



The Northern Bluegrass Circle Music

Bluegrass Newsletter

Winter 2016



Acoustic Music Workshop 2016 Another Success! by Grant Miner



In October the NBCMS hosted another very successful fall workshop at Camp HeHoHa. In total there were 147 attendees made up of campers, instructors and the NBCMS executive. Included in the head count were 45 enthusiastic ukulele players who attended the Saturday and Sunday portion of the workshop (along with a ukulele workshop).

Anna Somerville is the NBCMS Workshop Director and has been filling this role for over 5 years. This year Anna named the workshop "The Acoustic Music Workshop" as a way to reach out to the broader musical community. Since attendees were exposed to bluegrass music throughout the weekend, the theme aligned very well with the NCMS Mission: "To Preserve, Promote and Present Bluegrass Music."

On the first day Anna held an instructors' orientation meeting where the instructors were brought up to speed on the type of people who attend the workshop and what the attendees hope to get out of the workshop. The instructors are asked to get involved with the



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participants and to help build a strong sense of community. Not only did the instructors present their workshops with passion, they entertained everyone with a "Band Scramble" performance on Friday night, put on "Mini-Concerts" on Saturday afternoon, and jammed with the everyone on Friday and Saturday nights. As in past years, the feedback from the camp attendees on the instructors was very positive.

Since many instructors have taught at workshops in both Canada and the United States, I asked Anna what they thought of our workshop. Anna replied that the feedback she received from the instructors was, "The NBCMS workshop is the real deal." They saw that the camp was well organized and, as instructors, they felt they were "well taken care of."



Band Scramble Saturday Night

Continued on page 3

Ronnie's Ramblin's by NBCMS President Ron Mercer

Traditionally, the end of the year is when one looks back and ponders what has happened. What has the Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society accomplished, what didn't we do and what are our future plans for 2017?

Well, we do have a top-notch executive again. I am pleased to have such a dedicated team. I practically have to grab a handrail when a certain couple of them get flying. Sheila (Vice President) is always there to back me up and I really appreciate her calm demeanor when things get a little rocky. Leonard (Secretary) takes his job very seriously, with minutes and agendas never looking better organized. Some of our executive meetings are so short that he barely has time to type "adjourned." The toughest job has to be Treasurer and Jason covers this position. When everyone else gets to jam, he gets to write cheques and find signatures. I know he takes a lot of work home and does this on his own time. Give him a big "thank-you" next time you see him. I know I will. Shawn (Website Director) also does a lot of work on his own time and he is always ready to provide instant answers to any of our queries. Don't try to hack into our site with him in control. Kinley (Merchandise and Membership Director) is the only person with 2 positions on the board. You can usually catch his smiling face at the front table which he mans all night thus also missing out on a lot of the jamming. Steve (Equipment Director) handles our sound which includes hiring Matt Hotte for set-ups/tear downs and keeping our wireless system working. We have never been fed so well with Marlene (Front of House) in the kitchen. Her genuine smile as she talks to everyone is sure a welcome sight on these cold Wednesday evenings. Anna (Workshop Director) has her duties down to a fine science as she hosts the Winter Jam and the Fall Workshop. *(This reminds me that I should pay my winter jam camp registration. 72 hours of music adrenalin)*

Then there is Gene (Concert Director) who has certainly created a whirlwind of activity on that old Pleasantview stage. He is now our "Speaker of

the House" and let's make sure we vote him in again!

Last, but not least, are Frank and Grant (Newsletter Directors). These

two fellows have created a very high standard of bluegrass newsletters that are so professional looking that other clubs are envious. They have indicated they will be stepping down in 2017 since they both spend winters in warmer climates. I will be looking for a replacement(s) for them prior to our AGM. They came up with some great ideas how to simplify the newsletter and it is an exciting way to really get to know the club. You know you want to be part of our team. I just have to ask, right?!

One of my personal highlights of 2016 was the 20th Anniversary celebration. It turned out to be a wonderful afternoon of recognizing all the Giants of the Edmonton bluegrass scene. I was so proud to thank each of them for helping promote, preserve and present bluegrass. I understand that some of these organizations are going to copy our ideas in the future (now, that's flattering).

One of the things I wanted to get done was to produce a CD of our standard circle instrumentals. I would have the regular jammers playing solos on this CD, not some hired ringers. I believe it would help newer pickers to hear the tunes the way we play 'em and be ready to jump in. I will work on this in 2017 along with cleaning up the huge mess in the library...maybe I'll do these things in 2018.

What will 2017 bring? What do you as members want? With our current executive, nothing seems to be impossible. Bring it on!!



