

OLD TIME BARN DANCE NO. 2!!!

Saturday, October 18

By: Paul Kienitz

It's that time of year again. Come join in the fun of the Old-time Barn Dance No. 2 out on the farm at The O'Brien Barn, 552 Glenway Rd, Brooklyn, WI (about 20 minutes from Madison).

This event is in the spirit of family fun so Come One, Come All! Open to all Ages!

The Evening will start with a Potluck Dinner @ 5:30pm. Come meet some friends and neighbors and bring your favorite dish to pass and own beverage for the evening. A suggested donation will be collected to cover expenses.

The Old-Time Barn Dance at 7:00 pm will follow with fantastic LIVE MUSIC performed by the *Joke on the Puppy!* (featuring Chuck Hornemann, Paul Kienitz, Peter Gorman, Dave Batson with dance caller Mike Mossman) from the Madison area.

Check the link to see last year's review by former Fireball Mail editor Mary Helmke "A HOT time in the Old Barn!", posted on Oct 23rd, 2007...just to see what you might be getting yourself into.

<http://swbmai.org/index.php?s=barn+dance>

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 7PM
OLD-TIME
BARN
DANCE NO. 2
2008
Live Band and Dance Caller!
Potluck Dinner @ 5:30pm
THE O'BRIEN BARN - 552 GLENWAY RD, BROOKLYN, WI
Come One, Come All! Open to all Ages! INFO: 455-1860

The Fireball Mail is a publication of the Southern Wisconsin Bluegrass Music Association, Inc. Visit our website at www.swbmai.org

Send change of address to:
**Southern Wisconsin
Bluegrass Music
Association**
P.O. Box 7761 Madison, WI 53707-7761
Attn: Fireball Mail



Another Sugar Maple Festival Fan

Pass on the Fireball Mail to a friend!



FIREBALL MAIL

Southern Wisconsin Bluegrass Music Association, Inc. Newsletter September/October 08



SWBMAI's \$1,750 Support for Sugar Maple Festival Buys Smiles All Around

www.swbmai.org

FIREBALL MAIL

Volume 25 Issue 5

Fireball Mail is published bi-monthly: January, March, May, July, September, and November.

Please send advertising inquiries, articles, calendar information, photos and letters to:
Southern Wisconsin Bluegrass Music Association, Inc.
PO Box 7761
Madison, WI 53707-7761
Attn: Fireball Mail
Email: FireballMailEditor@gmail.com
Deadline for submissions is the 10th of the month preceding the month of publication.



SWBMAI is a member of IBMA (International Bluegrass Music Association) and the International Bluegrass Music Museum

SWBMAI is a proud sponsor of
WORT 89.9FM

Every Tuesday
Pastures of Plenty,
9:00 am - noon with John Fabke
Every Wednesday
Back to the Country,
9:00 am - noon with Bill Malone
Every Friday
Mud Acres Bluegrass Special,
9:00 am - noon with Chris Powers



Southern Wisconsin Bluegrass Music Association, Inc.

The SWBMAI is a non-profit educational organization devoted to the preservation and promotion of bluegrass music, and supported by the volunteer efforts of its members.

The SWBMAI mission as stated in the by-laws:

- 1) To promote bluegrass music and musicians
- 2) To bring together persons of all ages who enjoy singing, playing and listening to bluegrass music
- 3) To hold regular bluegrass jam sessions
- 4) To publicize information about bluegrass concerts and festivals
- 5) To help younger persons obtain instruments and instruction in bluegrass music
- 6) To introduce bluegrass music to new listeners

SWBMAI Board of Directors

President – George Reynolds, 608-957-1200, georgelreynolds@gmail.com
Vice-President – Ellis Bauman, 608-257-2431, ellisabau@aol.com
Secretary – Sharon Manion, 608-424-3408, smdw@charter.net
Treasurer – Jon Peik, jrpeik@yahoo.com

Attendant Board Members-

Jim Knobloch, 608-798-3810, knobhill@chorus.net
Catherine Rhyner, Membership, 608-835-8117, catherine.rhyner@gmail.com
Jean Knickelbine, Marketing and Public Relations, jeanknick@gmail.com

Volunteers-

Webmaster – Scott Knickelbine, swbmai@gmail.com

Jim Carrier, Nancy Garrett, Tom Garrett, Jim Maginnis, Carin Mizera, Stephanie Ramer
Betty Reis, Cole Reynolds, Lynn "Chirps" Smith, Robert Spaier, Hollis Spaier, Benjamin Spaier, Dale Ward, Mona Wasow

Board Meetings

The board usually meets the first Wednesday of each month, at 6:00 pm at the Bar Next Door, 232 E. Olin Ave., Madison, WI. If you would like to attend, contact a board member to be sure of the date, time and location; they are subject to site availability and holiday dates.

Board Meeting Minutes

The Southern Wisconsin Bluegrass Music Association, Inc. board meeting's condensed minutes are available on line at www.swbmai.org. If you would like minutes mailed to you please send a stamped self-addressed envelope to SWBMAI Secretary Sharon Manion, P.O. Box 7761, Madison, WI 53707.

Fireball Mail

You can print off your Fireball Mail at home any time: Please send your e-mail addresses to the membership chair, Catherine Rhyner, at catherine.rhyner@gmail.com. Write *e-mail newsletter* in the subject line. This will not only get the news to you faster, but will help preserve our natural resources and the Association's printing and mailing costs too.

Wishing You Well ...

As many of our readers have probably already heard, two long-time friends of SWBMAI have recently suffered some medical setbacks. Johanna Fabke suffered a brain aneurysm shortly before the Gandy Dancer Festival earlier this summer. We're told she is recovering well.

Beth Graham injured her head in a recent fall but didn't let that stop her from hosting the annual Fun on the Farm Picnic from her hospital bed. She is also recovering well. We wish them both the very best and hope to see them both up and about soon.

In Memory: Casey Kingery A True Bluegrass Send-Off

By: Dave Landau

Several members of the extended Wisconsin Bluegrass family sadly laid our friend Casey to rest this past June.

Musicians and friends gathered at Roselawn Memorial Park in Monona on a sunny Monday afternoon, opened up their cases and their hearts, and began a farewell Bluegrass jam session for the man known only as Casey. As the jam went around the circle some pickers chose to play and sing old gospel songs and some played songs that Casey used to perform for us.

Everyone shared their stories of Casey and a common theme quickly surfaced. It seems that almost everyone had met Casey as a Bluegrass beginner.

He was the one guy that would look around the room for "new" pickers and encourage them to join in. A lot of the musicians said that his encouragement is the reason that they are pickers today.

As the last notes of *Amazing Grace* faded away and we quietly put the instruments back into the cases, it became clear to me the gift that Casey has given to us all. By his example we should all strive to live life to the fullest, have fun, play Bluegrass music, laugh, tease people, and by all means... encourage those Bluegrass beginners.

By: Nancy Nikora

On the bright cool June afternoon of June 16, 2008, Casey Kingery was laid to rest at Roselawn Cemetery in Madison. A beautiful farewell jam was organized by his great friend, Patti Graham. Several musicians who had shared music with Casey over the years paid tribute to him in tune and remembrances. Everyone recalled happy times with Casey who came to every event with humor and an indomitable spirit. His love of music and generosity in sharing his gift is deeply missed in the Madison Bluegrass community. Rest in Peace, Casey.

By: Fritz Jaggi

Casey was a very honorable man. He had many talents. He had his own style of playing the harmonica. There were many that tried to copy his style of playing. He would put the harmonica to his mouth, rest it directly on his gums and then use his tongue to play the different notes.

