







**Publisher** Michelle Guidera

Visit us online at www.bluegrassnorth.com

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

#### **Editors**

Michelle Guidera Rob Baker Doug Reid Submit items to Michelledentinger @gmail.com

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Bluegrass Music Jam Every Wednesday at 6:45 pm

Pleasantview Community Hall-10860-57 Avenue

Jamming Since '96







# Presidents Message



Ron's Recipe for Bluegrass Jam Since my early retirement, one of my goals has to become a better chef. More healthy and interesting cooking is my new passion. I have tried quite a few batches and I think I have created the best bluegrass jam in Edmonton.

circle of friends and really accomplished musicians. I heard traditional North Carolina old-time music, true bluegrass, Merle Haggard country and Celtic tunes being played in various campsites. Brian is hoping this can become an annual event but would not be offended if someone else spear-headed the picnic next year. Well done, old chap. You R O C K !!

You will require the following ingredients:

- -one good slap of bass
- -a handful of rhythm guitar
- -finely chopped mandolins
- -a roll of banjo
- -slide in some dobro
- -smooth it all out with some fiddle

Here are some words of caution when the jam is cooking:

there can never be too much sweetness in the harmonies

keep stirring the jam but don't add any non-bluegrass ingredients

maintain proper balance, too much of any one ingredient could taint the batch

This jam is best served at least once a week. The final flavor can be delicious if the finest tuned ingredients are used. I highly suggest you-all practice as much as you can before coming out to "jam" night as this will produce consistent results. And remember, a great jam is non-fattening, healthy for you and tastes memorable!

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

I had a chance to attend one day of the 3 day Picker's Picnic held on the weekend of June 22-24 near Niton Junction. Brian Ficht arranged this event and I would guess that some 40 pickers supported the cause and camped out. Just the right number. It was beautiful!! There was a pot-luck on Saturday night and an open stage with excellent sound provided by Don Lecky. I jammed all afternoon with some very proficient players and met some new people. What a great way to spend a Saturday. People came from Jasper, Peace River, Calgary, Edmonton and everywhere in between. What a privilege to be welcomed into this





# Acoustic Music Workshop — October 12, 13 & 14

www.BluegrassNorth.com

The workshop, a not for profit venture, is a large undertaking by our club to provide support for musical development among its members. It is my intention as Workshop Director to provide the best opportunity for our community to get together for a weekend in October where we can share an experience around music.

Planning for the 13<sup>th</sup> annual workshop began months ago. After a lot of consideration and consultation with members of our community, the 2012 Acoustic Music Workshop emerged. I gratefully listened to opinions and ideas presented by people who have and have never attended our workshop. This year's workshop leaders and programs are a reflection of those conversations.

Camp He Ho Ha is a top notch facility and our relationship with the staff makes it a pleasure to be there. The workshop will continue its tradition of offering interesting programs on specific instruments as well as some new ideas. There is a new format for the ever popular Singing/Harmony Workshop. Take 12 Songs Home will appeal to every level of participant. Is it very ambitious? Maybe. Very friendly? Definitely. The songbook is already at the printers. There is the introduction of an Open Stage Saturday afternoon for those who are ready to be in front of an audience. This could this be a good opportunity to have one of the visiting bands provide some feedback. The ever nerve racking Band Scramble set up will be different also; bands will be given 24 hours to rehearse before their presentation on stage Saturday night. Past workshop leaders were canvassed and several interesting ideas were generated which resulted with the ambitious program, Out of The Box. This group of experienced players will undertake to produce a CD by Sunday afternoon. A sound engineer and a space for his recording equipment have been added to the roster. All that's needed is a quiet place on campus where a banjo can't be heard in the background. Selecting workshop leaders who are interested in teaching and have a willingness to participate in the jamming is very important. While specific learning is gained in a workshop setting, another type of learning also takes place at the jam. Both experiences are essential to every musician.

Pick up a brochure or have a look on line and find the program that works for you. Take advantage of this musical event by signing up for the 2012 workshop. *A big thank you to those who provided feedback to my many questions.* 

Anna Somerville





# Chapmans Concert—By Rob Baker, Photos By Doug Reid



### THE WAY I SAW IT - Rob Baker

March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012 was a night that the Royal Alberta Museum had more to show than just exhibits.

