

The Northern Grass



Summer
Edition

Northern Kentucky Bluegrass Music Association

August
2011

Keeping Bluegrass Music Alive In The Northern Kentucky Area

Presenting The 2011 Gene Thompson NKBMA Scholarship Award



The 2011 Gene Thompson NKBMA Scholarship selection has been made! We received three applications this year from very talented individuals at the Kentucky School of Bluegrass & Traditional Music. Our unanimous decision was to award this year's scholarship to Mr. Andrew Hunt. Mr. Hunt presented us with excellent references and enthusiasm in his application as well as meeting other selection criteria for the award. We are happy to introduce Mr. Andrew Hunt as the winner of this year's scholarship. An excerpt from Andrew's Artist's Statement is below:

"Music to me is not just a hobby it's a way of life. For a long time now I have known that I wanted to travel and play Bluegrass music professionally. Loving your work is the key to living a happy life, and if you are lucky you will have a job like that. If God calls you to do something and you want to do His will, He will help you.

Andrew's award will be presented at the 18th Annual Osborne Brothers Hometown Festival held in Hyden, Kentucky, August 4th through 6th. It is also our hope to get Mr. Hunt and his band to perform for us after festival season has ended.

Your 2011 NKBMA Board Members

President -	Pamela Messer
Vice President -	Luther Hensley
Treasure -	Ron Simmons
Secretary -	Jackie Bowling and Myrna Murphy
Senior Advisor -	Gene Thompson
Senior Advisor -	Steve McCain
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CALENDAR PAGE



The Richwood Opry

The best place to experience
Bluegrass and Country Music and
BEAT THE HEAT?

Located at the Journey's
building behind the
Richwood flea market
10915 Dixie Highway,
Richwood, Ky

Doors open 6pm Music from 7pm to
10pm
Children under 12 are Free!
Concessions available
General seating, first come first serve
For more information,
call 859-992-5775

2011 SCHEDULE

8/6 – Able Gray

8/12 – Darrel Webb

8/13 – Kirby Knob Boys, Estel & Molly Baker,
Roy Knipp & Southern Harmony

8/20 – Stacy Grubb Band

8/27 – Blue Mafia

9/3 – New Mountain Heritage

9/8 – (Thursday) – Hill Benders

9/9 – James King Band

9/16 – The Boxcars

9/17 – Night flyer Band

9/24 – Keith Prater Band

11/4 – Heart Town

11/11 – Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver

11/18 – Dry Branch Fire squad

11/19 – JD Crowe

12/9 Larry Stephenson Band



NKBMA PICNIC AND JAM BY THE RIVER

With a little help from everyone the NKBMA is planning a membership picnic so mark your calendars. Here is what is being discussed so far:

- NKBMA provide burgers, dogs and buns
- Jack and Gertie Barry are letting us use their land
- Asking members to provide pot luck dishes to add to the food.
- Music will be like our Friday night jam so bring your instruments and singing voice.
- Rain will cancel the event.
- Bring your chairs.
- Car pool if you can because parking close to the event will be limited.
- Starting time will be noon until dusk.
- Date for this event is being planned for 9/24/11.
- This will be a great time for everyone I'm sure.
- Additional information will be mailed out before the event.

BROWN COUNTY BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

August 25, 26, 27

NKBMA BLUEGRASS JAM

Willis Music , Mall Rd. Florence
August 26th

Mandolin Farms

September 2nd and 3rd

Clay City Bluegrass Festival

September 8,9,10

Wool Fest

October 7,8,9





Travels of the Famous Festival Couch



You may or may not remember that my best half had the brilliant idea of taking a couch to the 2010 JD Crowe Festival. It was a GREAT idea! We were comfy, warm and we paid a fourth of what you'd pay for a camp chair WalMart. 'Couch' was doomed by his previous owners to adoption at the local Good Will store in Wilmore, KY. We bought 'Couch' for \$15.00 and took him to the festival, and that is where it all began. Dean Osborne, musician, festival promoter, and all-around funny guy, was tickled. He said he'd seen it all, but never a couch at a bluegrass festival. After The Grascals finished their show we had the first autograph session and photo op with Couch. You can view those photos on The



Larry Cordel, Pam Messer and the Famous Traveling Couch

Grascals facebook page. A great time was had by all! Dean also signed Couch that night. The original plan was to drop Couch back at Good Will on the way out of town and leave him to his fate, but thanks to Dean, Couch had become an autograph hound and must now make his rounds wherever there is Bluegrass to behold. (Oh yeah - the plan sort of back-fired a bit on my best half - Couch has a sofa bed and he is a little over weight.)

Couch's next appearance was at the Flickertail Holler concert held at Willis Music in April. Somehow we managed to squeeze the band members onto him for an interview. That concert will be Couch's first foray into video stardom when the Woodsongs Coffeehouse DVD is completed and released to public access television. Flickertail Holler can be seen again at the Licking River Music Festival this month, August 26-28.