He had many friends both with two legs and with four legs. His four-legged friends were his pet squirrels. He had twelve

to fifteen; two or three would eat out of his hand. He would buy peanuts by the twenty-five pound boxes then shuck them on the kitchen table. He would sit for hours shucking peanuts for his friends. I made some cages for him. They were to keep other animals out.

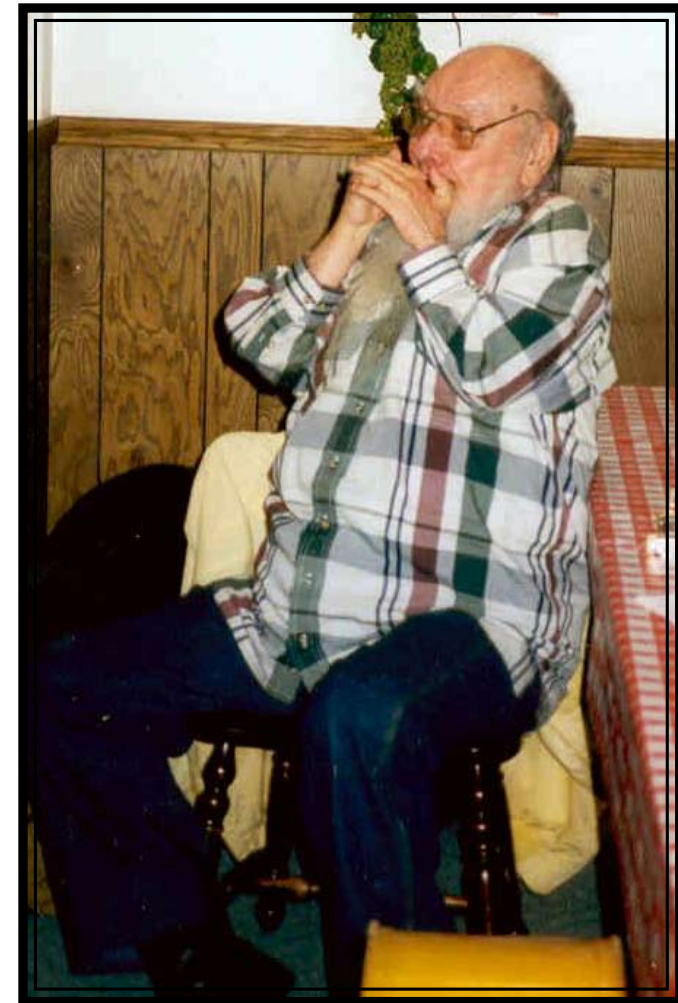
Casey loved to put puzzles together. He had one 10,000 piece and another 12,000 piece puzzle. He would put them on trays, get them laminated and then fasten them to the walls of his home.

Casey was crippled from birth but he worked. And played. He had bands. He worked as a dispatcher for a cab company. He was an excellent pool player. The only thing he got for nothing was a hard time.

There was a doctor from a foreign country that performed surgery on Casey when he was about the age of six. This surgery got Casey

to the point where he was able to get around. But because the doctor was not board-certified the hospital would not allow him to do more surgery.

Casey was a very proud man and he will be missed by all.



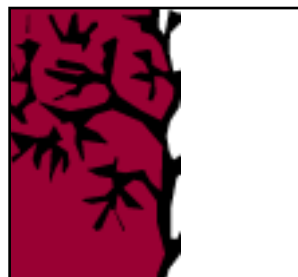
News From The Flatpicking Guitar Network

Our new Flatpicking Network is a FREE on-line social network, like facebook or myspace, but just for flatpickers. On this site we post photos, mp3s, videos, blog news, flatpicking events, and our members can do the same on their very own individualized member home page! Members can

also interact with other flatpickers, join various flatpicking interest groups, comment of various forum topics, access our podcasts, and much more. To check it out, go to: <http://flatpick.ning.com/>

It's Not Too Late To Register For Stringalong! October 24-26, 2008

It's an educational Folk Arts vacation weekend with 30 artistic staff, 75 classes, 15 concerts! Escape to a weekend of music and the arts, the company of good friends old and new, and the comforts of Olympia Resort and Spa. Enjoy 15 unique concerts and the hands-on teaching of 30 highly acclaimed performing artists from all over the country. Get started on a new instrument in separate beginner classes, or take your playing skills to the next level: guitar, dulcimer, mandolin, ukulele, banjo, tinwhistle, African drumming, autoharp, folk harp, fiddle, harmonica and upright bass.



winning naturalist, or take a songwriting class with two of the nation's most prolific and successful songwriters. Try handbells — a Stringalong first. Bring your digital camera and learn to frame that perfect shot. Jam with other folks who share your interests.

While you are in class, your family/friends can share your room and enjoy the luxuries of Olympia resort — spa, sports complex, swimming pool, hot tub, 18-hole golf course — then join you for meals, staff concerts and the evening program. All this while your cost for the Stringalongs starts at the low price of \$195 for

Take a Gospel or harmony singing class. Learn ensemble skills from one of the nation's best bluegrass bands, or share both music and laughs in a jug band class. Make jewelry, toys, greeting cards or a beautiful wooden instrument to take home. Bring both your left feet to contra, square or international dance classes, or share a dance with the experts. Drum with a Master Drummer from Ghana, study ecology with an award-

two-night stay, five meals, fourteen unique and amazing staff concerts, and your choice of three classes from 60 possibilities. Only \$89 (just Friday). Pre-Stringalong \$105+ (Th/Fr). or Stringalong Weekend \$195+ (Fr/Sa/Su) for 2-night stay, meals, tuition, concerts, jams, pool/spa (all)! Separate beginner classes. To register go to: <http://www.stringalongweekend.com/>

CD Review

Submitted by: Mary Helmke

John Hanson CD
Prairielands
Playing Time : 30 min. 12 secs.

John Hanson, a banjo player from Central Wisconsin, has released his first CD containing all original banjo melodies. Using a Recording King banjo with a well balanced tone, the style is basically traditional Scruggs, but the melodies might be considered by some to be slightly progressive.

Throughout the CD styles range from a straight forward, sometimes haunting beat to a mysterious sound with unusual chord changes. John makes good use of 6th and 7th chords and uncommon tunings. There is very little vamping. The banjo stays in the music from beginning to end which makes all the tunes sound fresh and alive.

The accompanying musicians include SWBMAI members Art Stevenson and the High Water band. Stevenson plays guitar

and harmonica and his wife, Stephanie, plays bass. Bruce King plays mandolin and mandola, while Gerald Evans fills in with mandolin and fiddle. Bass and guitar playing is strong with excellent rhythms. Evans does a fine job playing his breaks with great gusto.

"Milltown," "Prairieland," "Heavy Weather," and "Sugar Time" are songs fitting for a good jam session or a movie theme. All the melodies are real attention grabbers. Tunes in general, really move along with "Straight Ahead" nearing 170 beats per minute. There are no waltz time or 3/4 time songs; the slowest, "The Sweetest One," taps along at 108 bpm.

For top notch banjo tunes from a top notch player, *Prairielands*, with twelve original banjo instrumentals, will surely get bluegrass banjo souls excited. The CD is available by searching for *Prairielands* at www.cdbaby.com, www.myspace.com or by ordering from John Hanson at jahanson@charter.net.

2008 Bean Blossom Bluegrass Festival

By: Bruce Nichols

With sixty-plus young girls and boys attending the youth 3-day musical bootcamp, there were a lot of kids playing in the campsites each day and night. I saw a young 6 or 7 year old boy playing a full size bass while standing on a card table chair, while his mother held him to prevent a fall.