Acoustic Music Workshop

Success *continued from page 1*

Anna had some very interesting closing thoughts when I asked about her thoughts on the workshop. She said it was “all about relationships. It is a great place to build relationships with instructors and all participants. The format creates ample opportunity for people to meet and get to know one another in a very relaxed and informal “bluegrass” way.” The other thing that Anna brought up was why she continues to put in the hours required to put on the workshop. Anna said that she remembers how good it felt when she first found the NBCMS club and could play music with others. That is the fuel that drives her to provide this great support for the club and its members.

In case you missed it here is the website created by Anna for the fall 2016 workshop :

www.theacousticmusicworkshop.com.

Hopefully we will see you at next year’s workshop!



What's under your Bluegrass Christmas Tree?

Winter Newsletter

by Co-Editors Frank Omoe and Grant Miner



Over the past two years, we have had the honour and pleasure of being the Co-Editors of the NBCMS Newsletter. It has been a lot of fun! This Winter 2016 edition is the 8th that has been published during that time. We have learned a tremendous amount about our Club, its history, members, and activities during our tenure. Our primary focus has been on the club: its sponsored events, activities, local bands, and their gigs. We’ve also tried to promote provincial, national and international bluegrass happenings that we thought would be of interest to our members. We couldn’t have done that without the support and contributions of so many people. Thank you very much to those who helped write regular columns, special articles or provided pictures for the Newsletters: Ron Mercer, Jim Storey, Jason Baldwin, Anna Somerville, Carolyn Hotte, Shawn Robinson, Sheila Hallett, Mike Bunting, Gene Zwozdesky, Leonard Swanson Clem Bray, Noel McNaughton, Mike Bunting, Brian Ficht, Bob Leitch, Ken Clarke, Janet Franklin, Iris and Ollie Olekshy, Eric Papsdorf, Cam Yule, and Erin Kushnerik. We could not have done this without you.

We will put together one last newsletter in the Spring before passing the pen to the new Newsletter Editor(s). We hope they have as much fun doing this as we have had.

We wish everyone a wonderful holiday season. Keep on pickin’.

2016 Acoustic Workshop Classes



Isaac Calender's Fiddlers



Greg Blake's Singers



Andrew Collins' Mandolinists



Alastair Whitehead's Bassists



Darryl Poulsen's Guitar Pickers



Bruce Ziff's Claw Hammer Banjo Players



Tab Tabscott and his Dobro Players



2016 Acoustic Workshop Classes



Jenny Lester's Fiddlers



Curtis Appleton's Banjo Players



Bluegrass 101



Adrian Gross' Mando - ers



Marc Ladouceur's Guitar Pickers



Frank Evans' Banjo Players



Alastair Whitehead,
Curtis Appleton, Dar-
cy Whiteside, Ron
Mercer, Ralph
Shaw lead the
Sunday Morning
Sing Along



Camp HeHoHa Ukulele Camp by Janet Franklin and Friends

The Ukulele "kids" went to camp! Ukulele camp; with the "big kids." The prospect was exciting and a bit intimidating. We were not sure what to expect.

DORMS??? They were just fine. They were clean and comfy and had all you needed, especially your friends.

FOOD?? The food was very tasty, plentiful, and everywhere, all the time, even in the middle of the night. Yes, we did enjoy that!

SLEEP? You do NOT come to camp to sleep. As one of our number said, "We slept when we did." BUT that was because there was time for sleep.

MUSIC! Music, Music, Music was everywhere, all the time, day and night, and well into the wee hours of the morning. The most wonderful sounds came from every corner and room in the building. Bluegrass played on double bass, fiddle, mandolin, banjo, claw banjo, guitar and voices that seemed to seep out of people like water from a mountain spring. Never ending beautiful sounds of bluegrass from young and young at heart played by the finest musicians and the most novice players alike.

ORGANIZATION??? The organizer, Anna Somerville, seemed to be a one woman band. Everyone else was back-up. Underneath the fun, was organization the Canadian military would envy.

To the participants, the camp ran like a giant house party with family and friends. And everyone was your best new friend.

FUN?? There was a smile on the face of everyone we met ALL THE TIME. Well, maybe except the stand up bass players. But it was explained that they had to try hard not to smile because they were making everyone sound so good and they had the largest instruments.

INSTRUCTION? Ron Mercer wisely chose Ralph Shaw to lead our three Ukulele workshops. We were a little nervous. Would our skills be up to the expectations of the instructor and the bluegrass veterans? Or maybe, sadly, would the expectations be so low that we *would* meet them? No worries. We were made to feel comfortable and welcome to explore the many ways offered to improve our playing. Our workshops inspired, challenged and humbled us. We did improve. At least we were certain that, with a little practice of the excellent instruction, we would improve. Maybe we will demonstrate our improvement next year, if we are given that opportunity.

We would like to thank our good friend in the ukulele world, Ron Mercer, the super organizer Anna Somerville, and the Board of the Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society for giving us this wonderful opportunity to learn, and enjoy the very good company of the members of the Society. We enjoyed every minute!



