



Fall  
Edition

# Northern Kentucky Bluegrass Music Association

November  
2016

Keeping Bluegrass Music Alive in the Northern Kentucky Area

## *Sorghum and Songs in Sparta, Kentucky!* *A New Festival is Born*

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Edition**



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On October 2<sup>nd</sup>, this year, the beginnings of a new festival took root in Sparta, Kentucky. The hosting band was **'The Blue Belles'** who happen to be the amazing results of Kim Samuel's efforts in the local school system for many years. I bring her name into this article because she mentored many of the local children acoustic music providing knowledge as to the how's and why's of the Bluegrass sound. **The Blue Belles** are proof positive that active education in our favorite music is essential in ensuring a future for Bluegrass. Kim said her students (including family) made trips to visit and learn from some of the masters of the trade. Kudos to those that took the time to teach young people what they needed to learn in order to get better with their voices and their instruments. IT WORKS !!

The Blue Belles are Chloe Blayne, Andrea Brooke, Ellie Ruth and Amelia John. These young women have so much talent and are such nice people to be around. As a matter of fact, their talent and abilities go far beyond the music. They are all professional, highly educated and, can I say, beautiful ladies. Well I did and that's that!

Speaking of talent, Amelia, while sitting under the swing arm of the sorghum masher (that's what I am calling it) was busy literally minutes prior to going on stage for the first set of the day. I had some of that sorghum on my pancakes this morning. Before the festival where they were demonstrating and making

sorghum, I couldn't have identified it if it were sold to me as drinkable motor oil. So much for this city slicker and farming. IT'S GOOD !!

The other groups performing included Missy Werner Band (who know now not to depend on Garmin for directions), The Blue Mafia from Indiana, and some fellas I have not heard of before but were duly impressed by, Rick Oldfield and Curnie Lee Wilson. Oldfield and Wilson will be at Gene Thompson's WoodSongs event on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Don't miss them!!

I would be extremely lax in manners if I did not mention Chloe's husband and partner in this effort, Larkin, who emptied his pockets and dug thru his easy chair cushion to finance this endeavor. Bless his calloused hands and the rest of his tractor driving appendages for making the farm, the stage, the food, and the event possible. Thanks to him and Chloe for letting me operate Mr. Microphone at this event because the view from the stage is the one I like best.

I know the NKBMA will be helping out next year at this great new event. Let's all join in and build this Festival into a good time destination. We will keep you informed on the future date. Also, The Blue Belles will be at the Appalachian Festival next year over Mothers' Day weekend, Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, at Coney Island, Cincinnati. For more about the Blue Belles, see [www.kybluebelles.com](http://www.kybluebelles.com)

*A new fan of sorghum...Ron Simmons*



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# NKBMA END OF SUMMER PICNIC Sunday September 25<sup>th</sup> Bushelman Lodge, Verona

## DID YOU MISS IT??!

## Annual End of Summer Picnic Jam.

Plenty of parking space, a back porch for jamming, great food and good company. The perfect combination for fun!

NKBMA provided grilled meats, bean soup made in a huge pot on a wood fire and Soft Drinks. The bean soup was delicious. Members brought dishes to pass and desserts that were to die for!

Fun started at 1:00pm with jamming on the back porch and later in Tom and Pam's huge garage. The music and fun went on until dark.

Thanks to all the members and friends who made everything come together for the event. And a big thanks to Tom Bushelman and Pam Messer for hosting the event at their future abode.





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## COFFEEHOUSE *Past Events*

### Vernon McIntyre and the Appalachian Grass



Vernon McIntyre's Appalachian Grass is a bluegrass band with style. They always deliver an exciting stage show with driving instrumentals, close knit harmonies, amusing novelty songs and humorous banter among them. And their recent performance at Willis Music's Woodsongs Coffeehouse Concert on October 15<sup>th</sup> was no exception to over 40 years of entertaining audiences. If you missed it.... Shame on you, you missed a great event.

Their combination of music, energy, humor and showmanship just can't be beat. Each member contributes a unique element to the Appalachian Grass band. Vernon provides the unifying matchless rhythm guitar playing along with the perfect beat of Tammie's bass. The banjo is always the signature backbone of bluegrass music and Robert Campbell provides some of the best hard-driving banjo pickin' to

be found. Kitty and her fiddle add a spark of excitement with fill in licks and breaks that show her capability to deliver.

