



Bluegrass Newsletter Fall 2017



Music, Music, Music

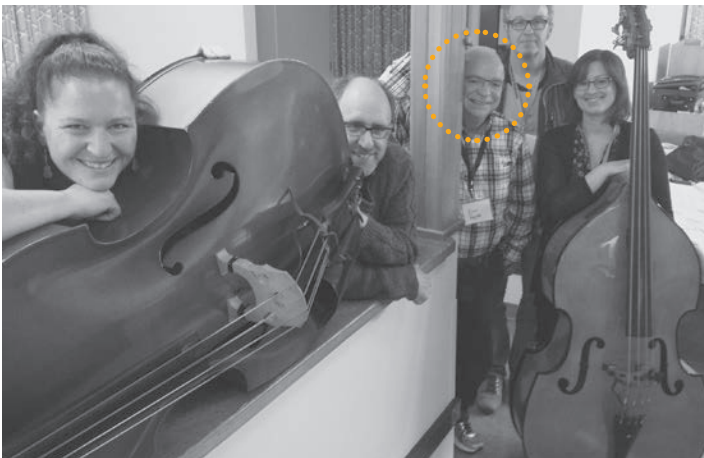


It's 9:15 — do you know where your jams are? John Lowell led this one on Friday Night in the Monroe Room at Acoustic Music Camp. Photo: Gene Zwozdesky © 2017.

All photos Anna Somerville © 2017 unless otherwise indicated.



"I can think of few greater rewards than spending a weekend with bright shiny folks keen on playing music together and committing to individual learning...not to mention an authentic recipe for bluegrass and old time jam!" — Co-facilitator Pamela Johnson



Shadow River bassist Brian Hazlett preached what he practices at the upright (aka stand-up) bass workshop—timing! Students absorbed this fundamental lesson, plus how to achieve it in an appropriate bluegrass style with proper technique, while pulling good tone. Brian's class was quick to incorporate new definitions of walking, and various types of slapping, in their playing.



After two late nights of jamming, and a very full Saturday of superb workshops, band scrambles, open stage, and mini-concerts, Ron still had enough fuel in the tank to assemble a stage full of folks to lead the early birds in a relaxed Sunday morning sing along. By the smiles on the faces of the participants and listeners, this is always a heart warming traditional way to start our last day at the Acoustic Camp. Photo: Grant Miner © 2017.

Ronnie's Ramblin's

President Message Fall 2017

I was thinking about my bluegrass roots. Growing up on the farm, I was never much interested in music. There were various instruments in the house, but we were never allowed to touch them as they belonged to my father. This was strictly enforced with a whipping should you be caught even holding his accordion. Fast forward to 1976. I was living on my own and going to College St. Jean when I saw a movie called "A Star is Born." Wow! Lightning struck me. I wanted to be just like Kris Kristofferson—playing guitar, looking cool, and getting all the girls.

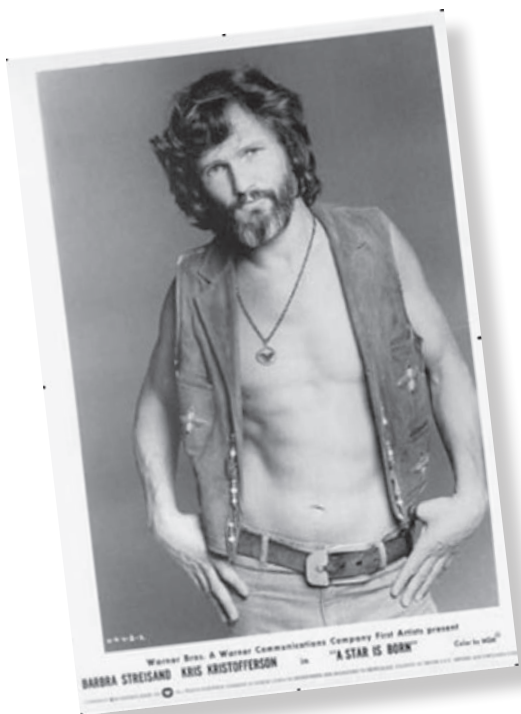
First thing I would need is a guitar. I went to Lillo's Music on Whyte Avenue and signed a contract (\$19 a month for one year) and I would own that beautiful Yamaha guitar. Next thing I had to learn how to play it, so I went to see my dad for some lessons. This proved futile as he told me to go learn it on the streets like he had to. I could not afford music lessons as money was pretty tight back then. I was taking the bus to school every day so I started carrying my guitar with me. People would ask if I played and I always said no. I would then ask if they knew anything on the guitar and once in a while I would get shown some chords or rock licks. I eventually learned to play "Me and Bobby McGee" and I performed on Jasper Avenue in front of the Odeon movie theatre with my guitar case open. I sang that song over and over for one hour and earned \$7 in quarters and nickels. Girls would stop by and smile at me as I put on my best Kris Kristofferson imitation. Does it get any better than this, I wondered?

