

HVBA Winter Fundraiser

River Station
Main Street

Sunday March 26, 2006
Poughkeepsie, NY

Bands and time to be announced
www.hvbluegrass.org

SAVE
THE
DATE!



Check the label for your expiration date. If it is past, please pay \$10 annual membership to keep receiving Jamboree.



Hudson Valley Bluegrass Association
106 Pancake Hollow Road
Highland, NY 12528



Jamboree

The Hudson Valley Bluegrass Association

WINTER 2006 online at www.hvbluegrass.org Number 40

Out to Lunch celebrates 25 years of music

Joseph Whelan

On Saturday, December 3, Out To Lunch celebrated their 25th year together as one of the liveliest, most versatile acoustic groups anywhere. The band brought three hours of performing to an appreciative audience that could not have asked for more great entertainment in a single evening. In addition to regular Out to Lunch personnel, Tom Eaton joined the group for the anniversary show – traveling all the way from Massachusetts.

The music is eclectic – with influences from Bluegrass, Celtic, Jazz and Classical. What is noteworthy is not only the well blended vocals with enjoyable harmonies but the outrageous virtuosity that entertains your eyes as well as your ears. Together for 25 years, the group has so much background that one must visit their website to appreciate their accomplishments. Go to www.out2lunch.lunarpages.com and enjoy one of the better websites anywhere.

www.out2lunch.lunarpages.com



Out to Lunch: (l to r) Susan Sassano, Tom Eaton, Michael Sassano, Larry Cohen, Howard Bujese, and Wayne Fugate

Wayne and Michael have generously given of their expertise at HVBA workshops and frequent HVBA jams. Both play the mandolin. Wayne explained to me that while one musician is playing melody or chords, the other will complement him with counter-

continued on page 15

What's Inside?

Phantom Ranch Guitar	3
Another Link in the Chain	5
Keith Holds Court	8-9
CD/DVD Reviews	12-13
Music and Dance Scene	14-15

Message from the President Circles unbroken

I was deeply saddened to learn of John Herald's passing on July 18. John was a resident of Woodstock, NY and member of the legendary Greenbrier Boys, the first touring northeastern bluegrass band. He is missed.

Since bluegrass is a genre that blossomed 60 years ago, many of its pioneers are ripening into their golden years and, fortunately for us, still touring and playing their music. I was fortunate to have experienced Doc Watson, Ralph Stanley, Ramblin' Jack Elliot and Del McCoury this year and Earl Scruggs last year. However, bluegrass recently lost many of its own -- including Vassar Clements, Jimmy Martin, Bob Paisley, Jerry Scoggins, and, of course the aforementioned John Herald.

Which brings us to that never ending circle. Seasons turn. Generations pass on knowledge, skills, and wisdom to the next. Please consider what you can do to pass on yours to others. And do your best to support live music at every opportunity.

Thanks to those who responded to our "pay as you are able" appeal. You know who you are. Our annual dues are still just \$10, which barely covers the cost of printing and mailing Jamboree. We hope we can continue to knit together a community of friends and provide more opportunities than ever to play and listen to bluegrass music. Please consider making any additional year-end tax-deductible donation to the HVBA you can.

Thanks, too, to the bands that played at *Bluegrass Between the Bridges* (see page 4). Their generosity filled Waryas Park with music,

Jeffrey Anzevino

Sign me up! Hudson Valley Bluegrass Association

Send to: Joyce Cullen, 395 Peekskill Hollow Road, Putnam Valley, NY 10579

_____ Enclosed is \$10 for new membership / renewal
 _____ Additional donation
 _____ Total

Name: _____ Email _____

Address: _____

Hudson Valley Bluegrass Association

*a 501 (c) 3 not for profit arts and
educational organization*

*Jamboree is published four times a year
Winter Summer Spring and Fall*

Jeffrey Anzevino, Editor-in-Chief
Lynn Lipton, Editor

106 Pancake Hollow Road
Highland, NY 12528
(845) 691-6784

hvba@optonline.net
hvbluegrass.org

Board of Directors

Jeffrey Anzevino, President
(845) 691-6784

Chris Scheu, Vice President/Treasurer
(845) 473-5896

Chris Scheu, Secretary
(845) 473-5896

Joyce Cullen, Membership
(845) 526-2275

Rob Bradley

unfurling the flag of bluegrass and spreading the word about the HVBA.

Join us on the afternoon of Sunday March 26 for our Winter Fundraiser at River Station in Poughkeepsie. While the bill has not been finalized, we promise an afternoon of great bluegrass, tasty food and camaraderie.

