

2019 -A Year We Will Remember

It takes each day to make a year stand apart from the rest. Heartaches and heartbreaks amidst celebrations of personal bests, struggles endured, and goals achieved are the threads that weave the common tale. There's one thing for sure, we are here together and together we are better than we are on our own. Take some time to share appreciation of those close to you and especially those you have struggled with. Share ways we can help each other to make the shared journey better and build a stronger community.



“The NBCMS is a non-profit music society that promises to promote, present and preserve Bluegrass Music.”



Acoustic Music Workshop main stage l to r -Tim Stafford, Byron Myhre, Calvin Vollrath, Steve Gulley and Greg Blake.



The Acoustic Music Workshop was perhaps the best one you've yet experienced, in many ways it was mine. There were many things to celebrate and be thankful for; the community of people, the amazing performers and teachers, the wonderful facility at Camp He Ho Ha (Health, Hope and Happiness), THE FOOD, the band scrambles, the open stage, the performances, the jams -especially the bathroom jam, and what about Calvin Vollrath's stage full of performers and their 7 1/2 minute rendition of Whiskey Before Breakfast in 6 keys!

It is so great to see the growth in our community, I'm very thankful to see the Ukulele musicians join us at the Workshop and in our jams. I think back to seeing Ralph Shaw on stage and contributing to a traditional Bluegrass set and the Gospel Hour. I'm especially glad to have found new and old friends amongst the Ukulele community.

The format for this year's Acoustic Music Workshop has taken a bold step into new territory with the opportunity to participate in more than one session over the course of the weekend. It presented the challenge of 'something new' and the excitement of being able to transcend the limitations of just one!

The Performers and Teachers that we welcomed to the Workshop this year have impressive resumes. They have played and performed with many of the greatest bands and artists of the Bluegrass genre. The opportunity to share time in workshops, performances and jams with the likes of Annie Savage, Tim Stafford, Jim Hurst, Steve Gulley, Eric Uglum, Greg Blake, Ned Luberecki, Nate Lee, Tracy Lynn, Rick Moore, Marc Ladouceur, Al Lamonica and Calvin Vollrath was beyond expectations. This was truly a once in a lifetime experience. I am so grateful!

-newsletter written and prepared by Greg Winter with the help of many others



*Christmas
fast it approaches
so haste we must find
for cookies at jams
will soon get
harder to find*

*Good times with friends
good times we have had
sharing kind words and laughter
that makes us all glad
with a music filled life
we say to each other
“til we meet again friend”
“and jam with each other!”*

The very best to y'all in 2020!

WATCH FOR A SAVE THE DATE CONCERT ANNOUNCEMENT!



So Steve Gosse -the President of the Uptown Folk Club one day says to Carolyn Hotte, I really like this Bluegrass stuff! We should put on a concert together, but lets make it a big show. I don't know anything about who to call so how 'bout if you take care of that and we can have it here at the Norwood Legion as part of the Uptown Folk Club Winterfest concert series. We're partner clubs right? Let's do this! (Well this is what I imagined Steve said to Carolyn...) And Carolyn said sure, I'm not too busy right now, let's do this! (Imagine that!)

So get ready to save the date... once the announcement is made. It really is going to be a great Winterfest 2020!

ACOUSTIC MUSIC WORKSHOP OCTOBER 18 - 20, 2019**BILL MONROE ROOM**

1:45 - 2:25 OPEN STAGE
 2:30 - 3:10 JIM HURST
 3:15 - 3:55 NATE & NED
 4:00 - 4:40 TBA
 4:45 - 5:30 CALVIN VOLLRATH

FLATT & SCRUGGS ROOM

2:15 - 2:55 TRACY LYNN
 3:00 - 3:40 GREG BLAKE
 3:45 - 4:25 SAVAGE HEARTS
 4:30 - 5:15 TBA

STANLEY BROTHERS ROOM

2:45 - 3:25 ERIC UGLUM
 3:30 - 4:10 STEVE GULLEY
 4:15 - 4:55 TIM STAFFORD

Band Scramble Performance
 Main Stage Saturday at 5pm

Friday October 18

4:00 pm Check in - Main Hall
 5:00 pm ORIENTATION / camp tour
 6:00 pm SUPPER
 7:00 pm PRESENTATION
 7:45 pm WORKSHOP
 8:45 pm SNACK & 50/50 Draw
 9:15 pm Bluegrass 101 - Main Hall
 Bill Monroe Room - Intermediate Jam
 Flatt & Scruggs Room - Intermediate Jam
 Osborne Brother Room - Intermediate Jam

Saturday October 19

8:30 am BREAKFAST
 9:30 am WORKSHOP
 10:30 am 15 minute break
 10:45 am WORKSHOP
 Noon Student Band Scramble rehearsal
 12:30 pm LUNCH
 1:45 pm OPEN STAGE in Monroe Room
 2:30 pm Mini Festival until 5:30
 5:30 pm SUPPER
 6:45 pm WORKSHOP
 8:00 pm Student Band Scramble
 8:00 pm 50/50 Draw
 9:00 pm Bluegrass 101 - Main Hall
 Bill Monroe Room - Intermediate Jam
 Flatt & Scruggs Room - Intermediate Jam
 Osborne Brother Room - Intermediate Jam

Sunday October 20

8:30 am BREAKFAST continental
 8:45 am Sunday Morning Sing-a-long
 9:30 am WORKSHOP
 10:30 am break
 10:45 am WORKSHOP
 11:00 am LUNCH
 12:45 pm Student Concert (under review)
 2:20 pm On the road

The workshop begins with conversations that Anna has with Ron and Carolyn as they hash out new ideas and talk about the opportunities with performing Teachers that have grown out of the previous workshop experiences. Following these conversations, Anna is the decision maker on format and focus of each session. She then begins to have conversations with the performing Teachers to get their feedback on the sessions that they are being asked to lead.