A friend of mine said that he played music. I should bring my guitar to his place and we would jam. He played drums and also was learning the

5-string banjo. Wow! Another bolt of lightning struck me. I needed to play the banjo. I went out and bought a book called "How to play the Banjo for the Complete Ignoramus," by Wayne Erbsen. It came with a little plastic record that I listened to every night before falling asleep. One month later I had saved up \$98, went to Eaton's, and purchased an Aria (made in Japan) 5-string banjo. I was crazy about practicing and within six months I had learned to play every song in that book. I was hooked on bluegrass. I remember going to see a band called Wheatland County that was performing in Edmonton (Al Lamonaca on guitar, Tony Michaels on fiddle/mandolin, Del Cocks on bass, and Jim Walker on banjo). This band had a following of pretty girls; they played well and looked really cool. Well, that completely changed my focus. Good-bye Kris, Hello Earl.

I started to meet other banjo players, like Craig Korth, Brad Lindberg, George Bayard, and Larry Murphy. Those fellows could really pick and each of them was yet another inspiration to me. Over the years, I have played in countless bluegrass groups, taught hundreds of students the square roll, and still have not quite got enough of the banjo. I'm sure enjoying the ride.

— Ron Mercer
President, NBCMS



Kris Kristofferson 1976

Can you tell the difference?



Ron Mercer 1977

Editor's Message



Mr. Ziff's students brandish their "axes" for Ms Johnson. Photo: Pamela Johnson © 2017.

For the NBCMS, the 16th annual Fall Acoustic Music Workshop (ACW) was our big event this last quarter. My second year in attendance confirmed that, when the golden leaves began to fall, Camp He-Ho-Ha is the place for me. What better way to say goodbye to the old year than with songs like "Ain't No Grave," "Bury Me Beneath the Willow", and "Rattlin' Bones." I chose the multi-instrumental "Won't You Come and Sing (and Play!) with Me?" workshop. Co-facilitators Pamela Johnson & Bruce Ziff broke new educational ground (and maybe even the occupant load guidelines for the classroom).

Participants explored jamming fundamentals such as finding your key, playing in different keys and tempos (eg, 3/4 and 4/4 time), and session etiquette. Johnson and Ziff's lesson plan fit different levels of musicianship so everyone could learn to "lock in" and lock we did!

Lock on,

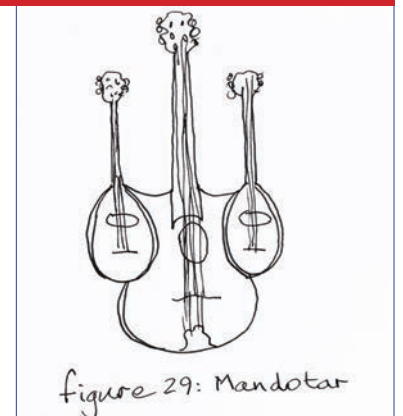
Erna Dominey
— ernad@telus.net

For Your Enjoyment



Q & A

- Q.** How do you get a banjo player to slow down?
A. Put tab in front of them.
- Q.** How do you get a banjo player to stop?
A. Put music notation in front of them.
- Q.** What's the difference between a banjo and a chainsaw?
A. You can tune a chainsaw.



"Mandotar", R. van Schaik © 2017.

Ten Songs



4 The Ten Songs initiative, begun in August of 2017, has successfully introduced its first three tunes to our circle. For those who haven't yet sat in on the informal instruction, fear not, you have not missed your chance! Three talented gentlemen of the NBCMS have stepped up to lead a tune each for November, December and January. Big thanks to Ian Johnston, Mark McHale and Joe Barraclough for their willingness to find a song, write a paragraph about it, and present it to the circle. They will lead the tune as many Wednesday evenings in their month as their schedules allow. Likely the first Wednesday of the month is when you can expect to get the most explanation and a sheet of tab for the tune.

In November Ian Johnston will teach us "Cluck Old Hen," a well-known song and tune from the Appalachian South. It has a series of playful verses with lyrics that "float" according to each particular version. As an instrumental, it is popular on both fiddle and banjo. A special feature of the tune, when played on the fiddle, is the "cluck" made by left-hand picking of the strings. One of the earliest reported transcriptions of the tune dates from 1886, in a book titled *South Texas Work Songs*. The earliest recording of it is from 1923, attributed to Fiddlin' John Carson.

