

Bluegrass Bulletin



Official newsletter of the Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society

Congratulations to the 2009 NBCMS Volunteers of the Year by Sue Decker

Why are these people so happy? Could it be that they have just been chosen as NBCMS volunteers of the year? Maybe it's the season tickets for next year's concert season that came along with the honors.

-to-date. Both of these folks do most of their work behind the scenes but the fruits of their labor are immeasurable—the workshop and library are so important in



Photo by Doug Reid

Well, they both certainly appreciated the recognition and the tickets, but they say that their contributions of time and talent to NBCMS is what keeps them smiling. Phyllis May spends countless hours handling registration and all things “student” for the annual NBCMS workshop at Camp He Ho Ha. When asked about the recognition, Phyllis said “It feels really nice. I really enjoy doing it and I’ve gotten to know so many people.” Co-winner Don Bourassa agrees, “you meet a lot of friends, it’s not a job.” Don has been involved in keeping the fabulous NBCMS library going for a few years—he created the current arrangement and catalogue and he keeps it up

members’ learning and enjoyment of bluegrass. Phyllis and Don were chosen this year from many deserving nominees, including Judd Vander Zalm, Marion deSeguin, Marge Miller, Rick Moscicki, Doug Reid, Fred Jones, and Karen Jones. The number of nominees is heartening—not only is NBCMS in good hands, but many hands which is a sign of the health of our club. President Carolyn Hotte mentioned that the choice was very tough when she announced that two people would be chosen as Volunteer of the Year. Congratulations Don and Phyllis! See inside for more on the membership and volunteer party.



www.bluegrassnorth.com



Articles submitted to Bluegrass Bulletin (BB) may be edited, however, care is taken to preserve the writer's intent. Photographs may be cropped, but are not otherwise altered.

We welcome written articles and Photos. Unfortunately, BB does not have the space to publish all material submitted



Presidents Message by Carolyn Hotte



Photo by Doug Reid

Summer is here, plan to attend and enjoy some of the festivals and jams! Use the enclosed NBCMS 2009 "Summer Festival and Jam Event Guide" to mark your calendar.

We have had a few noteworthy events in the past couple months. April 18th Down To the Wood and Back Porch Swing entertained us with their BackWoods Bluegrass. It was a fun and entertaining evening. May was International Bluegrass Month. I hope you were able to attend our Volunteer and Membership Appreciation BBQ on May 20th. It was outstanding! Marge Miller and crew did a fantastic job of decorating the hall. Ida Red, Long Way Home, Trio and A Page in Time entertained us with some fine tunes during the supper hour. Mushrooms and More catered this year's meal. Congratulations to Phyllis May and Don Bourassa the NBCMS Volunteers of the Year. Phyllis handles the registrations and accommodations for the workshop and has for the past few years. Don has spent many hours working in and for our library. He put up the shelves; he catalogues all of our new entries and maintains our library index. As volunteer of the year, they received club merchandise and two tickets to all of our concerts for the next year. There were many nominations. Congratulations to you all. Thank you to all members and volunteers you help make us sustain the great club we have. The key to our success rests in people like you, who embody the spirit of greatness by saying, "Yes I can!" Thanks for your inspiring dedication to the NBCMS.

May 29th we hosted our last concert for the season with the DownTown Mountain Boys from Seattle Washington.

They were awesome a treat to watch and their harmonies were fantastic. A Page in Time (Rob & Dodie Baker, Jeff Reiter, Matt Hotte and Tim Mercer) opened up the show. They did a great job. Thanks. Concerts will resume in the fall. If you have a bluegrass group that is interested in being an opening act for one of our concerts or if you would like to be an Emcee please contact me via e-mail: hottecarolyn@hotmail.com

We say good-bye and thank you to South Side Sound for their many years as club supporters. They closed their doors May 30th. We will miss their support and fine selection of Bluegrass Music. The NBCMS wishes them all the best with their future endeavours.

With the festival season fast approaching and summer being such a busy time for holidays we will not be facilitating the Slow-Pitch Jam in July or August but we will pick it up again in September. Please keep coming, the jam will go on.

Pick up your workshop brochure or get it on line. Ron has done a fantastic job. We have a great line up of instructors so don't wait too long it is filling fast.

Keep On Jammin'



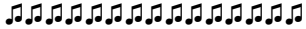
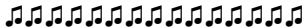
Photo by Doug Reid

The NBCMS Board of Directors singing "Working For the Circle". From left to right Ron Mercer, Cindy Pearce, Bob Whaling, Paul Hnytko, Carolyn Hotte, Terry Ruddy, Linda Saboe and Randy Mabbutt. Missing from the photo is Arlene Eberhardt and Noel McNaughton.