Once she has the support and commitment of those folks, she becomes responsible for negotiating contracts, booking Camp He Ho Ha as the site, then the travel and transfer arrangements for the Teachers. The Teachers then begin to prepare for their roles at the Workshop. These arrangements are usually not completed until around the beginning of September.

The announcement of the Workshop is followed by booking participation through the NBCMS website and usually includes some telephone consultation with Anna to discuss the 'appropriateness' of a session and this year, lots of discussion of the format for individual participants.

The NBCMS subsidizes the participation of each student and Anna encourages the club members and the board to become 'promoters' of the Workshop so that it fills up and becomes a cost effective opportunity for the club as well as each student. This role needs each member to serve as a 'promoter' in their own way, encouraging family and friends to discover what an amazing experience we get to share with an equally amazing community of folks each fall at the Acoustic Music Workshop.

Once the Teachers arrive, Anna brings the group together and encourages the sharing of their experiences in the Bluegrass world within their group. Their experiences establish the same thread of community building and reward that are common for each of us as well.

One common statement amongst the performing Teachers speaks of the quality of the community that exists here. They tell of meeting people that truly desire to realize their growth and goal achievement, and how rewarding that is for them. They receive joy from sharing with this community as the individuals work without ego towards attainment of their goals.

Acoustic Music Workshop program guide from the beautiful weekend at Camp He Ho Ha

The workshop has a profound effect on each participant through the experiences of self discovery, learning, personal relationship building, and challenge for all participants. When the workshop comes to a close, it's common for participants to experience a wide range of emotions that flow from the 'opening up' that each participant realizes within their experience.

The Acoustic Music Workshop is really a marathon that begins in the spring and culminates in an amazing weekend in the fall around the middle of October.

I had the pleasure of speaking with Anna Sommerville who is the Workshop Director with the Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society. She has been doing her job as a board member with the NBCMS for about 8 or 9 years now.

Anna took over her duties from Ron Mercer the previous Workshop Director who followed Carolyn Hotte who was the Workshop's founding Director 20 years ago!

ACOUSTIC MUSIC WORKSHOP OCTOBER 18 - 20, 2019

The program page below shows the layout of Camp He Ho Ha and the Acoustic Music Workshop names for the performance / jamming rooms in the different buildings around the site. The Band Scramble names are designated in advance of the arrival of attending students and are posted on a board adjacent to the checkin inside the Main Hall. Upon arrival, folks are encouraged to sign up for the Band Scramble... it's a lot of fun!

The map shows the layout of Camp He Ho Ha. Key buildings include the Main Hall (marked with a red star), Dining Hall, Chapel, Pool, Gazebo, and several performance/jamming rooms: Stanley Brothers Room, Jimmy Martin Room, Arts & Crafts Room, Flatt & Scruggs Room, and Osbourne Brothers Room. Dormitory rooms are numbered 1 through 12, with sub-rooms like 1A, 1B, etc. A red star is placed in the Main Hall.

Scheduled Jamming

	FRIDAY 9:15 - 10:15	SATURDAY 9:00 - 10:00
Monroe Room	Tim Stafford Al Lamonaca Steve Gulley Annie Savage Zach Daniel	Greg Blake Annie Savage Tracy Lynn Steve Gulley Rick Moore
Osbourne Room	Jim Hurst Nate Lee Rick Moore Tracy Lynn	Nate Lee Ned Luberecki Marc Ladouceur Zach Daniel
Flatt & Scruggs Room	Ned Luberecki Rob Baker Eric Uglum Greg Blake Marc Ladouceur	Tim Stafford Jim Hurst Eric Uglum Rob Baker Al Lamonaca

Band Scramble rehearsal locations
Meet your band at noon on Saturday

Band name	Rehearsal location
Rugged Bluegrass	Main Hall
Happy Drifters	Monroe Room
Happy Hill Band	Osbourne Room
Lonesome Tuners	Flatt & Scruggs Room
Dusty Pickers	Stanley Room
Twisted Time	Dorm 5
Lost Mountain	Dorm 6
Bluegrass Drifters	Dorm 7
Rambling Clan	Dorm 8
Melody Makers	Building 1/2 Hallway
Lonesome Clan	Building 3/4 Hallway

Sunday morning sing-a-long
8:45 am in the Main Hall

Open Stage
Saturday at 1:45
Sign up!
One song

Dormitory rooms are indicated in pink, blue and green shading (except for the Chapel). The rooms are spacious and comfortable with attached washroom and shower facilities. They contain single beds with some dividing half walls to provide for a little more privacy.

Over the course of the weekend and in successive years, one will become more acquainted with dorm mates as there's a high percentage of repeat attendees.

One must bring their own towels, toiletry kit, bedding and whatever other sundry items are desired over the weekend.

Food and snacks are provided on site.

During daytime hours, the dormitories become some of the teaching spaces as there are many separate workshop sessions that are being taught simultaneously, far too many to be accommodated between the jamming / performance rooms and the Main Hall.

This, in my opinion, is the biggest and best event that our club provides for members and non-members alike!

Meals are splendid and portions are not restricted, the food quality is excellent. You can expect to be fed dinner on Friday, breakfast, lunch and supper on Saturday, a continental breakfast on Sunday with lunch as the closing meal. Each time I've attended, the performers and students show their appreciation for the staff at Camp He Ho Ha with a dedicated song and sing-a-long following lunch on Sunday in the cafeteria.

You will have the chance to win at 50/50 (proceeds also to the club) and a guitar raffle that's been going on for many years, courtesy of Myhre's Music!

ACOUSTIC MUSIC WORKSHOP OCTOBER 18 - 20, 2019

Anna sees her role as a liaison during planning and the operations phase of the event representing the Students during meetings with the Teachers. This reinforces that the focus is on the Students. One concern that Anna has as the Director, is that she is not conveniently aware of the number of Students that will commit to attend the workshop. The workshop sees registrants signing up in the period from mid September through to the event. The concern is that any cost overruns of the workshop would be borne by the Club. It would be desirable for participants to register early and to see the numbers of registrants grow to ease the financial concern.