For December Mark McHale will teach us "Bonaparte's Retreat." Tracking down the origin of this one is a little tricky. It is almost certainly based on an Irish fiddle tune called "The Eagle's Whistle." The variation that became

"Bonaparte's Retreat" was made in the first half of the 19th century, either by Scottish pipers excited by Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo or by Irish fiddlers lamenting the English victory there. The song took a weird twist when country artist Pee Wee King added words and a bridge part to it in 1950. This version was then recorded by country, western swing and trad jazz artists. In bluegrass and old time circles the song remains an A-A-B-B instrumental fiddle tune, without Pee Wee's bridge. It's a great song for beginners because the melody comes through even on stripped down versions of the song. Simplified tabs will be available for mandolin, guitar and fiddle.

For January of 2018 Joe Barraclough will teach us "Foggy Mountain Rock," written by the late great Josh Graves, Gladys Flatt, and Louise Certain. We will do this instrumental tune in G, showcasing the Dobro. Josh Graves was best known as the Dobro player in the Foggy Mountain Boys, alongside Flatt and Scruggs. "Foggy Mountain Rock" is a simple, moderately fast bluegrass tune with a rockabilly swing derived from a 12-bar blues shuffle. After the introduction by the Dobro it moves through usual instrumental breaks for banjo, fiddle, mandolin, and guitar before reprising the Dobro at the end. It's a fun tune to improvise, and so long as players stick to the 12-bar pattern swing and throw in a dash of blue notes on the "one" chord, we can't go too far wrong. Here's a link to Josh Graves playing it: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=wSr7OZq52-0>. Enjoy!>

Last quarter's tunes were "Big Mon" (Sheila Hallett), "Bowling on the Strings" (Augie Hangartner), and "Red Prairie Dawn" (Shawn Robinson). You can expect to hear these come up in the circle from time to time.

Ten Songs is a fun way for us to expand our jamming repertoire. If you have an idea for a song, please come talk to me so we can plan which month you'll take the reins. It can be a song to play and sing or an instrumental. The club newsletter will announce the choices a couple months ahead. If you don't already know them, you'll have time to go online and listen to a few recordings of each. See you in the circle. — Sheila Hallett

Bluegrass in the Park

Do you play a little guitar, mandolin, fiddle, dobro, banjo, or upright bass? Come on down to Festival Place in Sherwood Park for an acoustical pickin' good time. Ron Mercer, president of the Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society, will have you playing the hits of Earl Scruggs, Bill Monroe, and Lester Flatt. You will receive basic instruction on your acoustic bluegrass instrument and on forming a real bluegrass group.

This course is for musicians with a basic foundation in any of the bluegrass instruments mentioned above. You have a choice of two time slots: Tuesday evenings from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm or Thursday afternoons from 2:45 to 3:45 pm. Cost is \$90.00 for 8 classes, beginning January 23, 2018. Call 780-464-2852 to register.

New Bluegrass Duo Debuts at NBCMS Club

Pleasantview Hall, September 27: We are so proud that Roxeen and Dalrymple chose our club for their very first concert as a duo out west. Roxeen Roberts and Gary Dalrymple are true veterans of the stage and studio. Individually they have either won, or been nominated for, almost every category of award offered by eastern Canadian bluegrass associations.

Roxeen and Gary first played together some 25 years ago in the Spinney Brothers Band—Roxeen was their original bass player and Gary, the bed-rock mandolin and fiddle player until their last gig (at Blueberry 2017). In between, Roxeen grew into an expressively powerful vocalist, talented songwriter, and rock-solid rhythm guitarist. Now their musical careers have converged once more to provide outstanding renditions of country, bluegrass, and gospel music. Clearly, the duo still love the traditional music they grew up on, and our club members reflected it back to them.

As is our custom for Wednesday night special events, delicious chili and pies made by Anna Somerville and Colleen Whaling, assisted by husband Bob, preceded the concert while Don Lecky set up the sound system. After the show, an interactive “instructional workshop” facilitated by MC Gene Zwozdesky provided valuable information about singing, playing, performing, and entertaining. All in all, a very satisfying experience for body, mind, and soul, from the heart of Nova Scotia’s Annapolis Valley.

Let’s have a show of guitars

President Ron spread the word about our club and was able to sell a variety of musical instruments while supporting the Edmonton music scene. Over 1,000 people attended! NBCMS Secretary Leonard Swanson and famous local picker Alex Boudreau spent all day at the table.



Roxeen Roberts and Gary Dalrymple. Photo supplied.



September 24, Italian Cultural Centre: The NBCMS had a table at the Edmonton Guitar Show. Photo: Leonard Swanson © 2017.

