

Keeping Bluegrass Music Alive in the Northern Kentucky Area

Northern Kentucky Bluegrass Music Association

August 2019

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Joe Mullins & The Radio Ramblers-IBMA Again!

Joe Mullins is no stranger to NKBMA. He and his Radio Ramblers have performed for us on numerous times during one of our WoodSongs Coffeehouse Events. Joe & RR are making headlines again this year and it is appropriate to share the news here.

Joe recently signed to Nashville's Billy Blue Records and released a 12 song album titled **For the Record**. For those of you not familiar with Joe and his band, here is a quick sketch:

Led by banjo playing Bluegrass veteran Joe Mullins, the band includes a plethora of instrumental and vocal talent with Jason Barie on fiddle, Mike Terry on mandolin and vocals, Duane Sparks on guitar and vocals, and Randy Barnes on upright bass and vocals. The group is a true industry and fan favorite having garnered multiple IBMA (6) and SPBGMA (4) Awards, including the 2018 IBMA Award for Song of the Year ("If I'd Have Wrote That Song").

Their newest album has garnered more awards! From the hard-driving "That Old Wheel" and the fun, upbeat "Bacon In My Beans," to the emotional "A Folded Flag" and beautifully arranged, soulful vocals of "I Want to Know More About My Lord," every track on this new project is strong evidence that Joe Mullins & The Radio Ramblers remain in a class all their own, with a unique and popular brand of the finest in Bluegrass music.

The first radio single, "The Guitar

Song" is a duet between Joe and the legendary Del McCoury. Co-written by another legend, Bill Anderson and award winning Jamey Johnson and Vicky McGehee, this version of the song, cleverly arranged by Joe, is a conversation between two pawn shop instruments, the guitar and a banjo, hanging side-by-side on the store wall. The guitar (McCoury) and the banjo (Mullins) discuss their respective Bluegrass history in the hands of some of the genre's greatest pickers and singers. This is a truly historic recording featuring two of the most popular veterans in Bluegrass music in their first-ever collaboration.

Having gained the reputation as a band that always chooses great songs, the recognizable sound of Joe Mullins & The Radio Ramblers, with their characteristically rich vocals, have exceeded that reputation, delivering another collection of wonderfully wellwritten songs, arranged and recorded in their inimitable style.

Joe says, "I am hopeful that everyone can hear the fun that went into this new recording. I looked around one day and told the guys, 'We are blessed with great instruments, playing into the best microphones in Nashville, at the studio of our friend and mentor, Ricky Skaggs. How fortunate we are to have an opportunity to do what we love. Could things be any better?' And then, Del McCoury....(continued on page 5)





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"The Family Event"- Ron Simmons, President., ACDA

May 10th thru 12th at Coney Island was our 50th presentation of some of our areas finest bands, artists, vendors, dancers, storytellers, historic re-enactors, and just plain all 'round good family fun. The Appalachian Community Development Association presents this fun and educational program to raise money for those who still need help in Appalachia with food and education. We support those that care enough to teach and nourish those whose lives have changed drastically in a traditionally depressed area. We are a 501c3 organization.

As with any outdoor event, the weather plays a major role. The music was good, the stories were great, the food booths were on top of their game, the Native American shoes and demonstrations

Remaining 2019 Festival Favorites: Kentucky:

Sept 12-15 Jerusalem Ridge Bluegrass Celebration, Monroe Homeplace,

Rosine, KY URL:

https://www.jerusalemridgefestival.com Sept 26-28 20th Annual Vine Grove Bluegrass Festival, Vine Grove, KY URL: https:/vinegrovebluegrass.com were inspiring, the dancers had their area filled to capacity. If we could have just found a weatherman to cooperate all would have been rosy! Thankfully we of the ACDA have kept some funds in the bank for these types of years and we will be back at it booking the vendors and performers that can make the mood and visions of our Appalachian Heritage live again in an entertaining and teaching environment.

Some of the bands this year included: Steve Bonafel and One Iota, Vernon McIntyre's Appalachian Grass, Uncle Mike Carr, Skirt and Boots, Nightflyer, Higher Vision, The Tillers, Kornerstone, Rabbit Hash String Band and more. Many brought their own instrument and jammed along with Artie Werner and his 'Art of the Jam' on the Up Close and Personal Stage, Saturday from 11:30am to 5:30pm.

