

NewsGrass

“Dedicated to the Perpetuation of an American Art Form”



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PRESIDENT'S CORNER by

Benny Cole

On behalf of MABA I want to thank everyone who organized and worked at our annual Gary Williams Memorial Potluck Award Banquet. There was a abundance of food, jamming and everyone enjoyed the bands on stage.

Those receiving awards for their work and dedication to MABA were;

Gary Williams Award - [Dianna Ford](#)

President's Award - [Mark Holder](#)

President's Award - [Sharrye Holder](#)

Gary Johnson Award - [Larry Bomar](#)

Recognition Award - [Peter Smith](#)

Recognition Award - [Ed Fleener](#)

Service Award - [Bob Davis](#)

Peter Smith manned the merchandise table and collected dues. Many members paid their dues and several new members joined. MABA uses these dues to fund programs through the year.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at our Saturday jam and the next event.

Benny Cole

Our Officers

President - Benny Cole

Vice-President - Peter Smith

Secretary - Dianna Ford

Treasurer - Clay Cover

Bluegrass and Old-time Music in Collierville

By: **Betty Westmoreland**

Whether it is winter or summer or in between, whether it's rain, snow, sleet, or shine, there is always bluegrass and old-time music in **Collierville, Tennessee**. The town just east of Memphis and Germantown

is alive with traditional music at the **Historic Town Square** every Friday night during the spring, summer, and fall. Even on an occasional Saturday, an impromptu acoustic jam session is likely to break out. The first Sunday of every month from 2:00 to 5:00 PM local time, pickers and fans gather at **Sheffield Antiques Mall** on Poplar at US 72 for the **County Line Old-Time Music** jam session. The bluegrass and old-time events are not sponsored, nor are they advertised very widely in any newspaper. Word-of-mouth seems to do it for this enthusiastic group of players and fans. It's working so far!

Musicians and fans now recognize that Collierville is the place to be for some real down-home pickin' and grinnin', whether it's indoors or out. Coming from the local Memphis-Collierville area, Jackson (TN), eastern Arkansas, north Mississippi, and even as far away as Texas and Canada, pickers and fans have heard about the weekly free jam and they want to get in on the action. Restaurants around the town square are staying open on Friday evenings these days to welcome the hungry crowds that gather for music on Friday nights.

The Collierville Historic Town Square Bluegrass Old-Time Music Jam is about to pick right into the 12th season of music and fun. During the winter months (mid-October to mid-April), the group moves indoors to the beautiful **Collierville Methodist Church** on Poplar Avenue. Our hosts, with **Len Lawhon** leading the way, provide the Common Cup Coffee Shop, the Missions Room, the Boy Scout rooms, and even the beautiful lighted patio, from 6:30 to 10:00 PM local time, for the Friday night jammers. (continue page 2)



Bluegrass and Old-time Music in Collierville



Continued from Page 1



See the photos of the **Brush Arbor Bluegrass Band** in the coffee shop and the dulcimer players in the lobby area of the church. Brush Arbor,

along with **Lee Cagle** and **Ilace Mears**, recently performed for the youth of the Collierville Methodist Church at their annual chili dinner. Notice the photo of Lee and Ilace playing their dulcimers for the crowd. Community outreach is a big part of bluegrass and old-time music.

In the spring, on **April**

15, 2011, the jam will make its annual move back to the town square. There will be families and groups with picnic baskets, blankets, lawn chairs, kids, and that wonderful music! The jam is al-



ways drug- and alcohol-free. Solicitation of any type is discouraged, whether it is religious, personal, or political. The purpose of the jam is to enjoy playing and listening. It's all-acoustic stringed instruments (fiddle, banjo, mandolin, guitar, upright bass, dulcimer [mountain or hammered], bowed psaltery, auto-harp), and no drums (bodhran OK) or amplifiers, please! The jam hours at the town square are from 6:30 PM local time until the last note is picked!



Sometimes it goes 'til midnight or later! A favorite place for the jammers to gather is near the **Town Clock**, and they don't care what

time the clock says when they are pickin'. They are passionate about their music! Did we mention that it's all free entertainment?