By Cracky!!! That was a night that had banjos a-ringin' & mandolins punchin' through. Basses were a-walkin', guitars & fiddles too.

In the wonderful R.A.M. theatre, not one, but two five piece bluegrass bands played their hearts out for Edmonton fans and guests.

The first band up to the plate was none other than a local bunch of guys who were "HUNGRY" to play. The name is CROOKED CREEK. This local band full of members of our club, came out ready to show Edmonton what "Fun" is all about!!! Now the harmonies...well to be honest, sometimes they just downright hurt. But the guys realized this and they'd laugh & joke & sing harder than ever & one knew that this was some group of old boys who aren't into bluegrass for the millions of dollars that is just floating out there.

CC had guitars, fiddle, Dawg house Bass, mandolin and open back banjo for their instruments. Crooked Creek looked fantastic!! They wore black trousers & white shirts with single lace bowties...that is all except the Bass player (who shall remain anonymous) cause when he heard black, he must have heard white, & vice/versa.

I had to laugh when in one nice song every body got a clap for their solos and when it came time for the guitar break, well he broke it alright and even before the solo "wasn't" finished he cried out "Don't Clap, Don't Clap".

Crooked Creek reminded us of what it means to enjoy music. Well done CC.









The mainstay act was yet to come. The Chapman's from Missouri. A 5 piece band with all the instruments and 22 years of being on the road together. This family band could sing like none other and you would swear that a band of angels were singing when they sang the gospel songs. The whole band had "fingers" and they could pick the "tar" out of any instrument. My only concern with The Chapman's was, even though they played & sang like the best of them, they must have left their suitcase with their "concert clothes" at home, cause in my opinion, the crowd dressed better than the band. I'm sorry to say that sure doesn't show much respect on the bands part. IMHO.

I had some Country Music fans come up to me and say how they thought Country Musicians were so talented but now after seeing a bluegrass show they were just knocked out at how EVERYONE was talented!!! He can't wait for the next show and he's bringing friends. Way to go Chapman's. Spreading the Bluegrass Word by song.

Both the Chapman's & Crooked Creek, being acoustic musicians when playing anywhere, are at the mercy of the sound technician.

Now the RAM had a new sound company providing lighting and sound... David Banks Sound Co. David's ear for bluegrass music was very tuned in and the sound he was trying to produce was that of having acoustic bluegrass instruments be heard yet not sound amplified. In my opinion the sound was like listening to a CD. NOT TOO LOUD yet crystal clear so that you could hear the guitar stings ring.

Next time there is a concert, bring a friend. You won't be disappointed.







Thank-you to Carolyn Hotte for creating this awesome poster! Nice to see we are keeping our past President somewhat occupied!





\* SHOW 8 P.M. PRESENTED BY THE NORTHERN

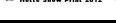
Theatre located in the Park on 1920 Street beside the Selkirk Hotel Lots of FREE parking on the street and beside the Hotel

NBCMS Members \$20 \* Non-Members \$25

Tickets available on-line www.bluegrassnorth.com

Pleasantview Community Hall (10860-57 Ave Wed. nights only) and at the Door (if not sold out)





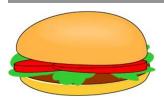
This fabulous art work to the right was done by our very own Rob Baker!

It will soon be printed into stickers for our instrument cases. Well done Rob!









# Calling all members! Let's BBQ at the club!



We are hosting several BBQ's this summer at the Pleasantview Hall.10860 57 Avenue Come for supper and visit.

Mark your calendar: Wednesdays July 25<sup>th</sup>, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, September 26<sup>th</sup>. Dinner 6:30 – 8:30pm Jamming 7:00 - 10:30pm

Keep in touch by dropping by for a burger, salad and beverage.

Tickets are \$5

Bring your instrument.

## YOUR CLUB NEEDS YOU!



Want to help out in a small way at the club? You can do it from home!

We need volunteers to remind members of upcoming events like BBQ's, concerts and special events hosted by the bluegrass Club. A few hours every month is all that is required.

