

Winter
Edition

Northern Kentucky Bluegrass Music Association

February
2020

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Keeping Bluegrass Music Alive in the Northern Kentucky Area

MESSAGE From THIS YEAR'S PRESIDENT

One of my treasured possessions is a plaque from 1977 honoring my Dad and namesake, Tom Bushelman Sr. (and founding member of the 3 Hanks) as President of the Music of Bluegrass Association. I also have a large photo of him presenting an award to a young JD Crowe with the Association banner in the background. I couldn't be more proud and honored to try and fill his shoes nearly 45 years later after being elected to the chairmanship of the Northern Kentucky Bluegrass Music Association. I wish he were still with us so that I could get some guidance. That being said I welcome any and all input from our members, non-members, bluegrass aficionados, and the occasional 'folkie' on any ideas you think we may be able to implement to further traditional acoustic and bluegrass music.

Our esteemed organization has several irons in the fire and I will try to name a few of our best efforts. The newsletter this article is printed in is one of the finest in the country with lots of great information about all things bluegrass in the area. If any of our readers has an idea they would like to see featured in the newsletter, we will do our best to make it happen. I applaud Jerry Schrepfer in his editorial endeavors as his efforts have created this fine newsletter much like the early versions of Bluegrass Unlimited.

Jerry also spearheads the website content which lists festivals throughout the summer, Willis Music Woodsongs event listings and performance recaps, details of jams all over

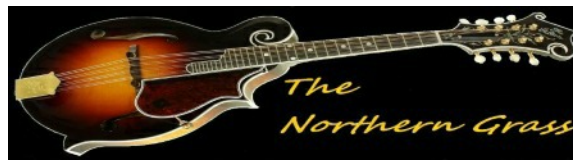
Northern Kentucky and Southern Ohio along with instruments for sale, photos of interest, member band information, details about band activity including shows and releases, an archive of current and past Northern Grass newsletters, etc.,etc. Please visit our website at NKBMA.com. As a side bar here, we were approached by a Chinese firm attempting to purchase our website domain name because it happened to coincide with their firm name or product. But fear not! Your NKBMA bluegrass website is safe.

Your donations at the door of our jams (when I say our jams, I mean you and me and everyone that turns up) help to fund the NKBMA/Gene Thompson Scholarship fund. Some of our past scholarship winners have gone on to critical acclaim in the music industry. This year's winner is our own Kendall Potter who is attending the Bluegrass program at Morehead State University. (See next page for details and comments from Kendall) She still shows up at some of the local jams with her banjo and occasionally another bluegrass student or two, making for a truly serendipitous relationship. We help fund her schooling and we get great entertainment in return. A real bargain!

If you have not seen our new apparel selection on model runways, look no further than your local jam for ball caps, t-shirts, sweatshirts, polo shirts, and zippered hoodie sweatshirts. You can be the fashion plate of your neighborhood, setting the latest in bluegrass apparel trends. I look forward to a great year with a bunch of well-dressed bluegrassers. - Tom Bushelman Jr.



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NKBMA/Gene Thompson Scholarship

Each year we look for students attending an accredited college or university majoring in Bluegrass or Traditional Music. All of the requirements for eligibility are listed on the ‘Scholarship’ page of our NKBMA.com website. Helping students of acoustic music with their education is just one more way your organization lives up to it’s mission statement of fostering, mentoring and promoting the traditions and well-being of Bluegrass and Traditional music in the Tri-State Area.

We are proud to announce that this year’s scholarship award has been granted to our very own banjo player, Kendall Potter. Kendall is attending Morehead State’s Kentucky Center for Traditional Music and enrolled in their Traditional Music Program. Anyone attending one of our NKBMA jam sessions in the last 3 years has watched as Kendall picked up the banjo and started the learning curve of playing an acoustic instrument. Her hard work and our members’ mentoring have resulted in a rapid level of achievement. She has become an asset to any jam. Congratulations Kendall!

We asked Kendall to share some of her first year experiences while attending the college. Here’s what she had to say:

“Whoooo Buddy! The college experience has been amazing so far! I’ll start by saying that I was originally going to attend college and major in music. But then, I toured Morehead State just for fun and ended up meeting Raymond McLain and taking a tour of the Kentucky Center for Traditional Music....and, well, it felt like home. So here I am.

“I started as a traditional music studies major last fall. From day one of classes I knew it was going to be fun! I grew up in an area where I had to drive an hour to find anybody to pick with and then suddenly, I’m living right in the middle of a bunch of musicians! I was fortunate enough to be asked to join the Mountain Music Ambassadors Ensemble, the traveling band which represents the school. (Editor: We had this group play for us a few years ago at Willis Music and explain their program. It was a night of fun!)

