



Fall  
Edition

## Northern Kentucky Bluegrass Music Association

November  
2015

Keeping Bluegrass Music Alive in the Northern Kentucky Area

### In This Edition



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A Series of Articles  
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Bluegrass Jams in  
Northern Kentucky  
Including Photos!

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For 2015

## *“Buicks and Bluegrass were a Perfect Match ”*

*Ron Simmons & Jerry Schrepfer*

If General Motors ever knew how good the live Bluegrass Music was at the Buick dealership in Florence, KY, in the early part of the new millennium it might have become commonplace all over the country! As a matter of fact the Buick dealership on KY18, skippered by a gentleman named Willie Roberts, was proof that it isn't the place where you pick and grin, it's the people, the food and the hospitality. Most folks don't think of a car dealership as a patron of Bluegrass, but the idea was put on the table by Ron Cornett, who was the Service Manager at the dealership, and our own Jim Moore who was more about servicing a few good jokes and playing Bluegrass Music than mechanical things.

It seems that Ron Cornett, who worked for GM in the greater Lexington area, was transferred to Florence and was a fan of the great jam sessions in Louisville put on by the Louisville Bluegrass Association. He became involved with two guys known as Lardo and Burley (yessir, the Moron Bros.) And they had jam sessions in Lexington called the “Firehouse Jams”. With the knowledge of good jam sessions filling his head with ideas, it became a good notion that driving from Florence to Lexington on jam nights was going to wear a car or a guy named Cornett out.

So, with that in mind, Ron got on the internet in a chat room somewhere in that great ether in the sky and had a person named Jim Moore answer his call to pick. The two men got together and made up some flyers to pass out. Some went to Gene Thompson's jam session in Hebron and soon Gene was on the bandwagon as well.

The repair bay for the Buick dealership became one of the biggest jamming rooms in Northern Kentucky. Tuesday night jams became even more widely known as Willie Roberts decided to provide fried chicken while the ladies brought some of the best side dishes and desserts I have ever eaten. Without an actual count I will venture that there may have been up to 100 or more people there on some occasions and as many as 40 itinerant musicians. I count myself as one of those. My cousin who worked for AAA said you just had to go there if you wanted to learn Bluegrass Music. Good food, good people and everyone was welcome.

In time, Gene and Ron decided that a real association should be formed for the purpose of preserving Bluegrass Music in the Northern Kentucky (and beyond) region. I am not sure how I became the first president of the NKBMA, but I knew that walking the plank was even less desirable so I took the



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job. The first meeting was called to order and off we went. The first discussion was a festival, of course. Another story for the future I'm sure.

I know that many faces have come and gone since 2002, but the core group remains as dedicated to the music as ever. The Buick dealership management eventually changed and the NKBMA landed at a new location.....Willis Music in Florence. We mourn the death of Mr. Willie Roberts whose generosity helped Ron, Jim and Gene grow a long lasting Bluegrass Association.

I sat down with Ron Cornett recently and asked him to give me some pros and cons concerning Bluegrass and jam sessions. I find that experience is usually a good teacher so I will share and paraphrase his thoughts for this article. Ron said, 'The down side to having the sessions at the dealership were based on some of the patrons being a little messy (sic) in the restrooms.' He added, 'The thought that strikes me best is that not one item was ever stolen from the dealership even though many tools and car parts were right there if someone was that thoughtless.' And if Ron had his way, 'there would never be a microphone at a jam session because adding mics makes it a performance. Jams should benefit the musicians there to learn the music. Adding mics to the session gets in the way of that.'

Lastly, Ron indicated that 'there should be more direct teaching of the music, the etiquette, the writing of and the singing of Bluegrass, so that younger folks are tutored to **do it right** in spite of the more progressive sounds now being accepted by younger audiences. The idea is to respect the music!' 'Nuff said!'