Contact Anna for more information. 780-718-3070

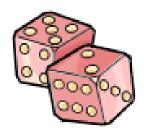
## Thanks!

Greg Yavorsky offered to manage a Workshop Face Book page. He is asking people to share their experiences at the NBCMS Workshop.

If you have a moment please visit Camp He Ho Ha Acoustic Music Workshop on Facebook and leave a comment or photo.



CASINO time again!!
Volunteers Needed!
November 17 & 18, 2012
Call Terry Rudy@ 780-244-4861





Bluegrass Bulletin

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# May's BBQ at Pleasantview Hall- Photos by Doug Reid





The Bluegrass Bulletin Summer July 2012



# \*

### What's That Horrible Noise??

A Semi-technical Explanation of Acoustic Feedback in Sound Systems by Kevin Jacobson - kevin@cavemusic.ca, www.cavemusic.ca

I'm pretty sure everyone reading this article has occasionally heard an annoying squeal or howl coming from a sound system at a concert. Sometimes it is a high piercing note, sometimes it is a loud low note, and often it is somewhere in between, and it sure makes the audience and musicians jump and give the sound person nasty looks. This article will attempt to explain why it happens, and some techniques for preventing it from happening.

#### What?

The noise you hear is usually a very loud squeal at one specific audio frequency or note. None of the instruments are generating that frequency - it's coming from the sound system itself.

#### Why?

To explain why this happens, we need to look at a simplified diagram of a sound system (Fig. 1). First off, there is a microphone that picks up the instrument or vocalist and turns acoustic sound into an electrical signal. Second, there is a mixer that collects the electrical signal and sends it to amplifiers. Finally, the amplifiers boost the signal in order to drive speakers. In a typical sound system there are speakers that face the audience - called front-of-house (FOH) speakers - and there are sometimes speakers facing the musicians so that they can hear themselves - these are called monitors.

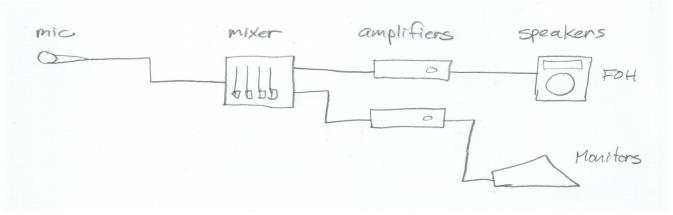
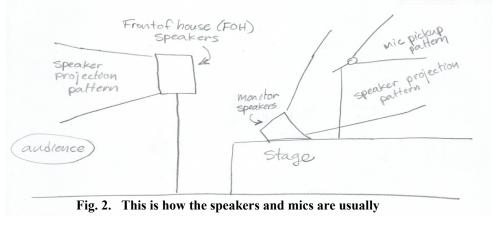


Fig. 1. The main elements of a sound system.

Fig. 2 shows the typical setup of speakers and mics. A microphone will pick up everything it "hears" so if the amplifiers are set loud, then the microphone will not only pick up the sound from the instrument, but also from the speakers, echoes in the room, audience noise and so on. So the mic picks up sound, which comes out of the speakers, which gets picked up by the mic, which comes out of the speakers, which gets picked up by the mic, .... you get the idea. It's sort of like when you stand in between two mirrors and you see multiple copies of yourself going off to infinity. Under certain conditions, the sound system begins to oscillate at a particular note all by itself. To get a little bit technical, this oscillation happens when the gain is greater than one and the relative phases of the "copies" are integer multiples of 360 degrees. This is like having the copies perfectly synchronized and reinforcing each other. With too much round-trip gain, the oscillation takes off and gets right out of control, even with no sound input. And this happens at very specific frequencies determined by the orientation of the mic and speakers.





There are a number of things that affect how bad the problem is: the microphone characteristics (pickup pattern and sensitivity), speaker characteristics (their projection pattern), the frequency response of the whole system, the gain of the sound system, the distance between the mic and speakers and the directions they are pointing. Even the proximity of the musicians and their instruments to the mic has an effect. An oft overlooked, but very important, factor is the nature of the acoustics in the concert venue. Many community halls, cafes and bars have poor acoustics: reflective walls, ceilings and windows, lots of audience or kitchen noise, etc.. Acoustic music suffers particularly badly because the instruments are often very quiet, especially the guitar, so that means the sound person has to crank up the gain in order to make the instrument heard clearly throughout the room.

