

Let's Catch Up...

We're truly travelling a Rough and Rocky Road for now. In our own ways, we are navigating the days while trying to keep each other and ourselves safe. That's something to be grateful for as I sit here on Thanksgiving morning reflecting on the challenges and wrapping my head around the past several months of things that have been for the club and our Bluegrass community... and our newsletter...

Flashback to the June meeting of the NBCMS Board and the discussions of possible gatherings to bring us together to play and enjoy live music in the not-too-distant future. Previous to that, we had shared opportunities to get together online with some of our partner clubs for slow pitch jams and concerts and now, with great anticipation, the opportunity to join with each other at our very own jams is upon us. Bluegrass 101 and the open jam have forged ahead with weekly get togethers at Pleasantview Hall where you will find club members that are fully vaccinated, safely and socially distanced, wearing masks and playing music together. Many of us have found that singing is still fun, even with a mask on!

The spark for all of this was a push from Carolyn Hotte to re-open the jam in July and to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Northern Bluegrass Circle with an exciting concert performance by the Backroad Stringband. These great folks are longtime mainstays of our get togethers at Blueberry and our very own Acoustic Music Workshops... they have a cool following at Blueberry 'friends' that will arrive days ahead of the event for the chance to camp in close proximity to their jams which are open and welcoming to folks that want to join in.

Like most things, it seems that when we realize how bad we're missing something, our time can get 'magically' filled with something valuable that's really good...(albeit different) That's the story behind the Blueberry 20 in 20 Workshops and The Blueberry Jam, which is also a story of the quality of people in our community! It's quite possible that the discussions around this event had been going on in a smaller circle for some time leading up to that event, however, for the rest of us the moment seemed a little more sudden than that. I've always been one that can take life in stride without too much creating any sort of anxiety for me. That's probably my work life experiences that have lead me to that sort of character quality. Lately though, I'm finding that I realize there are caution flags flying all over the place and I tend to want to sort those things out to make sure that my activities are quality experiences that are safe -perhaps a sign I'm getting older and possibly wiser??

I am participating in the Bluegrass 101 jams and the open jams that follow (even though I've found that 'Rust Never Sleeps' if you get my drift...). I enjoyed the Blueberry Jam including many of the activities that rolled out of that event and I must say, it was great fun to flip my share of the burgers for nearly 200 folks that came out to participate in the NBCMS BBQ on that beautiful July 30th Friday night.

Most recently the club has participated in opportunities for 2 outdoor jams that have had the blessing of some great blue sky Alberta weather well into our autumn season.

Recently a very exciting development occurred as well; following the Blueberry 20 in 20 Workshop series there was quite a buzz in the Bluegrass world. Musicians and participants were really excited about the novel event that brought hundreds of participants together to share in a celebration of our community and the Bluegrass culture all while gaining a tip or two from many of the best musicians in the business as they explored their craft with those of us that joined them online. With this new opportunity and the excitement of the event, a nomination made it's way to the IBMS to list Blueberry with other contenders for the 2020 Event of the Year. And, as it turns out, for 2 consecutive IBMA awards years, Blueberry has been selected as Event of the Year. Being such close friends, I feel privileged to say Congratulations!



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



NBCMS Jam Scene at Pleasantview

We are fortunate to have a community of people that like to play music together. With this driving force being thwarted for more than a year, lots of folks were getting antsy to get back together. The COVID thing has really impacted us, and in some positive ways as well. Since we decided to return to the jam scene at Pleasantview, there needed to be safety measures put in place. In recent weeks, we have been enjoying live and in person Bluegrass 101 (6:30 pm start) followed by the open jam immediately after that wrapping up before 10:00 pm with various members dropping in to play awhile. Well, we got off to a little bit slower than expected start but we have started!

We are really doing this and maintaining safety compliance with the Province's rules (as they change). The current practice at the jam is to welcome fully vaccinated members that will enjoy safely distanced seating while wearing a mask and making music with like minded folks. Terry Ruddy always has the coffee on, and hot water for tea, as well as some light, pre-portioned/sealed snacks. The circles have had some fuller and some leaner times but there's always reasons for that. What we're seeing is musicians enjoying themselves playing and singing with others in a safe manner.

The club is trying to be safety conscious by adhering to the Alberta Restrictions Exemption Program for businesses. We're not making the rules, but following them is allowing us to do something so that's that. The club is also keeping a sign in sheet at the front door to help to maintain some ability to contact folks if there's something that seems important for them to know.



It's awfully good to see Jim Storey sitting beside Darcy Whiteside as they host Bluegrass 101. Somebody has to keep the time around here!

I see happy faces !

-these pics were before the current requirement for indoor masks... ahhhh remember July 28, 2021?



You can expect to have fun just like the good ol' days... and we sure hope to see you at Pleasantview for the open jam very soon. We've recently become aware that Darcy will be absent from Bluegrass 101 for a while. The time slot is still filled with music but we'll be missing Darcy Whiteside for the next while and wish him the very best until he can join us once again.

Welcome Backroad Stringband!

On July 28, 2021 We welcomed the Backroad Stringband for an intimate concert of classic driving Bluegrass celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society with one of our favourite 'local' bands -usually seen when we're up to some fun!.



