



Gerry McGough Writes Top Song

Gerry McGough, HTMA member and singer/songwriter, won first place in the Folk/Bluegrass/Country Category of the annual MOVA Songwriters' Contest in Guntersville, AL, the weekend of June 7 and 8. His winning song was *Pickle Factory*, which he and his group, Rusty Bay (Gerry, Lori McGough, and Diane Miller), performed at the March HTMA members' performance Coffee House.

HTMA (and Rusty Bay) member Diane Miller won second place in the Inspirational Category of the competition with her song *Offerings*.

HTMA member John Abbott placed fourth in both Folk/Bluegrass/Country with *Southern Feelings* and Pop/Rock with *Nothing Wrong*.

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

www.huntsvillefolk.org



The Huntsville Traditional Music Association meets on the third Sunday of each month. Our next meeting is on:
 Sunday, June 15th, 2:00 - 4:30 PM
 In the Huntsville Public Library Auditorium
 915 Monroe Street, Huntsville, AL

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HTMA President's Notes

June 2008

Dear Friends,

I ran into another HTMA acquaintance this past week, Roy Bookbinder. Roy was in town playing a gig at the Kaffeeklatch, in between gigs in Franklin, Tennessee, and Atlanta. We had a good chat for an hour or so before he started playing, and Roy told Steve and me about a succession of interesting guitars he's played over the years.

Roy says that he really likes old Gibson guitars, but mostly plays guitars that were built by Gibson, but branded by other marques. The one he was playing Friday night was an S. S. Stewart OO size flattop. S.S. Stewart was a respected banjo manufacturer in the 20's and 30's and apparently wanted to break into the guitar business. They were one of four or five companies that had Gibson build guitars for their label. Back during the depression, Gibson would build guitars for anyone willing to pay for them. The one Roy was playing appeared to be in perfect condition, though he said it was built in 1931, a take-off from the Gibson L-2. The guitar had very nice detailing - double binding on the fret board, and inlaid mother-of-pearl Stewart logo. It sure sounded great.

HTMA produced a concert with Roy B some ten years ago, one of our earliest concerts, at UAH Roberts Recital Hall. I was struck by the difference between that concert and the one Roy played at the Klatch. Zach, at

the Klatch, was working sound through a tired old powered mixer and equally tired speakers, into a room that's difficult to put good sound into. Roy had one very dim stage light, and the audience behind us never stopped talking, even when Roy brought one song to a stop and said "Sorry, I couldn't hear you. I was singing." When Roy performed for HTMA at UAH, we filled up the hall, with a quiet and attentive audience, and of course at Roberts Hall every seat has a good view of the stage, and the sound is outstanding.

At HTMA concerts we provide a much better quality performance environment, and an audience interested in hearing the music. I hear all the time from songwriters who play at our coffeehouses how different it is from typical gigs playing at bars, competing with the serious drinkers in the back, and sometimes with the ESPN on the TV. I'm really glad that we can offer that better environment for all our guests, players and audience, and I'd like to see us do it more often.

You can help with that. If there is a folk/traditional artist or songwriter you'd like to see play here in Huntsville, help us get in touch with them. One of the biggest benefits of HTMA membership for music fans is the opportunity to help bring your favorite artists here, to meet them and see them perform in our intimate settings. You have to start the process, though, to take advantage of this benefit.

So call Steve McGehee, Lou Beasley, or me, and let us know who you think HTMA ought to be bringing to Huntsville. Get that ball rolling.

I'll close with a note of thanks to all the people at HTMA who have sponsored HTMA concerts in the past. Thank you Shelley Heard, Steve McGehee, Sue Charles, Lou Beasley, Joe Berry, Pat Long, Jim Holland, and Chip Gulbro.

We couldn't do it without you.

Jerry LeCroy

May Coffee House: Canadian and American Music

The May coffee house was begun by the group Kaleidoscope, composed of Chuck and Kristina Weber, on fiddle and keyboard. They performed a lively and fascinating array of Canadian songs, presenting the intertwined story of Canadian music and history as background to their performance. They explained that the origins of most Canadian music are French and Celtic.



