



Artwork by Emily Isbell

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Hello, Central Texas Bluegrass community! I hope everybody is fighting their way through the Central Texas Oak Pollen (TM) and finding some opportunities to pick out there.

I'm writing this the evening of the 2026 CTBA Band Scramble & Garage Sale, and it was an absolute blast (more on that below). Personally, I was taken by the incredibly high quality of all five bands - what a lineup! And we are sneaking in one more event before summer, CTBA Memorial Fest featuring

CTBA member-band Bobby Giles & Texas Gales (more on that below, too).

In the meantime, please join us on Sunday afternoons for the CTBA Sunday Bluegrass Jam at Batch Craft Beer & Kolaches. The jam has been very, very strong these past few months, some really excellent picking.

As always, I'll see you out there, but please feel free to drop me a line whenever at President@CentralTexasBluegrass.org.

Jon Lundbom
President, Central Texas Bluegrass

2026 CTBA MEMORIAL FEST

Jon Lundbom, President, Central Texas Bluegrass

Mark your calendars for 2026 CTBA Memorial Fest on Sunday, May 31st, at Batch Craft Beer & Kolaches (3220 Manor Rd, Austin 78723). We'll be **jamming at 1PM** as per usual, and around 3PM we'll be treated to a **special performance by CTBA member-band Bobby Giles & Texas Gales**. I can think of no finer way to spend an afternoon! Many more details to come, but for now mark your calendars and get excited for an awesome event!

JOIN THE CTBA!



We can't possibly say it often enough - you (yes, you!) should **become a CTBA member** today!
#youyesyou

The CTBA is a membership organization, we are able to do what we do only so long as our membership is strong. CTBA membership is **cheap** - starting at only \$25/year - and comes with a **ton of benefits**. With even more benefits for **band** and **business** members! You can read about it all and sign up today at CentralTexasBluegrass.org/Join.

2026 BAND SCRAMBLE AND GARAGE SALE

By Hannah Spooner-Giardino, CTBA Board Member

A huge thank you to everyone who came out to the 28th Annual Band Scramble and Garage Sale! It was a great event as always. Five different bands took the stage to play, and there were of course jam circles both before and after the main event. We also want to extend our gratitude for all your generous donations to the garage sale, and send a very special thank you to Eddie Collins for being such a wonderful host.



OLD SETTLERS MUSIC FEST 2026

This is your reminder that **Old Settlers Music Festival** is coming up. It's happening at **Camp Ben McCulloch** for **April 17-19, 2026!**

Want to get involved with a great group of folks and save money on a ticket? **Volunteer opportunities are available.**

Tickets, lineup, and camping information are all available at **OldSettlersMusicFest.org.**

39TH ANNUAL



**OLD SETTLERS'S
MUSIC FESTIVAL**
2026

APRIL 17-19

FEATURING

RAILROAD EARTH • THE BROTHERS COMATOSE
THE LAST REVEL • LINDSAY LOU • SHINYRIBS
MICHAEL CLEVELAND & FLAMEKEEPER
SHELBY MEANS • TWO RUNNER • MAGOO
WARREN HOOD QUARTET WITH EMILY GIMBLE
BILLY BRIGHT BAND • FOGGY MEMORY BOYS
FEEDING LEROY • BROTHER THUNDER
LOUISIANA SURF DEPARTMENT • IRA THORNE CLIFTON
(2025 YOUTH TALENT CONTEST WINNER)
AND MORE!

CAMP BEN ☾ DRIFTWOOD, TX

OLDSETTLERSMUSICFEST.ORG

ON REPEAT

By Loren Gunn, CTBA Board Member

Let's see. What's on repeat this month? Two songs, really, that I can't help hitting the back button on.

I'm Losing Sleep (2024)

Bronwyn Keith-Hyne

Listen [here](#)

First is "I'm Up for Losing Sleep" by Bronwyn Keith Hynes from her 2024 album, [I Built a World](#). It's just so fun and catchy, written by Maya de Vitry and Jordan Tice (Hawktail) and featuring Molly Tuttle, Bryan Sutton, and



Jerry Douglas. When the bass kicks I'm dancing and by the time they hit the bridge and break it down, I'm ready to listen again.



I'll Never Go Back (1950s)

The Louvin Brothers

Listen [here](#)

The second repeat offender would have to be “[I'll Never Go Back](#)” by the Louvin Brothers, a sweet little gospel call and response number from the 2018 compilation record, *[Love and Wealth: The Lost Recordings](#)*. This compilation features unreleased demos and radio transcriptions from their peak years (mostly the 1950s).

These two tracks are pretty far apart in years and on paper, but they both capture the honest bluegrass spirit that we love.

What's keeping you hitting the back button lately? When we see each other at the next jam, let me know what's on repeat for you!