Included in our photos for this story is a photo from **MulberryFest** on the Historic Town Square in 2008, with the **Potlikker String Band** pickin' at the little log cabin at the square. In addition, you will see a photo from a recent house concert held at the

home of fiddler **Donna Wolf** and her husband **Bill**. Renowned sixteen-year-old fiddler, **Ruby Jane Smith**, and her guitarist **Max Frost**, were in town for the annual 2011 Folk Alliance,



and they dropped by Donna and Bill's home for a wonderful concert.

Feel free to drop by any jam, wherever and whenever it is happening. Whether you sing, play an acoustic instrument, or just enjoy listening, you're always welcome at the Collierville and County Line jams.

Pick away!



Bluegrass In Schools



A call for used instruments, for a youth lending program, went out to MABA through the Yahoo Message Board and by an e-mail flyer. The response was great and the very next Saturday, Rebecca rolled out of the parking lot of Hope with a car full of donated instruments. That's the way to do it MABA!

Here is Rebecca's report of what followed.;

Bluegrass Youth

By: Rebecca Sherrod

As I packed my car with the plethora of bluegrass instruments on loan to our budding little bluegrass youth group, I wondered how the kids would react to this new style of music and these unfamiliar instruments. (I also wondered if I could even fit the 4 banjos, 1 mandolin, 1 guitar, 1 fiddle, and my own double bass and guitar in the back of my little Ford Escape.) With a little creative packing and the removal of a few seats it all went in, so off I drove to school.

That afternoon I was privileged to witness 4 little faces light up as they saw these different instruments being unpacked from their cases. I talked to the kids a little about each instrument as I passed them out, and I told them to play around with them a little while and see what songs they might be able to pick out. As they were plucking along, I rotated through the group, showed each of them the G, C, and D chords and had them start practicing those. First, I showed Luanna how to strum the mandolin a little. She picked up quickly, and she was as excited as I have ever seen her. She kept saying, "Oooh, it sounds so pretty!" Then, I got my big old bass out for little Emma. She had played it once about two weeks prior and hadn't forgotten any of it. Carley, who had her on her guitar, already knew those three chords and jumped right in. I then went over to Ryan who had been simply dying to get his hands on a banjo and started showing him a simple roll. Very carefully he started picking that roll; he hung in there, and little by little it started getting better. Then, I heard it. They were starting to play together. Oh, it was so inspiring. They were going through the chords, keeping time, and they actually sounded ...well ... pretty good! I couldn't stand it; I grabbed my guitar and jumped in. We stopped for a second and they all just looked at each other, amazed that they had just played together. Keith, the other teacher sponsoring the group, and I were standing there amazed. Other teachers were stopping by the room listening and bragging, and shaking their heads in disbelief. One of the administrators came in even took a little video of them on his phone. I think the students' cheeks were as tired from smiling as their fingers were from playing. Even one of our other students who said he wasn't interested in playing bluegrass ended up with a banjo in his hand...and Ryan was teaching him the new roll! Our hour wound down, and the kids simply didn't want to stop playing. They were so excited.

These young people are the future of this old music from our past. They are amazing, and if anyone is going to keep bluegrass going it is going to be them. They are so eager to learn, and they are incredibly talented. They are well worth our investments of time and money. A big "thank you" goes out to MABA for creating the lending library, and giving support to these kids. I can't wait to show them off to everyone in the summer.

Anyone interested in donating to the lending library, or offering some instruction to these students, please contact Rebecca Sherrod at rsherrod@scsk12.org or 487-6476.

We could use:

- ◆ Banjo
- ◆ Mandolin
- ◆ Bass
- ◆ Fiddle
- ◆ Instructional materials
- ◆ Picks
- ◆ Music stands
- ◆ Instrument Stands

We also need volunteers who can go out to the school and coach/teach the kids periodically. I think that the kids meet on Tuesdays from about 4:15 to 5:30. We can adjust those times for a bit later if necessary. Please let Rebecca know if you'd like to volunteer for that and when you would be available.

