

Bluegrass Bulletin

Fall September 2010



Official newsletter of the Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society

New Voices on CJSR's 'Prairie Pickin' by Doug Reid *Photos From Facebook 'Prairie Pickin' on CJSR*



Photo by Carolyn Hotte

CJSR's Prairie Pickin' program has some new hosts. They are Darcy Whiteside, Logan Sarchfield and Jim Storey who are members of "The Bix Mix Boys" bluegrass band. They took over the show from Doug Richie and Rob Baker in July of this year. I had the chance to sit down with them

after their set at the Blueberry Bluegrass Festival, and question them as to why they took over the show.

Q. Why did you take over the show?

A. Logan heard about it at a concert and emailed Doug Richie to find out more. They wanted to ensure the program still existed, and liked the idea that they could switch from week to week. Having three hosts makes it easy to have vacation coverage. They all have different tastes in bluegrass music and all have a good collection of music, which includes some vinyl records. Jim also noted that he was the star of the program.



Logan Sarchfield

Q. Where do you intend to take the radio show?

A. They are all "bluegrass nerds" who want to inform listeners about Bluegrass in Alberta. They also want to make sure there are new faces who will become involved in Bluegrass through listening to their program. They also want to make the under 40 crowd aware of bluegrass music.

Q. What is involved in being a DJ?

A. The biggest thing is trying not to screw up. Doug Richie sat through with them and showed them all how to push the buttons. By the sounds of it, you can't be claustrophobic as the studio is in an old bank vault which is only about 6' wide.

Q. How is the music picked?

A. Each week the program is hosted by one member of the group. That week's host picks the music, and they also work the soundboard. The other two hosts are there for support and to add comments as required (and even when not required). They all have a different and diverse preference of the types of bluegrass they like, from traditional bluegrass, to Newgrass and Great Canadian Bands. They will also pick other songs close to the bluegrass genre.

They have had the wonderful Claire Lynch on their program when she was in town for the Blueberry Bluegrass Music Festival at the end of July. Darcy had facebooked her before she got to town and she said she would do the show. I look forward to listening to these guys for many years to come, and I'm sure they will have other great guests on the program from time to time.

P.S. – For those who wonder, the other member of The Bix Mix boys is Terry Nadasdi, who the others say doesn't have the face for radio and had too much going on personally to be part of the 'on air' group. He said he has inside info for calling in to the program for free promo material though.

Darcy Whiteside



Jim Storey



You can catch these fine fellows Thursday night on CJSR, 88.5 FM at 7:06PM.



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

Wow summer sure flew by. Hope you all had some time to enjoy it.

September brings us to the start of a busy fall. The slow pitch has resumed on the first Wednesday of the month and the last Wednesday will be open stage/band scramble night. Our executive meetings are the second Wednesday of the month downstairs. Members are always welcome.

September is International Bluegrass Month and to celebrate, each Wednesday in September we will have a theme Jam. September 1st was on the songs of Flatt & Scruggs, September 8th the songs of the Father of Bluegrass Bill Monroe and September 15th the Stanley Brothers, Thanks to everyone for participating they were fun nights and now we can look forward to and prepare for September 22nd and songs of the King of Bluegrass Jimmy Martin and September 29th when we play songs from all the Bluegrass greats! The challenge is to find songs they have recorded. Don't know any of their music? The Club library is a great place to start!

September 15th we held our Semi Annual General Meeting downstairs. Your executive and Board of Directors always welcomes comments, compliments or concerns. We will be celebrating Alberta Arts Days on September 19th by jamming at the Muttart Conservatory 9626-96A Street from 1-4 pm. If you would like to be part of the jamming please let me know by September 17th or if you are not able to jam it could be a great day for you to tour the Muttart. Alberta Arts Days is three exciting days - September 17-19, 2010 - to showcase Alberta artists of all types, and to encourage Albertans to discover experience and celebrate the arts. For more information on other Alberta Art Day events check their website at <http://culture.alberta.ca/artsdays/default.aspx>

I hope you are registered for the 11th Annual

Fall Workshop. Registration deadline was September 15th.

We kick off our concert series with two bands from Calgary, Restless Lester and the June Bugs on October 23rd at Stencil Hall-Taylor College & Seminary 11525-23 Avenue. Restless Lester's last concert for us was in 2006. They have two new members since then and should put on a fine show. The June Bugs will be opening up the show and they will have their new CD for sale.

Thanks to the many members who so willingly volunteered for the November 9-10th casino, our biggest fundraiser, at the Yellowhead Casino.


2011 marks the 15th Anniversary of the NBCMS. Help us to plan our celebrations! Give suggestions to Board Members; Plan to perform at the Dow Center June Showcase, Watch for the souvenir edition newsletter

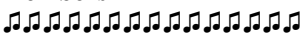
Board. We have a few events planned including theme jams, concerts featuring some of the bands that have played for us in the past 15 years and some that have not and another "Bluegrass Circle Showcase" on June 25th at the Dow Centre in Fort Saskatchewan. If your group would like to be part of the showcase please contact me via e-mail hottecarolyn@hotmail.com. This is a great event that highlights our members' talents. Don't wait too long limited spots are available. Linda Saboe and the newsletter team have been busy putting together a special edition to commemorate the NBCMS. Look for more details as our anniversary approaches and visit our website www.bluegrassnorth.com often for updates

Keep on Jammin'

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Visit us online at
www.bluegrassnorth.com

The deadline for the next newsletter is Dec 1 2010

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



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**Bluegrass Music Jam Every
Wednesday at 6:45 PM
Pleasantview Community
Hall-10860-57 Avenue**

NBCMS VP Terry Ruddy
Having fun at Blueberry!

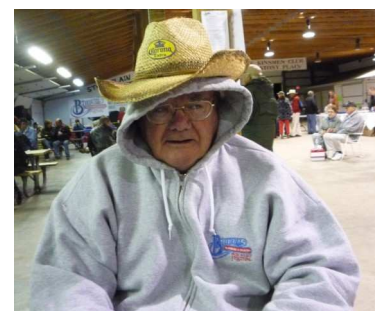


Photo by Evelyn Hayes

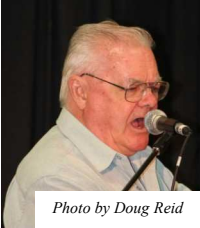


Photo by Doug Reid

Thank You Volunteers by Terry Ruddy

The NBCMS is the great organization that it is thanks to the tireless efforts of volunteers working at our events and throughout our community. Without my asking for help, our members have stepped forward and willingly volunteered their time to work on November 9th and 10th at Edmonton's Yellowhead Casino. This is our major fund raiser and without these monies we

would not be able to offer our many jam sessions, workshops, concerts, awards, charitable donations and so on. It is with sincere appreciation that we say "thank you" to the casino volunteers and others who assure our club can continue its' many good works.



Checklist for the 11th Annual NBCMS Workshop October 1-3 by Ron Mercer

Are you lucky enough to be coming to the NBCMS workshop? Don't forget to bring...

- your instrument(s)
- an instrument stand
- a pillow and a sleeping bag or bedding
- a towel and personal toiletries
- ear plugs
- music stand, tuner and pencil & paper
- some \$\$\$ to buy merchandise or accessories
- recording device if you wish to save your lessons
- bathing suit (if you plan on swimming)
- any dietary supplements required (i.e. vegan diet)
- your good humour and understanding
- some major calluses on the fingertips

See you at Camp He Ho Ha on Friday, October 1 between 4 & 6 pm.

Feel free to call me at 780 488-5256 with any advice, questions or concerns.



Photo by Linda Saboe

Congratulations Kayla Hotte & Logan Mills by Linda Saboe



Photo by Linda Saboe



Long time NBCMS member Kayla Hotte and recent member Logan Mills are both enrolled in the music program at Edmonton's Grant MacEwan University! Kayla will focus on vocals and Logan on the keyboard. Their first year of studies includes individual instrumental or vocal lessons, participation in small and large ensemble groups

(includes jazz choir, big band, showcase bands, guitar, and percussion), improvisation, ear training, studies in musical literature and style, theory, and related performance experiences.