*The Band left to right:
Darrel Fredland mandolin
Patsy Blois bass in this picture!
Paul Lloyd rhythm guitar
Dwayne Larson lead guitar*

missing: Pat Wearmouth usually on bass

We enjoyed some of their very own tunes like "Ricky Skaggs Never Signed Our Chair" and "Patsy's Daughters Song" along with the Bluegrass standard "Rock Salt and Nails" as an encore. Then they left the stage and took seats in the circle to join in on the jam that followed the show.

It seems the hardest thing to accomplish with this band is getting all of them together in one picture! Paul lives in Ponoka and the rest of the band members live in Grande Prairie. This makes for some challenges getting together for practice time and by extension some gigs. There's no shortage of folks that are eager to join their jamming circles off stage and they have many friends that join them on stage 'from time to time'. These great folks should be on your 'must see' list if you haven't enjoyed their shows already. They're down to earth, friendly and very fun!



*The Band left to right:
Darrell Fredland mandolin
Pat Wearmouth below the bass!
Patsy Blois fiddle
Dwayne Larson lead guitar*

missing: Paul Lloyd rhythm guitar



Backroad Stringband Bios

With thanks to Patsy Blois, I'd like to introduce you to the members of the Backroad Stringband from Grande Prairie and Ponoka:

Darrell Fredland is the backbone of our band. Darrel sings vocals and plays mandolin. He has been in the band since its inception in 2001. Darrel's contagious laugh and subtle sarcasm keeps us on our toes and laughing. The effort Darrel puts into researching and choosing songs that fit the band is astonishing.

Dwayne Larson, the best dressed member of the group plays Carter-scratch style lead guitar and lends some baritone to vocals. Dwayne has been playing with the band since its inception. He is an inspiration to many aspiring musicians.

Pat Wearmouth, with his deep voice, is our (Mollydooker) bass player. Pat is an avid storyteller and railroad buff which is represented in the songs he presents. His stoic manner is very effective in keeping the other band members anchored.

Paul Lloyd, our Bluenoser, met the band in 2017 at the Blueberry Bluegrass Festival. After hearing him sing "Keep the Lamp on Sadie", we knew he was a keeper. Paul plays rhythm guitar and sings lead and harmony. Paul knows the words and chords to every song known to man, and joke or two too!...

Patsy Blois, well - what can we say about Patsy? In at the inception she truly is the foundation of our group, from her profound songwriting skills to her ability to shift between multiple stringed instruments as required. We all feed off of Patsy's unlimited energy level and her patience with our nearly constant ribbing over her late night habits!

Check out their website at <https://backroadstringbandbandzoogie.com/>

"A man was driving past a farm one day and he saw a 3 legged pig in the front yard, so he pulled over to talk with the farmer and asked 'Why does your pig only have 3 legs?'"

The farmer replied "that pig is real special, he's actually a hero to us... one time the kitchen caught fire and the pig saved the whole family when he started squealing about the fire."

The man said "that's incredible, he is a special pig... but why does he only have 3 legs?"

The farmer said "there was that time when this tornado was approaching and we were all busy with our chores, the pig started squealing like mad to alert us to get down into the storm shelter."

The man said "wow, that's amazing that pig is so smart, but why does he only have 3 legs?"

The farmer said "that time that our son was stuck in the tree was the clincher for us, he might not have made it the way he was hanging, but that pig alerted us and we were able to get him down and save his life!"

"Okay, I'm convinced... that pig is a hero. But dammit tell me why he only has 3 legs!"

The farmer said "well when you have a pig that's that special, you have to eat him really slow..."

-Thanks Paul for sharing this rib-tickler in your show!

Blueberry Jam Weekend



With the border situation preventing access for south of the border musicians and members of the Bluegrass and Old Time Community to join us at Blueberry, what's a f'il ol' organization to do? How 'bout host a Jam Weekend with plenty of the best local talent in the Bluegrass community that are already here! That's what...

We celebrated our culture and community with pop up concerts, facilitated jams, workshops, open stages and plenty of jamming opportunities at various camp sites that went on well into the evening... every night!

The fun started on Thursday night (I know, that's not actually part of the weekend) but some folks had already been there for a day to catch up with musical friends and peers because that's something that's been sorely missing from our lives and that's a pretty common practice at Blueberry. For many of the folks in attendance, if they would have been allowed in sooner they would have been there, possibly as early as Canada Day! This was the first opportunity to get together as a community as a result of all the festivals and workshops that had been cancelled for health and safety reasons.

Let's look at some photos from the Blueberry Jam held on the August long weekend (July 29th through August 2nd, 2021...



Kicking off the pop up concerts on the 'new to us' NBCMS Hay Wagon Stage, an eager and welcoming audience had the treat of classic old tunes performed by 2 excellent young performers that came up as club kids; Kayla and Matt Hotte.

These two have played many gigs together and while being brother and sister can sometimes lead to some dissonant sounds, they always manage to only sound sweet together, particularly in harmony.

Kayla plays a classic old Carter picking style on her arch top guitar and has a wonderful voice while Matt can compliment her well on mandolin, fiddle, banjo, guitar and vocals as the pursuit of taste deems necessary.

They were both obviously delighted to play some live music again. The crowd was obviously delighted that they could do that too!

That 'new to us' stage is an old flat deck hay hauler wagon. With some improvised safety railings and a set of stairs, it provides a nostalgic stage that is bound to inspire everyone as we shift into the spirit of Bluegrass and Old Time music. You're sure to see that NBCMS Stage at Blueberry for years to come!

