



The Huntsville Traditional Music Association meets on the third Sunday of each month. Our next meeting is on:  
Sunday, December 21st, 2:00 - 4:30 PM  
In the Huntsville Public Library Auditorium  
915 Monroe Street, Huntsville, AL

HTMA's tireless Nursing Home Gig crew performs. The Huntsville Times had a really good article on the Nursing Home effort in the Sunday, November 30, paper. If you missed it, it's worth the effort to find and read it.

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

[www.huntsvillefolk.org](http://www.huntsvillefolk.org)



## HTMA President's Notes

Dear Friends,

I've been polishing up a few Christmas tunes, like I do for this season every year. Probably my favorite Christmas tune isn't a carol, it's *Christmas In the Trenches* by John McCutcheon. One of the verses in that song stands out for me today:

Twass Christman in the trenches  
Where the frost so bitter hung  
The frozen fields of France were still  
No songs of peace were sung

I'm thinking about that line of "no songs of peace" now, and comparing the music I hear today with memories of forty years ago. Back when the Vietnam war was raging, we had so many songs of peace being written and performed, from Phil Ochs *I Ain't Marchin Any More*, to Buffy Ste Marie's *Masters of War* to Dylan's *With God On our Side* to that *Vietnam Blues* song by Country Joe. And there were songs on the other side of the subject of war - I remember the *Ballad of the Green Berets* on the radio, and even Pete Seeger wrote about the *Ruben James*.

Seems as if we've been at war in one way or another most of the past decade, in Kosovo, or Somalia, or Afghanistan, or Iraq. What happened to our topical song writers? I've had time lately to listen

to old recordings loaded on my MP3 player on various plane trips. We had some great song writers bringing the issues of the day into the public arena in the sixties and seventies. Am I just missing it, or are we short on songs with a message today? Where is today's Phil Ochs? I'm not hearing those songs at HTMA meetings, and of course not on the radio.

If you know of some of today's topical songwriters, please share them with me and the rest of the HTMA family. Bring their songs to a meeting or coffeehouse, or maybe see if we can book them to perform at a coffeehouse or concert in Huntsville. Sometimes topical songs have a short shelf life, but some become just as timeless as the best of any other genre. I think it's an important part of the HTMA mission to bring a variety of music out to audiences in north Alabama, and I'd sure like to see us present someone with a message from time to time.

As I write, it's the week after Thanksgiving, and a month yet to Christmas - a good time to think about all we have been blessed with. I know I'm very grateful for the friends I've met and the opportunities I've had through the music association. The Saturday after Thanksgiving I got to go with Bill McCampbell to another retirement home performance. I've been out of town a lot this year and have really missed those opportunities to get out and play for an appreciative audience with good friends. Those performances are really rewarding, for everyone concerned. Today I want to thank all of the HTMA volunteers who keep showing up at these gigs, at coffeehouses, and especially the folks who keep working on the newsletter and other HTMA functions. We would not have nearly so much fun without friends like George and Sylvia Williams, Lou Beasley, and Joe and Linda Berry. Many thanks to you guys, and the other folks I haven't named, and my very best wishes for the New Year.

*Jerry LeCroy*

## Delmore Tribute Coffeehouse

The audience at the November Coffeehouse settled in to listen to some beautiful, classic Southern music, and they were not disappointed. The theme was songs by Country Music Hall of Fame inductees, the Delmore Brothers (Alton and Rabon), who are known to have had a profound impact on country music as well as on American popular music in general (for example, Bob Dylan, in the Chicago Tribune in 1985, said, "The Delmore Brothers, God, I really loved them! I think they've influenced every harmony I've ever tried to sing."). Judging by the wonderful music at the Coffeehouse, HTMA members feel much the same as Dylan about these Alabama natives and their songs.



A highlight of the excellent performance by Jerry Lecroy, Steve McGehee, and Danny Charles was their rendition of *Deep River Blues*.



The lineup of performers was a distinguished one, opening with Milton Wooldridge, who performed classic Delmore songs, including *Lay Down My Old Guitar*. His riveting performance featured stories about the Delmore Brothers and their career.



James Smith, The Autoharp Man, gave the audience songs including *Travelin' Blues*, in his inimitable way.



Jim Holland and Jon Blakely performed next. They also had stories to tell, in addition to great playing and singing on songs that included *Weary Lonesome Blues*.