Another 6 year old kindergarden graduate and mandolin player named Kyle jammed with Earl Scruggs at banjo-maker Frank Neat's campsite one afternoon. Kyle also played on stage with some professional bands, and he was a wonderful player and singer. Dan & Linda Servais camped next to Kyle's parents 's camper, and got to know the family pretty well. They do not push Kyle to play — he just loves it. You wouldn't believe what he could do on his \$8,000 mandolin.

One night I came across Jack Hicks, an ex-Bluegrass Boy from Bill Monroe's early 1970's band playing his banjo with another New York professional banjo player and a dobro player in the tent of an instrument dealer.

They were playing some of his banjos and really put on a good show. One played a flat-head banjo and the other played an arch-top banjo. I was mesmerized by superb musicians playing what they liked in a manner that left me breathless.

It is always fun to be invited to different campsites to talk with people from all over the country and the world. I met some Dutch folks that followed their very good European Champion Bluegrass Band as it toured many United States festivals in the summer. Their banjo player spent some time with banjo-maker Frank Neat, and had a great time at Bean Blossom.

I also met the promoter of a southern bluegrass festival called the "Two Rivers Bluegrass Festival" in Mississippi, and he told me that they use county prisoners to prepare and work at the festival grounds. The prisoners liked getting out for a while, and this arrangement had financial benefits for all involved. What an interesting idea when volunteers cannot be found.

We look forward to next years' 43rd annual Bill Monroe Bluegrass Festival at Bean Blossom, usually during the third week of June. We hope you can join us!



Four Different Voice Lesson Opportunities with Maggie from Harmonious Wail

By: Sims Delaney-Potthoff
formerly ran the Bluegrass in the Schools for our area

Hey everyone, did you know that Maggie claims "If you can speak, you can sing"? She is the world's greatest voice teacher! Gives you that "come on in, the water is fine" kinda feeling!

Private lessons begin mid-September (the 16th) plus there are three different adult class options through the UW Continuing Studies program including a NEW recording workshop. Please check them out - It's FUN, it's PAINLESS!

Any questions email maggie@wail.com. For information call 608/263-6670 or go to <http://www.wail.com/sims1/MagVoxClass.pdf>. To enroll: 608/262-2451 or you can go to <http://www.dcs.wisc.edu/lisa/info/register.htm>



Are You Our Next Fireball Mail Editor?

We are currently looking for someone to take over the position of editor for Fireball Mail. If you enjoy writing and editing and bluegrass music, this is the perfect position for you. It's a real plus if you know Adobe InDesign. Please contact Jean Knickelbine at jeanknick@gmail.com if you are interested or would like more information. Thanks!

ANNOUNCING

The 2nd Annual SWBMAI Holiday Potluck, Jam & Dance Saturday, December 6, 2008

Meet Us at the Montrose Town Hall

1341 Diane Ave in Paoli

Jamming 3:00 – 5:30

Potluck Dinner 5:30 – 6:30

SWBMAI 25th Anniversary Program 6:30 – 7:00

**To Be Announced
SWBMAI Member Band 7:00 – 10:00**

Jamming from 10:00 – Midnight

**SWBMAI Members FREE / Non Members \$10
Beer, Soda and Tableware Provided**

Eddie Adcock Recovering From Brain Surgery

SWBMAI's First Master's Heritage Concert Honoree

Submitted by: Ellis Bauman

Dear friends,

Now you can truly call Eddie Adcock the Bionic Banjo Player --and don't forget Gearhead Guitarist-- as he recovers from some remarkable brain surgeries to control a right-hand tremor.

The three-part surgery, termed Deep Brain Stimulation, involved implantation of electrodes into the brain as well as insertion of a palm-sized battery-powered generator within the chest wall, plus lead wires to connect the two. The technologically-advanced procedure was performed in multiple stages over the month of August in Nashville, Tennessee, at Vanderbilt Medical Center, a teaching and research hospital which is a world leader in neurological studies and surgeries.

Those neurosurgeons were eager to operate on Eddie, with his life-long high level of musical accomplishment and the unique requirements related to his fine motor skills. During the brain-implantation stage of the surgery, he was kept conscious in order to be able to play his Deering GoodTime banjo and assist the team of surgeons in directing the fine-tuning of their placement of electrodes in the brain -- an operating-room 'first'.

According to Eddie, "I came up in music the hard way and learned to be a trouper fast. Some of those early days were pretty rough, and I've been stomped, cut and kicked; but I never went through hell like this -- it was the most painful thing I've ever endured. And it was risky. But I did it for a reason: I'm looking forward to being able to play music the way I did years ago prior to getting this tremor. It means that much to me. I'm far from being done!"

Iconic bluegrass/newgrass picker Eddie Adcock, who turned seventy years old in June, began his career as a youngster touring his native central Virginia, then migrating to the Washington DC area, and from there jumping off onto the national and international stage. He's now an inductee into numerous Halls of Fame.

Eddie adds, "All those smoky places I used to play earned me the emphysema I've got now too." His breathing medications may possibly have been a factor in the development of his



hand's tendency to shake; but as Eddie points out, "I've gotta breathe!"

For the past several years, his primary neurologist had prescribed around a dozen different medications in hopes of quelling the tremor affecting Eddie's playing and writing. However, none worked, and some had unfortunate side effects. Eddie then underwent a number of evaluations which determined him to be a good likely candidate for Deep Brain Stimulation surgery. Eddie is now the first non-Parkinsons musician to have undergone the DBS procedure at Vanderbilt Medical Center. He has benefitted from the numerous innovative techniques and apparatuses developed by Vanderbilt Neurosciences, and his surgeries were videotaped for Vanderbilt Neurosurgery's use....and you may eventually see him on PBS!

Eddie's currently sporting a new haircut, an original design consisting of shaved spots as well as #1-clipper-setting-length fuzz, all showcasing several serious-looking suture areas. "I'm beginning to get used to wearing a do-rag, though. The girls seem to like it."

Eddie wishes to thank his team of neurologists and neurosurgeons, especially Dr. Joseph Neimat and Dr. Craig Woodard, for their enthusiasm and great attitude as well as their amazing talents; and he thanks Vanderbilt Medical Center's wonderful staff for their care. And Eddie and I both thank all our friends and family and fans --and the total strangers-- who have sent their good wishes and kindly kept us in their prayers. That has been the best medicine of all!

It's not over yet, though: a post-op checkup is slated for late September, and in early October the docs will finally turn the generator on and begin programming the device's strength and intensity. So please keep sending good thoughts Eddie's way!

We both hope you will understand that it's been impossible to keep up with email or to do much personal communicating at all, as we've been concentrating on getting Eddie through this ordeal....and out the other side better than ever!

All the best,
Martha (& Eddie) Adcock

Jams October / November 2008

EVERY MONDAY

Dry Bean Saloon, 6:30-10:30 pm, 5264 Verona Rd., Madison, WI Host: Dave Bachol

Newgrass Jam, 6:00 -10:00 pm, Bar Next Door, 222 E. Olin Ave. Madison, WI Host: Spencer Walts (Info: eyewerks@tds.net)

EVERY TUESDAY

Learner/Beginner Jam at the Coliseum Bar, 7:00 - 10:00 pm, 232 E. Olin Ave., Madison, WI. SWBMAI sponsored instruction on first Tuesday, 7:30 - 9:00 pm by Jon Peik, \$5.00 donation for instructor requested. Other weeks are facilitated without charge. (Info: Mary 608-838-4852)

3rd TUESDAY

Hartland Music, 7:00 -9:00 pm, 1125 James Dr., Hartland WI. off Hwy 83, just south of Hwy 16 (Info: rwschwartz@aol.com)

FIXX Coffee House Bluegrass Jam, 3558 E. Sivyver Ave., St. Francis, WI 7:00 -10:00 PM. Beginners welcome (Info: 414-482-0919 Host: James Brocksmith of the Liberty Bluegrass Band.)