Lead vocals are provided mostly by Vernon with an occasional solo from other members of the group. Their three part harmonies display the importance of timing and elocution as they sing as one person in perfect bluegrass style.

Vernon loves to MC and hams it up in entertaining fashion with other band members and the audience often getting a retort from wife, Kitty, drawing laughter from the crowd. He sets the pace creating a show full of warmth and spontaneity making it feel like a small family gathering on the back porch. It's old fashioned entertainment at it's best, fun to watch and fun to be a part of.

When Kitty McIntyre steps up to the mic it's time to fasten the seat belt. Her bluegrass fiddling can ramp everything up a notch on a fiddle tune played with impeccable timing and perfect pitch. Break neck speed or a slow ballad or waltz, she makes her fiddle sing.

*Editor's note: Vernon teaches bluegrass banjo and bluegrass rhythm guitar at Famous Old Time Music. Kitty teaches fiddle, mandolin, upright bass, beginning bluegrass banjo and beginning guitar at Famous Old Time Music.*

**Appalachian Grass is a NKBMA member band. To see more information about them or any of our member bands go to [www.NKBMA.com](http://www.NKBMA.com) and click on 'Member Bands'. We provide links to their websites and contact information for your ease in finding the best entertainment in the area. What...you're band isn't listed?? Becoming a member band is easy. Contact [jerry@NKBMA.com](mailto:jerry@NKBMA.com)**



**Ever Wonder....  
How did Vernon  
get hooked on  
bluegrass music?  
Did you know he  
was an excellent  
banjo player?  
How did Kitty  
meet Vernon?  
What influenced  
these two people  
to make a life of  
music together?**

**Kitty has provided us with the following  
short sketches .....**

**Vernon** and his younger brother, Gary, were walking to school one morning when an old guy offered them a ride. I think Vernon was about 9 so it must have been about 1954 when this happened. Vernon's favorite band at the time was a rock and roll group called Danny and the Juniors. The old guy who offered them a ride had a bluegrass station on the radio. It might have been WKRC out of Cincinnati. I think Flatt and Scruggs were playing and Vernon heard the sound of the banjo. He said, "Mister, what IS that??!!" The old guy said, "That's a banjer, son." And from that moment on, Vernon's life has revolved around bluegrass in general, and banjos in particular.

Sometime after this event, his dad took Vernon and Gary to the Salvation Army Thrift Store to buy three pairs of 25 cent shoes for the upcoming school year. Vernon saw a banjo there for 75 cents and begged his Dad to buy it for him. I know it broke his father's heart to tell him no because the family couldn't afford the extra 75 cents. Gary spoke up then and said he could make do with his old shoes; he would just put a new piece of cardboard inside to stop up the holes in the soles. Brother Don, who was to receive the third pair of shoes, didn't get the chance to vote but his shoe money was applied to the banjo purchase anyway. Vernon, of course, eagerly contributed his 25 cents and went home, without new shoes, but the proud owner of a banjo.

The banjo was an old tenor 4 string without a head. Scot Stoneman, a fiddler and family friend, took a nail

and made a 5<sup>th</sup> string for it. Stoneman helped Vernon cut a piece of old car seat and stretch it across the banjo in place of a skin head. Stoneman is the first one who showed Vernon how to move his fingers in a forward roll and started him on the road to becoming a banjo player.

Vernon practiced that forward roll diligently; 5-3-1, 5-3-1, 5-3-1, over and over. He sat in school and thought about his banjo and practiced on an imaginary banjo. He said his teachers thought he was 'tetched' because he was always noodling his fingers in that roll. He practiced his real banjo at home for hours on end. Day in and day out he practiced that forward roll. He tells of his Grandfather rocking on the porch one day while Vernon sat on the steps practicing his forward roll. He accidentally hit another string. His Grandfather said, "Thank the Lord, he found a new note! Practice that one for awhile, son!"

Vernon started working very young. A family friend, Nick Trifelous had a junk yard and put Vernon and his cronies to work stripping cars. Vernon scrounged up an old car radio and car battery from Nick and listened to the Grand Ole Opry every night until the battery ran down. Next morning, on the way to school, he would tie a rope around his waist and drag that battery a mile down the road to a filling station. The guy at the station would charge the battery for him and he'd drag it back home again that night. On weekends Vernon would work cleaning the station in payment for charging his battery. Vernon was a kid of maybe 11 or 12.