Some Words by Paul. W. Copeland

Just read the Newsgrass. Enjoyed it very much, particularly the article about Charlie Louvin.

I used to see Charlie and Ira when they were in Memphis, years ago. They worked out of the ORIGINAL WMPS radio station, AM 680, as part of the Smilin' Eddie Hill Show.

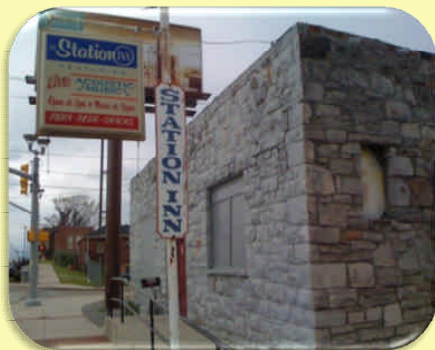
They did a wakeup show and also a noon-time show. Then, they'd jump in Eddie's Cadillac and go off to the hinterlands - North MS, Eastern AR, or West TN - and play some show at a high school, church, town square, etc.

They also did a Saturday morning show, at the old Black and White Department Store on Main St. They'd set up in the big plate glass window in the front of the store, put speakers inside and outside the store, and we'd fill up the sidewalks outside the store listening to the music. Eddie Hill had a good show, which not only included Ira and Charlie Louvin, but Paul Buskirk on lead guitar, Lightning Chance (from Hernando MS) on standup bass, and Buddy Baines from Tupelo who sang and played guitar. Great show.

Those days were precious to me, and seeing THE Louvin Brothers IN PERSON is something I'll never forget. Memphis attracted lots of those "name" artists in those days. They could make a good living from those radio station gigs. Artists like The Delmore Brothers, The Carlisle Brothers and many others came thru town. Other artists like Eddy Arnold, Hank Snow, Webb Pierce, etc., made regular concert stops in Memphis, usually at the Ellis Auditorium. Alas, those days are gone, never to return.

BTW, Floyd "Lightnin'" Chance (from Hernando MS) went with Smilin' Eddie Hill to Nashville and became THE premier bass player there when the recording business was first getting established. He died only a few years ago. His family still resides in North MS.

Them's my thoughts, and I'm-a sticking to them. Y'all behave.



The Station Inn—Nashville, TN

By: Benny and Brenda Cole

While planning our trip to SPBGMA in February, we discovered that Frank Ray and Cedar Hill were having a CD launch party at The Station Inn in Nashville on the Thursday night during SPBGMA. Because of their affiliation with MABA, we decided to go on Thursday and attend their concert that night. While looking at The Station Inn website, we saw that the James King Band would be there in concert on Wednesday night. Having already talked about our wanting to see him in concert this year, we changed out plans so that we could attend his concert also.

The James King Band was everything we hoped they would be. Living up to his reputation, James King broke a string on the very first song but changed it while he continued to sing. He said it was a trick he learned a long time ago. They ended their show with our favorite song of his, "Thirty Years of Farming."

On Thursday night we went to see Frank Ray and Cedar Hill. Pam Bunch, their manager, saw us and took us backstage to talk to the band a few minutes before they went on. During their concert, they performed the songs off the new CD, "I've Got A Thing About Doors" and we enjoyed each one. Since this was a CD launch party, the evening included door prizes and cake at intermission. We had the winning ticket for a copy of the new CD and a video entitled "An Inspirational Journey" that was filmed live in Missouri. We also got an autographed picture and two t-shirts that they were throwing into the crowd. Tom T and Miss Dixie Hall, who wrote the title song, were there too.

This was our first trip to The Station Inn. We were surprised at how small it was but the atmosphere was huge!! It had an intimate setting and every seat in the house was good. The admission price was more than reasonable for the quality of the performers. We look forward to our next trip to The Station Inn.

The Light of Bluegrass



By Brad Robb

As the name reflects, it's the largest annual cotton conference of the year – Beltwide. After 19 years in the cotton industry, going to Beltwide is like going to a Walton family reunion x 300.