EVERY WEDNESDAY

Northland Ballroom, 8:00 - 11:00 pm, HWY 49 (at CTY C) between Rosholt & Iola, WI Hosts: Art & Stephanie Stevenson with Dale Reichert (Info: 715-884-6996 or 715-677-3491)

Emily's Restaurant, 8:00 -11:00 pm, 3747 Cedar Creek Rd West Bend, WI. (Info: 262-677-0138 or www.emilysrestaurant.com)

1st & 3rd THURSDAY

Ruby's Road House, 6:00 -9:30 pm, free, Hwys 40 & 53, Bloomer, WI (Info: Larry Finseth, 715-926-5148)

3rd THURSDAY

Tuvalu (formerly Indigo) Coffeehouse & Art Gallery, 300 South Main Street, Verona. Bluegrass jam from 7:00 - 8:00 pm, followed by an open mic from 8:00 to 9:00 pm. (Info: (608) 845-6800) www.tuvalucoffeehouse.com

1st & 3rd FRIDAY

Bluegrass Jam, Harmony Bar, 2201 Atwood Ave., Madison, WI, 9:45 pm - midnight. Open jam in the traditional style. Musicians of all levels are encouraged. Hosts: The Trails End String Band (Info: 608-249-4333) Sept. thru May

2nd FRIDAY

Ron's Old-Time Jam, Black Earth Bank, 1:00 - 4:00 pm, (lower level meeting room) Black Earth, WI. Host: Ron Poast (Info: 608-767-2276) www.ragtime88.com/swotfa

3rd Friday

Bluegrass Open Mic, Crossroads Coffeehouse, 7:00 - 9:30 pm, 2020 Main St, Cross Plains, WI This is a walk-in event, but advanced sign up reserves your time slot. Info: joesnare@tds.net or call Mary at the Crossroads, 608-798-2080) Host: Joe Snare

EVERY OTHER SATURDAY

Spirits, 735 S Watertown St, Waupun 11:00 am. - 2:30 pm. All levels of playing ability are welcome. All Acoustic. (Info: Jeff Smith (920) 324-3977)

1st SATURDAY

Riley Tavern, 2:00 pm, 8205 Klevenville-Riley Rd., Mt. Horeb, WI Take CTH PD to CTH J between Mt. Horeb & Verona. Host: Archie Lowman (Info: 608-845-9150)

Waukesha Church of Christ, 1:00 -4:00 pm, 2816 Madison St., Waukesha, WI. Host: Pastor Greg (Info: 262-470-3644)

2nd SATURDAY

R.H. Landmark Saloon, 3:00 - 6:00 pm, 138 S. Main St. Jefferson, WI. Host: John Short (Info: 920-563-7441)

Spring Green General Store, 3:00 -6:00 pm, 137 S. Albany St., Spring Green, WI. Host: Paul Bentzen (Info: 608-588-7070 or www.springgreengeneralstore.com)

EVERY SUNDAY

Bluegrass Jam with the Mazomaniacs and Staff Infection, 4:00 - 7:00 pm, R & J's Saloon, 8 American Legion Street, Mazomanie, WI, Times may change due to Packer Schedule (Info: (608) 795-2251 Debra L. Schroeder schroederdeb@mhasd.k12.wi.us)

EVERY OTHER SUNDAY

Old Time Jam, Alchemy Cafe, 1980 Atwood Ave., Madison Ev-ery other Sunday at 5:00 pm (Info: Scott Knickelbine scottk@lcs-impact.com)

1st SUNDAY

Orfordville American Legion, 12:00 -6:00 pm. Orfordville, WI On Hwy 213 S, just south of Hwy 11. Host: Fritz and Donna Jaggi (Info: 608-897-4286) NOTE: November will have two jams: November 2 AND November 30. December will not have a jam.

Life Spring Coffee Shop, 1:00 - 4:00 pm, 7578 Orfordville, WI Host: Rich Gadov (Info: 715-588-9498) www.headforthedome.com

2nd SUNDAY

Hazelhurst (Yawkey) Town Hall, 1:00 - 5:00 pm, Hwy 51, Hazelhurst, WI. Host: Keith Justice (Info: 715-356-3793)

MABMA Bluegrass Jam, 2:00 - 5:00 pm, Borders Books, River Point Shopping Center, 8705 N. Port Washington, Fox Point, WI (Info: 414-540-1427) www.mabma.org

4th SUNDAY

Viroqua Bluegrass & Gospel Music Association Bluegrass Jam, 1:30-4:30 pm, Park View Ct, Viroqua, WI (Info: Dave Peterson 608-637-3820 dlpeterson@mwt.net www.viroquabluegrass.com)

Bluegrass Jam, The Attic, 2:00 - 4:00 pm, 730 Bodart Street, Green Bay (Info: www.theatticbooks.com or call 920-855-2627 or 920-884-7260)

LAST SUNDAY

Bill Jorgenson Jam, Tom's Garage, 1:00 - 5:00 pm, 222 West Franklin St., Appleton, WI (Info: (920) 882-2183)

Festivals September / October / November 2008

September

27 Fall Harvest Festival & Barn Dance - Manitowoc, WI, 1:00 pm - 8:00 pm, Pinecrest Historical Village, 924 Pine Crest Lane, Manitowoc, WI 54220 www.mchistsoc.org/index.html

28 FIXX Jammer's Fall Party, 4:00 pm to 10:00 pm CDT, Landing Condominiums at 4700 S. Lake Drive, St. Francis, WI Please RSVP to James Brocksmith paxflyer@earthlink.net

October

10 Farm Folk Music & Dance Gathering, 7am. Techny Towers Conference & Retreat Center, Northbrook, IL. www.farmfolk.org (773) 271-7127

11 Bluegrass Benefit Festival for Juvenile Diabetes, 6:00 pm featuring *Above the Town*, *Liberty Bluegrass Band*, *Big Cedar*, *On Eagle's Wings*. Oakwood Church, 3041 Oakwood Road, Hartland, WI

18 Old Time Barn Dance, potluck dinner at 5:30 pm, dance at 7:00 pm. Music by *Joke on the Puppy*. O'Brien Barn, 552 Glenway Rd., Brooklyn, WI.

23 - 24 Stringalong Weekend, Olympia Resort, 1350 Royale Mile Road, Oconomowoc, WI. www.stringalongweekend.com

Member Band Schedules October / November 2008

October

1-4 *The High 48s*, 12:00 pm and 5:00 pm Norsk Hostfest, Minot, ND www.hostfest.com

4 *Jefferson County Bluegrass Band*, 5:00 pm October Fest, Monroe, WI

Liberty Bluegrass Band, 10:00 am Hay Days, Greendale, WI www.discovergreendale.com

Liberty Bluegrass Band, 7:00 pm Michael Fields Ag Institute Harvest Festival, East Troy, WI www.michaelfieldsagainst.org

Above the Town, 11:30 am Michael Fields Ag Institute Harvest Festival, East Troy WI www.michaelfieldsagainst.org

Turtle Creek Ramblers, 1pm Hay Days, Greendale, WI www.discovergreendale.com

10-11 *Art Stevenson & High Water*, Autumn Craft Festival, Arena/Convention Center, Sioux Falls, SD www.hpifestivals.com

11 *Monroe Crossing*, 7:30 pm Bloomington Center for the Arts 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington, MN

Tangled Roots, Mantorville Opera House, 5 W. 5th St. Mantorville, MN 507-635-5419, www.mantorvillain.com

Art Stevenson & High Water, 9:00 pm, Latitude 44 Sioux Falls, SD www.44downtown.com

(*this is the*) *Squirrel Hunters*, 3:00 pm, FIB Gathering, 6914 Red Barn Rd., Crystal Lake, IL

Above the Town, 12 pm, Edwards Orchards Fall Festival, Poplar Grove, IL

Turtle Creek Ramblers, 9:30 am, Northwoods Care Centre, Belvidere, IL.

