



The Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society

Bluegrass Newsletter

Summer 2015

Bluegrass 101 A Hit!



What is Bluegrass 101?

"It's just what I was looking for," says **Lucy Rachynski**, banjo player and singer.

"Jamming is more complicated than even experienced jammers think."

Guitar picker **Bob Leitch** went on, "As a novice, it's really an easy way to learn the etiquette, the basics and it kind of forces you out of your comfort zone. But the group here makes you feel so comfortable. Darcy has such a good way of explaining the material at a level that everyone can understand."

As **Darcy Whiteside** explains, "The mission of the Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society is to preserve, protect and present bluegrass music. Part of that is providing an opportunity for club members to learn about bluegrass music, and learn the nuances of playing



Only the furniture is small in Darcy Whiteside's Bluegrass 101

bluegrass music, both in a jam and band setting. And that's the goal of Bluegrass 101.

Bluegrass 101 is not a slow jam. Every Wednesday, a bluegrass song is chosen and broken down. These songs would not be considered beginner songs (e.g. Cripple Creek, I'll Fly Away, Will the Circle Be Unbroken), but they are songs that you may hear at jams of any level and/or performed by professional bluegrass bands. The emphasis is to choose songs that represent bluegrass music.

For one hour, the song is played at various tempos. Each time the song is played, members are encouraged to play fills, take breaks, and sing verses. **Jim Storey** and I talk about the specifics of the song. For example, is the song straight time or does it swing? Is there something that makes this song special (such as a backstep or emphasis on a certain chord or section of the song)? Emphasis is placed on the role of each instrument in a bluegrass song, and the importance for a player to add to the song (tone, taste and

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timing). Players are encouraged to experiment at various points. The goal is to create an atmosphere of support to learn, make mistakes and, ultimately, to continue to elevate as bluegrass musicians, whether you are beginner, intermediate or advanced."

We believe this is a unique opportunity for players (and those simply interested in learning more about bluegrass) to really learn a bluegrass song - how to make it enjoyable not only for you, but for the listener as well. And still keep true to the roots of bluegrass music."

Ronnie's Ramblin's by NBCMS President Ron Mercer



The bluegrass jamming has been outstanding with the return of our snowbird NBCMS members. It's nice to hear some of the new tunes people are introducing. I am truly blessed to be invited to so many opportunities to play with others.

I had a nice chat with Norm Sliter about the future relationship with NBCMS and the Blueberry Bluegrass Festival. He made some interesting suggestions. Sheila Hallett then attended one of our monthly executive meetings and spoke of us partnering with Blueberry to help promote bluegrass to the next generation. She explained that our NBCMS has the talented players & teachers while Blueberry has the families & youth. It seems like a natural partnering of interests. Your NBCMS executive will endeavor to keep its motto of "preserving, promoting and presenting" bluegrass.

Keep a sharp eye open for a 15 x 15 foot square screened tent shelter with our NBCMS banners on

it this summer. I got an awesome deal at Canadian Tire (\$225) when this went on sale. I hope it becomes the focal point for jamming, meeting up and exposing our bluegrass club at many festivals. For me, it's all about the jamming opportunities!!

Our Bluegrass 101 classes on Wednesday evenings have been growing in numbers. Darcy Whiteside (and his trusty sidekick, Sunny Jim Storey) are presenting the classics and bluegrass history to enthusiastic pickers. The only complaint I have heard is that there are more banjos than other instruments but, hey, those people would complain even if you used a new rope to hang them.

Our monthly "Raise the Bar" jam sessions have been very well attended. Edmonton's local bluegrass bands are stepping up and providing first class entertainment and pushing us jammers at the subsequent jam sessions. We have decided not to have the Bluegrass 101 classes on those Wednesday evenings. Always check the www.bluegrassnorth.com website to see when the "Raise the Bar" nights are. I have been trying to schedule them on the third week of each month.

I can't remember exactly which Wednesday it was but I sure had great jam upstairs while the Bluegrass 101 class was in session. Carolyn Hotte on my right with that hard-driving rhythm, Ian Johnston on my left doing interesting solos, Frank Omoe with his infectious smile & good song choices and Leonard Swanson sliding in on dobro. Mmmm..... that's good pickin' and singin'.

Let's all stay healthy, learn some new tunes and get out there and play.



Chris Jones and the Night Drivers Concert of April 18

by Frank Omoe



Chris Jones and the Night Drivers put on a terrific show at the Royal Glenora Club on Friday, April 17. Over ninety people attended the brilliantly paced performance that demonstrated why this is one of the true bluegrass headlining bands.

Those who listen to Chris on Sirius XM may remember that he often refers to recording a program from his "northern studio." What he means is that it is being recorded just north of Grande Prairie, where Chris' wife Sally Jones comes from.

Chris was kind enough to spend fifteen minutes with me before the show. I asked him how he defined Bluegrass music. He answered by saying, "That's a tough one. I think that people who get to know the music for a long time have a hard time putting that into words. When we hear, for example, a Flatt and Scruggs song from 1952, we tend to say, 'Now that's Bluegrass.' I understand what that means but it is hard to put into words exactly. I think the difficulty is that Bill Monroe started his own distinctive style of string music that was very unique at the time. A whole lot of people imitated it and then put a little of their own thing into it, all being influenced by Bill Monroe and the five string banjo as part of their sound. Acoustic string band music that emphasizes the Scruggs style banjo and tight harmonies - those are the songs we associate

with Bluegrass music. Then there's just all sorts of many variations and we lump it together as Bluegrass."

Chris was raised in upstate New York around a town called Spring Valley (not exactly a hot bed of Bluegrass). While many instruments were played by his extended family, his dad was not one of those players. Said Chris, "My dad was not a musician at all but he was such a lover of music that it became kind of infectious so I credit him in a lot of ways with exposing me to bluegrass and country music, among other things. Bluegrass was the sound that I latched on to when I first heard it. There was such an exciting, electrifying sound. I took up the flat pick when I heard Doc Watson. He was a big influence on me. I think the first true bluegrass artist I ever saw live was Larry Sparks. I was fifteen at the time and was just blown away. I still am a hero worshipper of Larry Sparks."

When I asked about his writing process, he thought for a few seconds and then replied, "I started out just kind of fooling around with it. Tony Trishka once told me, 'You have a responsibility to be a writer and give back to the music.' Trishka said that bluegrass music was built on people who wrote songs and contributed like Bill Monroe, Flatt and Scruggs, and all the others. Songwriting is a gift to the writer because you express emotions in a musical way - maybe some things that are inside you that get released or you can tell stories. For me, I just get the kernel of an idea, this idea of the concept of the song. Then I try to marry that with some melodic ideas. I think every lyric has some sort of melodic home. A melody, in some ways, should be able to stand alone as an instrumental as opposed to trying to force lyrics into a melody. I think I spend more time now fleshing out the melody before the lyrics are done. The common question to a writer is which comes first and, initially, it's really neither one. But I tend to work more on the melody and then sometimes that melody will suggest lyrics to me." *Continued on page 4*

Chris Jones and the Night Drivers Concert by Frank Omoe

Chris Jones Concert and Interview continued

Marc Ladouceur had overheard the band talking about the “Employee of the Month” so I had to ask Chris what that was all about. He laughed and said that (banjo player) Ned Luberecki started that. “One day I couldn’t find the keys to our rental car or a guitar strap or something like that. Ned handed me the keys or the strap and said, ‘Employee of the Month.’”