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Visit us online at
www.bluegrassnorth.com

The deadline for the next newsletter is Sept 2, 2009

 The Bluegrass Bulletin is published four times a year to provide information and recognition to NBCMS members


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Membership Benefits by Cindy Pearce



Photo by Carolyn Hotte

Here's another reason to become a member of the Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society: **OUR LIBRARY**.

Over the past year, I have tried to let new members know about our library. I have even heard that some of our existing members were unaware of our library. Well, I hope this article will put everyone on an even 'borrowing' field.....

YES, we have our very own library, dedicated to preserving, presenting and promoting bluegrass music. Don Bourassa has been 'the keeper' of the library for several years. He is updating our catalogues frequently,

because of the continuous additions to the library. Don is one of our dedicated volunteers. And, Yes, we do have two lists of the library contents. One binder is kept on the Welcome Table, and the other is on the desk in the library. Up the 'stairs to no-where' in the Pleasantview Hall, sits our extensive library.

Our library consists of: audio CDs, concert DVDs, instructional books and DVD/VHS/CSs, interest books, and past issues of magazines including: Bluegrass Canada, Bluegrass North, Bluegrass Now, and Bluegrass Unlimited.

Our library works on the honour system. We ask that you follow three rules – borrow only one

instructional item at a time; try not to borrow any more than five items; and borrow items for no more than two weeks.

If you have any items you would like to donate to the library, we would be happy to receive them. Please make sure the item is in good condition, with all its components in tact i.e.: liner notes, accompanying CDs, etc.

And if you have any questions about the library, please ask any member of the executive, or the person helping out at the Welcome Table.

Our club has a library for YOU. Enjoy..... !!



The 10th annual Bluegrass Workshop is filling fast! Register early to save money and assure you get the class you want!

Class details and registration information is on the website at

<http://www.bluegrassnorth.com/clubevents.html> OR

The front desk at the jam OR

Contact Ron at 780 488-5256 or Phyllis at 780 487-3570

Membership Information by Arlene Eberhardt



Photo by Doug Reid

The annual dues are:
\$15 for regular membership
\$25 for couples or family membership.

In 2008, the NBCMS had 371 members, consisting of 162 regular and 209 couple/family memberships.

Income from member dues of \$4535. which represented 5.4% of the total income.

Membership benefits include newsletters and discounts at NBCMS sponsors, club events, concerts and workshops.

"If I was Arlene, I tell you what I'd do.

I'd count all the money, but I will not sing for you"

Ride the Bluegrass Express by Ron Mercer



(This is what I envision)



(what I'll probably get)

The bus will only run if at least 35 people sign up in advance. Contact Ron Mercer for more information. 780 488 5256

One of the many suggestions I receive every year for improving the NBCMS Fall Workshop is to provide transportation to and from the camp. Well this year I am planning to rent a school bus and doing just that! A mere \$20 will get you a ride from Edmonton to He Ho Ha and back. You will be riding with our instructors and there will be jamming! The bus will have two pick-up and drop off points in Edmonton. You may leave your vehicle in the RCMP parking lot on 118 avenue and 143 street for the weekend. The Bluegrass Express will then proceed to the West Edmonton Mall Inn to pick up the instructors and then head west to He Ho Ha arriving at about 5:00 pm on Friday (just enough time to register and get your room assignment before supper). I will need 35 people to sign up for this to make it viable. Please contact me and I'll put you on the list.

Letters to the Editor

You encouraged me years ago to keep singing and I really appreciate it. I am so fortunate to have discovered and joined this club; there are so many wonderful people in it and I continue to learn and have lots of fun jamming with everyone.

Mike Gunn



Byron Myhre teaching his first fiddle class at the NBCMS John Reischman and the Jay Birds workshop.

Paul Hnytko

Notes from the Executive Retreat by Carolyn Hotte

We have a very busy, hard working and capable executive and Board of Directors that with your help will assure ongoing success of the NBCMS. Our annual retreat held on April 25th at the Ramada Inn was a day well spent. Lengthy discussion and brainstorming allowed us to identify key priorities and set objectives for the upcoming year. We all agreed that the NBCMS is a jamming club that provides a venue for like-minded people to come together in fellowship and play and share the Bluegrass music they love. It is important that the jam remain pleasurable for all jammers and to this end, we must all share the responsibilities of communi-

cating jamming etiquette and by practising patience, kindness and support for fellow jammers, maintain a friendly welcoming atmosphere. We all have knowledge and it is in the spirit of our club to share information and help each other. We can talk one on one outside of the circle or provide information through the newsletter or our website or through workshops. It may be of benefit to share your knowledge or provide tips on using a microphone or the role played by each Bluegrass instrument in a group/jam. Knowledge, practise and listening to other groups perform will make us better musicians and this will continue to make our jams better.