Turtle Creek Ramblers, 1:30 pm, Maple Crest Care Centre, Belvidere, IL

12 *Monroe Crossing*, 7:00 pm, Phipps Center for the Performing Arts, 109 Locust Street, Hudson, WI

15 *Monroe Crossing*, 1:00 pm, Grandpa's Event Center, 31846 65th Avenue Way, Cannon Falls, MN

17 *Above the Town*, 8:00 pm, Schauer Arts and Activities Center, Hartford, WI www.schauercenter.org

The High 48s, Dulono's, Minneapolis, MN

18 *Monroe Crossing*, 7:30 pm, Pioneer Place on Fifth, 22 Fifth Avenue South, St Cloud, MN

Tangled Roots, 4th Annual Art Barn Bluegrass Festival, Osceola, WI

Wooden Bridges, 7:00 pm, Wells Street Tavern, 505 Wells Street, Delafield, WI

19 *Monroe Crossing*, 2:00 pm, Midwest Country Music Theater, 309 Commercial Avenue Sandstone, MN

21 *Liberty Bluegrass Band*, 9:00 pm, Red Line Tap, 7006 N. Glenwood Ave., Chicago, IL 773-274-5463

24 *Monroe Crossing*, 8:30 pm, Martys Cyber Cafe, Luther College, Decorah, IA

25 *Monroe Crossing*, 8:00 pm, Oak Center General Store, 67011 Highway 63, Lake City, MN

November

1 *Art Stevenson & High Water*, FFA Alumni Bash, Manawa, WI www.bksheep.com/bluegrassbash.htm

2 *Monroe Crossing*, 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm, Mantorville Opera House, Mantorville, MN

4 *Art Stevenson & High Water*, 7:30 pm. High School Auditorium, Three Lakes, WI

8 *Art Stevenson & High Water*, Sentry Theater, Stevens Point, WI

Turtle Creek Ramblers, 9:30 am, Northwoods Care Centre, Belvidere, IL

Turtle Creek Ramblers, 1:30 pm, Maple Crest Care Centre, Belvidere, IL

14 *Wooden Bridges*, 9:00 pm, Wells Street Tavern, 505 Wells Street, Delafield, WI

15 *Monroe Crossing*, 7:00 pm, Fine Arts Theatre, Mesabi Range Community & Technical College, Virginia, MN

Tangled Roots, 7:30 pm. St. Kilians Art Center, Gold and Bartlett streets, Wykoff, MN 507-533-6495

The High 48s, Savage American Legion Hall, 12375 Princeton Ave., South Savage, MN

16 *Monroe Crossing*, 7:30 pm Myles Reif Performing Arts Center, 720 Conifer Drive, Grand Rapids, MN

17 *Monroe Crossing*, 7:00 pm Backus Auditorium, 900 Fifth Street, International Falls, MN

20 *Monroe Crossing*, 7:00 pm, The Mill Restaurant, 120 East Burlington Street, Iowa City, IA

21-23 *Art Stevenson & High Water*, Autumn Craft Festival, The Odeum, Villa Park, IL www.hpifestivals.com

21 *The High 48s*, MBOTMA's Harvest Jamboree, Minneapolis, MN

22 *Monroe Crossing*, Iowa Flood Relief Concert, W. Des Moines Christian Church, 4501 Mills Civic Parkway, W. Des Moines, IA

Liberty Bluegrass Band, 9:00 pm, Maxies Southern Comfort, 6732 W. Fairview Ave., Milwaukee, WI 414-292-3969

Current SWBMAI Members

Tom Alesia	Felicitus Ferington	Jami Lampkins	Rebecca Rodwell
Charles Allen	Tom & Ellen Foley	Eric Larson	Mike Schmidt
Jorge Alva-Huerto	Vern & Betty Forest Family	Bob Lilley	Rick Schwartz
Debra Amesqua	Judith Frazier	Archie Lowman	Mary Ann Seaberg
James Anderson	Thomas & Nancy Garrett Family	Gary Lugauer	Rick & Rose Seeger
David L. Bacholl	David Golla	Jack Lyon	William C. Shattuck
Dan & Barb Batker Family	Mary Gorman	James Maginnis	John Short & Family
Ellis Bauman	Patti Graham	Bill and Bobbie Malone	Lynn Smith
Scott Baumann	W.T. Graham	Sharon Manion & Dale Ward	Jeffrey Smith
Paul Bentzen	Edward H. Greene	Family	Karen Sonnenblick
Sheldon Bey	Claude Gyrion	John Mataczynski	Spaier Family
Jim & Annette Birkes Family	Teresa D. Hayden	Eugene Matthews	Gregory Spencer
Dale Boettcher	Wayne & Shirlene Hefty Family	Bill & Roberta May Family	Kerry Spitzer
Robert Boyer	Mary Helmke	Glen McCarty	Robert M. Stanton
James W. Burch	Rosabelle Helmke	Fran McCollum	Tony Supanich
Edwin Burington	George J. Hollrith	John & Linda Merril Family	Herbert Swingen
Carmen H. Burnett	Lloyd Hornbacher	Carin Mizera	Donald W. Temby
Phil Carey	Ben & Suzy Howell Family	Bob Moloney	John Thraen
Roy Carley	Tony Hozeny	Dean Mueller	Alice Tibbetts
Glen Carlson	Dale Hughes	Dave Nelson	Norris Tibbetts
James Carrier	Ed Jacobsen	Bruce Nichols	Bill & Barb Townsend Family
Sandra L. Charnon	Fritz Jaggi	Nancy Nikora	Kevin Tubb
Julie Cherney	Keith Justice Family	Jim B. Oberg	Cheryl Van Lear
Charles J. Connell	Robert Kaminski	Kathy & Marty Ottem Family	Jeffrey Wagner
Ken Connors	Donald Kappel	Willie Pansegro	John Wallace & Family
Meredith Coulson	James C. Kennedy	Robert E. Patterson	Nadine S. Walsten Family
Don/Henry/Moira Creedy/ Kelley Family	Ronald Kittleson	Richard Peik	Spencer G. Walts
Sherry Crownhart	Stan & Margaret Kmiotek	David & Lorna O. Peterson	David Ward
Peggy & Robert Cullen	Jean & Scott Knickelbine Family	Todd Pieper	Ken Ward
Karen DalPorto	James Knobloch Family	Jay Pierce	Kristin Warren
Paul Davis	John Koch	Gladyn Raatz	Mona Wasow
Janet & Jim Deeds	Steven Kruzick	Stephanie Ramer Family	Shauna Wells
Bertie Donovan	Ken Kuenzi	Jennifer C. Ramm	Dave Westlake
Arthur Evans	Paul L. Kunz	Glenn Reinl Family	Al & Lindy Wilson Family
Johanna Fabke	Laura Kvalheim & J Lottridge Family	George Reynolds & Family	Max Winkels
John Fabke	Nova Kyburz	Catherine S. Rhyner	Dave Winters
Chris Falkner	Celia & Nicholas Lamper/ Linden Family	Barry & Deb Riese	Michael J. Wipperfurth
SunShine Ferguson		James & Joanne Robarts	