Jack Ellis delivered several songs with style and grace, including *Put Me On The Trail To Carolina*.

## Thank You Note From Debbie Delmore



Ending the evening beautifully were Sue and Danny Charles with a set that included *Precious Jewel*.

This evening was a well deserved tribute to two great stars of Southern and American music whose roots are deep in the soil of North Alabama; offered by HTMA members who remember, recognize and honor the Delmore Brothers.

There were special Guests of Honor in the audience for the performances: Debbie and Norma Gail Delmore, daughters of Alton Delmore, who were introduced, and spoke briefly, to the audience. They greatly enjoyed the tribute to their father and uncle (Editor's Note: see the Thank You Note from Debbie in a separate article). They distributed special brochures on the history of the Delmore Brothers to audience members, who were very pleased to receive them.



The following is the URL for a memorial web site that gives more history of the Delmore Brothers. Be sure to check out the scrapbook and the links & contacts sections:

<http://www.delmorebrothers.net/>

Note From The Editor: The following thank you note was forwarded by Lou Beasley, who is a co-chair of the Performance Committee. The November Coffeehouse featured songs of the Delmore Brothers (see other article).

Dear Lou,

I can't thank you enough for last night! It was absolutely wonderful. The music was beautiful, please relay that to all the performers for me.

The Church was just perfect, it was such an honor for you all to remember my Dad and Uncle in this very special way. Thanks for the pictures and also for bringing Mr. Bill McCampbell with you, he is so sweet.

Please keep in touch.

God Bless You,  
Debby (Delmore, daughter of Alton Delmore)

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### Note from the Editor

Our newsletter is an important part of our organization, and I invite every member to contribute ideas and/or articles any time you want to do so. You can reach me at [sylvia.s.williams@pobox.com](mailto:sylvia.s.williams@pobox.com) or 256-728-2359 or 1334 Columbus City Road, Scottsboro, AL 35769. I hope to hear from you soon.

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### **December Member Performance/Jam Coffeehouse December 23**

The December Member Performance Coffeehouse will be on Tuesday, December 23, in the Trillium Room at Burritt on the Mountain. It will be a Christmas Carol Jam format, with everyone invited to come join in the circle with Christmas jam tunes and/or performance tunes played informally.

No sign up is necessary for this one. We will begin at 7:00 PM.

There will be a fire in the fireplace, and we will celebrate a warm, happy Christmas with our friends and our music. **COME TO PLAY OR COME TO LISTEN - IT WILL BE A JOYOUS EVENING!!**

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## Notes From The Berry Patch

Christmas approaches and with it the right to make a Christmas wish. One has the right to wish.

I wish that I could write something special for my HTMA friends, something to let them know that I am grateful for each one of you. Something with sincerity of spirit. Something that would warm the heart of the reader.

I thought of choosing one of my poems to share with you; but sometimes a poem is more burden than blessing. This twisted thinking led me to share with my HTMA friends a poem about another friend that I once had. I wish that you might enjoy:

### *“GOOD FRIENDS”*

*KNEW HIM QUITE WELL,  
BUT NOT HIS NAME  
THAT LITTLE OLD MAN  
THAT SAT ON THE PORCH.*

*JUST A LITTLE OLD HOUSE,  
WITH A LITTLE OLD PORCH,  
ON WHICH SAT A LITTLE OLD MAN.  
THAT WAY FOR YEARS.*

*ALWAYS ON THE LEFT  
SIDE OF THE PORCH,  
ROCKING CHAIR,  
OVERALLS AND WAVED.*

*WITH HIS LEFT HAND.*

*NEVER SAW HIM STANDING,  
GETTING UP OR DOWN.  
JUST SITTING  
AND WAVING.*

*PROBABLY HIS WIFE,  
SOMETIMES THERE,  
SOMETIMES NOT.  
SAT ON THE RIGHT SIDE,  
STRAIGHT BACK,  
“MULE-EAR” CHAIR.  
SELDOM WAVED.*

