

President's Notes, April 2009

Since I wrote last we have had a few shakeups at the association. Claire Mikkelsen has graciously volunteered to take over the publicity chair for long-serving Sue Charles. Claire deserves applause, both for daring to volunteer, and for her fine radio announcing since she took the job. Claire has started a phone chain to let folks who may not have internet access know about upcoming association events and schedule changes. Please give Claire a call if you can help with this duty.

We have also have come up short a newsletter editor, as long-time volunteer editor Sylvia Williams just can't do that relentlessly monthly chore any more. I am clumsily filling in for this issue, but we really need someone a little more gifted at composition, editing, and writing in general. **Please let me know right away if you think you can help out on this crucial duty!**

Other changes – I am in the process of moving our website from our long-time host server to a new server, one that should provide much better connectivity to folks with Hiway and Knology internet service. Alan Cunningham, our hosting provider, is helping me with this transition. You might not notice much change, but we will now have both huntsvillefolk.org and .com urls at least during the move. And with the new hosting, I expect to have enough bandwidth to put up some sound clips of HTMA performers.

I like very much to post photos of HTMA members and guest performers at the website and in this newsletter. The new web hosting should give us room to post a lot of photo material that I've been holding back due to storage limits. If you would like to see your photos on our site, please email them to me, in full native resolution of possible. Photos taken with available light (no flash) are strongly preferred.

More next month!

Jerry LeCroy

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The Huntsville Traditional Music Association meets on the third Sunday of each month. Our next meeting is on:
Sunday, April 19th
2:00 - 4:30 PM

Due to a schedule conflict, this meeting will NOT be at the Huntsville Public Library Auditorium

Instead, please come enjoy the meeting with us at the HTMA president's house, 1311 Chesterfield Road SE Huntsville

www.HuntsvilleFolk.org

Calendar of Events for April

Saturday, April 11th, 1:00 - 4:00 PM

Traditional and Old-time Jam (Free admission for musicians, regular admission for non-musicians) at Constitution Hall Village

Sunday, April 19th, 2:00 - 4:30 PM

Meeting / Jam session at the LeCroy's. **Note alternate location due to schedule conflict at the Library**

Thursday, April 23rd, 7:00 PM

Coffeehouse featuring fine fiddling females **MOHR 4**
At the Old Church at Burritt Museum on Monte Sano.

For more information on all HTMA meetings, concerts, coffeehouses, and other events, visit our website at

www.huntsvillefolk.org.

HTMA Executive Board

President: **Jerry LeCroy** 880-6234
alabamahoss@bellsouth.net

Vice President: **Jim England** 852-5740
jengland@knology.net

Sec/Treasurer: **Pat Long** 539-7211
plong@hiwaay.net

Publicity Chair: **Claire Mikkelsen** 883-7919
homeschoolnan@yahoo.com

Public Service Chair / Pres. Emeritus:
Bill McCampbell: 882-2400
mccampbellwm@bellsouth.net

Performance Chair: **Lou Beasley** 859-5016
lrbeasley@mchsi.com

Newsletter Editor: **Position Available!**

Operations Co-Chairs:
George Williams 880-6234

george.p.williams@pobox.com

Steve McGehee 858-2032

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Mr. Bill's Gigs

April 2009 NURSING HOME GIGS

Nursing Home Gigs are on Saturdays at 3:00 PM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

APRIL 4 3:00 PM
HEARTHSTONE ASSISTED LIVING
8020 Benaroya Lane Huntsville 35802

APRIL 18 3:00 PM
MORNINGSIDE OF MADISON
49 Hughes Road MADISON 35758

APRIL 25 **NOTE: 3:15 PM**
REGENCY
(NOTE: Formerly Park View Health Care)
2004 Max Luther Dr. Huntsville 35810

If you have any questions or suggestions, contact Bill McCampbell at 882-2400 mccampbellwm@bellsouth.net

