstein, Fred ed.)

2012 *Bluegrass Bluesman*. Josh Graves, A Memoir. University of Illinois Press.

# Bluegrass Bulletin Board

## **STRICTLY BLUEGRASS ON KOOP-FM**

The *Strictly Bluegrass* Sunday morning radio program at KOOP-FM is always looking for new volunteer programmers who share a love of bluegrass music. No experience is necessary, training is free and the schedule is flexible. We create our own playlists and broadcast throughout the Austin area on KOOP-FM and around the world via WWW.KOOP.ORG.

Please contact us at [StrictlyBluegrass@koop.org](mailto:StrictlyBluegrass@koop.org) if you have an interest in joining our collective of programmers, which includes Sharon Sandomirsky, Ted Branson and Gary Mortensen.

## **CTBA LEANDER BEGINNER/INTERMEDIATE JAM**

**Starts December 4**

First Sunday of each month\*  
2-4 PM

Leander Public Library Community Room  
1011 South Bagdad Road  
Leander, Texas 78641

Contact: Bob Vestal (512) 983-5031      [bob@bobvestal.com](mailto:bob@bobvestal.com)

*\* Unless a holiday when the library is closed.*

## **The CTBA Turns 38**

The CTBA is 38 years old. It's not the oldest regional bluegrass association in the US, but it's close to it. It was founded before the IBMA, for example, and there are not many associations that are older. We'll have our 40th anniversary in 2018, just two short years away. Let's see, that's not the silver anniversary, not gold, um, it must be.... ah yes, Brazilian rosewood!

We ought to do something special for the 40th anniversary, so if you have any ideas, contact your president and board of directors. I expect they'll be looking for volunteers to organize something suitable.



## **BRIGGS PICKIN' AND GRINNIN'**

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Fourth Friday night (amplified instruments)



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Bass players get red-shirted: Lenny Nichols and Mark Fain at Coushatta Ranch. Photo by K. Brown.

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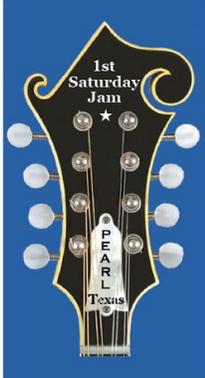
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Jam session at the Split Rail (undated, circa 1976). Dennis McDaniel on mandolin, Jody Brinegar and Anne Solomon on guitars. Can anyone identify the rest? Photo by K. Brown.




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# Parting Thoughts

K. Brown

Since this is my last issue as newsletter editor, I thought I'd leave you with some more or less random parting thoughts. I have to turn over the soapbox to the new editor now, and by the way, I hope you'll all give plenty of support to that person (whoever it might be). What follows here represents my own opinions, not any official position of the Central Texas Bluegrass Association. The January, 2016 issue (Vol. 39, no. 1) will be produced by somebody else, and I'm looking forward to that just as much as you are.

First of all, I'd like to thank everybody who's helped me over the past two years. First and foremost, our webmaster Jeff White, who caught most of the mistakes I committed in various issues, and suffered through first one, and then a second, and occasionally a third revised issue as they poured into his inbox. Turns out Jeff is a better proofreader than I am, and "nfrmsniztgh" is not really a word. Who knew? When I took over this newsletter two years ago (they told me I was "the interim editor until we find a real one") we were still producing both a black and white print version and a color digital version, and Alice Moore helped with mailing of the printed copies until we went all-digital a few issues later. Thanks, Alice.

I'd like to thank everybody who has submitted written contributions — Bob Vestal, Eddie Collins, Mike and Nan Hurlbut, Jamie Stubblefield, Lenny Nichols, Rob Lifford, and anybody else I've forgotten. I'd like to thank Jamie for forwarding frequent news items about CTBA board business. Sometimes he even got them in to me in time to use them in the newsletter.

Thanks to those of you who offered consistent moral support (most notably Duane Calvin, Colee Littlefield, and Jamie Stubblefield). As a result, I'm pretty sure that at least three people have been reading this newsletter. Thanks also to the promoters who have provided financial support by purchasing display ads (Colee, Alan, the folks in Burnet and Leander, and anybody else). And now, some parting thoughts on a few assorted random topics, in no particular order.