Ralph
Shaw's
Ukulele
Class

Welcome
Cake For
Ukulele
Players



The Ukulele by Grant Miner



After the success of the ukulele workshop at the NBCMS Acoustic Camp in October, I thought it might be timely to have a short article about this interesting little instrument. When we think of the ukulele some of us just think of **Tiny Tim**, **Taylor Swift** or perhaps a 1960 Hawaiian based “moving picture show.” A little research shows that there is more to the story.

The story of the ukulele starts in Europe. By the 18th Century stringed, fretted instruments had a long history. Larger instruments such as guitars and lutes developed smaller cousins that were useful to sea-faring musicians. In Portugal, the guitar had shrunk down to become a machete. In 1879 the “Ravenscrag” set off for Hawaii with four Portuguese cabinet makers on board. When they arrived, the Hawaiian people could not afford ornate furniture so the cabinet makers started to make instruments. The one that took hold was the machete.

The truth behind much ukulele mythology, such as where it got its name, the tuning and ‘my dog has fleas’, is mostly lost to us. What *is* true is that the uke became a big hit with the Hawaiian Royal Family, the Hawaiians in general, and became firmly established as their instrument by the start of the 20th Century. After the USA’s annexation of Hawaii, the new owners were keen to sell it to mainland America as a dream tropical island. Their big push was the Panama Pacific International Exposition in 1915. Their show included plenty of ukulele music and featured the ukuleles of **Jannah Kumalae**. It sparked the original ukulele boom in the 1920s among mainland people dreaming of a mythical island getaway.

The ukulele started to move away from a purely Hawaiian novelty to become such a part of music making that by the start of the ‘30s most piano scores featured ukulele chord diagrams. Thanks to **Ukulele Ike**, the uke’s image turned almost 180 degrees to become associated with smoky bars, trilbies, and jazzy songs.

When Wall Street collapsed in 1929, the economy and the uke’s popularity in the USA took a big dive. However, the uke, in its louder and harsher banjolele form, started growing in popularity in the music halls of the UK. The biggest star of the era was **George Formby** (I believe George was referenced by **Ralph Shaw** during his performance at the Acoustic Camp in October) whose banjolele strumming was the sound of the Second World War. The war also provided an impetus for the revival of the ukulele in the USA when troops returned with souvenir ukuleles from Hawaii.

The booming USA consumer economy of the 1950’s saw mass produced plastic goods flooding shops, including plastic ukuleles by Maccaferri. This was bolstered by the use of the ukulele by huge TV star **Arthur Godfrey**. The second American ukulele boom came into being. The rather less inspirational figure of Tiny Tim provided the soundtrack to the uke’s crash in popularity during the 60s and 70s.

Two huge trends that have helped bring the ukulele back to popularity are the proliferation of the internet and the huge increase in imports from China and the East. The internet has put ukulele music in front of people and has created a groundswell growth of people being inspired to pick up the instrument by others like themselves who are playing for their own enjoyment rather than superstardom.

In the Edmonton area, you can find the “Edmonton Ukulele Circle.” They generally meet once a month for the pure joy of playing together. For more information please check out this website:
<http://edmontonuke.wordpress.com>.

Sources – UkuGuides.com, Edmonton Ukulele Circle website

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, flat-picking 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



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 you still can't play your instrument following your lessons.

Grassified Ads

My name is Steven and I have a couple of fine bluegrass instruments for sale if anyone in your club is looking for something like this:

Martin HD 28	\$ 2500.00
Gibson F-5G custom	\$ 3500.00

These are very fine instruments and I am the original owner of both. They both come with excellent cases.

ssretreat@hotmail.com cell- 780-832-6086

Band Equipment for Sale

The equipment consists of 5 mics with stands, house speakers with stands, floor monitors, a Sampson TXM16 - 1000W stereo powered mixer, a Peavey Deltaflex mixer. Both mixers are in a hard cases. A separate tub has all the necessary cables to hook up the speakers and mics.

Prefer to sell as a package = \$2,500.00.

Contact Terry Ruddy at 780-244-4861 OR

Dennis Ruddy at 780-435-0324 (daytime)

The Bitter Green - September 19 by Frank Omoe



On Wednesday, September 19, **The Bitter Green** closed the "Raise the Bar" series of local band concerts. An appreciative audience of nearly fifty bluegrass lovers was treated to some mighty fine singing and picking from Erin Kushniruk (vocals and guitar), Miles Zurawell (vocals, banjo and dobro), Nico Humby (vocals, upright bass), and guest mandolin player, Jose Mejia.

The six song (plus an encore) set was kicked off by Erin taking the lead vocal on *Train Going South*. The varied strum patterns she would use throughout the set really demonstrated Erin's prowess as a rhythm guitar player. *Twenty-Twenty Vision* featured Nico's emotive lead vocals and Erin's beautiful harmony. Jose Mejia provided some lovely mando runs and fills on the haunting *Wayfaring Stranger*.