Please catch Ron Cornett and his program 'Bluegrass from the Old Country Store' by listening on the internet at [www.bluegrassfromtheoldcountrystore.com](http://www.bluegrassfromtheoldcountrystore.com) or [www.bluegrassmix.com](http://www.bluegrassmix.com)

Broadcast times are:  
Monday 8-10am EST,  
Wednesday 5-7pm EST, and  
Saturday 8-10am EST.

The move to Willis Music in Florence has proven very successful with jam sessions on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of every

month starting at 6pm. Jamming sessions are held in the various rooms at Willis (used by their staff of music instructors), in the hallways, and in the employee lunchroom. The tradition of playing and learning from each other continues in this vibrant setting. And if you are so inclined, you can take the wonderful stage with full sound system in the auditorium at Willis and perform for the audiences that come out to hear the 'jammers' perform. It's a great way to become accustomed to microphones and audiences while playing with some to the areas finest Bluegrass musicians!

Special performances using Michael Johnathan's WoodSongs CoffeeHouse format are produced monthly by Gene Thompson with the cooperation of the NKBMA and Willis Music. Some of your favorite recording artists are on the schedule and Michael Johnathan, himself, will be coming back to Willis on April 16<sup>th</sup> along with the New Coon Creek Girls. Michael will be bringing his long neck 5-string and the new Martin 0000-28 'Woodsongs Quad' guitar. Mark your calendar... You won't want to miss this one!

Bands performing at WoodSongs Coffeeshouse events are recorded by the Sound Workshop and provided a copy of the audio track(s). Each performance is also video recorded by Heavens Mark Productons, LLC. A complete DVD of each performance is available to the band and additional copies can be purchased for resale.



See the full performance schedule by visiting our website at

<http://www.nkbma.com>. Check the website often for a listing of local jams, festivals and concerts. Something is always going on around the area.

Want to help us continue the tradition of good music and good fellowship? Members are needed and membership in the organization is important. Become a member of NKBMA and help us continue this important tradition of preserving and promoting Bluegrass Music.

JOIN TODAY....see page 11 for details.





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### JAMMIN' PHOTOS - WILLIS







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# WOODSONGS® COFFEEHOUSE

## *Past Events*



The Missy Werner Band



Happy Audience



Vernon McIntyre and Appalachian



Full House Having Fun



Mountain Music Ambassadors



The Price Sisters

**Sign on a Maternity Room Door:**

***PUSH! PUSH! PUSH!***

**Sign at the Optometrist's Office:**

***If You Don't See What You are Looking for....  
You've Come to the Right Place!***



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## Bill Keith

(December 20, 1939 - October 23, 2015) was a 5-string banjoist who made a significant contribution to the stylistic development of the instrument. In the 1960s he introduced a variation on the popular “Scruggs style” of banjo playing which soon became known as the

melodic or “Keith style” Born in Boston, MA., he graduated from Amherst College in 1961. In 1963 he joined Bill Monroe’s Bluegrass Boys. Known as ‘Brad’ Keith (there could only be one Bill in Monroe’s band) during the nine months he toured with Monroe, his performances permanently altered banjo playing, and his style became an important part of the playing styles of many banjoists. Audiences were impressed with his ability to play fiddle tunes note-for-note on the banjo.

The **Keith style** of playing the 5-string emphasizes the melody of the song. Also known as the “Melodic style”, it is used by bluegrass banjoists and is applied to many genres including jazz. Most banjoists integrate it into their playing adding spice to the more common 3-finger style of Earl Scruggs. In contrast to the “Scruggs style” which is centered on arpeggios or chord tones played in rapid succession, his style centers on playing scales in a linear fashion. In the Keith style the fingers of the picking hand alternate between strings, rarely picking the same string twice. Frequently open strings are alternated with strings that are fretted halfway up the neck or more. A distinct advantage of this melodic style is the ease of playing fiddle tunes using the melody verbatim while maintaining a right hand technique in line with the Scruggs style. While at times the thumb may be used in a manner inconsistent with a banjo roll-based style, the ‘cascading’ effect of the roll is still present in many riffs of the melodic style of playing.