Blueberry Jam continued...



The Bix Mix Boys delighted us with their seasoned traditional Bluegrass style on Friday night July 29, 2021 performing on the NBCMS Stage at Blueberry. They shared their energy and enthusiasm in a first class performance "even after maintaining a schedule that had them playing as many shows in the past year as Ricky Skaggs!" (bababa! that there's pretty durn funny Darcy!)

*The Band from left to right:
Logan Sarchield guitar, vocals
Jim Storey bass
Darcy Whitside banjo, vocals
Terry Nadasdi mandolin, vocals*



For those who haven't had the privilege of enjoying one of the Bix Mix Boys shows as yet, take a look at their website then watch for the opportunity to enjoy one of their fine shows!

Often if you're attending Bluegrass 101 on Wednesday nights, you may hear a plug for an upcoming show and that would be well worth your trip the next time you get a chance. You'll find yourself sitting in a seat somewhere (like most recently at the Cafe Bicycleette in the French Quarter off Whyte Avenue on October 7th) singing along to some of the classics that you love!

The photos next door are of Jim's bass Thumper with the set list at Blueberry.



Check out their website at <http://www.thebixmixboys.ca/>

The Story of the Bix Mix Boys...

More than ten years ago, each member of the Bix Mix Boys had met at various jams and festivals throughout Alberta while they were still members of different bands. Opportunity struck when a number of those bands dissolved, and late night jams lead to the formation of a new band. Wanting to respect the roots of Bluegrass, they chose the name The Bix Mix Boys after one of the biscuit products from the Martha White flour company - Martha White is known for sponsoring Bluegrass acts such as Flatt and Scruggs, Hot Rize and Rhonda Vincent (just to name a few).

They have always focused on producing the highest quality of music possible, both vocally and instrumentally. While keeping the tradition of Bluegrass alive, they want to bring their unique, Canadian interpretation to the genre. At the same time, they've always wanted put on an entertaining show - with humorous twists in between numbers.

They've entrenched themselves into the Edmonton and Calgary Bluegrass scene and consider themselves ambassadors of Bluegrass music for Alberta and Canada.

Darcy Whiteside started playing banjo at the age of eight and in his teens took lessons from Canadian banjo champion Jake Peters. He is the host of the CKUA Bluegrass Hour every Sunday, noon to 1 pm. Darcy also teaches banjo and has taught banjo, guitar and vocals (including harmony) at numerous workshops.



Logan Sarchfield is the newcomer to the Edmonton Bluegrass scene, and arrived in 2005 (not such a newcomer in my books! -ed.) from Millbrook, New Brunswick. In Millbrook, at the age of 14, he started working in a music store, which further fuelled his obsession with the guitar. In addition to playing music, Logan is interested in the art of lutherie and has built a number of mandolins and guitars.

Terry Nadasdi is a veteran of the Edmonton music scene where he's known as both a singer-songwriter and a talented side-musician. He started playing guitar at the age of six, and plays ragtime guitar and acoustic finger-style blues in the tradition of John Hurt and Bill Broonzy in addition to mandolin. Terry may be recognizable to some as Professor Nadasdi from the Linguistics department at the University of Alberta.



Jim Storey's first instrument was a Hawaiian steel guitar. That led to a turn with the Blues before turning to Bluegrass. He plays guitar, banjo, mandolin and fiddle as well as upright bass. Jim is also one of the founding members of Edmonton's Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society and has played on-stage with some of Canada's best musicians over the years. He has also taught students and conducted workshops on bluegrass guitar and upright bass.

Blueberry Jam continued...



*Prairie Sky
on the NBCMS Hay Wagon Stage
left to right:
Marty Srayko mandolin, guitar, vocals
Sheila Hallett banjo, vocals
Jeannette Sinclair guitar, vocals
Kenny Mak Makarchuk bass, vocals*

*photo credit and thanks to
Rocky Sinclair*

Here's some fine homegrown talent! Prairie Sky put on a great show with a tasteful blend of Bluegrass, Old Time and Country music. They pumped out 10 great tunes and looking back at the set list, I think we'd all agree that we'd like to hear more. I'd love to have their set on CD to plug in any time! This band loves music and that's the drive for what they do. They're a very talented group of musicians that share warmth and humour during their show. They've been playing frequent gigs at coffee shops, community halls, private parties and festivals for 10 years. They have great comfort with each other and with their audience, this is a must see act.

It's Been a Long Time (we know it from King Wilkie) -Ken sings
 I Still Carry You Around (a Steve Earle tune) -Marty sings
 The Sweetest Gift (we know it from Trio: Linda Ronstadt, Emmylou Harris and Dolly Parton) -Jeannette sings
 Goin' Down That Road Feelin' Bad/Lonesome Road Blues (Flatt & Scruggs tune) -Sheila sings
 Still House (we know it from Caleb Klauder/Foghorn Stringband) -Marty sings
 Loves Gonna Live Here (a Buck Owens tune) -Jeannette sings
 East Bound and Down (Jerry Reed/sound track of Smoky and the Bandit movie) -Ken sings
 A Little Light (a Sturgill Simpson tune) -Marty sings
 Honey You Don't Know My Mind (a Jimmy Martin tune) -Sheila sings
 White Freight Line (Fred Eaglesmith tune) -Marty sings

We had the opportunity to be in the audience and to jam with members of Prairie Sky at the 2021 Blueberry Jam. They are regulars at the NBCMS Acoustic Music Workshop and have played concerts with follow up jams at Pleasantview Hall as well. I've often seen members of the band at Pleasantview just for the pleasure of the jam. So if you haven't had the chance to participate and enjoy this group, let's look forward to those times ahead. You'll be very happy to add them to your 'Favourites' list.

