



Spring
Edition

Northern Kentucky Bluegrass Music Association

May
2016

Keeping Bluegrass Music Alive in the Northern Kentucky Area

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As warm weather arrives the sounds of Bluegrass Music move from indoors to outdoors. Front porch pickin' begins. Local picnics and parties will include Bluegrass Music filling the air and Festivals will fill weekends all over the Tri-State with fun, education, and entertainment for all.

Your favorite bluegrass and roots bands take to the road. While recorded music is a huge industry, there is nothing like live music to provide the maximum in audio and visual entertainment experience. Watching and listening to performers who pour their hearts and souls into their presentation is one of those inspirational experiences that defies words and just can't be captured on a CD or YouTube download. The excitement in the crowd, the energy flowing from the stage.... You just have to experience it to understand and appreciate it. If something 'live' is happening near you or you are traveling near something that is happening 'live' you just have to check it out.

And Festivals often mean more than just musical performances. Often Arts and Crafts vendors, Musical Instrument vendors, Musical Workshops, and Food vendors are part of the ingredients. Local Tourism Booths, Community Service Organizations, and Medical Screening vans sometimes join the mix. Music Festivals and Community and family friendly fun go hand in hand.

And let's not forget the parking lot picking! Festivals are often in and around campgrounds that offer perfect places for people from all over the area to come together and jam! Parking areas around Festivals brim to overflowing with the sounds of music filling the air. Sharing talents and skills with others, often strangers at first, creates a special bond among festival goers with memories that can last a lifetime. And to be honest, some of that parking lot talent rivals the best recording artists on the planet!

If you are looking for bluegrass events in you area or are planning a trip this summer and wondering what is happening in any state in the country, we recommend that you visit the following site:

<http://bluegrassfestivalguide.com>

Click on the 'STATES' tab, select the state you are interested in and find a list of festivals with links to each one for details that will help your travel plans. The site is regularly updated as events are added or changed. Some of the events for the Tri-State this summer are listed on the next page.

Spring is here! Pack up the car or camper. Put your instrument(s), the spouse, the kids and pets (in order of importance) in there and hit the road. It's Festival Time!



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Festival Season is Here (con't) **Tri-State Festivals:**

Kentucky:

June 2-4 **SALLY GAP Bluegrass Festival**, Williamsburg, KY. For info go to <http://bluegrassfestivalguide.com/sally-gap.htm>

June 3-4 **Bardstown Bluegrass Festival**, Bardstown, KY for info go to <http://www.bluegrass101.com>

June 9-12 **Festival of Bluegrass**, KY Horse Park Campground Lexington. [URL: http://www.festivalofthebluegrass.com](http://www.festivalofthebluegrass.com)

June 22-25 **Rudy Fest**, Grayson KY Carter Family Fairgrounds [URL: http://www.rudyfest.com](http://www.rudyfest.com)

June 22-25 **ROMP Festival and Workshops**, Owensboro, KY For info go to [URL: http://www.rompfest.com](http://www.rompfest.com)

July 9th **The Sun Valley Music Festival and Jubilee**, A.J. Jolly Park, south of Alexandria, KY. For info call (859)750-0505.

July 14-16 **Shriners Bluegrass Festival**, Olive Hill, KY For info go to [URL: http://bluegrassfestivalguide.com/olive-hill](http://bluegrassfestivalguide.com/olive-hill)

Sept 16-20 **Jerusalem Ridge Bluegrass Festival**, Rosine, KY [URL: http://bluegrassfestivalguide.com/jerusalemridge.htm](http://bluegrassfestivalguide.com/jerusalemridge.htm)

Sept 22-24 **Vine Grove Bluegrass Festival**, Vine Grove, KY [URL: http://bluegrassfestivalguide.com/vine-grove-bluegrass-festival.htm](http://bluegrassfestivalguide.com/vine-grove-bluegrass-festival.htm)

Indiana:

June 1-4 **Bean Blossom John Hartford Memorial Festival**, Bill Monroe Music Park and Campground For info go to [URL: http://www.johnhartfordmemfest.com](http://www.johnhartfordmemfest.com)