During the 1960’s and 1970’s, the style steadily gained popularity among progressive bluegrass banjoists like Alan Munde, Tony Trischka, Courtney Johnson, Ben Eldridge and Gordon Stone. Tony Trischka has written several instructional books that discuss the Keith style.

*Hot Licks for Bluegrass Banjo, Teach Yourself Bluegrass Banjo, and Melodic Banjo* to name a few.

After leaving Monroe’s Bluegrass Boys, Bill began playing plectrum banjo and steel guitar as well. He soon began working with artists such as Ian and Sylvia, and Jonathan Edwards, and by the 70s was recording on Rounder Record label with others such as Clarence White and David Grisman in Muleskinner, Tony Trischka, Jim Rooney and Jim Collier.

In our August edition of this newsletter we talked about the Bill Keith Banjo Summit at Grey Fox in July. That edition can be found on our website at [www.NKBMA.com](http://www.NKBMA.com) . Watch/listen to portions of that summit using the following URLs in your browser: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?V=ss68E1mrNFg> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?V=GKEH31eg4vI>

In 1964, Bill designed a specialized type of banjo tuning peg that facilitates changing quickly from one open tuning to another while playing. Known today as **Keith Banjo Tuners**, they remain the state of the art with over 30,000 pairs sold. While easy to install yourself, they can be ordered factory installed from many of the best banjo manufacturers. Bill manufactured and marketed them personally as the primary product of his own company, the Beacon Banjo Co. until his death. Beacon Banjo continues its proud tradition, now, in the hands of his son Martin.

Bill was inducted into the IBMA Hall of Fame at an awards ceremony in Raleigh, NC on October 1, 2015 and delivered a heartfelt address on that occasion, just three weeks prior to his death. A replay of his acceptance speech, reflecting the humble nature of this remarkable man can be found at the following link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?V=M\\_ZxvoxLmXY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?V=M_ZxvoxLmXY)

On a personal note, Bill enjoyed a good merlot. Sharing a campsite and my bottle of wine with him at Grey Fox is a memory I will cherish forever.

He died of cancer on October 23, 2015 leaving behind his beautiful wife, Claire, and sons Charles and Martin. Mentoring many musicians, young and old alike, over the course of his career and catering to a huge group of friends and fans, he will be sorely missed by all.

*editor - Jerry Schrepfer*





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## Your AD Here

Your advertising will be included in our quarterly newsletter which is also posted on the NKBMA website for all to view. Great Internet exposure for your company or services. Contact Jerry Schrepfer at [schrepferjerry38@gmail.com](mailto:schrepferjerry38@gmail.com) for more info.

	Single AD	Yearly (4)
Card	\$5.00	\$15.00
¼ Page	\$10.00	\$30.00
½ Page	\$15.00	\$60.00
Full Page	\$25.00	\$90.00

# NKBMA.com

## Click It To Get It!!

Get all the latest NKBMA News, calendar updates, local Events and more. All this is right at your finger tips!



## Old-Time Radio Hour

<http://www.woodsongs.com/>



## COMMONWEALTH SURVEYING

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Commonwealth Surveying is a proud sponsor of the Northern Kentucky Bluegrass Music Association.  
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Email:

[pls@commonwealthsurveying.com](mailto:pls@commonwealthsurveying.com)



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 Musical need.

Our Florence location 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**



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## **BLUEGRASS SPECIAL EVENTS**

*There is nothing better than live music. Bring the family, a friend, or grab a neighbor!!*

**NKBMA Annual**

### **CHRISTMAS PARTY**

**Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup> 6:30pm**

**Willis Music**



©funmunch.com



MEATS and DRINKS provided by NKBMA, BRING a COVERED DISH or DESSERT. BRING YOUR INSTRUMENT and JAM. Entertainment to include special guest below. Come out for good old fashioned fun !\$5 at the door

**Members FREE with card**

### **Special Guest - Steve Martin**



The Host of UnrealBluegrass.com radio program airing every Saturday 2-5pm on The Bluegrass Mix and current member of the Board of Directors for IBMA will drop by to talk about the IBMA Convention in Raleigh and the direction the new board is charting in the years ahead.