Already busy with class work and playing music both have assured me they will still keep some time available for Bluegrass but, listen for some jazz and swing chords in their future mandolin playing!

They will keep us informed of their upcoming performances.



Preserving, Promoting & Presenting Bluegrass Music by Linda Saboe

Roy Thompson, Don Bourassa & Wendy Stadnick

Evelyn Hayes, Terry Ruddy, 'Tess Bassie' & Laurie Scheer



Photo by Linda Saboe



Photo by Linda Saboe

Up The Creek

Grant McCarthy, Mark Edwards, Ron Woytiuk, Eric Papsdorf & Al Kucy
Missing is dobro player Leonard Swanson & Mando player Anthony Bentz

Diana Nuttall & Steve Schroeter



Photo by Doug Reid



Photo by Linda Saboe

The Gates Family Band

Glen Nott, Troy Gates, Marlee Gates, Braden Gates & John Appleton

Erin Kushniruk, Ken Hotte & Kayla Hotte



Photo by Doug Reid



Photo by Doug Reid



Back Porch Swing

Jim Malmberg, Penny Malmberg & Kevin Jacobson



Photo by Back Porch Swing

The Proper Charlies

Hannah Goa, Mike Sadava, Lenny Gallant & Dallas Petry



Photo by Linda Saboe

Ed Chalifoux



Photo by Doug Reid



Jeanette & Doug Massey

Adeline Lerohl, Ollie Machon & Linda Saboe



Photo by Ollie Machon



Photo by Linda Saboe

Anna Somerville & Carolyn Hotte

Roy Thompson

New Member Laura Theriault is welcomed by Evelyn Hayes



Photo by Linda Saboe



Photo by Doug Reid



Photo by Linda Saboe



Meet Our Sponsors by Sue Decker & Photos by Sue Decker

Avenue Guitars

Brian Schultze loves guitars. It doesn't take long to pick that up when you spend some time with him. He is the owner of Avenue Guitars which re-located in 1995 to Whyte Avenue. He started out in music retail in 1976 at Keenkraft Music, then with partner Dale Cameron opened Cameron Guitars in 1986 —“we basically dealt in vintage guitars” when the taste for pre-war Martins had not really hit Canada yet. As he and I sat in the acoustic room at Avenue, surrounded by Martins, Taylors, Gibsons, and Santa Cruz guitars (among many others), Brian was more than happy to talk about any of the instruments but there were a few that caught my eye. One was a Martin D-42 made from Amazon Rosewood with beautiful inlay—one of only 35 of these guitars Martin made. Another was a remake of a Gibson J-42 Banner style—it fooled me, looked like Maybelle Carter might have played it! His advice to anyone in the market for a guitar is to play lots of different guitars and more than one guitar of the same model—that's the beauty of wood, each one sounds and feels different. Oh, and make sure to pick up a humidifier—they carry a nifty D'Addario Planet Waves. Avenue also carries other acoustic instruments and accessories—check out their website www.avenue-guitar.com.



Acoustic Music Shop

Acoustic Music Shop is a community unto itself. That's always been the goal for **Rod West**, owner. He likes nothing better than to get someone started with an instrument and to nurture their learning and enjoyment for years down the road. Acoustic sells the full range of bluegrass instruments (great selection of mid-range price points) plus many others, including musical saws (for those of you who have mastered all the bluegrass instruments, just don't bring it to the jam!) Rod is also pleased to carry Wechter Scheerhorn resophonic guitars. Once you've got your axe, you can sign up for lessons (including mandolin, fiddle, guitar and voice) in their newly expanded space upstairs. It's pretty swanky up there and the drum lessons happen downstairs in a padded room, [insert your favorite drummer joke here] so there's no sound interference when you are practicing your tasty licks. Two of the teachers, Catherine Hiltz and Sarah Hart, have started a fiddle jam for students on Tuesday nights to help people learn a repertoire and feel comfortable jamming. You can drop in to that for \$5.00. They've also moved the repair shop upstairs should the need arise. So it seems like Rod and his staff have achieved their goal, go in some time and see for yourself. www.acousticmusicshop.com



Myhre's Music

Hanging out at Myhre's Music is a lot of fun. **Byron**'s one-man variety show (it's actually his supporting cast of staff who make the whole show work, sorry Byron) sets the tone for a relaxed look around before trying out some of the beautiful instruments on hand. There's the wall of fiddles (Alfie might play some for you if you want to hear how your new fiddle *could* sound), the Martin and Collings guitars, and a great selection of basses, mandolins, and resophonics. Plus, you can't overlook the banjo section for two reasons: 1) there's so much bling on those things, and 2) the store started out in 1967 as “House of Banjos” with Alfie Myhre and Don Evoy at the helm. “A whole store of banjos?” I asked. “Back then, they even put their own banjos up on the wall just to have inventory” according to Byron. He showed me a new banjo model they got in, the Deering Eagle II. Yikes, sounds like an aircraft—probably just as many moving parts! If you're looking to get into a Martin for under \$1000, the store also carries the D1. Myhre's will be at Camp He Ho Ha again this year, be sure to come by for a bit of fun and whatever you need for woodshedding through the winter! www.myhresmusic.com



Musical Initiations By Ian Porteous – Director of The Lumberjacks Music Camp



Photo by Linda Saboe

I just got back from the British Columbia Bluegrass Workshop, yet another mild initiation for myself and countless others who attended the beautiful Sorrento Centre in the Shuswap Valley of British Columbia.

Life at the camp is an array of programming including lessons, afternoon workshops and many other activities including, instructor performances and slow pitch jams. Meanwhile, scattered about the campground is a smattering of jams from beginner to super advanced, expert even. The BCBW workshop is an obvious Mecca for the Pacific Northwest, somewhat of a tribal gathering of people driven towards musical mastery and personal relationships.

Stepping into a jam circle can be an interesting experience, seems as though there is an invisible etiquette and a timeless hierarchy that must be realized, acknowledged and honoured. So many different personalities, repertoires and levels of accomplishment make it seem that making music would be impossible. But not so! One of the beauties of Bluegrass Music is that it is a system and once internalized, brings one of the most rewarding personal experiences one can have no matter what level you're at.

Anybody can step up to a jam with a childlike wonder if you come from a place where you are first a listener and observer. To "listen more than you play while playing" as quoted by Chris Sharp, is the beginning of pure growth and learning

As you approach a jam where others are playing at a higher level, there is often a sense of discomfort. I have felt this discomfort for years and still

find myself trapped in that awful feeling. Make note of the discomfort, rather than judging your own ability, simply come from that place as a listener and an observer. Let your hands fall from your instrument and breath and smile, knowing well that all those players were in your shoes at one time or another.

Every time you successfully go through this process of sharing a song at the Wednesday circle or approaching the jam in the campground, you transform yourself and the people around you. Come from a place of care. Be careful. Come from a place of wonder, be wonderful. Embrace the Musical Initiations.

Editors note: Check Ian's website for information on his workshop

www.lesbucherons.com/en/lumberjacks-music-camp/

Every time you successfully go through this process of sharing a song at the Wednesday circle or approaching the jam in the campground, you transform yourself and the people around you.



Anna Somerville & Marc Ladouceur by Linda Saboe



Anna & Marc had a busy Bluegrass Summer. They performed at the 2010 Kluane Bluegrass Festival and also played at the Big Valley Jamboree, one of Alberta's biggest festivals! Anna & Marc are known for their ability to draw out the intention of the song be it bluegrass, old-time or folk and Anna is no stranger to song writing.

Anna still found time to volunteer for the NBCMS and at Blueberry where she was kept busy chauffeuring dignitaries and others around the grounds on a golf cart.

Down at the Jam By Sue Decker

Photos by Sue

What do you like about Bluegrass Singing?



Photo by Denny Reid



Kathy

It inspires me and stirs my soul



Terry

The meaning to the songs



Bud

I'd like to hear more gospel singing, it's more together—the harmonies



Jim

Just about everything



Marlene & Helen

Probably the words, the feeling. The harmony means a lot.