June 10-11 **Wakarusa Bluegrass Festival**, Wakarusa, IN. For more info go to [URL: http://wakarusabluegrassfestival.com](http://wakarusabluegrassfestival.com)

June 11-18 **50th Annual Bill Monroe Bean Blossom Bluegrass Festival**, Bill Monroe Music Park and Campground For info go to [URL: www.billmonroemusicpark.com](http://www.billmonroemusicpark.com)

July 7-9 **Bean Blossom Southern Gospel Jubilee**, Bill Monroe Music Park and Campground For info go to [URL: http://www.billmonroemusicpark.com](http://www.billmonroemusicpark.com)

Sept 21-24 **Bill Monroe Hall of Fame Uncle Pen Days Festival**, Bill Monroe Music Park and Campground For info go to [URL: http://www.billmonroemusicpark.com](http://www.billmonroemusicpark.com)

Ohio:

June 8-11 **Bluegrass in the Hills**, Hopedale, OH For more info go to [URL: http://bluegrassfestivalguide/hopedalejune.htm](http://bluegrassfestivalguide/hopedalejune.htm)

And of course one of the most important local events is this Mother's Day weekend. Take it away Ron.....

Appalachian Festival 2016 47 Years and Counting!

The 47th Annual Appalachian Festival is once again at Coney Island May 6th thru May 8th. The Musicians, Dancers, Crafters, History Re-enactors, Storytellers, Demonstration Artists, and of course the Food vendors, are all ready to make Mother's Day Weekend great for young and old.

The venue is rich with history and lore of the Appalachian Mountains and the people who came from that region to settle in the Midwest. Values, Skills, and Ethics of the Region are all brought back to life to teach young folks how it was and to remind many of us of our roots.

The Festival earns funds which are given to other 501c3 organizations directly involved in educating or feeding those in or from Appalachia who have those needs. Many good folks of Appalachian descent are not predisposed to look to others for help of any kind. Very often the **Appalachian Community Development Association (ACDA)** looks real hard to find the gaps in government or private assistance programs to steer the

funds to those in need. We are proud of our heritage and proud to help those folks or their offspring who need a helping hand. Please consider coming to the festival this year and **take pride in our Ancestry and rich Mountain Heritage.**

The Festival will also have on hand Saturday, May 7th, the Tri-Health Mammogram van from 10am to 4pm. If you have insurance that is great. If not, they can help and want you to come visit them anyway. The American Veteran's Association will be there as well to assist our Vets with problems they may be having. Stop by and thank them for all they did, all they do and all they have come to mean to so many people.

The website for the Appalachian Festival is under construction but you can get most of the info available on line at [URL: www.appalachianfestivalcincinnati.org](http://www.appalachianfestivalcincinnati.org) or [URL: http://www.appalachianfestival.org](http://www.appalachianfestival.org). Schedules and groups performing on our two stages are listed for your planning needs.

Ron Simmons, president, NKBMA, ACDA



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APPALACHIAN FESTIVAL Stop by the **NKBMA** booth and say hello to those that are glad you care! Friends are easy to find there. Here are a few of the groups that will be performing this year:

Friday May 6th

Willis Music Stage:

- 10:30am Rabbit Hash String Band
- 12:30pm Mike & Jean
- 1:30pm Monday Night Big Band
- 3:45pm P's in a Pod
- 4:45pm Appalachian Grass
- 5:45pm Shotgun Holler
- 6:45pm Black Water
- 7:45pm Appalachian Grass

Up Close & Personal Stage:

- 5:00pm Black Water
- 6:00pm P's in a Pod
- 7:00pm Shotgun Holler

Saturday May 7th

Willis Music Stage:

- 11:00am Retread Bluegrass Band
- 12:00pm Won Peace BG Band
- 1:00pm Wayfarers
- 2:00pm Wildwood Valley Boys
- 3:00pm Missy Werner Band
- 4:00pm Nightflyer
- 5:00pm Wayfarers
- 6:00pm Wildwood Valley Boys
- 7:00pm Tillers
- 8:00pm Nightflyer

Up Close & Personal Stage:

- 10:00am Uncle Mike Carr
- 11:00am Kevin Hendrix
- 12:00pm Missy Werner Band

Sunday May 8th

Willis Music Stage:

