



Artwork by Emily Isbell

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Y'all, it's hot. It's hot out there, and it's going to get hotter. But just yesterday (as I write this), I attended the outdoor CTBA jam at Batch and played an evening show with my full-weight cowboy hat on. We're Texans, we can take it.

I'm so incredibly thankful that Memorial Fest was yet again a great success. I am beyond excited with who we've booked for the Annual Meeting.

And it means the world to me that we are routinely having at least 15-20 jammers at Batch every Sunday afternoon. Not to mention that the CTBA has awarded four - count 'em - four scholarships! The state of the union is indeed strong.

I'll see y'all out there, but please don't hesitate to reach out literally any time. As always, I'm at President@CentralTexasBluegrass.org.

Jon Lundbom
President, Central Texas Bluegrass

CTBA 2024 MEMORIAL FEST RECAP

Memorial Fest 2024 is in the books, and we are happy to report that it was an absolute blast! We had a ridiculous number of jammers - five jam circles! - and three awesome performances. Huge thanks to **Batch**, **Wayside Bluegrass**, **The Sylvan River Band**, **Bird Calls**, and all the **CTBA members** and friends who came out.



CTBA 2024 ANNUAL MEETING & SHOW

SAVE THE DATE!

Next up: the **2024 CTBA Annual Meeting & Show!** Grab your calendars and mark down **Sunday, November 10th**. That Sunday, we'll be meeting to jam, announce which CTBA members were elected to serve on the Board of Directors, and enjoying some world-class Bluegrass performances!

The event will start at **1PM** (our new jam time...) at **Sagebrush**. And we are thrilled to announce that the event will be headlined by **The Special Consensus!!!**

Many more details to come, but please do mark your calendars. And please note that, as last year, this event will be **free to CTBA members in good standing**.



NEW CTBA WEBSITE

We are getting a new website! VERY soon, CentralTexasBluegrass.org will be home to a brand-new website and membership management platform. To be honest, the new website will look an awful lot like the old website (it ain't broke, we ain't fixin' it). But it will be run on some new software and have a new (but, again, incredibly similar) membership management software.



During the transition, CentralTexasBluegrass.org may be down for an hour or a day (hopefully no more...), but you will still be able to access the Central Texas Bluegrass Association through [email](#), [Facebook](#), or [Instagram](#).

After the transition, we'll send an email with information on how to access your membership account. In the meantime, hold tight! And please, please, please spare us the unfriendly emails. We are on top of it.

CTBA WILLA BEACH-PORTER SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE

The CTBA is thrilled, just thrilled to announce that we have **awarded some scholarships!** First off, congratulations to **Liz Bethune** who is headed to **Camp Bluegrass!**



"My name is **Liz Bethune**. I am a registered nurse from Fredericksburg TX. In my spare time, I enjoy camping, sewing, and playing bass, mandolin, and banjo! I am so excited about receiving this scholarship to attend Camp Bluegrass!"

Many thanks to **Camp Bluegrass** for continuing to put on such an awesome camp and for their support of Central Texas Bluegrass!

And, of course, we are still accepting applications for **2024 CTBA Willa Beach-Porter Scholarships!** If you or someone you know is interested in **attending a bluegrass camp**, please consider applying for a scholarship! CTBA Willa-Beach Porter Scholarships are available to **any Texas resident aged 12-18**.

Next, we are so happy to announce that we have **awarded our first ArtistWorks scholarships** of 2024. Congratulations to **Paula Aubert, Noah Griffin, and Nicole Ridgwell!**



Paula Aubert (Long Prairie) is a singer/songwriter from northern Minnesota born and raised. Her dad bought her a banjo in 2013, she began taking lessons from a bluegrass instructor who taught her all about bluegrass, and has been hooked ever since. She has been a Central Texan since 2011-2013 & 2016 until now. "Thank you CTBA for fostering this exciting learning opportunity! I'm looking forward to getting to the next level on guitar which is my main instrument."

Noah Griffin is a native East Texan who has found a home in Austin. As a kid, his first encounter with bluegrass was through reruns of the Beverly Hillbillies, and then later Steve Martin and eventually Bela Fleck. Since moving to



Austin he has sought to connect with as many musicians and creatives as possible and loves to learn and grow as the result of networking.