Check out their website at <https://www.prairie-sky.net/>

Blueberry Jam continued...

Let's meet the members of Prairie Sky



Jeannette Sinclair's early musical influences were primarily from her mother, Edna. Jeannette and her siblings were raised on country music in Slave Lake and later in Hinton, Alberta. Music was and still is an important tradition in the Sinclair family. Like many young people, Jeannette discovered other genres of music in her teens and early twenties and left country music behind. It wasn't until the early 1990s that she got the bluegrass 'bug' after her late sister talked her into going to a small bluegrass festival at the Blueberry Community Hall. She was immediately drawn in by the amazing musicianship & beautiful harmonies of the performers, the late night parking lot picking, campfire singing and the friendliness of everyone there—a true sense of community spirit that she'd longed for after many years of urban life.

In the mid-1990s she discovered a mutual love of bluegrass music with her new friend Sheila which led to them playing music together since then. Eventually, with a few female friends in bluegrass, they formed a band called *Sweetgrass*. Years later, drawing on some local bluegrass talent, they formed *Wildwood Flower* and now *Prairie Sky*. Jeannette considers herself blessed to play music that she loves with her 'sweetie' Ken, and great friends and band-mates, Sheila Hallett, and Marty Srayko. Although there is very little spare time to play music, Jeannette believes that if music is "in your blood, you've gotta play it" and keep learning and growing as a musician. And as her mom, Edna says, "never give up—keep practising and carry on the tradition". Jeannette continues to be inspired by her mom who is 93 and still plays guitar and sings at the Thursday night acoustic jam at Fiddler's Roost in Edmonton along with family and other musician friends. Jeannette considers singing and playing music "food for the soul" that lifts peoples' spirits, is "life giving" and helps to build bridges among people.



Sheila Hallett took up the banjo in the mid-1990s with encouragement from her former work colleague, Jeannette Sinclair. A visit to the Blueberry Bluegrass and Country Music Festival with Jeannette and an introduction to the Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society, presented her with a perfect opportunity to honor her love of music. The banjo just seemed the right instrument to learn. She settled into the bluegrass community, along with her children, and has become a committed volunteer for both the weekly bluegrass jamming circle and the annual Blueberry Bluegrass Festival. She has played in various Edmonton bluegrass bands over the years with Jeannette. She says 'fortune shined' when she, along with Jeannette and partner Kenny Mak formed *Prairie Sky* several years ago.

Sheila's banjo playing has expanded with lead playing in a four-person bluegrass configuration. She is inspired by the band's harmonies and the opportunity for every member to step up to the mic and sing lead. Never one to shy away from a challenge, Sheila works to come up with tasty back-up and breaks for the many varied songs that members bring to the band. Maybe it's the autograph of Earl Scruggs inside her banjo's resonator that keeps her striving to improve as a player. A deep respect for bluegrass and great instrumentalists of any genre, Sheila pulls inspiration from a wide swath, including band members and the local music community.

Blueberry Jam continued...

Let's meet the members of Prairie Sky



Kenny 'Mak' Makarchuk started banging on bongo drums with chopsticks at an early age to Hank Williams "Cawliga". That started an interest in drums & percussion through high school, until he picked up the electric bass at 15 years old and never looked back. He grew up with music in the house all the time. Family friends would come and play and sing in the living room, and that had a huge influence on him. He wanted to join in, and he even one time hauled his drum set to the living room. He decided that he should play an instrument more portable and appropriate, and naturally moved from drums to bass in the mid 1980's, then picked up a Ricky Skaggs album to learn from. Kenny was hooked on bluegrass from the first note. After many years of honing his skills in the "closet", he finally found his way to Fiddler's Roost in Edmonton, and discovered a warm & welcoming music community that provided the opportunity to perform.

Kenny met his sweetheart Jeannette at Fiddler's Roost and even sang his first song with her (awww!). "I'm very blessed to have a partner that loves music like I do, and that we play in a band together."

Kenny's listened and learned from many different bass players over the years. Geddy Lee from Rush is amazing. "His finger work and dexterity compare to no one else." James Jamerson of the Funk Brothers is a legend of the Motown sound. "I tried (and love) flat wound strings because of him." Victor Wooten of Bela Fleck & the Flecktones has incredible chops and is a really great teacher. Lee Rocker from the Stray Cats is a rockabilly wonder and his showmanship is a big influence on Kenny. "Mike Bub from the Del McCoury Band and Nashville super group 18 South, is my mentor for slapping." A great, solid double bass player. And of course, the legend, Marshall Grant of Johnny Cash's "Tennessee Two", who was a huge part of Cash's famous "boom-chicka-boom" sound. In 2015, Kenny produced and played numerous instruments on the CD project "*Three for the Show*" for local Edmonton country artist *Chuck Porter*.