- 10:30am Gospel Music w/ Steve Bonafel & Friends
- 11:30am Blue Bellies
- 12:30pm Steve Bonafel & One Iota
- 1:30pm Comet Bluegrass Allstars "BIG SHOW"
- 3:15pm Blue Bellies
- 4:15pm Steve Bonafel & One Iota

Up Close & Personal Stage:

- 11:15am Phoebe Goodale
- 12:00pm Randy Barger

See www.appalachianfestival.org for the latest in scheduled events

APPALACHIAN FESTIVAL WORKSHOP - On Saturday,

May 7th, radio broadcaster and one of Cincinnati's foremost acoustic guitar and mandolin instrumentalists, **Tim Strong**, will host a day long Bluegrass Music Seminar. Tim is lining up a growing list of professional Bluegrass musicians to help with one on one and group instruction.

Anyone bringing an instrument and registering at the Southwest gate will receive an ID wristband entitling them to receive professional help with playing techniques, Bluegrass

music structure and vocal arranging.



TIM STRONG

Young people 16 and under will enjoy free admission. All others wishing to participate are welcome with normal admission ticket. Fundamental ability on your instrument is recommended.

Applicable instruments are mandolin, acoustic guitar, acoustic bass, resophonic guitar (dobro), violin (fiddle) and 5 string banjo. A lineup of instructors will be announced in the coming months on the 2016 ACDA website now under construction. For questions regarding this instructional seminar please contact Ron Simmons via simmons@fuse.net

"Sex is one of the most wholesome, beautiful and natural experiences money can buy" - Steve Martin



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COFFEEHOUSE

Past Event - The Comet Bluegrass Allstars

Bluegrass Music is a recognizable sound thanks to the standard contingent of instruments usually used for that purpose. This view also recognizes that some folks are just better at standing behind those instruments than others. I would not be the first to say that the **Comet Bluegrass Allstars**, led by Ed Cunningham, are by most standards of ability the best and most consistent around. By the way, they don't brag or assume to be top dogs. They just approach the microphones and let their ability speak for itself.

The '**Allstars**' have been together over twenty years making their home the Comet Restaurant in Northside, Ohio. The fact is, Ed and the gang have kept Bluegrass alive and well with some, but not nearly enough, fanfare. Current members who did the WoodSongs CoffeeHouse event at Willis Music in Florence included Missy & Artie Werner, Brad Meinerding, John Cole, Jeff Roberts, and of course, Ed Cunningham. If you came to the concert you know why they are a local institution. They make the music friendly and familiar. If you weren't there, you'll have to trust me. What a treat to hear them live.

Live music is so much better than a sterile CD, even though it has been cleansed of any "oopsies" that make the humanity in us show up for that god blessed moment. I saw with my own eyes Missy smile when the audience showed appreciation for solos on her mandolin or her singing. While she is in the middle of a solo her look of concentration may be similar to the pain of taking a final trigonometry test at MIT. Nevertheless, Missy lights up a stage when she smiles and sings. She is a class act that I have appreciated for some years.

A little later I heard brother Brad trip over a break on "The Tennessee Stud". This was a very important moment in history. So far as I can tell it has been decided with reliable witness and decided by other musicians that he is not from this planet. His beyond supernatural musical ability certainly is undeniable evidence. Sorry Brad to "out" you on this one but I'm sure you'll get even in your own "extra-terrestrial" way.



I could go on a while about Jeff on the banjo, John on the resophonic, Artie on bass and Ed on fiddle, but I'll try to laud and poke them about their musical exploits in future articles since they are very used to my "fly on the wall" overviews of this wonderful genre of music called Bluegrass.

On a special note.....A special thanks goes out to John Cole as he verbalized a special tribute to the late Bud Walls and dedicated a song on his resophonic guitar to him.

Stop by the Comet on Sunday nights. Hear and see for yourself why they've been making music there so long and are the home town favorites.

The Comet Bluegrass Allstars will be at the Appalachian Festival on Mother's Day weekend, Sunday afternoon, doing what they do so well. Thank you Ed and company for a great concert and wishes for continued success in all your future endeavors.