Your elected executive and Board members are unanimously committed to maintaining the annual Fall Workshop; to hosting concerts with bands from other parts of Canada and the USA; to repeating the “NBCMS Showcase” featuring our local bands and performers (Possibly in November 2010) and to maintaining the library and continuing to add CDs, DVDs, Books and instructional materials. We also plan to meet and closely review our finances including distribution of subsidies to our events. Please contact any Executive or Board member with any questions or concerns you may have.

“Our executive and board of directors, with your help will assure ongoing success of the NBCMS

NBCMS Board of Directors Work and Play at Annual Retreat

Photos by Carolyn Hotte



Above
Ron Mercer, Randy Mabbutt and Noel McNaughton



Cindy Pearce, Ron Mercer and Noel McNaughton



At Right
Ron Mercer and Randy Mabbutt



Congratulations and Thank you to the Volunteer of the Year Nominees *Photos by Doug Reid and Carolyn Hottel*



Fred Jones



Karen Jones



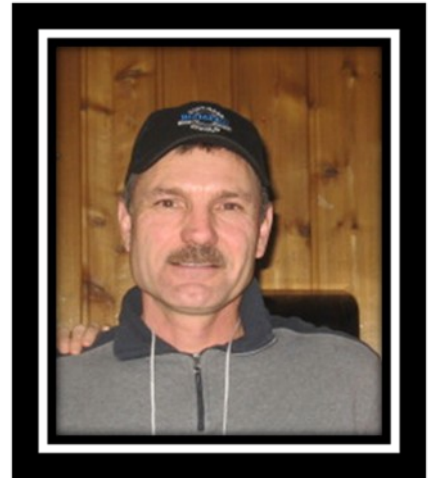
Phyllis May



Don Bourassa



Marge Miller



Rick Moscicki



Doug Reid



Judd Vander Zalm



Marion deSequin



Why Volunteer? By Ron Pidskalny



Photo by Carolyn Hotte

Do you join the regular and slow pitch jams at Pleasant-view Community Hall on Wednesday evenings – or do you just come out to listen? Whatever your motivation, you are greeted at the door, the coffee is on, soft drinks and snacks are available in the canteen, chairs and tables are set up and the sound equipment is in place. Slow pitch instructors lead beginner musicians through a well chosen set of easier to play songs representative of traditional Bluegrass music. Better yet, a Bluegrass instruction booklet contains tips and a complete list of slow pitch songs. You just follow along – and then take the booklet home to hone your skills for the next jam. As the slow pitch session transitions into the regular jam, more musicians join the circle – and the music continues late into the evening.

By now, you must be wonder-

ing, “how does this great event come to pass each and every Wednesday, all year long?” The answer is volunteers; volunteers make this happen! However, studies suggest that about seven percent of those who volunteer contribute 73 percent of the volunteer hours – and this statistic does not account for those who never volunteer at all. If we look around our community, we often find the same people volunteering for their children’s hockey club or soccer club, community get-togethers and various charity events. This type of commitment is commendable, but along with this dedication and level of involvement there is a down side – volunteer burn-out.

We know that the solution is sharing the load, but we also understand that, in some cases, altruism needs to go hand-in-hand with a bit of self-interest. So what will you get if you volunteer to help out with club activities? Have you ever noticed that club volunteers are always smiling,

laughing and interacting with others? This does not happen because happy, social, extroverts tend to volunteer. It happens because volunteering has a number of benefits that make people feel good.

Thirteen scientific studies examined the correlation between volunteerism and health. Volunteers showed reductions in anxiety and depression (seven studies), improved self-esteem (6) lower mortality rates (5) improved immune systems (3), better weight control, reduced blood pressure and a faster recovery time after surgery compared with those who did not volunteer. One study even identified increased mental function as a health benefit of volunteering. Do you want to become known as the Socrates or Aristotle of the Bluegrass world? Volunteering could be the first step towards your goal. The bottom line is that volunteering is good for your health. It is also a fun and rewarding experience – and your club needs you.

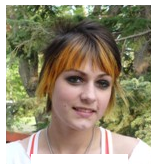
“The bottom line is that volunteering is good for your health. It is also a fun and rewarding experience – and your club needs you.”

A Few of the Many Volunteers That Make this Newsletter Possible

Photos by Kayla Hotte, Carolyn Hotte & Arlene Eberhardt



Carolyn , Linda, Sheila , Sue & Doug



Kayla



Arlene



Les



Ron



Cindy



Young Helper, Percy, John, Karen, Phyllis & Dianne
Missing from this picture are many, many more!