Dec 31: Southern Rail at Boston First Night, Hynes Auditorium, Roots Stage 9:15&10:15PM

Jan 6: Laurie Lewis & Tom Rozum at The Emelin Theater, Mamaroneck, NY 8PM \$28 www.emelin.org

Jan 7: Laurie Lewis & The Guest House Band at The National Heritage Museum, Lexington, MA www.bbu.org or (617) 782-2251

Jan 9: Tin Roof at The Parkside Lounge, NYC

Jan 14: The Wickers Creek Band at Westchester Bluegrass Club monthly concert & jam series. Lake Purdys Clubhouse, 33 Lake Way, Purdys, NY. \$8.00. Too Blue performs at 9 pm: jam session 7PM; open mic 8PM Bring your instrument! Info: (914)276-2239

Jan 20: Elana James Trio at Club Helsinki, Great Barrington, MA www.clubhelsinkiweb.com

Jan 21: Elana James Trio at Cafe Nine, New Haven, CT

Jan 21: Hunger Mountain Boys at Rosendale Cafe, Rosendale, NY www.rosendalecafe.com

Jan 22-23: Elana James Trio at Rodeo Bar, NYC

Jan 27: Marty Stuart at The Egg, Albany, NY 8PM www.theegg.org

Jan 28: The Wiyos at Rosendale Cafe, Rosendale, NY 8PM, \$10 www.rosendalecafe.com

Feb 3: Mark O'Connor's Hot Swing at The Egg, Albany, NY 8PM www.theegg.org

Feb 10: David Bromberg Band at The Egg, Albany, NY 8PM www.theegg.org

Feb 11: The Indigo Girls at The Egg, Albany, NY 8PM www.theegg.org

Feb 12: David Bromberg at The Bardavon, Poughkeepsie, NY 7PM www.bardavon.org

Feb 17: The Bluegrass Gospel Project at The Emelin Theater, Mamaroneck, NY 8PM \$26 www.emelin.org

Feb 15-17: Pete Wernick's Bluegrass Jam Camp Sheraton Hotel, Framingham, MA www.drbanjo.com

Feb 17-19: 21st Annual Joe Val Bluegrass Festival with Mountain Heart, The Claire Lynch Band, The Grascals, Dale Ann Bradley, Dan Paisley & The Southern Grass, The James King Band, Pete Wernick, and more at The Sheraton Hotel, Framingham, MA www.bbu.com

Feb 18: Jack Lawrence, Gary Hess, & Jon Garon at Music at the Mission (two guitar workshops and concert), West Milford, NJ guitar workshops 10AM-noon and -3PM \$65 each. Concert in the evening with opening act WMV Oh YEAH!! Call Stephen (914) 420-6476

Feb 18: Aztec Two Step at The Towne Crier, Pawling, NY www.townecrier.com

Feb 19: Stacey Earle with Tin Roof at The Towne Crier, Pawling, NY www.townecrier.com

Feb 26: Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder at Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, Troy NY 7PM \$35/\$26 www.troymusicchall.org

Mar 12: Emmy Lou Harris at The Egg, Albany, NY 8PM www.theegg.org

Mar 19: Maura O'Connell at The Towne Crier, Pawling, NY www.townecrier.com

Mar 24: Hunger Mountain Boys at Caffe Lena, Saratoga Springs, NY www.caffelena.com

Mar 25: (TENTATIVE DATE) Tin Roof at Westchester Bluegrass Club monthly concert & jam series. Lake Purdys Clubhouse, 33 Lake Way, Purdys, NY. \$8.00. Too Blue performs at 9PM; jam session 7PM; open mic. 7PM Bring your instrument! Info: (914)276-2239

Mar 28: HVBA Winter Fundraiser, River Station, afternoon show bands & time to be announced Poughkeepsie, NY (845) 691-6784 www.hvbluegrass.org

Mar 31: The Grascals at The Emelin Theater, Mamaroneck, NY 8PM \$32 www.emelin.org

Apr 14: Peter Rowan & Tony Rice Quartet at The Egg, Albany, NY 8PM www.theegg.org

Apr 18: Bela Fleck & The Flecktones at The Egg, Albany, NY 7:30PM www.theegg.org

Jun 9: Beartracks at Wind Gap Bluegrass Festival (201) 584-2324

Jun 10: Beartracks at Sand Road Sugar Camp Bluegrass Festival, Moose Creek, Ontario

Jun 24: Beartracks at Jenny Brook Bluegrass Festival, Weston, VT

Jul 13-16: Grey Fox Bluegrass Festival, Rothvoss Farm, Hillsdale, NY www.greyfoxbluegrass.com

Out to Lunch

continued from page 1

melody or chops or chords in different voicings.

Many of the performers' family members attended, including Susan's dad, and Howard's wife and his daughter among others.

Some of the tunes included Fishers Hornpipe, Wayfaring Stranger, *Soldier's Joy*, *Dusty Miller*, *Cold Hard Rain*, *Footprints in the Snow*, *Good Woman's Love* and *Calvary*.

We look forward to the celebration of their 50th anniversary! 🎉

Music and Dance Scene

MAD Scene is provided as a service to HVBA members and bands.

Play it safe! Call before you go. List your event by sending pertinent details to

hvba@optonline.net

Ongoing Jams, Dances, Gigs etc.