Ron Simmons

"BIGAMY is having one wife too many, MONOGAMY is the same thing" - Oscar Wilde



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COFFEEHOUSE

Past Events

LARRY SPARKS and the Lonesome Ramblers



He is called the King of Bluegrass Soul.....

And I will add the fellow who put the big 'M' in Mellow. Larry Sparks at his best is like being in his living room sipping coffee in front of the

fireplace and talking about your favorite song. For many of us, our favorite songs were sung by Mr. Sparks either many years ago or just last year. You see he has been at this music business for over 50 years. He makes no bones about aging, needing his Faith, staying warm in the winter or enjoying being on the stage performing.

All of the things that have been his life are fair game for discussion. There is nothing he won't kid you about or take a ribbing about himself. You see, he is that "John Deere Tractor". Larry Sparks is still plowing through the Bluegrass fields that from time to time have been like iron. The music he does is pure, honest and from the heart. There has been no digression to see if he could become something

he is not. Every CD or at one time vinyl record was done his way. I made note that if he sings 2 or 3 notes or picks his old Martin just a little, I know it's him. Good ears help, but he has a very prominent style all his own and makes his signature sound his real identity.

Let it be noted, that his last trip to Willis Music was on a snowy and cold evening with a less than stellar turnout. That did not deter Larry Sparks from doing what he does best. He entertained everyone including 3 young boys who, while in their very early years, will grow up and be reminded that they saw in person one of the best at his best.

The Lonesome Ramblers were smooth backup to the man himself including Bethel, Ohio's own Daniel Patrick. I remember when Daniel's Dad had to put a skyhook on his behind to help him support a banjo that weighed more than Daniel did. Now he informs us that he will be married shortly. *Egads and Whoa Hoss!* Is he really old enough to do that?.....or more aptly put, when did the rest of us lose track of the years he was getting older, better, and becoming the great young man his parents raised him to be? He even wears shirts with sleeves now.....an inside joke but one which I had to write. His Mom will get it!

Take care down the highway Mr. Sparks and the Lonesome Ramblers. Another 50 years of music at least! Thanks for coming to the Woodsongs Event at Willis Music in Florence.





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COFFEEHOUSE

Past Events

DOVE CREEK



If you missed the **Dove Creek** live performance you should just shoot yourself here and now! Pam Perry Combs and Dove Creek put on a show that would rank right up there with AKUS, Rhonda & The Rage, or any other top tier band in the business today. Wow!

Friends that have played for 30 some years with other bands come together in Dove Creek

and have the high energy fun only friends can share. All are outstanding instrumentalists and each very capable lead vocalists that can sing harmony as well. And sing they did! Some of the tightest vocals I have ever heard came from the Willis Music stage.

Pam Perry Combs has a voice that rivals the best female recording artists in the business and her mandolin needs a fire extinguisher close by. Mike French on banjo, guitar and mando added a Bob Seeger song to the mix that was an outstanding adaptation of a classic to the bluegrass format. Larry Rains just tore that flat top Martin up! And his clear vocals were outstanding as well. Go to www.dovecreekband.com, click on About Us, read their individual bios and then weep because you missed these seasoned, veteran performers.



'Song Farmers' concept of keeping music alive in homes and schools.

He demonstrated the new **Martin 0000-28s** guitar made in the folk tradition with the WoodSongs logo on the 9th fret by finger-picking some great licks for the crowd. Clear deep bass and bell like trebles make this latest guitar from Martin a real beauty.

Using his long-neck, Pete Seeger style 5-string, he picked and strummed some good olde tyme stuff including a sing-along version of **Summertime** to the audience's delight.

Much of the music performed was available for the audience to purchase in the form a CD that he recorded on an iPhone6. An amazing CD that sold out quickly after the show.

Michael Johnathon, founder of WoodSongs, took to the Willis stage, performed comedy and an interesting mix of all original music while weaving in his message regarding the Front Porch & Gathering Association promoting the



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Tel : 859-586-7454 or email at trooperbob101@aol.com



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Located across from the Florence Mall and
Next to H. H. Gregg on Mall Road, our
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Rick Fuchs and staff bring
Years of service and experience to meet
Your every Musical need.