SUMMERTOWN – BEYOND THE BLUEGRASS

By Pat Long

As someone who grew up in what is now the bluegrass mecca of Summertown, TN I thought I would give fellow HTMA members and bluegrass festival goers some glimpses into the “real” Summertown that I know and love. First of all, did you know that it is home to what was once one of the largest communes in the country? Check out The Farm at <http://www.thefarm.org/>. The Farm is a few miles northwest of the festival site. Summertown is about 1000 feet in elevation and because of this and the abundant natural springs it was a summer resort in the late 1800s. This is the source of the name Summertown. If you drive just a short distance north of the festival site you will come to the most famous landmark in Summertown, “The Monument”. This is a small obelisk-shaped monument to World War I dead. Two names are inscribed there; one is of a distant cousin of mine who was killed at the Battle of Belleau Wood in France. The town also boasts some Civil War history as the road through S’ town was a major thoroughfare between Shiloh and Nashville. “Downtown” Summertown has a bank, post office, a few stores, a florist, a BBQ place and several churches. There’s an elementary and high school just off the main drag. My high school graduating class numbered 61 students! Since then the place has grown by leaps and bounds as it has become a “bedroom community” for workers in Lawrenceburg, Columbia and beyond. But, I still have quaint memories of the place that would rival Garrison Keillor’s Lake Wobegon stories! Enjoy the festival if you go!



Notes from the Berry Patch

NOTES FROM THE BERRY PATCH:

THE DELTA QUEEN, the last of the smoke and soot belching paddleboats to part the water of our rivers slipped by me this morning. I had intended to be at Ditto Landing as she passed by on her way to Chattanooga to become a thing of the past. The Old Lady and I were about the same age, I wanted to wave good-bye to her as she made her way “up-the-river,” never to churn the water and belch the soot again. But, she caught me napping and passed me by.

The truth be known, I really wanted to do more than wave to her. I wanted to stand on the dark shore, boy again, barefoot, in my overalls, with lantern in hand to signal the captain that I wanted aboard. I wanted to hear the pilot’s voice above the hissing steam call out, “Pipe the port watch. All hands on deck to lower the plank for passenger. Mind the Cypress stumps. Careful, now.”

I wanted to hear the answer come, “Ay—ay, Sir.”

In my dream of things no-more-to-be, I wanted to be short the passenger fare and see if a quart of home-brew would induce the first mate to turn his back while I slipped aboard and hid in the boiler-room as the Fair Lady made her last run past Gunter’s Landing. Forbidden fruit appeals to boys, and some old men.

But the DELTA QUEEN passed by Ditto Landing in the darkness of early morning as the old man slept, leaving him with only his dreams of riverboat gamblers, wood-fired boilers, and lady friends that pass in the night.

Joe M. Berry, 2/10/09



Former HTMA president Jack Ellis at the January coffeeshouse.

Report on the Breakin' Up Winter music retreat

by Jon Blakely

On the weekend of Mar. 6-8, Lou Beasley and I drove up to Lebanon, TN for the Breakin' Up Winter music retreat. This event is organized annually by the Nashville Old Time String Band Association at the Cedars of Lebanon State Park. The schedule included presentations on the Roots of Old Time Music, workshops, and performances by masters like Cyde Davenport of Monticello, Kentucky and Franklin George of Roane Co., West Virginia. Outside of these events, there was lots of jamming, a silent auction, a collection of hard-to-find CDs for sale, and a wax cylinder recording machine with which that you could make your own vintage recording.