Thank you by Linda Saboe



This newsletter is the largest ever published by the NBCMS. We hope you enjoy reading it. It was possible to create this newsletter because so many of you so willingly contributed articles, photos, ideas, time, encouragement and help with mailing and distribution, proof reading and the list goes on.

It is exciting to be joined by Kayla Hotte and I look for-

ward to articles from a youths perspective.

Thank you to our many members that cannot make it to the jams nor all of our events. Many contribute to distributing our news and our mission. This edition has an article from a Saskatchewan member and news from Boscombe. Thanks to Larry & Maryanne Pshyk for lobbying to introduce Bluegrass Music to this years' Vegreville Pysanka Festival.

Special thanks to those who take time to read the newsletter. If you like the newsletter please let us know. If you do not like it, get involved and change it. Your editorial board is looking forward to producing the Fall Issue. (The next edition will be smaller!)

On behalf of the newsletter team, thank you for allowing us the opportunity to produce the newsletter and all of your contributions and support.

"...it looks to be a fun year working to get your Bluegrass Bulletin newsletter out."

New Bluegrass Bulletin Committee by Doug Reid



Photo by Carolyn Hotte

The new Bluegrass Bulletin Committee met for the first time on April 15, 2009 to get our new marching orders from the editor in chief Linda Saboe. The other lack-eyes, I mean reporters in the field are Her Royal Highness and Club President Carolyn

Hotte, the always colourful Kayla Hotte, banjo gal Sheila Hallett, dobro dealer Sue Decker and myself, the um... token male, Doug Reid.

The first meeting was held to toss around ideas (and the odd water bottle whenever it seemed appropriate) and to assign the different tasks for the upcoming newsletters. You could feel all the estro-

gen at work here, at least I could. But I did what any man should do in a room full of women...sit down, shut up, and listen (or at least pretend to). You can also throw in a few "yes mam's" throughout the meeting. Enough about the women though, it looks to be a fun year working to get your Bluegrass Bulletin newsletter out.

Annual NBCMS Volunteer and Membership Barbeque by Sheila Hallett



Photo by Linda Saboe

The annual NBCMS Volunteer and Membership Barbeque is an evening that really shows appreciation to the people who are the heart and soul of the club. May 20, 2009 we all gathered at Pleasantview Community Hall to chow down on a great meal and to listen to a few sets of music before we launched into a band scramble. It was an opportunity to see what three local bands are up to as they each played a 20-minute set of their finest.

Ida Red opened the stage with a high-energy set of traditional bluegrass, which paid tribute to some of the great founders of the genre: Bill Monroe, Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard. *Ida Red* includes Linda Saboe (mandolin) and club president Carolyn Hotte (rhythm guitar) on lead vocals, Ken Hotte (bass), Les Eberhart (lead guitar) and Ron Mercer (banjo). Great things are happening there!

The second band was *Long Way Home* featuring Eric Papsdorf on guitar and vocals, Terry Ruddy bass, Steve Crocker on banjo and vo-

Annual NBCMS Volunteer and Membership Barbeque by Sheila Hallett (cont'd from page 8)

als, Tony Bentz on guitar, and Paul McFarlane on mandolin. This group has been playing together in various configurations for five years and started out as a jam session of NAIT instructors. It was great to see club regulars Eric and Terry showcasing their work with the band that performed one original tune in their set: "Fort McMurray" which is a driving song about working in the oil patch. Good job fellas.

The fourth band was *Page in Time* with Rob

Photo by Doug Reid



Trio: Donna Lee Randon, Sheila Hallett and Erin Kushniruk sing sweet acapella gospel harmonies –(Sheila neglected to mention her contribution to entertainment. *Linda*)

(mandolin) and Dodie Baker (rhythm guitar) singing leads and harmony. Jeff Reiter (banjo), Tim Mercer (bass) and Matt Hotte (fiddle) rounded out this fine band. Their songs provided a sneak peek into their May 29 opening gig for the *DownTown Mountain Boys*, where they got the evening off to a fine start.

Just before the band scramble was announced our club executive got up and entertained us with an inventive version of "Working on a Building". Each board member sang a verse that highlighted their position and duties and provided a good laugh for the crowd. Treasurer Arlene Eberhart cheered the gang on from the back of the hall as Randy Mabbutt, board secretary, got on bended knee to sing about counting money for Arlene. Kudos to the board for showing us how they work so well together and bring joy to the tasks that keep our club running.

It was time for the rest of us to get to work as Carolyn announced the line-ups for five scrambled bands. The audience visited over coffee and Black Forest Cake as we took ten minutes to arrange two tunes for our newly formed

bands. Musicians huddled in corners of the hall to figure out songs, keys, singers and breaks for their big debut on stage. For newbie club members the process is a bit of a nail-biter, but the experience brings out the best smiles when it's all said and done.