2nd & 4th Wednesdays of each month: HVBA Jam at Pirate Canoe Club, Poughkeepsie, NY 6-10 PM (845) 691-6784 or (914) 276-2239

Every Friday: Jammin' at the Legion Hall, Marcellus, NY; (315) 673-2329 or 1844

Every Monday: Bluegrass night at The Parkside Lounge, NYC

Every Monday: The Alphabet City Opry at The Parkside Lounge, Houston St. betw. Ave A & B in Manhattan; 9 PM

Every Monday: Irish Folk Session at The Baggott Inn, Manhattan

Every Monday: Riverbank Banjo Band, Umberto's, Poughkeepsie, NY

First Monday: ABL Jam at The Parting Glass, Saratoga Springs, NY 7PM

2nd Tuesday of Each Month: North East Bluegrass Jam, Malt River Brewing Co., Latham NY, 8 PM, (518) 489-2369

4th Tuesday of Each Month: Jam at Lark Tavern, Albany, NY (518) 489-2369

Every Wednesday: Minetta Creek Band, Carpos, New York City (212) 353-2889

Every Wednesday: Bluegrass & Good Times Jam with host Sheriff Bob at The Baggott Inn, Manhattan 9 PM

2nd & 4th Wednesday: Warren Academy, Warrren, CT 7 PM (201) 868-7659

Every Thursday: Bluegrass Clubhouse with Saturday Night Bluegrass Band at Colony Cafe, Woodstock, NY (but not June 23rd) 7:30PM

1st Saturday of Every Month: Jam (hosted by Wayne Fugate, Suzy Arnowitz & Mike Baglione) at Warwick Valley Winery, Warwick, NY 2-5PM
www.vvwinery.com or (845) 258-4858

1st Saturday of Every Month: Jam hosted by Roger Sprung, United Methodist Church, Sandy Hook, CT (203) 426-5243 (NOT IN JULY OR AUGUST)

1st Saturday of Every Month: Open Mic/Bluegrass/Folk Jam; Unitarian Church; Rock Tavern, NY (845) 496-0771

1st Saturday of Every Month: Contra Dance at St. Phillips Church Parish House, Route 9D, Garrison, NY (845) 265-4011, 265-7201, 265-0032

2nd Saturday of Every Month: Walkabout Clearwater, Katonah, NY (845) 242-0374

3rd Sat. of Every Month: Restoration Coffee House Open Mic; Old Dutch Reformed Church, Bloomingburg, NY; 7 PM; (845) 647-6491

3rd Saturday of Every Month: Hudson Valley Folk Guild Poughkeepsie Chapter, (845) 297-6372

Every Other Saturday: (Old Time only!!) Thady Con's Pub NYC; (212) 688-9700

Every Sunday: Woodstock Jam at Catskill Mtn Pizza 1PM (845) 679-7969

Every Sunday: Bluegrass Session at Paddy O'Reilly's Bar, 4 PM; NYC (718) 884-5721

Every Sunday: Club 9C in Manhattan 5 PM - ???; (212)-358-0048

4th Sunday: Finger Lakes Bluegrass Monthly Jam 2-8 Pm at the Ontario County Arts Council, Canandaigua, NY (716) 396-0087 or 924-3117

More Music!!

Dec 13: Rachel Handman, Phil Helm and Wayne Fugate at The Bardavon's Christmas Party
www.bardavon.org

Dec 16: Buddy Merriam & Backroads at Surf and Turf, Fort Salonga, NY (631) 757-5770

Dec 16: The Blue Ribbon Boys at Club Helsinki, Great Barrington, MA 9PM
www.clubhelsinkiweb.com

Dec 16: WAMC's Winter Solstice Holiday Show with Jay Ungar, Molly Mason, Leslie Ritter and Scott Petito and the Dancing on the Air Orchestra special guests Blues guitarist/singer Scott Ainslie and Celtic harpist/singer Aine Minogue. The Linda Norris Auditorium, Albany, NY \$20 www.wamc.org

Dec 17: Too Blue at Westchester Bluegrass Club monthly concert & jam series. Lake Purdys Clubhouse, 33 Lake Way, Purdys, NY. \$8.00. Too Blue performs at 9PM; jam session 7PM; open mic. 8PM Bring your instrument! Info: (914)276-2239

Dec 17: Dyer Switch at Perfect Blend Cafe, Delmar, NY 8-10PM (518) 439-6537

Dec 18: Adirondack Bluegrass League Christmas Party, K of C Hall, Corinth, NY 1PM meeting 2PM jam. Bring a covered dish.

Dec 19: Adirondack Bluegrass League Jam at The Parting Glass, Saratoga Springs, NY 7PM

Dec 31: Club Helsinki New Years Eve Party with The Moonlighters & The Blue Ribbon Boys at Club Helsinki, Great Barrington, MA \$25
www.clubhelsinkiweb.com

Dec 31: String Dusters, Skeeter Creek, Sweet Cider, others, at First Night Saratoga, Saratoga, NY

Dec 31: Cabin Fever Band at First Night, Oneonta, NY

Dec 31: Bluegrass Gospel Project, Flynn Theater, Burlington, VT

Phantom Ranch Guitar

Joe Hayes

On day eight of our Colorado River raft trip, we reached Phantom Ranch on Bright Angel Creek, and we hiked up from our boats to get ice cream and check for mail. We were scruffy and happy, and had 15 miles to row that day. The guitar at the Phantom Ranch cookhouse hangs on a wooden peg in the old mess hall, in reach of any hiker, river runner, or Grand Canyon wanderer who comes in and wants to play. It's an old nylon string cowboy guitar, sturdy and a little battered, with the loving words, "Be Gentle Please" clearly lettered on the side. It has no visible brand, no fancy logo on the headstock, but it has the unmistakable patina of age and seasons, and the touch of countless caring hands.