“Playing in that band has been an amazing experience. I got to attend the 2019 IBMA event in Raleigh which was wonderful. I met tons of people, picked some, and got to perform some. The highlight of that trip was when I got to go out to supper with some of John Hartford’s family.

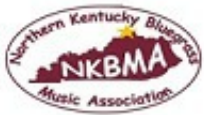
“In addition to the Ambassador’s Band, I’ve also been in another bluegrass ensemble, have taken banjo and guitar lessons, and had music history and theory classes; all of which have been amazing! (If only the required general education classes could be as much fun as all the music classes....) At first, having banjo lessons was a little odd. I kinda did my own thing for three and a half years and had never had a formal lesson. But now lessons are my favorite part of the week. I am surrounded by good musicians, creativity, and inspiration. There is always another song to have ready for the next show and there is never a dull moment. And I can’t wait to see what else happens while I am here! Thanks NKBMA!” - Kendall



Kendall (left with banjo) on stage with the Mountain Music Ambassadors Ensemble at IBMA in Raleigh



Kendall with her new banjo enjoying college life!



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Our Alaskan Visitors - by Tom Bushelman

Our immediate past president and my wife, Pam, being one and the same person, received an email through our NKBMA.com website portal from a banjo picker who would be in town for a short while and wanted to join a jam if there were any to be found. Here is where you snort derisively and say, “jams to be found in Northern Kentucky, Hmmp. Of course there are jams in Northern Kentucky.” We have jams every Friday of the month, every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and some Sundays plus pickin’ parties all over the place. We are truly in a jammers paradise here. So this banjo picker, Josh Kennedy, comes loaded for bear with a fresh set of strings and a spare thumbpick in case things get too exciting on a wild break of ‘Shucking the Corn’ and he accidentally shucks a pick!

This nice young gentleman is currently serving our Country in the US Coast Guard way up in Alaska. I asked him what he did to the Admiral’s daughter to get stationed up there by Siberia but apparently it is a pretty good posting and he enjoys it. He started playing banjo a year and a half ago and you wouldn’t know it by listening to him with a large repertoire and great timing with the bonus of high hill country vocal harmonies that not just everybody can reach.

He arrived in town conveniently just before the annual NKBMA Christmas bash at Willis Music and was thrilled to come. There was great food, friendly people, and really great jamming that couldn’t be beat. When I say really great jamming, I don’t necessarily mean a well-polished band smoothly rolling out one hit after another though there was that. I mean all skill levels of musicianship, with those that had more experience helping those that are earlier in their musical careers. Everyone had a shot at the big time on stage. I just knew there had to be a scout from Nashville in the audience but couldn’t pick out who it was. Our esteemed guest had a big time along with a local childhood friend, Noah, playing a left-hand guitar.

To maximize Josh’s picking time while in town, Mrs. President organized a jam at our house the next night with

plenty of friends, food and fun. We had a great picker and singer, Chaplin Larry Franklin, who recently got out of a 20 year prison term (he was the prison preacher, not an inmate, but it cracks me up to say it that way). Steve Bonafel, winner of the IBMA song of the year and a local celebrity arrived along with DJ Smith who plays his Grandpa’s D-41 like Larry Sparks and the upright bass like a pro. Too many pickers to count. Neighbors stopped by, there was a crackling fire in the fireplace, deals were made over jars of moonshine about horse pasture and a good time was had by all. For the first time in 25 years, I broke out by Dad’s 3 foot bass speaker with big Peavey head that has powered many a bluegrass festival in years gone by for Noah who also plays one of those skinny upright electric basses. We picked until the next day and had so much fun, we decided to do it again the following Saturday night.

On Friday, one of Josh’s band mates from Alaska arrived to play a gig with him and Noah at The Humble Monk (a brew pub in Cincinnati). So, Pam and I crossed the river to watch their gig. Here is a testament to youth and stamina in what we witnessed that night. A four hour set, performed straight through, no breaks, no significant pauses! I think the brew pub did a fine business that night as the place was packed and the spirits were flowing. I love to jam, being part of the action, but I also really appreciate listening and watching a good show.

One more big picking party at my house Saturday night, well into Sunday morning, and Uncle Sam required the services of our temporary banjo player. I thought we did the best we could for our servicemen by providing all the entertainment we could while they were home on a short leave. Thanks to all who may have helped as hard as it may have been to come out and play and sing and drink a little.