<<http://www.canadianguitarshows.com/exhibitors-edmonton>>



Calvin Bauer was the happiest man at Camp He-Ho-Ha when Ron and Gene presented him with his half of the 50/50 draw. (Left to Right) Ron Mercer, Calvin Bauer, and Gene Zwozdesky. Photo: Anna Somerville © 2017.

The Power of a Great Instrument...

Every now and again someone puts a piece of musical art into your hands. "You play it, and the sounds that emerge make your heart swell with love." Suddenly you are waltzing with your dream movie star, driving a Ferrari, being served roasted pork loin by Anthony Bourdain, or having Allison Krause sing backup vocals for you. You sound better than you ever remember sounding. Such is the magic of playing a piece of musical art.



6 On a recent motorcycle trip through the American Midwest I noticed a highway sign for East Lansing, Michigan. Hmm, that name sounds familiar. Oh! It's the home of Elderly Instruments, source of my beloved Stelling Sunflower Banjo and 1947 Hungarian double bass. Sure, I had plans later in the trip to visit Staten Island's Mandolin Brothers before they closed, but no harm stopping in at Elderly on my way. This humble brick building full of goodness was right there waiting for me.

The place was quiet on a rainy Thursday afternoon so I meandered back to the banjo rack, where 50 used instruments begged to be played. I wanted to respond but apologized for being on a motorcycle and unlikely to buy. The shop keeper said "Notice that there is no background music? That is because we love visitors to exercise our instruments – help yourself" Amazing.



Soon I had a lovely Wildwood open-back in my lap, followed by a claxon-like Huber, a poppy old Gibson, an old-style Baldwin (a soft spot of

mine), and a Rich and Taylor arch-top that sounded positively electric. Staff kept bringing more banjos from the back of the store to refresh the rack—a well-worn Recording King, a 1970s Fender, an unplugged Crossfire, a pre-war Gibson with a feathery light neck set up by Frank Neat, a Bacon and Day frailing banjo, and a dozen others. These were instruments I had read about for decades but never seen. I loved them all. The place was empty so I played until closing time. Still, they didn't kick me out. Out of sheer guilt I bought a handful of picks and a nifty little banjo capo, thanked them profusely, and slunk out. The time spent was a good investment though because if ever our local Myhre's Music doesn't happen to have what I want, Elderly will be my next purchase stop.

Last year, when Victoria's bluegrass band Nomad Jones was in Edmonton for a concert, Naomi and I billeted Craig Korth and Bill Humby. Craig is locally famous for unselfishly thrusting very expensive instruments into his friends' hands. Soon I was playing the pre-war Gibson top-tension banjo made famous by Sammy Shelor. That instrument is now campaigned by Craig. Out of it rolled my rendition of "Earnest T. Grass," one of Sammy's songs. Oh, it didn't sound anything like Sammy's version... it was better because I was playing it on the same instrument used to record it. Heck, I got about 80% of it right too.



Some 30 years ago, when agonizing over the big purchase of a used Stelling, my Nashville brother Ed said flatly "You should always own an instrument that is better than you are able to play so you know you are not being limited by the gear." OK, I bought that old Stelling from Elderly Instruments and played it through a series of bands—Friends of Old Time Music (Baton Rouge), The Garden Variety String Band (Logan, Utah), and Grass Routes, Boreal String Band, Lonesome and Then Some, High Point Bluegrass Band, and now Morningside (Alberta).

My kids were always around music. They watched and sang along with us in band practices, went to concerts, and camped at bluegrass festivals. Years later, the tables have turned and I am wishing her good luck as she heads out onto the Edmonton Folk Festival stage. In learning, Eva made a commitment to the guitar and songwriting, and she quickly outgrew my basic Larivee. Though perfectly serviceable, it was an unexciting guitar. As I deliberated on a new instrument for her, Larry Seutter said "Here, try this Loef," a \$3,500 guitar handmade by Olav Loef in Norway. Of course, Eva instantly fell in love (or "Loef"). The instrument has a history, a name, and a story that preceded her ownership.

<<http://www.loefguitars.fi/?p=1237>>

A Photo Essay by Lee Foote



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Following dozens of house concerts, coffee shops, and open stages, we put a Baggs pickup in it and she was off to the festival circuit. After recording her first two EPs with that guitar, Larry, in his typical generous way, told her to keep it. Just flat out gave it to her. Such generosity and investment into young people's musical future runs through the bluegrass world. Eva continues to grow, tour, and compose with that instrument. As her father, it is a reassurance that the inevitable lonely times off at school in Montreal are never quite so lonely with a dependable spruce and steel friend on the stand by her bedside.

Now, I find my 14-year old daughter Antonia playing the house guitar an hour or more each day, working on harmonies with friends, and starting to play open stages (... sigh!). In no time she, too, will need an instrument that fits her playing. Let's see which way she goes and what resonates. Some days it is an electric, on others a Martin, and even some interest in blues and a resophonic instrument. I am committed to getting her a lifetime-quality instrument eventually so I need to start saving now.

