

Comin' Down the Road

Important dates for MABA members

September 16, 2006
11am-4pm

MABA Fall Picnic

Baptist Conference Center
849 Rocky Point Rd., Cordova

September 23rd, 2006

Blue Highway

Lucy Opry at BPACC

October 5-8, 2006

**Jerusalem Ridge Bluegrass
Celebration**

Rosine, Kentucky

October 14, 2006

Riverfest

Mud Island – Memphis, TN

November 9-11, 2006

Fall Bluegrass Festival

Ozark Folk Center Auditorium
Mountain View, AK

November 17th, 2006

Kenny and Amanda Smith

Lucy Opry at BPACC

January 20-21, 2007

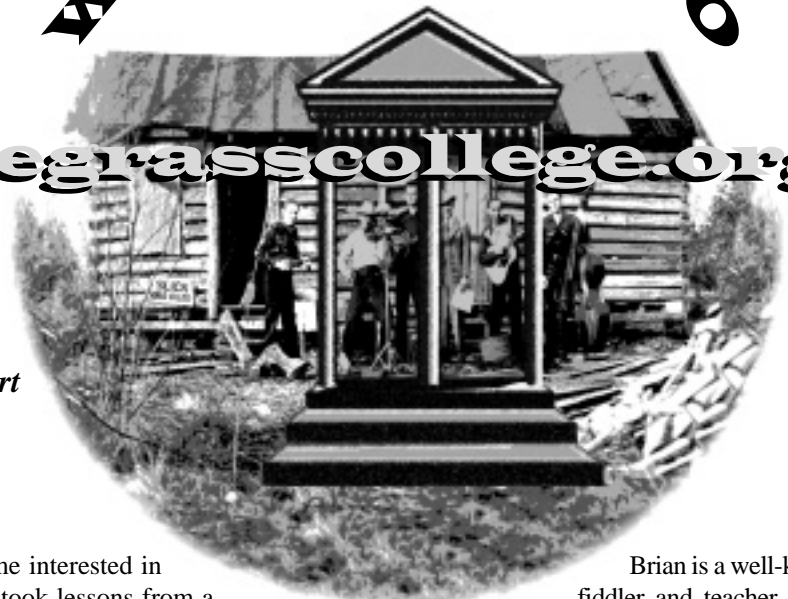
5th Annual Family Entertainment

Bluegrass Jamboree

Desoto County Civic Center

WELCOME TO

bluegrasscollege.org



By Chris Stuart

When I first became interested in bluegrass guitar, I took lessons from a guy in Jacksonville, Florida who lived about four blocks from me. I was lucky to have had someone that close and that good. Back then I couldn't imagine getting a lesson from one of my bluegrass heroes-a lesson any time of day or night and for as long as I wanted!

Today, I'm going to have a lesson with Tim Stafford, Blue Highway's guitar wizard. He gives me lessons whenever I want. He teaches me an easy solo and one of his amazingly fast ones which he slows down for me and tabs out. He plays it up close so I can see exactly what he's doing and he doesn't mind playing it over and over. When I know the tune, he even lets me take his place in the band! Am I delusional? No it's bluegrasscollege.org and it's the best thing since sliced cookie dough.

Bluegrasscollege.org is the brainchild of an American fiddle player, Brian Wicklund, and three British musicians: Ian Nicholls, Andy Metcalfe, and Peter Earle.

Brian is a well-known fiddler and teacher, based in Marine on St. Croix, Minnesota.

He has played fiddle and mandolin for thirty years, toured with Stoney Lonesome, appeared on Prairie Home Companion, and was a member of the Kathy Kallick Band. He's the author of the best-selling American Fiddle Method series of books, CDs, and DVDs, all Mel Bay Publications.

A year ago, while teaching at the prestigious Sorefingers bluegrass academy in England, he talked with one of his students, Ian Nicholls, about how great it would be to put classes like the ones at Sorefingers on the Internet. Bluegrasscollege.com was born.