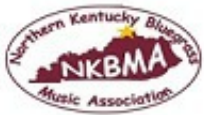
P.S. I am not often bothered by the truth and have a faulty memory on a good day. If I have told this tale differently than you remember it, I would be glad to include your version in a subsequent issue.

NKBMA Board of Directors for 2020:

President - Tom Bushelman
Vice President - Rick Crawford
Treasurer - Myrna Murphy
Secretary - Jerry Schrepfer

Members at Large:

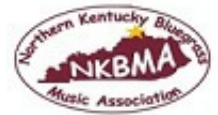
Pam Bushelman
Ron Simmons
Gene Thompson
Kathy Wolfe
Steve Wolfe



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Featured in TRAVELMAG as one of the best festivals and fairs in Ohio, The Appalachian Community Development Association's **Appalachian Festival** returns for it's 51st year. An event including Dancing, Food, Music, Storytelling, Festival Crafts, Educational Displays, and a Pioneer Village/Living History Area, makes this a great family friendly celebration of Appalachian life and history. Festival President/Director Ron Simmons has the following to say as a preview of this year's event and musical performance schedule:

"I wish I had room for every group in town.....but that would be a 3 month festival. So just to give you an idea of who is coming this year, here is a short list:

- Blackwater** (Tony Hale and company.....one of this areas best groups, bar none, just ask me)
- Fenced In** (Curney and Rickey.....and they can flat get it!)
- The Tillers** (New old time flavor of true mountain music)
- The Wayfarers** (Most asked for group I have ever booked from Eastern Ohio)
- Forest Hills Bluegrass Band** (by leaps and bounds one of Cincy's best all round Bluegrass/Americana bands)
- Ma Crow** (If you don't know Ma Crow, you ain't seen a good show)
- Higher Vision** (Bluegrass Gospel and good friends every one)
- Rabbit Hash** (Corn bread, beans, hot ham sandwiches and sweet tea)
- Vernon & Kitty** (I'd call them by the bands name but why.....it's Vernon & Kitty!)
- Comet Bluegrass Allstars** (Big Show House Band, featuring all of them!)
- One Iota** (Steve Bonafel and all his minions of helpers)
- Artie Werner** (The Art of the Jam.....crowd favorite and to think it was my idea, neat huh?)
- Pam Temple & Spencer Funk** (Just because they live in the City doesn't mean they can't pick!)
- The Bings** (One of the best musical duos in Ohio and Texas)
- Corncobs** (Corn on the Cob and certainly with old fashioned butter)
- Ray & Beth Vining** (It's a good thing they are married. They understand each other, nuff said)
- Sycamore Sally & The Straw Dawgs** (Trina's in the group....you don't need to know any more)
- Barefoot in the Briar Patch** (Russ Childers and Ramblin Chuck with their posse)

A whole host of other musicians, performers, rapscallions, ne'r do wells, truck drivers, meditators, and pickpockets! Please come one and all for a great Mothers Day Weekend, May 8th-10th at Coney Island. Times and stage schedules to be determined soon. For more info, visit <http://appalachianfestival.org>

Jack Bullock - Another of our fine friends met thru the Bluegrass networks, jams and gigs passed away in December. 3 weeks prior to his departure, we had breakfast at the First Watch in Kenwood. We had a great conversation about life, liberty and what a treasure happiness is. He was sick but put on a good face for me like always. Little did I realize it was his farewell tour. Jack Bullock was a devout scholar in religious matters and was not afraid to die, but as the rest of us realize, it doesn't matter as it is inevitable so get ready! He made one of my most quoted sayings about 3 years ago. It went like this: "Ron, at our age we will most likely attend more funerals than weddings, so get over it!" I couldn't make it to his wife Janice's wake, but Jack didn't care. I was in Charlotte waiting for my younger Brother to pass after a massive stroke. He is still with us but in bad shape. One thing I am aware of for sure is that guys like Jack Bullock will be waiting for us all including possibly my Brother and they will be "waiting drawing pictures in the sands of the Jordan River" Jack, if you can read this, practice that dobro 'til I get there! Those are my thoughts and God Bless Him for being my friend. - Ron Simmons



Famous Old Time Music Company

Vernon McIntyre has always been a Buy, Sell, and Trade kind of guy. Playing banjo full time during the 1960s, or for that matter at any time in history that I know about, didn't pay well enough to meet a young man's living expenses. So, as one of the original multiple revenue stream advocates, Vernon augmented his band income by



b u y i n g ,
selling and
trading just
a b o u t
anything and
everything
that wasn't
illegal or
i m m o r a l ;
instruments,
cars, jewelry,
coins or even
furniture, you
name it.

