



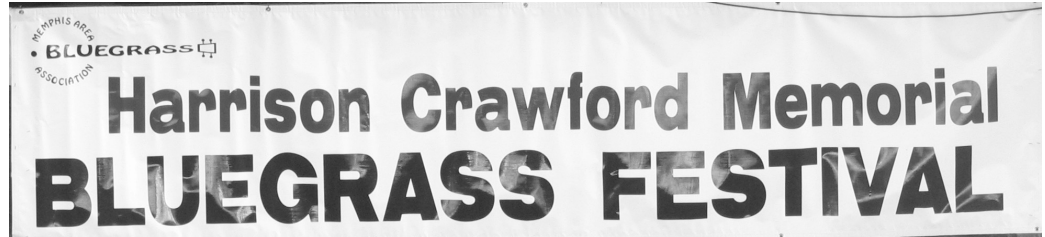
# NewsGrass

July 2009

Founded in December 1999

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## COME AND GONE!

John Gay

The music finally started Saturday morning. Thanks to Jim Phillips, who scheduled 15 band performances, and Larry Bomar, who emceed the event, the festival ran like a well oiled machine with nearly 12 hours of live music on Saturday. Larry gave away numerous CDs during the band changes. Mark Holder and team had the sound system dialed in and quickly made the PA adjustments for each band. Rick Crenshaw and Sam Ketchum headed up the MABA tent. Brenda and Benny Cole setup the MABA concession stand with drinks and ice cream, and manned it much of the day. The smell of burgers, hot-dogs, and grilled chicken filled the air. Numerous others worked on setting up Friday morning, breaking down Saturday night, manned the gate, the MABA tent, and the MABA concession stand.

Festival goers began rolling in Saturday morning and by mid-afternoon the parking area was nearly full. The atmosphere was fantastic. Music permeated the festival grounds with several groups jamming and bands warming up. Southern Roots, a state-wide public television show, taped several hours of footage for a show to air later this year. There were about 280 paid attendees from all over West Tennessee and North Mississippi. Probably close to that many band members and volunteers as well. We collected over 100 surveys to find out who our attendees were and how they

heard about the festival.

There was a great lineup of bands and each did a great job! Crosswind, from the Savannah/Selmer, Tennessee area, did a powerful set Saturday evening. Bluegrass Connection, from central Florida, closed out the day with a kickin' set of straight ahead, driving bluegrass and our own Peter Smith and Bob Turner sat in.

One of my personal favorites, the Fortneys, played Saturday afternoon. The Fortneys are the von Trapp family (remember the Sound of Music) of bluegrass and old time music. The Fortney band is Lawrence and Jeanne, their kids Taylor and Mary, and Lawrence's brother Ken. They have that great family harmony which comes naturally to them. Christine Donhardt and I are long lost Fortney third cousins - four times removed. I've seen the banjo played in lots of unusual ways - behind the back, spinning around dancing, two people playing one banjo... But I've never seen any one play it the way Taylor played it. Taylor is a very accomplished guitarist, mandolinist, and drummer. He broke all the bluegrass rules when he played the banjo like a snare drum using brushes on a couple of tunes. I have to admit - it sounded great!

*...he played the banjo like a snare drum*

Many thanks to all the bands and volunteers who made the festival a success. Thanks to Mrs. Crawford and

the Crawford family for the use of their property.

MABA president, Harry McLellan, is the driving force behind the festival. Harry's leadership was essential to the success and he plans to move it forward for years to come - there's even discussion about a band contest in 2010.

OK -- Time for a little editorializing... We have great potential for a really special bluegrass event for the mid-South area out in Williston, but we need your help. If you're interested in helping the festival reach its potential, there are tons of opportunities to be a part of it. We need your ideas, expertise, time, and manpower. We need

sponsors, vendors, and advertisers. We need expertise to tap into the Tennessee Arts Commission grant process. We need graphics help to put together nice artwork and info for the website and for printed material. We need help promoting the festival. We need help to make improvements to the facilities.

To volunteer or submit any ideas, contact Harry McLellan, me, or anyone of the MABA officers or board members.◇

# HURRICANE WILLISTON 2009

John Gay

Friday morning when I woke up early to get ready for this year's festival I would never have guessed what lay in store for us Friday night. I tried to check the national weather radar on the internet Friday morning before I left, but our internet connection was down at the house. Since I was excited to get out to Williston, I thought I'd just go on. It seemed nice - the TV forecasters were saying 50% chance of rain - not bad. The rainy days ahead of the festival made me nervous all week, but as I arrived at the Crawford property Friday morning the sun was shining, Mrs. Crawford was zipping around on her big mower, and there was even an RV already on the scene.