He may even tell a few stories, bring his ‘Osborne Chief’ banjo and pick a little if you twist his arm.

### ***PLUS.....WIN A MARTIN GUITAR w/Case***

Tickets are \$5 each, only 300 to be sold, so come to our next jam session or reach out to a current NKBMA Board member or Gene Thompson (859)689-7431 and purchase your chance at winning a new Martin DX1KAE KOA Dreadnought guitar and case..



The Martin DX1KAE acoustic-electric guitar features a D-14 neck and full dreadnought body design with Sitka Spruce top and Hawaiian Koa-pattern back and sides. Loaded with Fishman electronics this guitar is truly a “plug and Play” instrument. List Price \$749

With the hard shell case this becomes a plus \$800 value.



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## **BLUEGRASS MUSICAL EVENTS**

*There is nothing better than live music. Come on out, bring the family, grab a neighbor!!*

# **WOODSONGS® COFFEEHOUSE EVENTS**

**Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup>**

**7:00pm**

**The RETREAD BAND**

**at Willis Music in Florence**

The Retread Band performs Bluegrass, Old Tyme, and Gospel. A favorite at numerous festivals and featured at Renfro Valley, written up in Bluegrass Unlimited, don't miss this evening of delightful music. For info, contact Gene Thompson (859)689-7431



**Saturday, January 16<sup>th</sup>**

**7:00pm**

**TOMMY BROWN**

**and County Line Grass**

**at Willis Music in Florence**

Pleasing audiences around the nation while still holding true to traditional, mountain-style bluegrass, you don't want to miss this entertaining group! For info, contact Gene Thompson (859)689-7431







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## *The PRICE SISTERS*

If you didn't attend the October 17<sup>th</sup> WoodSongs Event featuring the Price Sisters, you really missed a great performance. Twin sisters Lauren and Leanna are students of the Kentucky Center for Traditional Music (KCTM) at Morehead State University. Their mandolin and fiddle playing was reminiscent of the Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys tradition. And their vocals proved once again that you cannot beat family vocal harmony.....and twins singing together is the ultimate demonstration of beautiful tight harmonies. Pictured here they performed some heart-warming gospel songs that thrilled those in the audience.



They recently completed a tour of China where, along with 4 other students, they were billed as **Mountain Music Ambassadors** bringing the songs of Appalachia to audiences eager to hear this great tradition of music.

The Mountain Music Ambassadors joined them on stage for 2 sets of music featuring the twins on such songs as Bluegrass Breakdown where their mandolin and fiddle playing rivaled those of the great musicians of the past.



Gene completed the night with another raffle where lucky winners went home with new NKBMA articles of clothing.

Is Your Band currently a member of NKBMA? (If not, see page 11) Would you like your performance schedule listed on our WEBSITE and FACEBOOK pages? Send the request with information to the editor at:  
[schrepferjerry38@gmail.com](mailto:schrepferjerry38@gmail.com)

Favorite Sign of the Month:

*At the Electric Company:*

**“We would be delighted if you send in your payment.**

**However**

**If you don't, you will be delighted**



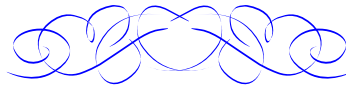
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# MEETINGS AND JAMS



**GENE THOMPSON Jams are back**  
1<sup>st</sup> Friday of each month thru April  
Hebron Lodge, Hebron, KY  
Starts at 6:30pm; \$2 donation at the  
door; refreshments available

**NKBMA Monthly Bluegrass Jam**  
4<sup>th</sup> Friday of each month  
Willis Music on Mall Rd  
Contact Rick Fuchs at Willis:  
(859)525-6050

