



Artwork by Emily Isbell

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



It's a busy time of year here at CTBA HQ. We have Board of Directors election ballots and our Q3 newsletter going out this week, and we are busy getting ready for the 46th CTBA Annual Meeting and Show! It's mentioned below, but now is the perfect time to check on your membership status. Members get to vote in the election, of course, but members also get free admission to the Annual Meeting on November 10th! We have Frank Evans coming in, as well as the one and only Special Consensus. I, for one, am excited. To say nothing of the oodles of great Bluegrass happening in and around Austin over the next few weeks.

That's it for now, I hope to see y'all out there!

Jon Lundbom
President, Central Texas Bluegrass

CTBA 2024 ANNUAL MEETING & SHOW

The **46th CTBA Annual Meeting & Show** is at **1PM on Sunday, November 10th**, at **Sagebrush!** Featuring **Frank Evans** (from the **Slocan Ramblers**) and **The Special Consensus**.



Here's the schedule:

1PM CTBA Sunday Bluegrass Jam...AND...
1PM Banjo Workshop with Frank Evans
3PM Frank Evans & Friends
4:30PM The Special Consensus

This event is **FREE** to all **CTBA members** in good standing. To reserve your seats today, **please click here**.

Tickets are **\$25 to non-members**. If you'd like to purchase tickets, **please click here**.

But – heads' up – an **individual membership to the CTBA is only \$25** Heck a **family membership is \$35** and that would get you **two tickets!** The CTBA is a organization built on the strength of our membership, and we'd love to have you be a part of it. Read all about the tiers, benefits, etc and join the CTBA today by **clicking here**.

NEW CTBA WEBSITE



A reminder that the CTBA has a **brand-new website!** Our new website is...well, honestly, it's rather similar to the last one. But it is streamlined, it is more efficient, and it will save the organization a ton of money (that we can spend on scholarships etc!).

With the new website, we have also moved to a **new membership management platform.** If you have any issues or need any help, just send a polite email to us at CTBA@CentralTexasBluegrass.org and we'll get it all sorted out, no worries.

CTBA WILLA BEACH-PORTER SCHOLARSHIP

Bluegrass will survive and thrive only if talented young musicians carry it forward into the future. To this end, the Central Texas Bluegrass Association has established the **Willa Beach-Porter CTBA Scholarship Fund**, which provides scholarship awards to students who have demonstrated a serious interest in studying music. Each year, the program provides scholarships to **music camps, CTBA-selected bluegrass camps, and/or online learning resources.** Any **Texas resident aged 12-18 is invited to apply** for scholarship plus room and board to any bluegrass-related music camp of their choosing.

And, yes, the CTBA still has **ArtistWorks** scholarships available! Each Artistworks 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 partnering with the CTBA to bring these opportunities to our community!



If you are interested in applying for any 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.



CTBA MERCH UPDATE

We have **new CTBA shirts!!!**



Well, this it to say we have old CTBA shirts...? We've resurrected a**CTBA design from 1996** and reprinted it on both **t-shirts** and **women's racerback tanks**. And we've also gotten a**new batch** of **tie-dyed** tees and tanks, this tine **custom tie-dyed** on some really high-quality fabric.

CTBA BOARD ELECTIONS



Ballots for the **2025-2026 CTBA Board of Directors** election will be in your inbox soon! As they say: vote early, vote often.

We'll announce the CTBA members selected to serve on the Board at the Annual Meeting on November 10th.

CTBA BLUEGRASS JAM AT THE AUSTIN STRING BAND FESTIVAL

The CTBA will host a bluegrass jam on **Saturday, October 19th**, at **1PM** at the **Austin String Band Festival**. Presented annually by **Austin Friends of Traditional Music**, the String Band Festival is a celebration of old-time country music in every imaginable form. This year's festival features a stellar lineup, including CTBA member-bands **Hot Pickin 57s** as well as dancing, workshops, camping, and picking all weekend. The CTBA jam will be led by CTBA Board Members **Chelsea Burns** and **Simon Waxman**. Bluegrass musicians of all skill levels are encouraged to come along and share their favorite tunes.