There really isn't any better gift or welcome into the rich world of acoustic music than an instrument that will forever be a little better than the player. These instruments are always beckoning and providing those little "ah ha!" moments of tone, resonance, ring and melody. We only have so many notes to play in this lifetime and they should be the best we can muster. Choose your friends carefully and your instruments even more carefully.

— Lee Foote

After enjoying a short concert performed by Mark Baker, the ukulele class experienced three fast paced, entertaining and informative workshops with him. He focused on chord patterns & shapes, strumming techniques and making songs more entertaining by using substitute chords & adding "colour." Using his vast experiences, Mark made learning the ukulele fun and we learned how to rock the chords to give our songs a pop!

— Nancy Omøe

In Memoriam

Grant McCarthy, July 3, 1936–July 12, 2017

It is with sadness that I report the passing of Grant McCarthy. Part of the Edmonton bluegrass scene for decades, he was a member of the Foggy Road Band and more recently, banjoist for Up the Creek.

Grant started playing music at a young age, on a catalogue-ordered Roy Rogers guitar that he kept all his life. At 15 he progressed to fiddle, playing in Saskatchewan's Wyatt Family Orchestra. He then moved on to banjo, and Scruggs-style bluegrass banjo became his passion for the rest of his days.

He was born and raised on a farm near Corning, Saskatchewan. In the early 1960s Grant moved to Edmonton, eventually starting his family business Beaver Plastics Ltd., which his sons still run. Grant was a wonderful bandmate, generous with his time and welcoming to all. We will miss his driving banjo introductions and breaks, as well as his gentle sense of humour and kindness.

— Leonard Swanson



The Foggy Road Band in the mid-1980s. (Left to Right) Ken Machon, Jack Stout, Ronnie Hnenny, Grant McCarthy, and Walter Germaniuk. Photo: Sheila McCarthy.

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Morningside—Music to Brighten Your Day

Readers take note—central Alberta has a new bluegrass band! Morningside nods respectfully to the traditional sounds of the masters while engaging the audience with their contemporary Canadian take on “that low highsone sound.” Listeners can tell they enjoy singing the three- and four-part harmonies that give the band its distinctive sound.

Smooth lead singer and guitarist Rich Wagensveld runs his private construction business from Morningside, Alberta. Louisiana-to-Edmonton import, Professor Lee Foote imparts a driving banjo sound and sings as well. Greg Leblanc, a human resources professional in Red Deer, plays the standup bass, guitar, and sings the tenor parts. Rounding out the quartet with the baritone vocal line and strong rhythm on mandolin and lead guitar, Rick Moore is a retired teacher and current musical instructor from Bentley. In combination, that makes well over 100 years of bluegrass playing experience! The songs of Morningside will soothe the bluegrass, folk, and country music fan's soul! They jam regularly and perform occasionally throughout Alberta. They welcome the occasional walk-on musician friends such as Brian Ficht, Eva Foote, and Ruth Henderson. Maybe you too!



(Left to Right) Greg Leblanc, bass; Rick Moore, mandolin; Lee Foote, banjo; and Rich Wagensveld on guitar. Photo supplied.

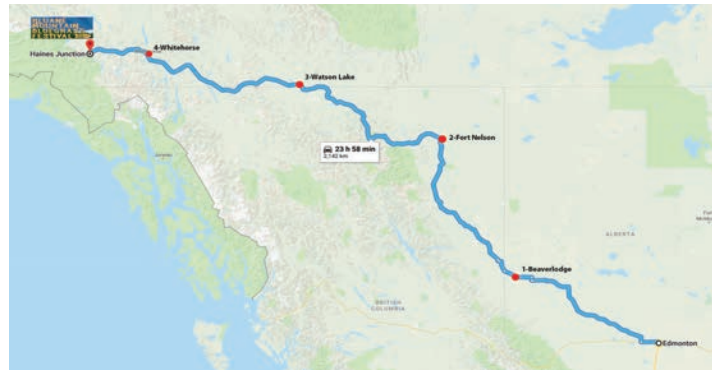


Konvoy to Kluane

Mandolinist Rick Moore invites you to come on and join his bluegrass convoy. Four relaxing days of jamming, camping, and all-round happy motoring will culminate in the highly acclaimed Kluane Mountain Bluegrass Festival in scenic Haines Junction, Yukon. So far, two other owner-operators have expressed interest, but you don't need a big rig to participate. Rick will haul your axe if you want to ride your motorcycle!