Vernon's Dad played bass for Earl Taylor and the Stoney Mountain Boys. Once Vernon got a little older, he realized his Dad was playing bluegrass music he loved so much, He would ride with his dad to the nightclub, but couldn't go in because he was underage. The transom window above the door was open during the summer. Vernon would climb a street sign post and hang there, watching the band thru the window. When the door opened, he could hear the whole band; with it shut, the banjo was the loudest so that's what he heard.

Vernon would visit his aunts, uncles, and cousins in Tennessee and North Carolina during the summer months. The whole group of boys would make money helping a nearby farmer bale hay. After several days in the hot sun, Vernon told his Uncle Russell, "There's got to be a better way to survive!" He decided the banjo was the easier way for him. He decided the banjo was his ticket out of poverty.



*(Vernon continued)*

At 15, Vernon ran away from his home in Baltimore, MD and went to New York to get on Ted Mack's Amateur Hour. He slept on a park bench and got in with a bunch of hobos who took some care of him. I don't know how long he stayed there.

While Vernon was in New York, Earl Taylor got a band job at the Kenmill Cafe in Cincinnati, so Vernon's family packed up and moved there. Once he reconciled with his family, Vernon moved to Middletown, OH and started playing banjo in a band led by Charlie Fugate. Earl Taylor and his Stoney Mountain Boys were still playing at the Kenmill and, because JD Crowe had just quit, the band was in need of a banjo player. Vernon was hired to replace JD and ended up playing at the Kenmill for 6 years, 6 nights a week. That's a lot of playing. During this time period (mid 1960s) the Kenmill was THE HOTSPOT for Bluegrass artists traveling thru the area. Everyone from the Stanley Brothers, to the Osborne Brothers, Don Reno, Bill Monroe, The Foggy Mountain Boys, Bill Napier, Charlie Moore, Paul Mullins, The Stoneman Family, Jimmy Martin, Kenny Baker, and Benny Martin came to the Club. Vernon met them all and played on stage with all of them.



### **Martha White Bakes up Right .....Kitty's Story**

I had never heard of bluegrass music until 1974.... Brother Andy took me to Kings Row, a local bar featuring nightly performances by 'Appalachian Grass'. Andy was taking banjo lessons at the time and wanted me to convert my classical violin training to bluegrass fiddling. I listened to Paul Warren

kickoff the Martha White Theme on Flatt and Scruggs Carnegie Hall album. I listened and listened. I didn't get it. It wasn't written in music notation; I couldn't play it if it wasn't written down. Andy slowed the

record down to half speed and I listened and listened again. I still didn't get it. So much for my career as a bluegrass fiddler.

Vernon McIntyre played banjo with the Appalachian Grass. He was excellent. As ignorant as I was about bluegrass, Vernon's fierce concentration and almost frantic attack on his banjo captivated me. I was too shy at the time to speak to him or any other band member; in my eyes they were 'bigger-than-life stars'.

I moved away from Cincinnati and lost track of Vernon and the Appalachian Grass for several years. During this time Vernon started playing guitar instead of banjo and became the lead singer. He kept picking and signing for nightclubs, festivals, colleges, fairs, and private parties all across the U.S. And Canada. He built a good reputation as a banjoist, guitarist, singer, and all-round entertainer. I still hadn't met the man and I still couldn't play the Martha White Theme.

In 1981, I settled back in Cincinnati and Andy finally introduced me to Vernon and the rest of the band. Vernon asked Andy for my phone number, but Andy said, 'Lord, no. You're not going out with MY Sister!' Andy was then called out of town on business, so I grabbed the opportunity and I gave Vernon my number.

We spent a lot of time together that summer and, finally, I started learning some bluegrass fiddle. Vernon can't play a fiddle; anyone who has heard him will testify to that. But, he can hear how it should be played. He spent hours singing melodies for me, showing me notes on the guitar and helping me find them on the fiddle. He encouraged me and told me I could be really good someday. I thought he was nuts. But, I had already made up my mind. I wanted to be with him and wanted to be part of the band. So I kept plugging away learning to play the fiddle.

My first show with the Appalachian Grass was 1983. I was terrified! My knees were knocking and my fingers started shaking' I could barely play what little stuff I did know. All the guys in the band were very patient and supportive and for that I thank them all.