On a side note, our newsletter editor and publisher, Jerry Schrepfer, had his new consortium of music makers, The Forest Hills Bluegrass Band, there and I found it proof positive that finding entertainment in unexpected local venues is what makes me excited about my job of booking bands. They will be back and I hope you all set aside Mother's Day Weekend, May 8,9 & 10, 2020. Stay healthy and let me know about groups you know of locally that can fit into our schedule next year. I'm listening! *-Ron Simmons*

Indiana:

Sept 18-21 **Bill Monroe Hall of Fame Uncle Pen Days Festival,** Bill Monroe Music Park and Campground For info go to <u>URL:</u>

http://www.billmonroemusicpark.com

New York:

Aug 23-25 **Summer Hoot Music Festival**, Ashokan Center, Olivebridge, NY. For info go to: <u>URL: http://hoot.love</u>







July 18th thru 21st, Oak Hill, NY was

once again an incredible experience. While the weather didn't cooperate sending daily thunder showers and 90-97 degree (indexed to 116) temps which were a challenge, the highly organized city of Grey Fox, volunteers, and patrons came together to ensure the exciting lineup of artists, workshops, and youth academy were the best ever.

With a daytime main stage (under a huge tent) and a evening main stage under the stars, over 5000 music fans enjoyed the performances of the host band, Dry Branch Fire Squad, Molly Tuttle, Balsam Range, Del McCoury Band, The Tim O'Brien Bluegrass Band, Sierra Hull, The Steep Canyon Rangers, Leftover Salmon, The Travelin' McCourys, The HillBenders, The Lil Smokies, Frank Solivan & Dirty Kitchen and many more.

Five other stages hosted dance classes, story telling, band interviews, workshops in a number of topics including songwriting, the art of the jam, banjo technique, bass playing, bluegrass guitar, mandolin and more plus most major bands were showcased on these smaller stages including question and answer sessions.

Of special note, Jerry Douglas and his Earls of Leicester graced the main stage in full Flatt and Scruggs attire performing their traditional act to the thrill of over 5000 fans. Having VIP access, I enjoyed a chat afterwards backstage with Jerry who is a very warm, funny guy.

Tim Surrett, bass player with Balsam Range, came early ahead of the band and showed me how to assemble his new standup bass with removable neck for airline travel. A remarkable solution to traveling with a large instrument. The band dedicated their version of John Denver's Matthew to me making my day!

Irish bands were present and totally captivated the crowd. We Banjo Three made their first appearance at

Grey Fox thrilling the audience with their 4 string banjo skills. I Draw Slow, the number 1 band in Dublin Ireland, entertained from multiple stages.

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The Gibson Brothers debuted their new Country music act including steel guitar, drums, electric guitars and cowboy hats. A very convincing country twang to their vocals capped it off.

Molly Tuttle and Sierra Hull performed with their new approach including, as many bands are doing these days, drums and 70s, 80s rock and roll songs done acoustically.

And the audience was stunned by the artistry of Tommy Emmanuel as he took the main stage for the first time Saturday evening. An amazing man to talk to back stage as he explained his approach to performing.

Eric Lee (fiddle) and Man About a Horse performed on the main stage and Eric has also created his own album to be released this year. Always fun to talk with Eric.

A new, young band, Cane Mill Road, performed on multiple stages and surprised me with their acoustic version of Gordon Lightfoot's 'Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald'', a song I have sung for years on the folk circuit. Chatting with the lead singer, Liam Purcell, I complimented him on remembering all the words to such a long ballad. I had the opportunity to tell him the real story of the freighter and the actual circumstances of the wreck which is now a memorial to the 29 sailors who perished resting on the bottom of Lake Superior.