Concert News by Carolyn Hotte

October 23rd we will kick off our concert series with two great bands from Calgary, **Restless Lester and the June Bugs**, at Stencil Hall-Taylor College & Seminary 11525-23 Avenue. Doors 7:30PM - Show 8:00PM

Tickets are \$20 for NBCMS members and \$25 for non-members are available at Myhre's Music, Tix on the Square on-line www.tixonthesquare.ca, by phone 780-420-1757 toll free 1-877-888-1757, or at the box office 9930-102 Avenue, at the Wednesday night jams and at the door if not sold out.

Restless Lester

Since 2002 **Restless Lester** has travelled far and wide playing its own version of bluegrass sound throughout western Canada and into the U.S. Pacific Northwest. In 2005 the band's debut CD 'Endless Skies' was released to excellent reviews and received wide airplay on CBC, CKUA and other radio across Canada, the U.S. and in Europe.

From the beginning Restless Lester has been known for high quality musicianship and founding members **Steve Fisher** (guitar) and **Bruce Blair** (fiddle) both have long and distinguished careers on their respective instruments.

Restless Lester's current line-up continues to have an exceptional depth of talent and the added advantage of youth. Joining Bruce and Steve are



Erik Smistad, age 21, on bass and **Mickey Reeves**, age 20, on banjo.

Opening the show & promoting their new CD the 'June Bugs'

The **June Bugs** are four women whose singing voices blend like butter in two, three and four part harmonies. From upbeat gospels and saucy bluegrass to traditional folk and contemplative originals,

their music reflects a shared passion for the pure, heart-piercing magic of acoustic music and the marvel of well-blended vocal harmonies

The June Bugs are: Renay Eng-Fisher (upright bass), Sue Anne Borer (auto harp, percussion), Audrey Guagliano (guitar, mandolin, harmonica), Christie Simmons (guitar, whistles, banjo)

Come out and enjoy an evening with these two talented groups.



Thank you NBCMS by Hannah Goa



Photo by Kirsten Goa

Thank you NBCMS! There is nothing quite like studying poverty to help you to appreciate the privilege of graduate studies. Of course, there's also nothing like graduate studies to help you to appreciate the incredible love, support, guidance, and friendship that surrounds you through the process. In this respect, throughout this process, I have been wealthy beyond imagination and you have all

been a part of that. All y'all are the greatest!

Editor's note: Hannah's response to our June Message:

"Congratulations Hannah Goa on the successful completion of your Masters degree. Hannah is a long time member of NBCMS and has served on the Board as Secretary. She was a popular fiddle instructor at a NBCMS Bluegrass Workshop, has toured with many groups and currently performs with the 'Proper Charlie's.'"

Fiddle Lessons



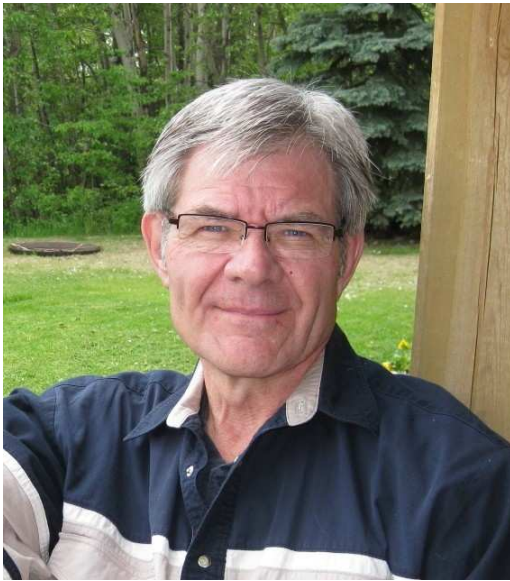
Interested in learning fiddle?

Contact Hannah at

780-439-2104 or

hannah.goa@ualberta.ca

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) by Bryce Ohneck



Q. I frequently read on several internet BG instrument forums and hear from other BG players that one of the best ways to learn how to play bluegrass music is to listen to all kinds of music but in particular, to “LISTEN” to BG music. I thought that I was “LISTENING” to BG music but now I’m really wondering, what the heck am I “LISTENING” for?

A. To listen 24/7 to internet bluegrass music tune in to bluegrasscountry.org, or thebluegrassexpressonline.com. Also, 24/7 bluegrass is available at [SIRIUS] “Bluegrass Junction”. There are other fine broadcasts but these are my personal favs. But the very BEST “LISTENING” opportunities are at “LIVE” music performances where you will experience the full range of sound dynamics and visuals, and you will “LIVE” the music while immersed in the bluegrass culture. But specific to your question, you will want to become skilled at learning chord recognition by listening for chord changes and chord progressions (the I –IV-V stuff). You will gradually learn to hear in your brain when, where, and what chord changes are coming and likely where the song is going. This will be a huge help in learning to jam because in your mind you will begin to set up your fingering in advance of the next chord. “LISTENING” to BG music will also help your brain to develop a “sound memory” that in general will help in learning songs whether “by ear” or by “tab”.

And while you are doing all of this you may want to pick out say, the mandolin player or the guitar player, and watch and listen to that player - while in your ear’s periphery you are also listening for the rest of the band. This will help you

learn how each specific instrument contributes their part to make the “Bluegrass Sound”. Coincidentally, it will greatly help you learn the concept and importance of “backup”, and some of the possible licks that end a song. And high on the list of what you will be listening for you will - say if you are learning the banjo - closely watch and listen and reinforce in your mind what the standards are for clean and crisp picking. And by the way, if all of this isn’t enough to listen and watch for, keep your ear attuned to the sounds of “nothing”. That is to say, how a player, or a band (or even a song) uses an interesting combination of timing delays, dotted half notes (etc.), rests, and “drive” to create a signature song, technique, or “sound” for which the band or player is known.

Q. I presently own 3 guitars but I am also doing a few deals on a 1937 Martin D-18 (reissue), and a few others. Do you think I am “collecting” them or “hoarding” them – and the second part of my question is, when she finds out how many I have how do I give her a satisfactory explanation?

A. First, there is no known cure for GAS (guitar acquisition syndrome) - but let’s take the high road with where you are going with this. I’d say that you are engaged in commendable behavior to selectively acquire guitars for investment purposes. Besides that, a general rule of thumb is that a serious bluegrasser can never have too many instruments. The second part of your question is how you could explain your guitar collection to your wife when she finds them. Among these four suggestions you might find something that works - you could say:

“.....I made them” , or

“ ...although they have a similar appearance they are tuned differently for the type of music I play”, or

“ ...oh THOSE?.....I’m just storing them for a friend from Out East”, or as a final try you could say to her

“.....I had my heart set on collecting Hummels but do you know how much THEY cost?”

But, if those suggestions fail then the thing to do is to avoid putting yourself in such an indefensible position again by attempting to explain your behavior. First, start buying used, empty \$50 guitar cases and scatter them around the garage where she would feel less inclined to rearrange them – much less be able to count them. Sooner or later she’ll mention the extra guitar cases stored here and there in the garage and then when she finally asks about them you can say “honey, ... there is money to be made by selling good, second-hand guitar cases”. Then when it is safe you can begin filling the guitar cases as you come across wise investment opportunities.

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) cont'd by Bryce Ohneck

Q. I've noticed over the recent last few years that I don't hear speech and bluegrass music as well as I used to. Listening and playing bluegrass music have always been a big part of my life so this problem that I believe I have even affects my desire and ability to attend events such as NBCMS concerts and the Fall Workshop. I will likely get hearing aids soon but my question is - are there hearing aids that are specially manufactured for musicians?

A. The short answer to your question is yes – there are “musicians’ hearing aids”, and they are a necessity for professional musicians living with a hearing impairment. You have asked a very good question and coincidentally you have asked the right person – I am not a hearing aid expert or technician but I can give you an expanded answer from my perspective as a hearing aid user/wearer who was curious enough to do a bit of research on the physics of sound and music, and generally about hearing aid capabilities. The subject of hearing aids is complex, broad, sometimes a sensitive issue, but for those who play a [stringed] bluegrass instrument, or who enjoy listening to live music, or anyone whose is closely related to such a person – including band-mates, may be interested enough to raise additional questions. To write any further about hearing aids for musicians a bit of background information is necessary; first, the purpose of hearing aids is NOT merely to amplify incoming sound signals in order for the wearer to hear *better* by sending *louder* sounds to the ear drum, but rather, good hearing aids permit adjustment of internal programming to “process” incoming sound signals to, as fully as possible, compensate within the specific parameters of the wearer’s hearing loss.