The Brits are interesting because they have come to bluegrass the way we all did. They were bitten by the bluegrass bug and can't get enough of it. Ian Nicholls is a music producer for BBC television in children's programming and a classically trained violinist. Andy Metcalfe took a musical degree and then played electric bass in a rock band,

See College, page 4



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So Long, John



*John Branam, from the cover of
Newsgrass, November '04*

*In August, MABA members swelled the ranks of those honoring
the passing of our beloved and loyal fellow-member,
John "Too Tall" Branam.*

*His daughter Debbie and great-grandson Arlen
are familiar to the folks who attend Friday evenings in Collierville
and Saturday jam sessions.*

*John's family has suggested contributions to the
GRASS Committee as a suitable memorial.*

Visit our website:

www.memphis-bluegrass.org

Join our Yahoo Group:

**[http://groups.yahoo.com/
group/maba](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/maba)**

CARS PULLED OFF THE SIDE of a two-lane, black top road somewhere just south of a dying Mississippi Delta town slowed what little traffic there was and let those passing by know that tonight there was bluegrass music at the community grocery store.

As I closed the door to my truck, the muffled, but unmistakable sounds of acoustic instruments flooded the humid air of the sweltering summer night. While lugging my D-18 up the down-grade side of the moon-lit country road, I thought how many bluegrass pickers through the years might have experienced the same excited anticipation before their show.

As I walked up to the weather-beaten old store, I noticed two antiquated and sorely outdated Shell-Oil gas pumps, standing as an ever-present reminder that I really hadn't regressed that far back in time, despite the fact that I was in a town that didn't even have one horse. I don't believe the gas pump attendant was actually supporting the pumps, but I never saw him stray from his idea of a good lean-to.

As with all new arrivals to the store, everyone is given the "check-to-see-if-they're-ok" glance. Once we passed the impromptu inspection by the locals as our band walked toward backstage, we were never looked at again until it was our time to play.

Some of the locals, who were there purely for the social aspect of the night, kept themselves herded like cattle up on the front porch of the store. Although they caused frequent traffic jams for those coming in and out of the store, they never seemed to mind - they were there to see and be seen.

As I walk back inside again, I found myself feeling as if I were a bit actor in a low budget, b-grade movie or maybe even a victim of a cloudy, black and white dream. People's leathered faces, wrinkled from years of working under the sun, were all examples of America's common folk -- as they related their lives to the traditional bluegrass music emanating from the stage.

Electrical wires, erected without respect to local codes, hung carelessly from the ceiling. The eye-piercing, unshaded lights were only another visual obstruction, coupled with the stretched necks of those trying to glance over the field of complimentary cotton baseball caps - no doubt distributed by the local county agent. A pot-bellied stove, buckets for stools and benches for chairs, served to enhance the rustic atmosphere with which bluegrass music has long been associated.

Praise be!! This is bluegrass in its purist state. No studios, no special-effect lighting, no charge at the door - except for the hat that was eventually passed. This was simply a chance for hard-working, country folks to meet, see and enjoy friends -- and to sit a while and forget about how many cows there are to milk early the next morning or the number of chickens to feed, or seeds to plant.

Bluegrass music's deep-rooted heritage is bred into the souls of all that are afflicted with its magic. Being a bluegrass player, at some point in your career, you'll have the opportunity to share the limelight of the stage -- even if you don't have a record deal. Afterwards, you will forever cherish that unique feeling.

Although applause was predictably minimal, controlled enthusiasm abounded and was reflected in the periodic, offbeat tapping of work boots. A local farmer, wearing a pair of well-worn overalls, rose painfully from a bench as if he had "gotten-the-spirit". After dancing a short jig, he returned to his seat as a few approving nods were offered, but then all attention was returned to the stage.

As the night ended, I thought about how tomorrow the sun will call these rural Americans back to the fields and the little country store will once again assume its role in doing little to boost the local economy. But next Saturday evening, just after the sun's last light fades through the trees, a common bond will once again draw them all to the bluegrass flame.

By Brad Robb

Writer by trade

Banjo/ Guitar Player & Bluegrass/Country Vocalist

Memphis, Tennessee

A

C O M M O N

B O N D

College, continued from page 1

Robyn Hitchcock and the Egyptians, between 1984 and 1994. He's now a respected studio producer and engineer in London, and is learning bluegrass flatpicking. Peter Earle has over twenty years experience in information technology and is responsible for the daily operations of the website. He's also looking forward to taking the online instruction himself.

The best way to experience bluegrasscollege.com is to jump right in. Simply go to bluegrasscollege.com, sign up, and start in on your first lesson. Learn at your own speed. Download the exact tunes, tab, and notation that you want, from the players and instrument you want.