What's a bluegrass concert without a gospel song and **The Bitter Green** did not disappoint with a beautiful rendition of *Man in the Middle*. Nico took the lead vocal, was joined by Erin's tight harmony, and then Nico showed off a nifty bass solo.

Ain't No Ash followed wherein Erin's wistful lead melody was beautifully harmonized by Nico and Miles. Jose's break saw him traverse the length of the mando fret board and Nico's use of the bow added some moving low sustain notes. Miles' flying fingers provided a great kick off to *Down Along the Dixie Line*. Miles was great all night on both the banjo and dobro.

I have to admit that, while I saw lots of audience toe tapping and body swaying in time to the music, I was disappointed that none of the instrumental breaks were recognized by applause. And, boy there were some great breaks taken by all the **The Bitter Green** members, particularly some wailing Dobro and blistering banjo pickin' by Miles, deft use of harmonics by Jose, fine flat picking by Erin, and the aforementioned bass solo by Nico. The crowd must have enjoyed the music, though, because it would not let the band slip away without an encore. A fearless cover of **The Steeldrivers'** *Drinkin' Dark Whiskey* brought closure to the thoroughly enjoyable set.

Thanks Erin, Nico, Miles and Jose for showcasing your considerable talent.

Greg Blake Trio and Friends

October 19 by Frank Omoe

Partly, I'm sure, to ease the letdown/hangover from the Fall Acoustic Workshop, on Wednesday, October 19, the concert master of organization (and ceremonies) Gene Zwozdesky, put together a fine show of bluegrass, gospel, and country music that featured **Greg Blake, Isaac Calender, Ellie Hakanson** (from Jeff Sroggins and Colorado) with guest artists **Marc Ladouceur** and **Darcy Whiteside**. The Trio kicked off the evening with a rousing version of *I'm On My Way Back to the Old Home*. Two country songs followed. I swear, if you closed your eyes, you'd have sworn it was the Ol' Possum himself, **George Jones**, "sangin'" as Greg crooned out *She Thinks I Still Care*, which also had Isaac showing off some fine doubles stops on the mandolin. Fiddler Ellie Hakanson displayed some soulful fiddling on the second country offering, *Heartaches by the Number*. **Hazel Dickens'** *Won't You Come and Sing for Me* and *Just a Few Old Memories* featured lead vocals by Ellie (with harmony provided by Greg). You could have heard a pin drop during Isaac's tremolo mandolin solo.

The writing, vocal and fiddle talents of Isaac Calender were well demonstrated firstly, in what Greg described as the aptly named, musician's anthem - *Flat Broke* and, secondly, in a beautiful love song called *Emily's Waltz*, which featured Isaac and Ellie playing twin fiddles and Greg taking a very sweet guitar break.

Faded Love followed demonstrating exceptional taste and timing by Ellie and Isaac on the twin fiddles. The final number for the Trio was taken from Greg's recording called *Heart and Home*, a CD that spent 20 weeks in the top 5 on the Folk Chart.

Johnny Cash's *I Still Miss Someone* was the selection played.



Marc Ladouceur and Darcy Whiteside joined Greg, Isaac, and Ellie for the final three songs, the first of which was a Greg Blake composition called *Fifty Miles From Nowhere*. I swear, if Darcy had been playing any farther up his banjo's fretboard, he'd have been fingering the bridge. It was a lovely break. Greg, Marc and Darcy displayed some really tight three-part harmony on *Once More*. The well deserved encore of **Carter Stanley's** *True Love Is Too Sweet To Last* featured a tasty mando solo by Marc and a ripping break on the guitar by Greg (no, his fingers didn't actually leave his left hand - it just looked like it).

The combination of great music and great food (thanks, Anna Somerville, for the chili and pie) drew over 100 people, which included eight ukulele players fresh from the Acoustic Workshop at Camp HeHoHa. Another NBCMS successful concert at Pleasantview!

Nadine Landry and Sammy Lind

November 2 by Ken Clarke

Pleasantview Hall was filled to capacity to hear **Nadine Landry** and **Sammy Lind** perform a duet show for the NBMCS. Many will know Sammy and Nadine as members of the group "**The Foghorn Stringband.**" Fresh off a tour this summer over to Ireland and Wales with their band, they decided it was time to return to the east and, with that, embarked on a tour throughout the Yukon called the "Farewell to the Yukon Tour." Sammy and Nadine are moving from their former home in Whitehorse, Yukon to their new home in Gaspésie, Quebec and, with that trip ahead, they decided to make it a musical tour which, thankfully for us, included a stop in Edmonton. They call that the "Moving Home Tour."