Nearly all adult and pediatric consumer-type hearing aids are digitally-based precision hearing instruments that are engineered, manufactured, and programmed to enable the wearer to facilitate the speaking and hearing of a language, and to a lesser extent to hear the peripheral sounds within the wearer’s physical environment. To achieve that primary requirement the internal “computer” (within a hearing aid (or synchronized pair of hearing aids) *processes* and *alters* incoming speech sounds [sound waves] within a known frequency envelope of speech frequencies. Another way of saying it is that a great deal of sound “filtering” takes place within the hearing aid, so right at the outset, hearing aids (in general) sacrifice “real sounds” – but from “real sounds” hearing aids manufacture “artificial sounds”. (...hmm...confusing huh?...but stop to consider, it would be possible that from the first moment on a new hearing aid wearer may hear artificial sounds forever!) Further sound *filtering/processing/altering* of typical hearing aids are “shut down” commands - or in some way reacting (or not reacting) to instantaneous, and loud sounds (example: banjo string picking), and to not responding to hundreds if not thousands of sound frequencies falling outside of the speech envelope. Additionally, sound signal alterations would include “real time” time delays - first for the picker’s string attack, then

for the signal to be received by the hearing aid microphone(s), then “sampled” – “analyzed” – (and) “altered” (by the circuitry), then transmitted to the ear drum, then perceived by the brain. So, in addition to “altered” sound, the sound may be delayed, and/or out-of-phase by several milliseconds.

To boggle our minds even further [...*gee, will he ever stop ? ...*], many “*speech*” based hearing aids are manufactured with a “*dedicated music channel*”, or with music channel capabilities that are advertised as capable of transmitting “LIVE” music. These claims can be very misleading and inaccurate but as yet there are no industry-wide specifications as to what constitutes a “real-time/live music” channel, thus, “LIVE” music depends largely upon how the manufacturer defines “music channel”. Key words to be aware of when searching for “musicians’ hearing aids” include, “*open-fit*”, “*open-channel*”, “*(number) of channels*”, and ... “*battery life*”. So overall, hearing aids designed for speech are unable to transmit the “real” sounds and sound dynamics including the “real time” speed, timbre and tone, room acoustics, and decibel levels of “LIVE” music. On the flip-flop then, these inherent shortcomings are the bases for the offerings by some companies of dedicated “*musicians’ hearing aids*” – they can accommodate individual impairment parameters but are designed for “*real time music*” that includes all of the music dynamics and nuances that makes music music. But oddly enough, “*musicians’ hearing aids*” may be entirely suitable for normal, every-day wearing by many people.

Well, I certainly failed to keep my answer brief but I did mention earlier that it was complex. Many of us “*boomer*” or “*pre-boomer*” bluegrass players and listeners, may need to consider “*musicians’ hearing aids*” when the need arises. Finding the right hearing aids for your MUSIC PLAYING and LISTENING can be exhaustive – and more frustratingly so when encountering the dispensers and technicians who fail to have the knowledge, experience, and desire to provide the right hearing aid that you need – not just what hearing aid is the most convenient and lucrative for them to sell. But in the end, with your new “instruments” plugged into your ears, you will no doubt smile in amazement how much better your mistakes are sounding.



The Carter Family Fold & Photos By Evelyn Hayes and Terry Ruddy



Photo by Linda Saboe

When one is about to visit a new place, he or she forms a picture in their mind on what they expect. Often you are disappointed when you arrive, finding it is not quite what you expected. Not so at the Carter Family Fold in Hiltons, Virginia.

The Carter Family Fold is located on "The Crooked Road" about 20 miles from Kingsport, Tennessee. The Carter Family Memorial Music Centre, a non-profit organization, serves fans and supporters of old time country and folk music through the presentation of weekly performances on this site. It also honours the memory of the first family of country music, the legendary Carter Family (*A.P. Carter, Sara Carter and Maybelle Carter*). This was their 36th annual week-end. What an amazing rural settlement.

When we arrived and were claiming our seats for the concert, we noticed many people of all ages, from small children to senior citizens and everything in between, wearing clickers on their shoes. We were baffled!

The evening started with Lorrie Carter Bennett a granddaughter of Mother Maybelle, who was the emcee. She introduced several Carter family members who sang several songs that the Carter Family has sung over the years.



Then the Stoneman family of Hee-Haw fame was introduced. The Stoneman family, recorded with the Carter Family in the 1920's at

Bristol, Tennessee. Patsy and Roni are the only ones left. Patsy who is 85 years played the auto-harp while Roni who is in her late 70's played the mandolin. They were excellent, their voices still strong and they are still as humorous and exciting to watch now as they were in the 1960's.

Then it was band time, before the first note was completed, the dance floor was filled with people and they started to dance. They do a dance called flat footing, which is similar to clogging. This flat footing continued throughout the balance of the performances. This made the evening!

The first band was "White Water Bluegrass Band", followed by "White Top Mountain Band" and finally the "Dollard Brothers".

Saturday night followed the same format with Lorrie Carter Bennett.

That night, the first band was "Big Country Bluegrass", followed by "Grayson Highland Band" with the final act being "Ralph Stanley



and the Clinch Mountain Boys. There were also performances by the Smoky Mountain Cloggers on both evenings. Again, throughout the evening the people continued to dance even through the performance by Ralph Stanley.

All the bands are quite up-beat with very few slow songs. Each band highlights the banjo and fiddler. All were in the bluegrass tradition, but the locals refer to it as mountain music! We thought we had died and gone to heaven with the music and dancing.

If ever you get a chance **GO** you will not be disappointed!

We thought we had died and gone to heaven with the music and dancing...

If ever you get a chance *GO* you will not be disappointed!

Woodbend in August by Ron Mercer

Woodbend Bluegrass band (Les Eberhardt, Terry Lawson, Ron Mercer, Jesse- Jo Charles & Jean Coates) had a busy month in August. We practice all year for the festival season and August was our time to shine.

Lucky enough to get asked to perform at the Blueberry Bluegrass Festival, we played two sets of music to great crowds and hot weather. Jessi and Ron got their pictures on CTV news and the Stony Plain Reporter. Then it was off to CJSR studios for a live interview on the Prairie Pickin' show on Thursday evening. Our hosts, Sunny Jim, Cousin Darcy and

Hollywood Logan really made us feel welcome. Playing live on radio was a first for all of



us and I highly recommend everyone to try it sometime. I was told I have the "perfect face" for radio but I still dressed up a bit, just in case that wasn't enough. Jean's bass peg slipped and we had a

crashing ending on our Gospel number. Good times!!

We finished off the month with our CD release party held at the B Street Bar. The place was packed and we played 2 sets of music. Getting asked to sign our CD (Hank's Old Mandolin) sure makes a person feel humble but in a good way. Les always makes his signature so big that the rest of us only have room for an X.

Our last gig for the 2010 year is a house party in September and reservations are going fast. Thank you bluegrass fans for your support.

Woodbend Bluegrass Band had a busy August, including the release of a new CD and thanks Bluegrass Fans for their support

Bissell Centre Raffle by Hannah Goa



Bissell Centre is holding a musical instrument raffle with the proceeds being earmarked for their Recreation and Wellness program.

Tickets are \$5 each or 5 for \$20 and are available from Hannah Goa 780-439-2104 or hannah.goa@ualberta.ca).

You may also contact Hannah if you are able to sell tickets!

First Prize is a matching pair of hand made F5 style mandolin and guitar with extensive ornate inlays. Value \$2,500

Second Prize is a set of handmade guitar and mandolin with matching inlays. Value \$1500

Third Prize is an Acoustic guitar and handmade violin with floral inlay. Value \$750.