Current SWBMAI Member Bands

Above the Town – Jerry Loughney; 262-510-1128,
jerry@abovethetown.com

Art Stevenson & High Water – Art Stevenson; 715-884-6996,
artstevenson@tds.net

Cork n' Bottle Stringband – Greg Dierks; (608) 241-2430,
www.bignew.com

Jefferson County Bluegrass Band – Doug Hodge;
(608)201-2032, dhodge1@tds.net

Liberty Bluegrass Band – James Brocksmith; 414-803-7477,
www.libertybluegrass.com

Monroe Crossing – Art Blackburn; 763-213-1349,
art@monroecrossing.com

New Bad Habits – Chirps Smith; chirpsdot@aol.com

'Round the Bend – Fred Newmann; 608-238-6863,
fnewmann@wisc.edu

Sparetime Bluegrass Band – Bob Batyko; 608-575-9945,
bob@sparetimebluegrass.com

Tangled Roots – Martin J. Marrone; 651-501-9735

The High 48's – Eric Christopher; 651 271-4392,
eric@thehigh48s.com

This is the Squirrel Hunters – Brian Ray; dasspunk@gmail.com

Turtle Creek Ramblers – Dave & Michelle Wilson;
608-361-0770, www.turtlecreekramblers.com

Wooden Bridges Bluegrass Band – Rich Schwartz;
262-719-3549, http://home.wi.rr.com/woodenbridges/

Last Oxford Barn Dance Of The Season On October 11

Submitted by: Karen Sonnenblick

My name is Maggie Mae. I am a country/yodeler/bluegrass singer. I live in Oxford, WI. A friend of ours from Wisconsin Dells told us that in your Spring newsletter there was an article about a group doing stories on barn dances. Well, we have been doing barn dances on our farm in Oxford for two years! We had one this last weekend with a crowd of 700 plus. Even getting buses in from Minnesota! We usually have six per summer. One is left this year for October 11 from 1:00 -5:00 pm. I perform with my band and can be seen on RFD TV on the Midwest Country Show airing on Saturday nights 8:00 pm. Here's my website if you'd like to view: www.maggiemaecountry.com

Sincerely,
Maggie Mae



Stone Oak Bluegrass Band Reunion Show September 28



By: Tom Waselchuk

Madison bluegrass fans will recall Madison's fabled Club de Wash, located within the dark confines of the Washington Hotel, and all of the fine acoustic music that showcased there. Among that number was the Stone Oak Bluegrass Band, a Madison-based quartet that called The Club de Wash home from 1979 through 1983. The original members of The Stone Oak Bluegrass Band are pleased to announce a reunion performance on Sunday, September 28 at 7:00 p.m. at the Harmony Bar, 2201 Atwood Ave., Madison.

After the group's four years of performing, touring and recording (one record—vinyl!), the members went their separate ways but stayed actively involved in music and have remained close friends. Stone Oak has gotten together for a few reunion shows over the years, the last one in January 1997.

Sims Delaney-Potthoff, mandolin and vocals, attended the Berklee School of Music immediately after Stone Oak disbanded and then formed Harmonious Wail, a vintage acoustic jazz group that evolved to incorporate the Gypsy Swing styling of Django Reinhardt. Harmonious Wail has become a Madison institution, recording six critically acclaimed CDs and traveling the U.S. and abroad to Europe and Taiwan. (www.wail.com).

Doug DeRosa (bass, vocals) is a founding member of another Madison institution, the blues/rock band Honor Among Thieves, a group that produced five albums from 1983 into the 1990s. (www.myspace.com/honoramongthievesmadison). Doug currently plays upright bass in Dollar Bill & The Bucks, a band he describes as "a drinking club with a penchant for tear-in-your-beer country, that has been performing on a limited basis since 1997."

Max Winkels (banjo, vocals) relocated to Marshfield WI where he's kept up his chops playing with area bands including his current group, the East Hill Bluegrass Band, formed in 2002.

Tom Waselchuk (guitar, vocals) has led and performed with many groups in many styles, from mainstream jazz (Full Count Jazz Band) to folk & country blues (The Rubato Brothers). He started his current group, a honky tonky, Western swing, and Americana band called The Dang-Its in 1998 (www.dang-its.com), and joined Sims Delaney-Potthoff as guitarist for Harmonious Wail in 2001.

The Washington Hotel burned to the ground in February 1996. The Stone Oak Bluegrass Band promises to honor the memory of that amazing place with some fire of their own.

SWBMAI 2008-2010 Strategic Plan: Listen, Play, Learn

Dear Members,
I promised to share the SWBMAI Strategic Plan with you in this issue of the Fireball Mail, and you'll find it beginning on page eight. But first, allow me to share some of the context that led the board to create it.

Why a Strategic Plan? As SWBMAI's 25th year began in April 2008, the organization did not have any long range plans or nor did it have an annual operating budget. As the board began discussing what we would do after the summer festival season, we began asking questions like "What should we do?", "What are we capable of doing with our resources?", "What is needed in the community?". We needed a strategic framework against which to assess the organization's activities and resources, so we set about drafting a plan that would articulate how we would support SWBMAI's mission "... to promote the education in and enjoyment of Bluegrass music and to preserve the folk traditions from which this music was developed."

In many ways, the board generally believes that the problems that SWBMAI was formed to address twenty-five years ago — few opportunities to play together, a lack of quality bluegrass performances in the area, the difficulty in finding local information, and so on — have been solved. There are now jams nearly every night of the week in the Madison area; top notch acts including Ricky Skaggs, the Punch Brothers, and Bela Fleck will appear this fall alone; dedicated groups organize wonderful festivals such as Sugar Maple, Gandy Dancer, and the Brooklyn Bluegrass Festival; and local and national Internet sites such as theDailyPage.com, and Mandolincafe.com provide comprehensive information to listeners and learners alike.

This is an absolutely wonderful result and stands as a testament to the foundation architected by Bruce Nichols as the first SWBMAI president, and nurtured through the last two and a half decades by countless volunteers, board officers, and community members.

So what should be the mission for the next 25 years? I don't know the answer to this question, but we are determined to keep asking the questions and to keep searching for good answers. The following pages highlight a general direction that the board nearly unanimously believes we should pursue over the next 18 months, steps that I'm confident can serve as the first flagstone on the path for the next 25 years.

Over the coming months, the board and I will be working to prioritize the activities we will conduct in support of the strategic plan's themes, set funding and budget targets, and to locate people who would want to lead various activities. SWBMAI exists to enrich your lives and communities, not just mine or the board's, but we can't do it without your help. So I invite you to give me feedback on the strategic plan, to suggest specific ways in which we might accomplish it, to volunteer your talents and labors, and/or contribute your treasure to the cause.

At your service,
George L. Reynolds, President

What is the Southern Wisconsin Bluegrass Music Association?

The Southern Wisconsin Bluegrass Music Association is 25-year old non-stock, not for profit educational corporation currently headquartered in Madison, WI.

Mission

The purpose of SWBMAI is to promote the education in and enjoyment of Bluegrass music and to preserve the folk traditions from which this music was developed.

Vision

In pursuing its purpose, SWBMAI will seek to enrich southern Wisconsin communities by supporting active participation in bluegrass music.