The plan is to leave Edmonton on Sunday, June 3 and arrive Wednesday, June 6 in Whitehorse. Good buddies can restock supplies, tour around locally, and generally do as they please on June 7. Rick himself intends to be in Haines Junction before Friday shows begin on June 8. (He is booked to play at the festival with the Canyon Mountain Boys.) Clearly, there are many things to do and see after the festival, so no itinerary for the trip home.

For this idea to become a reality, Rick will need to hear from interested readers before the end of February in order to book campgrounds—at the festival and all along the route shown here—before they are full.



Bluegrass Convoy Route, based on 550 km per day

- Day 1: Edmonton to Beaverlodge AB
- Day 2: Beaverlodge to Fort Nelson BC
- Day 3: Fort Nelson to Watson Lake YK
(stop in Liard River Hot Springs possible, if bears aren't wall to wall)
- Day 4: Watson Lake to Whitehorse
- Day 5: Whitehorse to Haines Junction at your own pace

If this sounds like something you would like to participate in, call Rick at 403-318-2276 for more information.

At press time, the following acts have been booked:

- The Bombadils
- The Sweet Lowdown
- The Lonely Heartstring Band
- Canyon Mountain Boys

Check Kluane's website at <http://yukonbluegrass.com/> to see which acts have been booked for 2018.



Northern Lights Bluegrass and Old Tyme Music Camp and Festival

The 12th annual Northern Lights Bluegrass and Old Tyme Music Camp and Festival in August of 2017 was certainly one for the record books! A wonderful mix of artists met with a most enthusiastic group of students and patrons at Ness Creek in north central Saskatchewan for an unforgettable week of music.

It began with a sold-out music instruction camp, where 20 instructors taught guitar, banjo, fiddle, dobro, vocals, bass, mandolin, and children's music to 130 students. Several artists came back to teach a second, and in some cases, a third camp: Nadine Landry and Sammy Lind, the Foggy Hogtown Boys, the Slocan Ramblers, Bob Hamilton, Patrick Hamilton, Andrew Sneddon, and Ken Olson. New to camp were members of the Ryan McNally Band. Also new was the instructor mentorship program, in which two long-time music camp students paired up with two highly experienced instructors to learn how to teach music workshops themselves.

The new dance hall in the Jack Millikin Centre, with one of the only horse-hair dance floors in Saskatchewan, enhanced an already wonderful camp experience—the dancing workshops. Each year at music camp, participants learn to dance squares, Virginia reels, schottisches, and polkas, but this year, Cajun waltzes and two-steps were introduced. The new building also housed a variety of mini-workshops over the course of the week, such as French Canadian traditional music and footwork, dobro and pedal steel, stellar arrangements, Cajun music, intro to bottleneck slide, choosing mics and pickups, and many more. Each music camp student was offered a free pass to the music festival, which took up where camp left off.

The variety of artists on stage at the 2017 Northern Lights Bluegrass and Old Tyme Festival truly offered something for everyone. The weather was perfect. All the artists who taught at the music camp stayed to play the festival, plus a few more, including the Amundson Family, Kiera Dall'Osto, Sierra Noble, Irvin Amundson's Sunday Morning Gospel Show, and of course, headliner Dom Flemons, founder of the Carolina Chocolate Drops. The impressive lineup certainly kept the dance floor busy all weekend long. In addition to mainstage acts, many local groups performed during set changes and as jam leaders in the Picking Shack and Moonlight Jams. Add the campground jams populated by the amazing patrons and you know you are never more than a stone's throw away from fantastic acoustic music and dance when you visit Northern Lights.



Mark your calendars for next year! The music camp will be held August 13-17, and the festival August 17-20. Information can be found at northernlightsbluegrass.com.

Member Profile

At 16, Bob Leitch ordered a Silvertone electric guitar from Sears to play with his friends at house parties in Calgary. Years went by as Bob looked after family, work, and mortgage—the old guitar forgotten. At 40, his wife Emily presented him with a very nice Fender acoustic guitar for his birthday. Still, he didn't play much until after retirement. But whenever their oldest son, Rob, came home from Vancouver, Bob did enjoy jamming with him. Rob, who played in a country/rock band, encouraged his dad to find someone to play with more regularly. About three years ago, Bob found the NBCMS on the internet, then at Pleasantview Hall, and has participated in weekly jams ever since.

As a novice player, Bob found his first few times in the jam circle quite intimidating, but everyone was very encouraging. He learned to play basic versions of the fiddle tunes “Whiskey Before Breakfast” and “Cherokee Shuffle” on his guitar, and soon he was jamming! When Bluegrass 101 began, he attended regularly, but after about 60 sessions, Bob realized he had to start practicing the songs he'd learned and just start playing them in the jam circle.