Bissell Centre 2010 Musical Instrument Raffle Lic # 294741

Draw Date: November 30th 2010 At Bissell Centre

Tickets: One for \$5 or 5 for \$20 Total number of tickets 2250

First Prize Value \$ 2,500 Matching F5 Guitar & Mandolin Butterfly Inlays



Second Prize Value \$ 1,500 Acoustic Guitar & Mandolin Butterfly Inlays



Third Prize Value \$ 750 Acoustic Electric Guitar & Floral Inlay Violin



Bissell Centre 10527 - 96 Street Edmonton AB T5H 2H6 (780) 423-2285



Preserving, Promoting & Presenting Bluegrass Music

Some NBCMS Volunteers at the Blueberry Table

Roy Thompson, Wendy Stadnick, Arlene Eberhardt, Carolyn Hotte, Terry Ruddy, Evelyn Hayes, Jeanette Miner & Don Bourassa



Photo by Linda Saboe

Doreen Bourassa

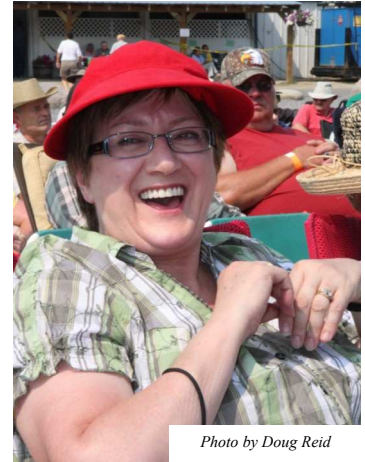


Photo by Doug Reid

A Page in Time

Jeff Reiter, Dodie & Rob Baker & Michelle Guidera



Carolyn Hotte, Linda Saboe & Kathy Reid

Photo by Doug Reid



Photo by Doug Reid

Evelyn Hayes & Terry Ruddy



Photo by Linda Saboe

Doug Reid & Rhonda Vincent



Photo by Kathy Reid



Preserving, Promoting & Presenting Bluegrass Music

Woodbend

Ron Mercer, Jessi Jo Charles, Les Eberhardt, Jean Coates & Terry Lawson



Photo by Doug Reid

Logan Mills & Trevor Cameron



Photo by Linda Saboe

The Bix Mix Boys

Logan Sarchfield, Jim Storey, Darcy Whiteside & Terry Nadaski



Photo by Doug Reid

Doug Reid



Photo by Linda Saboe

Hayden Mills

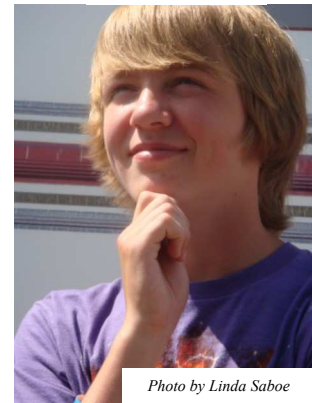


Photo by Linda Saboe



Musical Moms & Daughters at BC Bluegrass Workshop
Lauren Spear, Diane Spear, Fiona McTaggart, Susanne Schloegl,
Erin Kushniruk & Sheila Hallett

Photo by Sheila Hallett

Guy Bouchard & Al Donald



Photo by Linda Saboe



Bluegrass Brings People Together 21st Annual B.C. Bluegrass Workshop by Sheila Hallett



Photo by Doug Reid

Fresh from the beautiful Shuswap Lakeside and a week of studying the art of bluegrass, you can't help feeling grateful that such an opportunity to learn exists relatively close to home. This was my seventh trip to bluegrass camp and in some ways, it's like the spirit of it never leaves your heart. I talked

to Camp Director Jay Buckwold about 21 years of bringing people together in the name of bluegrass and got a glimpse of the history that grounds the camp (22 years if Camp Operations Manager Doug VanDine is right).

In late '80's, after attending Jim and Linda Jesson's Kamloops Bluegrass Festival, a group of Vancouver Bluegrass fans along with Jay camped out on the north shore of Shuswap Lake and jammed every day prior to the start of Glenn Hobbs and Al Christoferson's Shuswap Lake Bluegrass Festival.

Someone suggested to Jay that there was a perfect lodge and campground nearby that would be a great site for having a workshop between the two festivals, thereby putting some of the musicians to work while they were in the area. Jay put together a survey the following year and determined that there was interest in attending a workshop between the festivals. The response was sufficient for Jay to start organizing the first BCBW in 1990. Sixty-eight staff and students attended the workshop's first year at the Anglemont Estates Lodge and employed the "Wild and Blue" Band featuring David Harvey from Nashville and "New Wine" with Ron Block, Rob Ickes, Eric Uglum and Sandra Block. Jay remembers the first camp vividly because his partner Ada Cheung cooked the Chinese food for the group - it was a challenging undertaking.

Word spread through the bluegrass world and registrations increased as years went by and some big name musicians taught at the camp

including Tony Trishka, Steve Kaufman, Bill Keith, Dan Crary and Sally Van Meter, just to name a few.

"We weren't the first bluegrass camp, but pretty close, and many have started since, patterning themselves on our model," said Jay. Early organizers of the BCBW included Program Director, Michael Brooks and "Mayor of Tent City", Carrol Oldenburg.

The camp was held in Anglemont for seven years before outgrowing the site with high enrolments. A guitar-playing Anglican priest from

Kamloops suggested to Jay that Sorrento Centre would be an ideal place for the workshop and contact was made. It was perfect timing for the Anglican Church Retreat & Conference Centre to consider taking on a one week bluegrass camp and in August of 1997 BCBW held its workshop at Sorrento Centre. The camp continued to grow and Doug VanDine remembers that in order to be guaranteed a spot during the one week program; people had to call in the day registrations opened as many classes would sell out in one day. In 2000 they

expanded the camp to two weeks so that more students could be accommodated. Sorrento Centre seized this opportunity to host a one-day Bluegrass festival held on the Saturday between the two workshops and originally designed as a fundraiser for the Salmon Arm forest fire victims.

Sorrento Centre has proven to be a perfect home for the workshop - 20 acres including some beach front, hotel-type rooms, cabanas, camp grounds and lots of places for classes, jams and concerts. Last year the Centre received title to a nearby farm and they are now growing organic vegetables to supply the centre's kitchen and to give away some to a local food bank. Christopher Lind, the new director of Sorrento Centre, is happy to support the bluegrass camp and crew.

Jay Buckwold

Photo by Sheila Hallett



**This was my
seventh trip to
bluegrass camp
and in some ways
it's like the spirit
of it never leaves
your heart**

Bluegrass Brings People Together 21st Annual B.C. Bluegrass Workshop (cont'd) by Sheila Hallett

In 2010, BCBW week one had 220 students and staff, with another 215 registered for week two, which is more than last year. There are 27 classes going at the same time every morning and again late in the afternoon. After lunch, there is a good selection of optional drop-in workshops or participants can just spend time at the lake relaxing or napping to get ready for the evening concerts and jamming into the wee small hours. This was also the 10th anniversary of the BC Swing Camp which was initially started by Jay. This camp happens just prior to the two weeks of bluegrass.

Ivan Rosenberg has served as the Bluegrass Program Director for the past four years. More and more old-time music has found its way into the camp and that has brought increased numbers of young musicians and a new exciting energy. Jay says that with the talented support staff that is in place now, he is

able to do a little less each year and the load is more manageable. It is a labour of love, he confesses. He enjoys hearing of bands that have begun because they met at camp. "What we've done may have been partly responsible for making that connection, which gives me great pleasure," said Jay. Of course many new friendships have begun at camp too - some have even become romantic. On Saturday, Aug. 28th camp attendees were invited to witness a marriage in the outdoor chapel of a couple from Red Deer who met at camp in previous years.

Music brings people together and being able to spend one week a year (two if you are really lucky) focusing on learning to play your instrument or sing a little better is a treat. Thanks NBCMS for the opportunity to go back to Sorrento and see old friends and focus on my banjo. With what I've learned, and many hours of practice, I'm definitely pickin' and grinnin'.

Thoughts of music camp...by Jeannine Cloutier

Lumberjack Music Camp 2010 – my very first music camp – was an incredible experience. One I shall forever cherish.