The setup this year was like clock

work. Tents and canopies went up, the stage area, dance floor, banners, sound system, seating, and the port-o-potties arrived. The scene was perfect. By mid-afternoon, we were ready to roll for this year's edition of the festival.

By late afternoon about 4:00 we noticed some clouds on the western horizon. A few minutes later, someone with an iPhone was showing the weather radar - looks like a big storm might be blowing in. I called home to check on the weather - Cathy switched over to the local channels. Oh no - wall to wall weather on TV. A big storm that was predicted to pass through during the early hours Saturday morning was coming in ahead of schedule. Lots of wind, rain, hail... It could be another Hurricane Elvis - the big storm we had in 2004. Word spread quickly. Folks batted down and put things up.

Someone mentioned we didn't have anyone at the gate - but by that time, with the lightning in the area, manning the gate was a potential death sentence.

A couple of the vendors had just finished setting up and Rick Crenshaw, who'd worked so hard setting up our MABA tables and canopy, started breaking down again. The vendors who'd just finished setting up began breaking down. I ran around and took my borrowed canopy down and loaded all my stuff that needed to stay dry.

By 5:00, the thunder was rolling. Reports were coming in from Cordova, Southaven, Rossville, Somerville - get ready, its going to be bad. Then the rain came down - in buckets.

About 30 of us headed under the pavilion to stay dry. Not bad so far but we knew from weather reports that the worst was on the way. After about 20 minutes of torrential rain, lightning, and thunder, the wind picked up. A few minutes later the wind was blowing the rain through the pavilion. Sound gear was powered down and covered. Anything that would fall over was laid down and protected. Those of us there huddled



## How about them Fleeners!!!

### The 5th Annual Pickin' Porch May 30th

What a great time!

Everyone enjoyed great food,  
music and friendship.

Thanks to Ed and Beth Fleener for  
such a wonderful contribution to  
our bluegrass family!



in the end of the pavilion to try to stay dry. First the wind was straight out of the west through the pavilion. Eventually the wind was swirling through - no place to stay out of the rain.

By now, the canopies and tents were taking a beating. The vendor canopies completely collapsed. The larger tents began to bend and sway. There were a couple of loud pops and cracks - big limbs were now coming down. One barely missed the big cooker. Andy Williams advised everyone to head for a low spot in the pasture if things got really bad. I was thinking the pond might make a good spot to go - probably not!!! The words to the "Walls of Time" were echoing through my head - "The wind is blowin' cross the mountain and out o'er the valley way below..."

A few minutes later Hurricane Williston was over. The power was out and the rain was still coming down but not nearly as hard. The buzz and boom of a transformer blowing was heard and seen in the distance across the pasture. We were grateful that no one was hurt. Next, Harry made it official - we were rained out for the night. But Saturday was to be a different story...◇

#### Charter President

- Gary Williams 1943-2003

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- GRASS - Helen Davis
- Lucy Opry - Beth Mays
- Membership - Gordon Jones
- Regulatory - James Johnson/Wayne Walker/Peter Smith
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#### MABA Support

- Editor - Karen Clark
- Webmaster - Chuck Clark
- Reviews - Betty Westmoreland
- Yahoo Group Moderator - Mike Albert
- Board Member at Large - Sam Ketchum
- Founder - Peter Smith

Submissions, feedback, and information are welcome please contact Karen Clark at [newsgrass@memphis-bluegrass.org](mailto:newsgrass@memphis-bluegrass.org)

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# BAND WORKSHOP

Ever think about what it would be like to be a member of an established bluegrass band and be able to perform at various bluegrass events, private parties, charitable functions and maybe a festival sometime? Now that you have become a proficient enough picker and/or singer to be a contributing part of any jam session or get together with your picking buddies each week or so, you find yourself looking and listening to other pickers with the idea of forming a band. You may already have started a band and are working to learn new songs, arranging and working out who takes which break and sings what part. You think it would be nice if you had someone from a band with experience to come and help out or maybe wouldn't mind if you came to their practice sometime to observe what and how they practice. You may be someone that is in a band and have been for a long time and would be willing to share some of your ideas and experiences with us. You may also enjoy seeing and hearing about the things that another band will be sharing with us about what it takes to be a successful

band. Well, Cypress Creek, a very successful band in MABA that is one of our longest running bands with a lot of years experience, is willing to share some of the insights of what it takes to be a band member and make a band work. They have the talent, patience, dedication, goals and family support to keep it enjoyable and fulfilling for each member. They will also discuss how being in a band will improve your picking and singing more so than just playing at home by yourself or just picking with your buddies. We can also learn from them some of the things that we should not do in order to keep things running smoothly. There is a lot of things that go into making a bluegrass band work and when it does, there can be a great amount of enjoyment and satisfaction that makes it all worthwhile.