Well it became a running joke so anytime Ned does anything like a favour or if he’s ready and no one else is, he reminds me that he’s the ‘Employee of the Month.’ It doesn’t take turns. Ned’s monopolized it from Day One.”

After the recent release of the *Live at the Old Feed Store* CD, I inquired what was the next project for the band. Chris’ face lit up as he told me, “Well we’re very excited about a new studio album that we just completed. We just signed with a new record company called Mountain Home Music out of North Carolina. Doyle Lawson, The Grascals, The Box Cars and others are affiliated with this record label. We feel like this album is the best thing we’ve done. It will be out in August and will be called *Run Away Tonight*.”

The final question I put to Chris was, “If you could only play one song with one artist, past or present,

who would that be and what song would you sing?” After a long pause, Chris answered with, “I guess I would like to sing a duet with Ralph Stanley. I’ve just always loved his music and I’ve always studied his various lead singers. I don’t know if I have a song in particular but I’ll say *I Don’t Want Your Rambling Letters* which is a favourite of mine. A long time ago when I was in my early 20’s, I played with Dave Evans briefly and I sang that song. That was a great song with Dave’s band but I’d love to sing that one with Ralph Stanley.”

In the April 1st issue of *Bluegrass Today*, Chris wrote a very funny article called, “Haiku - Part Deux.” I encourage you to read it as there are some great haikus set to Bluegrass songs. I closed our interview by sharing my haiku about the band:

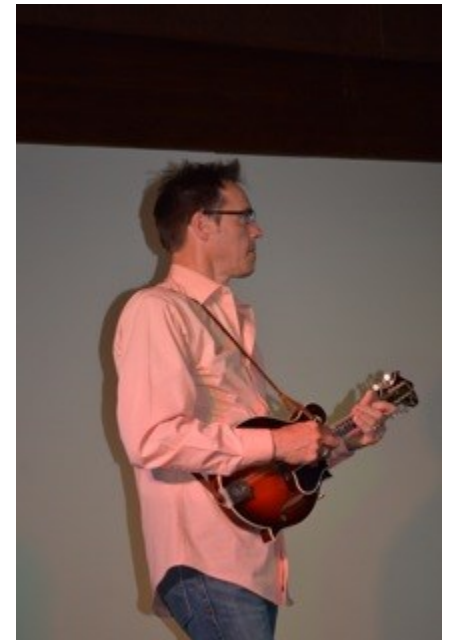
mainlining bluegrass
chris jones and the night drivers
get your daily hit

Somehow I don’t see that one making any of his columns soon.

If you missed the concert, it was your misfortune. It was worth the price of admission simply to hear the musicianship of Chris Jones (guitar), Adam Stoffel (mandolin), Ned Luberecki (banjo), and Jon Weisberger (bass) on *Edelweiss/Forked Deer* (no that is not a misprint—it was an incredible medley). Here are some pictures of the evening, courtesy of Marc Ladouceur.



Chris Jones and the Night Drivers Concert Pictures by Marc Ladouceur



Summer Newsletter by Co-Editors Frank Omoe and Grant Miner

Welcome to the Summer 2015 Newsletter! It's our second attempt at bringing you all the news and views about the Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society (at least, as how we see them).

Thank you to everyone who gave us feedback about the Spring issue. Thank goodness nobody went over it with a fine toothed comb as there were too many typos, misspellings, and other errors (for our liking, anyway). Frank spent over twenty years as a School Principal, writing a School Newsletter every month. Even with secretaries and assistant principals as expert proofreaders, he is sad to say that not one issue was perfect. So there will be no "Spot the Mistake" contest in the NBCMS newsletters as there would be too many winners!



We hope that you'll find some interesting reading in this Summer Issue. There are so many things happening in and around the club. Our regular featured columns of *Ronnie's Ramblings*, *Sunny Jim's Bluegrass Storeys*, *Grant's Wood, Steel and Strings* and *Bluegrass Grass Artists Past and Present*, and Frank's library offerings *From the Vault* all still appear.

The focus on local bluegrass bands remains strong as we will tell you about the Monthly Concerts/Jam Leading of *Back Porch Swing*, *Amerada Road*, *High Point Bluegrass Band* and *Up The Creek*. Our featured local bands in this issue are *The High Point Bluegrass Band*, *The Hay City Rollers*, and *Prairie Sky*.

Before the Chris Jones and the Night Drivers Concert on April 17, Chris was kind enough to spend some time talking with Frank. Chris is a very thoughtful and talented artist. Hopefully you'll enjoy reading the conversation.

Sheila Hallett has a great write-up about this year's Blueberry Bluegrass and Country Music festival. Anna Somerville reveals some of outstanding line-up of instructors at the Fall Workshop. Oct. 16-18.

Grant also plans to continue to write articles that will include information about local musicians with a link to the bluegrass world. When you start talking with people about their musical background there is often a regular theme. Players often start out with country, rock, blues or pop, perhaps even a bit of jazz. Over time they eventually find their way towards bluegrass and all of the great things related to bluegrass. It is just a matter of time! On the other hand there are the folks who are new to their instrument and bluegrass but they are attracted to the welcoming atmosphere they get from the bluegrass community. The Bluegrass 101 participants are likely great examples!

Tex Taylor - man of many talents by Grant Miner

I recently had the pleasure of meeting a very interesting gentleman who goes by the name of Tex Taylor. I got to spend some time at his Edmonton shop where I really started to get to know Tex and learn about his incredible background.

Tex and his wife have been long-time musicians. Throughout his life he has toured extensively from Western Canada all the way to Atlantic Canada. His memory for names and details is unbelievable and his stories could keep anyone captivated for hours.

What inspired me to meet up with Tex was his reputation as a local luthier. Tex has no formal training and it was his father who taught him to use his hands. Tex has dabbled with instruments all his life. He has learned his craft by talking with anyone willing to talk about guitars and violins.

When Tex was younger he helped build amplifiers for Pete Traynor and he worked on guitars for Long & McQuade, both jobs in Toronto. As well, he lived and worked in Quebec for 10 years and claims his ability to speak French is still quite good. While in Quebec he gigged on the weekends and spent his days doing guitar set-ups, vio-

lin repairs and learned to re-hair violin bows.