I, having no musical background what-so-ever, but loving the sounds and the way my insides feel at the sound of the fiddle, the banjo or the guitar, I know this is something special. It's toe-tapping, smile making, heart warming. It's simply contagious. If down home bluegrass music is contagious then Ian Porteous is infectious. He has a sincere passion and love for the music. It's obvious that he would like to share this passion with others. I first met Ian at our

school when he performed a concert for our students. I was so taken by his deliverance of the music and songs. You just couldn't help but join in happily. It was then that my own interest began. I asked Ian where I could learn to play the fiddle like him. This is when I first found out about "The Lumberjack Music Camp", a five day camp where you are totally in music – how perfect.

Having no experience in music and being somewhat nervous – downright terrified actually – day one of camp arrived and the rest is history. This music camp has exceeded every expectation I ever

had. I have learned to play the fiddle. I will leave here with a repertoire of songs to play for my family; new friends to communicate with and a new love for music.

"Cabine Soleil" is such a beautiful, peaceful, spirit filled place. It's the perfect location. Ian Porteous

has a way of passing on a love of music to his students. He teaches the songs but the music "pours" out of him. Being immersed for five days really forces a person to learn. It becomes natural. I have learned more in five days than I would ever have in 5 months or more.



I left camp excited about what I'd done and grateful for the learning opportunity. I truly believe that anyone can come to camp and go away with something. I'm excited that "The Lumberjack Music Camp" will be around again next year. I expect a growth in numbers over the years. Those who come will not be disappointed. Music does put a smile in your heart.

This camp made music possible for someone like me – there are more like me out there that are ready for a music camps like this one.

Down home
bluegrass music is
contagious...I left
the camp with a
repertoire of
songs, new friends
and a new love for
music...

Mandolin Messins' by Rob Baker



F style mandolin with an oval or A style hole

Being a Mandolin picker of some sorts, I was truly honored when asked by the Newsletter Committee to write an article on Mandolins in Bluegrass. Bearing that in mind, please don't think I'm biased when I say: "IF IT DON'T GOT A MANDOLIN ... THEN IT 'AINT BLUEGRASS"!!! "nuff said"!



Photo by Doug Reid

Actually if one turns back the pages of time they would find a fair amount of mandolin playing Country & Old time music. Now this music was actually recorded in the late 1920's & '30's in the far southern States. With this new popularity in the Mandolin, Societies & Orchestras were formed. The Mandolin was an instrument that was affordable and easily obtained. Even though the earlier sounds of Mandolin were there in the Old time music, it wasn't Bluegrass.

the rhythm & "Chop Chording" which is so prevalent in Bluegrass music was actually developed by a young Bill Monroe.

The smooth duet singing with guitar & Mandolin accompaniment started in the mid & late '30's. The mandolins role was about to drastically change in Country music of the time. The new line up of music consisted of Gospel Songs, Love songs & songs which had been sung for generations & just handed down. The mandolin became a very prominent voice in the early Country Music of the Rural South. Mandolins now "kicked off" songs, took breaks, put in fills & runs, and a lot of tremolo.

Now the rhythm & "Chop Chording" which is so prevalent in Bluegrass music was actually developed by a young Bill Monroe. Bill was playing in a very successful Brother's duet with Charlie (vocals & guitar). They were the rage across the South. But like a lot of bands (even today) they parted paths and went their own ways. Charlie went on to form "Charlie Monroe & the Country Pardners" & Bill went on to form "Bill Monroe & his Bluegrass Boys".



A Style on Left, F Style on Right Both have F style holes

Photo by Rib Baker

Ironically, one of the first inceptions of the Bluegrass Boys had a woman in it. Sally Ann Forester, wife of Fiddler Howdy Forester. Oh yeah, Sally played accordion. Listen to the recordings from this time. Bill was developing a style on the Mandolin. Some blistering fast licks & an incredible instrumental recorded February 13, 1945 called Bluegrass Special.

One could just hear the "Blues" when Bill played, and with his Lonesome lyrics & vocals a new "genre" of music had started with the Mandolin as a lead and a dominant rhythm instrument.

The Bluegrass Mandolin's rhythm task is as important to a band as is every other instrument, but the Mandolin is the snare drum of a Bluegrass band and is to play the offbeat from a Bass & Guitar. Thus the "Chop".

Bill played a 1923 July 09 Gibson Master Model #73987 F5 Mandolin. It was signed by acoustical engineer Lloyd A. Loar, who was a key player in developing the new F5 Mandolins between 1922 & '24, amongst other instruments in the Mandolin family. Now these Loar's sell for between \$185,000 - \$235,000 US today, depending on demand, condition and etc. That is why you don't see too many "vintage instruments" at public jams.

The shape and carving of a F5 Mandolin with its scroll & 2 points is an awesome feeling of power. The 2 "f" holes just popping out chop chords. Many great F5 Mandolin copies are now flooding the market ... Eastman, Kentucky, Washburn, Loar and many more, while the private Luthier's are gaining in numbers and knowledge and skills to do competent F5 copies, right down to the original Loar mandolins measurements and varnish recipes. A few of today's well respected F5 builder's are Gilchrist, Heiden, Mac Rostie, Ellis and Collings.

Lloyd Loar also developed an A model Mandolin which is fast becoming a Bluegrass Icon. Sure an A5 model may not be as fancy as an F5 style, but with sound chambers of equal size and "f" holes, you've got the Bluegrass chop and the screaming high notes and the good old bottom end of any F mando (so say some). The bottom of the line, is it worth \$4,000 for a scroll & 2 points?

If you still don't know the difference between F and A style Mandolins check out the attached photos, or go to your local music dealer.

One word of advice, if someone tries to sell a Mandolin with an oval or round sound hole to you, remember, they may sound pretty and would be great for Celtic music, but they just might not cut through in a Bluegrass jam. Remember, you want a Mandolin that will tame a 5 string.



From The Editorial Team



Photo by Doug Reid

Back Row Left to Right: Bryce Ohneck, Sheila Hallett, Ron Pidskalny, Linda Saboe, Rob Baker & Doug Reid
 Front Row Left to Right: Carolyn Hotte, Kayla Hotte & Sue Decker

Once again we have worked hard and hope you will enjoy reading this edition of the Bluegrass Bulletin. Special thanks to Ian Porteous, Mark Thibeault, Hannah Goa, Jeannine Cloutier, Evelyn Hayes, Terry Ruddy and Iris Oleskey for their submissions and photos. We hope you enjoy their stories and will be inspired to submit something for the December issue. Thanks also to all who have expressed an interest in the Bulletin and for your comments & suggestions. NBCMS is volunteer based and to that end it might be nice to feature a volunteer in each edition of the Bulletin. This fall edition features Jeanette Erikson and we invite you to submit a brief article about a volunteer you see at our events.

Jeanette Erickson an NBCMS Volunteer by Linda Saboe

Jeanette has been busy manning the front desk of the Wednesday night jam while Evelyn Hayes & Terry Ruddy were touring the Deep South. I thought our members might like to know a bit more about some of our volunteers and here is what I learned.

Three years ago Jeanette came to the weekly jam with her friend and long time member Dianne Ockenden. Listening to Old Time and Country music have always played a part in Jeanette's life and since joining the club she is working hard at rhythm guitar and has enrolled in vocal lessons. Attending NBCMS events, practicing guitar and writing songs brings her great joy. She attended last year's NBCMS Bluegrass workshop and winter jam camp saying: "It was wonderful to be surrounded by music and camaraderie".

Jeanette enjoys the opportunity of helping out as much as she can with the many tasks our club has.



Photo by Linda Saboe

**Write something about a NBCMS Volunteer
 You see at work & appreciate**

Looking for a Jam in Calgary contact the Foothills Bluegrass Music Society



Monday Night Jams (MNJs)

King's Tower Apartments - 807 6 St. SE

(Please use west door) 7:00 - 10:00 pm

Focus: Traditional bluegrass, jazzgrass, swing . . . you name it! Beginners and all instruments are welcome. Note: Knock on the west door to get in. If we don't hear you, come to the east side and knock on the southeast windows that are lit up!