When Marty Srayko was 11, his brother brought home an electric bass. It was a complete surprise and a defining moment, especially after his brother allowed him free access to the new instrument. Using the Hal Leonard instruction booklet that came with it, Marty soon taught himself some simple tunes. His brother, who had an eclectic music collection, provided the material and the method for how to listen to music and analyze its components, Marty further developed his ear by teaching himself guitar and learning how to solo. He joined a local wedding band at the age of 15 and later performed with various rock bands in pubs and halls. He became fascinated with Bluegrass and Folk music later in life upon hearing bands like The Tony Rice Unit and The Seldom Scene, and he developed his acoustic style while a member of a Calgary-based band, *Deliverance*. He started playing mandolin about 10 years ago, inspired by Adam Steffey, Sam Bush, Ricky Skaggs, and John Reischman. Over the last few years, he has continued to explore different acoustic music genres, while writing and jamming at home with his daughter. He recently discovered the wonderful bluegrass community in Edmonton, which has exposed him to new tunes, new styles, and great people, including his band-mates in Prairie Sky.

Blueberry Jam continued...

The River City Playboys!



The River City Playboys (left to right) Zach Daniel Robertson, Matt Hotte, Byron Mybre, Curtis Appleton and Marc Ladouceur

The River City Playboys put on another great show at Blueberry during a pop up concert on Saturday night (July 31st, 2021). These veterans came together for the Silver Skate Winter Festival in 2019. For many of us, the first occasion we had to enjoy the masterful talents of this band was the night we honoured the life and musical contributions of Gene Zwozdesky at Pleasantview Hall on March 13, 2019. This band has put their brand on the local Bluegrass scene and while it seems to be just good luck when we get the opportunity to see them, I expect their high energy and driving performances will become more frequent especially as we find our way back to more normal ways of life. If you haven't seen them yet, they should be at the top of your discovering local talent list!



The River City Playboys jam in the NBCMS tent was a favourite with many great tunes and opportunities for participants to share tunes with each other and the audience that was present to enjoy ALL the live music!

Blueberry Jam continued...

There's many ways to have fun at Blueberry, let's take a photo journey to discover some of those!



We sometimes realize that the Bass is an element that is missing from workshop focus. Blueberry reinforced how much desire there is for these sessions. This bass workshop was hosted by Kenny Mak was really well attended and fun! And best of all for participants, what happens in the bass workshop stays in the bass workshop!

The Backroad Stringband is a favourite stop for Jammers every year at Blueberry and this was true this year too!



For many of us, this was the first opportunity to see the Spitzee Post Band from High River, AB. They're a talented and high energy bunch that put on a great show and host an equally fun jam!

Blueberry Jam continued...

The Spitzee Post Band



*The Spitzee Post Band (left to right)
Wayne Corner
resonator guitar,
Joe Gore mandolin,
Coralee Gore bass,
Gerry Madigan
banjo, and Darron
Peardon fiddle.*

One of the finest aspects of the festivals, jams and workshops that we have the opportunity to participate in is meeting more great people and discovering more great talent within our community. Despite the COVID thing and all the border issues having their negative impact on drawing community together, we're having the wonderful opportunity to discover and share music with more folks right here at home. Maureen and I found ourselves camping at Blueberry in a wonderful location right next to a fantastic jam that seemed to take no rest! The bold talent and enthusiastic spirit of the Spitzee Post Band had us visiting and jamming each day whether it was at their campsite or at the facilitated jam beside the Heritage Park Pavilion.

The Spitzee Post story

Some of the best things in life are formed from disaster. Such is the case with The Spitzee Post Band, formed in High River Alberta, in the year of the great flood of 2013, when the music was washed away. A bunch of town musicians found that the music was still there. So after drying off the music, the only place left to play was the Spitzee Post bar in town. What a fitting name for the band. Ispitsaysay is the Blackfoot term for tall trees along the river.

With their love for folk, bluegrass, old timey, and killer new grass the "pied pipers" of High River Alberta have been on a quest to put energy and fun in their music, the music we like to call "Bluesgrass"! From the Calgary Stampede to festivals all over the west, spreading the love of music. Checkout their website <https://www.thespitzeepostband.com/>



Blueberry Jam continued...

Let's meet The Spitzee Post Band!



Joe Gore *vocals, mandolin, guitar*. Joe Gore, a lover of music and classics. Who was always singing even when people didn't want him to! He's a semi retired oil field worker, husband, father and grandfather with the love of mandolin and guitar.

Coralee Gore *double bass, vocals*. Coralee Gore, also a lover of music and classics. It's amazing she never picked up an instrument sooner. Later in life she met her mentor and now friend Trisha Gagnon from The Jay Birds. Trisha inspired her to become the upright bass player she is today. She started in 2011. She's also a loving wife, mother and grandmother.



Wayne Corner *resonator guitar, guitar, vocals*. Wayne Corner has played coffee houses, and is a songwriter, who has studied songwriting with Karla Adolphe and guitar with Tim Williams and Dave Hamilton. Wayne has a love for all kinds of music, he's also a husband and father who really loves the slide.

Gerry Madigan *banjo, vocals*. Born in Dublin, and weaned on Ireland's vibrant folk scene, Gerry enjoyed an incredibly successful career with his band, The Cotton Mill Boys. This band was one of Ireland's most popular bands on the live music circuit in Ireland and the UK, including American Airforce bases in England and Continental Europe. They had their own TV series, won Opportunity Knocks three times (similar to today's American Idol), recorded 15 top selling albums and 25 singles. He left the music industry in the late eighties to pursue a career as a management consultant and keynote speaker on the international speakers' circuit. During that time he wrote three top selling books – The Five Plateaus of Progress, The Agony of Ecstasy, and The TMI (Ten Minute Interview). His new book, Fluff Management (which deals with bullying in the workplace) will be published later this year. But now he is back to his first love – writing songs, recording them and playing them. Last year he released a solo album of all original material, Wild Bird, Fly Free. He was one of the pioneers of bluegrass music in Ireland and now he is playing an eclectic mix of 'bluesgrass' music with The Spitzee Post Band.