Neither Lou nor I had ever been to this event before, so this trip was a bit of an experiment. (In fact, this was the first festival I've attended as a musician rather than as a spectator.) We arrived Friday evening around dinner time and in no time were jamming with a crowd led by Scott Miller (currently of Cullman, AL). Later in the evening, we ran into several friends from Huntsville like Jim and Cole Holland and Bob and Cathy White, and enjoyed playing more with them. The group lodge was full so we spent the night at the Days Inn in Lebanon. After breakfast at Cracker Barrel we headed back to the park in time to join a jam led by Tennessee fiddler Bob Townsend. Bob introduced each tune with a story about who he had collected it from. Next we heard a presentation by Bruce Green of songs he had collected from south central Kentucky. Then we went looking for another jam. We sat down with a fellow from Nashville and before we got tuned up to play the first song there were half a dozen other musicians gathering around to join in. After jamming with this crowd for a while, I went to get a snack and Lou ran into some folks from the Grand Old Dulcimer Club (based in Nashville). We had to get in a few tunes with that crowd before heading back to Huntsville in the afternoon. Lou and I agree that next year we want to go back to Breakin' Up Winter and attend the full weekend.

Pre-Meeting Seminars Call for Volunteers

Last year we had several pre-meeting seminars on various facets of making and enjoying traditional music. We've been a little short on presenter volunteers this year, but the seminars are a tradition well worth continuing. If there is a subject that you'd like to present at a meeting, please call HTMA president Jerry LeCroy to get on the schedule. And many thanks to all the presenters who help continue HTMA's educational programs.

HTMA Coffee House
19 Mar 09
Lou Beasley

The March 09 Coffee House Concert was held on the 3^d Thursday of March, instead of the customary 4th Thursday, because of a scheduling conflict. It turned out that we were blessed with great weather, and an even better evening of music.

HTMA's own Thumb Picking Champion, Ken Hinkle, opened the evening with a rousing boogie medley on his guitar. He followed that with several vocal and guitar instrumental pieces that included *Wild Irish Rose*, *Two Little Worms*, *Farewell My Bluebell*, and *Copper Kettle*. Interspersed in the vocals were several instrumentals to include *Wait Till The Sun Shines Nellie*, and *The Day is Mine* (written by Jerry Reed). Ken closed out his part of the concert with a great version of *Precious Lord*.

Ken does not shy away from complex pieces of music and his concert was an inspiration to all us guitar pickers. Ken recently went through a difficult surgery on his picking hand and a long period of recovery/therapy on that thumb. He was in great form tonight, and it was evident that Ken's surgeon did a fantastic job of "overhauling" his thumb. Thanks for a great job Ken.

The featured group of the evening was Hanging By A String. This band is comprised of a group of talented local musicians. Band members include Ricky Holeman (dobro), Jonnie Lee (lead guitar), Frank Cole (rhythm guitar), Wesley McDonald (bass), and Lance Stone (guitar and vocals).

Tonight, the band featured Lance singing a wonderful set of Southern Gospel songs. Included in this set were *Just A Closer Walk With Thee*, *Guide Me Lord*, *A Cabin in the Hills*, *Family Bible*, *Sing a Family Song*, *Precious Lord*, *Life is Like A Mountain Railroad*, *Old Rugged Cross*, *Jesus Hold My Hand*, *Roots of My Raising Run deep*, *Jericho Road*, and closed with *I'll Fly Away*.

The band was simply outstanding and provided absolutely beautiful support for Lance's singing. Each instrument was played with expertise, grace and polished taste. Lance has a very smooth, velvety voice (reminding one of Merle Haggard) and seemed a perfect fit for the vocals chosen for this set. Good job, well done.

Good weather, good crowd, and good music made for a most enjoyable evening. I received many wonderful comments on tonight's performance, and all were in agreement that this was simply a great evening of music. I, personally, look forward to having this band for a return engagement in the near future.



Jake Stevens Playing at the February coffeehouse

Sacred Harp Singing Workshops

The Guntersville RSVP is sponsoring a course on Fa Sol La (4-part shaped note, or Sacred Harp) singing. It will be held on six consecutive Tuesdays from 12:30 PM until 2:30 PM, beginning April 14.

The cost is \$30.00, which includes singing materials. The teacher will be Mr. Robert Walker. The classes will be held at the RSVP facility in Guntersville.

For more information, please call 256-571-7734.