They started off their set with the classic **Bill Munroe** tune "*Jenny Lynn*" followed by "*Train on the Island*" and great banjo tunes such as "*Down The River I Go* , *Uncle Joe*" and, "*Reuben's Train.*" Another fun tune named "*You Already Put Big Tears In My Eyes, Must You Throw Dirt In My Face*" kept the standing-room-only crowd amused!

Sammy and Nadine are multi-talented musicians. Sammy played toe tapping, smooth, rhythmic fiddle and finger driving, hammer-on banjo, with Nadine playing perfect rhythm guitar, button accordion and, a new instrument in their repertoire, the Triangle! They shared with us that, in their travels throughout the north, they were always concerned about the cooler weather and how it could affect their instruments. Well, when they were on tour in California, they had a warmer temperature problem when the Triangle got too hot and was



burning Nadine's fingers to hold onto!

Originally a Minnesota boy, Sammy, who was a young rocker in his teens, shared with us a memory of his father (who became a huge **Doc Watson** fan.) Sammy heard the tune "*Reuben's Train*" being played by his grandpa. The young rocker was so impressed when his grandpa told him that this

tune happened to be the "*Can't Buy Me Love*" hit of his grandpa's day!

Another great story Sammy shared with us was during their trip to Scotland where they met up with a group of musicians composed of 4 Scotsman and 3 Americans. They played the old Scottish ballad called "*The Unquiet Grave.*" It turned out that this tune was a very old Scottish poem and had words to it!

A unique display of talent was displayed as Nadine played her knitting sticks in percussion on the finger board of Sammy's fiddle as Sammy bowed out the tune! They finished off their set with the classic "*There's No Place Like Home*" and invited all the Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society members in attendance to join in singing. We all were very entertained!

From tearful bluegrass favourites, to pick-me-up, old-timey tunes, and sweet harmonies, they have it all! Sammy and Nadine's next stop was Saskatoon. As they were packing all their equipment into the rented 1 Ton U-Haul Cargo Van for the trip home to Quebec, Nadine and Sammy invited one and all to stop by if they were ever in the neighbourhood! "The kettle will be on."

NBCMS 20th Anniversary

The Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2016! Rather than spend time patting itself on the back, the Club Executive decided that the time was right to recognize and thank the many groups who had been of great support to bluegrass music in Alberta and, directly or indirectly to the NBCMS. So, on Nov. 6, at Stang Guitars, 9976 - 76 Ave the following were thanked and presented with a trophy of appreciation. The event was hosted by NBCMS President, **Ron Mercer** with Director of Entertainment **Gene Zwozdesky** as Master of Ceremonies.



NBCMS President **Ron Mercer** (in bluegrass formal) welcomes the presenters and recipients.



Since 1986, the **Foothills Bluegrass Music Society** in Calgary has had monthly concerts, weekly jams and

the Shady Grove Bluegrass Festival. Accepting the award was Artistic Director and Website Guru, **Rick Gerrior**.



The **Festival of Stars** has been showcasing Alberta talent every long weekend in May since 2004. **Les Eberhart** presented the award to event

Chairpersons **Penny and Ron Shantz**.



CKUA Radio has been Alberta's cultural network celebrating music, engaging communities and making life worth listening since 1927. **Noel McNaughton** presented the award to CKUA's CEO **Ken Regan**.



The **Blueberry Bluegrass and Country Music Festival** has proudly hosted the absolute best bluegrass music festival north of Kentucky since 1985. Accepting the award was long time Volunteer Treasurer, **Sheila Hallett**.



NBCMS 20th Anniversary

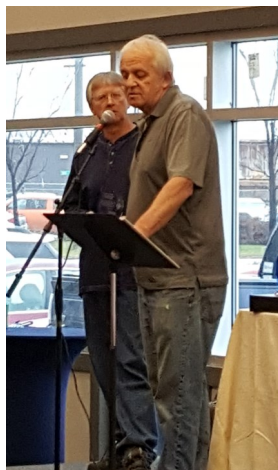
CJSR Radio, the farthest left a dial can go - 88.5 FM, since 1984 has been playing diverse music for a diverse audience. Accepting on behalf of



Program Director **Chad Brunet** was Prairie Pickin' Co-Host "**Cousin**" **Darcy Whiteside**.



Myhre's Music has been a family business with family values since 1967. Accepting the award was **Byron Myhre**.



Quite simply, the **Edmonton Folk Festival** has been the best folk festival in North America since 1980. **Terry Lawson** presented to **Terry Wickham** producer, for the last 28 years, of the Folk Fest.

The **Ironwood Stage and Grill** is purported to be the best "room" in Alberta and has been proudly supporting live music since 2006. **Marc Ladouceur**



presented the award to Owner **Pat McIntyre**.



Alberta's first family of bluegrass, the **Hotte Family**, inspire us all to play bluegrass. Long time NBCMS member **Linda Saboe** presented the award to **Matt, Ken, Kayla, Carolyn** and grandson **Potter Hotte**.