In the top picture to the right you can see a badly damaged Amati-type violin. It looked like it had spent several years outside in the wind, rain and snow (and possibly been driven over by a garden tractor).

In the middle picture to the right you can see Tex holding the same violin after he restored it with many hours of work.

The bottom picture is Tex holding a 1920's Harmony "Fancy" or sometimes known as a "Special." When it arrived it had several large cracks. The top had such a "ravine" cut into it, by aggressive strumming no doubt, that he had to build up the surface and then cover it with an attractive pick guard. Still sounds great!

Tex prefers to work on older and damaged instruments to bring them back to life for musicians who really appreciate the value of restored instruments. By the way, he also does ceramic repairs and restoration.

If you want to talk to Tex about an instrument that needs some special care and attention, feel free to give him a call (780) 454-4435.



2015 Acoustic Music Workshop Oct. 16-18 by Anna Somerville

What's happening?

The process of finalizing the contracts and making arrangements for the workshop is underway. I can tell you that three seminar leaders are signed, sealed and have promised to deliver: singer, songwriter, guitarist **Steve Gulley**, and mandolin player **Alan Bibey**.

Last year we introduced a **Bluegrass 101** workshop and received rave reviews. We will be offering it again this year. Learning from our successes we have added **Appalachian 101**: Fiddle and Clawhammer Banjo will be taught together in a jam-like setting. As always, you can count on two levels of **Guitar, Banjo, Mandolin** and **Fiddle** offered along with the well attended workshops focusing on **Songwriting** and **Singing**. Do you find yourself interested in learning a new instrument? Consider a spot in the 101 workshops. All other workshops are geared for intermediate to advanced players.

The workshop weekend in-

Bluegrass has brought more people together and made more friends than any music in the world. You meet people at festivals and renew acquaintances year after year.

Bill Monroe

cludes a 3 hour mini festival on Saturday afternoon. Six 40 minute concerts spread over three venues provide participants with a sampling of some of the best performers in Bluegrass and Old Time music.

At the heart of the **NBCMS** is the jamming and we facilitate it whenever possible. Scheduled jamming on Friday and Saturday night are set up to maximize your exposure to our visiting guests as well as find out what the other workshop participants are up to. Time is also set aside for the **Band Scramble**, an accelerated opportunity to meet other participants at the workshop. **The Open Stage** is a highlight for those wanting to showcase their material. This is where all musical styles are welcomed and enjoyed.

The goal of the weekend is to at-

tract music enthusiasts from all styles of music and expose them to the strengths associated with the Bluegrass genre. By providing solid instruction, jamming opportunities, and exposure to world class performances the NBCMS hopes to expand interest in Bluegrass.

As Workshop Director, I strive to encourage a friendly atmosphere where you are free to partake in the many learning opportunities and enjoy the benefits of a musical community.

I hope to see you at the **Acoustic Music Workshop** October 16th – 18th, 2015 out at Camp He Ho Ha.

Workshop leaders and their session outlines will be posted as they are confirmed at www.BluegrassNorth.com

Schedule for NBCMS 2015 Workshop Oct. 16-18

Friday October 16^h.

4:00 pm **Registration.**
Pick up room assignment
Name tag
Band Scramble sign up
Open Stage sign up

5:00 pm **ORIENTATION and
Camp tour**

6:00 pm **SUPPER** in Main Hall

7:00 **PRESENTATION**

7:30 pm **Welcome and
Introductions**

8:00 Workshop in session

9:00 pm **SNACK and**

50/50 Draw

9:15 pm **Jamming**

Slow Pitch Jam - Main Hall

Intermediate Jam -

George Kidd Lounge

Intermediate Jam -

Lounge 5 /6

Saturday October 17th.

8:30 am **BREAKFAST** until 9:30

9:30 am Workshop in session.

10:30 am 15 minute coffee break
in Main Hall.

10:45 am Workshop in session.

Noon **LUNCH** until 1:00 pm

1:15 Band Scramble rehearsal

2:00 pm **BAND SCRAMBLE
PERFORMANCE**

2:45 pm **OPEN STAGE**
in George Kidd Lounge

3:00– 6:00 pm
Mini Festival

6:00 pm **SUPPER** in Main Hall

7:00 pm Workshop in session.

8:00 **SNACK** in Main Hall.

8:00 pm **Guitar Raffle &
50/50 Draw**

8:45 **Jamming**

Slow pitch – Main Hall

Intermediate Jam -

George Kidd Lounge

Intermediate Jam - Lounge 5 /6

Old Time Jam - Chapel

Sunday October 18th.

8:30 am **Continental
BREAKFAST**

8:45 am **Sunday
Gospel Sing-a-long**

9:30 Workshop in session.

10:30 **SUNDAY BRUNCH**

11:15 Workshop in session.

12:30 pm **Student Concert.**

1:30 pm Closing comments

2:30 pm On the road.

Back Porch Swing Concert/Jam Lead March 25 by Grant Miner



Back Porch Swing had the pleasure of performing as the first guest band in 2015 on the stage at Pleasantview Hall in Edmonton. There were over 30 people in attendance and they thoroughly enjoyed the band's set. The experience and professional stage presence of **Back Porch Swing** shone through and of course Jim Malmberg's composition, "That Ain't The Way Bill Played It" added charm to their performance. Penny Malmberg (vocals, guitar), Cam Neufeld (fiddle), and Kevin Jacobson (bass) kept the sound driving forward. After their solid half hour set they led the Club's evening jam. It was a great start for this new format and set the stage for good things to come for the Club.

Amerada Road Concert/Jam Lead April 22 by Frank Omoe

Amerada Road took to the Pleasantview stage on Wednesday, April 22 as the featured monthly local bluegrass band. Nearly forty people (including the "seldom seen" and greatly missed Linda Saboe) were treated to **Amerada Road's** bluegrass and old timey songs and tunes that included *Shetland Foot*, *Our Time, I've Endured*, *Magic Foot*, *Rock of Ages*, *Angeline the Baker* and others. Following the 30 minute concert, **Amerada Road** (fiddler/singer Hannah Goa, guitarist Brad Creemer, and bassist/singer Toby Tellier) led the jam that began by getting all of us singing along in a spirited accapella number. With noted NBCMS pickers Marc Ladouceur, and Ron Mercer also taking part, it was a very tasty jam.



High Point Bluegrass Band May 27 by Grant Miner



For those of you who attended the NBCMS club on May 27 to hear the High Point Bluegrass Band, you were able to see a great mini concert by some dedicated bluegrass pickers and singers. There were close to 50 people in attendance which shows that this approach to showcasing local bands to the bluegrass community is working well.