Folk Songs for Lonely Tumbleweeds. Cast Iron Shoes is a fiddle-driven western act from Texas and a must-see live performance showcasing an energized retro sound, brilliant songwriting, fantastic musicianship, and a huge body of original music that speaks to the heart of the underdog. Fronted by singer/songwriter and badass fiddle player **Nicole Ridgwell**, Cast Iron Shoes gets their vintage loving audiences dancing with high energy multi-instrumental live shows. From two-stepping Texas swing & swampy blues to soft acoustic ballads, they're cooking up Folk, Rock n Roll, Celtic, Bluegrass, and Alt Country into a brand new sound called Cast Iron Shoes.

And, yup, the CTBA still has **ArtistWorks** scholarships available! Each scholarship recipient will receive a **one-year ArtistWorks membership** to the study track of their choice from the 30+ courses offered through **ArtistWorks**. **ArtistWorks** scholarships are available to **any Texas resident aged 12 years or older** (no age limit). Many thanks to **ArtistWorks** for again partnering with the CTBA to bring these opportunities to our community!



If you are interested in **applying for a CTBA scholarship**, head on over to **CentralTexasBluegrass.org/Scholarship** and apply today!

CTBA SUNDAY JAM UPDATE

Just a quick reminder from your friendly neighborhood bluegrass club that we have moved our Sunday Bluegrass Jam! We are now jamming **every Sunday** at **[Batch Craft Beer & Kolaches](#)** at **1PM**.

Batch has a gigantic, beautiful, and (most importantly) shady backyard with plenty of room to pick. An earlier start will help keep the jam a little bit cooler. And if it's just too darn hot, we are welcome to play in their (albeit limited) indoor space most Sundays.



Many thanks to our friends at Sagebrush for hosting us for the past six months. We are thrilled to have a new home at Batch. We've been picking on Sunday afternoons since 1978, here's to the next 45 years!

NEW CTBA MERCH

It's CTBA merch time! We have **two new t-shirts** en route:

First off, it seems like bluegrass fans in Central Texas REALLY love **tie-dye**, as last year's batch of tees sold out almost immediately. We've ordered a second batch with two changes: (1) these shirts are a **softer cotton, custom tie-dyed** for us; and (2) we've ordered a mix of **traditional t-shirts** and **ladies' racerback tanks**.

Secondly, CTBA member **Sylvan Donnenfeld** brought a surprise to this year's Memorial Fest: **Grace Womack** had gifted him a **vintage CTBA t-shirt from 1996** she found on eBay! We absolutely love it, and CTBA business member **Oh Boy! Print Shop** was able to reproduce it for us.



As with the new tie-dye, we'll have a mix of **traditional t-shirts** and **ladies' racerback tanks**. Both shirts are in production now, and we'll post them for sale as soon as they're ready!

IN MEMORIAM: DAVE FERGUSON

By Alan Munde

I learned through Dave Ferguson's brother, Greg, that Dave died of a brain tumor. Dave was the fiddle player in Country Gazette following Byron Berline's departure from the group in late 1974. There couldn't have been a better musical choice to take Byron's place.



Country Gazette in 1975

L to R: Alan Munde, Dave Ferguson, Roger Bush, Roland White

Dave came up in the rich musical milieu that was Fort Worth, Texas in the 60s and 70s. North Texas was full of many great fiddlers influencing Byron and in turn Dave. Dave loved Byron's playing and could play "Sally Goodin" as close to Byron as anyone. But he was more than just a Byron clone. He had grown up with the music of Delbert McClinton later playing in his band. He played with his Fort Worth buddy Stephen Bruton, an award winning singer, songwriter, and actor. He was a much sought after musician in his area and could cover many musical bases. Country Gazette was fortunate that Dave accepted the gig with the group.