After 4 days and more music than any one individual can absorb, I came away with two impressions. Audiences for traditional bluegrass are dwindling while the trend of recycling 70s and 80s rock, folk and country music is drawing audiences young and old. Secondly, the technical equipment required to support all acoustic bands is unbelievable. - *Jerry Schrepfer* (below-city of Grey Fox)



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Member Story: Dangers of Bluegrass

A Public Safety Notice

In the interests of public safety, some dangers regarding bluegrass that I have observed will be brought to light with some prime examples and some more obscure possibilities. We all remember the classic line from 'A Christmas Story', "you'll shoot your eye out kid?" This phrase comes back to me every time I change strings and am tuning up through several octaves, reaching the seemingly impossible tension and tensely waiting every second for that string under several hundred pounds of tension to snap off and whiplash back into my eye. I have had a few strings break while tuning up and it makes me awfully jumpy, but I still have proper depth perception with two good eyes. *Changing strings can be dangerous!*

There are a great number of bluegrass camps throughout this great country, some of them lasting up to a full week and being an all-encompassing time of music and good times. Lots of lessons can be learned on every instrument and about music and people in general. As far as vacations go, I have had more fun at Nashcamp near Nashville, TN, than a barrel full of monkeys. My Dad was the first to go there. Then we went together for many years, each time always better than the last. I don't clearly remember if we met my North Carolina buddy, Hank at Nashcamp or IBMA but we all continued to meet at each event as often as we could. My Dad and I both had the middle name of Henry so we were the three Hanks. Don't let this confuse you. I will continue to refer to myself as me, my dad as Dad (or Pop, sometimes) and my North Carolina buddy as Hank. So far nothing dangerous here.

Well one summer in early August, Hank flew into CVG a little early so that we could all drive down to Nashcamp together. He enjoyed a trip to historic Rabbit Hash, helped me replace the brakes on my truck, spread a little gravel up at the barn and we generally had a good country time.

There was a well-bred coon hound named Gus that had a "house of origin" a couple miles away but he had the traveling bones. He was at everyone else's house as often as his own and often at Mom and Dad's place where Hank had temporarily boarded in the basement. Gus really loved life and everybody enthusiastically. He was big buddies with Dad's 98 pound, 10 inch tall basset hound named Freckles and they would play like puppies, albeit, 200 pounds of puppy.

As any coon hunter will tell you, almost all coon hunting goes on at night so coon hounds naturally get fairly active in the wee hours just by the nature of their breeding. Let me set the stage properly here. It is 2:00 in the morning, Hank is sleeping in the basement, surrounded by a cornucopia of bluegrass instruments, Mom and Dad are sleeping peacefully and Freckles is in the house, but smells a play buddy outside. Freckles makes his wishes known to Pop to please let him outside for something very important.

Dad gets up in his underwear to let Freckles out. I'm pretty sure Dad special ordered his tightie whities with extra sag because as far back as I can remember his always sagged nearly to his knees, nothing tight about them anywhere, and Dad's legs were as snowy white as an alabaster statue. His legs saw sun once for five minutes in 1948, but I digress. Dad opens the kitchen door to quietly let Freckles out, careful to keep Mom from waking up. No one wants to wake Mom in the middle of the night! As Freckles winds his way past Dad's tightie whities, Gus enthusiastically bounds into the house, just tickled to death that someone was paying him attention! He skids across the kitchen linoleum, runs a lap around the living room and back again! Dad is quietly trying to chase him down and, at all costs, keep him from waking Mom who was still asleep in the back bedroom. Gus heads for the stairs and runs down at full speed to check out Hank.

Now Hank is a boxer man, looking like a golf pro when he sleeps and he gets up and assesses the situation immediately saying, 'Shhhhh, Gus, #@!! Gus, Shhhh! And there goes the boxer and tightie whitie team chasing a nimble dog in a Keystone Kops parody around the house in the middle of the night, alternately going 'Shhhhh' in a loud whisper or '#@!! Gus'. It all could have gone horribly awry with knocked over vases, crashed into instruments, or worst of all, Mom being awakened. But it all turned out OK. Nothing was damaged but the fashion report. Gus was finally captured and led outside to finally play with Freckles. 2:00 in the morning is no time to invite a young dog into the house. The three Hanks made it to Nashcamp that year and had a time that couldn't be beat.

