



Artwork by Emily Isbell

THE GRASSY GAZETTE

Spring 2022

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Y'all, let me tell you what: COVID-19 is in sharp remission, Central Texas is opening up like crazy, and **bluegrass music is blooming across the region**. CTBA members and member-bands are working again, booking their calendars solid. The **CTBA Sunday jam** has been busy as all get-out the past several weeks, with upwards of **30-40 jammers** and two if not three jam circles going - **many thanks to Oskar Blues Austin for their partnership!** We are hosting **CTBA Memorial Fest** again this year and working super-duper

hard to deliver a **Band Scramble**, too. And, just this month, we have **Old Settlers Music Fest** and the **Bluegrass Heritage Festival** to look forward to. Most importantly, we have opened up the **CTBA Willa Beach-Porter Scholarships for 2022** - please head on over to CentralTexasBluegrass.org/Scholarship and apply! Lastly, if you are not currently a member of the CTBA, I strongly encourage you to **join today!** **CTBA membership is up 40% over last year (!!!)**, and the more members we have, the more good work we can do supporting bluegrass in Central Texas.

See you out there, y'all!

Jon Lundbom

President, Central Texas Bluegrass Association

MEMORIAL FEST - SAVE THE DATE!

CTBA Memorial Fest is on for 2022! **Sunday, June 5th**, at **Oskar Blues Austin**. We'll start the **jam at 1PM** and have CTBA member and member-band **performances beginning at 3PM**. And, importantly, Oskar Blues will be **donating a portion of the day's sales** to the CTBA! *Buy a beer for bluegrass?* Anyway: mark your calendars, more info ASAP...



OLD SETTLER'S MUSIC FESTIVAL 35th EDITION

April 21-24, 2022



Old Settler's Music Festival returns in fewer than three weeks! After a wildly successful post-quarantine reboot, OSMF is back for its **35th edition** in **Tilmon, TX**. This year, legend **Del McCoury** performs Friday and Saturday night as **artist in residence**. We're also very excited to see **The**

Steep Canyon Rangers, Sierra Hull, Peter Rowan, Leftover Salmon, and Austin's very own Women of Western Swing, featuring an all-star lineup of some of Austin's finest genre-crossing pickers.

As in previous years, **the CTBA is proud to sponsor OSMF** and will also be sponsoring a series of **workshops** with some fine picking talent leading. We will have Saturday afternoon seminars with **Del McCoury (!!!), Los Texmanics, Ludiker House**, and more!



And the CTBA will be **on-site during the festival** with a table to say howdy and hello to old and new friends alike. We'll have lots of information and **CTBA swag** for sale. If you're a **member or interested in becoming one**, feel free to **join or renew** your membership right there!



If you are a CTBA member interested in **volunteering** at OSMF, please get in touch with us at **CTBA@CentralTexasBluegrass.org**.

For more information, updates, and ticket sales, visit the **[OSMF website](#)**. You can also connect with OSMF on **[Facebook](#)**, **[Instagram](#)**, and **[Twitter](#)**.

BLUEGRASS HERITAGE FESTIVAL - *THIS WEEKEND!!*

April 8-10, 2022

Our good friends at **Bluegrass Heritage Foundation** are hosting their annual spring festival at the **Doubletree Dallas near the Galeria** in **Farmer's Branch, TX** this weekend!

Headliners include **Special Consensus, Appalachian Roadshow, and The Tennessee Bluegrass Band**. There will be some terrific workshops, along with the **TX State Championships** for banjo, guitar, and mandolin! Our sources indicate there will even be an opportunity to **jam with Special Consensus** on Saturday at 6PM!



As always, accommodations are available onsite at the **Dallas Doubletree near the Galeria**. There will be rooms dedicated to **all-night jamming**, as well as quiet floors for the more sensible among us, seeking a good night's rest!

More information about the festival and the Bluegrass Heritage Foundation can be found [here](#).



WOODTONE STRINGS CTBA BUSINESS MEMBER FEATURE

By Jon Lundbom

The CTBA is thrilled to welcome business member **Woodtone Strings**, a new project from **Austin resident and native son Devin Shawn**. Devin left his desk job a decade ago to focus on [CountryGuitarOnline.com](#), which he has grown to remarkable success. Now, he has partnered with **Black Diamond** to produce **his own line of strings**.



Woodtone Strings makes use of Black Diamond's digitally-controlled manufacturing process to ensure immaculate attention to detail. For guitar, Woodtone offers their "**Country**" series - lower tension, bigger tone - as well as a "**Bluegrass**" series - medium tension and thicker core wire for extra volume. They also produce strings for **banjo, mandolin, fiddle, and resonator guitar**.