Vernon's lifelong love and my new-found love of bluegrass have totally changed the course of my life. Through bluegrass music, I found Vernon who is now my husband; have been encouraged to try things and think about things I never tried or thought of before; have met people who have welcomed me into their homes and fed me, a total stranger. I have finally discovered the joy of biscuits and gravy, fried 'taters' and Martha White cornbread (*and play the theme!*) 5



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## “Mark Stidham and the Future”



As many of you know, we lost another one of our friends and fellow pickers. I thought the world was becoming a rather cold place when Bud Walls died and I am wearing a lot more wool even as I write this note of condolence to Charlie and Roberta Stidham and Mark Stidham’s entire family.

I cannot with any truth tell you my friend and band buddy was a saint of any note. I cannot say he was the best at anything he did. I won’t say he always thought things thru with the best information available because truth is, in computations, that bad info in makes for bad

info out. I can tell you this, though. I loved him like a brother that I should have kept closer when he was going astray. That, however, was not the case.

He loved to play that mandolin wherever and whenever he could. It was an obsession he never lost even in his darkest days. Many friends have asked me why he lost his final battle. I will say this. He did not lose. He won. You see I believe that all of our futures as Christians, and Mark was one for sure, start as we pass from this life to the next one.

I was so angry when I learned of Mark’s death and was feeling so hateful that I lost another friend and band member, I was at the point of pulling off the road in order to just curse the very earth that I would be standing on.

The radio was on low volume so I could hear myself being spiteful and vocal about religion, morality and life in general when a song came on sung by Tim O’Brien. It was called “Ye Who Are Weary Come Home”. Google it up and listen to it. If you do you will understand why I am much more in control of my emotions now. I think it was a message from Mark and the God that he believed gave him all in spite of his transgressions. Mark has left the past behind as we all must and begun his future as we all will.

I miss Mark. I miss Bud and Roy and Earl and so many more of my friends and pickin’ buddies that it really keeps my memory busy. Rest in Peace boys. You are all in my future.

Grateful, Thankful, and at Peace - *Ron Simmons*  
(*Ron Simmons is the current President of the Board of Directors of NKBMA, talented writer, musician and leader of My Favorite Bluegrass Band*)

## Rabbit Hash General Store Rebuild Update

GREAT PROGRESS! The framing is now complete and the walls of the old General Store are rising from the ashes! A quick visit before winter sets in should be in your travel plans. (The new mayor has been elected in a last minute upset). Let’s be sure to continue to support this worthy effort by attending future money raising events or contributing directly to the fund via [www.gofundme.com/fewqjkh8](http://www.gofundme.com/fewqjkh8) .





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**A bargain in ad space**  
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**Can design it for you:**

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¼ Page	\$10.00	\$30.00
½ Page	\$15.00	\$60.00
Full Page	\$25.00	\$90.00

It's that time of year again  
NKBMA Christmas  
Party and Jam will  
be December 16<sup>th</sup>  
Bring family and friends,  
your instrument for jamming  
and a dish or dessert to pass.  
Deli Meats and Beverages  
supplied by NKBMA  
Mark your calendars and  
Join us for an evening  
Of music, food and  
fun!



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Located across from the Florence Mall and  
Next to H. H. Gregg on Mall Road, our  
Florence Superstore has it all.  
Rick Fuchs and staff bring  
Years of service and experience to meet  
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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**  
**859-525-6050**



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## Missy Werner Band performs at the Library



The Missy Werner Band performed at the Boone County Library, Scheben Branch, US 42, Union, KY on Sunday October 16<sup>th</sup> to the delight of bluegrass music lovers. An NKBMA member band, this group of professional entertainers always showcases the elements that make a good public performance..... Excellent instrumentalists, great vocals with tight harmonies, a varied song set and a warm approach that makes the audience feel like family.

MC, Artie Werner, always smiling, set the stage for the group and introduced the audience to some of the nuances of the music while providing humor, harmonies and often lead vocals. His bass playing started at age 13 and is the solid rock that keeps the group together. Missy began her interest in music at age 7 and has gained national and worldwide acclaim for her distinctive lead vocals and solid mandolin playing. Jeff Roberts, who is a full time musician and banjo teacher, provided some of the best banjo playing around while managing great harmonies ( a banjo

player that sings!) Suzanna Barnes is the newest member of the group. Showing an interest in music at age 3, formally trained in the Suzuki method and now a certified teacher in the Mark O'Connor method, she can hold her own providing great fiddle flavor to the group and an occasional lead vocal. And our old friend Tim Strong sat in on guitar for this concert providing the solid rhythms and colors of bluegrass guitar while tearing up the neck on breaks as only Tim can do.