Darron Peardon *fiddle*. Born and raised in Calgary, Darron started playing fiddle at an early age. He played with a number of groups and individuals until his early 20's, but wasn't able to play regularly when his business career kept him away. After a number of relocations across the country, he moved back to Alberta in 2011 and has rediscovered his passion for playing. Darron's musical influences include Old-Time, Celtic, Down East fiddle styles, and also Country fiddle.



Blueberry Jam continued...

Zachary Willier



On a smokey Saturday July 31 evening, we discovered an amazing new talent. Now I'm sure that Zachary Willier doesn't feel like he's a brand new talent, that's just my frame of reference. He's been focussed on his music for long enough to develop the skills that "gave Byron a pretty good run for his money, right?"

If Zach Willier is new to you, I'll try to convince you to check him out so that you too can become a fan!

When young Zach Willier took the stage, his stage presence was obvious. He's a young, enthusiastic performer with a big voice and a bigger heart to match his stage presence. He's respectful, humorous and warm with the crowd. He strikes me as a young man who loves his music, much like another big (hearted) fiddler we know and love!



"Zachary Willier is a 16 year old Métis and Country style fiddler and singer who comes from Sucker Creek first nation near High Prairie, Alberta but currently lives in Edmonton where he is performing at many different events around the city. On December 1 of 2018 he was handpicked by his former teacher Daniel Gervais as part of an honours group to perform on stage with Natalie MacMaster at the Jubilee Auditorium.



In August 2020 he was selected to represent Alberta as a junior showcase performer at the Canadian Grand Masters Virtual Fiddle Celebration. The songs he sings and plays are mainly in the country style and he loves to bring back old songs when performing. When not on the road performing he enjoys practicing and listening to LP records."

Zach participated in Kenny Mak's bass workshop at the Blueberry Jam. He was a keen student and shared a lovely story of how he got his bass and how he became inspired to become a bass player.



"In December of 2020 my mother Janice got a call from a close family friend Phillip Bellrose who asked how we were doing and if I was still playing and performing. Janice told Phillip I was definitely still performing, and Phillip asked if I was familiar with the upright bass. Phillip told Janice the he had an upright bass for Zach to have, so we made the trip to Driftpile AB where Phillip lived. When we went to give Phillip a visit at his house he told us how he used to play in a band for years and purchased the bass

from Myhre's music. He said "I want you to have this bass because as a fiddle player I want you to learn how to play it, because the upright bass sounds so good with fiddle music", so that's exactly what I did. One of the kindest things anyone has ever done for me was giving me the gift of an instrument. In August of 2021 I was saddened to hear of Phillip's passing, I'll always have that bass to remember him by."



Blueberry Jam continued...

Fun Times!



The view from the BBQ 'Green Space' backstage area. A nice busy BBQ on a hot hot evening! The NBCMS volunteers (from left to right) Greg Winter, Mark McHale, Terry Ruddy, 1/2 of Grant Symons, missing from the photo are Maureen Winter and Carolyn Hotte (the backstage green space was not big enough to capture the entire mealee). Nearly 200 delicious M & M pre-cooked beef patties were nicely seared and served! Donations were graciously received by the club.

One morning a friend from another part of life, Daniel Van Heyst, met Maureen Winter at Kenny Mak's Bass Workshop where he was sketching some of the goings on. Daniel has a very cool hobby that artistically accompanies and captures the musical event at that moment in time. The sketch to the right is of Maureen with her acoustic bass guitar. The sketch below is of Kenny teaching the class. Kenny inspired and instructed his students in a much appreciated bass workshop.



Donna Ingram hosted a Square Dance outside of the Pavilion and veteran enthusiasts along with newbies shared the joy of the square dance. Donna did a wonderful job of calling the dance, keeping everyone on their toes if you know what I mean! This is a must event, you'll know what I mean after you try it next time.

Blueberry Jam continued...

What was special about The Blueberry Jam for you?

At the monthly meeting of the NBCMS Board last August, I proposed a question (/ challenge perhaps?) to the members of the board. My question was “thinking back about your experience at Blueberry I’d like each of you that were at Blueberry to think of a moment or an experience that you were thankful for or one that struck you in some manner, with that in mind, would you consider writing your story for me to include in the newsletter?”

From Terry Ruddy (the very first one to take this on and get it to me!) Terry forwarded to me the story he titled “Miss Evelyn” and his favourite memories that he re-visits every year thanks to The Blueberry Bluegrass Festival.

Blueberry causes me to re-live some favourite memories. We all know that life takes some strange twists and turns -here's a twist. Back in 2007, I was to meet up with a friend of my daughter's who had never been to Blueberry. When I met her, I was introduced to her companion, a lady who became affectionately known to me as Miss Evelyn. As it turns out, Miss Evelyn was attending her 12th or 14th Blueberry Bluegrass Festival. I didn't know at the time that this meeting was nicely arranged by my daughter and her friend. I discovered that Miss Evelyn, who worked with my daughter's friend, loved Bluegrass music, Nascar races, and hockey -what more could a guy ask for?