**Topic 1: Big Bill Lister.** Improbable as it seems, this is a true story. I am not making it up. Big Bill Lister (1923-2009) was a country singer who toured in the 1950s with Hank Williams and the Drifting Cowboys as his opening act. His given name was Weldon E. Lister, and he was over six feet seven inches tall. He performed on the Grand Ol' Opry with Little Jimmy Dickens, Minnie Pearl, the Carter Family, and others. He recorded "There's a Tear in My Beer" (written by Hank) and passed the original demo by Hank Sr. to Hank Williams, Jr., who later had a hit with it. Big Bill retired in the 1960s to become a firearms engraver, but then came out of retirement in 1983 to record an album on Slim Richey's Tex-Grass label.

In the 1980s, I was living in Helotes and had some office space at the University of Texas at San Antonio. One day, the phone in the lab rang, and it was Big Bill Lister calling for me. "Big what?" I asked. I'd never heard of the guy. He explained who he was, and I said "Uh huh." I pictured him as some talentless old coot with an oversize cowboy hat and an out of tune guitar. I had, after all, never heard of him at that point. He was looking for somebody to play dobro and steel guitar for him, and somebody had given him my name. Thinking now about the date

of that call, I'm guessing it might have been Slim Richey and it might have been connected to his 1983 record. I don't remember if he was looking for someone to tour, or record, or both.

In any case, I told him politely but firmly that I couldn't help him, and I didn't play steel guitar at all. He seemed a bit annoyed by that, and we concluded the phone call. Truth is, I'd never heard of him and thought he might be some random crackpot. So I passed up a chance to play with him.

What's the moral to this story? *It pays to know the history of your music.* I missed a chance to play with a living link to the legendary Hank Williams. Or maybe not. Truth is, in 1983 I was in no way qualified to fill the role Big Bill was looking to fill. Not only did I not own a steel guitar or have any idea how to play one, I also didn't own a professional-grade dobro at the time, nor was I any good on the one I had. If I'd gone for an audition, it would have resulted in a humiliating rejection. I suspect the only reason I got the call was that Slim Richey knew I was in San Antonio, and Big Bill was looking for somebody local. So maybe in that instance, it actually paid to be ignorant of history. But aside from that one odd case, I think *it pays to know the history of your music.* I'm still surprised by how many pickers I encounter who know the jam session standards but have no idea where they came from. How many know that Tim O'Brien wrote "Nellie Kane"?

Fortunately, there are now some good resources for learning bluegrass history. The series of biographies published by the University of Illinois Press is excellent. There are books on Bob Black, Bill Clifton, J.D. Crowe, Hazel Dickens, Josh Graves, Bill Monroe, Curly Seckler, Ralph Stanley and the Stanley Brothers, Roni Stoneman, the Stoneman Family, women in bluegrass, the banjo, the Brown County Jamboree at Beanblossom, West Virginia traditional music, and general histories of bluegrass by Carl Fleischhauer and Neil Rosenberg, Thomas Goldsmith, Stephanie Ledgin, and Robert Cantwell. There are also online resources like the Flatt and Scruggs Preservation Society web site, or Wayne Rice's biography web site. Elderly Instruments carries a wide selection of books on musicians and vintage instrument history. Check their web site. It pays to know the history of your music.

**Topic 2: There's No Such Thing as an "Open Mic."** That's right. There's no such thing as an "open mic." That's because it's actually "open mike." In American English, when we abbreviate a word, we do it phonetically. Thus:

*Refrigerator* becomes "fridge," not "frig"  
*Hydraulic fracturing* becomes "fracking," not "fracin"  
*Lubrication* becomes "lube," not "lub"  
*Nuclear* becomes "nuke," not "nuc"  
*Tricycle* becomes "trike," not "tric"  
*Bicycle* becomes "bike," not "bic"  
*Microphone* becomes "mike," not "mic"

I'll be happy to discuss this further if you want, but you'll have to wait, because I'll be out riding my bic. Phonetically, of course.