The Austin Friends of Traditional Music Presents the 17th Annual

AUSTIN STRING BAND FESTIVAL

Camping · Jamming · Workshops · Great Food



Steamboat · Skillet Licorice

Jerron Paxton · Hot Pickin 57s · Western Flyers
Joymakers · Guy Forsyth presents 78 Special
Funyun Creek · So & So and the Swamp Sizzle
Up Around the Sun w/Bosco · Lloyd & April

October 18 - 20, 2024

Camp Ben McCulloch, Driftwood, TX



Ellis
MANDOLINS



Collings
GUITARS
AUSTIN & TEXAS



SHOMOS
FOUNDATION



For tickets and information, visit AFTM.US

IBMA RECOGNIZES TEXAS

IBMA World of Bluegrass 2024 took place last weekend, and some CTBA friends brought home some big awards!

First up, former Central Texan **Alan Munde** was inducted into the **Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame**. It's no secret that Alan is an absolute legend of a musician and a human being, there is no one more deserving. Congratulations, Alan!

In addition, both **Bloomin' Bluegrass** and **ArtistWorks** received IBMA Distinguished Achievement awards! Both are dear friends and supporters (not to mention: members) of the CTBA, we offer our congratulations on their achievements. To many more years of friendship!

PLAY IT FORWARD!

HELPING PICKERS IN NEED

I have been teaching folks the ways of bluegrass for over 25 years from the friendly confines of **South Austin Music**. Several years ago, I began working with a husband/wife team. Greg Johnson, who wanted to learn to play his grandfather's banjo, and Angie Bernal, a newbie, was interested in mandolin. They took lessons for several years, with Greg also learning some Travis style guitar. They could be seen at many of the CTBA events and were kind enough to donate items each time we held our annual Bluegrass Garage Sale fund raiser.



The couple pulled up stakes and moved to Ruidoso, New Mexico several years ago, leaving an open invitation to come visit them should I ever be in the area. Fast forward to the summer of 2024. Me and the missus are always looking for some place a bit cooler to visit during the July heat of Texas. Remembering their offer, I contacted Angie in the middle of June to see if they would be up for receiving some visitors from their old hometown. I didn't know that Ruidoso was experiencing raging forest fires and the couple had just evacuated their home. She emailed back a couple of days later that theirs was one of hundreds of homes lost in the fires. Luckily, they had their dog Porter with them, but the only instrument they managed to get out was Greg's grandfather's banjo: they lost everything else.



My immediate thought upon hearing this was to help Greg and Angie get some instruments so they could get back to playing, knowing first-hand how therapeutic playing music can be when facing a life crisis. I had recently purchased a Blue Ridge dreadnaught guitar that had come in to South Austin Music. It was a very high quality instrument that store owner, Bill Welker, was able to sell me at a

super reasonable price. I have bought such guitars from time to time with the purpose of getting them into the hands of my students once they have reached a certain level.

What I didn't have was a mandolin comparable to the one Angie had lost. I contacted the Central Texas Bluegrass Association to let them know of the situation and what I was looking for. Lenny Nichols, in turn, contacted Alan Tompkins of the **Bluegrass Heritage Foundation** in Dallas, an organization that promotes bluegrass throughout Texas. The foundation hosts the annual **Bloomin' Bluegrass Festival**, which this year is being held on **October 18th & 19th**. The organization has a **'Play It Forward'** music instrument lending program, which provides donated instruments for youth who need help securing a quality instrument to learn on. The organization had just received an F-model Epiphone mandolin. As luck would have it, Alan had a

trip to San Antonio planned and was able to meet up with me at South Austin Music to drop off the mandolin, which came with a nice hard shell case. I adjusted the set-up to where it played perfectly and sounded great.

So now I had the instruments I wished to get Greg and Angie, but lacked the knowledge of how to ship them safely to New Mexico. Enter Sean Crooks of South Austin Music. He's the guy that handles all the shipping for the store. They were kind enough to donate their services to pack and ship both instruments that reached their destination safe and sound.