We returned to Blueberry the next year and celebrated our one year anniversary with a bottle of champagne at Stony Plain, life was great! Things couldn't get any better, I was already serving our club on the Board of Directors and Miss Evelyn volunteered to be on the Board as well, serving as the Membership Director. Over the next 12 years we travelled extensively attending the IBMA in both Nashville and Raleigh, Wintergrass in Seattle, and concerts in Yuma and Phoenix, AZ. We married in Portlock Beach, Honolulu in 2010. Each year we would spend 4 months in Palm Desert, California. For several years we would return to my hometown of Renfrew, Ontario where we would attend a local Bluegrass Festival and fundraiser for their new hospital.

When we arrived at our condo in Palm Springs back in 2015 and Miss Evelyn was not feeling well. We flew home in January and following many tests it was determined she had a bad case of cancer. Miss Evelyn passed away in November of 2018 after putting up a good fight. Part of Miss Evelyn lives at Blueberry so when I attend, she visits me in my memories. I still enjoy the music and the people that I get to re-acquaint with through the Festival as I get to renew old friendships. We loved the Festival together, it's not quite the same without her, each year I look forward to arriving at Blueberry and visiting with Miss Evelyn in my memories.

From Carolyn Hotte “The Blueberry Jam what a fantastic weekend.” Greg Winter our Newsletter Director has asked for a highlight that I would like to share. As I think back a smile comes to my face and warm and happy thoughts come returning back. The weekend held so many highlights for me, it was hard to choose just one. The jamming was phenomenal, the smiles were contagious but the best part for me was the community and the sharing of ideas, expectations and experiences. As I walked the campground many times over the weekend I greeted and chatted to everyone I could jammers and listeners. Everyone said the same thing. “Thanks for doing this it is so much fun to hear live music and be with our bluegrass family and friends.” and “We are having the best time!” Thank you everyone who attended the Blueberry Jam it was my pleasure to chat with you. Looking forward to when we meet again in 2022.

From Anna Somerville I should have known the numbers at Blueberry would be higher than expected in 2021. The festival has always enjoyed tremendous support from festival goers, even Covid didn't prevent some 500 people from showing up for the annual long weekend in August to jam. Blueberry gave the festival back to the jammers in 2021. We took a chance and recreated the early years of Blueberry. We invited bands that liked to jam, found a hay wagon to use as a stage and then just let the rest happen. The festival has grown to international acclaim over the years, but jamming has always been at the heart of Blueberry for many of us. The jammers really saved Blueberry in 2021 and brought a lot of pleasure to festival goers. I was surprised by the number of people who showed up who didn't jam. They just wanted to come to Blueberry and hang out with the community. We saw happy faces everywhere and enjoyed the positive feedback. There were many highlights for me as a festival presenter. I was so happy to work with the festival organizing team again and loved seeing people I see every year at Blueberry. Everyone was in a good space and did their best to make the 2021 Blueberry Jam a memorable experience.

Blueberry Jam continued...

What's special about Blueberry for you?

From Anna Somerville continued

This year will always remain extra special. My 4 year old grandsons shared their first public jamming experience with me. They arrived in car seats, threw a few rocks around, wrestled a bit, and got told off by some campers before letting me know they were ready to jam. They spotted the Backroad Stringband, introduced themselves, pulled out their ukuleles and just started strumming. What a great group of people to introduce them to jamming. A big thank you to the jammers of Blueberry. You showed up, played your hearts out and took good care of the dedicated bluegrass fans who showed up to listen. Same place, same time next year.

From Maureen Winter

“Great music inspiration, community and human connection: Blueberry Jam 2021”

Reflecting back on the August long weekend (which seems SO very far away now the leaves are falling), I wanted to capture what the highlights of the jam weekend were for me. I have a few short ‘story’ experiences that might even resonate with a few of you.

I’m a fairly novice bass player, and currently I am learning about music (and bluegrass) through the strings of my Taylor mini GS bass. How I came to own this little bass, is a story in itself. After attending Don Share’s harmony workshop out at Camp He-Ho-Ha, Greg and I approached Don for some advice as to what instrument I could begin to learn. Up to this point, my only musical knowledge was the recorder from elementary school. I do love the dobro (probably because it can easily make me cry!) and other friends had suggested the mandolin but Don’s advice was to get an acoustic bass guitar. So, Greg and I headed out to chat with Byron at his Myhre’s Music booth. As my luck would have it, Byron had just taken a mini-bass in on consignment. So, Monday after the jam camp – I was the new owner of a Taylor mini-bass. Before the insanity of COVID, I was fortunate to have had bass lessons from Zach Daniel-Robertson. Zach plays upright bass with the River City Playboys, and I loved when he would come over on Tuesday evenings. I’m looking forward to being able to have lessons again very soon.

As a volunteer at the Blueberry Bluegrass jam, I had the opportunity to attend the event while continuing to build my skills and connections. On the Saturday, Kenny Mak was hosting a bass workshop in the Gazebo at the Pioneer Museum. There were about 10-12 participants observing and playing, and one gentleman who was busy illustrating the workshop with his pencil and art pad. When the workshop was over, I approached the artist to see if he would consider sharing his illustrations for the NBCMS newsletter. Well, the world shrunk a little that morning – as it turned out the ‘gentleman’ was none other than Edmonton artist Daniel VanHeyst. I have one of Daniel’s paintings in my home, but more importantly, I taught his son Jack years ago. I had the chance to catch up and even shed a happy tear. As a retired principal – it is always wonderful to hear how former students are making the world better places.