**Topic 3: It's Actually "Angelina Baker."** *Angelina Baker* was composed by Stephen Foster (1826-1864) and published in *Foster's Plantation Melodies* in 1850. We don't know exactly who Angelina was, or if she was a real person (although if you Google her, you get "We Found Angelina Baker - Current Email, Phone and Age"), but viewed from today's perspective, the lyrics are patronizing and demeaning, and are now mostly forgotten. I have seen or heard at least two more recently composed sets of lyrics to the same tune. If you want to hear the original, you can visit this YouTube link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0auFH12WAh4>

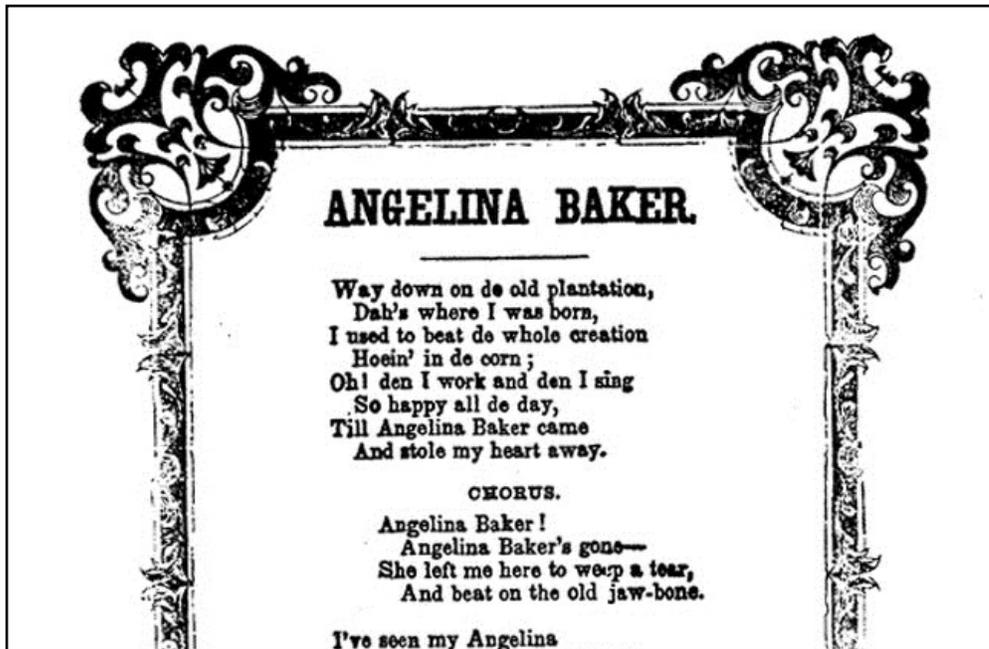
I discussed this topic previously in the January, 2010 issue (Vol. 32, no. 1) of this newsletter, which you can find online here:

[http://centraltexasbluegrass.org/Adobe\\_Newsletters/Jan10.pdf](http://centraltexasbluegrass.org/Adobe_Newsletters/Jan10.pdf)

Stephen Foster himself is revealed in a new book published earlier this year:

O'Connell, JoAnne

2016 *The Life and Songs of Stephen Foster*. Maryland, Rowman and Littlefield.



The antebellum lyrics to Angelina Baker don't pass muster today, but the music endures.

**Topic 4: An Open Letter to Festival Promoters.** This topic is addressed to the handful of people in Texas who do the hard work and financially risky enterprise of putting on bluegrass festivals for us to enjoy. There aren't many of you (I wonder why?); it's always a gamble on the weather, it involves months of hard behind-the-scenes work, you don't get to sit down during the whole weekend, everybody's talking to you at once, and hardly anybody remem-

bers to thank you when it's all over (while you're picking up the trash). I wonder that more people don't jump into this exciting world. But while I have your ear, please listen to what I have to say.

I've been doing the bluegrass thing for pretty close to four decades now. When I first started playing and going to festivals, there was an *unwritten but clearly understood rule* that political and religious debates were to be left at home. You don't discuss that stuff at bluegrass festivals. In fact, nearly all of us, I suspect, go to festivals in part to escape that sort of thing.