Thursday Night Jams (TNJs)

Irish Cultural Centre - 6452 35 Ave NW

7:00 - 10:00 pm

Focus: Improve your skills and increase your confidence playing in a group setting. Old standards are usually played, as well as new and original songs in a friendly and encouraging setting.

Last Saturday of the Month Jams (LSMs)

Irish Cultural Centre - 6452 35 Ave NW

Jamming until midnight will follow most concerts/events

Focus: Bring your acoustic instruments (guitar, fiddle, mandolin, bass, banjo, autoharp, dobro) to concerts, as most concerts are followed by jamming. Besides traditional bluegrass and newgrass music, other genres such as swing, country, fiddle tunes, and even some original songs my fellow club members may be played.

www.foothillsbluegrass.com

The Waskasoo Bluegrass Circle Music Society Jam Schedule



RED DEER

The 1st Tuesday of every month at the Golden Circle.

4620 - 47 Ave.

7:00 pm - 10:00 pm

For information, call Scott at 403-314-5522.

Cost: \$2.00

Dates: Nov 2, Dec 1, Jan 5, Feb 2, Mar 2, Apr 6, May 3, Jun 1, Jul 6, Aug 3

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE

The 2nd Thursday of every month at Ecole Rocky Elementary School.

4703 - 50 Ave.

7:00 pm - 10:00 pm

For information, call Jenny at 403-845-2818.

Dates: Sep 10, Oct 8, Nov 19, Dec 17, Jan 22, Feb 11, Mar 11, Apr 8, May 13, Jun 10

INNISFAIL

The 3rd Tuesday of every month at the Nazarene Church.

4904 - 48 St.

7:00 pm - 10:00 pm

For information, call Isabel at 403-227-3512.

Cost: \$2.00

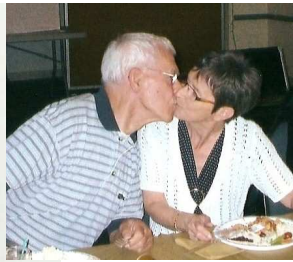
Dates: Nov 19, Dec 17, Jan 21, Feb 18, Mar 18, Apr 15, May 21, Jun 17, Jul 15, Aug 19

www.waskasobluegrass.com

Congratulations Willy & Denise Arsenault on Celebrating 50 Married Years Photos by Iris Olekshy



Willy & Denise



Willy, Carolyn & Ken Hotte, Troy Gates



John Appleton, Rose Seuter, Dave Johnson, Erv Holtz, Carolyn Hotte & Linda Saboe



Stella AKA Sheila Hallett



Music Merit Awards (MMA) by Carolyn Hotte Photos by Doug Reid

Congratulations to Sheila Hallett and Arlene Eberhart on receiving a MMA for 2010. The MMA was set up in 2007 to allow recipients to further their musicality or knowledge through the study of Bluegrass. It is a way for NBCMS to recognize and give

\$2,000 to the NBCMS MMA fund from the Casino account. The awards occur annually and the application deadline is June 15.

If you would like more information on the MMA visit our website look under Member Information or get a hard copy at the front desk of the weekly jam.

back by providing a monetary award to individuals demonstrating: outstanding achievement, ability, potential and/or contributions to the preservation, promotion and/or presentation of Bluegrass Music.

Sheila and Arlene have demonstrated all of these qualities many times over. Sheila has accumulated many hours writing for the newsletter, emceeing and helping out at concerts to name a few. Arlene's contribution to the club is huge she keeps our finances in check, deals with all of the paper work concerning our various accounts, the government and bands. Both Sheila and Arlene are great representatives of the NBCMS everywhere they go and both of these ladies are well deserving of the MMA. Congratulations! Well done! Sheila has used her MMA to attend BCBW in Sorrento and Arlene is using hers to travel to the IBMA and promote the NBCMS.

Each fiscal year the NBCMS Executive allocates The Bluegrass Bulletin September 2010

Sheila



Arlene



Sheila and Arlene demonstrate outstanding achievement, ability, potential and/or contributions to the preservation, promotion and/or presentation of Bluegrass Music





Building From Here by Mark Thibeault Photos by Mark Thibeault

When I tell people we build guitars a 14 hour drive north from Vancouver BC it is often met with a dropped jaw kind of look and followed with a "Wow" then a "Why?" It is normally quite easy to explain why; you need only see this area once to love it. 14 hours from Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Whitehorse we like to say that Rayco Resophonics in Smithers is conveniently located in the centre of it all. Leaving Vancouver into the 13th hour of driving north you will crest Hungry Hill. At the top of this 16 kilometre hill is where farmers and ranchers years ago would stop to feed the horses after making the long trek up, hence the name Hungry Hill. From the crest of this hill looking north you can see an incredibly beautiful valley rolled out below. This is the Bulkley Valley and it is home for many small communities and towns including Smithers.

Smithers and the surrounding areas' economy is built in part upon wood mills, mining and exploration and eco tourism. Fly fishing and guided hunting in pristine wilderness attracts people from all over the world. Major political figures, golf pros and rock gods have all made their way here to take it in. With this diverse population of 5000 Smithers has a vibrant arts community. Home of Alexis Puentes who comes from Cuba and has won Canada's most prestigious Juno Award for best World Music recording, Mark Perry whose songs speak largely and affectionately about northern Canada, the Valley Youth Fiddlers, a group of 60 plus fiddle students holds the annual Northwest FiddleFest and brings some of Canada's top fiddlers to instruct and take part in creative weeklong workshops, and 5 luthiers including myself and Jason where we founded Rayco Resophonics. Smithers has 2 Summer guitar camps put on by the Bulkley Valley Folk Music Society. The youth guitar camp and adult guitar camp are held in August at a beautiful rustic retreat with cabins and camping in rolling fields and a mountain backdrop. There are 2 music festivals both held at the local exhibition grounds; Midsummer Music Fest and the Fall Fair complete with prizes for the largest pumpkin, horse pulls, pie

eating contests and logger competitions. Smithers is relatively young and still has a pioneering spirit. The oldest building in town, a church erected in 1904 has recently been revived. With the tree removed that had grown through the floor then the roof it has been completely renovated and is now a space for art exhibits, craft fairs and concerts. The head carpenter from the project gave us a piece of Douglas fir that was the step running along the entire length of the altar. The local history of this piece of wood; the weddings, wakes, celebrations and ceremonies that have taken place on that step over the past 100 years make it real inspiring to incorporate that piece of wood into a guitar.



The area is dotted with many similar buildings and community halls often transformed to host evenings of music and dances. Usually kept warm by the only heat source a large wood stove. At the end of the evening all take part in stacking the chairs and sweeping the floor leaving it ready for the next event. The Driftwood Hall 2 kms down the road from our home has a sign above the door next to the wood stove that reads 170 maximum capacity where someone creatively turned the 1 into a 2. Maximum capacity is now 270. Outside is a fire pit, an ice rink in the winter lit by strings of Christmas lights draped between poles and a basketball court. An annual event Valentino's held every February brings local artists, musicians and writers together for 2 special evenings of a musical production centred around a chosen theme then a dance afterwards. The band reverberates off the fir flooring and walls. My wife Jenny and I are making our home 2 kms past this hall in Driftwood Canyon on one of the last parcels on Driftwood road close to the foot of the Babine Mountain range where her family still lives.



Our first meal with my wife's family was dominated with laughter, hunting and fishing stories and spirited discussion on which is more lethal a bear, cougar or moose attack. As I am writing I have to take a break to investigate what it is that my dogs are barking at. Their barks echo off the canyon

Building From Here by Mark Thibeault (Cont'd)

walls and though I can't see it I am sure it is one of the three moose that live on our property that has gotten their attention. The dogs come running back.