2008-2010 Strategic Plan: "Listen, Play, Learn"

The Southern Wisconsin Bluegrass Music Association will support its strategic mission by concentrating on three self-reinforcing activities: listening to music; playing music with others, and learning about the music, its performers, and the instruments.

Listen

Listening to Bluegrass music, especially live performances, is an enjoyable, rewarding, and instructive experience that has long been supported by SWBMAI. Historically, SWBMAI was needed to actively organize, promote, and operate listening events such as concerts and festivals; often consuming significant amounts of labor, money, and risk in doing so. Today, commercial venues such as the Barrymore Theater, the Overture Center, and the High Noon Saloon, and volunteer organizations such as Four Lakes Traditional Music Collective, provide these opportunities far more regularly and ably than SWBMAI is equipped to do. However, SWBMAI is committed to continuing to help create listening opportunities in the Southern Wisconsin community, and can do so through more indirect means such as funding grants, and promotional support.

Learn

Potential Supporting Activities:

1. Giving direct festival support through underwriting, grants, and volunteerism. In 2008 SWBMAI returned nearly 50% of member dues to the community in support of local music performances.
2. Serving as a funding application partner for local organizations seeking grants and awards from entities such as the Wisconsin Arts Board. In 2007-2008, SWBMAI helped community organizations obtain nearly \$15,000 in funding.
3. Providing organizational membership in and sponsorship of entities such as WORT radio, the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA), and the Bluegrass Museum.
4. Helping to promote events through our mailing list, newsletter, and website; serving as an informational nexus for venues, performers, and listeners.
5. Organizing limited, small events such as the SWBMAI jamboree, and holiday party.

Play

This is where it all began 25 years ago as thirty people jammed for seven hours at Quivey's Grove on May 13, 1983. Ordinary people playing together is a core component of what distinguishes Bluegrass and Folk music from other genres such as classical or

hip-hop, and has helped develop and sustain the art form through generations. And at a time that finds many people leading sedentary lifestyles, full of solitary pursuits, gathering together to play music creates an active, social vitality for the community.

Potential Supporting Activities:

1. Continuing SWBMAI's organization of and financial sponsorship of the Tuesday Night Beginners' Jam.
2. Identifying and sponsoring additional instructor-facilitated jams in the community, perhaps one that is located in a non-bar venue, or on a weekend day.
3. Using the SWBMAI website, mailing list, and newsletter to connect people looking to play together.
4. Supporting and promoting playing at area festivals and events such as the Jamboree, holiday party, and local festivals.

LEARN

Learning is an integral component of a lifelong attachment to a hobby or pursuit. As the learner's knowledge increases, his/her enjoyment of the activity deepens and becomes more faceted. It's the difference between "seeing a movie" and becoming a "film buff" or eating in a restaurant and learning to cook. The same holds true for the bluegrass fan: as one listens to the music one wants to learn more about its history and performers (e.g., starting with "Oh! Brother Where Art Thou?" and wanting to learn more about Jon Hartford). As one gains proficiency in one's instrument, one wants to acquire more skills and play with others. As one discovers the amount of study and work demanded by the craft, one comes to better appreciate the virtuosity of a performer at a live event. Fostering an active community of learning and discovery will be the cornerstone of SWBMAI's 2008-2010 strategic activities.

Potential Supporting Activities:

1. Directly organizing and sponsoring workshops that provide opportunities to learn about the music, as well as opportunities to acquire skills that support active participation in the music. These events may cover instrument building, repair, and maintenance; instrument playing; singing; and music appreciation and history. They may be standalone, attached to local festivals, open to members only, or even school-based.
2. Publishing informational content that will help the community understand, appreciate, and participate in the music.
3. Awarding direct scholarship support to members of the community who wish to actively pursue their interest in and education of bluegrass music.

What Do You Think?

Your input is vitally important in determining the future direction of SWBMAI. Please let us know what you think of this strategic plan, and give us your own suggestions!

GO TO ON-LINE SURVEY AT:
<http://www.swbmai.org/membersurvey>

It only takes a few minutes! We look forward to hearing from you.

NashCamp 2008

By: Julie Cherney

January '08 in Wisconsin. Christmas is over. The New Year has come and gone. The Packers blew it in the playoffs and another winter storm threatening to dump a foot of snow is on its way. I should have written blue yodel #154, but instead I watched an inordinate amount of TV and settled into lethargy.

One day I get an email from my pal Karen asking if I'd be interested in attending NashCamp. Hmm. A week of picking, singing, learning and having a good ole time in a place far from winter. It took me a day or two of pondering, but I was sold. My other pal Catherine needed even less time to decide. "Let's go!" she said on the spot. And a little farther down the road our fourth pal Teresa said, "I'm kenneling my dogs and coming with you!" It was decided; four girls from Wisconsin were going to take Cumberland Furnace, TN by storm.

Day 1 After a long winter, followed by a quick spring, Teresa's retirement, my almost undefeated softball season, Karen's certification exam and Catherine's computer class from hell, we were on the road. We were as giddy as school girls wondering what this experience would be like, who the other Nashcampers would be and what kind of instruction we would get. Nothing could dampen our spirits! Not even the elongated drive through Illinois and a 3 hour traffic jam in Effingham! Our first stop, Peducah, KY.

Day 2 With a song in our hearts and Illinois in our dust, we were two hours away from the "premier camp for acoustic music and songwriting." Up the steep driveway sits the restored Drouillard Mansion three stories high with an exquisite wrap-around porch. The carriage house is 100 feet away and is where the classes and concerts are held. Surrounding these two structures are rustic wood cabins for the Nashcampers. All this rests on many acres of land with lovely wooded walking trails.

After registering, I eyed the other newcomers. Who were they? How skilled were they on their instruments? Everyone seemed nervous, but the camp director gave us all a warm welcome followed by an introduction of the instructors: Bill Evans for the banjo, Tim Stafford for the guitar, Mike Compton for the mandolin, Fletcher Bright for the fiddle, Jim Hurst for vocals, and Mark Shatz for the bass. With no time to waste, we broke up according to our instrument and had our first lesson.

My class was considerably multi-leveled, but my instructor, Bill Evans, was adept at catering to everyone. In a cozy wooded classroom, we reviewed rolls (or learned them for the first time). Over the course of the week, we would follow with licks, how to create a solo, backing up and practicing songs from tablature, with ample time for questions.

After the initial class, we reassembled into the carriage house for a band demo. Then we feasted on another gourmet meal. The mood was lighter and I talked with Bill about his background

in ethnomusicology. Discovering other facets of these musical geniuses is a perk of this camp. I chatted up other campers and as far as I could tell, the Wisconsin contingent was the northernmost. The majority were from the South, so WE had the exotic accents.

In the evenings, we were treated to a concert by an instructor. The first night's performance was given by Tim Stafford; Grammy and IBMA winner, wonderful songwriter and founding member of Blue Highway. After the concert we had free time. Inspired by the day's lessons, we got our instruments and proceeded to jam.



Day 3 After an amazing breakfast we all went to our classes. Each morning's class was 3 hours long...full of valuable information, but intense. Because of this and the intimacy of the setting, we were able to get to know each other really well. Many funny stories and jokes were told and I laughed myself silly.

At lunch I talked at length with Tim Stafford. Not about music, but about topics ranging from history (he was on the academic

track working on a Ph.D. in history before music snatched him up) to the state of the union to the fate of the Packers. Then it was off to our elective classes. Mine was Fletcher Bright's harmonizing class. Other classes included old-timey mandolin, music theory, and instrument care and set-up.