For a yearly subscription of \$69.95, you get access to a library of standard bluegrass tunes recorded by the top players. You can download one tune a month (or pay a reasonable fee for access to more tunes). Each tune is actually nine audio files (mp3), transcriptions (pdf) and a video file (mov). The tune is recorded at three different tempos: learning tempo (very slow), practice tempo (moderate), and performance tempo. For each of these speeds the instructor plays two different solos: one beginner and one advanced. The audio versions are both full-band (emphasizing the individual instrument) and music-minus-one mixes for all but the slowest speeds. For vocals you get lyrics and mixes with lead and each separate harmony part.

A new tune is added every month. You can download sample files and there is plenty of help available online. Payment is made by paypal or credit card from a secure server.

I wish there had been something like this when I first started. I would have saved a lot of money and been a better player. The list of instructors for bluegrasscollege.org is a virtual Who's Who of pickers and singers:

Guitar - Tim Stafford, Chris Jones, John Moore
 Banjo - Ron Stewart, Matt Flinger, Keith Little
 Mandolin - Butch Baldassari, Matt Flinger,
 Mike Compton
 Fiddle - Ron Stewart, Megan Lynch,
 Brian Wicklund
 Bass - Mike Bub, Missy Raines
 Dobro - Rob Ickes, Andy Hall, Ivan Rosenberg
 Vocals - Chris Jones, Sally Jones, Tim Stafford,
 Keith Little

They're available online, 24/7, with lots of great tunes and in-depth instruction. Bluegrasscollege.org is not just flashy players strutting their stuff. These are all good teachers as well as good players. Give it a try. Bluegrass music has always attracted those who want to join in on the fun by learning to play. Bluegrasscollege.org is a twenty-first century way to join in, but it's still fun!

Review of Concert by

The concert on August 5, 2006, at the Lucy Opry in the Bartlett Performing Arts & Conference Center (BPACC) by the Claire Lynch Band was another wonderful opportunity to see and hear one of the finest vocal and instrumental groups in bluegrass music! While this reviewer heard the band at the Concert for Ataxia in Huntsville, AL, only two weeks prior to their appearance at the Lucy, she was more than eager to hear them again. This kind of interest began about 25 years ago, when the reviewer first heard the Front Porch String Band, which was Claire Lynch, husband Larry Lynch, Herb Trotman, and Andy Meginniss, as they performed what is now a signature song for Claire, "Kennesaw Line," written by Don Dunaway. "Kennesaw Line" cuts right through to the heart of the listener. It reveals a story by a Confederate soldier named Sammy Watkins, and Company H of the Maury County (TN) Grays, as Sammy tells of the events which happened north of Marietta, GA, in the War Between the States. The years have brought personnel changes in the band, many new songs, and new fans to be added to their huge following. At the core, the heart and the soul of this band, stands world-class songwriter, vocalist, and guitarist, Claire Lynch.

A familiar face to the Memphis bluegrass community, Claire Lynch has performed at the Lucy Opry when it was housed in Frayser at the Harvester Lane union hall, and more recently at the Lucy Opry in the BPACC. She held a songwriter's workshop at Bill Weir's Gumball Studio on a wonderful, snowy winter afternoon – remember snow – and winter? Claire performed like a woman possessed for a lot of years, then she realized that she and her family needed rest and more "face time," so she took a break in order to be at home with her family. She did that and she is back! She is touring! She has her CD, "New Day," which is selling well, and she and her fine band are excited about the response to the Claire Lynch Band. This thing is working and rather well.



Claire Lynch writes many songs for herself and others. She also incorporates songs by songwriters, such as Memphian Paul Craft; Nashville attorney Henry Hipkens; Chris Stuart, a recent performer at the Lucy Opry; Huntsville writer, Hershey Reeves; Pierce Pettis; and Tim Stafford, of Blue Highway, the band which will appear at the Lucy Opry on September 23, 2006. In addition, Claire co-writes with songwriters such as Pamela Brown Hayes, Jennifer Kimball, and Irene Kelley.

The dynamic duo of Jim Hurst and Missy Raines are also quite familiar to West Tennessee bluegrass music fans. They have performed here as their own band and as earlier members of the Front Porch String Band. They're back, too, and Claire's got 'em!