I will leave you with a short story about the *dangers of bluegrass instrument acquisition*, commonly known as Guitar Acquisition Syndrome (GAS). My Dad was a musician all of his life but had never owned a Martin guitar. He always had what he called secret "rathole money" that he judiciously saved up for the appropriate occasion. Back around around 1996, Martin Guitar Company made a special offer from the custom shop for a 40 guitar run, each to be made to customer's specs with a nameplate on the inside including your name. Dad



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(*Member story continued*) managed to get on the list for one of these guitars. In the past 20 years, I have managed to play four guitars out of this run and each one is absolutely awesome. Crisp, clean and powerful. It takes a while for each guitar to be built to Martin's exacting standards, but finally Dad's is finished.

Mom is in the kitchen when the phone rings. She picks up the rotary dial wall mount phone (still proudly in use today) and it's the local music shop calling. They say, "Mrs. Bushelman, we called to let your husband know that his new Martin guitar is here and ready for pickup. The remaining balance of \$\$..... is due". Now here is the funny part for you and me. Mom didn't know anything about the guitar and Dad wasn't home. *That is a very dangerous bluegrass situation!* I now have that guitar with Dad's name (and, incidentally, my name is the same) on the nameplate. Even though Dad may have risked being beaten to death by Mom with a flyswatter, I love that guitar dearly. It sounds incredible and means the world to me.

Be careful about the situations you get into in the world of bluegrass. There are hidden dangers everywhere. *Tom Bushelman Jr*.

(Joe & RR continued from page 1)...walked in to do a song with us - life is good and we are thankful."

For the Record - Joe Mullins and The Radio Ramblers was released March 29, 2019 (Billy Blue Records) and as a result they have received the following IBMA nominations for 2019:

- * Entertainer of the Year
- * Song of the Year The Guitar Song w/Del McCoury
- * Album of the Year For the Record (Billy Blue)
- * Gospel Recording of the Year Acres of Diamonds
- * Collaborative Recording of the Year The Guitar Song w/Del McCoury

Congratulations! We wish Joe Mullins & The Radio Ramblers luck and hope they bring home all of the above awards this fall.

As some of you may know, Joe Mullins has been a radio personality for over 30 years. He purchased WBZI Radio in Xenia, OH in 1995 and now owns an Ohio network of radio stations - Real Roots Radio - and can be found on the air most weekdays from 1pm until 3pm featuring Bluegrass and Bluegrass Gospel music and webcasting at www.realrootsradio.com. He was SPBGMA's 2011 Broadcaster of the year and also hosts Front Porch Fellowship, a weekly syndicated radio show which airs on over 200 radio stations. Joe was IBMA's Broadcaster of the Year in 2016 as well.

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Joe Mullins & The Radio Ramblers are also hosts to one of the largest indoor music festivals in the area:



The Southern Ohio Indoor Music Festival features nationally known acoustic music groups, including pioneers of Bluegrass music, as well as a sampling of up and coming bands. Their goal is to feature bluegrass, old-time, and gospel music, combined with family fun and educational opportunities in an entertaining, smoke and alcohol-free environment.

This is always an exciting event with a stellar lineup and you are encouraged to attend one or both days. Here are some of the details:

Master of Ceremonies - Blake Williams Artists performing on Friday: Joe Mullins & The Radio Ramblers Doyle Lawson & QuickSilver The Becky Buller Band Ralph Stanley II & The Clinch Mountain Boys The Moron Brothers The Family Sowell Artists performing on Saturday: Joe Mullins & The Radio Ramblers The Seldom Scene Kenny and Amanda Smith Paul Williams Jeff Parker & Company Remington Ryde

Tickets went on sale August 1st. For ticket sales, festival information and performance schedules, go to:

Somusicfest.com







Live Music at

It's Best

Willis Music

August 2019





The Forest Hills Bluegrass Band October 12, 2019 7pm

High energy entertainment in the comfort of the Willis Music Auditorium, Mall Rd, Florence,KY Come out and enjoy traditional bluegrass, Americana and roots music with a special focus on the music of John Hartford, sprinkled with some Tony Rice, Gordon Lightfoot, New Grass Revival and original compositions. Banjo, fiddle, guitar, mandolin and bass plus great vocal harmonies will have you tapping your foot and singing along.

Get there early, seating is limited to 120 people. \$10 door donation appreciated.



End of Summer Picnic and Jam

September 15th 2:00pm to 5:00pm

Hebron Church of Christ 2966 Damascus Road, Hebron, KY NKBMA will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, buns, condiments, soft drinks, water and ice. Bring a dish or dessert to pass. AND your instrument to jam!