There is a synergistic effect that comes from Anna also serving as the President of the Blueberry Bluegrass Festival as the performing Teachers see their role at the Acoustic Music Workshop as a means to establish themselves and build relationships that may result in them becoming performers at Blueberry as well.

The Workshop provides opportunities for participating students to challenge themselves in many ways. Those 'ways' include learning from Teachers that are 'well down the road' in their musical journey, jamming in groups that include players with new and old skills, singing, band scrambles and open stages.

The hospitality and the food provided by Camp He Ho Ha are second to none. Rooms are spacious and comfortable dormitory style accommodation. Did I mention the food? The food is the best I've experienced in this type of an event! It's very evident that the staff at Camp He Ho Ha receive joy from hosting our group as well!



I've noticed that each year there are many of the same faces at the Acoustic Music Workshop. I believe that's because these folks have discovered this experience to be highly rewarding. I look around the rooms that I'm in and I see smiles on faces because I believe that people are thriving on their experience. I get together with different groups throughout the weekend as I participate in jams and workshop sessions and band scrambles. There's an energy that each person brings to the group and a collective energy that brings a high that's shared within the group.

There are different levels of skill amongst all of the students with all of their different instruments, but there's an overarching welcome for folks to participate in jams that are spread out over the entire facility and the opportunity to kick off jams that are established by skill level to help build both greater comfort and challenge.

I felt that this year was the best ever, and yet I felt the same about last year and the year before... I can't help but feel that I'm incredibly lucky to have this opportunity and experience. I'd like for you to discover this if you haven't already.



Tim Stafford accompanies Jim Hurst during a performance in the 'Bill Monroe' room.

ACOUSTIC MUSIC WORKSHOP OCTOBER 18 - 20, 2019



ACOUSTIC MUSIC WORKSHOP OCTOBER 18 - 20, 2019

*Jim Hurst on guitar and St. Paul, Alberta's very own
Calvin Vollrath on fiddle*

I participated in 2 guitar workshops over the weekend that I want to share with you. I was the least experienced student in Jim Hurst's guitar class and yet, I was able to participate fully in the class. Jim emphasized the importance of building fretboard knowledge.

Jim emphasized the importance of playing very simple melodies that we all know by ear and singing while playing those melodies. Those simple melodies included Mary Had a Little Lamb and Happy Birthday. He encouraged us to learn to play those melodies in as many keys as we could muster in equally as many different positions on the neck.

Jim spoke of CAGED theory as a tool that one would benefit from having in the box and then immediately followed that discussion with a demonstration of the value of diagonal movement from low to high and back down while playing scales and simple melodies.

I've become aware that the more 'angles' from which I can see my instrument and my play, the greater the strength of my play will become. A real time demonstration of that occurred on the main stage as many great performers joined Calvin Vollrath to play an enduring rendition of Whiskey Before Breakfast switching keys each time they went back to the 'A' section after one of the performers played their solo. It was outstanding and insightful!

Late on Friday night I came across a great jam going in the Bill Monroe room with Steve Gulley (Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver, Mountain Heart, Grasstowne), Tim Stafford (Dusty Miller, Alison Krauss & Union Station, Blue Highway), Calvin Vollrath (you should check his Bio at CalvinVollrath.com), Calgary based singer songwriter Robb Mann, fiddler Annie Savage (The Savage Hearts) and a room full of enthusiastic instrumentalists of all skill levels making music in the moment and having fun! So I sat down and played too, I was welcomed to the circle and I had the opportunity to sing and play with some of the greatest musicians in Bluegrass along with many of my friends. What an amazing experience.

On Saturday night I was very fortunate to find myself hanging Byron Myhre's store in the Main Hall and I got to play an old D-18 that I was very impressed with. I found myself to be the only one 'manning' the store and Maureen told me that there was an amazing bathroom jam going on next door that I should check out while the slow pitch jam was taking place in front of the main stage.

I respectfully left that old D-18 on it's stand and covered the tables then grabbed my guitar and went next door to join Byron Myhre on fiddle, Marc Ladouceur on mandolin and Kayla Hotte on guitar as they had a rippin' jam going in the men's washroom! While we played song after song, Eric Uglum (Weary Hearts, Copperline, Lost Highway) joined us with his incredible guitar and harmony vocals. Then along came Greg Blake to bring that vast treasure chest of songs that he packs around with him everywhere he goes along with his powerful lead vocals. Then Anna jumped in and played a couple of songs on an old borrowed D-18 (thanks and WOW Byron)!

I wasn't able to see all of the performances as there were too many in too many places, but the ones I saw blew me away. Jim Hurst made sounds come from his guitar that I've never heard before. He played an amazing train song written by Chris Cuddy called "Long and Lonesome Old Freight Train". This is worth a look, he's got a link for it on his website JimHurst.com along with many instructional tools and a link to lessons he provides online.

My second workshop session was with *-continued*

ACOUSTIC MUSIC WORKSHOP OCTOBER 18 - 20, 2019

the incredibly talented harmony vocalist and rhythm guitar player Steve Gulley. Steve is a soft spoken fellow that can blow your mind with his powerfully emotional singing. His workshop was titled "It's All About the Song", and was focussed on the real product that we produce in the moment that we make music together. His message was simple and strong. Steve's intention was for us to realize that within each band, that may include a full range of personalities and perhaps strong opinions and egos, that the song is the real thing that we all must deeply respect. He described a song as having a spirit that was intended to convey a message, an emotion, and create a focus of energy for a moment in time as was intended by the composer. Steve gave real life examples of virtuosic performers that experienced 'Aha' moments as other members of the band respectfully helped them to discover that their self aggrandizing play was not necessarily in the best interests of that particular piece of music or that moment in time.