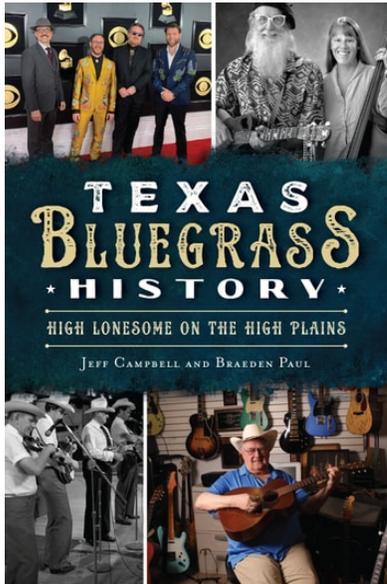
Just this month, Woodtone and Black Diamond are proud to launch two new lines of guitar strings using a new **nickel-infused alloy wrap wire**. The infusion of nickel (and other proprietary materials) ensures a remarkably new sound and increased string life. Black Diamond will be branding these strings "Nashville Bronze," but just look for the "**nickel infused**" (and Austin-based!) lineup from Woodtone.

More information is available at [WoodToneStrings.com](#).



TEXAS BLUEGRASS HISTORY: HIGH LONESOME ON THE HIGH PLAINS

Book Review by Celebrindal Roberts



"Texas Bluegrass History: High Lonesome on the High Plains," written by Jeff Campbell and Braeden Paul, is the first published work detailing Texas' Bluegrass history.

It is written in chronological order and includes bluegrass musicians from the beginning of bluegrass to current day. Jeff Campbell is the director of the Historical Preservation Society in Plano, Texas which is a nonprofit organization that has published several history books.

The idea for the book came while sitting around a campfire while volunteering at one of the Bluegrass Heritage Foundation's festivals. Braeden met Jeff while Braeden was playing with bluegrass band Texas True, who opened the festival every year.

An article written by Dr. Rod Moag about the history of bluegrass in Texas provided a spark of curiosity for Braeden. He set out to find more and stumbled upon old record of Holly Bond and the Bluegrass Texans. This traditional bluegrass coming out of Dallas, Texas was an exciting bit of history that, Braeden believed, needed to be documented and recognized as authentic bluegrass coming right out of the heart of Texas.

This book spans time, and other names included are Peter Rowan and Alan Munde. The interview with Peter Rowan spans subjects from tacos to the Allman Brothers. Big thanks to Jeff and Paul for all the work and passion behind this project to preserve the rich history of bluegrass right here in Texas.

Order your copy today on Amazon.com or directly from the publisher.

You can also watch CTBA member **Chip Bach interview Jeff and Braeden** about their exciting new book on the [CTBA YouTube channel here.](#)



...UNLESS IT'S THE ROUSE BROTHERS! BLUEGRASSER YOU SHOULD KNOW ("BUSK"): SHARON SANDOMIRSKY

Profile by Julian Root



Sharon (right) performing with Tommy Jarrell (center)

*(The title comes from Sharon's afterthought to her response about one of the songs she would be happy to never hear again. **Read on to learn which tune never to call around her...**)*

So here at the CTBA, we often plug **'Strictly Bluegrass,'** the Sunday morning radio stalwart of our preferred genre, aired by **KOOP 91.7.** They even plug us, as we **underwrite the show!** Most readers probably know this. What some readers may not know is that **the show's most tenured host among a rotating cast is also one of the most tenured bluegrass denizens in Texas—if not the entire country.**

Born in Saskatchewan (that's in Canada, folks), **Sharon Sandomirsky** was bit by the old-time bug before she found her way to bluegrass. She moved to Durham, NC in 1968, where she joined up with Bill Hicks and the rest of the **Fuzzy Mountain String Band** (see *photo below*). She played guitar on their second album, *Summer Oaks & Porch* (Rounder 0035), which drew heavily from the group's friendship and mentorship with **Alan Jabbour and Tommy Jarrell.**

She went on to form a close friendship with **Alice Gerrard** (remember the name **Hazel and Alice?** Yeah, *that* Alice). She played extensively with Alice, as well as Gail Gillespie, as a member of **the Herald Angels.**

Want more?

OK, Sharon co-founded the **Sugar Hill record label** with her then-husband in 1978. If you need a little reminder... "**Skaggs and**

Rice." Dolly Parton, Doc Watson, Jerry Douglas, Guy Clark... All these and more have recorded with Sugar Hill, and Sharon knows most of them from her direct work with the label and its artists. **Tim O'Brien** once had to remind Sharon who *he* was when he walked up and said hello to her at a festival.