Of French influence were several songs, including *Les Joies de Quebec* (The Joys of Quebec) and the moving *Un Canadien Errant* (The Wandering [or Exiled] Canadian), written in 1842 by 18-year-old Antoine Gerin-Lajoie, which told of the despair and loneliness of a Canadian refugee from the rebellion in 1837 that resulted in the banishment of many of the rebels.

From the Celtic influence came several rousing jigs including *Trip to Sligo* and *Apples In Winter*, as well as an Irish clog and several reels. One highlight of the performance was Chuck's demonstration and instructions to the audience of Canadian toe-tapping, which is both rhythmic and rather intricate. The audience was hugely entertained by these excellent performers and their music.



No words are adequate to describe the performance of Dale Ramsey. The audience sat literally rapt as he wove melody and lyrics and absolutely beautiful guitar playing into a spellbinding experience.

Dale's mastery of the guitar is truly wonderful to hear and behold, and his voice is uniquely suited to the songs he chooses to sing, bringing depth of feeling to each of them.

With his slide guitar giving counterpoint to his voice, he played and sang Bob Dylan's *Buckets of Rain*, which he learned from Bob Hines. Taj Mahal's playful *Fishin Blues* and the thought provoking song gleaned from the parable in the bible, *Prodigal Son*, followed.

Then he sang a few songs hauntingly accompanied by his acoustic guitar, most notably *Magnolia Wind*, which he dedicated to his wife, Vicki, saying it always made him think of her when he played it.

He returned to his slide guitar to further mesmerize the audience with Richard Thompson's *1952 Vincent Black Lightning*. He followed it with Willis Alan Ramsey's *Watermelon Man* (an audience favorite) and Tom Rush's *Panama Limited*.

The only way to end this review is to repeat the first sentence of it: No words are adequate to describe the performance of Dale Ramsey.



Mr. Bill's Birthday Celebration

At the May HTMA meeting at the library, Bill McCampbell was surprised with a birthday celebration in honor of his 85th birthday. Songs were sung, candles were lit and blown out, and cake and punch were served.



Walker Street Opry to Headline June Coffee House

Walker Street Opry (Blaine Anderson, Phil Easterbrook, Tony Robertson and Rick Taylor) will once again perform their magic for us on June 26, at our Coffee House at the Old Church at Burritt On The Mountain. They have been together as a group since 2002, and perform at venues throughout North Alabama. Their music is primarily stellar bluegrass that is certainly worth a trip up the mountain!

Opening for the Opry will be a very talented group of sisters, the Mohr4 (Rebekah, Naomi, Hannah, and Tabitha Mohr), whose acoustic strings and vocals are, in a word, beautiful. Featuring fine fiddlers, they play a mix of Celtic, folk, and classical music. The four Mohr sisters will be accompanied by their mother, Michelle, on whistle, and by Jennifer Allen on guitar.

Please join us for wonderful music on Thursday, June 26, at 7:00 PM, at the Old Church at Burritt On The Mountain. You'll be glad you did!

For more information on these two groups, check out our web site at

www.huntsvillefolk.org.



Notes From The Berry Patch

Linda and I invite all members of HTMA, and friends of members, for a serving of Berry Jam at the Berry Patch on Saturday, October 18. Save that day on your calendar for a repeat performance of last year's event! More about that, later.

In my storytelling, I often relate historical events. (When I grow up, I will likely be a history teacher.) That said; let me tell you how Mordecai, in an unusual way, saved the life of one of our Presidents.

My story begins with Daniel Boone telling his friend Abraham about the good, black land across the mountains to the west and how it could be purchased for forty cents an acre. This sounded like a good deal to Abraham, so in 1782, he loaded his wife, Bathsheba, and five children, Mary, Nancy, Mordecai, Josiah, and Thomas into a wagon, together with all their belongings, and across the mountains he went to present-day Kentucky.

There, two years later, Abraham and his three boys were surprised one day by an Indian attack as they worked clearing a spot of ground. Abraham had been shot and fell dying at the feet of his three sons. Mordecai, age twelve, ran to their cabin. Josiah, age nine, ran toward the nearest neighbor's house. Little Thomas, age six, too scared to run and not knowing what to do, dropped to his knees beside his dying father.