Jim Hurst has won IBMA awards for his fine style of playing the guitar; his vocals are sublime. He can grab a banjo and get serious on that instrument, too. One can sense when he or she is in the presence of a master like Jim Hurst. When he is performing, Jim just looks like he is having the best time. He is!

THE CLAIRE LYNCH BAND

at the Lucy Opry on August 5, 2006

Missy Raines has won the IBMA upright bass award so many times that she has probably lost count. Completely in synch with what is going on, Missy keeps a steady groove, literally moving her bass back and forth behind Claire – first toward mandolinist David Harvey, then toward Jim Hurst and his guitar. Missy works her bass like no other you will ever see or hear! She is a complete joy to watch! She also contributes occasional vocals to the rich sound of the Claire Lynch Band.



David Harvey completes the makeup of the band, as he demonstrates his expertise on the mandolin, the fiddle, and the mandola. His harmony vocals work perfectly with the voices of Claire Lynch and Jim Hurst. David works for Gibson Guitar Corporation in Nashville, TN, building and repairing instruments. At this concert, the band paused to remember David's friend and co-worker, Charlie Derrington, who was killed in a motorcycle wreck on August 1, 2006, in Nashville. Charlie was known all over the world for his reconstruction of Bill Monroe's 1923 Lloyd Loar F-5, which was damaged in a home invasion. Charlie was a friend to many in Memphis and West Tennessee, performing over time in bands such as Cross Country, the Tennessee Gentlemen, the Gibson touring band, and more recently, Traylor Parker. In the true style of musicians everywhere, David Harvey paid special tribute to Charlie Derrington with his lively tune, "Tater Patch," and the show went on. David's history in bluegrass began at his tender age of 14, when he performed with the legendary

Red Allen. Locals may remember the fine band Wild & Blue, which featured David Harvey, his wife Jan, and her sister, Jill Snider. David Harvey recently produced a fabulous CD called "Moody Bluegrass," which pays tribute to the music of the Moody Blues. Fellow musicians who contributed to the project are some of the most outstanding in bluegrass music.

First Set: 1. Love Light (written by Claire Lynch), 2. Goin' Up, 3. Train Long Gone (currently nominated as IBMA Song of the Year), 4. Stafford's Stomp (instrumental written and performed by Jim Hurst and dedicated to Lucy Opry legend Joe Taylor's grandsons, Justin and Jeffrey), 5. Down in the Valley (written by Jess Leary, Morgane Hayes, and Liz Rose), 6. Leavin' on that Evenin' Train (written by, as Claire says, "a hippie type"), 7. Who Knows What Tomorrow May Bring (written by Henry Hipkens), 8. Jealousy (co-written by Claire and Irene Kelley), 9. Tater Patch (written by Charlie Lowe, featured David Harvey), 10. White Train (written by Peter Holsapple), 11. Kennesaw Line (written by Don Dunaway), and 12. Hitchcock Railway (written by Chris Stainton).

Second Set: 1. I'm Movin' (written by Paul Craft), 2. Paul and Peter Walked (written by Chris Stuart), 3. Missionary Ridge (written by Pierce Pettis, of Mentone, AL), 4. Up This Hill and Down (written by Richard Staedtler, made famous by the Osborne Brothers), 5. I'm Fallin' in Love (written by Henry Hipkens), 6. Pee Wee and Fern (written by Claire Harley Allen and Mel Beshar for her Moonlighter album and #1 on the charts), 7. Lonesome Indian (a "pick-off" between Jim Hurst on guitar and David Harvey on fiddle – he "picked" his fiddle!), 8. Sunny Side of the Mountain (written by Jimmy Martin, featured Gary Johnson with the Claire Lynch Band), 9. Thibodeaux (written by Chris Stuart), 10. Judas Is My Name, 11. This Old Guitar (written by Jonathan Edwards, featured Jim Hurst), 12. Savannah (written by Tim Stafford, performed on mandola by David Harvey), 13. Wabash Cannonball (written by Roy Acuff), and 13. the encore, which Claire Lynch calls her "critter song," Your Presence Is My Favorite Gift (written by Hershey Reeves).