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Emily, a devoted grinner, enjoys attending the jams and attending the special concerts. She became interested after seeing Bob's enthusiasm for both the music and the people who participate. She loves it that Bob is constantly trying to improve both his picking and singing, and can see how much playing with a group in the jam helps him progress. She also enjoys singing along with songs such as “Some Old Day” and “Used to Be.” Attending NBCMS provides a focus for having bluegrass as an ongoing family activity.

Bob enjoys all aspects of bluegrass music, particularly the improvisation during breaks.



Photo: Andrea Leitch© 2017.

Recently he purchased a mandolin and is looking forward to learning enough to play it at a future jam. Says Emily, “we are very fortunate to have three artistic sons with spouses and grandkids who love music and I can see some future bluegrass players.”

— Bob and Emily Leitch



**DON'T FORGET
TO REGISTER FOR
WINTER JAM CAMP!
January 19–21, 2018**



Local Bluegrass Bands

Back Porch Swing

contact: backporchswing.ca

Cabin Fever Band

contact: Patrick Guidera

780-235-8671

OR cabinfeverband.ca

Kayla Hotte and her Rodeo Pals

contact: therodeopals.com

Long Way Home

contact: Eric Papsdorf

etpapsdorf@gmail.com

Pluckin' Holler Boys

contact: Matt

780-915-7807

OR Mattgrierdrums@gmail.com

Prairie Sky

contact: Sheila Hallett

780-982-9401

OR galbanjo@telus.net

OR www.prairie-sky.net

The Bix Mix Boys

contact: www.thebixmixboys.ca

The Strawflowers

contact: Pamela Johnson

howdy@thestrawflowers.com

Up the Creek

contact: Ron Woytiuk

780-470-0234

OR ronpeggywoytiuk@gmail.com

Whitemud Drive

contact: Clem Bray

cbray@telusplanet.net

Band contacts who require any changes made to this list or new bands who wish to add their information to it should communicate with the club. Any board member will take responsibility for accepting and passing messages along to Erna and/or Shawn for the newsletter, website or both!

The editor welcomes accurate content in any delivery medium for inclusion in future issues of this newsletter.

Bluegrass Instructors

Do you want to learn a new instrument, or improve your musicianship on the one you have? Private lessons with these local musicians can help you play better bluegrass:

Troy Gates

fiddle

780-998-4817

Kayla Hotte

voice, fiddle, rhythm guitar

780-940-3375

Marc Ladouceur

mandolin, guitar

780-221-3464

Ron Mercer

banjo

780-488-5256

Jim Storey

stand-up bass,

flatpicking guitar

780-474-6033

Leonard Swanson

dobro

780-436-1998

Any bluegrass teachers wishing to be added to the list, email: ernad@telus.net.

Situations Vacant

Hello!

I have been playing bluegrass banjo for 50 years and want to start a bluegrass band. I live in Stony Plain so it would be really nice to have players from Stony Plain. My phone number is 780-863-1266.

Thank you,

— Paul Mondell

NBCMS WWJS

From 7:00 to 10:00 every Wednesday night, the NBCMS hosts an acoustic bluegrass jam session at Pleasantview Community Hall, 10860-57 Avenue NW, Edmonton, Alberta.

Musicians (the pickers) of all abilities and listeners (the grinners) are most welcome. A donation of \$2.00 for NBCMS members or \$4.00 for non-members is requested, but no one is ever turned away if they can't pay.

Free coffee is provided.

Bluegrass 101

Bluegrass and jams can be intimidating. It seems that jammers know a million tunes, and songs can be FAST! Bluegrass 101 hopes to demystify bluegrass and teach the fundamentals of what makes a song a bluegrass song in a safe, fun environment.

Instructors Darcy Whiteside and Jim Storey are at Pleasantview Hall, Wednesday evenings at 7:00, and classes start at 7:30. Darcy and Jim focus on breaking down a different song every week for an hour—learning the lead and the harmony, practicing breaks and giving everyone a chance to sing and play. Participants say Bluegrass 101 is a great feature of the NBCMS club.

Here are the songs for this quarter:

Cry Cry Darling

Carolina in the Pines

I Wonder Where You Are Tonight

Somebody Loves You Darling

On and On

Feast Here Tonight

Who's That Knocking At My Door

Yonder Stands Little Maggie

Willow Garden

Is It Too Late Now

After the learning session, everyone is invited to join the jam on the main floor of the hall.

Attention Bluegrass fans!

Tune in to Prairie Pickin' on CJSR every Thursday night from 7:00 to 8:00 pm. Hosts Sunny Jim and Cousin Darcy spotlight bluegrass on one of the station's longest-running radio programs.