The members of the band :

Bill Humby - guitar and lead vocals
Rick Moore - mandolin and vocals
Greg LeBlanc - bass and vocals
Larry Seuter - dobro
Lee Foote - banjo and vocals

Several of the songs in their 30 minute set stood out for me. *Freight Train* was a good opener and showed some creativity. *Never Coming Back* demonstrated some pretty fancy picking and nice harmony. *Sea of Heartbreak* really showed off the group's ability to put together some three part harmony. *Get Out There* had an old time swing and their closing number was a Beatle's favourite, *Ticket To Ride*.

Following the concert, High Point set themselves up with mikes to lead the jam circle for an hour or more. They did a good job introducing each song, explaining the chord changes, and then encouraged players around the circle to take solo break.

On one song, where the timing of the chord changes was a little different, Rick helped the group by signalling I, IV, V etc. It was good for players of all levels to get exposure to new songs and to hear more familiar songs played at a little faster pace.

I spoke with Larry a few days ago and he said the band really enjoyed the night that they spent at the Club. They thought it was great that the Club was creating these types of opportunities to further bluegrass music.

Larry had one suggestion for the mini-concert /jam night. In addition to picking out the instrumental songs he would like to see a way to get some harmony singing into the jam. Good positive feedback.

Another great evening at Pleasantview Hall.

Up The Creek Concert/Jam Lead June 24 by Grant Miner



In June we had the opportunity to hear **Up The Creek**, all 8 of them! Leonard Swanson told me that they enjoy playing all kinds of music but for the half hour set at the NBCMS club they focused on bluegrass. Shawn Robinson took the above picture and he was almost able to squeeze everyone in the picture.

They played songs like *Glendale Train*, complete with a solid banjo and mandolin break, and finished off with an acapella “train whistle” which was pretty cool. They played a gospel bluegrass style tune with a nice fiddle break and *I’ll Fly Away*. In *Hold Watcha Got* the group show-cased some of their instrumental expertise and even had a key change towards the end, (something that you will seldom hear in bluegrass) and they did it without people scrambling to move their capos up two frets!. I believe they also slipped in an original song written by Sue, called *Get Out, Goodbye*.

The band loves to get together to jam and have fun. The group who performed included :

Susan Green—vocals, guitar
 Eric Papsdorf—vocals, guitar
 Leonard Swanson - vocals, dobro
 Anthony Bencz—mandolin

Ron Woytiuk—vocals, guitar
 Mark Edwards—vocals, fiddle
 Grant McCarthy—banjo
 Al Kucy—bass

Up The Creek then lea the club in a strong round of jamming. The players took lots of breaks and seemed to be enjoying themselves. We even had a southern Alberta guy attend the jam, that being the one and only Les Eberhardt, a long time NBCMS member and a great contributor to the club while he lived in Edmonton. All in in all it was another great band night at the club. The next band will perform at the clu b on Sept 23.

NBCMS Weekly Wednesday Jam Session

From 7:00 to 10:00 pm. every Wednesday night, the NBCMS hosts an acoustic bluegrass jam at Pleasantview Community Hall, 10860 - 57 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta. Musicians (the pickers) of all abilities and listeners (the grinners) are most welcome. A donation of \$2.00 for an NBCMS member and \$4.00 for a non-member is requested at the door (but no one is ever turned away because they can't pay). Complimentary coffee is provided. Bluegrass 101 takes a summer vacation for July and August but it's back to Bluegrass School in September. The next local band concert will be held on September 23 and will feature **Whitemud Drive**.

Casino Thank You by Terry Ruddy (Casino Chairperson)

I just want to say a big thank you to all who volunteered for the December Casino especially those who worked two shifts:

Bob Whaling	Joanne Walthro	Steve Schroeter (2)	Anna Somerville
Norm Walthro	Pat Sundahl	Ian Johnston (2)	Ron Mercer (2)
Kinley Miller (2)	Shawn Robinson	Daryl Roth	Al Preston (2)
Carolyn Hotte	Lawrence Jones	Noel McNaughton (2)	Elsie Roth
Irene Miller (2)	Eric Papsdorf	Corinna Diamond	Phylis May
Colleen Whaling	Don Kupidy	Sheila Hallet	Kayla Hotte
Ken Hotte	Angelina Majeau	Jason Baldwin	Dennis Brulette
Jeanette Miner	Charlie Miner	Eloise Leckie	

Thanks to your volunteering, the NBCMS should receive close to \$80,000. The money is put to good use helping to defray costs of the Fall Workshop and Winter Jam Camp, purchasing new sound equipment and many other endeavours that promote, preserve and present Bluegrass Music.

Myhre's Music
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Local Bluegrass Bands by Frank Omoe

At this time, we are proud to say that there are twelve local bands who are dedicated to playing *all or mostly* bluegrass music. All of them have at least one member who belongs to the NBCMS. Most of the bands have web pages so please check them out to learn more about our very own Northern Alberta bands. The following is a list of the bands, in alphabetical order :

- Amerada Road** website: ameradaroad.com
- Back Porch Swing** website: backporchswing.ca
- The Bix Mix Boys** website: www.thebixmixboys.ca
- Cabin Fever Band** contact Patrick Guidera (780) 235-8671
- Hay City Rollers** website: haycityrollers.com
- High Point Bluegrass Band** contact Larry Seuter (780) 988-8282 or poundslbs@xplornet.com
- Kayla Hotte and her Rodeo Pals** website: therodeopals.com
- Mountain Spirit** contact: <https://www.facebook.com/pagesMountain-Spirit/487844594605733>
- Prairie Sky** contact Sheila Hallet (780) 488-9401 or galbanjo@telus.net
- Up The Creek** contact Ron Woytiuk (780) 470-0234 or ronpeggywoytiuk@gmail.com
- Long Way Home** contact Eric Papsdorf etpapsdorf@gmail.com
- Whitemud Drive** contact Clem Bray (780) 465-5611 or cbray@telusplanet.net

Each Newsletter will feature two or three of the local bands. For this edition we have focused on **The High Point Bluegrass Band** (page 11), **The Hay City Rollers** (page 15), and **Prairie Sky** (page 16).

The Hay City Rollers by Frank Omoe

If you are searching for a bluegrass based band that takes their music seriously, but not themselves, and likes to have fun on and off the stage, look no further than **The Hay City Rollers**. They started out five years ago as **Crooked Creek** with Noel McNaughton, Steve Schroeter, Bob Whaling, the late Ken Machon and Ron Mercer. With the sudden passing of Ken, and Bob taking a personal leave, Toby Tellier (formerly of **Wood Bend**) was recruited to play upright bass in the present line up of Noel (guitar), Steve (mandolin), and Ron (banjo and dobro). All contribute to the vocals in both lead and harmony roles.

Taking their name from a clever play on words of the 1970's Scottish teeny bopper boy band, the Bay City Rollers, the also plaid clad **Hay City Rollers** are only too happy to draw from a vast repertoire (two 40 minute sets in the bag and working on a third one) to perform classic cabin songs, mountain, murder, mayhem music, and some fine bluegrass instrumentals.