My final little anecdote, involves a connection with the Spitzee Post Band. During the jam weekend, Greg and I were camped in our motorhome in the main parking lot. It was a primo location – right in the heart of the action. The entire weekend was an amazing opportunity to reconnect with bluegrass friends and acquaintances to visit, jam and (in my case) learn. We had a few friends jamming and chatting outside our motorhome, when I heard this beautiful song coming from a few motorhomes away. I was drawn by the melody (and the singer was pretty good too). As I wandered over, I stood out side their jam listening and when the song was done – I asked what they had been playing. It was “Missoula Tonight” – originally sung by Eric Brace and Peter Cooper. This beautiful, haunting song is about fleeing a forest fire. Pretty fitting song, considering the smoke from BC fires was all around us. So, while the song was what drew me in – the Spitzee Post Band was pretty fun to jam with over the course of the weekend. I look forward to the day we get down to High River to see them play again. If I keep up my lessons, maybe I’ll be able to play the mando-cello bass that Greg bought for me from the band. Thanks Spitzee Post Band – you were inspiring, fun and friendly – bluegrass traits to be sure. -Mo

MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT CAROLYN HOTTE:

Greetings everyone and WOW! Summer and now fall are passing quickly. It is great to be back at the hall jamming again. The safety of our community is important, and we thank you for your patience, kindness and understanding as we move forward to implement the Restrictions Exemption Program*, the City of Edmonton Masking By-law*, showing your proof of vaccination, and providing your name and phone numbers for contact tracing purposes. Your cooperation has allowed us to continue our weekly jam and Bluegrass 101.

On July 28th we had our Official Jam Re-Launch Party, and what a great time we had. So nice to see so many familiar faces. There was 40 people that came through our door. The evening started with Darcy Whiteside hosting Bluegrass 101 followed by a concert and jam with The Backroad Stringband from Grand Prairie. A very entertaining and fun evening it was. So nice to hear live music again. Thanks to everyone who joined us and we hope you make the Wednesday night jam a recurring destination.

The Blueberry Jam was an amazing weekend. There were lots of things to keep us entertained such as facilitated jams with 12 different groups, 11 workshops, open stages, pop-up concerts, and even a square dance kept our toes a tappin'. Let's not forget the food opportunities that were delicious, the pancake breakfasts put on by the Pioneer Museum, the BBQ'ed burgers Friday & Saturday night -- we served nearly 200 hamburgers at the Northern Bluegrass Circle BBQ on Saturday night! One more of the many outstanding parts of the weekend was the chance to see our old friends and make new ones. Jamming and visiting were highlights for many and the weather did not disappoint. All in all, a busy and fantastic weekend. It was a pleasure to be involved with the Blueberry Jam, and we look forward to what the festival has in store for us in 2022.

CONGRATULATIONS BLUEBERRY BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL! The 2021 International Bluegrass Music Association's Event of the Year winner for 2021 is the Blueberry 20 in 20 Workshop Series. They won this award in 2019 too! Can't wait for the 2022 festival to celebrate this well-deserved win.

We are looking for volunteer greeters! -If you would like to volunteer as a greeter for the weekly Wednesday night Pleasantview jams, please let me know via email to hottecarolyn@hotmail.com

We do not have anyone to set up or put away the chairs at this time. Please make sure to stack your chair (max 8) when you are done with it and ensure it is returned to the storage room. Thank you for your assistance.

If you would like full details about the AB government Restrictions Exemption Program visit: <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-public-health>

Full details on the City of Edmonton masking by-law can be found here:

<https://www.edmonton.ca/sites/default/files/public-files/assets/Bylaws/19408.pdf?cb=1632148116>

Your Proof of Vaccination card will only be valid until November 15th.

The AB COVID Records Verification app is now available for iPhone and Android devices on their respective app stores. The app does not store any personal information

Get your verified COVID-19 vaccine record with a QR code. <https://covidrecords.alberta.ca/home>

It's fast and easy – no account required. Keep it with you – save it to your phone or print it out. Show your vaccine record when you enter businesses or attend events.

See you at the jam!

Carolyn

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

-Robert Leckie would like to connect with club members and friends for telephone and in person visits, please call him at 780.487.3016

-Bob Leitch would appreciate sharing an honour recently bestowed upon Gene Zwozdesky... check this website <https://www.dialogdesign.ca/stories/newly-named-gene-zwozdesky-centre-at-norwood-continues-construction/>

Thanks Contributors!

-Darcy Whiteside for keeping the wheels on the Bluegrass 101 bus and allowing our members to stay connected weekly, best wishes Darcy.

-photos from Grant Symons, Rocky Sinclair, and Carolyn Hotte

-story contributions from Terry Ruddy, Carolyn Hotte, Maureen Winter and Anna Somerville

-Bio and band info from Patsy Blois, Sheila Hallett, and Zachary Willier.

-Sketches by Daniel VanHeyst.

-Thanks to the NBCMS for 25 wonderful years!

-Thanks to the Internet for photos and all the truths I could find...

-written by Greg Winter, edited by the lovely and talented EX-Principal Maureen Winter

-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.