Thank you NBCMS for arranging this yearly event to thank the volunteers that keep the club chugging along seamlessly and congratulations to Phyllis May and Don Bourassa the NBCMS volunteers for 2009 and to all the great nominees.

The annual NBCMS Volunteer and Membership Barbeque is an evening that really shows appreciation to the people who are the heart and soul of the club.

Photo by Doug Reid



Long Way Home: Paul McFarlane, Steve Crocker, Terry Ruddy, Eric Papsdorf and Tony Bentz



Photo by Doug Reid

A Page in Time: Jeff Reiter, Matt Hotte, Rob & Dodie Baker and Tim Mercer



Photo by Doug Reid

Ida Red: Ken Hotte, Les Eberhardt, Linda Saboe, Carolyn Hotte, & Ron Mercer



Thanks to Our Members and Volunteers For



Special thanks to Carolyn Hotte, Marge Miller and Paul Hnytka for all of the great planning and decorating and to Doug Reid for the wonderful pictures!



Thanks to Matt Hotte for another year of employment with the NBCMS and your care in setting up and taking down our jam.



Another Great Year of Bluegrass Music *Photos by Doug Reid*



What's a Bluegrass Party without a Band Scramble?



Greg Yavorsky, A New friend Brian, Sue Decker, Mike Bunting, Carolyn Hotte, Judd Vander Zalm and Augie Hangartner
The Bluegrass Bulletin June 2009



Backwoods Bluegrass by Doug Reid Photos by Doug Reid



The NBCMS held its Backwoods Bluegrass concert on April 18, 2009, at Pleasantview Hall.

The bands were the Down to the Wood, and Back Porch Swing. Both bands are local and have been around for a number of years. These facts are the probable reasons why they played before a standing room only crowd on this warm spring night.

The Down to the Wood (DTTW) boys, consisting of Glen Hoffart on bass, Marc Ladouceur on guitar and mandolin, and Curtis Appleton on banjo and guitar, were first up. They had just traveled a long way from their previous gig, which happened to be in the parking lot of the hall (while warming-up). Once on stage and before proceeding to play, Glen could be seen praying while Marc holds his bass. I'm not sure what the other two have for rituals, but its probably best left untold. Once underway, DTTW dealt

the crowd and themselves amused. These antics also keep the audience involved, attentive and appreciative, and that is why they are so well received at all the venues they play.

After a short break, Back Porch Swing were up next on the stage. The band consist of Penny Malmberg on vocals and guitar, Jim Malmberg on vocals, mandolin and guitar, Cam Neufeld on violin, and Kevin Jacobson on bass. They have a pleasant mix of bluegrass, western swing and original music that also keeps the audience involved. This was evident when the band got eight lucky Mark's, I mean one Marc and seven other volunteers to help do the contra dance or a form of square dance . The volunteers were kept swinging with a few allemande lefts and rights, as Penny Malmberg called out the moves and directed traffic. After the dancing interlude, the band got back at it with a few more tunes to keep the joint jumping.



DTTW: Glen Hoffart, Marc Ladouceur and Curtis Appleton



Glen and Marc

out their usual fair of tight harmonies that are some of the best you'll hear around these parts. While serving up their own style of bluegrass and other fare, their horsing around on stage seems to keep

The evening ended with the DTTW boys joining Back Porch Swing on stage for a few songs. It was nice seeing Cam Neufeld stepping forward and singing a few lines. Overall, it was a great concert and I'm looking forward to hearing some new tunes on their next CD's. When they come out.



Back Porch Swing: Cam Neufeld, Penny and Jim Malmberg and Kevin Jacobson



DownTown Mountain Boys by Sue Decker



Photo by Doug Reid

NBCMS closed out the 2008-2009 concert season with a real treat. The **DownTown Mountain Boys** delivered a wonderful evening packed with a rich combination of traditional and original songs, not to mention some great laughs. These Pacific Northwest musicians clearly enjoy playing together. Dave Keenan, who is known by many Sorrento workshop students, played banjo and fiddle beautifully as well as contributing 2 original songs on the group's recent CD *Big Darlin'*. Dave's humor set a relaxed and fun tone, starting with mocking the MC for the evening, Ron Pidskalny. Ron played the straight man to

Dave's antics very well. Did they work that out before the show? Dave also took the lead vocal on his original *Sometimes Dig for Taters* ("sometimes bail, sometimes jail, and sometimes dig for taters"), a song that argued the benefits of aiming low in life.