Couch then rested for a while in the performance hall and eventually made his way to the Sally Gap Bluegrass Festival where he was introduced to many new signatures, including a group from Russia called the Grass Pistols. The Lonesome River Band added their signatures as well as Michael Cleveland and Flamekeeper, and the AMAZING festival host band - Southern Sun! Couch has asked to be a front row seat there next year, too! This is a great festival held the first weekend in June, and truly - it has the BEST food of any other festival so far!

Couch was then off to Rudy Fest in Grayson, Kentucky. Couch attracted a lot of attention, and his neighbors stated many times not to move him or they would never find their seats again. Couch was enjoyed by all, but mostly by us when we opened his sofa bed and relaxed under the stars for the evening shows. Being in among the crowd it was difficult to get many performers to come into the seating area for signatures so we helped out by taking the cushion to the artists. Dailey and Vincent, and the rest of the Grascals were a few of the signatures gathered there. The Great Larry Cordel said that he had been asked to sign many things during his career, but never a couch. He braved the seating and came down for a signature and photo op. I've met Larry at several festivals, and I have to say that a nicer more approachable artist is hard to find. Larry will be performing at the Station Inn on Friday, October 1, 2011. We'll be seeing him there while attending IBMA Fan Fest. Rudy Fest has a great line up, excellent jamming, and a great camping area. Plans are already underway for Rudy Fest 2012. We plan on being there! You should, too!

Couch has had another short rest in our garage, but is breaking out again this weekend to attend the 18th Annual Osborne Brothers Hometown Festival. (Since the Famous Festival Couch is really Dean's brain-child, we have to arrange regular visitations.) Dean will be up to see us in early February for a performance at Willis Music. The Osborne Brothers Hometown Festival always has a top line up and the pre-sale price is the absolute best - just \$15.00 for all three days if you purchase before opening day. Dean does his level best to promote his performers and still make it possible for fans to attend during these economically trying times. This year we will present our scholarship award at the festival, and visit with many with great performers and friends! Come see us if you see us!

More Travels of the Famous Festival Couch in our October issue!

At the Festival of the Bluegrass in Lexington

by Ron Simmons

Please don't read this as a chance for me and or My Favorite Bluegrass Band to bask in any sunshine we truly expected. Nope, it was raining and cold the day we were asked to do the FOBG, and for that matter the night was dark and stormy! Here's the way it went down.

We, (MFBGB) were scheduled to make some Bluegrass music at Clay City last fall and we did.....and had a great time doing it as always. At the time we really hadn't considered who was paying attention or not because on the stage you are pretty much into yourselves and what is going well, or not which does happen too. When we were done with our evening, Donny Rogers said to us (as Gene Thompson has told us in the past) that he and the other folks at Clay City appreciated the fact that we played songs that most other groups wouldn't do for one reason or another. You go with that thought in *whatever* direction! I think we are always trying to do things that suit MFBGB the best and as it turns out they are songs that can be a little tricky vocally or chord progression-wise. We rehearse a lot and maybe that's why the challenge is worth it. You know, "no pain, no gain".

Little did we know that Gaines Cole and Donny Rogers of Clay City, had informed the Cornettes of the Festival of the Bluegrass that they should come and hear our group at the Spring Festival at Meadow Green Park. Sure thing. They'll run right over from Lexington with their Grandson Roy and ask us to play the Festival, and offer a shot on the main stage.

They did. Roy asked, and Tom Murphy, since he could still speak, said we'd be glad to. Old Ron here is the nay saying skeptic who believes very little of what I hear and only a small dab of what I see. (I didn't really expect much of that encounter as a lot of time passed before being contacted with details by Roy.) So after an exchange of cards and thank you, we did our show (inside because of the weather) with Roy, and Bob and Jean Cornette sitting in the front row. Playing Bluegrass for the Clay City folks is like "pickin'" on your back porch for those family members that love you in spite of the wart on your nose. We played and cut up as usual, picking on each other as much as our instruments.

Friday, June 10th came so slowly I thought perhaps God had rolled speed bumps in front of that date. Most of our NKBMA members were congratulating us while others thought that it was not deserved and we were way out of our league. I give them all credit for (in their own way) feeling exactly as we did.

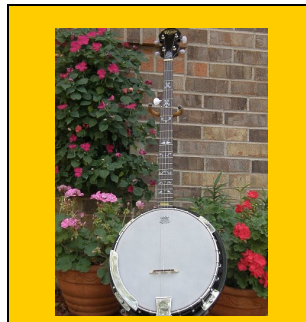
At 1:50 PM on June 10th after cueing up in the hospitality tent (yeah....all the food, drinks and a pretty lady to serve them too) we talked to the host who laughed as most others do about the name of the group. We agreed that being called "boys" from some fictitious valley wasn't as cool as it used to be. We climbed the stage and looked out at the audience. Good Lord, what are we doing here? With about a two minute drill to get the mics set, we were introduced. Mark started "Till the end of the World", then Tom Murphy, Mark Stidham, Bud Walls, Barry Hartman and me, Ron Simmons became a small part of Northern Kentucky Bluegrass Music Association, Friends of Bluegrassoh yes and **The Festival of the Bluegrass** history.