After a day of exciting (*that's sarcasm folks*) presentations on everything from agricultural and textile research, to consumer marketing presentations (*where results sustain that the majority of U.S. consumers still prefer cotton over polyester*), I needed a respite from the fabric of my life.

As I descended the escalators to the lobby floor that acts as a staging area to meet others before heading offsite to dinner, there they were ...two instrument cases, covertly resting among hundreds of legs. (*Funny how little things like that catch a musician's eye.*) I knew the researcher standing next to the case and I also knew the fellow bluegrass singer to whom he was speaking - Cecil Yancey. Cecil is not only a great person who I'm proud to call my friend, he's also a very seasoned singer who also just happens to be one of U.S. agriculture's most respected magazine editors. I soon discovered he knew the owner of the cases and I then found out he and other players were scheduled to do a few songs

during a cotton consultant's dinner that night - but would eventually return to one of the hotel hospitality suites for a late-night jam. My respite from cotton had been delivered.

Before Cecil's group departed, another guitar case, a mandolin case and a banjo cased appeared. I tried, but I just couldn't think of a way to weasel into their event so I stood there like a whimpering pup as they disappeared out the door.

I ate at one of Atlanta's most celebrated restaurants that night but for the life of me, I can't remember the name of it or what I ate. I was blinded by the light – the light of bluegrass anticipation.

By the time the clock struck 9p.m., our group had arrived at the 44th floor and walking off the elevator I could see people were crowding the hallway in front of the suite. When I rounded the corner, I heard that unmistakable sound of a mandolin chop behind the solid strum of a flat top. Not wanting to intrude, I started talking to some of the sales guys hosting the suite, but I'm sure my wandering eyes revealed my insincerity toward their conversation. With Grassfire (*my bluegrass band*) having played several cotton events through the years, it didn't take long (*thankfully!*) for them to ask me to sit in. After several songs, we took a short break, came back and I sang "*When You Say Nothing At All*" with my yet-to-be-discovered-by-a-record label co-worker Stacey G. and by midnight, it was all over except my call to the front desk to ask for a ridiculously early 5:45a.m. wake-up call.

Another bluegrass adventure veered its head from out of nowhere, gave me fodder for this article and added four more players to my bluegrass friends contact list.

Have you been anywhere interesting lately? Bluegrass Festival, a New Jam, Workshop , A Concert or Anything Bluegrass? If so Send us a few lines and maybe a picture or two.



By Bob Davis

My wife Sandy was going to meet her best friends from high school for their semi-annual reunion. They attended high school in Newton Grove, NC but now all live elsewhere. This reunion was in Atlanta. With her dreading the drive to Atlanta, she recruited her favorite chauffeur, "Me". Knowing that being cooped up with 4 grown women reminiscing (gossiping, yakking) about high school is not a place for aspiring Bluegrass picker, ME. What I needed was a Bluegrass solution.

I hit the web looking for something in the Atlanta area ending up on the SEBA site (South Eastern Bluegrass Association). Having Saturday free, I was looking for a Saturday Jam. You would think that this would be easy but it wasn't, making me realize how lucky we are to have our weekly Jams. This brought me to Breazeale's Grocery in Pendleton, SC. Here's what their website said.

"Bring your bluegrass instrument" and join the bluegrass jam or just come out and enjoy the music and fellowship. All skill levels are welcome (beginner - professional). Located Near Anderson, SC (Upstate South Carolina)

Hmmm... it did say "beginner", so I decided to give it a try. My exposure to Bluegrass Jams was limited to two Saturday evenings at Mountain View (as a spectator) and the MABA's Saturday Slow Jam. I stayed at a local KOA camp ground staying in the Kamping Kabin. The Jam started 6:30 pm, so earlier that day I made a dry run to the Breazeale's Grocery. It was exactly what was expected, an old general store and when built it was probably the only store for miles. One thing not expected, the store was obviously closed. I called the contact number and was told that the store only opened on Saturday nights for the jam session. One of the members of their association actually bought this old store for the sole

purpose of using it for Bluegrass.