Jenny grew up here and her songs Mountain Girl and Crooked Log Cabin speak directly of the canyon's beauty and how her family came to live here in the early 70's when they moved into a crooked log cabin that became a warm home. Our first home here was a 10'x14' cabin on the same 80 acres. We had sold almost everything we owned and could part with in Vancouver and had little to move into the cabin. Walking through the heavy, rusty hinged wooden door immediately to the left was a small counter which had to be cleaned of mouse droppings and seeds prior to moving in. Two steps straight forward is the propane stove and next to it the propane fridge. 2 steps to the right is the 80 year old bell shaped cast iron wood stove. With the seal gone and a few cracks in the cast iron body the stove quickly circulated air and produced enough heat to more than warm the small space. Before going to sleep in the loft bedroom which had a ceiling of only 4 feet and accessed by stairs made of roughly hewn old timbers suspended by a pulley system, the fire would be stoked. Quite comfortable but getting hotter. 4 o'clock in the morning we would wake up shivering with only a few coals left in the stove. Last spring Jenny lay outside in a hammock and watched a bear and her 2 cubs forage on the hillside above where we are set to build our log home. Here we plan to host art, music and guitar building retreats.

The Rayco shop where Jason and I build guitars is a short distance from here. The 12 kilometers drive out of the canyon



en route to the shop takes you down a rolling, winding road along old running wooden fences, past 2 community halls, old barns and pastures with panoramic mountain views. Almost daily I see a moose, deer, coyote, fox or bald eagle on my drive.

Our 2000 square foot woodshop is amongst 10 houses and as many outbuildings on this 80 acre parcel. Established in 1938 the property was a government run farm used to grow experimental crops. The houses on the property were built to house staff. The experimental farm changed functions and became the Northern Training Centre then a rehabilitation centre where The Residential Attendance Program or RAP centre was developed to help troubled youth learn trades. The many outbuildings housed an automotive shop, a welding shop and the 2000 square foot woodshop we are now in.

We were first introduced to the wood shop 3 years prior to moving in. It sat vacant complete with dust extraction system, spray booth, several bandsaws and a stroke sander. I thought "this is a guitar shop waiting to be plugged in". However, the next 3 years were spent building guitars in a 10' X 12' spare

bedroom in our house on Columbia Drive. Jason had just moved up from Vancouver and was living in the same log cabin that gave Jenny and I our start in the valley. Every square inch of space in the Columbia Drive bedroom was utilized as orders for our guitars increased. Another spare bedroom became my office and the storage space under the stairs was called the shipping department because this is where we stored guitar boxes. We were looking into the possibility of purchasing an abandoned church to set up shop when we gave the woodshop at the "old experimental farm" a second look. It was still vacant. We moved in and started building immediately. Jason, his wife Tatianna and daughter Claire now live next to the shop.



A mouse became quite comfortable with Jason and I working in his space and would run past less hurriedly as he became accustomed to us. I began to leave him offerings of expired peanut butter on crackers. His snacks were soon shared by others. Brian, a talented furniture builder who shares the neighbouring space with us called me over one morning to see the cache of nuts, potato chips and crackers he found when cleaning out his router table. Days earlier I had seen a flash of white fur with a black tipped tail when I went to use the saw in Brian's space. I proceeded to make chirping sounds to call the animal out. It was very curious and for a moment I thought it was tame, maybe somebody's ferret. He moved towards me then away then towards me again. I thought it strange behaviour for a wild animal. After seeing Brian's router table, the nest for our guest, I realized that I was calling a weasel and his advancements towards me were because he was trying to protect his cache in the router table to which I was standing all too close. I have since learned that a weasel is not afraid to fight a porcupine or a bear or a luthier I suspect.

So "Why Smithers?" A vibrant supportive arts community, pristine wilderness and wildlife from moose to mice; being in the centre of it all just seems to make sense.



The Crooked Road By Evelyn Hayes and Terry Ruddy



Photo by Linda Saboe

In the Bristol/Kingsport areas of Tennessee, there is a famous road known as “The Crooked Road”. True to its name, the road goes between the hills of Virginia and Tennessee, is approximately 130 miles long and has 30 or more places where jams are held regularly. Booklets show the locations and the days and times of the jam.

One evening, we visited “Lay’s Hardware and Furniture” store in Coeburn Virginia. Coeburn is a small coal mining town, very neat and tidy with refurbished buildings. Lay’s is located on Main Street a store with no fixtures, you just walk in and grab a seat.

No sooner were we seated than a couple nearby inquired as to whether we had been there before, then asked us where we were from. Upon our advising we were from Canada, the man immediately went over to the side of the playing area and talked to another gentleman who then came directly to us and welcomed us. As it turned out, this gentleman was the organizer of the jam. Before long there were more people coming to say welcome. They gave us a pencil drawing of the jam site and CD’s, of a locally written song about the Crooked Road which was later performed by the writer of the song.

We had several of our NBCMS decals with us to distribute; they requested that Terry take the microphone, show the decals and explain just exactly where we were from in Canada. They then asked him to sing, which he did after determining the song “Play Dixie for Me” was not offensive in that area. He was told not to worry, that everyone in the room had at least one rebel flag under their bed.

When we were leaving, of approximately 60 people in the hall, more than half of them had to shake our hands. These people were very gracious and couldn’t do enough to welcome us.

The jam was much the same as ours, with the exception that they don’t sit in a circle and when you finish your song you ask for the next person on the list. The music was great; there were a lot of gospel songs sang and one group of 2 women and 2 men sang in 4 part harmony.


What a wonderful evening!

Jam at Lays Photo by Evelyn Hayes




The music was great; there were a lot of gospel songs sang ... Terry took the microphone to sing “Play Dixie for Me”

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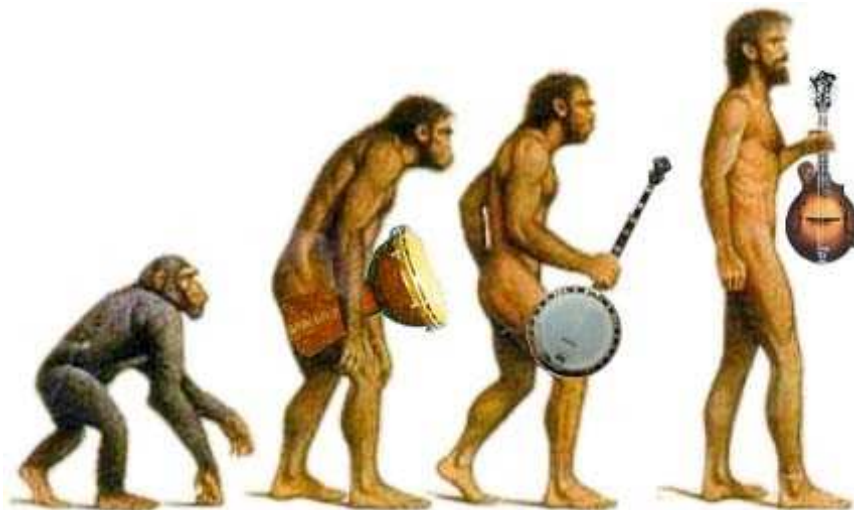


2011 marks the 15th year of the NBCMS. An achievement worth celebrating!

The newsletter team is preparing a special souvenir booklet. Do you have any photos, stories or interesting information to contribute? Please send it by email to Linda Saboe lsaboe@telus.net by October 15. We welcome written articles and photos and will publish material submitted as space allows-written articles may be edited.

June 25, 2011: Do you have a Bluegrass Band or group? NBCMS will host a Showcase of Bluegrass Talent at the Dow Center in Fort Saskatchewan. This is an event you do not want to miss. Plan to attend as a participant or an audience member. Performance Space is limited. For more information contact Carolyn Hotte at hottecarolyn@hotmail.com

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Photo by Doug Reid

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You may contact any board member via email from the contact us page of www.bluegrassnorth.com

Upcoming NBCMS Events

September is International Bluegrass Month and every Wednesday in September we will have a theme Jam.

September 19th 1-4 PM jamming at the Muttart for Alberta Arts Days

October 1st – 3rd : 11th Annual Fall Workshop. Registration deadline is September 15th

October 23rd Restless Lester @Stencil Hall

November 9th -10th NBCMS will host a casino our biggest fundraiser, at the Yellowhead Casino.

December 22nd Christmas Jam

Bluegrass Jam Every Wednesday 6:45 PM at Pleasantview Community Hall 10860-57 Ave
Facilitated Jam the first Wednesday of every Month
Board Meeting second Wednesday of every Month
Open Stage Band Scramble last Wednesday of every month

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