I took it down off the wall while my raft trip buddies were checking for mail and buying postcards, and I strummed a chord. It rang out loud, in tune and clear. It was morning at Phantom, and the place was quiet. Breakfast had been cleared away, sun was streaming in onto the wooden floor, and outside were scattered campers and chattering groups of tourists, starting their day in the bottom of the Grand Canyon.

And just for a few minutes, I sat at the cookhouse table in a straight backed wooden chair and I played that old guitar. I played the intro part to *Ghost Riders in the Sky*, to get the cowboy feel. I strummed my favorite dramatic Spanish falsetas and then I settled down and played *Don't Fence Me In*, for the part about the horses, and so I could sing the line about "I wanna gaze at the moon until I lose my senses."

The guitar had an easy action and sounded surprisingly good. Some folks came in and some left, my river trip buddies went back to the boats, and I was left to play for myself in



a sunny corner of the empty dining hall. The music rang out and no one watched or cared, and to me, my playing never sounded better.

After a few more songs, I knew I had to get back to my boat. I hung that guitar back on its peg, to wait for the next wanderer to find it, and I walked out the door down to the trail that runs along Bright Angel Creek to the Colorado River. My trip was almost ready, with the other boatmen rigging their rafts and filling water jugs. The Colorado River was shining in the sun. I sat in my seat and took the oars.

Time to focus. Big water lay waiting downstream, a string of serious and reverent whitewater big drops with names like Horn Creek Rapid, Granite, Hermit and Crystal. As our group pushed off and my boat swung out into the riffles where Bright Angel Creek met the Colorado, I started to sing *Don't Fence Me In*, and you know, I think I never sounded better. I can't wait to play that guitar again.

www.phantomranch.com

HVBA News Briefs

Thanks to BBB Bands

By all reports everyone enjoyed the Bluegrass Between the Bridges stage at The Bardavon's Hudson River Arts Fest on September 17. Heartfelt thanks to the bands that played, donating their time, energies and talent so that we could tap our feet and feel good: Second Gear, Two Dollar Goat, Wayne, Rachel & Phil, Blue Plate Special, Tin Roof, and The Wickers Creek Band.

Keith Banjo Tuners in Alaska

Imagine my surprise to find a box of Keith tuners at The Red Onion Saloon, in Skagway, Alaska! In 1898 the Red Onion was a brothel servicing the "needs" of prospectors setting out on the White Pass Trail to find their fortune in gold fields of the Yukon Territory.

Today, the Red Onion is a fun bar and the building is being restored. Funding is raised for the restoration by providing interpretive tours to explain brothel life.

There, upstairs in a bedroom on the dresser, sat a box of Keith Banjo Tuners. Amazed, I asked the "hooker" if she would mind holding the box in the glow of the lamp in the dimly lit room. She obliged and I photographed the box bearing the image of a



Keith Banjo Tuners in a former Skagway brothel

much younger Bill Keith. I returned from Alaska with this wonderful souvenir and, for a moment, in the midst of the natural beauty of fjords, glaciers and snow-capped peaks, I became a bit homesick for my friends and life in the Hudson Valley.

New Bluegrass Slow Jam DVD

Homespun Tapes latest catalogue features on page 4 a "Bluegrass Slow Jam for the Total Beginner" DVD by Pete Wernick. This super easy, no fail play along session features Drew Emmitt (mandolin), Nick Forster (guitar), Ben Kaufmann (bass), Sally Van Meter (dobro), Joan Leonard Wernick (guitar & vocals), Nancy Steinberger (fiddle), along with Pete "Dr. Banjo" Wernick.

www.homespuntapes.com.

Top Bluegrass Guitarist hold workshop

Jack Lawrence (Doc Watson's long time touring partner), Clay Hess (Ricky Skaggs' award winning band member) and Jon Garon are coming to play on February 18th at The Music at the Mission in West Milford, New Jersey.

The workshops are open to all who want to join in on what will be the best opportunity to learn about these unique styles from the masters themselves. The workshops will be two hours in length held from 10AM until 12Noon and second session from 1PM until 3PM. The cost is \$65.00 for each session.

Call Stephen at (914)420-6476 to reserve your place with these truly wonderful people and great Musicians.

Jammers sought

An early Intermediate Bluegrass guitarist, seeks Gardiner/New Paltz area musicians for a weekly music night. Bluegrass,

Jeffrey Anzevino

continued on page 6

From The Hollow Beartracks AMT 0511

Just when I thought this issue of Jamboree might not include a CD review, this record, sent by slideman extraordinaire Junior Barber, appeared without warning in my mailbox.