A free concert for fans of bluegrass and a wonderful opportunity to see and hear live music being performed as it was meant to be performed. No sound system, no monitors. Just solid group interactions producing solid music with great execution, tempo, timing, harmonies, elocution, and balance.

To learn more about the Missy Werner Band, go to our NKBMA.com website, click on 'Member Bands' and follow the links to their website and activities. And if you want to play along with them sometime..... drop in on Monday nights at Molly Malone's for the Monday Night Bluegrass Jam. (See the ad below ) Most of the band members are often present to lead the jam!

theSoundWorkshop

RECORDING STUDIO

Located within Willis Music on Mall Road in Florence, KY. Contact Rick Hopkins for all your recording needs at:

(513)607-9855 or visit their website at:

[www.soundworkshop.net](http://www.soundworkshop.net)

MONDAY NIGHT BLUEGRASS JAM  
STARTS AT 8 PM

MOLLY MALONE'S



Irish Pub & Restaurant  
Covington, Kentucky

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

JOIN IN OR LISTEN TO SOME OF THE AREA'S FINEST IN FRONT OF OUR FIRST FLOOR FIREPLACE. FULL MENU AND \$2 BULLEIT SPECIALS. EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

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## ***FUTURE BLUEGRASS SPECIAL EVENTS***

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

# **WOODSONGS® COFFEEHOUSE EVENTS**

***New to WoodSongs - Don't Miss the chance to experience  
A live performance from these exciting Professionals!***

**Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup>**

**7:00pm**

### **Cody Norris and The Watauga Mt Boys**

**from Mountain City, TN**

Traditional Mountain Sounds and Old Time

Gospel Music from Yesteryear

Willis Music, Mall Rd, Florence, Ky

Details: call Gene Thompson(859)689-7431

\$10 Donation at the Door



**Saturday, January 14, 2017**

**7:00pm**

### **Po' Ramblin' Boys**

Born in the shadow of the Great Smoky Mtns

1940s Tennessee Bluegrass at it's best!

Tight, Hard-driving Stanley/Monroe Bluegrass

Willis Music, Mall Rd, Florence, Ky

Details: call Gene Thompson(859)689-7431

\$10 Donation at the Door





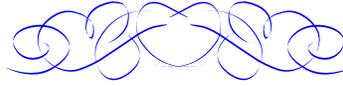
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# JAMS



## Gene Thompson -Hebron JAMS ARE BACK!

1<sup>st</sup> Friday of each month Nov thru May  
Hebron Lodge, Hebron, KY  
Starts at 6:00pm; \$2 donation at the  
door; refreshments available  
Come and play or listen. Info Contact:  
Gene Thompson (859)689-7431



## Russell Turner Bluegrass Jams

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

## Old Time Fiddlers Jam

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month 1 - 4:30pm  
Whitewater Community Center  
6125 Dry Fork Rd, Cleves, OH  
All Acoustic, bring instruments or  
listen and enjoy. Refreshments available.  
[roseballard3@aol.com](mailto:roseballard3@aol.com)

## NKBMA Monthly Bluegrass Jam

4<sup>th</sup> Friday of each month  
Open Mic Fun! Backroom Jammin'  
6pm to 9pm Willis Music on Mall Rd,  
Florence, KY  
Come and play or listen.  
Contact Rick Fuchs (859)525-6050



## *NEWEST JAM!!*

## Crew Lounge Jam

1933 Petersburg Rd, Hebron, KY  
Every Tuesday 8pm to 11pm  
On and around the Stage  
Contact Mickey McAdams for info:  
(606)524-4163





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## **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.

### **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 [Jerry@NKBMA.com](mailto:Jerry@NKBMA.com)***

## **RENEWAL TIME IS HERE ! ASK A BOARD MEMBER ABOUT OUR FALL RENEWAL SPECIAL**

***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 helping keep Bluegrass music alive in the area. Member bands are listed on our website and member band event schedules are added to our website/Facebook calendars.***

***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 2017 and help us support Bluegrass Music in the Northern Kentucky Area.***



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## Featuring Fall Concert Schedules & Jams



**Past and Future Events and More**  
**Pick up an instrument**  
**And Make Some Music!**