*MAYBE SHE  
DID NOT SEE WELL.  
MAYBE UNFRIENDLY.  
MAYBE DID NOT LIKE TO WAVE.*

*SHE AND I DID NOT  
COMMUNICATE VERY WELL.  
NO RECALL  
WHICH HAND  
SHE WOULD SELDOM WAVE.*

*NEVER LIKED HER AS MUCH  
AS I LIKED HM.  
IF HE COULD NOT HAVE  
WAVED THAT LEFT HAND  
HE WOULD HAVE HIS RIGHT,  
I AM SURE.*

*GOT TO KNOW HIM VERY WELL.  
WE TRUSTED EACH OTHER,  
REGULAR WAVING,  
SIX OR EIGHT YEARS,  
WILL DO THAT TO YOU.*

*HE WAVED FIRST,  
MOSTLY.  
I TRIED TO BE FIRST,  
SOMETIMES.  
HE USUALLY BEAT ME.*

*ONE THING,  
FOR CERTAIN,  
EACH OF US  
ALWAYS WAVED  
BACK.*

*I JUST KNEW,  
DO NOT KNOW HOW,  
EXCEPT BY WAVING,  
HE DID NOT WATCH  
TELEVISION OR READ  
THE PAPER,  
MUCH.*

*HE WAS ALWAYS PEACEFUL,  
WAVING IS BETTER FOR YOU  
THAN NEWS OF AFFAIRS.  
I KNEW JUST BY WATCHING  
HIM WAVE.*

*WINTER MONTHS CHASED HIM  
OFF THE PORCH.  
BUT I KNEW HE WAS THERE.  
SMOKE OUT OF THE CHIMNEY.  
I LOOKED FOR IT.*

*WOOD SMOKE,  
NOT COAL.  
DIFFERENT COLOR,  
BETTER SMELL.*

NEVER SAW A WOOD PILE.  
HADN'T THOUGHT OF THAT BEFORE;  
BUT,  
IT WAS WOOD SMOKE.

MADE ME FEEL GOOD  
TO SEE  
THAT SMOKE.

THAT WAS HIS WAY  
OF WINTER-WAVING.  
GOOD FRIENDS KNOW  
THINGS LIKE THAT.

SEEMS LIKE I LAST SAW  
THAT SMOKE-----  
WAS IT WINTER OF '92  
OR '93?  
THE PURPLE MARTINS  
CAME EARLY,  
LATE MARCH.

HIS CHAIR WAS ALWAYS  
ROCKING BY APRIL,  
LEFT HAND WAVING.  
I STARTED WATCHING  
CLOSELY  
FOR THAT LITTLE OLD MAN  
ON THAT PORCH.

TOLD MY WIFE,  
"THE LITTLE MAN IS GONE."

"HE WILL BE BACK."  
THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID,  
"HE WILL BE BACK."  
SHE USUALLY KNOWS  
ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT.

SHE IS, MOST TIMES,  
RIGHT.  
THIS TIME, I RECKONED,  
SHE MIGHT BE WRONG.  
I DID SOME MIGHTY  
HOPING  
SHE WAS RIGHT.

SIX, OR EIGHT,  
YEARS NOW PASSED.  
ROCKING CHAIR STILL,  
ON THE LEFT SIDE OF PORCH.  
NO SMOKE, ROCKING OR  
WAVING.

WHERE IS  
MY GOOD FRIEND  
WHO BELONGS  
IN THAT CHAIR,  
ON THAT PORCH?

WHO WAS HE?  
DOES HE LOOK FOR ME?  
WAS HE NONE OF US,  
ALL OF US?

WAS HE A STRANGER,  
OR MY BROTHER?

DOES HE STILL WAVE TO ME  
IN THE WINGS  
OF THE MONARCHS,  
OR SWALLOWTAILS?

I DO NOT PASS  
HIS HOUSE AS MUCH AS ONCE,  
BUT I ALWAYS LOOK  
TO THE CHAIR  
THAT DOES NOT ROCK,  
AND FOR  
THE HAND,  
LEFT HAND IT WAS,  
THAT DOES NOT WAVE.

MOSTLY,  
I SIT  
ON MY PORCH,  
IN MY OVERALLS,  
AND TRY TO WRITE.

JUST ANOTHER  
LITTLE OLD MAN,  
SITTING ON HIS PORCH,  
LOOKING,  
SOMEONE  
TO WHOM I MAY WAVE.

*Joe m berry, 1999*

Good Christmas wishes for all my Friends from  
The Berry Patch.

*Joe M. Berry*

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