While the group certainly has a distinctive style in their choice of clothing, Noel told me, "We don't have any one band we try to pattern ourselves after or style of bluegrass we play. We find a song we like, arrange it how we like, and play it how we like." Sometimes that involves some writing of their own as demonstrated by Steve Schroeter's words to "*Gloom, Despair and Agony*." Check it out on the band's website at haycityrollers.com

Over the past two years **The Hay City Rollers** have played Saturday Night Bluegrass, The Works Festival, The Shady Grove Festival and, most recently, the Festival of Stars in Radway. It was in Shady Grove that they were approached by a fellow from, what he called "the real Hay City - Hay Lakes," who asked if they'd be interested in playing for his wife's 50th Birthday Surprise Party at the Community Center in Hay Lakes. She was shocked to find 200 of her closest friends at the hall with music provided by this bluegrass tartan quartet. When Noel asked the fellow how his wife was enjoying the party, the reply was, "Well, she's not speaking to me right now but she will later." It turned out to be a great night that was thoroughly enjoyed by all, including the birthday girl.

All of the band are members of the NBCMS with Noel, Steve and Ron having served or presently serving on the Executive and Board of Directors. We thank them for that and for adding Toby, the "rose among the thorns" to the band. You can reach the band by calling Ron Mercer 780 488-5256 or via e-mail at coates.mercer@interbaun.com



Prairie Sky by Grant Miner

Prairie Sky describes themselves as a local Edmonton band that loves to play music and see smiling faces. In my opinion that is a pretty good reason to spend time together as a band.

The group was formed around 2008. They are open to playing most genres of music, from bluegrass to country to original compositions. Their most memorable gig was the first time they played at Blueberry. The group was very excited, highly motivated to do their best, and the 45 minutes flew by too fast.

On bass and vocals is Kenny Mak who is a familiar face around the bluegrass community, especially for those of us who have attended the Blueberry Bluegrass Festival. Kenny grew up surrounded by music at home. He has been influenced by bass players in groups such as Rush, the Funk Brothers, Bela Fleck and the Flecktones and the Del McCoury band. With **Prairie Sky**, Kenny often plays the “entertainer” role through his humour. Kenny met Jeannette at Fiddler’s Roost and their love for music also developed into a love for each other (see, music has many good sides).

Sheila Hallett keeps things moving with her banjo and vocals. As a regular attendee at the NBCMS’ Wednesday night jam, we know that there is a soft spot in her heart for Jimmy Martin tunes. Sheila sees the bluegrass community as her second family (as many of us do). Sheila has a thirst to learn other styles of banjo (an instrument she first picked up over 13 years ago). To show you how dedicated she is, Ron Mercer and I were driving to a Saturday jam west of Edmonton one hot summer day last year. Sheila was in the back seat practicing claw hammer banjo all the way there. Did we mind? Absolutely not!!

Alex Boudreau delivers the rhythm and some of



the lead instrumentals through his mandolin. He takes on some of the vocal duties and contributes his own written material to the group. Alex enjoys all styles of music, from the Beatles and early rock to blues and country and, of course, bluegrass. One of his favourite songwriters and performers is Steve Earle. Alex is a dedicated song writer, and recently went through a two-year period where he was writing two songs a week. He usually writes the lyrics first when composing. One of the more meaningful self-composed songs for Alex and the group is a song he called “*The Moon Is A Friend.*”

Jeannette Sinclair is featured on guitar and vocals. Jeannette says that her music today was influenced by the country music of yesterday, largely through the influence of her mother, who is still going strong at Fiddler’s Roost on Thursday nights. Jeannette loves the ballads and the stories that good ballads usually tell.

One of the joys for the band happens when the music just clicks and feels right. **Prairie Sky** is the opening act for Blueberry this summer. Please try to get out to give them a listen.

Wood, Steel and Strings by Grant Miner

There are a handful of key stringed instruments that traditionally make up the “bluegrass sound.” The mandolin is one of those key instruments. It plays several unique roles. In addition to providing the driving “chop” rhythm (in concert with the bass), it is also used to provide a high pitched lead for melody and improvised breaks.

Early Mandolins

As a descendent of the lute, the mandolin reaches back to some of the earliest musical instruments. Lute-like chordophones appear as early as 2000 BC in Mesopotamia. The early instruments were fretless (just to make it harder to play).

A marked increase in Italian immigration to the USA in the 1880s sparked a fad for the bowl-backed Neopolitan instrument (I have a bowl-backed mandolin, also known as a “taterbug.” I found it under a pile of junk in an antique store in rural Ontario).

The Evolution to the Modern Flat-Back Mandolin

Orville H. Gibson (Kalamazoo, Michigan) began designing and building instruments in the 1880s. His early instruments were highly experimental and ornate. In 1902, a group of businessmen bought



his patent, and formed the Gibson Mandolin-Guitar Company.

The 1905 Gibson A-4 was a revolutionary instrument, breaking radically away from the traditional bowl-back edinstruments brought to America by Italian immigrants. Orville's new design was based on principles of violin construction, using a carved top and back. Orville was obsessed with ornamentation, particularly the scroll. His personal hallmark, included in the inlay on many of his early instruments, was an occult star-and-crescent. The 1910 Gibson F-4 with its lavishly detailed flower pot headstock inlay featured a new scroll 3-point design. This new design had a full, well-balanced tone with great carrying power.

In 1922, Gibson, under the influence of their new acoustic engineer Lloyd Allayre Loar, refurbished their entire line of mandolins. Loar's finest achievement was his new Master Model style F-5 series. There were approximately 170 F-5s signed and dated by Lloyd Loar.

These mandolins are in great demand, and today are often sold at astonishingly high prices.

Monroe's Gibson Loar

Bill Monroe played his Lloyd Loar 1923 Gibson F-5, which now sits in the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. Monroe purchased the mandolin at a barbershop in 1945 for \$150. One day someone became angry with Monroe and, with a fireplace poker, smashed the mandolin into splinters. Charles Derrington (Gibson craftsman) was able to repair the instrument by gluing the 500 or so fragments together, and did so without diminishing the sound quality. Monroe last played it on March 15, 1996, at the Grand Ole Opry, shortly before he suffered a stroke.

Modern Day

Today there are independent luthiers in Canada and the USA, along with leading manufacturers such as Gibson and Collings, who make exceptional mandolins. The features of the better quality instruments include hand-brushed varnish, hand-applied polish, beautiful headstock inlay, carved solid spruce top, maple backs and sides, and an arched fretboard. Their beauty matches their incredible sound.

House Concerts by Grant Miner



Mountain Spirit in Concert in June (photo – Cam Yule)

The idea of local musicians playing private house concerts has become increasingly popular. Some of you already know about the house concerts at the Mercer's house and I am sure that you will agree that it is a special experience. Here is a little more information...