This rule isn't written down anywhere, and it isn't engraved on any tablets that I know of, but 40 years ago *everybody knew it, everybody understood it, and everybody followed it*. No politics or religious proselytizing at the bluegrass festival! And especially over the last couple of years, we've needed that rule more than ever. It's just common sense, but it looks to me like common sense is becoming extinct.

I'm sad to say that I'm starting to see that rule crumble at the edges. Maybe some of us have forgotten it, or maybe some of the newer pickers never learned it, but I'm starting to see preaching from the stage, both political and religious, from MCs and performers. I'm not talking about what happens on Sunday morning during the bluegrass gospel sets, I'm talking about what happens Friday night and Saturday night. It's microphone abuse, that's what it is. About two years ago, I heard an onstage expression of religious bigotry from one of the performers so offensive that I got up and walked out of the auditorium. It was at an event promoted by a sponsor who supports this newsletter with display ads. Many of the MCs and performers seem to feel they're addressing like-minded audiences (indeed, I've heard some of them say so onstage), but maybe your audience isn't as like-minded as you think. At least until you drive away anyone who doesn't share your political or religious philosophy. Then it'll be truly like-minded, but also smaller.

We need to build the bluegrass audience, and that means gathering in people who share our love of bluegrass, but not necessarily our politics or our religious orientation. I don't need to know if you're a Democrat or a Republican, all I need to know is, can you please tune that banjo and quit noodling during the guitar break? If we're going to continue to build the bluegrass community, we need more diversity, not less.

In the ready room behind the stage at Coushatta Ranch, there's a sign posted on the wall reminding performers to please "keep the jokes clean and watch your language." I think that's a good idea, but I think we now need another sign reminding both the performers and MCs to keep the political and religious exhortations off the stage. And that's why I'm addressing this to the promoters. If the MCs and performers you hire can't confine themselves to bluegrass during the weekend, don't invite them back next year. If you know that a particular performer is prone to political bloviating during the Saturday night set, don't hire them. Find somebody else. I go to bluegrass festivals to get away from dissension and exhortatory tirades for a weekend. I don't drag my lawn chair down to the stage because I want to hear more of it.

You promoters, maybe you aren't necessarily responsible for everything said onstage, but maybe you do need to start cautioning every performer about microphone abuse. And maybe you need a suitable warning sign in the green room. It saddens me to think that after 40 years of wonderful festival experiences as part of our great Texas bluegrass community, the day might

be coming when I no longer want to go to them.

OK, that's all I've got. Support your new editor with news, reviews, or just a word of encouragement. See you at the jam, and by the way, the next tune is your call. What's it going to be, and what's the key?



**Danger in the Air** at the Kerrville Bluegrass Festival, September, 1986. Left to right: Drew Garrett (bass), Robin Macy (guitar), James McKinney (banjo), Andy Owens (mandolin). Robin later went on to become a founding member of the Dixie Chicks. Photo by K. Brown.

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# CTBA Artists and Bands

**Cole Anderson**  
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acbluegrill@aol.com

## **Better Late Than Never**

Duane Calvin (512) 835-0342  
BLTNbluegrass@gmail.com

## **Black Diamond**

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clydemiddleton68@gmail.com

## **Blazing Bows**

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caracooke@gmail.com

## **Blue Country Grass**

Ben Buchanan (512) 263-7193

## **Blue Creek Bluegrass Gospel Band**

Bing Rice (830) 253-7708  
bluecreekbg.com  
bluecreekbing@cs.com

## **Bottom Dollar String Band**

John Ohlinger (512) 431-5150  
bottomdollarstringband@gmail.com

## **David & Barbara Brown**

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## **Carper Family Band**

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## **Chasing Blue**

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www.chasingblueband.com

## **Christy & the Plowboys**

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## **Fletcher Clark**

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## **Eddie Collins**

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## **Concho Grass**

Randy Blackwood (325) 227-2074  
https://www.facebook.com/ConchoGrass

## **David Diers & #910 Train**

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daviddiersbooking@gmail.com

## **Four Fights Per Pint**

Jay Littleton (512) 848-1634  
bluegrassman@usa.com

## **High Plains Jamboree**

Brennen Leigh  
brennenleigh@zoho.com  
highplainsjamboree.com

## **Hill Country Harmonizers**

Elise Bright (817) 501-1172  
musicgirl3205@gmail.com

## **Kid on a Pony**

Don Douglas (512) 608-3859  
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## **Lone Star Swing**