The Hebron Church of Christ has plenty of parking and multiple jam rooms inside plus full sound setup in the sanctuary for lots of jamming music fun! Bring the family or a neighbor, come out and enjoy an afternoon of fun, food, and music. Rain or shine, weather will be no problem. Door donation appreciated.



Wayne Luessen - Mandolin/vocals; Brian Buckley - Guitar/vocals; Rick Marksberry - Banjo/Fiddle/vocals Jerry Schrepfer - Bass/vocals Visit www.facebook.com/FHBB2019 for info







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Live Music at It's Best Willis Music Event

Willow Creek Bluegrass Band November 16, 2019 7pm

Hailing from Eastern Pennsylvania with a 24 year history of providing traditional bluegrass music to audiences of all ages, this group really delivers the sounds of the past masters of the genre. Active members of the Appalachian Fiddle and Bluegrass Association, Willow Creek Bluegrass Band has thrilled fans with that traditional sound that you just cannot afford to miss in the comfortable setting of the Willis Music Auditorium, Mall Rd., Florence, KY.

Get there early, seating is limited to 120 people. \$10 door donation appreciated.



Christmas Party and Jam

December 27th 5:00pm to 8:00pm

Willis Music

Mall Rd, Florence, KY

NKBMA will provide sandwich meat trays, breads, condiments, coffee, soft drinks, water and ice. Bring a dish or dessert to pass. AND your instrument to jam!

The Willis Music Auditorium provides us a wonderful stage, sound system and comfortable chairs for lots of jamming music fun! Bring the family or a neighbor, come out and enjoy an evening of fun, food, and music. Rain or shine, weather will be no problem.

Door donation appreciated.



The band consists of: Dennis Schuler on banjo Rich Laughlin on guitar Bill Shaffer on bass Dave Stever on fiddle and dobro Visit their website at https://bluegrassbywillowcreek.com for more information on the band and it's history



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Serving Kentucky and Ohio

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In MEMORANDUM

Jack Willis 1938-2019

Long-time friend to many, musician and NKBMA member, Jack passed away at age 80 on June 2, 2019 at his home in Florence, KY. He was born July 1, 1938 in Portsmouth to Bernard and Lena

Willis, graduated from East High School and honorably served his country in the U.S. Army. He then worked for 37 years for the Norfolk Southern Railroad as Chief Clerk before retiring. He moved to Florence, KY in 1969 where he was very active as a baseball coach supervising the Boone County Girls Softball League for over 20 years and the Boone County Knothole Baseball League. He was a member of the Florence Lions Club and a charter member of the Northern Kentucky Bluegrass Music Association.

Fellow musician friends had the following to say about Jack:

'I met Jack and Emma Willis in the late 70s or early 80s. They were members of a CB club and his handle was 'Bi-jack', because he sponsored charity country music dances twice a year. After the dances we would invade the 338 truck stop for an often embarrassing breakfast. My wife and I often camped with them, cooking beef quarters, roasting pigs and partying all weekend. We were charter members of NKBMA with Jack devoted to the Association always willing to do more than his part.

Usually where Jack was Emma was there also. I told Jack the only reason she ran around with him was she didn't want to have to kiss him good by usually resulting in Jack uttering a few choice words in my direction.

In the fall Jack and Emma made sauerkraut, always saving me a package, and I would give them some fish that I had caught. I am truly missing my friend' -Russell Turner 'I would like to say that Jack Willis was as big with his generosity when it came to his favorite Bluegrass music as he was in life. He was always one of the first to volunteer when he had his mobility and one of the first to reach for his wallet when the NKBMA needed a boost in revenue. He has been missing from the scene these last few years and will be remembered as a lifelong friend of our music and our lives in general. Our regards to his family and especially Emma, who was his best friend and wife for many years. RIP Jack' - Ron Simmons

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Annie Thompson 1931-2019

Annie Laurie Thompson nee Wilson, 87, of Hebron, passed away Sunday July 21, 2019. Wife of our local 'Father of Bluegrass', Gene Thompson, Mrs. Thompson was retired after more than 34 years as an Elementary School Teacher for the

Boone Co. Schools, Conner School District. She was a graduate of the University of Kentucky, lifetime member of the UK Alumni Association, A Kentucky Colonel, a member of the Boone Co. and Kentucky Retired Teachers Associations and a charter member of the Hebron Baptist Church. She enjoyed crocheting, UK Basketball and Bluegrass Music.