Steve helped us to work up songs in the class with a focus on rhythm and lead play, and particularly lead and harmony vocals. He discussed how one strong voice was present for the lead singer and that it could be powerful at times. Then how the lead becomes part of one voice when the harmony singers join each chorus. I found a new and deep respect for the artistic focus and quality of "Old Home Place" while getting the opportunity to play and sing in Steve's class. Plus I found a new and deep respect for the intention and effort that my classmates were bringing to the song. Much love was shared in that class, it was a very good thing.

As with each workshop that I've attended, they come to an end way too fast... even those that last for 2 weeks! There's a powerful feeling in sharing those moments with friends from our community, that results in strong emotions as we say goodbye.



Steve Gulley and Tim Stafford

So what does Anna get from all of her hard work in pulling this event together? Her greatest joy is when she is able to focus on each person to help them to get what they want and need in the workshop. She told me that it touches her heart when people stop her afterward and say thank you and share how they may have been moved by their experience. She also told me that she will never forget Gene Zwozdesky after attending his first Workshop, thanking her deeply and weeping on her shoulder for the incredible experience he had.

Thank you Anna for your hard work!



Northern Bluegrass Circle's Winter Jam Camp 2020

It is time to start thinking about the Northern Bluegrass Circle's 2020 Winter Jam Camp.

Why not put the Winter Jam Camp on your Christmas list? What a great gift to receive!

The dates this year camp are January 17 - 19, at the beautiful and serene Camp He Ho Ha.

The weekend is jam packed (pun intended)

Registration fee is \$240.00; Let us take care of you!

You receive two nights accommodation in Semi Private rooms (no dorms).

Five meals and unlimited jamming.

Play what you want and jam as long as you can. It is your weekend and you should expect to have a great time.

Four buildings each hosting a different style of music

- Lounge 3/4 will host the Old Time
- Lounge 5/6 will host the Swing & Fold
- Lounge 7/8 will host Country
- George Kidd Lounge will host Bluegrass.

Feel free to stay playing one style all weekend or roam around and try a little of everything.

Mark McHale will be doing the administration for the Jam Camp. He is a regular at the weekly Wednesday night jam and a member of the Northern Bluegrass Circle Executive.

Mark will keep you organized and provide you with up-to-date information about the Jam Camp. If you have any questions or need help registering please send an email to us:

[Anna Somerville](#) or [Mark McHale](#)

LONESOME ACE STRINGBOARD OCTOBER 16, 2019



*"Please join me in welcoming the Lonesome Ace Stringband!"
-Grant Symonds
Concert Director*

The Lonesome Ace Stringband put on another great show for the 89 person crowd that attended. Many folks in the audience have discovered the last couple of shows that we've put on through ads in the Journal and 'friends telling friends'.

To emphasize our hospitality and respect tradition, a meal was provided in addition to the show. For this event we ordered in delicious pizza and enjoyed blueberry pie and ice cream for dessert.

The concerts provided by our club prove to be great value and we should expect to see the size of the audience continue to grow as word gets out of what an experience folks have at our concerts!



Sound was provided by Arlen Sound, his equipment and skills were excellent.

An open jam followed the one hour show with the Lonesome Ace Stringband members joining in.

Shawn Robinson introduced the routine of our jams to the audience and invited them to stick around and enjoy the jam, which many did.

INTERVIEW WITH BRUCE ZIFF (THE STRAWFLOWERS) SEPTEMBER 11, 2019

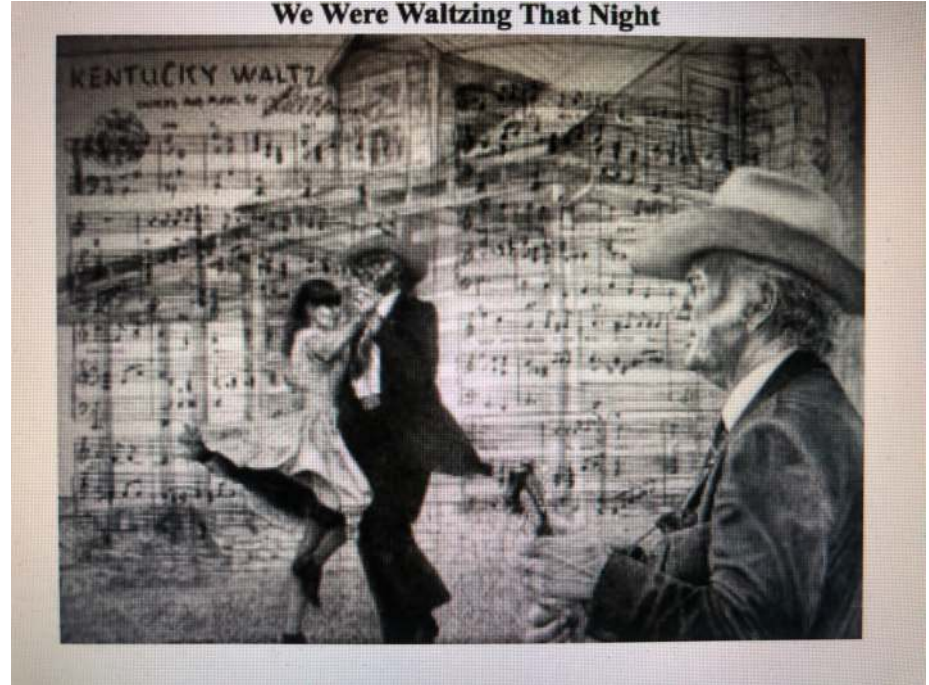
Bruce Ziff with internationally renowned pencil artist Willard Gayheart who released his first ever CD at the age of 87!