The smooth lead and harmony voice of Terry Enyeart (Bass) was a real standout. *Raised by the Railroad Line* and *Far Side Banks of Jordan* were two of the many songs that showcased his vocal style—full of emotion, yet seeming effortless at the same time. Tom Moran—bluegrass aficionado, accomplished mandolin player, and librarian!—added some of the traditional elements of the sets, including *Ol Dangerfield*. Don Share

provided superb rhythm guitar and very tasteful flatpicking on several songs in addition to lead and versatile harmony singing. Speaking of harmonies, Dave, Terry, and Don blended their voices in masterful ways throughout the two sets. The fiddle of Paul Elliot was so engaging, the style fitting each song like a glove. Not surprisingly, Paul has a large hand in the arrangements for the band. Each song had clearly been crafted with great care by the band. This was the appeal of DMB for me—the relaxed and funny delivery of seriously sophisticated vocal and instrumental arrangements. Check out DMB's website (www.downtownmountainboys.com) to pick up *Big Darlin'* for yourself!

...the appeal of DMB is the relaxed and funny delivery of seriously sophisticated vocal and instrumental arrangements.



DownTown Mountain Boys: Paul Elliott, Don Share, Dave Keenan, Terry Enyeart and Tom Moran

Photo by Doug Reid

A Page in Time by Sue Decker



Photo by Doug Reid

Opening up for the DownTown Mountain Boys was local band **A Page in**

Time. It's always exciting to see members of NBCMS come together as a band. The band is lead by Rob Baker's passionate vocals, offering up a traditional-sounding set. But don't be looking for Bill Monroe or the Stanley Brothers as the

songwriters for many of the band's songs. Rob has a real talent for writing material that sounds like it came from the founders of bluegrass. I particularly enjoyed his instrumental *Northern Flavour*, the song seemed to tell a story without words. Dody Baker's rock-solid rhythm guitar playing and sweet harmonies added a soft touch to **A Page in Time's** sound. The band rocked out on a few of the tunes like *Foggy*

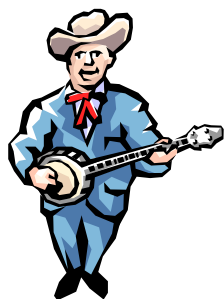
Mountain Breakdown thanks to the energy of Jeff Reiter on banjo, Matt Hotte on fiddle, and Tim Mercer on bass. These guys are all pretty young, with Matt the well-known veteran player having been around NBCMS for longer than most of us. Jeff and Tim are relative newcomers to the "circle" but they seemed to be pretty at home up there on stage. Great job!

It's always exciting to see members of NBCMS come together as a band.



A Page in Time: Tim Mercer, Jeff Reiter, Matt Hotte, Rob and Dodie Baker

Photo y Doug Reid



This Summer plan to attend/support local festivals. See "Festival and Jam Events" 2009 Created by Carolyn Hotte for your convenience

Tenth Annual Fall Workshop by Ron Mercer



This will be the 10th annual NBCMS Fall Bluegrass Workshop. The Bluegrass Breakdown Concert on Thursday, October 1 will feature three bands: The Breakmen from Vancouver, Brother Mule

(USA), and The Blue Canyon Boys from Denver, Colorado. I have an exciting line-up of 20 instructors that are preparing lessons right now for you.

A new concept this year (one of your suggestions on the camp evaluations) is the Bluegrass Ensemble class. This class will feature Marc Ladouceur and Drew Garrett teaching how to develop your “band” skills. The ideal student can sing and play at an intermediate level and wants to learn the next step. So for all you folks that are wondering what class to choose, think about this one.

Our prices are the same as last year and currently there is lots of room in all classes. The cost goes up after August 15, so don't delay.

Check out the website at <http://www.bluegrassnorth.com/clubevents.html>

Contact Ron at 780 488-5256 or Phyllis at 780 487-3570 for details or questions.

NBCMS Weekly Jam by Carolyn Hotte

Every Wednesday evening we host an Acoustic jam session at Pleasantview Community Hall (10860 - 57 Avenue Edmonton, Alberta). The doors open at 6:30 p.m. Spectators are welcome - we set up tables and chairs in addition to the chairs in the circle. Donations are welcome. The club provides free coffee.

ABOUT THE JAM

Our jams are totally acoustic in the spirit of traditional bluegrass music. We provide microphones for sound reinforcement until 10:00 p.m. You may stay and jam acoustically after that. The focus of our jam is **bluegrass**. Acoustic stringed instruments only please.

ENTERING THE CIRCLE

The participants of the jam sit in a circle in the centre of the hall. Before entering the circle make sure you are in tune to concert pitch. The best way to achieve this is with an electronic tuner. If you do not have one, someone would be glad to lend you one. Or there is a tuner available at the front table.