Like their first CD, "Makin' Tracks" (reviewed in Jamboree 37), "From the Hollow" contains a mix of old favorites and original songs. For those needing comfort of the familiar, *Long Black Veil*, *Can't You Hear Me Calling*, *Drifting Too Far*, and one of my all time favorites, Jimmy Rodgers' *Waiting For A Train* are sure to please.

But as tasty as these chestnuts may be, the outstanding songwriting on several original numbers provides a glimpse into the lives of brother and sister Tom Hogan and Julie Venne Hogan and their cousin Junior Barber.

The title track, *From The Hollow*, provides the visual imagery of old wringing washing machines, driving a car with "three on the column" in Saranac Hollow and lovingly relates how Tom and Julie's mother tapped her feet while singing and playing the accordion.

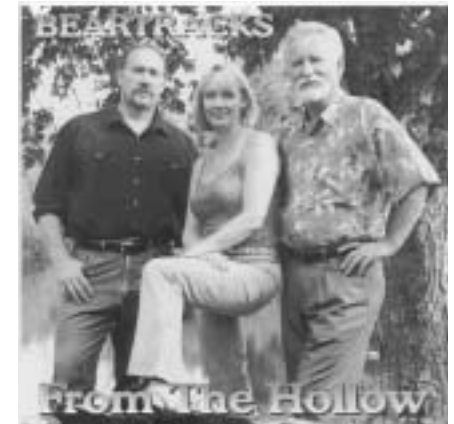
The deeply moving *Come With Me* was the first song ever written by Julie and the true story of life growing up with her father. Perhaps more importantly, it reflects upon the time at life's end when a father and daughter must part. And the lyrics to Julie's *Honey Don't Worry* console her sibling during times of tribulation related to dating and marriage.

Another personal song, *When I'm Gone*, again penned by Julie, this time for cousin Junior, considers the question "who's gonna play my dobro when I'm gone?" Junior does not disappoint, answering not with words, but rather with tasty licks embedding a hook from *Will the Circle be Unbroken* into the finale.

As one would expect, Tom and Julie's vocal harmonies blend perfectly with Junior's impeccably tasteful slidework on his DeNeve resonator guitars, which are tuned three different ways (DAF#DAD, DBGDGD, and DBGDBG) on various cuts on this album.

Those desirous of Junior's flashy picking will find it in the CD's two instrumentals, *JP Grasshopper* and *Shake That Water*.

In Pete Wernick's book "How to Make a Band Work," Nick Forster advises performers to make a personal



No Mother or Dad
Long Black Veil
From the Hollow
JP Grasshopper
Last Letter Home
March Winds
Carolyn at the Broken Wheel
Inn/Revised
Can't You Hear Me Calling?
Why Did You Leave Me?
Honey Don't Worry
Drifting Too Far
When I'm Gone
Waiting For A Train
Come With Me
Shake That Water

connection with the audience. I agree. Many talented pickers and singers vie for our attention. Most are quite proficient. Some are even phenomenal. However, the best sing and play well, but they also bond with us by connecting with us.

In this CD, Tom, Julie and Junior deliver more than an earful of outstanding music. Without a doubt, the music sounds great. But listen deep into *From The Hollow*. The lyrics provide an understanding that these musicians are people, like you and me. We get a sense of who they are and where they're from. Somehow, we feel close to them, as if we know them as friends, neighbors — or even family. And, in my opinion, that's the highest form of musical communication.

Jeffro

www.beartracksband.com

King of Bluegrass, The Life and Times of Jimmy Martin

Straight Six Films

Whether he was on stage or in the woods coon hunting in this DVD, we get to see the real "King of Bluegrass". The real Jimmy Martin is that man. There is no difference. What we come away with is that Jimmy Martin did his thing the way he wanted his thing done.

Much of this story is told in the first person with Jimmy making sure we know how good he is. That's a bit harsh but his commentary on never having been asked to be on the Grand Ole Opry underlines the fact that he went his own way. Is it hubris to have your tombstone ready to go with your own epitaph?

Vintage photos and recordings document Jimmy's rise and fall in the bluegrass world and his comeback. This seems to be a common theme for the initial wave of bluegrass musicians. This also seems to be where the drive and knowing, "you've made it" comes from. It ain't braggin' if you can do it.

Music is provided by his own band, The Sunny Mountain Boys. As is common in this type of documentary there are interviews with old friends and band members like Tom T. Hall, Ralph Stanley, J.D. Crowe and Marty Stuart, confirm his place in the pantheon of bluegrass royalty. The spirit of the man is well captured.

The film describes how Jimmy began his career with Bill Monroe and helped change the sound of the music. His strong driving rhythm and his high voice pushed Monroe up into that "high lonesome" range.

The DVD offers a brief history of bluegrass, some concert footage and provides a good sense of why his fans loved him and considered him the King of Bluegrass.