The Fiddler's Roost has been a place where anyone can gather and play music since 1995. Accepting the award, from presenter **Kenny Mak**, is the proprietor, **Bernie MacLellan**.

NBCMS 20th Anniversary



The Uptown Folk Club has been supporting musicians and music lovers since 1996. Happy 20th! **Alex Boudreau** presented the award to **Steve and Karen Gosse** and two unidentified volunteers.



Since 2012, Alberta's best kept secret, unless you're a bonafide bluegrass picker, has been **The Picker's Picnic**. Presenting the award was **Pat Guidera** to **Don Leckie** who accepted on behalf of **Brian Ficht**.



Vintage Musical Instrument Models **Matt and Kayla Hotte** show and tell about a 1939 D-18 Martin and 1933 Gibson L-5 guitar

Master of Ceremonies **Gene Zwozdesky** with **Taylor Stang**, owner of Stang Guitars

The beautiful venue of **Stang Guitars** hosted the NBCMS 20th Anniversary Celebration on Sunday, Nov. 6.



Local Bluegrass Bands by Frank Omoe

At this time, we are proud to say that there are thirteen 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
- Cabin Fever Band** website: cabinfeverband.ca contact Pat Guidera at 780-235-8671
- Kayla Hotte and her Rodeo Pals** website: www.therodeopals.com
- Long Way Home** contact Eric Papsdorf etpapsdorf@gmail.com
- Pluckin' Holler Boys** contact Matt (780) 915-7807 Mattgrierdrums@gmail.com
- Prairie Sky** website: <http://www.prairie-sky.net>
- The Bitter Green** website: TheBitterGreen.com
- The Bix Mix Boys** website: www.thebixmixboys.ca
- The Steepbank String Band** contact Scott Degen at sdegen@mcsnet.ca
- The Strawflowers** www.thestrawflowers.com; howdy@thestrawflowers.com or 780-633-6941
- Up The Creek** contact Ron Woytiuk (780) 470-0234 or ronpeggywoytiuk@gmail.com
- Whitemud Drive** contact Clem Bray (587) 989-5403 or cbray@telusplanet.net



“Seen and Noted” by Iris and Ollie Olekshy

A sample of the players and songs played at the past few Wednesday Jams courtesy of the eyes and ears of sisters Iris and Ollie Olekshy.

November 9 and 16

The Players



Blyth Nuttall



Frank Omoe and Grant Miner

The Songs

- Red Wing
- I Saw the Light
- I Wonder Where You Are Tonight
- On the Banks of the Ohio
- St. Anne's Reel
- What Was I Supposed to Do?
- Salt Spring



Ian Johnson



Anna Somerville



Ken Clarke



“Seen and Noted” by Iris and Ollie Olekshy



Shawn Robinson



Gene Zwozdesky



Pamela Johnson



Darcy Whiteside

Songs and Players
Nov. 23, 30 and Dec. 7
 Midnight Special
 Dark Hollow
 Nine Pound Hammer
 Lover’s Return
 Shackles and Chains
 Don’t Fall For Me Darlin’
 Truck Drivin’ Man
 Gentle on My Mind



Robert Leckie



Scott Degan, Ken Clarke. Jim Malmberg, Ian Johnson, Ron Mercer and the toqued-top head of Bruce Ziff.



Noel McNaughton and Leonard Swanson



2016 NBCMS Christmas Party and Concert

THE EVENT



THE GREETERS



THE MENU

- Buns and Butter
- Two Types of Salads
- Steamed Vegetables
- Mashed Potatoes & Gravy
- Roast Beef
- Sticky Pudding
- Mini Donuts
- Cream Puffs,
- Dessert Bars,



SOME GUESTS



Mike Bunting, Kenny Mak

Lynn, Greg Giese and Judith Williamson

Bob and Colleen Whaling, Doug and Cathy Reid, Doug and Shirley Seymour and Linda Saboe



Noel McNaughton, Norm Waltho

DINNER IS SERVED!



Dr. Ernie Skakun, Nick Lees from the Edmonton Journal, Gene Zwozdesky, Rick Sliwkanic



2016 NBCMS Christmas Party and Concert

THE BIX MIX BOYS



THE SET LIST

Rebecca (Instrumental)
 Big Spike Hammer
 Cold Sheets of Rain
 I Wouldn't Change You If I Could
 I'll Be Gone
 Ashes of Love
 Across the Great Divide
 Cheyenne/Old Home Place
 Paper Heart
 Hard Pressed
 A Ramblin' Man is a Ramblin' Man
 Crazy Heart (Encore)

NO CHRISTMAS PUDDING? WE'LL HAVE CHRISTMAS JAM!



TIME TO CLEAN UP



Thank you for all that you do, Anna



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 and Front of the House Director **Marlene Thompson** always comes up with some tasty goodies.