The audience has a long-standing love affair going on with the Claire Lynch Band. Folks sang along, they perhaps shed a tear, they smiled, they may have even laughed out loud, and they thoroughly enjoyed themselves at this concert. Catch the band whenever you can. Pick up their CD, "New Day," on Rounder Records, and make it a permanent fixture in your CD player.

Additional information:

HYPERLINK "<http://www.clairelynch.com>" www.clairelynch.com
 HYPERLINK "<http://www.jimhurst.com>" www.jimhurst.com
 HYPERLINK "<http://www.missyraines.com>" www.missyraines.com
 HYPERLINK "<http://www.davidharveymusic.com>" www.davidharveymusic.com

E-mail: clairelynchband@gmail.com

- By Betty Westmoreland

RANDOM NOTES

The **2006 MABA FALL PICNIC** is set for **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16TH 11AM-4PM**. We're moving a little further east to the Mid-South Baptist Conference Center on Rocky Point. Its about 10 minutes east of the Shelby Farms site. The address is 849 Rocky Point Road, Cordova, TN. Here's a link to their site: <http://www.msba.org/>.

The Baptist Conference center site will give us access to a large air conditioned building with a built-in stage, a lake with lots of shade trees for outdoor jamming, restrooms with running water, etc... We should be able to have a really nice event at this site.

The MABA picnic is always a blast. MABA supplies the Hot Dogs, Burgers and BBQ. Members bring drinks and side

dishes. Bring your instrument and a chair. We plan to have another band scramble.

DOBRO WORKSHOP:

There are still a few slots left for the **September 23rd** dobro workshop with Rob Ickes. If you are interested, contact Al Gallarno at 386-3739 or email to dobro@myfam.com.

This will be a 3-hour dobro workshop with reso-master Rob Ickes of Blue Highway. The workshop cost is \$85 per person and will take place at BPACC in the early afternoon.

DULCIMER FESTIVAL:

The Memphis Dulcimer Gathering & Folk Festival 2006 will be held at Calvary Episcopal Church, 102 North Second, Memphis, Tennessee, on Friday, September 29 & Saturday, September 30, 2006.

ANNUAL JERUSALEM RIDGE BLUEGRASS CELEBRATION - October 5th - 8th at Bill Monroe's Birthplace in Rosine, KY. Over 40 bands appearing, including Ralph Stanley. For info call 270-274-9181.

RIVERFEST OCTOBER 14, 2006

As in the prior two festivals, we'll need our members to step forward with bands, sound equipment, people to run the sound, stage help, etc...

GRASSIFIEDS - advertising space in *Newsgrass* available to MABA members for bluegrass-related items - is making its debut in this month's issue of *Newsgrass* (see below.)

GRASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE: BEAUTIFUL HOPF full-size Fiddle: This fiddle is in excellent condition considering its age. Appears to be in the late 1800's early 1900's...it is ready to be played! There has a repaired crack on the front by the right f hole. Besides that I do not see anything wrong with this violin, a few very minor nicks on the body...Very gorgeous and has a NICE full tone!!! Approx. measures: From scroll

to tailpiece 24" body alone 14". I will have it on some Friday nights at the square if anyone is interested in playing or seeing it...or e-mail me wwolf1@midssouth.rr.com
Asking \$500.00

I have a nice Taylor 310E for sale.
My phone is 355-4716
Matthew Jackson

The Editor has offered to publish ads for members wishing to sell or buy bluegrass-related items. As with other copy for Newsgrass, the deadline for placing these ads will be the 20th of the month prior to publication.

Place your ad HERE!

Size	Monthly	Yearly
		(paid in advance 2 months free)
Card size	\$10	\$100
Quarter Page	\$20	\$200
Half Page	\$30	\$300
Full Page	\$50	\$500

Please contact the Editor, Duke Walker, to make arrangements for ad placement and payment of fees.

DEADLINE NOTICE

Submit your stories, photos and ads to Duke Walker, editor, by September 20th for publication in the October NewsGrass

The Lucy Opry

– est. 1967 –

The Legacy Lives On

BLUE HIGHWAY

September 23rd

The Bartlett Performing Arts Center • 3663 Appling Road • (901) 385-6440

Tickets for each performance are available through the Bartlett Performing Arts box office beginning 30 days prior to that show's date.

For more information, log on to www.lucyopry.com

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Please call for available days and times.

MABA
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