Chis Scheu



Starring:

Jimmy Martin
and the Sunny Mountain Boys

Marty Stuart
Ralph Stanley

Tom T. Hall
JD Crowe

Bill Emerson
Paul Williams

Mary Ann Garrison
Chubby Dickens

Produced & Directed by
George Goehl

www.kingofbluegrass.com

Situation wanted... Old-time/bluegrass banjo and fiddle player with interest in many types of music would like to get together for jamming with people in the Orange County/Middletown area. They should be able to stay up late.

Contact Stephen James sjkoolart@earthlink.net

Another link in the chain

Janice MacDaniels

It all started the Christmas of my 10th year. Mother gave Dad a Silvertone guitar from Sears Roebuck (he still has it and plays it). I think it cost all of 35 dollars and I couldn't believe the wonderfulness of this instrument and its sounds. Dad showed me how to play the C, F and G chords using only one or two fingers for each chord, playing on the first four strings. The song was "Streets of Laredo," the first song I learned to play. I must have been relentless in my pursuit of learning to play as my mother convinced the fifth grade teacher at my elementary school to include me, a fourth grader, in her after school group lesson class.

This was the era of folk songs and singers: Dylan, Peter, Paul and Mary; Judy Collins, and the New Christie Minstrels. At home we had an LP record set from the Book of the Month Club that featured some recordings from the Newport Folk Festival, of artists the likes of Clarence Ashley, Doc Watson, Jeanie Ritchie, Maybelle Carter, Flatt and Scruggs and Mississippi John Hurt. I wore out the grooves in the vinyl. It's funny now to think about it but we always had this kind of music in my home growing up. We called it hillbilly music -- I think to self-efface ourselves in front of our friends. Most people--at least people we knew--thought it to be too "hick" and to listen to it made one less than sophisticated.

We were a singing family with my sister or I playing out everything from show tunes to folk songs to gospel on the piano. It wasn't until my adulthood that I realized that much of this music was called Bluegrass. It wasn't until this past year that I realized that this love of this roots music actually connects me to my roots. It's as if its rhythms are in my DNA. I received a memoir, of sorts, written by my grandmother, Ruby. She told of her grandmother, Bathsheba, who as a young

bride, came to Illinois from southern Ohio, leaving home and parents, to homestead with her new husband. She told how she remembered Bathsheba, as an old woman, sitting in her rocking chair, smoking her pipe and singing old, mountain songs learned in her childhood.

This past summer, my aunt presented me with several old family photos. Amongst them was a photograph of my grandmother, Ruby, as a young woman,

embracing a guitar, circa 1916. I don't know if she played, no one seems to know. This photo was taken before she was married and had her children. I hope she played, I hope she didn't give it up after becoming a wife for the more "sensible" pursuits of home and family. I think that is a possibility. I love this photo of my grandmother. I see such joy in her face as she is holding this guitar, lovingly, almost like a small child. I see something of my face in hers. 🎸



Ruby and guitar, circa 1916

photo provided by author

News Briefs

newgrass, acoustic blues songs: Guitars, fiddles, mandolins, bass, dobro players where are you? A heated barn in Gardiner awaits. Don't just play alone, C'mon over, lets tune up, learn some songs, and play on cold winter nights. Beginners and experienced players welcome. Call Joe Hayes at 255-8582 or email joe@weber-hayes.com

The Wickers Creek Band

Peter and Charlene Paden report that The Wickers Creek Band will be playing at the Purdy's Lake Club House on Saturday, January 14th. This is a don't miss event!

The Doc Marshalls

Will Solomon wrote to say The Doc Marshalls just had a four-week run on the Americana Charts (www.americanamusic.org) where they reached the top 40 on the national radio airplay radar. That means DJ's have been spinning their record *No Kind of Life* and, in fact, like it enough to keep spinning it after a first listen.

The Docs played a few significant Hurricane Katrina relief concerts (IMAC Theater, Huntington, LI and the Baggott Inn, NYC) this fall and have officially sold out of the first pressing of their CD.

As for Will, he is "sitting on his record," waiting for the right time for its release. He hopes to share his music with the HVBA community soon and conveys his apologies for the delay.

Will also attended the IBMA trade show in Nashville this year, saw Joyce Cullen and Bill Keith, went to the honky-tonks, wrote a few songs, and finally finished mixing his CD.

Will reports that Greg Garing has made another splash in Nashville, as he won the

continued from page 4

"Best Return to Nashville" category in the Nashville Scene. Though he didn't get a chance to see Greg's showcase at The Basement, Will heard it was stellar with players like Kenny Vaughan (guitar) backing him up and all sorts of people coming out of the woodwork to support him. Rumor has it that Gillian Welch and David Rawling were sitting near the front row.

Will raves about Uncle Earl, an all female quintet that plays old-timey music. The songwriting is good and their stage show is fun to watch. Kristin Andreassen, the guitar player, just moved into the Hudson Valley.