Greg and Angie have already made plans to stay in the Ruidoso area and are extremely appreciative of all the love and support sent there way as they try to rebuild there lives. I was deeply touched myself by all those willing to help in this endeavor. Thanks y'all!

BUSY TIMES FOR BLUEGRASS

There is a TON of Bluegrass happening in Central Texas over the next two weeks! (And then **Bloomin' Bluegrass** in Dallas the weekend after...)

First up, the **Two-Wheelers** (CTBA Board Members Simon Waxman and Chelsea Burns) are performing at **Batch** at **7PM** on **Tuesday, October 1st**.



Then we are onto the weekend and the **Leander Bluegrass & Folk Festival!** CTBA members and member-bands will be performing, including **The Hillsiders** and **Chris Melas**.

19TH ANNUAL BLUEGRASS & FOLK FESTIVAL

6:00PM TO 9:30PM

OCTOBER 4TH

OCTOBER 5TH

STEEL BETTY

LOST PATTERNS

MIDNIGHT GRASS

THE HILLSIDERS

CHRIS MELAS

MASON HOMESTEAD

1101 S BAGDAD RD. LEANDER, TX 78641

LIVE MUSIC-FOOD-FUN ZONE

ADMISSION IS FREE
FUN ZONE REQUIRES \$15 WRISTBAND

And there are two more amazing Bluegrass/Bluegrass-adjacent shows on Friday, October 4th. First up, Larry & Joe are coming to Austin!

SEPT 15 Winston-Salem, NC
Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts

SEPT 18 Boone NC

SEPT 19 Knoxville, TN
Mississippi State Community College

SEPT 20 Cleveland, TN
Museum Center at Five Points

SEPT 22 Decatur, GA
Eddie's Attic

SEPT 25 Nashville, TN
The Station Inn

SEPT 27 Fort Smith, AR
Fort Smith Levitt Series

SEPT 29 Tulsa, OK
St. Cecilia's Listening Room

OCT 2 Waco, TX
Waco Levitt Amp Series

OCT 4 Austin, TX
Practice Yoga Church

OCT 9 Corpus Christi, TX
Texas A&M's Performing Arts Center

OCT 11 Baton Rouge, LA
Baton Rouge Levitt Amp Series

OCT 25 Rocky Mount, NC
North Carolina Wesleyan
College Dunn Center

OCT 26 Raleigh, NC
NC State Stewart Theatre

NOV 17 Roanoke, VA
Spot on Kirk

MANOS PAN AMERICANOS
LARRY & JOE

Joe is **Joe Troop**, Grammy-nominated banjo player extraordinaire best known for **Che Apalache**. In addition to his musical life, Joe works with asylum-seeking migrants. Larry is **Larry Bellorín** from Monagas, Venezuela, a legend of Llanera music. Larry was forced into exile and is an asylum seeker in North Carolina. Joe heard about this absolute master of Venezuelan music working construction jobs, sought him out, and they formed their duo.

I (Jon!) have heard them perform twice at the Blueridge Banjo Camp, and I gotta say it's some of the coolest and most impressive music I've ever heard. It would behoove y'all to check this one out! Tickets are available [here](#).

Also on Friday: **Rob Ickes and Trey Hensley** are performing at **Radio East!** This is gonna be a good one for sure...

**GRAMMY® NOMINEES
LIVE IN TEXAS!**

10/1 - MCKINNEY, TX
10/2 - KENNEY, TX
10/3 - THE WOODLANDS, TX
10/4 - AUSTIN, TX
10/5 - NEW BRAUNFELS, TX
10/6 - FORT WORTH, TX

*Rob Ickes
and
Trey Hensley*

2023 IBMA Guitar Player of the Year

15-time IBMA Dobro Player of the Year

"Two Musical Phenoms" -NPR

"Steel-string bluegrass with all the
intensity of rock 'n' roll" -Acoustic Guitar

And then NEXT weekend, CTBA Member-Band Randy Collier & Grassland will be performing for Fiesta Jam 2024 in Marble Falls on **Saturday October 12th!** The event runs from 10/10-10/12, check out all the details at [FiestaJam.org](https://fiestajam.org).