As Thomas knelt beside his father, an Indian approached him from the rear, intent on clubbing Thomas to death. Before the

Indian's club could work its intended evil, there was the sound of a second gunshot and the approaching Indian fell dead close by. Twelve-year-old Mordecai had gotten to the family cabin, retrieved a gun, and shot the Indian.

In doing so, Mordecai had saved the life of his brother, Thomas. In that way, Mordecai saved our country a future president.

Thomas would grow up and marry Nancy Hanks. That union would produce a daughter, also named "Nancy," and a son that we know as "Abraham Lincoln."

Thanks for reading my story and remember our plan to serve Berry Jam in October.

Joe M. Berry

That's What I'm Shooting For

Editor's Note: The following exchange between two HTMA members was forwarded to me. *Bill* is Bill McCampbell, and *Steve* is Steve McGehee.

Bill,

I recently went to a concert in Mississippi (just because I had free tickets - I didn't have much to lose [except my hearing]). As things sometimes go, I soon found out I was in for an unexpected treat. The band stopped playing after about three songs, and introduced a legend. His name was Pinetop Perkins. He was 95 years old, had a cane and was escorted out on stage by two drop dead gorgeous women. He sat down at a piano in his orange suit and matching tie with a big broad brim hat and played a song that Jerry Lecroy plays a lot called *Come Back Baby*. He really brought the house down. For his third and last song (which I think he wrote) he played *I Got My Mojo Workin'* and the crowd was into it so much he just kept playing the last verse over and over till everyone was exhausted. He stood up, took a bow, and the entire place gave him a standing ovation. As he was leaving the stage escorted by the two gorgeous women in evening gowns, the young man who was the leader of the band (Kenny Wayne Shepherd) announced "PINETOP PERKINS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! 95 YEARS OLD AND STILL PLAYING LIKE HE'S 75!" That's what I'm shooting for.

Steve

Steve,

I think I will shoot for that, too. Just ten more years, less three days. That oughta be easy. I have in the last week had birthday cake at the HTMA meeting and the dulcimer association meeting. I am reasonably sure I do not rate such treatment, but I am darned sure not going to argue about it. I'm not even going to pretend modesty. I'll let you in on a little secret, though, I do not expect my playing to improve each year.

Bill

James Smith Reaches Head of the Appalachian Trail

Jim Holland

Our traveling Auto Harp Man, James Smith, called in the middle of May and left a message that he was at the head of the Appalachian trail in North Maine. This had been his goal, in the latest leg of his musical Appalachian Trail odyssey, and he made it! He said he played six songs with his Morgan autoharp, and left some of his CDs on the trail for the next traveler to scavenge. North Maine is farther north than Quebec, and most of Nova Scotia. He concluded the message with his usual, "See you when I get back."

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 or 256-728-2359 or 1334 Columbus City Road, Scottsboro, AL 35769. I hope to hear from you soon.

Mr. Bill's Gigs

June 2008 Nursing Home Gigs

Nursing Home Gigs are on Saturdays at 3:00 pm unless otherwise noted.

JUNE 7 3:00 PM
HEARTHSTONE ASSISTED LIVING
8020 Benaroya Lane Huntsville 35802

JUNE 21 3:00 PM
WHITESBURG MANOR
(NOTE: Formerly Whitesburg Gardens)
105 Teakwood Dr. Huntsville 35801

JUNE 28 **NOTE: 3:15 PM**
REGENCY
(NOTE: Formerly Park View Health Care)
2004 Max Luther Dr. Huntsville 35810

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

Calendar of Events for May.

June 14 - Jam session from 1 - 4:00 PM at Constitution Village, downtown Huntsville

June 15 - HTMA Meeting 2:00 - 4:00 PM. At the Huntsville Public Library Auditorium

June 26 - June Coffee House - 7:00 PM
Walker Street Opry. Opening will be Mohr4. At The Old Church at Burrirt on the Mountain. Free; donations accepted

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