Take a seat in the circle, if you are a novice at jamming you may want to sit next to a more experienced player playing the same instrument. If you wish to just play back-up or quietly in the background, that is quite all right. The dos and don'ts of jam etiquette are

merely suggestions; there are no hard and fast rules and each situation is a little different.

We generally proceed in a clockwise pattern around the circle. Participants are allowed to sing a song or play one song of their choice when it comes to their turn. If you do not wish to pick a song when it comes to your turn, simply pass on to the next person in the circle.

WHEN IT IS YOUR TURN

You may want to bring a list of a few songs to the jam that you want to play so you are ready when it is your turn. It is usually best to pick a familiar tune or one with not too many changes that is easy to learn by ear.

Call out the name of the tune, the key and any unusual changes before starting. Request harmony back-up on the chorus if you want it. For the benefit of all players, try not start a tune at too fast a tempo.

Instrumental breaks should also follow a clockwise pattern. Keep eye contact with others around the circle. Encourage those who wish to take a break, but do not intimidate those who do not want to do so.

Bluegrass, acoustic

jam every

Wednesday at

Pleasantview Hall

10860-57 Ave

EDMONTON

Where our Members Promote and Hear Bluegrass

A Bluegrass Cruise by Colleen Whaling

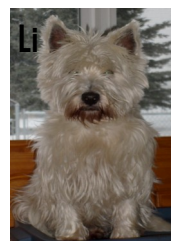
Bob and Colleen Whaling, Ron and Jean Mercer and Darryl and Elsie Roth enjoyed a week filled with blue ocean and bluegrass! Between Feb. 21 and Feb. 28, 2009, we took the 11th annual Bluegrass cruise with Royal Caribbean through the western Caribbean on the "Liberty of the Seas". Every evening we attended bluegrass concerts composed of the following bands: Lorraine Jordon & Carolina Road, Grasstowne, Bradley Walker, Dismembered Tennesseans, Mark Newton Band, Cherryholmes, and Tim Graves & Cherokee. Bob, Darryl, Ron and Jean also had the opportunity to participate in the workshops. Bob took guitar with Josh Goforth from Lorraine Jordon & Carolina Road. Ron took banjo from Ross Nickerson. Darryl took dobro with Phil Leadbetter from Grasstowne and also Tim Graves. Jean took bass with Jere from Cherryholmes. Bob and Ron were also able to get in a few private lessons!

It was a great week of bluegrass music and a chance to meet many of the band members and bluegrass fans from Canada and U.S.

The ship also had other shows such as world class figure skating and a high energy performance trapeze show. It was truly a great experience!



Photo by Colleen Whaling
Darryl Roth, Ron Mercer, Bob and Colleen Whaling, Jean Coates and Elsie Roth



Little Mon read the April newsletter in the country. Send us a photo of you reading the newsletter during the summer. Catch the event or location name if you can we will publish photos as space allows but hope to have at least one!

The Rhonda Withnell Quartet by Kayla Hotte



Photo by Carolyn Hotte

Saturday, May 30th some of us went to see The Rhonda Withnell Quartet at Festival Place. We were all impressed

by her amazing voice and phenomenal musicians including Don Bradshaw playing Bass and Mo Lefever playing guitar. She not only put on a beautiful performance but her versatility was as-

tounding.; ranging from jazz and blues to the Louvin Brother's "My Baby's Gone" and A Red Allen version of Hank Williams' "Since my Sweet Love Ain't Around". She sang harmony with Shelly Jones. Her last song of the evening was "Grooving on a Sunday Afternoon". Shelly and Rhonda sing together in the rock band Blackboard Jungle who will be playing the Taste of Edmonton July 24.



Northern Lights Music Camp and Bluegrass Festival By Jennifer Bork

This year the Northern Lights Bluegrass and Old Tyme Music festival is putting on our fourth annual event. And it's going to be a humdinger! Join us August 14-16, 2009 for a coast to coast lineup with an American sweet-heart thrown into the mix! In addition to Sierra Hull and Highway 111 from Tennessee and The Spinney Brothers from the Maritimes, there's Viper Central from BC, Woodbend from Alberta, and a number of bands from Saskatchewan.

Rustic and quaint, the Northern Lights festival and camp is situated in a lovely little clearing in the Saskatchewan boreal forest, just to the west of Prince Albert National Park at Ness Creek, 20 km NE of Big River, SK. Advance tickets are on sale until August 10 (only \$40 for the weekend) and include free camping and all the fireside jamming you could ever want.

It all starts with Music Camp on Monday, August 10, 2009. We are excited that we've hired Sierra Hull and Highway 111 to teach at camp. They're playing the Edmonton Folk Fest the weekend before our fun begins and we figured, why not call and see if they'd be interested in extending their stay in Canada to include a bit of Saskatchewan time. Sierra's great mandolin playing caught the eye of greats like Alison Krauss and Sam Hull at a young age and she's been in the spotlight ever since. Her band is amazing, an assembled group of stellar musicians who have played with the likes of Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder, Marty Stuart, Del McCoury, Ralph Stanley and many other greats.