That evening I arrived shortly after 6:00 pm. Just a few people were milling around. Inside, the store was rustic, nostalgic and with the exception of a glass counter, which no doubt held penny candy back in the days, there was open space. This space was filled with chairs forming a semicircle around one corner of the room. In this corner there was a small table with a stand holding a single condenser type microphone. The walls were covered with burlap

potato sacks, along with some old framed photos and a few farming implements. My first thought was "What a perfect place for Bluegrass". A couple of old gents were sitting on benches in front of the store, cutting up, joking and were really friendly towards a stranger. Then people started showing up, a lot of people. Before the music started the room was buzzing with friendly chatter.

A core group of pickers surrounded the mic and the music started, good music, the kind that you would pay good money to hear. In the course of the next 3-4 hours all the classics were played, sung and played some more. Obviously most of these guys play together often. There was a lot of bantering, almost fighting for position to get their breaks in. Different players joined the group as other left. Different musicians were taking the lead for a few songs and then stepping back for the next player. What was cool is that the not-so ready-for-prime-time players were in the back of the room, playing along with their various instruments. This is where I found my temporary roost. Several of the prime-time-player's did probe me to "get up there and play a few" (the word had gotten out that a stranger with a guitar was staying at the camp ground" and I guess I looked the part)". I knew my limits and responded with "I'm pretty comfortable right where I am". This wasn't like any Jam I've been exposed to. It was more of an open mic type of deal. This would have been perfect for someone that likes to perform on stage. I do believe that they were sincere about "getting up there and playing a few" and wished I had the experience (and the guts) to do it. If I'm ever in the area on a Saturday night I will most definitely go visit Breazeale's Grocery store again.

My first thought "What a perfect place for Bluegrass" turned out to be true.

Web Site - <http://bgbluegrass.com>

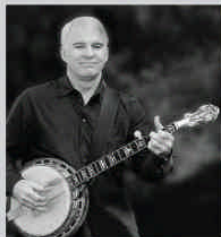
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THURSDAY

- 10-5 Exhibits and Film Fest at the Museum; showcase bands at the Park
- 7:00 Pete & Joan Wernick
- 8:00 Steve Martin with Steep Canyon Rangers

FRIDAY

- 10-5 Exhibits and Film Fest at the Museum; showcase bands at the Park
- 6:00 Audie Blaylock & Redline
- 7:10 Tony Rice with Mountain Heart
- 8:30 Punch Brothers featuring Chris Thile
- 10:00 Trampled By Turtles

SATURDAY

- 10-12 Exhibits and Film Fest at the Museum
- 12:00 Kentucky BlueGrass AllStars
- 12:30 Kenny & Amanda Smith
- 1:40 Valerie Smith & Liberty Pike
- 2:50 Professors of Bluegrass
- 4:00 The 23 String Band
- 5:10 Josh Williams Band
- 6:20 Sarah Jarosz
- 7:30 The Infamous Stringdusters
- 8:40 Emmylou Harris
- 10:00 Carolina Chocolate Drops

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CALENDAR/REMINDERS: EVENTS

Every Month 2011

Mondays:

Flying Club Pickin'

6:30pm at the Flying Club; 5796 Eniwetok St.; Bldg. #10; Millington, TN

Fridays:

6:30pm On the Square, Collierville, TN
Outdoors for the summer/fall season

Saturdays:

MABA Weekly Jam & Pickin'

12:00pm to 3:00 Hope Presbyterian Church; 8500 Walnut Grove Rd., Cordova, TN 38018

**Turn Back One Page !!
Check Out Our New
Advertisement Page !!**

Coming Soon:

“Pickin’ Picnic”

Bartlett Performing Arts Center

May 6th

“Fleener’s Pickn’ Porch”

June 4th

“Williston Bluegrass Festival”

June 10th and 11th

Visit the MABA online store at:
www.memphis-bluegrass.org and click on
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