Bluegrass 101

Bluegrass 101 at Pleasantview Hall returns January 4 and takes place almost every Wednesday from 7:30-8:30. Not to be confused with a "Slowjam," **Darcy Whiteside** and **Jim Storey** take a different song each Wednesday, thoroughly dissect the parts and arrangements, and teach while playing. What makes the song unique, how it is put together, where the players can embellish (or back off), hints on taking breaks and so much more make **Bluegrass 101** a treat for players of all abilities. Upcoming songs will include:

In the Pines by Bill Monroe, *Ocean of Diamonds* by Jimmy Martin, *In The Gravel Yard* by Blue Highway, *My Walking Shoes* by Jimmy Martin, *How Long Have I Been Waiting For You* by Doyle Lawson, *Don't This Road Look Rough and Rocky* by Flatt and Scruggs, *Hold What'cha Got* by Jimmy Martin, *Nine Pound Hammer* by Multiple Artists, *Somehow Tonight* by Flatt and Scruggs, and *Big Spike Hammer* by The Osborne Brothers. Come on down to the basement. You'll be glad you did!

Myhre's Music
8735 - 118 Ave. Edmonton, Alberta T5B 0T2
(780) 477 - 1586
10% of all Non-Sale Accessories
Current Membership Card Must be Presented

2016 NBCMS Casino by Ron Mercer

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

Joanne Waltho	Steve Schroeter	Anna Somerville	Frank Omoe
Norm Waltho	Ian Johnson	Ron Mercer	Kinley Miller
Shawn Robinson	Greg Giese	Sheila Gurba	Gene Zwozdesky
Carolyn Hotte	Noel McNaughton	Elsie Roth	Sheila Hallett
Daryl Roth	Jason Baldwin	Bob Leitch	Michelle Dentinger

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.



Is there a better promoter of the NBCMS than Prez **Ron Mercer** seen here at the annual Guitar Show Sept, 18, 2016? A number of used instruments were sold and over 1000 people saw our sign and met the Prez.



Inside the Vault by Frank Omoe

In late August of 2016, NBCMS member **Al Preston** passed away from pancreatic cancer. Al was a quiet man who played the banjo at the jam, Acoustic Workshops, and at a number of Winter Jam Camps. He volunteered his time to work at NBCMS Casinos. Al liked to purchase CDs from the bluegrass groups who attended Blueberry or performed concerts sponsored by the NBCMS. Shortly after Al's passing, **Karen**, his widow, contacted me to ask if the NBCMS would like Al's Bluegrass CD and DVD Collection. I gratefully accepted the donation. There were over 40 Bluegrass CDs, 10 DVDs and instructional books. The contents of Al's collection ranged from compilation albums by the bluegrass legends to signed discs by renowned recent artists to inspiring recordings by local groups to excellent instructional banjo DVD's and print. Al supported them all. We miss him. In the next few months, Al's collection will be accessioned to the NBCMS Library. You will recognize Al's donated items by the following sticker affixed to the cover:

In Memory of Al Preston
2016

Sunny Jim's Bluegrass Storeys by Jim Storey

Continuing from the last newsletter, in which I was rambling on about my old 5 string Kay bass, and its help in building the club, as well as myself, the things that I learned while jamming on Wednesday nights, and playing small gigs to earn money for the club (pre-casino) are pretty much all the basics that I know about bluegrass music. We played 200 - 300 gigs (maybe more) for \$20 to \$50 and sometimes for free. We once had a raffle where we sold tickets for \$2, and the winner got the house band to play for a backyard or garage party. We made almost \$300 on that one. We played mostly old folks homes and hospitals, etc. - dragging that bass and all the other equipment we could scrounge up. I think we finally raised enough money to buy a small PA of sorts, and maybe a couple of microphones.

All the while I was picking up more bass playing information and technique but I still considered myself more of a rhythm guitar player, so it was a surprise when one Wednesday night, someone came up to me and asked if I would be interested in joining a new band that they were forming - but not as a guitar player, as a bass player. I still wasn't very good on the bass, but for some reason I agreed. The band we started was called **Maple Creek**, and like most bands we rehearsed plenty, and played small gigs for a couple of years. Our difference was that we had 3 people that could sing 3 part harmony perfectly, as well as a world class fiddler, and the best Scruggs style banjo player that I had heard. I was just the bass player with a beat up Kay bass. The band got pretty good, and over its 9 year life span we played at bluegrass festivals in every province except Quebec, played at the Canadian Country Music awards twice, once hosting the Sunday gospel show at the Citadel, played at the Western Canadian Music Awards, as well as at the Junos. We played on an Ian Tyson tribute show with some other famous Canadian acts (such as Ramblin' Jack El-

ott who took a liking to me and wanted me to drive him to Edmonton from Calgary). We played at the Winspear, the Citadel, Horizon Stage, Festival Place, the Arden Theatre, the Jack Singer in Calgary, and some other big halls and events in other provinces that I can't remember any more. We cut 2 CD's which we sold at events. The second one was produced by Emory Lester, who also played on it. I could go on and on, but vanity prevents me. The furthest away that I heard of for air play was Japan, where they did an hour radio show on us (in Japanese). Played a lot of good music and met many great people, and it was all up to that old Kay bass. For the last 10 years, the old bass has been seen with **The Bix Mix Boys**.