SPINNING WAX

By Simon Waxman, CTBA Vice-President

*Louisiana's Own
Southland Bluegrass*



Thirty-Two Acres Of Solid Grass

This edition of Spinning Wax takes us a little farther afield than usual. Instead of resurrecting an old soldier from the Texas scene, we're traveling ALL the way across the Louisiana border to commune with the spirit of Southland Bluegrass. These fellas spent a good part of the 1970s on the festival circuit throughout the Lone Star State and neighboring terrains. Long-timers among our CTBA community may be lost in the mists of reminiscence just now. This is a band that deserves fond recollection.

The Southlanders possessed the bluegrass spirit distilled to a high proof. It shows throughout their 1980 release *Thirty-Two Acres of Solid Grass*. This is not a terribly original production, relying on workhorses like "East Virginia Blues," "Dark Hollow," "I'll Never Shed Another Tear," and "Fox on the Run." The arrangements and vocal performances, however, elevate the materials.

In particular, Greg Edwards earns strong marks for lead vocals, and his banjo picking is more than serviceable. Edwards had that '70s sound of which Bill Emerson was a foremost exponent—the Country Gentlemen are clearly an influence—exchanging some of Earl's bite and drive for an extra helping of tuneful embellishments. Brothers Ray and Jimmy Nugent are themselves capable singers, on lead and harmony, and Jimmy plays a soulful mandolin that cuts somewhat against the grain of his contemporaries. This was an era of profound stylistic change on the instrument, thanks not only to progressive giants such as Sam Bush and David Grisman, but also the likes of Herschel Sizemore, Doyle Lawson, and Red Rector, who were raising the bar for skill and complexity even as their musical sensibilities were firmly tethered to the bluegrass heartland. Amid all that, Jimmy Nugent put his faith in a powerful command of tremolo and didn't care that much whether he was in tune. (Jimmy's daughter Alecia, by the way, is the best-known of the Nugents, having recorded three albums on Rounder and appeared on the Grand Ole Opry dozens of times.)

The best tracks on *Thirty-Two Acres of Solid Grass* show off the band's impressive vocal talents. "East Virginia," as Southland Bluegrass calls it, opens the album with perfectly executed three-part harmony throughout. "Beautiful Life" is pleasing call-and-response gospel. From there, we get two wonderful slow numbers. "Thirty-Two Acres"—a Bluegrass Cardinals original from the sub-genere of eminent domain tragedies—features Edwards's dynamic lead vocals, at once aching and forceful. The Nugents round out the harmonies on this tale of rural woe, in which the county needs your farmland for a right of way, and, well, what are you gonna do about it? Despair, that's what. The same arrangement works just as well on Dallas Frazier's "So Afraid of Losing You Again," a country #1 for Charley Pride. Southland Bluegrass fills in the seams with a gentle instrumental palate so the vocals can take center stage.

A final highlight sees Edwards swapping out the banjo for a fiddle on "Sally Johnson." These boys from the bayou handle the Texas-style classic with confidence. It's a dry and slippery rendition, with wobbly double stops and a toothsome edge. In other words, it's got character.

You can hear all you want of [Thirty-Two Acres of Solid Grass](#) on YouTube.

SXSGRASS 3: A MILESTONE YEAR AT RADIO/EAST

By Hannah Spooner-Giardino, CTBA Board Member



Another amazing **SXSGrass** is in the books! For its third installment, the fest returned to **Radio/East**.

This year marked the first time booking national acts *and* expanding to a second stage. Plenty of familiar faces from our local bluegrass community shared the stage and jam circles all day long, and headliners **Clay Street Unit** brought incredible energy to a packed audience. **Fennario Flats** closed out the day with a Bob Weir tribute.

Despite a torrential downpour at the start of the day, the show went on and it was a beautiful day of music and community. If you missed any of the action (or just want to relive it), [check out this highlight](#) reel on Instagram!

SXSW MAGIC: "WHO IS NOAH TALKING TO?"

By Hannah Spooner-Giardino, CTBA Board Member

SXSW brings thousands of people to Austin every March, but for those of us in the local music community, we know the real magic usually happens in the quiet corners of the city, away from the giant brand activations.

Strawberry Flats was lucky to play our debut gig at **The White Horse** during their *Honky Tonk Trailblazers* week, with our own CTBA board member **Chelsea Burns** sitting in on accordion as a special guest. We were already having a blast, but we also got a little extra SXSW magic during our set.

Early in the set, the room was essentially empty. Just us, the bartender, and about five other people. One of those people happened to be **Ketch Secor** of Old Crow Medicine Show. Our banjo player, Noah, struck up a conversation with him right before we started. Truthfully, we were all wondering who on earth Noah was talking to and were feeling a little rushed since it was time for us to start, only for him to hop on stage and tell us who it was.

After a few songs, Ketch headed out. We figured he'd seen enough (cue the quiet, collective sadness that maybe he didn't like us!). But about twenty minutes later, here he comes, walking back toward the stage, fiddle in hand.