#### So What Can Be Done?

Well, that depends on who you are. Obviously a large responsibility lies with the sound technician (more on that in a minute - it gets complicated!), but others can help too. If you are an audience member, the only way you can help is by being quiet during a concert. If you are the concert planner, pick a venue that has good acoustics (please, please!), both in the audience area and in the stage area. If you are a music venue owner, improve the acoustics. If you are the guy who built most of Edmonton's community halls, there is a special place in hell for you.

There are a few things that the musician can do. First, loud projection of your voice and instrument can help a lot. That way less gain is needed to make you heard. Second, practice good microphone technique: stay close to the mic, don't shift around much and don't move the mic around. Consistency in your orientation to the mic helps the sound tech a lot, and remember that moving the mic changes everything. This is most important with the bluegrass-style single mic technique. Third, understanding some of what your sound tech is doing will help both of you.

#### What Can a Sound Tech Do?

Blame someone else!! But seriously, sometimes it's a tough job being a sound tech, especially in a terrible sounding room, or with inexperienced musicians. There are, however, a number of things that a tech can do. This is where things get a little technical, so for you tech-heads (for musicians and concert planners: this is good for you to know too), here are some feedback-minimizing ideas.

#### **Good Acoustics**

Did I mention a good sounding room is important? Unfortunately you don't have much control over this aspect once the concert planner has booked the place. But if possible, think about the placement of the stage area and speakers in relation to hard surfaces like cement walls and glass windows. Maybe there are some heavy curtains that can be set up, and consider bringing a nice plush area rug to place on the floor. There is no magic cure if the room is bad, but every little bit helps. In some halls, the "official" stage area is quite boxy and echoey, so some techs actually set up the stage on the floor in front or somewhere else in the room. Odd isn't it?

#### **Good Equipment**

Good sounding equipment is pretty important. Every piece of the system: microphones, DI boxes, cabling, mixing board, outboard processing gear, amplifiers, speakers, have an effect on the clarity of the sound. If the sound is muddy, probably you will have to turn things up a bit more so that musicians and audience can hear. And more gain means feedback is much more likely to happen. And then you have a loud, muddy, squealy sound system. Yuck. Also, good quality gear may give you some better tools to work with.

#### **Speaker Setup**

It's best to have a lot of distance between the speakers and the microphones. Of course you will be constrained by the layout of the stage and room, but try to make sure that the FOH speakers are as far forward of the front line of mics as possible, and far out to the sides. Balance this against proper coverage of the audience area. Point the speakers forward to the audience and the microphones back towards the musicians. I guess that's obvious, but the point is to minimize the overlap of the microphone pickup pattern and the speakers' projection patterns. Setting up the monitor speakers is trickier because you need to point them at the musicians, which means they are pointing at the mics (even though they are pointing at the backs of the mics, the mics will still pick up some sound). However, you can try keeping them further from the mics, changing the angle and so on. If the back wall is hard cement, drywall or windows, the sound might bounce off that wall and into the mics, so angling the monitors and/or mics may help.

#### **Microphone Issues**

If you're using the single mic technique commonly used at bluegrass concerts, the mic has a fairly wide pickup pattern (cardioid mics are usually used, not omnis) so that the whole band can be picked up.

That can be a bit of problem: musicians are further from the mic and therefore you need more gain to make them loud enough. Fortunately you don't usually use monitor speakers, but often feedback occurs between that mic and the FOH speakers in smaller spaces. Keeping the FOH speakers far forward, or the single mic further back, is critical. Also, the quality of the acoustics of the stage area is much more of a factor with the single mic setup. Using side mics (sometimes called satellite mics or spot mics) can help for quiet instruments like guitar. For these, you can select very directional (cardioid or hypercardioid) mics, and the musicians can get in close to them.