Gary Hartman (979) 378-2753  
gh08@txstate.edu

## **Los Bluegrass Vatos**

Danny Santos  
danny\_santos@hotmail.com

## **The Lost Pines**

Talia Bryce (512) 814-5134  
thelostpines@gmail.com  
www.lostpinesband.com

## **Missing Tradition**

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## **Rod Moag & Texas Grass**

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## **Alan Munde**

banjonbass@outlook.com

## **One Eye Open**

Max Zimmet (512) 924-0505  
www.OneEyeOpenBand.com

## **Out of the Blue**

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(512) 923-4288  
jamie5011@aol.com  
www.outoftheblue.ws

## **Pearl and the Polka Dots**

Rachel Bates  
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## **The Pickin' Ranch Ramblers**

Richie Mintz  
Ritchie@ritchiemintz.com

## **Pine Island Station**

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pineislandstation@gmail.com  
www.pineislandstation.com

## **The Piney Grove Ramblers**

Wayne Brooks (512) 699-8282  
(877) 899-8269  
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## **The Prime Time Ramblers**

Jacob Roberts  
jrobertsrr@gmail.com

## **James Reams & the Barnstormers**

(718) 374-1086  
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www.jamesreams.com

## **Redfire String Band**

Molly Johnson  
molly@integratedmotion-studio.com

## **Rusty Razors**

Patrick Davis (512) 802-7438  
https://rustyrazors.bandcamp.com

## **Shawn Spiars**

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## **The Sieker Band**

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## **The Stray Bullets**

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## **String Beans**

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## **Texas Honeybees**

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## **Woodstreet Bloodhounds**

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## **West of Waterloo**

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## **Max Zimmet**

mzimmet@austin.rr.com  
www.maxzimmethotpickinbluegrass.com  
(512) 924-0505

# CTBA Area Jams and Events

## AUSTIN AREA

**Every Sunday**, 3 PM-??, CTBA Sunday jam at Hill's Café, 4700 S. Congress; (512) 851-9300.

**2nd and 4th Saturday**, 3-5 PM, beg./int. jam at Wildflower Terrace, 3801 Berkman Drive; Steve Mangold (512) 345-6155.

**1st and 3rd Thursday**, 7-9 PM, beg./int. jam, Northwest Hills area; Steve Mangold (512) 345-6155.

**Every Thursday**, 6-9 PM, beg./int. jam, Texican Café, 11940 Manchaca Road; Dave Stritzinger, (512) 689-4433.

**2nd Thursday**, bluegrass jam at Texas Barber Services, 2301 E. Riverside Dr, #400A; Kurt Phillips (512) 330-4895.

**Every Tuesday**, 8-10 PM, Texas Old Time Fiddling, Scholz Garten, 1607 San Jacinto; (512) 474-1958.

## BANDERA

**4th Friday** of each month except Good Friday, November, and December at Silver Sage Corral – east of Bandera. Starts at 6 PM. For more info call (830) 796-4969  
silversagecorral.org

## BELLVILLE

Texas Bluegrass Music jam/show Jan. through September, **4th Sat**; 4pm jam, 6:30 pm show. Coushatta Recreation Ranch, 2812 Nelius Rd. (936) 697-5949 coleebiller@aol.net  
www.TXBluegrassMusic.com  
Plenty of RV camping, restrooms, showers.