In 1975, almost immediately upon joining the group, Gazette did a tour of Europe with Dave. He filled the bill perfectly, he played fiddle the best, he played mandolin, and could sing the parts. He was great. Because of family considerations, he left the group near the end of that same year. Even though he left the group, we stayed in contact and Dave participated on many recordings with the group and me. He was on the Country Gazette album "Out To Lunch" on the Flying Fish label, "All This and Money Too" on the Ridge Runner label, he was the fiddle player on my first album "Banjo Sandwich," and later I played on his solo album, "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." Much later Dave helped me with "Cotton Patch Rag" and "Powder Creek" for the Stelling Banjo project.

(Editor's note: another wonderful record featuring Dave and Alan is the "Stone Mountain Boys' LP Reunion Album" on Ridge Runner. It's noteworthy not just for its music - check that banjo break on "Lonesome Day" - but also the pairing of two mentor/mentee teams: Byron Berline/Dave Ferguson and Ed Shelton/Alan Munde.)

Dave came to a few Country Gazette reunions hosted by Byron Berline at the Oklahoma International Bluegrass Festival in Guthrie, Oklahoma. It was there that I saw and played with Dave the last time.

Dave was in all ways a great musician, and a dear and joyous friend.

BLUE RIDGE GUITAR CAMP

By Roam Gunn



CTBA members **Roam and Loren Gunn** and **Ken Marut** recently attended **Bryan Sutton's Blue Ridge Guitar Camp** at the **Brevard Music Center** in Brevard, North Carolina. Instructors included **Bryan Sutton, Michael Daves, Jake Workman, Chris Eldridge, Charlotte Carrivick, and Courtney Hartman**. The camp was facilitated by **Casey Campbell** and **Woody Platt** with surprise guest **Billy Strings**.

In addition to world-class flatpicking instruction, there was also a focus on mindfulness, active listening, the psychology of learning, as well as AI and music. After three days of classes and late night jamming, the hosts and faculty were joined by special guests **Del McCoury, Jerry Douglas, Sara and Sean Watkins, Kaia Kater, Barry Bales, Casey Driessen, and Bennett Sullivan** at the **North Carolina Guitar Celebration**. What a camp and what a show!

Some personal highlights:

- **Stormy Horizons** - feat Michael Daves, Bryan Sutton, Billy Strings, Jake Workman and Roam Gunn
- **Red Clay Halo** - feat Jake Workman, Loren and Roam Gunn, and Ken Marut
- **Blue Virginia Blue** - feat Michael Daves, Bryan Sutton and Roam Gunn
- **The Lonesome River** - feat Billy Strings, Michael Daves and Roam Gunn

Roam, Loren and Ken are students of **Michael Daves** and **Jake Workman**, and also are enrolled in Michael, Bryan, and **Sierra Hull's ArtistWorks** courses. Check out **MichaelDaves.com** and **JakeWorkman.com** for individual instruction as well as Bryan Sutton, Michael Daves, and Sierra Hull's **ArtistWorks** sites.

BIRD CALLS



Bird Calls hail from Austin, Texas, with: **Everett Wren** on fiddle, mandolin, percussion, and vocals; **David Rabinowicz** on guitars and vocals; and **Taylor Turner** on bass and vocals. They play riveting bluegrass and fiddle tunes and harmonize on songs about the human adventure.

Everett began performing at age four in his family's band, took home an Arkansas state fiddling championship in his teens, toured the USA with an Americana band, and co-founded the Austin bands Lost & Nameless and Chalkboard Poets, before focusing on releasing his own solo record called 'Porchlight' in 2022. David was born into a multi-cultural family, and the different languages and traditions that surrounded him helped shape his guitar-playing, singing, and writing. Taylor is a native Austinite and has been playing professionally for 15 years, touring internationally with rock, folk, and bluegrass bands. He graduated from UT Austin with a degree in Jazz Performance and since then has continued to explore every kind of music.

Find them online at [Instagram.com/WeAreBirdcalls](https://www.instagram.com/WeAreBirdcalls).