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Florence, KY 41042
859-525-6050



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**EARL B.
WISEMAN**

April 6, 1952
March 2, 2016

Lawrenceburg,
Indiana

Earl Wiseman has passed away but remains close to our hearts.

“Fellow Pickers,

I’m sorry to tell you that Earl Wiseman passed away on March 2nd. Earl Wiseman and Kentucky Express played for many years around the Cincinnati and Tri-State area.

“Earl was a tremendous ambassador for bluegrass music and promoted it not just on stage but everywhere he went.

“He was also my cousin and one of the finest men I’ve ever known. I’ve heard

people say, ‘He’d give you the shirt off his back’. That was cousin Earl. He was always ready to help people and he’d do whatever he could for you just for the asking. Men like him are a rare and dying breed and he will be missed sorely by me and everyone who knew him.

“When I was young and first learning to pick, he was one of my big influences. His family played music and so did mine so when we got together there was a lot of noise. When I started my band he gave me nothing but encouragement and was always willing to give me advice on any aspect of the business I needed help with.

“These few short lines are a pitiful tribute to a man that did so much for so many people but I could write all day and never say how much he meant to me and the other people that loved him.

“I guess it will have to be enough to say I loved him, and he knew it, and that I will see him on the streets of glory someday.” **Gary Duncan - WonPeace**

“If Earl would have lived forever, he would be the same man through eternity. He was a strait shooter, a hard worker and above all honest and kind. His understanding and help when I was trying to learn Bluegrass music was patient, forgiving, humorous, affable and encouraging. I knew music in general better but he knew what I needed in the way of guidance for his kind of music. A good man never rises to greater heights than when he bends down to help someone up. Thanks Earl. No doubt you have reached the Pinnacle of Life and Faith. Go with God. **Ron Simmons**

**2004 Keystone
Laredo RV
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Perfect for Festivals!!

Good Condition. Single slide out living room. Gooseneck bedroom with shower and toilet. Can sleep 4, lot’s of storage. New water heater, deep cycle battery. All appliances, furnace and AC work great After market rear deck perfect for hauling bikes, motorcycle or electric cart.

Call or text (859)991-5197 for Info

**MONDAY NIGHT BLUEGRASS JAM
STARTS AT 8 PM**

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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

**Saturday, May 14th
7:00pm**

FELLER & HILL

And the Bluegrass Buckaroos

At Willis Music in Florence

Feller and Hill continue using their deep-rooted pedigrees in Bluegrass and traditional music to grow their audience and deliver a high-energy show with rich vocals and smooth instrumentation at some of the largest festivals in the country. If you love traditional bluegrass, classic country, and southern bluegrass gospel music, then You'll love **Feller and Hill and the Bluegrass Buckaroos**. Join us on the 14th at Willis Music

For more information contact Gene Thompson (859)689-7431



Updated NKBMA website now Apple Compatible

Go to 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

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





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MEETINGS AND JAMS



Gene Thompson -Hebron Jams are back

1st Friday of each month 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

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



NEWEST JAM!!

Richwood Flea Market Jam

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



Old Time Fiddlers Jam

2nd 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

NKBMA Monthly Bluegrass Jam

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





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RABBIT HASH BENEFIT JAM



The NKBMA sponsored a special Jam Night at Willis Music on April 22nd with all door

donations and raffle monies going to the *Rabbit Hash General Store Restoration Fund*. Members and jammers had fun on stage and in the back rooms making good Bluegrass music and the audience enjoyed an appearance from the Rabbit Hash String Band. Gene Thompson gave away passes for the Appalachian Festival at Old Coney. Someone donated cage-free eggs for auction.

It was a night of great music and fun and due to the generosity of all the event raised over \$635 which was deposited into the restoration fund..

Want to be part of our Event Reminder Network? Send your current email address to schrepferjerry38@gmail.com

HAVEN'T RENEWED?

MEMBERSHIPS ARE DUE?

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 can be 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 2016 and help us support Bluegrass Music in the Northern Kentucky Area.



Address Label

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PO Box 133
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Featuring Summer Festival Information

Past and Future Events and More

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