Volunteering at Blueberry 2017 wasn't what I thought it would be

It was better! Who could resist a full weekend pass to the Blueberry Bluegrass and Country Music Festival in exchange for twelve hours of volunteer labour? How hard could the labour be? Despite cramming twelve hours into two days, not hard at all. In fact, it was a lot of fun.

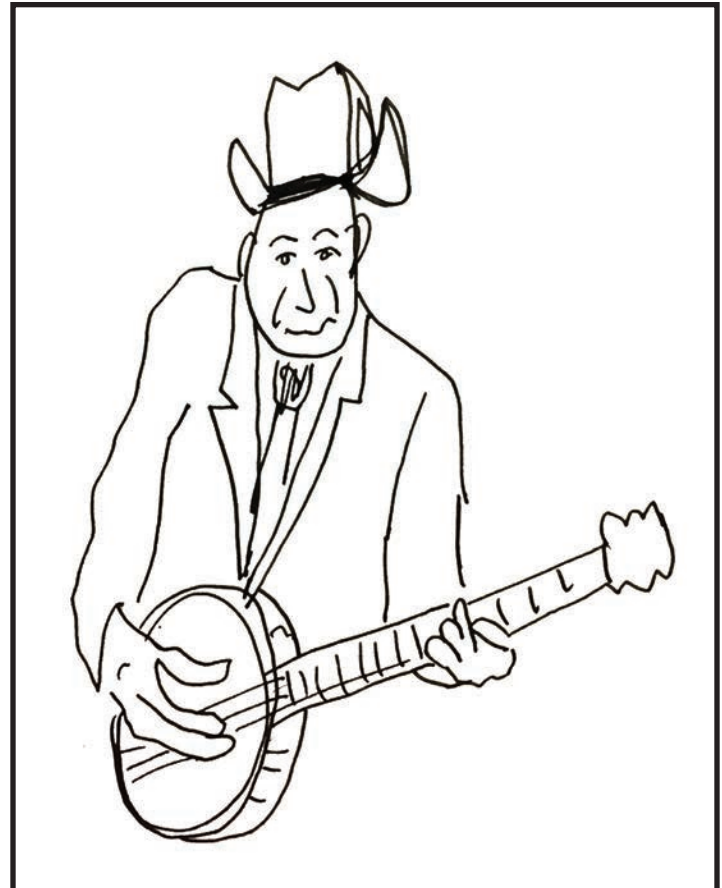
Volunteer Coordinator Ron Mercer sent out a list of volunteer jobs and shifts well in advance. I signed up for two three-hour shifts on both Friday and Saturday. Sunday was the day my 92-year-old father, my 35-year-old son and I (aged somewhere between) planned to sit in the sun and soak up the music at the festival. My first shift was on Parking Patrol, helping festival-goers find a parking spot and assisting those pulling trailers to park their units. As the rain poured down Friday afternoon, the rubber boots I had stopped to purchase on the way to Stony Plain became very valuable. Despite the showers, patrons were excited to be able to park closer than in previous years. All were pleased with the new Red Chair Program, and, those who needed a ride to their "stage of destination" were grateful for the covered golf cart. Three hours of talking to bluegrass fans from all over Western Canada was soon completed. It was time to switch positions—I exchanged my red Volunteer vest for one with "Security" on the back. Upon deployment to the Green Room, I headed up to greet, guard, and guide performers and volunteers to the Dining Room and Artists' Lounge in the Pavilion.

Performers and volunteers alike raved about the meals (another first-class detail Anna and the committee made sure was looked after). My next three hours led to everything from reconnecting with artists I'd met at NBCMS workshops or concerts—Andrew Collins from the Foggy Hogtown Boys, Ellen Frose-Koijenga of In with the Old—to meeting new players. One of these was Mickey Boles who plays mandolin for David Peterson and 1947. Mickey confirmed the saying that "you can make tens of dollars playing bluegrass" as he told me how he was putting his daughter through college by playing in four bands, working in a warehouse, and doing maintenance jobs on the side. What a guy and what a life!

Saturday I once again pulled the Parking Patrol/ Ferry shift and spent my last three hours manning the NBCMS Booth in the Pavilion. As on Friday, I met people from far and near, explained about the club, gave out stickers and newsletters, and promoted the Acoustic Music Workshop and Winter Jam Camp to visitors.

I even made an emergency run into Stony Plain to pick up some batteries for one of the main stage microphones. It is said that "time flies when you are having a good time." That was certainly true for both days I volunteered. Before I left Saturday night, I managed to catch the last two acts on the main stage and even spend an hour jamming with Noel McNaughton, Toby Tellier and Augie Hangartner at "Augie's Stage" next to his camper. I intend to volunteer for Blueberry 2018 and would encourage you to do so, too. You'll have a great time!

— Frank Omoe



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