Registration forms are on our website and you can buy advance festival tickets on-line. www.northernlightsbluegrass.ca. Keep checking our website for details, or contact the Society if you'd like to be on our email-list. And we are always seeking volunteers for the festival – a Society membership (\$10) and six hours of volunteering gives you a weekend pass. What a deal! For more info: email: info@northernlightsbluegrass.ca or phone: 306-373-4190

Want to see Sierra Hull and the Spinney Brothers at a festival this summer?

Head to Saskatchewan!!!



Tips to Help You At the Bluegrass Jam by Carolyn Hotte & Linda Saboe

The most important advice we can give anyone is to practise listening. Listening is the single most important asset to any instrumentalist or vocalist. Attend as many live concerts as you possibly can, listen to CDs and try to single out the instrument you like best (yes the voice is a bluegrass instrument), listen to different performers and try to determine what it is about their style that you enjoy. Copy the best of the best. Study jamming etiquette so you know what to expect and how to contribute to the sound and joy of the circle. Jamming etiquette is available on line at www.bluegrassnorth.com, in the NBCMS "Jamming Song Book" and at the door of the club. Before entering the circle make sure your instrument is in tune and check the tuning often. Almost anything can make these instruments go out of tune.

The most important advice we can give anyone is to practise listening. Listening is the single most important asset to any instrumentalist or vocalist. "

Bluegrass is hard driving, passionate music and it can be a challenge to keep the tempo and play your instrument with the passion you have yet still maintain the tempo and allow the lead instrument to be the loudest. If you are unfamiliar with the song or tune, don't play but listen to the chord progression, listen to the Bass and let it tell you when the chords are changing. When you try to play do it softly to confirm that you have the correct timing and chord progression. No matter how fast and fancy you can play instrumental breaks, keep in mind that over 90% of the time you will be playing rhythm. Never play notes over the lead instrument and this includes the singer. When two or more vocalists are singing in harmony, there is no room for extra notes. One person is the lead and everybody else is there to support the lead, with rhythm. At home, practise with a metronome and play along with a CD. Our library has a number of teaching manuals that include CDs with the music played slower than usual. Why not play with Tony Rice or Roland White or any of your Bluegrass favourites.

Know the role your instrument should play in a Bluegrass Band. Remember, you are almost always playing rhythm. The Bass is the heart-beat and it lays down the beat, the little mandolin is the snare drum usually chopping down on the offbeat. Together these two instruments

are the glue holding the rhythm together. The guitar playing down stroked 'boom chucks' and the banjo and the resonator guitar rolling in eighth notes adds further rhythmic support and bluegrass drive. The fiddle plays double stops, slides and drones (long bows on root note of the chord). When any one of these instruments is playing lead then a different instrument may be required to play their rhythmic part. That is why you often hear a banjo or a fiddle chop during a mandolin break. When the vocalist is the lead instrument, everybody is playing rhythm. If you cannot hear the vocalist or other lead instrument, you are playing too loud.

Microphones are there to help 'balance' the sound. A guitar will never have the natural volume of a fiddle or a banjo. The greatest and loudest operatic singer would be unheard above a hard driving full tilt Bluegrass Band let alone a jam circle. The microphone is a tool to help the lead instrument, not a weapon to erase its sound. Proper use of a microphone takes practice and a basic understanding of the types of microphones. Each instrument (including the voice) has a 'sweet spot' where the microphone placement results in the sweetest and purest sound with the least feedback. Do not be scared of the microphone, embrace it and listen for the sound through the speakers. The most important thing you can do in a jam is to listen to yourself and those around you, use eye contact when you want somebody to take a break and shake your head if you do not want a break. Remember jamming etiquette, pass the microphone clockwise to the next person and if no one wants it place it in the middle of the circle. Happy jamming!

Our Wednesday Night Jam



Photo by Carolyn Hotte

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**Ida Red Bluegrass Band Performing at the Vegreville Pysanka Festival Saturday July 4 at
2:40 PM in the Agriplex**

**Do you know of an acoustic open stage ? Where is your bluegrass band perform-
ing ? Let us know we could put the announcement here.**

Email linda@idaredbluegrass.com



Our mission is to Preserve Promote and Present Bluegrass Music

Official newsletter of the Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society

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www.bluegrassnorth.com



Festival
Friday, August 14 -
Sunday, August 16, 2009

Music Camp
Monday, August 10 -
Friday, August 14, 2009

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