So, if you want to see one of the oldest members of our club, come and say "Hi" to my old 5 string Kay at some jam or show. It still is ugly.

Let me take this opportunity to wish you and yours the Merriest of Christmases, and the Happiest of New Years. Keep on pickin' (and grin-nin').



"Sunny" Jim Storey is a founding member of the NBCMS who, along with "Cousin" Darcy Whiteside co-hosts *Prairie Pickin'* every Thursday at 7:05 p.m. on CJSR FM Radio 88.5



Winter Jam Camp January 20-22, 2017 by Anna Somerville

Oh the weather outside may be frightful
But Winter Jam Camp is delightful
And in case you've no place to go
Pack up your guitar, mando, fiddle or that old
banjo.

(Sung to the tune of Let It Snow)

Yes, it's that time again to start considering your January musical options. Besides being a time of deep winter, January is also a time for fresh starts. So there you are, it's New Year's Eve and your resolutions are to play more music and play more music with other people. The festivities of Christmas and family commitments are behind you and now it's just you and your guitar (fiddle, mandolin, dobro, banjo or bass). You want to play more...get together with likeminded people...what to do, what to do...WAIT!...I know...pack up your favorite instruments and a songbook...say, "See ya later" to the family and make your way to Camp HeHoHa and the Winter Jam Camp. It's a weekend that will go by too fast and leave you feeling exhausted and exhilarated. Your family will be glad to see you arrive home Sunday content and renewed.

Have you been to the Jam Camp before? OK, you remember what a great break it was, how much music you played, how it was hard to leave and head for home on Sunday...think about returning. Would this Jam Camp be your first time? Well, what do you need to know? The food is great, you don't sleep in a dorm but in a semi private room, all styles of music are appreciated, and there is always someone to play with. It's your weekend to play.

If you have questions about the Winter Jam Camp don't hesitate to ask. I will do what I can to make the weekend an experience for you to enjoy.

The Winter Jam Camp will be held January 20-22 The fee is \$220 for NBCMS members or \$250 for non-members.

Register on line at www.BluegrassNorth.com or by phoning 780-718-3070.

Remember, the Jam Camp can only accommodate 48 people. Don't wait until it's too late.

Enjoy the holiday season, Merry Christmas!



Corinna Diamond, Les Eberhart, Kinley Miller, Dwayne Kjelsness and Noel McNaughton pick and grin late into the evening. All the mandolin, fiddle, banjo, dobro and bass players must have all gone to bed!

Upcoming Concerts and Festivals in Alberta

Dec 31 **Back Porch Swing** Benefit Concert for the Food Bank McDougall United Church 10025 101 St
Doors open at 6:45 Concert 7:30 – 10:30

Other artists include: Gateway Festival City Fiddlers, Justine Vandergrift Trio,
Benjamin Williams, Twin Peaks, Scott Cook and the Second Chances,
Daniel Gervais, Clint Pelletier and Jeremiah McDade

Jan 21 **Jim and Penny Malmberg** at Northern Lights Folk Club, Parkview Community Hall,
9135 146 St. Double Bill with Rosie and the Riveters. Doors open at 7:00 Concert 8:00

Feb 8 **NBCMS** Annual General Meeting 7:00

Feb 11 **The Strawflowers** Burma Refugee Fundraiser at Bonnie Doon Community Hall 9240 93 St.
7:30 p.m.

Feb 25 **Southern Alberta Bluegrass** (Allen and Arnell, Go Ask Ear, The Spitzee Post Band) at the
Irish Cultural Centre 6452 - 35 Ave SW, Calgary 7:30

March 25 **Jeff Scroggins and Colorado** at the Irish Cultural Centre 6452 - 35 Ave SW, Calgary 7:30

May 19-21 **Festival of Stars**, Radway

Workshops and Camps

January 8-14 2017 Pete Wernick's Boulder Bluegrass Camp (Boulder, Colorado)

Jan. 20-22, 2017 **NBCMS Winter Jam Camp** at Camp HeHoHa

February 23-26 Wintergrass in Bellevue, Washington for info go to: wintergrass.com

June 11-17 Steve Kaufman's Acoustic Kamp Week 1 Maryland, Tennessee

June 18-24 Kaufman's Acoustic Kamp Week 2 for info go to: Flatpick.com

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