## BLANCO

**First Saturday**, 2-5 PM at Buggy Barn Museum, 1915 Hwy 281 N; contact Deanna Dosser, (830) 554-0006

## CUERO

**First and 3rd Thursday**, 5-8 PM, acoustic jam at The Emporium, 417 E. Newman St.; Darrell Ferguson (256) 714-0766

## DRIPPING SPRINGS

**Last Saturday** of each month, 3 PM, jam at Hudsons on Mercer St.; contact Cliff at (701) 770-8962 or telecliff@hotmail.com

## FAYETTEVILLE:

**2nd Saturday**, Fayetteville Picking Park jam Jan.-Nov. beginning at 1 PM on the courthouse square. Acoustic instruments only. For info: banjobooklady@yahoo.com

## GARLAND

Bluegrass on the Square: **Every Saturday**, March- November between Main and State Sts. At 6th, 7:30 PM to 1 AM

## GLEN ROSE

**3rd Saturday**, Oakdale Park, Paluxy River Bluegrass Association, free stage show and jam; potluck and jam Friday night before. Jim Chapman (469) 231-6616.  
<http://www.paluxybluegrass.com>

## HOUSTON

**1st Tuesday**, Fuddruckers, 2040 NASA Rd 1  
(281) 333-1598

## JOHNSON CITY

**3rd Saturday** except in December, 2-6 PM, jam at The Dome, 706 W. Main St., Hwy 290 W; Charlene Crump, (512) 632-5999.

## LEAGUE CITY (BABA)

**3rd Saturday**: Jam 5 PM, Stage show 6:30 PM Jan- Nov., League City Civic Center, 300 W. Walker St. (281) 636-9419. Sponsored by Bay Area Bluegrass Association.

## LILLIAN

**2nd Saturday**, 4 PM jam, 7 PM show, First Baptist Church, \$4; contact Dale Brawner (972) 935-4525.

## LLANO

**4th Saturday**, 2 PM, jam at Fuel Coffee House, 106 East Main St.; (325) 247-5272; [www.fuelcoffeehouse.org](http://www.fuelcoffeehouse.org)

## MEDINA

**2nd Tuesday**, all gospel jam, 6 PM at First Baptist Church; contact Linda Barton (830) 589-2486.  
**2nd Friday**, jam at 6 PM, Masonic Lodge; contact Maude Arnold (830) 796-8422.

## PEARL

**1st Saturday**: Jam all day/night, stage show, 12:15 PM-6:15 PM; food and RV hookups available. Pearl Community Center, on FM 183, 7 mi. south of Purmela; contact [info@pearlbluegrass.com](mailto:info@pearlbluegrass.com). Check web site for show schedule: [www.pearlbluegrass.com](http://www.pearlbluegrass.com)

## ROUND ROCK

**3rd Saturday**, 2-5 PM except November and December, jam at Danny Ray's Music, 12 Chisholm Trail; (512) 671-8663.  
[www.dannyraymusic.com](http://www.dannyraymusic.com)

## SAN ANTONIO

**Every Monday**, 6:30-8:30 PM, at The Barbecue Station, 1610 NE Loop 410 at Harry Wurzbach exit; (210) 824-9191.

## SCHULENBERG

**1st and 3rd Tuesday**, 6 PM, jam at Schulenberg RV Park Community Center, 65 N. Kessler Ave. Laretta Baumgarten (979) 743-4388; [camp@schulenbergrvpark.com](mailto:camp@schulenbergrvpark.com)

## TOMBALL

**4th Saturday**, 4 PM, bluegrass jam at Kleb Woods Nature Center and Preserve, 20303 Draper Road, Tomball. (281) 373-1777 or (281) 910-4396.

## Curbfeeler's Sundries.

Emu jerky, live crawdads, bear traps, jawbreakers, milled flooring, cane fishing poles, pickled eggs, overalls, shotgun shells, sorghum molasses, lottery tickets, barbed wire, cattle guards, beans, kerosene, outboard motor oil, inboard motor oil, harness and tack of all kinds, peacans, chilipetins, japaleeno candy, gingham curtains, lag bolts, carriage bolts, gravel by the cubic yard, weed eater line, surfcasting weights, flaxseed poltices.

Rufus Curbfeeler, Prop.  
Catwater, Texas

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Box 9816  
Austin, Texas 78766-9816

## Merchandise

Compilation CD of member bands, vol 2	\$10
CTBA logo T-shirt (black, white, orange)	\$15
Earl Scruggs design T-shirt	\$20
Mona Lisa design T-shirt	\$20



## PINE ISLAND STATION

\*Janine Carter, mandolin \* Gary Carter, bass \* Brian Meadors, guitar \*  
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[www.pineislandstation.com](http://www.pineislandstation.com)