RANDY COLLIER & GRASSLAND



SATURDAY OCT 12

**FIESTA
JAM
2024**

OCT 10-12

FEATURING ▶ Shawn Camp • John Arthur Martinez
Walt Wilkins • Shake Russell • Bernie Nelson
Braedon Barnhill • Sarah Pierce • Terri Hendrix
Susan Gibson • David Lee • Michael Hearne
Mike Blakely • JAM & Tejas • John M Greenberg
Randy Collier & Grassland • The Outlaw Firm

Get Tickets & Info ▶ [fiestajam.](https://fiestajam.org)



And, as a reminder, you can always stay on top of all the happenings in Central Texas Bluegrass at [CentralTexasBluegrass.org!](https://CentralTexasBluegrass.org)

BATCH CRAFT BEER & KOLACHES

CTBA BUSINESS MEMBER FEATURE

By Simon Waxman

From the perspective of a venue operator, the words “amateur music” might be among the scariest in the English language. Who knows what you’re gonna get. It could be a brilliant but unheralded songwriter on the verge of a major break. Or maybe the Elm Street Kazoo Quintet is about to cover in its entirety the 1998 Hanson compilation album “3 Car Garage.”

The good folks at **Batch Craft Beer & Kolaches** have no such fears. Since May of this year, they have been gracious hosts of the CTBA Sunday Bluegrass jam, which joins jazz, swing, and classical music sessions held at their location on Manor Road. It’s no wonder this delicious amalgamation of brewery, bakery, and coffee bar, nestled ’mongst inviting shade trees, can feel more like a community resource than a business. At Batch, participation is encouraged. It also doesn’t hurt that you’ll run into the same employees over and over again as time goes by. That’s a testament to a family business that respects working people.



Batch opened their doors in August 2017, and now they are the CTBA's newest member business. We're thrilled. The place is run by music lovers; many of the staff are musicians themselves. In addition to jams, they put on concerts and poetry readings, storytelling, comedy nights, craft markets, and tango lessons. The arts are flourishing at Batch.

CTBA members are invited to stop in every Sunday for the jam, which is not just inclusive of players of every skill level, but avidly welcoming. And members who don't pick will find that Batch is also the perfect spot to enjoy the charm and spontaneity of - gulp - amateur music.

SPINNING WAX

By Simon Waxman

Try as you might, you'll never manage to keep track of all the ramblers out there. I suppose that's in the nature of rambling. Of course, rambling is in the nature of bluegrass music as well, and perhaps especially bluegrass music in the vastness of Texas. **According to the late Rod Moag**, in the 1960s, "There were separate groups in Dallas, Houston, and Tyler named

the Bluegrass Ramblers, each unaware of the others.”

Among them were the Bluegrass Ramblers of Texas, who formed in 1965. Led by guitarist Johnnie Martin, these ramblers had a pretty good run of it. They were the first bluegrass outfit to play the Kerrville Folk Festival, and they launched the career of 3rd Tyme Out’s Russell Moore, who plays bass on the Ramblers’ 1982 album "Traveling Man."

Their other album, from ten years earlier, goes by the title of "Bluegrass Music from Bluebonnett Country." That’s two tees because everything is twice as big in Texas. The delightful cover art features the band in burgundy oxfords, looking a lot like the considerably more popular Country Gentlemen as they pose in front of two objects that I assume were dear to them: Houston’s San Jacinto Monument and the group’s touring bus, which signaled nothing if not professionalism.