The Mountain Spirit concert in mid-June was the 18th house concert at the Mercer's. Ron started the home concert series 3 years ago. The basement venue holds 25 people and every concert has sold out. In addition to the good music, I am sure that it continues to sell out due to the great hospitality shown by Ron and Jean.

When you go to their house concerts you also get to view the amazing musical instrument collection on all of the walls, and even on the ceiling for those "down under" instruments.

Every local Edmonton bluegrass band has played at the Mercer's house. The entire proceeds for each house concert go directly to the musicians. Kenny Mak creates all the promotional material and band posters. Cost is \$15 per person. Myhres Music provides a gift certificate for a door prize.

To get on the invitation list please email jeancoates@hotmail.com

Sunny Jim's Bluegrass Storeys by Jim Storey

Don't forget the back beat! Louder with the back beat! Listen to the bass! Heavy on the 2 and 4! Remember the flatted 3rds and 7ths! If these thoughts are running through your head at night it's probably because you've been attending the Bluegrass 101 sessions in the basement of Pleasantview Hall on Wednesday nights. Darcy Whiteside is hosting the learning sessions and he has asked if I would help him by playing bass and adding comments and observations (which I'm happy to do). It's been a lot of fun so far and people seem to enjoy it. Come join us if you are interested in learning the basics of playing bluegrass music. It's free! (thanks to the club).

If you use Facebook this may be of interest to you. Punch 'Mac's Bluegrass ERA' into the search box on Facebook and have a look at this page. It's sponsored by Mac Wiseman (with a little help from his daughter, I think). There are lots of great photos and videos of some of Mac's performances over the years, plus lots of footage of great bands and individuals. Turns out that it was Mac's 90th birthday a few weeks ago and they had a party for him. Lots of pictures of the event, plus a video of Mac in a wheelchair singing one of his signature songs, "*Tis Sweet To Be Remembered.*" The old boy still has it. One of my all time favourites. He used to do great duets with Bill Monroe when he was with Mon-



*Jim Storey plays bass for
The Bix Mix Boys*

roe's band in the 50's.

I received a CD in the mail a few days ago. Been waiting for this one for awhile. It is entitled Laurie & Kathy Sing the Songs of Vern & Ray. 'Laurie' is Laurie Lewis, and 'Kathy' is Kathy Kallick. These two women are purveyors of the west coast bluegrass sound, each with their own highly successful careers in the bluegrass field. Together they were founding members of **The Good Old Persons** band which was formed in 1975 in the San Francisco Bay area, and has also included Sally Van Meter, John Reischman, Paul Shelasky, Bethany Raine and others. When **Good Old Persons** was forming they got a lot of their inspiration as well as a lot of their songs from Vern Williams & Ray Parks and their band, which was the hottest bluegrass band in Northern California at the time, and

played the bay area quite often. They were together from the late 1950's to the mid 1970's, and each had his own band after their collaboration was finished. There are very few Ray & Vern recordings, but they are some of my favorites. All of the songs on this CD were learned from Vern & Ray, and there is not a bad song on the album. Kathy's soaring lead singing with Laurie's harmony really bring home that old time bluegrass sound. Worth the time, folks.

Please try to catch Darcy Whiteside (Cousin Darcy) and me, Jim Storey (Sunny Jim) on the air every Thursday night from 7:06 pm 'til 8:00 pm on '**Prairie Pick-in**' (CJSR's longest continually running radio show).

It's an hour of the best bluegrass music we can find on CJSR 88.5 FM or streaming live on the old inter-web at www.cjsr.com

“Grassified” Ads

For Sale:

- Eastman Mandolin MD315 F-style, purchased new from Myhre’s Music, May 2014. Gig bag included. For further details contact Grant Miner (780) 246-1424
- 1955 Kay upright bass. It's in great shape and has had work done on the neck/fingerboard and bridge. It currently has D'Addario strings on it and comes with a Shadow pickup, stand and gig bag. I'm asking \$3,500.00 OBO. Model is C-1 and I can send along the serial number if it's requested. Contact Tanya Groundwater (587) 432-6362

Musician Wanted :

- Local Edmonton bluegrass band “Whitemud Drive” is seeking a dobro or fiddle player who can also contribute to vocal arrangements. If interested call Clem Bray (780) 465-5611

Bluegrass Instrument Instruction

Are you learning a new instrument?
Are you looking to get to the next level of playing?

Learn to play better bluegrass with help from these local musicians who are willing to give private lessons (unrelated to the NBCMS):

Jim Storey	stand-up bass, flatpicking guitar	(780) 474-6033
Marc Ladouceur	mandolin, guitar	(780) 221-3464
Ron Mercer	banjo	(780) 488-5256
Kayla Hotte	voice, fiddle, rhythm guitar	(780) 940-3375
Larry Seuter	dobro, steel guitar	(780) 988-8282
Troy Gates	fiddle	(780) 998-4817
Leonard Swanson	dobro	(780) 436-1998
Mike Bunting	mandolin, guitar	(780) 952-6820



If you know of any other teachers who wish to have their name added to the list, please contact Frank Omoe at omoe@shaw.ca.

The NBCMS does not sponsor or endorse these lessons nor does NBCMS accept any responsibility if you are not satisfied with the lessons or if still can't play your instrument following your lessons.

Blueberry Bluegrass and Country Music Festival Has a Plan to Grow

By Sheila Hallett

With the help of Tourism Alberta, the **Blueberry Bluegrass and Country Music Festival** began looking at the sustainability of the festival and how it could survive and grow despite a slight downward trend in attendance for a few years. Our plan to attract more people to Blueberry is to enhance the quality or quantity of programming.

In 2014 we incorporated a youth workshop for people between the age of 10-17 who were learning to play bluegrass instruments. We spread the word about the workshop through local music instructors and we offered free one-day entry to the festival for the youth and their families if they pre-registered for the workshop. NBCMS members Marc Ladouceur, Anna Somerville, Kayla Hotte and Curtis Appleton gave demonstrations to these young people with the hopes they'd catch the bluegrass bug. Eleven young people took advantage of this session in 2014. We hope to keep improving and potentially expanding on this idea in partnership with NBCMS.



The Del McCoury Band

We hope to someday expand our program onto the Stony Plain Pioneer Museum site (adjoining the exhibition grounds) and eventually have it fully animated during the festival. This could include an old-time dance, for example. We will also be working on building our relationships with other partners as well.

If the festival grows in the next few years there could be additional stages/tents added annually to include other genres of music such as old-time and other roots music. The main stage will always be bluegrass. The Blueberry board has committed to this.