Surviving is her husband of 69 years, Gene Thompson; daughters, Lynda Anne (Keith) Jones and Laura Beth (Robert) Madden; son, Jeffrey Eugene (Pamela) Thompson; sisters, Donna French, Nancy Mullins and Martha Hogue; brother, James Lewis (Diane) Wilson; 6 grandchildren, Ashlei (Bryan) Winningham, Anna (Chris) Turner, Hannah Madden, (Leigh), Carly Jones and Eva Madden and 4 great grandchildren; Reid Winningham, Liam Winningham, Niles Turner and Parker Madden. Visitation and services were held at the Hebron Baptist Church with interment at Hebron Lutheran Cemetery.

A husband and wife had been arguing all day. As they passed a herd of jackasses, the wife says, "relatives of yours?" The husband responds, "Yep, in-laws"

Wife: "Look at that drunk guy". Husband: "Who is he?" Wife: "10 years ago he proposed to me and I rejected him" Husband: "Oh, My God! He's still celebrating!"

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Russell Turner Bluegrass Jam 2nd Friday of each month

Newport Masonic Lodge 6th and Park St, Newport, KY 6pm to 10pm - Pot Luck-\$6 donation

What a wonderful experience! Bluegrass music, good food, and lots of fans of good music and good food! It's all happening at the Masonic Lodge in Newport, Kentucky, every 2nd Friday of the month.

Hosted by Russell Turner and his wife, Odessa, the Masonic Lodge provides the kitchen and serving tables, the chairs, and the lower level hall. The potluck supper is always good with a couple entrees, numerous side dishes, and great homemade desserts, thanks to the Lodge kitchen and (I will call them) the 'Ladies of Bluegrass'. The coffee bar is well stocked and an extra donation is requested for that.

But for \$6, the food cannot be beat anywhere. And the plus of local bluegrass music performed by various local musicians makes this an awesome way to spend a Friday evening.

Lot's of fans and friends attend and catch up with each other sharing stories of family and vacations and such making this a real mini-reunion of bluegrass family members. So if you are looking for good music, good food and a great social event, come on out to the Lodge in Newport.

For more info, contact Russell Turner at: russturner22@gmail.com



Russell on bass; Odessa on guitar; Kenny on banjo



Plenty of tables and chairs for the audience



Enjoying the music after supper has been served

Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad





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more Jams

Gene Thompson Jam 1st Friday of each month

1st Friday of each month Hebron Masonic Lodge Hart Drive, Hebron, KY Starts at 6:00pm; \$3 door donation Food and refreshments available Come and play or listen. Contact:Gene Thompson (859)689-7431



NKBMA Gospel Jam 3rd Friday of each month Hebron Masonic Lodge Hart Drive, Hebron, KY Starts at 6:00pm; \$3 door donation Food and refreshments available Come and play or listen. Contact:Gene Thompson (859)689-7431





Camp Springs Tavern 7009 Stonehouse Rd, Melbourne, KY All acoustic, bring instrument or just come out to listen.

Jams are subject to change. Check our Jams and Events pages at www.nkbma.com for more jams.

NKBMA Monthly Bluegrass Jam

4th Friday of each month Main Stage Open Mic Fun! Backroom Jammin'
5pm to 8pm Willis Music on Mall Rd, Florence, KY Come and play or listen.
\$2 donation at the door Contact Rick Fuchs (859)525-6050



I was taught to respect my elders but it's getting harder and harder to find one now



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MARK





Located across from the Florence Mall and Next to H. H. Gregg on Mall Road, our Florence Superstore has it all. Our staff bring years of service and experience to meet your every Musical need. 10% discount on accessory items to **NKBMA** members

Our Florence location features a 24 track Digital recording studio and performance Center (seats 200) in addition to the Kate Young Music Makers studios and lesson center 7567 Mall Road, Florence, KY 41042

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Pick up an instrument And Mentor Someone!



Hedron, KY 41048 PO Box 133 NKBMA

Address Label