In September I enjoyed a fascinating conversation with Bruce Ziff as he shared details of his research sabbatical from the University of Alberta with me. For a year that bridged 2018 into 2019, Bruce took up residence in Independence, Virginia. While there he found himself immersed in roots music culture at the epicentre of Appalachian Old Time and Bluegrass music. He was very near to a number of small communities where music was the cultural centre of life. On any given night, he could participate in a jam in one of those communities.

Independence is a short drive from Galax, Virginia which is the gateway to the Blue Ridge Mountains and home to this year's 84th annual Fiddler's Convention. Floyd (Virginia), Sparta and Mount Airy (North Carolina) were neighbouring towns where public jams and dances occurred on various evenings each week. Bruce would make those drives to immerse himself in the musical culture and build friendships amongst the community.

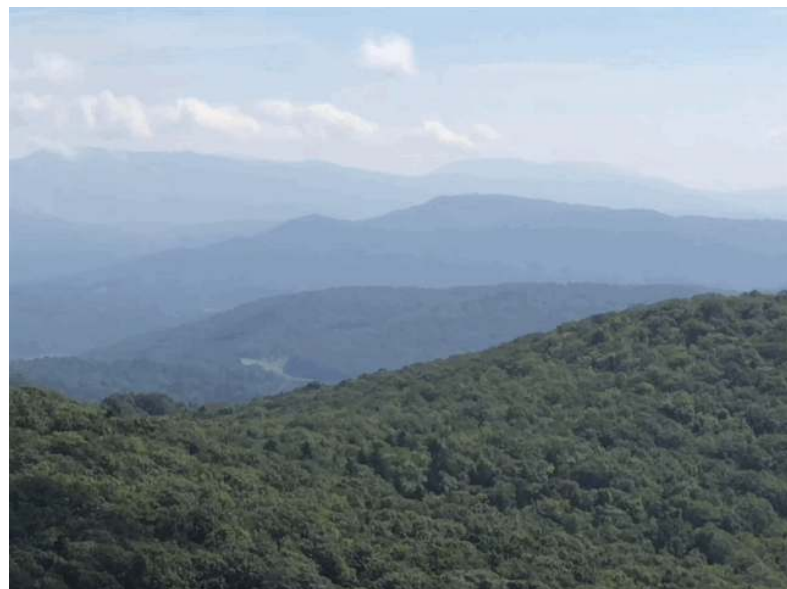
Bruce was able to find an Old Time jam every night of the week. On Tuesday and Saturday nights there were jams with dances at the Allegheny Jubilee in Sparta, North Carolina where folks would be flat footing or dancing squares, shuffling or waltzing.

On Wednesday nights there is a jam at the Old Courthouse in Independence, Virginia. There would usually be around a dozen folks or so and one day



A Willard Gayheart sketch of the great 'Father of Bluegrass' Bill Monroe and friend dancing to the Kentucky Waltz

Bruce showed up on a Wednesday evening and introduced himself then asked if he could join them, they welcomed him in and those folks became Bruce's closest friends while he was there. He would occasionally do concerts and open mics with them and they had an emotional farewell when he departed. He continues to stay in touch with them as friends do and they have welcomed him to return, even to stay with them.



INTERVIEW WITH BRUCE ZIFF (THE STRAWFLOWERS) SEPTEMBER 11, 2019

Also on Wednesday evenings there was a jam at Mount Airy, North Carolina which is known to be the home of actor Andy Griffith of the Andy Griffith's Show. Andy was the Sheriff of Mayberry which is the setting of the show and is modelled around the real town of Mount Airy. There really is a 'Floyd' the barber, and a 'Snappy Lunch', and you can get a tour of the town in an old Ford Galaxy police car like the one Andy had in the show. This show was a series that ran for 8 years from 1960 - 1968 and spawned the career of movie director (and actor) Ron Howard who, as a boy, played Opie the son of Andy. The show also featured the Bluegrass band The Dillards from Salem, Missouri as members of the fictional Darling family band in many episodes between 1963 and 1966. This show shared local culture and introduced Bluegrass music to many across North America. Episodes that are still available through YouTube and continue to inspire folks to this day.

On Thursday, one could go to a 'company' town called Fries (Freeze), where the cotton mill built the firehall and school. There were small similar looking homes built by the company, and electricity came to them before many other places had electricity as a spin off benefit of the mill which needed the power. There was no retail other than one company store. There was a jam at the old Millworker's Hall which still looks like it's in the 1950s. The jammers would jam and dancers would dance around the outside of the jammers. Dance was a big part of most Old Time jams.

In Galax at the Rex Theatre, the first 6 rows of seats have been removed so that dancers could dance and folks would start as soon as the jammers began to play. Bruce met the Whitetop Mountain Band there, this is a band that Martha Spencer plays in. For those of you that were at NimbleFingers this year during week 2, you will remember the Spencer Branch Band from Whitetop Mountain, Virginia. This is another band that Martha plays in. She dresses in cute dresses, cowboy hat and boots, she plays the fiddle and guitar and usually does some flatfoot dancing at some point in their performances. Jammers at the Theatre would play around the outside of the theatre and dancers would dance in the middle.

Once the festival season ends, in Lansing (North Carolina), a couple named Greg & Rita would open up an old granary on the family farm which

Greg converted into a jam space. Greg put up instrument hooks on the walls and hung many of Willard Gayheart's pencil drawings. Folks would bring food and jam away the evening.

Folks in these communities have deep roots, generations of roots. There is a strong commitment to community and their musical culture here. This is the root land heart of Old Time and Bluegrass music.



Folks jamming at the Millworker's Hall in Fries. The American flag on the wall at the back of the hall does not have 50 stars!



Martha Spencer and the Whitetop Mountain Band

INTERVIEW WITH BRUCE ZIFF (THE STRAWFLOWERS) SEPTEMBER 11, 2019

Bruce and friends jamming in the old granary that was converted into a jam space.