Sharon moved to Austin in 1991, and has been here ever since. **She's been one of Central Texas' only bluegrass DJs for virtually 30 years.**

So, why don't you already know all this? Well, as in many a country song (and Sharon knows most of 'em), things don't always work out gravy for the woman. Furthermore, Sharon embodies the community spirit of bluegrass and old-time music. For her, it's clearly more about the music and the community the songs build than about attaining celebrity status.

When she hosts "Strictly Bluegrass," listeners will know by the segment's end that they've been guided by a woman with both encyclopedic knowledge of bluegrass (and, yes, old-time) music as well as an undying affection for its players, listeners, and history. Oh, and listeners can rest assured that--at least on Sharon's shows--they'll never hear "Orange Blossom Special" **...unless it's the Rouse Brothers!**

Tune in every Sunday morning to KOOP from 10-noon to hear the finest in classic and modern bluegrass sounds, where Sharon still DJs several times a month. More info on "Strictly Bluegrass" [here](#).



REFLECTIONS ON PEARL

By Liz Sutton

In 1932 a young woman graduated from a four-room log schoolhouse built in 1884, nestled in the folds of the Texas Hill Country. 90 years later, her son walks the halls of that



same schoolhouse, photographing a very different scene from the one his mother knew.

That original schoolhouse still stands outside a 'newer' building (erected 115 years ago), which has served as the Pearl Community Center since 1958. Nowadays, the schoolhouse is mostly quiet.

However, for one weekend per

month, the old schoolhouse comes alive with the hustle and bustle of bluegrass pickers, gridders, and a small but dedicated group of volunteers that run a kitchen to help fund the PCC.

On the first Saturday of every month (except September), the PCC has hosted a bluegrass jam for over 30 years. People from across the country will drop in, as musicians from across the state come to play music and camp in the RV park built on site. In March, the group Addicted to Bluegrass came up from Corpus Christi to visit, and a Montana man came back to play with the new friends he's made at Pearl while wintering in Texas this year.

Before being indefinitely shut down because of COVID's rampant spread, families and other groups would come in as early as Thursday to make sure they got the RV slot they liked, and music would ring through the halls most of Friday and Saturday. Regular attendees have had the joy of watching many young musicians grow through the years. The current crop features Izaak Mora with Charlotte and Parker Jensen - a group that has started performing around the Georgetown/Austin area, and often plays at Pearl's stage show.



Through the past two years, the PCC jam shrank as people have passed on or moved away, and of course by the effects of COVID shutdowns. Dedicated souls like Ron Medart and Connie Long spearhead the non-profit organization behind the Pearl Community Center and have kept things running through the pandemic.

The return of spring and loosening of COVID restrictions has seen the small band of pickers that restarted the jam last May start to grow again. There is still plenty of room in the on-site RV park, but the bands and pickers and gridders are starting to return. Hopefully the circle will be unbroken, and the jam will continue to be a tradition that brings together people from all walks of life for many years to come.

Plan your visit to Pearl at PearlBluegrassJam.org.



CTBA BUSINESS MEMBERS

The CTBA is proud to have the following businesses as members, please consider supporting them as they support Bluegrass in Central Texas!

Barton Springs Mill

BartonSpringsMill.com

Country Guitar Online

CountryGuitarOnline.com

Heart & Hands Massage

Madrone Coffee Co.

MadroneMountainCoffee.com

Old Settler's Music Fest

OldSettlersMusicFest.org

St. Elmo Brewing Company

StElmoBrewing.com

Texas Bluegrass Music/Salmon Lake Park

TXBluegrassMusic.com

Vista Brewing

VistaBrewing.com

Woodtone Strings

WoodtoneStrings.com

If you and your business are interested in becoming a part of the CTBA, please head on over to CentralTexasBluegrass.org/Join or reach out at CTBA@CentralTexasBluegrass.org.



'Possum with the WiFi Password

...and other juxtapositions
...by your editor, Julian
Root

Not Just Steve Martin!!

A quick Google search of "Marshall Brickman" will yield a great deal of factoids about a man with a slew of screenwriting credits. The same Marshall Brickman is also known for his innovative work on the banjo in the 1960's and 1970's, particularly with Eric Weissberg and Clarence White. Just five years after recording the soundtrack to 1972's *Deliverance*, Brickman was the co-recipient of an Academy Award in Best Screenplay alongside Woody Allen for his co-writing *Annie Hall*.