To be fair, "Bluegrass Music from Bluebonnett Country" is rather an uninspired selection, featuring a number of Bill Monroe and Stanley Brothers tunes that were getting dusty even fifty-plus years ago. But the performances largely hold up. Martin takes a powerful lead on each of the vocal cuts, and Kenneth Clemons provides a confident tenor, as well as extra-chunky mandolin tone. Jim Moratto - described in the liner notes as "18 years old, single" - plays crystalline banjo that attracted the

attention of the aforementioned Mr. Monroe and earned Moratto a place in the Bluegrass Boys. You can't say no to the double fiddles on "Indian Hollow," featuring Kenneth Holder and guest Bill Northcutt, a Texas fiddling legend for good reason. *(EDITOR'S NOTE: Northcutt also bears the distinction of playing fiddle on the only LP known to feature local legend Doc Hamilton on every cut: "Old Time Hoedown" by Bill Northcutt and Doc Hamilton, released on Houston's Stoneway Records in 1968.)*

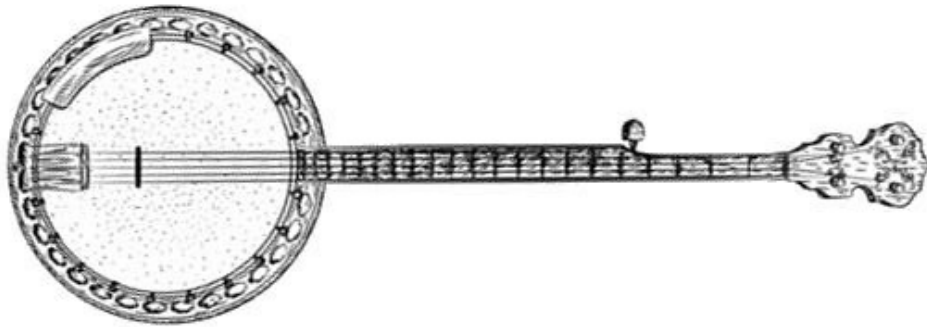
The band excels on "Who Will Sing for Me," Jake Landers's "This Last Request," and the prison ballad "A World So Strange to Me." Appropriately, "Who Will Sing for Me" is uncredited, rather than being attributed to Carter Stanley, as is typical but certainly not accurate. "Some Old Day" - no credit to Flatt & Scruggs or their wives, further demonstrating the Ramblers' rigorous concern for historical detail - proves an adventure. A botched harmony in the first chorus tests the brain's auditory pleasure center, but the last chorus makes up for it with a surprising and well-executed delay in the vocal scansion.

"Bluegrass Music from Bluebonnett Country" may not be the most creative or perfected album, but it has plenty of charisma. It's a fun listen, no doubt.

[Hear it on YouTube.](#)

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

Long Prairie
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
Batch Craft Beer & Kolaches
Country Guitar Online
Fiddler's Green Music Shop
Oh Boy! Print Shop
Old Settlers Music Fest

Shades of Bluegrass
St. Elmo Brewing Co.
Texas Bluegrass Music
Vista Brewing
Woodtone Strings

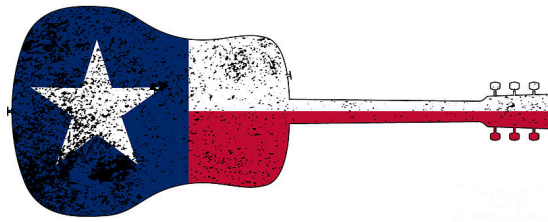
If you and your business are interested in becoming a part of the CTBA, please head on over to **CentralTexasBluegrass.org/Join** or reach out at



'Possum with the WiFi Password

By your editor, Julian Root

Your neighborhood pickin' possum recently acquired a vast cache of old bluegrass records from the near bottomless collection of Rod Moag. Many of these records had the name "Jim Barr" handwritten on their sleeves. Often, that was followed by words of gratitude and thanks and the signature of such luminaries as Jim and Jesse McReynolds, The Osborne Brothers, and Doyle Lawson. Like any muckraking marsupial, I needed answers. Who was Jim Barr??? Why did all these bluegrass legends feel so grateful to Mr. Barr? The obituaries, those ceaseless archives of the transit records between this world and the next, gave me an answer. Look for a piece to come later this year chronicling this Central Texas grasser and his major role in bringing bluegrass music to the great state of Texas...



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