The USA is considered to be the ‘melting pot’ where many cultures came together and were blended into one. Old Time really is old and has evolved from Irish and Scottish fiddle music meeting African slave music and the gourd banjo and North American indigenous and folk dance music, French / Cajun / Acadian music and German folk music in the Appalachians long ago.

Old Time (also called Mountain Music) is the oldest style of culturally blended traditional roots music in North America. The birthplace and cultural home of Old Time lies in the Blue Ridge Mountains that span 8 southern States.

Old Time music provides a strong link to the history of the region and really is the dominant genre in the Blue Ridge Mountains. It’s not until one ventures out of the mountains that Bluegrass and Country become genres that are more frequently encountered in jams.

The 3 characters depicted in the picture to the right are left to right Tommy Jarrell, Fred Cockerham, and Ralph Epperson. These three have distinct roles in the music world.

Tommy Jarrell (March 1, 1901 - January 8, 1985) on the left, was a fiddle and banjo player from the Mount Airy region of the

Appalachians. Like most musicians, Tommy was a musician at night after his work day was through.

Tommy is considered to be the ‘Spirit of Old Time’ music. His role in Old Time is seen much as Bill Monroe’s is viewed within the Bluegrass community. Tommy won the U.S. government’s highest honours for folk and traditional arts; the National Endowment for the Arts' National Heritage Fellowship in Washington, D.C. in 1982. His use of syncopation and sliding ornamentation along with his ability to sing and play inspire many to this day particularly in the Round Peak style of clawhammer banjo.

Fred Cockerham (November 3, 1905 - July 8, 1980) is known to be one of the most skilled Round Peak style musicians. He played banjo and fiddle and was Tommy Jarrell’s accompanist on banjo to Tommy’s fiddle. His clawhammer style skill with slides on the fretless banjo was remarkable.

Ralph Epperson (on the right) started local AM radio station WPAQ in 1948 with his father and cousin in response to the observed falling off in popularity of Old Time music. Ralph began the Merry Go Round live radio broadcast on Saturday afternoons and became known as ‘The Voice of the Blue Ridge’.

8 brick sculptures adorn the ‘whittling wall’ where folks would gather to tell stories while leaning against the wall and whittling. This scene depicts Tommy Jarrell, Fred Cockerham, and Ralph Epperson -well known locals that have their hands and their hearts in the history of Mount Airy.



INTERVIEW WITH BRUCE ZIFF (THE STRAWFLOWERS) SEPTEMBER 11, 2019

The 'Merry Go Round' is the third longest running live radio programs in the U.S.A., the longest being the 'Grand Ole Opry', and is still being broadcast to this day by WPAQ. The station has maintained its long standing commitment to promote Old Time and Bluegrass music. The only real changes to the station over many decades are a boost in broadcast power in the 1950's and internet streaming that Fred's son Kelly initiated in 2007 a year after Fred's passing.

Recordings of Tommy Jarrell and Fred Cockerham may be found on a website called <https://www.slippery-hill.com/> and really should be discovered... start with "Soldier's Joy" by Tommy Jarrell or "Deford Bailey Blues" by Fred Cockerham (those are slides he's performing on a fretless banjo!) and let your imagination take you away from there.

Bruce described some of the characteristics that set Old Time jams apart from Bluegrass jams. One of those being that they tend to stick to a key for prolonged periods, even having entire evenings dedicated to one key with a published list of tunes that one could expect to play in that key at that jam. The reason to keep to a specific key is to allow for musicians to arrive with their instruments tuned for the jam and songs that they may expect to play that week. Re-tuning of instruments imposes a significant break from jamming on all participants, that really cuts into jam time. Another being no solos, folks would settle into 'the groove' of the tune and each musician would play along while exploring their musicianship within the collective play at the jam. This would allow each to discover whether their play which might include improvisations worked within the context of the tune that may have included play in different positions on their instruments.

Another characteristic that I've felt in the Old Time jams that I've taken part in is 'the groove' that musicians get into in each tune. The groove lies within a tune's rhythmic and collective musical expressions that are much like a musical conversation amongst the group. Bruce referred me to a 7 minute video on YouTube called 'Clifftop 2015' which is a short musical narrative from the huge Clifftop - Appalachian String Band Music Festival and Workshop held each year near New River Gorge, West Virginia. Within this video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXlwJ-xR73M>, Rachel Eddy describes the groove and the explorations within the tune and the transcendent experience when everyone gets it 'just right' *collectively* during the jam.

At many jam locations there are 2 rooms, one for Bluegrass and another for Old Time jamming. A few folks would participate in both genres but mostly they would stick to one or the other. Bruce attended a huge music camp called Swananoa in Asheville, NC where he discovered a weekly jam at the 'Jack of the Wood' pub in Asheville which was actually 3 old time jams on a Wednesday evening. Older folks would begin to jam at 6:30, better skilled players would show up around 8:00, then at 9:30 the younger and strongly skilled folks would show up and go all night or as long as they would be allowed!

During the Old Time jams people would mostly dance, and during the Bluegrass jams people would mostly sing as singing is such a strong element within Bluegrass music.

Music festivals typically combine Old Time and Bluegrass, Martha Spencer indicated that it's really all the same thing for them... just a little bit different. I am suspecting that much of the difference is cultural. Many of the Old Time fiddle tunes are frequently played at our Bluegrass jams and others.

Bluegrass and Old Time share many common tunes at their jams, for example, Angelina Baker, Red Wing, Soldier's Joy, etc. Singing and dancing are not restricted to either and may accompany both. Clawhammer style is not exclusive to Old Time, nor is Old Time restrictive to clawhammer style. Bluegrass arose from Old Time music and as Bruce describes it as "really revved up Old Time music".

Bristol is a city that lies about an hour and a half drive west of Independence (Virginia). The Virginia / Tennessee state line lies on Main Street in Bristol (like Lloydminster). Bristol is the birthplace of Country music and the home of the Birthplace of Country Music Museum. The 'Big Bang' of Country music arose from the Bristol recording sessions that Ralph Peer conducted in the summer of 1927 during which he recorded blues, gospel, ragtime, ballads, string bands and topical songs for the purposes of determining whether there was a market for this 'Country Music'.