VALLEY FLOWER

CTBA MEMBER-BAND FEATURE

By Natalie Turner, CTBA Vice-President

Valley Flower is one of Austin's newest bluegrass bands, and if you haven't checked them out yet, treat yourself to a listen! They are bringing a fresh energy to our Central Texas bluegrass community, both with their music and with their connection to the people. They're already playing venues including **Sagebrush**, **Jester King**, and **Hole in the Wall**. Their music is rooted in bluegrass while "venturing into folk, country and jam band worlds and back." This according to lead vocalist, songwriter, and rhythm guitarist **Rose Flower**. Their focus is on developing an original music and an original sound, their own "newgrass" influenced by (to name a few) Gillian Welch, Jerry Garcia, Jimmy Martin, Willie Nelson, and Ryan Young.

Rose is joined in Valley Flower by **Joe Wurst** on lead guitar and vocals; **Jonah Calvo** on fiddle, vocals, guitar and mandolin; **Phill Brush** on stand up bass and vocals; and **Scott Stegall** on banjo, vocals and guitar.



Rose, who grew up in a very musical and artistic family in Virginia, has been singing and writing songs from a young age. And when Rose turned 30, she decided she would finally “formally” learn guitar. She started attending the CTBA Sunday jam and sitting in on 'grass nights at breweries around town. About two years later, she stumbled upon a flier that Jonah had put up at **Austin Guitar House**. He had just moved to Austin from Minnesota and wanted to start a band. So Rose and Jonah started playing together last summer. In September, Rose met Joe at the

Butterfly Bar bluegrass jam. He had just moved to Austin from Colorado and had been playing with a Grateful Dead cover band. As Rose recalls:

“It was a two-second conversation: ‘Do you want to start a band with me and this cool fiddle player?’ Joe immediately said yes and our Valley Flower trio was born. The energy sometimes is just right. Phill, our bass player joined in January, and Scott just came on board in April. Bringing Scott and his banjo in really rounded out our overall sound. I think the band is complete, but who knows. We tend to be over-inclusive!”

At Valley Flower shows, you will be taken aback by the depth of talent and exceptional instrumentation that extends across the band, all supporting the driving feel and uplifting energy of their music. Expect to be drawn in by Rose’s beautifully rich voice, harkening back to sitting on a porch in the southern regions of the country where bluegrass was born. You’ll be amazed when Jonah rips it up on the fiddle and soulfully kicks songs into another gear. When Scott’s incredible banjo skills, that he’s honed in since a young age in North Carolina, take you back to the true roots of bluegrass music. When Joe breaks it down on guitar with his groovy, jam band approach and creativity. And when Phil ties it together with the propelling force of his bass. Keeping things exciting, they often switch on harmonies and instruments throughout the set and invite friends, family and even strangers to sit in with them.

“This is something we love to do to celebrate the communal, jam spirit of bluegrass and keep the good juju flowing. Just the other week we had Smokey sit in on harmonica for a two hour set at Sagebrush to celebrate his 77th birthday.” says Rose. “I just love this tradition because it channels the essence of the Austin bluegrass scene: bringing people together and supporting all of our talents!”