Ketch jumped up and joined us for five songs, including some Dolly Parton favorites, "Driving Nails in My Coffin," and even a couple of Irish tunes we prepared special for St. Patrick's Day.

In a week often defined by high-profile showcases, this was a spontaneous, "only in Austin" moment that reminded me why we do this. It felt like a wink from the cosmos that our scene in Central Texas is as vibrant and welcoming as ever. And Ketch, if you're reading this, you and your fiddle are welcome anytime!



SIGN UPS FOR TEXAS STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS ARE OPEN

[Visit the Bluegrass Heritage Foundation website for
more info and to get signed up](#)



July 31-Aug 1, 2026

Texas State Championships

Banjo • Mandolin • Guitar

DoubleTree Hotel Dallas Near the Galleria
4099 Valley View Lane, Dallas Texas 75244



TexasStateContests.com

Texas State **Banjo** Championship – Fri. July 31 2026 – 2:00p to 5:00p

Texas State **Guitar** Championship – Sat. August 1 2026 – 9:30a to 12:30p

Texas State **Mandolin** Championship – Sat. August 1 2026 – 1:00p to 4:00p

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**1st Place: \$500, 2026 Texas State Champion Title, and Commemorative Plaque**

**2nd Place: \$250 & Commemorative Plaque**

**3rd Place: \$100 & Commemorative Plaque**  
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Each contest is limited to 10 contestants.

*Contestants **do not** have to be a resident of Texas to participate.*

Contest registration fee is \$20 in advance; \$25 at the door (if space available).

REGISTRATION IS OPEN! SIGN UP ONLINE TODAY!
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DoubleTree Dallas Hotel near the Galleria invites you to a weekend of non-stop jamming! **DESIGNATED JAM ROOMS** will be available for 24-hour jamming! A list of jam rooms will be provided at check-in!

**DISCOUNTED ROOM RATES** of \$135/night for the Championships are available THURSDAY - NIGHTS and include breakfast for two people per room! Call (972) 385-9000 - ask for the **BLUEGRASS** rate!



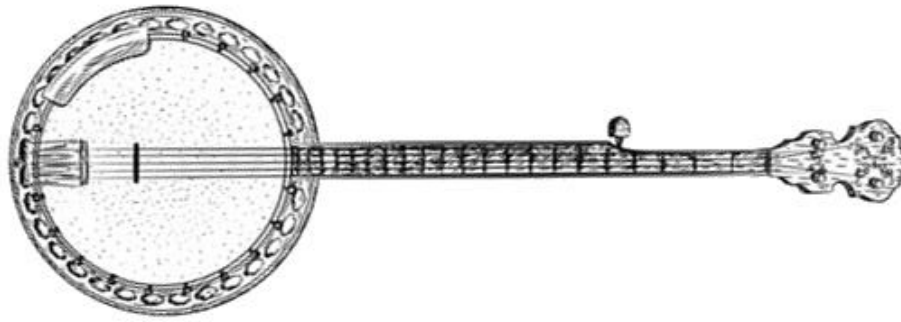
[TexasStateContests.com](http://TexasStateContests.com)



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## 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!



Across the Way  
Bird Calls  
Black Diamond  
Bobby Giles & Texas Gales  
BuffaloGrass  
Dalton Harper Band  
Four Fights Per Pint  
The Greenlawn Rangers  
Gus Miller & The Buzz Killers  
Livermore

Long Prairie  
Lost Patterns  
The McKinleys  
Randy Collier & Grassland  
The Sieker Band  
Strawberry Flats  
Susto Stringband  
Sylvan River Band  
Wayside Bluegrass

If your band is interested in becoming a CTBA member, please visit [CentralTexasBluegrass.org/Join](http://CentralTexasBluegrass.org/Join) or contact us at [CTBA@CentralTexasBluegrass.org](mailto:CTBA@CentralTexasBluegrass.org) to learn more.

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## 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!

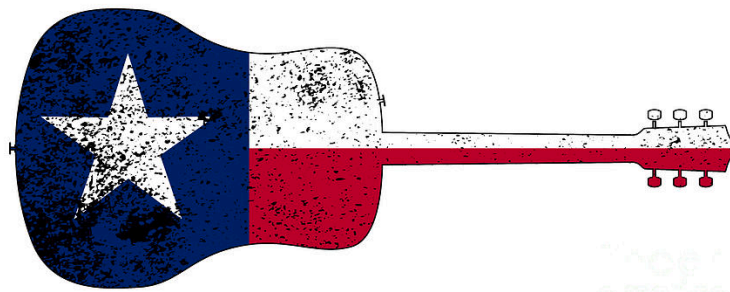


Barton Springs Mill  
Batch Craft Beer & Kolaches  
Cabin 10

Old Settlers Music Fest  
Shades of Bluegrass  
St. Elmo Brewing Co.

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

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