We'd like to thank the NBCMS for the support you've shown to Blueberry for so many years and we look forward to working with the club and all the bluegrass fans to keep the music alive and thriving in Edmonton and area. We hope to see all of you at the 2015 festival July 31st to Aug. 2nd as we celebrate our 30th anniversary with headliners that include



Hot Rize

the Del McCoury Band, Hot Rize, Rhonda Vincent, Seldom Scene and Calvin Vollrath to name a few. Check out our website for more information

www.blueberrybluegrass.com

2015 Blueberry Band Line-Up

- *The Seldom Scene*
- *Rhonda Vincent and the Rage*
- *Valerie Smith and Liberty Pike*
- *Hot Rize*
- *The Del McCoury Band*
- *Calvin Vollrath*
- *Jimmy Whiffen*
- *Back Porch Swing*
- *Prairie Sky*
- *The Steve Fisher Bluegrass Band*
- *Kayla Hotte & Her Rodeo Pals*
- *Sonny Bandura*

Jamming Etiquette by Grant Miner

The first time that I attended a bluegrass jam was at the Pineridge Bluegrass Folklore Society in Oshawa, Ontario over 4 years ago. While I could play guitar. I did not know anyone there, I did not know the songs, and I certainly did not understand if there were any “rules” for the small jamming circles. It was a bit intimidating and I am sure everyone has experienced that feeling. However I could see that there was a flow with each informal group that seemed so natural and fun for everyone.

I finally realized (slower learner?) that this natural flow is achieved by understand the “jamming etiquette.” You can find the basic etiquette on numerous websites and in the NBCMS Bluegrass Songbook. Many of the rules are just good common sense. Here are a couple of jamming good practices that stand out for me :

- ***Signal to the person leading the song that you want to take a break (or shake your head to pass)***
- ***Lower the volume of your playing when someone else is taking a break*** (a practice that is often not followed and one that I had to learn myself)
- ***Encourage each other & have fun doing it***

NBCMS Stuff To Buy

The Club has put together some great looking merchandise with the NBCMS logo as shown in the picture on the right. Kinley Miller has been passionately exploring other ideas.

All of these hot little items are being sold “at cost” which means the Club is simply trying to offer you some cool things without trying to make a profit.

Hmm, picture 100 NBCMS members at Blueberry all wearing Club hats or Club T-shirts ! Cool thought....



Inside the Vault by Frank Omoe

What an incredible library we located upstairs at Pleasantview Hall! There are dozens of CD's, lots of DVDs, and many instructional books on every bluegrass instrument and the voice.

Whether you are a "picker" or a "grinner," I'm sure you could find something that you like.

There are sign out sheets in a binder in the Library.

In each issue of the Newsletter, I will feature items that are in the Library. They are just waiting for someone like you or me to take them home.

Pioneering Women of Bluegrass: Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard CD

I took this CD for a listen because, while I had heard the name Hazel Dickens, I knew nothing about her. I hadn't even heard anything she had done. Am I ever glad I took it home! What great songs, what talent, and what a story. This 1996 Smithsonian Folkways release is 63 minutes long. All the songs were re-mastered so the sound quality is very good. The great liner notes tell the incredible story of how Hazel Dickens and singing partner Alice Gerrard struggled to break down the bluegrass gender barrier. Tak-

In this issue, I'll share with you a CD I discovered of the remarkable music and story of **Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard**.

I also listened to and learned from a CD called **Second Generation Bluegrass**.

Parking Lot Pickers—Banjo Edition is an instructional book and CD I'd love to tell you about.

Lastly, I watched a DVD entitled **Pioneers and Legends of Bluegrass**.

Just my thoughts. I'd love to hear yours.

ing songs from all over (The Carter Family, Bill Monroe, The Stanley Bros and some of their own) Hazel and Alice, backed by a stellar group of musicians became legitimate stars in the bluegrass world. I loved their great harmony. There are three tunes on the CD, my favourite being Chubby Wise's fiddling on *Lee Highway Blues*. Other guest artists included mandolinist David Grisman and banjo great Lamar Grier. Grisman and fiddler Billy Baker contributed a great mando/fiddle duet in a break on *A Distant Land to Roam*. I really enjoyed the multi harmony on *Gabriel's Call*. With 25 numbers, it was hard to pick a favourite song but I settled on a great version of



A peek inside "The Vault" looking at half the CD Wall

Won't You Come and Sing for Me. Not only was this a great CD to listen to, but I learned a heck of a lot about two great ladies and band leaders.

Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard



Second Generation Bluegrass CD

IMC Music released this 24 song CD in 2004. *Second Generation Bluegrass* features groups from the 1960's and 70's such as The Dillard's, The Country Gentlemen, and The Kentucky Travelers. Talented singers and pickers like Bill Emerson, Buzz Busby, Bill Browning, and Bill Clifton perform some of their hits. Ricky Skaggs, Keith Whitley and David Grisman show why they were emerging as young bluegrass stars. *Dooley, My Main Trial is Yet to Come, Bury Me Beneath the Willow, and Shady Grove* were some of the familiar songs on the 51 minute CD. My favourite song on the CD was the Country Gentlemen's *High Lonesome*. Buzz Busby's fingers fairly flew across the banjo in *Banjo Whiz* and I always chuckle when I hear *The Talking Banjo*. The Dillard's' version of the classic *Flint Hill Special* was my favourite tune. Ralph Stanley's singing was a treat on Skaggs and Whitley's *Rock Bot-*

Parking Lot Pickers Banjo Edition

Mel Bay Publications put out this 225 song book in 2007 for three instruments – banjo, guitar and mandolin. Written by Bill Evans and Bruce Dix, the simple melodies are written in both banjo tab and conventional music format. Most songs are in G, C or D with a few written in F, Dm or Em. The two CDs have an easy to fol-

low, medium speed arrangement of the first verse and chorus of every song. For those like me who learn best by ear (coupled with tabs), the CDs are of great assistance. A "usual" male vocal performance key and use of a capo are also included. Basic instructions are given on how to learn a new song, how to use banjo tablature and how to transpose a chord progression or melody. The 225 songs are listed in alpha-

The Pioneers and Legends of Bluegrass DVD

This Man-do-Lin 2010 DVD features some of the prominent First and Second Generation characters in Bluegrass music. Ronnie Reno (Don Reno's son) also conducts short interviews with Bill Monroe and Mac Wiseman. Showing pioneers and legends in a music genre that began nearly 70 years ago means that most of the performance footage was shot in the 1970's or early 80's. The quality

of the filming may not be the best but the quality of the music leaves no doubt that the DVD is aptly named. This is an all star cast. Bill Monroe starts off the 15 song disc with the number that probably started it all - *Mule Skinner Blues*. *Rawhide* quickly (literally) follows. The signature voices of Lester Flatt and Mac Wiseman serve up the next five songs. The Lewis Family provide three inspirational Bluegrass Gospel tunes - fine harmony. Jim and Jesse amaze with their outstanding vocals and Jesse McReynold's fabulous mandolin cross picking on the classics *Hard Hearted* and *Cotton Mill Man*. Closing the DVD are two songs by the very youthful and hirsute Sam Bush, Tony Rice (now age 62 and 63 respectively) and Bluegrass Alliance. At the time of the filming, they were prodigies. Forty years later they've become legends. The DVD was fun to watch.

betical order and are the same in each of the three songbook set. Special attention was given to include works of the pioneers of bluegrass, especially Bill Monroe, Flatt and Scruggs, The Stanley Bros, Jimmy Martin, etc. Not being a banjo player, I can't comment on the quality of the banjo instruction but I know I signed out the mandolin edition as soon as I returned the banjo book.