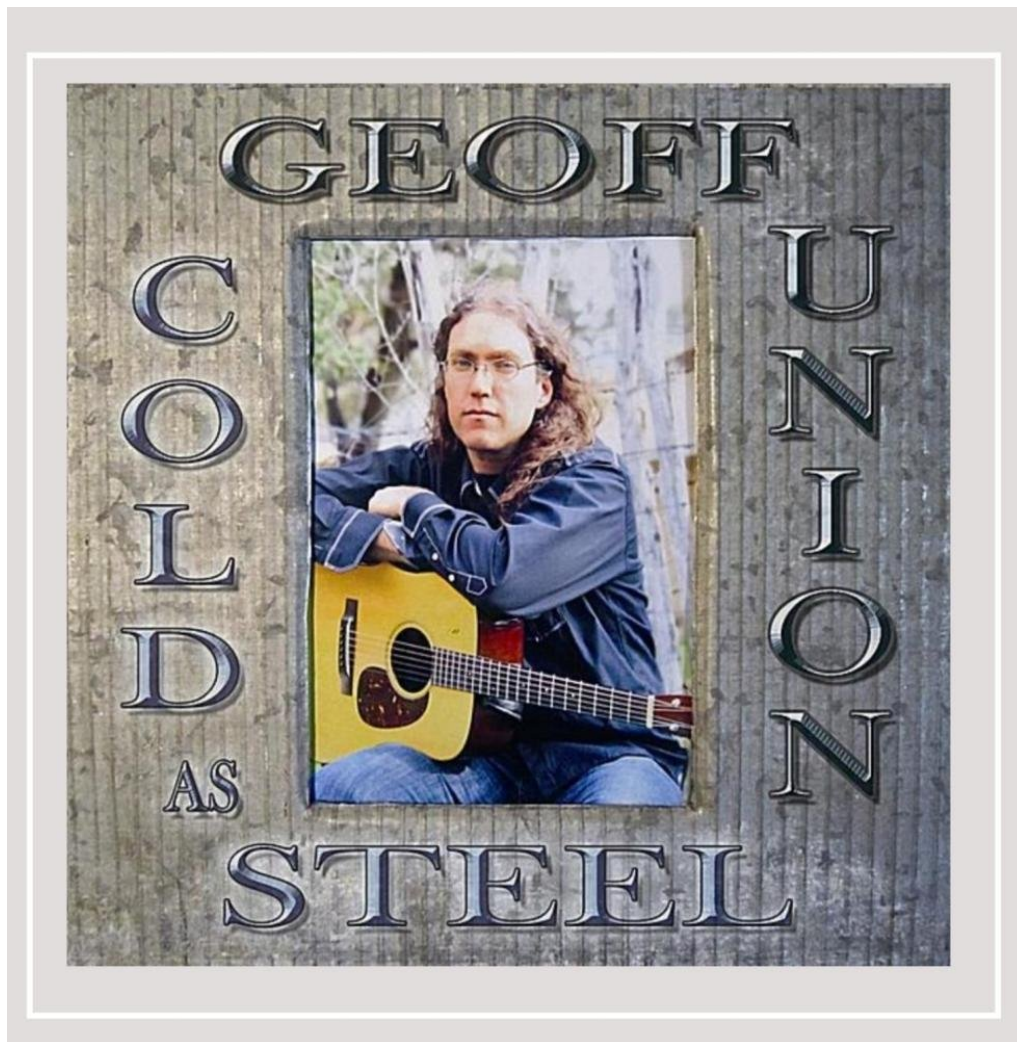
Keep your eye out for the release of Valley Flower’s first two singles later

this summer - "Valley Flower" and "Westfalia Van" - both written by Rose. Meanwhile, check them out on [Instagram](#) and catch them at one of their shows.

SPINNING WAX

By Simon Waxman

A little more than a decade ago, **Geoff Union** swung his bindlestiff over his shoulder and set out for the mountains of Colo-ray-do, as he puts it in his song "**Water in the Well.**" But for a while before that, he was a big dot on the Austin bluegrass map, recording and touring with the **Two High String Band** and putting plectrum to steel wire at Monday night bluegrass. That was back when no one had heard of Radio Coffee & Beer. To be fair, it didn't exist at the time.



"**Cold as Steel**," Union's 2012 solo album, has got heft. It weighs less than a Cadillac, but still - this is an item of quality. How many songwriters take their inspiration from the Whiskey Rebellion of 1791-1794? (Not a word about it in that "Hamilton" **whitewash**, that's for sure.) Union even gets the details right. That's craft. Throughout the recording, there are whiffs of Jay Farrar and Rhett Miller in Union's unadorned vocals. That's integrity. Union doesn't force it. Not that tracks like "40 Years" and "Devil's Card" lack for vehemence. And Union's guitar work has energy enough to sustain your fallout shelter straight through the postapocalypse. Billy Bright brings his

more-than-stellar lifetime ERA of 1.29 to the mandolin, which growls and sweetens on call. Fellow CTBA'ers: who is banjo player Mark Maniscalco? The touch is light, but the rivets are tight.