Later, we all met to pick people and form our own bands. Brave Teresa wanted the experience of playing with other people but the rest of us stuck together. So with a mandolin, guitar and banjo accounted for, we picked up Fred, the bassist from D.C., as well as Virginia, the fiddler from South Carolina. We called ourselves Fred and the Betties. Nabbing Jim Hurst as our coach, we began rehearsing the two songs that we would perform at the world famous Station Inn! Hallowed ground for all bluegrassers!

I had been nervous about this prospect. Fortunately, Jim was great at calming us down and going step-by-step about what we needed to do. Pick two songs. Decide who does the lead, who does the harmony, who gets what break and when. It was easy enough to make those decisions. The hard part was making it sound good. Or at least adequate. Fortunately, everyone was energized and excited.

After yet another amazing meal, I grabbed Karen and we ventured out for a hike. Then we skipped over to the veranda and were entertained by Fletcher Bright's band, The Dismembered Tennesseans. Fletcher's fiery fiddle performance commanded energy people half his age would have difficulty mustering.

Being from the city that boasts the #1 party university in the U.S., our reputation preceded us as Catherine, Karen and I had our room designated as party central. So later that evening, folks congregated in room 44, instruments and all. I was sitting between Mark Shatz on claw hammer banjo and Tim Stafford on his composite guitar, astounded by their virtuosity. As we were listening, I looked over at Catherine as she mouthed, "I'm in HEAVEN!"

Day 4 As we settled in for our morning classes. Bill asked us what songs our bands had chosen and in what keys. He quickly deciphered that some of us were playing in difficult keys for the banjo. I thought it was my lack of ability to play in D but even Bill has problems with D. So he gave us tips to make this key easier.

Band practice followed lunch. Fred and the Betties gathered to nail Red Clay Halo and Don't Go Out Tonight. Coach Jim Hurst made suggestions on our solos, vocals and on stage positioning. Jim kept cracking jokes and making things light until we got in a groove. Catherine and Karen sang a splendid duet on Red Clay Halo. I was in a harmonizing trio for Don't Go Out Tonight with Karen (a.k.a Betty) and Moxie, taking the lead.

Next dinner, then the concert by Bill Evans, Mike Compton, Mark Shatz and Jim Hurst. Bill entertained us with his dexterity on the banjo playing bluegrass, a bit of jazz and the Clarinet Polka. Mike did a fiddle tune on the mandolin while Mark clogged on a table top. Jim's amazing flat-picking followed. I was astounded at the work they put into their show on top of all the teaching.

Then back to party central in Rm. 44. No instruments this time. We sat in a circle as Mark, Tim and Bill entertained us with stories of life on the road. Humor must be a pre-requisite for musicians because these guys had it in abundance. Tim launched into one impression after another while we were all laughing hysterically.

Day 5 Delicious breakfast, 3 hour class, sleep deprivation and reaching my saturation point. It was all worth it though because I had never felt so stimulated. Still, the Station Inn gig was looming ever closer and my anxiety level was getting higher. I took advantage of the nature walk again, shot some hoops and took Mark's clogging/hambone elective, the perfect elixir for nervousness. His relaxed style and flawless timing made him a joy to watch. We tried to mimic him, but turned it into a flailing mess! Still, Mark broke down the steps enough to make one or two stick.

Band practice. I was on edge. Jim suggested doing my solo up the neck. I tried it but wasn't comfortable. "Getting out of your comfort zone is what it's all about," he said. Well I was in the discomfort stratosphere. But I wasn't at NashCamp to play it safe so up the neck I went. Everyone else in the band was studiously learning their parts. Catherine brought recording apparatus, recorded us, analyzed her part and got it down pat. Virginia, a classically trained violinist, was trying her darndest to fiddle. Karen got coached on her solo and calmly went about practicing until callused. And bass player Fred, trying to embody Shecky Greene, was practicing his shtick. Dinner time and my nerves were frayed.

The after-dinner concert featured Mark Shatz and Jim Hurst. Jim wowed us with his flat-picking and steel guitar skill. Mark did some amazing claw hammering.

We all bought cds and books from the instructors after the show, signed with very nice personal messages. Folks were sniffing around for another party, but we had to put the kabash on that. A good night's sleep was in the plans for the Wisconsin girls. Still, we hung around a bit and listened to some jamming showcasing the most talented among us, the Swanson family from Florida.

Day 6 Our last day. We wrapped up our banjo class with final questions and a class picture. We were sad as we'd gotten into a routine and now it was time to say good-bye.

Performance time was fast approaching and my nerves were racing. I formed a plan to bolt. I wasn't the only one who thought of going AWOL. But I had no way of leaving the grounds aside from

running away, and in the heat and humidity I knew I wouldn't get very far. So I decided to stay and went to my final elective...Clogging II. And more band practice. I'd come to the conclusion that I was as good as I was going to get and that there would be a real possibility of screwing up. But if I could screw up at the Station Inn and survive, I could screw up anywhere and be okay!

After dinner we loaded on the bus to Nashville. It was a pleasant drive, the first after five days of secluded living on the Drouillard grounds. As we approached the city and the Station Inn, my heart started to pound. We disembarked, picked up our instruments and filed into the bar.

Despite its big reputation, the Station Inn is an unpretentious venue. It's basically one big room with a small stage and posters and pictures of everyone who's anyone in bluegrass. You can feel the presence of Bill Monroe, John Duffey, Lester Flatt and Roland White who was actually in the audience that night.

The first act was the instructors themselves. Each played a different instrument in an effort to show solidarity. It worked. They struggled and we all breathed a big sigh of relief. But then they got their instruments back and did a wonderful version of Another Night led by Tim. So much for struggling.

On came the first round of Nashcampers. Good for them. Get it over with. The crowd couldn't have been more supportive. Out came the second, then the third with our Teresa on the fiddle. Band four...then us. We ducked into the warm-up room. What a trip to be warming up in the same room as all my bluegrass heroes had before me. I had barely gotten my banjo on when we were called on stage. I was sweating bullets! Off we went to cheers and thank God, no jeers. I looked out over the crowd. I smiled at my fellow campers and instructors and they gave big smiles back.

It was up to Fred to introduce the band and turn on the humor which wasn't difficult to do as he was chomping at the bit. One-liners came spewing out of him, cracking up the audience and easing the tension. He eventually had to be dragged off by cane so we could start our set. Karen and Catherine launched into Red Clay Halo with beautiful harmonies. The others joined in and each did superbly with their solos. I, as feared, stumbled... but recovered! The audience was totally with me. They crossed their fingers when I flubbed up my up-the-neck solo, but cheered me on when I got my bearings! When we finished, we heard "All right cheeseheads!" and the crowd applauded uproariously. We finished nicely with Don't Go Out Tonight and exited beaming with pride and an adrenaline overload.

We cheered on the remaining bands, relaxing with our drinks and taking final pictures of all our new friends. It was wonderful! And raucous! But ended as quickly as it began. When the last band finished, we packed up our instruments, got back on the bus and drove back home where blackberry cobbler awaited us. Around the table we rehashed our sets as if reliving the plays of a championship game we'd just won. It was such a bonding experience.

As intense and fun as it was, it was too short. I'm already planning bluegrass camp 2009! If you are in a musical slump, I would highly recommend some kind of camp. It will inspire, energize and connect you to a whole new network of people. And if you're lucky, you might be able to perform on a stage graced by all your bluegrass heroes.

Photo L to R: Fred and the Betties — Virginia, Catherine Rhyner, Fred, Karen Sonnenblick and Julie Cherney