Thank you to all of our supporters and skeptics that make us work harder to be a good friend and representatives of this wonderful Appalachian Heritage Music, and the Bluegrass Associations that keep it breathing.

Ron Simmons



MFBGB Performing at a Willis Music event earlier this year



NKBMA Beginner Banjo Raffle

If you have been to a NKBMA in the last 6 months or so, you probably have seen the new beginner Woods banjo displayed and up for raffle. Hopefully you took advantage and bought a chance or two to win. The proceeds of this raffle will go directly to help support the Gene Thompson NKBMA Scholarship that is awarded to a student every year.

At the last NKBMA board meeting on 8/1, it was decided to draw for this banjo at our August jam session at Willis Music.

If you have purchased a raffle ticket for this banjo, please make sure you are at Willis Music on August 26. You do not need to be there to win but we would love to put this in your hands.

Thanks so much for supporting this raffle as well, as the students who will keep Bluegrass music around for future generations to come.

From The Desk of Our President

Pamela Messer

I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank each and every member and partner of our association for your support. As you know, our mission is to preserve and promote bluegrass and traditional music in our area, and we are doing a fabulous job!

Some of you may have asked "Where do my donation and member dollars go?" Well - here are just a few of the activities you support: This quarterly newsletter is printed and mailed to all of our members. It is also made available to potential members, promoters and musicians via our website www.nkbma.com which is currently getting approximately 1,100 hits per month. In addition to that, your dollars help with the printing of advertising and promotional materials including our signs, concert flyers, and membership cards. You also support partial assistance for music boot camps and workshops to our young members who are interested in learning bluegrass music. Our largest contribution is a \$1,000.00 scholarship that is granted to a deserving student at the Kentucky School of Bluegrass and Traditional Music. Last year's scholarship winner, Seth Mulder and his group, Flickertail Holler were put into contact by our association with Joe Carr of the Licking River Music Festival and they will be performing there at the end of this month! We also regularly attend the Appalachian Festival each year in May to help introduce and promote this musical style. Unfortunately, it was canceled this year due to the flooding, but we'll be there next year! We do not yet have the funds to host and promote a festival, but that is a future goal, and will take a tremendous amount of planning and volunteers to pull it off, but as we grow, so does our potential.



Located across from the Florence Mall and next to H.H.Gregg on Mall Road, our Florence Superstore has it all. Store manager Rick Fuchs brings years of service and experience to meet your every need. Our Florence location also features a 24 track digital recording studio and performance center in addition to the Kate Young Music Makers studios and lesson center.

7567 Mall Road
Florence, Ky. 41042
859-525-6050

In the meantime, many of our members help coordinate performances at the Willis Music Supercenter in Florence where your admission dollars go directly to the performing band or artist. The band is paid 100% of the take at the door and they also get CD/DVD copies of their performance. Volunteers from The Sound-Workshop and Heaven's Mark Productions create and edit the performances as Woodsong Coffeehouse events that are distributed to statewide public access television stations such as KET and PBS.

Many of our Association Member Bands also attend local elementary schools to perform and introduce this music and history to youngsters. The groups of Luther Hensley, Ron Simmons, Gene Thompson and Russell Turner are just a few of our biggest supporters of this activity. The association helps provide an avenue of access for the academic community to educate and support this tradition and hopefully spark a young mind and talent.

Our monthly jam sessions are a great place for old and new bands to perform and meet new musicians and 'fans'. Some new groups have been formed just by meeting at our jam sessions and finding that 'sweet' sound. We have recently had one of our youngest members (Kyle Smith, age 15), taken on by one of our member bands, New Godspeed, for their remaining performance season. He will be performing with New Godspeed with Ernest Tubbs in Nashville on November 4th. And Ron Simmons' 'My Favorite Bluegrass Band' performed this year on the main stage at the Kentucky Horse Park Bluegrass Festival. There is a lot of talent out there that our association helps to recognize and support.

If you've ever doubted that the NKBMA promotes and supports bluegrass and traditional music - doubt no more! The answer is YES! We are very successful in our support and promotion, and you, our members and partners, make this support possible. To learn more - please remember that our association board meetings are held on the first Monday of each month at Willis Music Supercenter on Mall Road in Florence. We usually start around 6 p.m. All members are invited to attend and participate. We hope to see you there! Have a safe and happy summer!

- Pamela Messer - President NKBMA

NKBMA
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