INTERVIEW WITH BRUCE ZIFF (THE STRAWFLOWERS) SEPTEMBER 11, 2019

The Bristol Session recordings captured the talents of many artists that were in the region and some who were invited to attend. They launched the careers of Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family. The model of paying artists and record producers with royalties was launched in these sessions as well and remains the system of payment to this day.

The earliest recordings of 'Country' music date back to 1922 and were of 'Hillbilly' artists that travelled to New York to record their music and included the likes of Vernon Dalhart with the million selling "Wreck of Ol '97" and Ernest Stoneman from Galax, Virginia. In an incredibly small window of time during which Old Time music was still evolving in the melting pot, Country music arose followed shortly by Bluegrass. One might say that in the region of the Blue Ridge Mountains the cultural climate was 'just right' for the birth and evolution of roots music.

The well known Father of Bluegrass, Bill Monroe, was born and raised in the great state of Kentucky. His parents died young and Bill came to find a home with his Uncle Pendleton Vandiver who would take young Bill to dances where he would play the fiddle. Bill, of Scottish heritage, had been raised on Scottish fiddle tunes and would have his impeccable sense of rhythm develop through accompanying his Uncle Pen at these dances. Eventually Bill would encounter another strong musical influence in Arnold Schultz who played fiddle and guitar, and introduced Bill to the Blues. When Bill and his band would perform their unique blend of string band music, folks went crazy for it. Bill, being from Kentucky, thought it natural that the band should be called the Bluegrass Boys and because Bill was in the forefront playing this style of music, it came to pass that the style of music was referred to as Bluegrass.

Bruce told of visiting the Earl Scruggs Museum in Shelby, North Carolina and discovering that Earl Scruggs as a young boy perfected his 3 finger roll on an Old Time tune called "Train 45" you may also know as "Reuben's Train". This is an example that Bluegrass roots are in Old Time music. There are other signs... such as the plethora of fiddle tunes that we roll through at most of the Bluegrass jams that are still part of the Old Time jams.

This was only a one hour conversation but has lead me through such a journey of discovery and built questions within that I feel I need to explore. I've experienced growth and am inspired for future learning with a more purposeful sense of direction and resources. Thank you Bruce!

What do you call a drummer in a three piece
suit?

The Defendant

How many folk singers does it take to change
a light bulb?

One to change it and 5 to sing about how
good the old one was!

What did the guitar player get on his IQ test?
Saliva

What do bass players use for birth control?
Their personalities

What do you call a beautiful woman on a
banjo picker's arm?
A Tattoo

"I love to sing and I love to drink scotch,
most people would rather hear me drink
scotch." -George Burns

MESSAGE FROM YOUR EDITOR:

This is the 4th newsletter that I've had the pleasure of publishing. I'm grateful for the opportunity to discover and share information with all of you folks that enjoy it. I've had many compliments from friends that are appreciating the articles that I write and the information shared. This is a great thing to be a part of, the people in this community are very special to me.

In my work life, as a Firefighter here in Edmonton, I was lucky to be able to serve the public everyday. I took great pride in being able to help out where I could and gained even greater satisfaction when people got more than they expected. This opportunity for me is a little bit like that, and makes me grateful for all of you. My work life created for me a deep respect and value for strong teams. I knew that strong teams contained individuals that played their 'A' game everyday but were empathetic of others as they strived to be their best. The best team members go beyond

empathy in their manner of seeing solutions and aiding others to collaborate while inspiring feelings of respect and pride. I believe that people generally bring their best efforts with timeliness to their actions based on their perception of situations and needs.

The strongest teams I've been part of have anticipated needs that lie ahead and are prepared to act quickly and decisively. Their ability to do so depended strongly on communication and a big picture focus while maintaining attention to their duties. Communication is the biggest influencing factor in the effectiveness of a team. The manner with which we communicate and the quality of those communications affords all members the opportunity to contribute at a high level while reinforcing their understanding of the importance of their individual roles. For me, I appreciate the team and community members that share experiences, insights and information that helps me put together a newsletter I can be proud of.

We can all strive to be the best we can be and, thankfully, we get a chance to do that every single day. From Maureen and I, the very best to you all over the coming holidays!



CKUA's The Bluegrass Hour -hosted by our very own Darcy Whiteside plays a classic mix of Bluegrass and Old Time music spanning approximately 60 years of the genres. "I try to introduce bands from all over the world... stuff you've never heard before but hopefully will enjoy."

Darcy brings a variety of music coupled with an insightful focus on some of the history of this passion inspiring music.

The Bluegrass Hour can be heard Sundays 12 - 1 p.m. and Mondays 4 - 5 a.m. at 94.9 in Edmonton and area.

Calgary 93.7

Red Deer 107.7

Edson 103.7 Hinton 102.5

Whitecourt 107.1 Grande Prairie 100.9 Spirit River 99.5

Peace River 96.9

Athabasca 98.3 Fort McMurray 96.7 Lloydminster 97.5

Canmore Bow Valley 104.3

Drumheller Hanna 91.3 Medicine Hat 97.3 Lethbridge 99.3

SADIE'S GHOST -Y'ALL!

Sadie's Ghost is an Americana string band from Alberta. Amber-Lynn Yourk (mandolin/guitar), Hannah Goa (fiddle/guitar), and Toby Tellier (bass/clawhammer banjo) bridge bluegrass, old-time and folk music. At times delivering rough-hewn hootenanny, at times spinning delicate haunting harmonies. Exploring new arrangements to time-cherished tunes, and throwing in a few sweet originals, Sadie's Ghost performed for the Foothills Bluegrass Music Society on November 23, 2019 at the Foothills Acoustic Music Institute to share their love of music. We look forward to future dates when we can discover this band first hand!