#### What's That Horrible Noise??....continued......

With a multiple mic setup (one mic for each instrument/vocal), feedback problems most often happen between the mics and the monitor speakers. The most difficult problem lies with the quietest instruments (acoustic guitar usually) because they need the most gain. Although it's nicer to mic acoustic instruments, using pickup systems and plugging them into DIs can make life a lot easier. When micing, choose good directional mics (cardioid or hypercardioid). As much as possible, keep the front of the mic pointing away from the monitor speaker. Feedback is perhaps less severe with the vocal mics since the vocalists can get in pretty close, and some vocalists can sing pretty loudly. You can chose hypercardioid mics for those (Shure Beta 58 or Audix OM5 for example) for a narrow pickup pattern. Keep in mind that while hypercardioid mics have good side rejection, they also have a pickup lobe on the back of the mic.

#### The Secret Sauce: Ringing Out The System

Remember I mentioned that feedback occurs at very specific frequencies depending on mic-speaker distance? I'll bet you're thinking: how about notching out those specific frequencies? Brilliant idea. On top of the above techniques (which you should employ before you get to this point), this can be very effective. Professional sound rigs almost always have a 31 band, 1/3 octave, equalizer on each monitor send. The FOH signal may also have equalizers, too. (Note: Equalizers with less than 31 bands are not very useful.) Certain models of equalizers have a nice feature called feedback locating system (FLS on Peavey equalizers). FLS equalizers have a small light above each frequency slider that lights to tell you which frequency is really hot. Here is the basic process. First set up the system, with mics and speakers properly placed, and get the FOH mix and monitor mixes set to proper levels. Then, tell everybody in the room to plug their ears for a bit. Turn up the gain on one monitor mix slowly until feedback starts. Having someone clap hands in the stage area can help set feedback off. A little red light will light above the feedback frequency: pull down that slider a little bit until it stops. Then crank up the gain a little more, and likely a different frequency will pop up. Pull that slider down too. Repeat with the remaining monitor sends and/or FOH mix. Set the gains back down to where you started, and you will have more "gain before feedback" to work with during the show. Newer devices (feedback "killers" and the like) automatically detect and notch out feedback frequencies.



Fig. 3. A Peavey QF-131 31 band equalizer with feedback locating system (FLS).

#### **Other Things to Mention**

Sometimes reversing the phase on individual channels may help. A lot of mixers don't have phase switches, but some DI boxes do. Moving mics and speakers around may help too. There is a bit of trial and error in doing these things, and sometimes it might just change the feedback frequency. It's worth a try.

Some of the top touring acts use in-ear monitors (IEMs) these days. This simplifies things by getting rid of the monitor speakers and putting custom mixes in each musician's ears.

#### **Summary**

So you can see that a lot of little things add up to make a concert sound good: the room, acoustics, the musicians' microphone skills, the quality of the sound gear, placement of the speakers and mics, and the capability of the sound tech.

by Kevin Jacobson - kevin@cavemusic.ca, www.cavemusic.ca



## NBCMS Word Search



0 Е E D Ι 0 N R D S J F Ι Κ C 0 U В G 0 S E В E E N Ε H R E I G Ι В F В В 0 В Ε Z Ι Х 0 R W A Ι M S Z 0 Ι M S M В J MH N K В S Z D A D AXS S K NU E WNR 0 В I N S 0 Ν A E E R J Е C Ι P C Ι X N W Κ K D M S Ι В F WZM X В Е G Н OMC 0 S S G D ANQNM E I T s E FSGGURC S

**EARLSCRUGGS** BILLMONROE **BLUEGRASS BANJO MANDOLIN GUITAR** FIDDLE DOBRO BASS FESTIVAL **NBCMS** RONMERCER PICK DOUGREID ARLENEEBERHARDT KAYLAHOTTE **BOBWHALING** NOELMCNAUGHTON **STEVESCHROETER** MIKEBUNTING SHAWNROBINSON **ANNASOMERVILLE MICHELLEGUIDERA PLEASANTVIEWHALL** 



## Did you know?!!!.....

# J.D. Crowe to hang up his banjo

Another banjo milestone is about to be passed. The great <u>J.D. Crowe</u> has announced his intention to retire from performing at the end of 2012. He will turn 75 years old this summer.