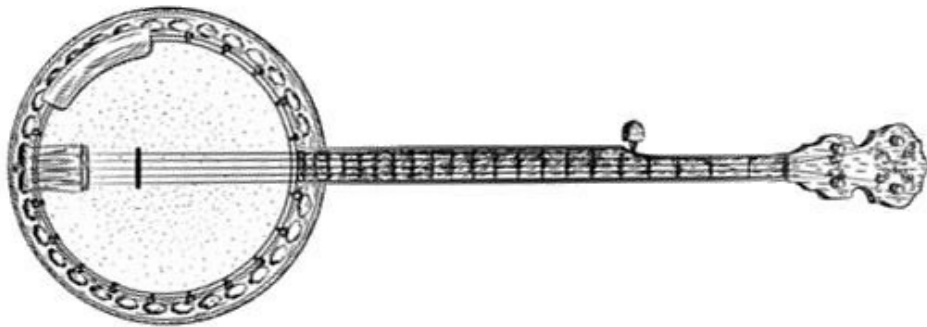
"Spirit of '94" is a standout track from Geoff Union's "Cold as Steel."

So is **"40 Years."** You can find the rest of the album—all of it strong—where music is available.

By the way, check out this rendition of **"I Never Will Marry"** from 1973's "The New Female Voices of Bluegrass," who evidently were the Williams Sisters (no relation to Serena and Venus). The treatment here is downright holy. Alas, the engineer might have been dipping into the sacred wine, because the mix is a wreck. I think there's a mandolin solo in there, but it's wandered far afield.

CTBA MEMBER-BANDS

The CTBA is proud to have the following **bands** as members and wholeheartedly recommend them for all of your Central Texas bluegrass needs!



Austin Monday Nighters
Bird Calls
Black Diamond
Bobby Giles & Texas Gales
Four Fights Per Pint
The Greenlawn Rangers
The Hillsiders
Hot Pickin 57s

The McKinleys
MoPac Traffic Jams
Randy Collier & Grassland
The Sieker Band
Strawberry Flats
Valley Flower
Wayside Bluegrass

If your band is interested in becoming a CTBA member, please visit CentralTexasBluegrass.org/Join or contact us at CTBA@CentralTexasBluegrass.org to learn more.

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](#)
[Country Guitar Online](#)
[Fiddler's Green Music Shop](#)
[Madrone Coffee Co.](#)
[Oh Boy! Print Shop](#)
[Old Settlers Music Fest](#)

[Shades of Bluegrass](#)
[St. Elmo Brewing Co.](#)
[Texas Bluegrass Music](#)
[Vista Brewing](#)
[Woodtone Strings](#)

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

By your editor, Julian Root

The wifi has been strong for this 'possum, who's been busier than a gopher in soft dirt busting bluegrass myths. Sniffing around the scraps of bluegrass jams worldwide, there are any number of classic songs attributed to classic bluegrass stars. Digging deep in the feral realms of the information superhighway, I'm happier than a boll weevil in a cotton patch to set the record straight for everyone:

"Blue Night"

Everyone says it's a Bill Monroe song. Welp, turns out it was written by brothers Kirk and Sam McGee, who also were the first to cut it. Albeit only one year before Bill's first recording, in 1967.

[YouTube it!](#)

"Sunny Side of the Mountain"

"...oh, the Jimmy Martin song?" No!! The Harry McAuliffe/Bobby Gregory song, first recorded by Hank Snow in 1946!! Oh, and another thing - The Stanley Brothers recorded it in 1959, six long years before Jimmy first got his claws on it.

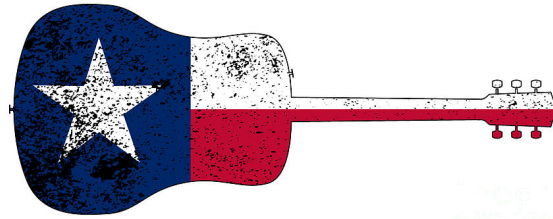
[YouTube it!](#)

"Some Old Day"

"Ahhh yes, the Flatt and Scruggs song credited to their

wives (Certain and Stacey), though actually written by them. Thought you'd fool me there!" Nope, wrong again. This old chestnut dates back to The Rouse Brothers, who wrote and recorded the song in 1939, 18 years before Flatt and Scruggs made it a bluegrass standard.

YouTube it!



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