Bluegrass at “The Works” by Grant Miner

The Works Art & Design Festival took place in Edmonton from June 19 - July 1. As described in The Work’s website, it was an “extravaganza of visual art, design & entertainment that attracted artists and patrons from around the globe.”

Each day featured live performers on the stage in Churchill Square, which was surrounded by artists tents and food vendors. Again this year the NBCMS had centre stage for the entire afternoon on June 29. Thanks to Marc Ladouceur, the club put forward four acts—Hay City Rollers, Kayla and Matt Hotte, Whitemud Drive and Prairie Sky. The temperature was HOT, meaning +32C, but hopefully the audience thought the bluegrass music was just as hot!

Edmonton’s well known theatre performer and musician, Cathy Derkach, did an outstanding job as the MC. She also did a wonderful job promoting bluegrass music & NBCMS.



Whitemud Drive



Hay City Rollers



Matt & Kayla Hotte



Prairie Sky

Pictures courtesy of Marc Ladouceur, Evan Bray, and yours truly)

NBCMS Under the Big Tent

by Grant Miner



It has arrived !

The Club (Ron got it on sale) recently purchased a tent that will be used to create a NBCMS presence at festivals like Blueberry and similar bluegrass events. The purpose is to create a welcoming environment for NBCMS club members to meet up and jam.

The plan is to have some NBCMS signage or banner on the outside of the tent to clearly indicate this is the best place for pickin' and singin' bluegrass.

Jason Baldwin and Ron Mercer set up the tent a few weeks ago for the first time and as you can see Jason had the honour of breaking it in with some banjer pickin'.

Extra points for anyone who can identify the person inside the tent.

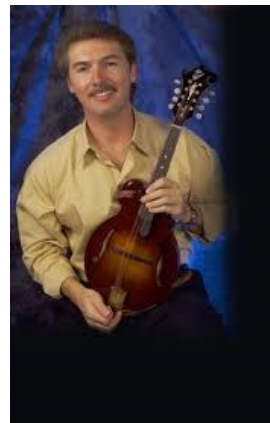
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BLUEGRASS ARTISTS - PAST & PRESENT by Grant Miner

Allan Bibey

Allan Bibey is one of the leaders in mandolin in the world of bluegrass. Since first hitting the scene in the early 1980's, Allan has made a name for himself as one of the most creative and technically gifted mandolin players in bluegrass and acoustic music. The bluegrass seed was likely planted when Bibey's dad took him to see Bill Monroe when Allan was five years old. Bibey helped found the **New Quicksilver Group** and he also played with groups like **IIIrd Tyme Out** and **Blue Ridge**.



In the 1990's he played with various groups & projects. In 2000 Bibey was included in Mel Bay's book, *The Greatest Mandolin Players of the Twentieth Century*. In 2001 Bibey won two IBA awards, Instrumental Recording of the Year, and Recorded Event of the Year. In 2002 he released his own album, "In The Blue Room" which included guest players like Jerry Douglas. In 2004 Alan was nominated for a Grammy for the **Blue Ridge** project "Side By Side." Bibey was voted Mandolin Player of the Year for 2007, 2009 and 2010.

Today Allan Bibey leads **Grasstowne** (an amazing group that played at Blueberry 2014. I was astonished by Bibey's blazing speed, note clarity and overall musicianship). **Grasstowne's** amazing success includes the SPBGMA 2008 award for Album of the Year for "*The Road Headin' Home*" with former bandmates Steve Gulley and Phil Leadbetter.

Bibey says that a band requires a special musical connection to play blindingly fast. However he also focuses on the importance of vocals in achieving the bluegrass sound. He says, "I really try to sing in tune!" He likes all kinds of music but his heart is with bluegrass. When it comes to playing, Bibey says, "The mandolin becomes a vehicle for my soul." One song that he plays at most gigs is a song that he wrote about his grandparents, through his eyes, called "Side By Side."

In early 2004 the Gibson Company put into production the "Alan Bibey Signature Series" line of mandolins. Bibey wanted the mandolin to have the classic looks and sound of a Loar, but with tortoiseshell binding and antique 'burst' finish. Other special appointments included the old-style flowerpot headstock inlay, hand-engraved gold-plate hardware and a stained, unfinished neck, "so it feels wonderful in any kind of weather." Bibey specified a scalloped neck extension so the mandolin is player-friendly, even for those players who have a tendency to hit the extension with the pick.

Allan Bibey's advice to aspiring musicians – "Be true to your heart and listen to what people have to say but always stay true to yourself".

Upcoming Concerts and Festivals in Alberta

- July 10-12 Boscombe Hillbilly Jam
 July 17-19 South Country Fair (Fort MacLeod)
 July 17-19 Vilna Cowboy Fest (www.vilnaagsociety.com)
 July 23-26 Calgary Folk Festival
 July 24-26 Sasquatch Gathering (Rangeton Park)
 July 31-Aug 2 Blueberry Bluegrass & Country Festival (Stony Plain)
 July 31-Aug 2 Big Valley Jamboree (Camrose)
- August 1-3 Canmore Folk Festival
 August 7-10 Edmonton Folk Festival
 August 14-16 Shady Grove Bluegrass Festival (Nanton)
 August 15-16 Come By The Hills Music Festival (Wainwright)
 August 16 Kitscoty Jamboree
- Sept. 23 *Whitemud Drive* Concert/Jam Lead Pleasantview Hall
 October 22 Central Music Fest (Red Deer) features Claire Lynch

Workshops and Camps

- July 5-11 Guitar Camp (Manning, Alberta)
 July 19-23 Camp Calvin Week 1 July 25-29 Camp Calvin Week 2 (St. Edouard, Alberta)
 July 26-31 Acoustic Music Camp (Hillspring, Alberta)
 August 10-14 Northern Lights Bluegrass & Old Time Camp (Nesslin Lake, Saskatchewan)
 August 16-21 or 23-28 Nimblefingers Bluegrass & Old Time Camp (Sorrento, British Columbia)
 Sept. 9-13 Monroe Mandolin Camp (Kingston, Tennessee)
 October 16-18 NBCMS Fall Workshop (Camp He Ho Ha)
 November 13-16 ResoSummit –Dobro only (Nashville, Tennessee)

The Mission of the Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society
is to promote, preserve and present Bluegrass Music
 Visit our Website at www.bluegrassnorth.com