Crowe is widely regarded as among the most influential bluegrass banjo players of the 20th century, with many placing him as second only to the dearly-departed Earl Scruggs. By most any standard, he is on everyone's top 5 list, and is clearly one of the most imitated 5 stringers ever to don the thumb and two fingers.

His first break into the business was working with Jimmy Martin in the 1950s, before he turned 20 years of age. By 25, he had left Martin and from that point forward he pursued his own way in bluegrass, never again serving in the sideman role. Together with Red Allen and Doyle Lawson, Crowe formed The Kentucky Mountain Boys in the mid-'60s, but his lasting legacy is with the group that first hit it big in 1975, J.D. Crowe & the New South.

Just as Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys had once served as a training ground for aspiring bluegrass artists, Crowe's New South nurtured the budding careers of such stellar performers as Tony Rice, Ricky Skaggs, Jerry Douglas, Keith Whitley, Gene Johnson, Don Rigsby, Ron Stewart and many others.

Crowe also filled the banjo spot in the Bluegrass Album Band in the 1980s, a superstar project that reunited him with Tony Rice and Doyle Lawson in one of the most memorable vocal trios in the history of our music, along with Bobby Hicks and Todd Phillips. Doesn't sound like J.D. has anything left to prove.

According to current New South mandolinist Dwight McCall, Crowe had long said that he wanted to go out while he was still playing well, and would know when it was time to hang it up. The New South will finish out all the remaining shows on their 2012 schedule – and any new ones that are booked – but at the end of the year, J.D. is off the road.

But it appears that the band will soldier on...



We have learned that popular bluegrass singer and band leader, <u>James King</u>, has been hospitalized near his home in Danville, Virginia. He is suffering from Deep Vein Thrombosis and awaiting a consult from a vascular surgeon before treatment is determined.

His wife, Julie, tells us that the veins in James' left leg are blocked from his groin to his ankle, and some have collapsed. The doctors also fear there is gall bladder involvement.

Julie says that James will be laid up for a bit, and will surely miss shows booked this weekend and possibly beyond.



# Doyle Lawson Receives Honor and Standing Ovation from Tennessee Senate



published by BMNN on Fri, 03/02/2012

Nashville, TN -- Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver received a standing ovation from the members of the Tennessee State Senate after performing two hymns a cappella on the Senate floor Monday evening at the State Capitol in Nashville.







# Stetson and Cia - Wedding and New Single

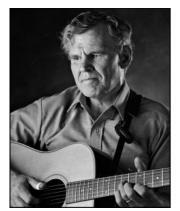




Stetson Adkisson and Cia Cherryholmes wish to announce their marriage. On May 20, 2012, in an intimate setting with close friends and family present, Stetson and Cia officially became husband and wife. The wedding was officiated by the bride's grandfather, the Rev. Gene Cherryholmes, and and the groom's father, the Rev. Grant Adkisson. A family reception was held at the home of Jere and Sandy Cherryholmes.

published by BMNN on Sun, 05/27/2012

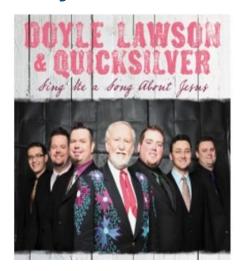
# **Guitar Legend Doc Watson has Died**



Arthel Lane "Doc" Watson, 89, passed away Tuesday, May 29, 2012. Affectionately known as Doc Watson, the guitar legend, songwriter, singer and artist performed bluegrass, blues, gospel, folk and country music. He was highly regarded in the bluegrass music community for his guitar style and innovation.

published by Bob Cherry on Wed, 05/30/2012

## Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver to Release New Gospel



Bluegrass and Gospel legend Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver have announced a new gospel album to be released soon. *Sing Me a Song About Jesus* consists of eleven tracks of that great Doyle Lawson sound. The album has a March 20 release date scheduled.

published by BMNN on Tue, 02/28/2012





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# 13<sup>th</sup> annual Acoustic Music Workshop

Presented by the Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society

# OCTOBER 12<sup>th</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> Camp HE HO HA Lake Isle, Alberta

Located 45 minutes West of Fdmonton

2012



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