Out to Lunch

Three of the Out To Lunch crew (Michael, Howie & Wayne) are working on a sound track for an indie film called "Home." The movie is really nicely done and features the story of a guy from Ireland who has recently come to live in NY. In recounting his experiences, the film interweaves interviews with other New Yorkers that share their experiences and observations about the Empire State. The cast is really amazing and features Liam Neeson, Susan

continued on page 10

HVBA Jam Sessions

2nd & 4th Wednesdays
of each month

No jam December 28

Pirate Canoe Club, Po'keepsie, NY
Slow Jam starts at 6PM
Jam ends at 10 PM

\$3 admission
(845) 691-6784 for more info



News Briefs

continued from page 10

releasing their CD, a soundtrack for the film "Four Dead Batteries." You can also order the soundtrack at hotjazzcaravan.com!



While neither band is bluegrass, check them out. You won't be disappointed by these phenomenal western swing bands.

AKUS in Po'town

On Saturday night, November 19 Alison Krauss and Union Station featuring Jerry Douglas performed at the Mid-Hudson Civic Center in Poughkeepsie. Dolores Tubbs emailed to say the show was awesome.

And John Barry, Poughkeepsie Journal music writer reported that Krauss told the crowd that she ate at Demitasse Cafe on Main Street in Poughkeepsie. She also mentioned that some members of the band on a day off from touring, in Poughkeepsie the day before the show, had visited "the mall" and gone to see "Harry Potter & the Goblet of Fire." Oh, well. One out of two ain't bad. I love the Demitasse. Wish I had been at the show.

Festival Flash

Good news and bad news to report regarding 2006 local bluegrass festivals. The good news first... Grey Fox has a one year reprieve at the Rothvoss Farm in Hillsdale. You may recall that the family needed to sell the farm. While this still may happen, forces are at work to keep the festival at the farm, but at least for 2006, the festival is safe. See you there July 13-16.

Bob Brennan's Long Hill Farm, home to the Falcon Ridge Folk Festival, has been sold.

Again, good news... Promoters Anne Saunders and Howard Randall have announced that Falcon Ridge 2006 will be held just up the road at the Dodds Farm, six miles north of Hillsdale, NY (at the intersection of Rts. 22 and 7D).

Joyce Cullen reports that the Norwich Bluegrass Festival was going under, but Mike Tirella and his Cabin Fever Band have saved the festival.

Unfortunately, not all news is good. Neither the Catskill Mountain Bluegrass Festival nor the Willow Creek Bluegrass Festival will be held in 2006. These are great losses for local bluegrass fans.

News from The Dwyers!

The Dwyer Family Band has settled in out in Port Townsend, Washington. The kids are happy, the family is building their house and they now have a regular weekly gig at Aldrich's (market/cafe) providing good exposure in a vibrant local/regional music scene...of course Jack has been playing with everybody (jazz/blues/swing).

Despite being back in the Pacific Northwest (and on Alaska's doorstep) the family misses everyone back in the Hudson Valley. They love to receive emails from their friends back east. You can drop Bill, Mindy, Jack and Katey at line at dwyer_billy@yahoo.com



www.hvb1uegrass.org

News Briefs

continued from page 6

Sarandon, Mike Meyers, Frank McCourt, Pete Hamil, Fran Liebovitz, Woody Allen and a host of others.

Michael, Wayne and Vin are opening for Clay Hess (Former Ricky Skaggs guitarist), Jon Garon, and Jack Lawrence (long time colleague of Doc Watson) at "Music at the Mission" in West Milford NJ on Saturday, February 18th. There will be a guitar workshop with Jack, Clay, and Jon earlier that afternoon.

Tin Roof played to a great house full of folks at Bodles on November 12 as part of Bodles' annual Bluegrass weekend ... and has booked dates coming up at the Parkside Lounge (Jan 9th), the Towne Crier (Opening for Stacey Earle on February 19th), and at Mike Burns' Bluegrass Clubhouse (was a Feb date but might slide into March or April)



Tin Roof

Rachel, Phil & Wayne also played for the Bardavon's X-Mas Party on Dec 13.

As for Wayne, he reports he spent a week studying at Berklee College of Music this summer and have since gone back a few times for some private instruction with a few of the teachers there. Ways says, "I'm making some great connections and learning a ton of stuff ... now if I can just

get it all under my fingers!" He's really into the "teaching thing" sharing what he has learned from guys like Barry Mitterhoff (Hot Tuna), Mike Marshall (Grisman Quintet and pretty much everyone else that matters since then), John McGann, the professors at Berklee etc so if anyone is interested in hosting a workshop (mandolin specific or perhaps music theory or reading music etc) or private instruction, he is into it! Any takers?

Two great new Western Swing bands

The bad news that one of your friendly editor's favorite bands has broken up is tempered by the fabulous news that its members have formed two new bands.

Hot Club of Cowtown is no more. However, fiddler and vocalist Elana James (formerly Elana Fremerman) has formed a trio with Luke Hill (guitar) and Beau Sample (bass), both stars in their own right and are fantastic singers and players.