The band workshop will be held on Saturday, July 18 at Hope Presbyterian at 12:30 PM. Hope to see you at Hope.◊

Jim Phillips  
(901)377-1910  
phillips362490@bellsouth.net

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## THE LUCY OPRY

August 8th  
*Special Consensus*

September 18th  
*Dailey & Vincent*

All performances are at the Bartlett Performing Arts Center (BPAC). Tickets are \$20. All seating is reserved. Tickets for each show are available from the Bartlett Performing Arts & Conference Center beginning 30 days prior to the performance date. For further information please call (901)385-6440.

### July 2009

- 3 **Collierville Bluegrass & Ole Time Jam**  
6:30pm on the Square
- 4 **Pickin' at Hope**  
12:00pm at Hope Presbyterian Church
- Independence Day**
- 6 **Flying Club Pickin'**  
6:30pm at the Flying Club-Millington
- 10 **Collierville Bluegrass & Ole Time Jam**  
6:30pm on the Square
- 11 **Pickin' at Hope**  
12:00pm at Hope Presbyterian Church
- 13 **Flying Club Pickin'**  
6:30pm at the Flying Club-Millington
- 14 **MABA Members' Meeting /Pickin'**  
7:00pm at Faith Anglican Church
- 17 **Collierville Bluegrass & Ole Time Jam**  
6:30pm on the Square
- 18 **Pickin' at Hope/Band Workshop**  
12:00pm at Hope Presbyterian Church
- 18 **Bluegrass at the Ruffin**  
7:00pm Covington
- 20 **Flying Club Pickin'**  
6:30pm at the Flying Club-Millington
- 24 **Collierville Bluegrass & Ole Time Jam**  
6:30pm on the Square
- 25 **Pickin' at Hope**  
12:00pm at Hope Presbyterian Church
- 27 **Flying Club Pickin'**  
6:30pm at the Flying Club-Millington
- 31 **Collierville Bluegrass & Ole Time Jam**  
6:30pm on the Square

### August 2009

- 1 **Pickin' at Hope**  
12:00pm at Hope Presbyterian Church
- 3 **Flying Club Pickin'**  
6:30pm at the Flying Club-Millington
- 7 **Collierville Bluegrass & Ole Time Jam**  
6:30pm on the Square
- 8 **Pickin' at Hope**  
12:00pm at Hope Presbyterian Church
- Lucy Opry - Special Consensus**  
8:00 pm BPAC
- 10 **Flying Club Pickin'**  
6:30pm at the Flying Club-Millington
- 11 **MABA Members' Meeting**  
7:00pm at Faith Anglican Church
- 14 **Collierville Bluegrass & Ole Time Jam**  
6:30pm on the Square
- 15 **Pickin' at Hope**  
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- 29 **Pickin' at Hope**  
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- 31 **Flying Club Pickin'**  
6:30pm at the Flying Club-Millington

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Visit Memphis Area Bluegrass Association (MABA) on the web at [www.memphis-bluegrass.org](http://www.memphis-bluegrass.org)

## ***GRASS*** ***"Giving Rural Assistance"***



Music often typified the end of a long days work...of family and friends coming together for a quilting bee, barn raising, a corn husking all for the betterment of the community. MABA continues this tradition with the Giving Rural Assistance program (GRASS). Be it an Angel Tree at Christmas or the collection of first-aid supplies for a local church or the playing at a retirement home.

Thanks to Helen Davis, MABA recently donated \$250.00 to Le Bonheur's Camp Brave Heart Family Grief Camp, which enabled five children to attend the camp hosted by Methodist Hospice. The possibilities are endless but the end is always the same: our community smiles a little more.

Please submit community project ideas to:

*Helen Currie Davis*

Email: [gertrude2@juno.com](mailto:gertrude2@juno.com)