**Russell Turner Bluegrass Jam**  
5<sup>th</sup> and Park St., Newport, KY  
2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of each month  
6pm to 10pm year round  
With Pot Luck and \$6.00 donation  
Contact Russell Turner at:  
[rturn02@zoomtown.com](mailto:rturn02@zoomtown.com)

**Old Time Fiddlers Jam**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday each month 1- 4:30pm  
Whitewater Community Center  
6125 Dry Fork Rd, Cleves. OH  
All Acoustic, bring Instruments or  
Listen, Refreshments Available  
[roseballard3@aol.com](mailto:roseballard3@aol.com)

## NEWEST JAM!!

**Richwood Flea Market Jam**  
10915 Dixie Hwy, Walton KY  
Every Sunday 2pm to 5pm  
On the RFM Restaurant Stage  
Contact Jerry Schrepfer for info:  
(859)393-1175



Richwood  
Flea Market  
Restaurant



### KITTY McINTYRE

**PRIVATE LESSONS**  
*Bluegrass Style Music*  
Fiddle Mandolin Guitar Banjo Bass

**Northern KY School of Music**  
2551 Dixie Hwy, Lakeside Park, KY

**513-607-1874**

[fotmc@jglou.com](mailto:fotmc@jglou.com) [www.fotmc.com](http://www.fotmc.com)

## the Sound Workshop

**RECORDING STUDIO**

Located within **Willis Music** on Mall Road in  
Florence, KY. Contact Rick Hopkins for all  
Your music recording needs at:  
(513)607-9855 or visit their website at  
[www.soundworkshop.net](http://www.soundworkshop.net)





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## AND NEW FOR 2015

### Updated NKBMA website now Apple Compatible

Go to [www.nkbma.com](http://www.nkbma.com) for all the latest news, special events, concert schedules and jams.

And while you're there, look for the link on the Home page for the best internet radio playing all your Bluegrass favorites 24 hours a day, 7 days a week



[www.bluegrassmix.com](http://www.bluegrassmix.com)

### Plus our own Facebook Page



Find us on  
**Facebook**

[www.facebook.com/nkbma](http://www.facebook.com/nkbma)

*Visit the page whether you have a Facebook account or not and see photos from past events and the **latest event schedules***

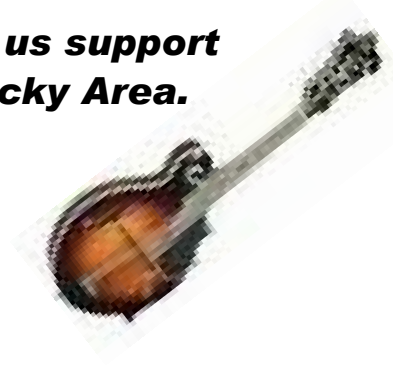
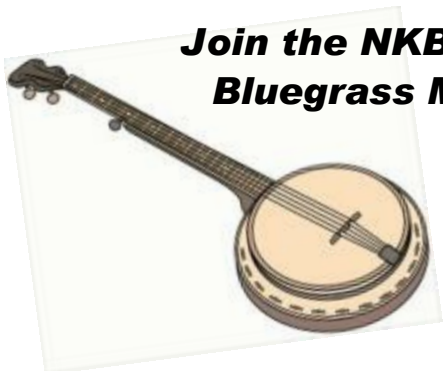
*Want to be part of our Event Reminder Network? Send your current email address to [schrepferjerry38@gmail.com](mailto:schrepferjerry38@gmail.com)*

## HAVEN'T RENEWED?

***If you haven't already, please send in your annual membership dues to the NKBMA , remain a member in good standing and be part of the team. Send payment (\$12 Single, \$15 Couple, \$25 Band) and your current email address to:***

**Northern Kentucky Bluegrass Association  
P.O. Box 133  
Hebron, Kentucky 41048**

***Join the NKBMA team for 2016 and help us support Bluegrass Music in the Northern Kentucky Area.***



Address Label

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**3rd installment of "In the Beginning"  
'Buicks and Bluegrass'**



**Coming Events and More**

**Pick up an instrument  
And Make Some Music!**