The band started playing together in Austin, Texas in October and are already set to travel far and wide in 2006 beginning with a run to the Northeast in January: Club Helsinki (Great Barrington, 1/20), Cafe Nine (New Haven, 1/21), and the Rodeo Bar (NYC, 1/22&23).

Elana is chomping at the bit to get back out into the world of traveling, to get the show back on the road, and to get back to playing for her fans. Find out more by visiting new website www.elanamusic.com

Hot Jazz Caravan

Former Hot Club of Cowtown Guitarist Whit Smith and bassist Jake Erwin have teamed up with Jon Doyle (clarinet/sax), JD Pendley (guitar), and Mike Montgomery (fiddle) as the Hot Jazz Caravan, recently

continued on page 11

Earl Scruggs Instruction CD

Joseph Whelan

Earl Scruggs, the dean of bluegrass banjo, has updated his book *How to Play the Five String Banjo* (Hal Leonard, \$19.95). The book was originally published in 1968 when Earl had already been performing for about 25 years, and included an accompanying LP. The new book includes a CD (\$14.95), which is a re-release of the LP.

The teaching method used on the CD may turn out to be the sleeper of all the banjo instruction methods ever published. Who else could claim to know more about Scruggs style than Earl Scruggs (he had the valuable guidance of Bill Keith in this effort). The CD

consists of 60 tracks, a total of 30 minutes of "lessons" that relate to the "exercises" in the book. I refer to the lessons on the CD as the "Scruggs Method." It is unique in my view.

What is so significant about this CD? Well, Earl is nothing less than genial and encouraging on the CD. He carefully leads you through a sequence that in only eight tracks, has you playing the chorus of Cripple Creek. However, the CD not a substitute for a teacher (to give feedback, clarification and encouragement) nor is it a complete course of study.

The CD offers the aspiring banjo player a sequence of steps that aim to let one sound

like Earl. He cautions the learner about "(not) trying to play too fast or too hard a song." He explains "go through each exercise slowly and patiently before proceeding to the next new exercise." In the 1968 book he asked the reader to repeat some rolls and techniques 1000 times! (In the new book, it says "many times"). This single caveat will separate the men from the boys. Although most teachers know that

each exercise must be mastered (no mistakes) before going on, some students insist on doing so, which leads to poor quality playing.

Finally, the CD first teaches "rhythm" (utilizing right-hand pinch chords) and then the mixing of the alternating thumb roll with the rhythm. Next, it

demonstrates sliding with the previous techniques leading to playing the first tune. Similarly, other left hand techniques are progressively mixed with rhythm until one can play *Ballad of Jed Clampett*. Listening only to the CD, one would develop the vastly important "ear training".

I would like feedback from banjo players of every level of expertise. Please email me at Jwhelanpcpa@juno.com and share your views of the method. I will continue with another article if warranted. 🍸



Earl Scruggs at Hardy Strictly Bluegrass, in San Francisco, Summer of 2005

Ron Baker

www.earlscruggs.com

Rapt students deem Keith banjo demonstration "awesome . . . amazing"

Roy Coates

On Wednesday November 23, the legendary "father of modern banjo playing," Bill Keith, gave a presentation to students at Rhinebeck High School in Rhinebeck, New York.

Mr. Keith had been invited to speak with students currently taking a music course called "Music In Our Lives," which focuses on American music including genres folk and Bluegrass. Mr. Keith spoke and

performed for approximately one hour and covered his early influences and interest in the five-string banjo. Perhaps more significantly, he related his introduction to and experiences performing as a "Bluegrass Boy" with Bill Monroe.

All through his presentation, which included many anecdotes, he performed musical examples to illustrate the many different ways the five-string banjo was, and is currently, used in Bluegrass, Broadway musicals, Classical, Ragtime as well as Jazz. Among his musical examples were traditional Bluegrass tunes such as "Earl's Breakdown," and the Flatt and Scruggs' "Til the End of the World Rolls Round."

He then spoke about his own contributions to the banjo—of playing fiddle tunes melodically, note-for-note, which had never before been done. He

demonstrated this technique by rendering fiddle tunes, including his arrangements of "Arkansas Traveller," and "Blackberry Blossom."

He then launched into Duke Ellington's "Caravan," J.S. Bach's "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," and concluded the medley with his virtuosic arrangement of the 1918 ragtime classic piece "Nola."

As is always Mr. Keith's custom in his concert performances, he ended his presentation with his own arrangement of *Auld Lang Syne* that features his famous "Keith Banjo Tuners." The normally active and demonstrative high school students, on this day, sat on the edge of their seats giving rapt attention throughout the entire presentation.

As the approximately 40-50 music and art students were leaving the band's rehearsal room, many expressions of "awesome" and "amazing" could clearly be overheard. The experience that Mr. Keith so generously provided to these high school students certainly served not only to make an impression that will last a lifetime, but to also give the younger generation a deeper appreciation for "America's National Instrument" —the five string banjo. 🎸



Bill Keith (l) and Roy Coates (r) with banjo and guitar



Lynn Lipton

Roy Coates, Rhinebeck High School band Director addresses students as Bill Keith tunes up