TIMING, TONE, AND TASTE...

While Michael Shields was at the Shady Grove Festival at Broadway Farm east of Nanton, Alberta, he attended a guitar workshop hosted by **Don Share** and **Dale Adkins** of **The Old Growth Quartet**. Many of you will know Don from the Acoustic Music Workshop where he has provided classes on harmony singing mostly.

Michael provided a 'quick guitar tips' sheet that he put together following the presentation from Don and Dale.

- *Practice learning the key of the song by listening to recordings -find the root note!
- *Listen to any Bluegrass Album Band recording and try to pick out the key.
- *Everything one needs to know about timing, tone, and taste can be found on the 6 volumes of the Bluegrass Album Band recordings.
- *Use the capo and learn where the key of the song can be played in different positions.
- *When playing with 2 or more guitarists, play the song with a capo in different positions on the fretboard for enhanced sound and texture.
- *One of the best examples of Bluegrass rhythm guitar playing is from Tony Rice on "Church Street Blues".
- *For fast rhythm guitar playing in the key of G, learn to play the G & C chords with the middle finger.
- *One may not hit all the bass strings when playing rhythm, but ensure you strum through the chord.
- *Song dynamics are critical -everything must centre around the singer and the soloing instrument, play to compliment the singer and soloist with timing, tone, and taste.
- *Try using the round side of the pick for rhythm playing or soloing.
- *One must practice fast to play fast.
- *Important to always keep the right hand moving to maintain the rhythm of play.
- *Play with a metronome and practice clean. Increase tempo at a rate that maintains clean play.

THE PULSE...



The Club Jams

On Wednesday nights, Bluegrass 101 starts at 7:00 p.m. and runs through until 8:00 p.m. and an open jam follows from 8:00 til 10:00 p.m. There is also a small 201 group that follows Bluegrass 101 and are working up several tunes with the goal of taking the tunes to open jams ahead.

Bluegrass 101 encourages participants to play and sing with a focus on one tune per week including some history of the tune! Singing is a large part of Bluegrass 101. Our fearless leader and instructor Darcy Whiteside accompanied with masterful bass rhythms and story rounder—outering by Jim Storey to bring community and skill to their students. It's a fun and lively time and all are welcome. Singing makes you feel alive and full of life!

"My chances of getting into the Rock and Roll hall of Fame are as good as Millie Vanilli's!" -*Wierd Al Yankovic*

George Melly says to Mick Jagger "Why's your face so wrinkled?" Says Mick "Laughter lines my friend." Melly replies "Nothing's that funny!"

"I'm 42, that's 84 in Musician years!" -*Monica Wood*

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND CLASSIFIED ADS:

Christmas Concert on December 11, 2019 at Pleasantview Community Hall

- 5:30 doors and cash bar open
- 6:30 Christmas dinner
- 7:00 blueberry pie
- 7:15 concert featuring Kayla and Matt Hotte
- 8:40 open jam

Tickets available online at bluegrassnorth.com or at the Wednesday jams

If you would like to promote an event in the Newsletter, please e-mail Greg at winski.greg.winter@gmail.com with a description of the event, the date and location.

Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society
of Edmonton presents
A Bluegrass Christmas Concert
Wednesday, December 11 / 2019
with Kayla and Matt Hotte

ADMISSION
Members \$20.00 each
Non-members \$25.00 each
Portion tickets not available

5:30pm Doors open / Cash-Bar
6:30pm Christmas Supper
7:00pm Blueberry Pie
7:15pm Concert
8:40pm Circle Jam

Pleasantview Hall, 10950-57 Ave, Edmonton
Buy tickets here, or on-line: bluegrassnorth.com

Fiddle lessons with Hannah Goa

- teaching at the Acoustic Music Shop 780.433.3545
- learn to jam with others
- transition from classical violin to fiddle
- build a strong foundation for playing violin / fiddle in any style
- call or e-mail Hannah at 780.433.3545 or birtehannah@gmail.com

Guitar and Bass lessons with Zach Daniel Robertson

- lessons for all students from beginner to advanced
- lessons in genre style of your choice
- call or e-mail Zach at 587.987.2081 or zachery94@hotmail.com

Acoustic and Electric Guitar and Mandolin lessons with Marc Ladouceur

- all styles and levels welcome
- contact Marc at 780.221.3464 or e-mail marcladouceur@shaw.ca

FRIENDS OF BLUEGRASS



Myhre's Music

The NBCMS members enjoy a special and long standing relationship with a local music store... A cornerstone of acoustic and roots music in Edmonton... a family owned and operated store with family values that has served the Edmonton area since 1967! Myhre's Music has been a great supporter and promoter of the Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society, for which we say THANKS! Staff in the photo are left to right: Lydia Myhre, Catherine Robertson fiddle and violin luthier, daughter Haley, Byron Myhre, Alfie Myhre, Bob Potoniec, missing Thomas Slaymaker guitar luthier, George Back, and son Tanner Myhre.

Classified Ads -if you have an item you'd like to publish in the newsletter, please let Greg know by e-mail to:

winski.greg.winter@gmail.com

each issue requires confirmation of your desire to re-publish your item.



Elwood: "What kind of music do you get in here?"

Claire: "We get both kinds... Country and Western."

-The Blues Brothers

"The inventor of the bagpipes was inspired when he saw a man carrying an indignant, asthmatic pig under his arm." *-Alfred Hitchcock*

"I just can't listen to any more Wagner, I'm starting to get the urge to conquer Poland!"

-Woody Allen

Contributors

Pictures and stories from Anna Sommerville, Bruce Ziff, Scott Degen, Carolyn Hotte, Grant Symonds, and Marc Whittington.

Information from website research following interviews referencing the municipalities in the Blue Ridge Mountains region, festivals, museum sites and Wikipedia.