Founded in 1972, Famous Old Time Music Company was already a well-established, viable business when owner Rich Hart decided to switch careers and put the store on the market. Despite never having any formal business training and with pretty much no idea how to run a retail store, Vernon jumped at the opportunity to purchase it. For Vernon, ownership of Famous Old Time Music Company was a dream come true.

As proof of Vernon's persuasive skills, he somehow talked me into investing in the endeavor too. I had never taken any business courses either and definitely had no idea how to run a retail enterprise. I recall standing in the store after the closing paperwork was completed and the dust had started to settle. A customer walked in the door and asked for some guitar strings. We managed to find a set for him and went to make change for the purchase. Vernon and I looked at each other in horror and panic....WHERE WAS THE CASH REGISTER?? Talk about green!

Vernon's eternal quest for bigger, better, fancier, larger, and in general, more stuff was the driving force behind moving Famous Old Time Music to the various locations the store has occupied over the years. The Elmwood store was home for a long time and served quite well. The retail area was large enough; it had a full basement for storage space and lesson rooms; plus it provided a small show venue for hosting concerts, workshops, and other events.



However, when he had the opportunity to buy an old school building with 10 large classrooms, an onsite restaurant, 8 acres of parking, plus a LARGE show venue, Vernon just couldn't resist!

The building was in northwest Ohio in a town called Wapakoneta. We bought the property and launched a branch of FOTMC. From that move, we both learned a painful lesson about how hard it is to start a new business in an area where nobody knows you! We kept the location open for over 10 years, served a variety of new customers,



did plenty of fun live concerts on the stage, some great festivals, plus made lots of new friends in the area.

And served a lot of food to hungry bluegrass music fans.



However, it became hard to sustain with the depressed economy and the high fuel prices of that time

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(FOTMC continued....) it proved impractical to continue the business. With the intent of closing Famous Old Time Music and enjoying a partial retirement, we sold the building with all the inventory and moved back to Cincinnati.

Partial retirement didn't last long for Vernon, however, When a store front in Millville, Ohio, became available this past summer, he announced that he was going to rent it and re-open Famous Old Time Music Company. He has done exactly that! He has it packed full of banjos, guitars, mandolins, basses, and other musical paraphernalia. Lesson business is brisk and repair services are in demand. Plans are in place to reinstate the Tuesday evening jam sessions established during the Elmwood location era. I have been amazed at the number of folks we knew at the Elmwood store who have now resumed doing business with Famous Old Time Music Company!



The new store is at 1196 Millville Rd, Millville, OH 45013. If you want to do some buying, selling, and/or trading, stop by or call Vernon at 419-568-1220. He'll be happy to accommodate you! -Kitty McIntyre

Editors Note: Vernon and Kitty McIntyre and FOTMC offer a variety of lesson programs in a number of acoustic instruments designed for the beginner or the more advanced student. And Vernon McIntyre and the Appalachian Grass band have been a member band for years supporting NKBMA. Links to their website and performance schedule can be found on our NKBMA.com website under 'Member Bands'. They provide a performance of lively bluegrass music, lightning fast instrumentals, close harmonies, and entertaining novelty songs to delight audiences of all ages. See our WoodSongs Coffeehouse page as well. They will be featured on the Willis stage in March!



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Sun Valley Bluegrass Rolls On -

Back for its 6th year, the Sun Valley Bluegrass Festival brings the finest Bluegrass and Old Time music and culture to Northern Kentucky once again.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, July 11th, 4pm. The festival features a full lineup of local and regional bluegrass acts with returning crowd favorites, Marteka and William Lake. Marteka has been wowing crowds for years now with her blazing banjo skills - close your eyes and tell me it's not Earl up there - and William pulls off some spot on Lester Flatt vocals. They have created a following and great performance reputation all before their 21st birthdays, by the way.



Marteka and William Lake

Additional acts this year include local favorites Tweed Donaho and Danny Davis (formerly of the Stanley Bro's), Back up and Push, Willow Creek, and Rose & Wine, a

duo from Lexington featuring recording artist Stephanie Jeter.

The festival takes place on the shores of the A.J. Jolly lake (fishing plus bluegrass music, anyone?) And remains only \$5.00 to get in. Now "That's a deal!" As my ole feed store buddy used to say.



You won't go hungry or thirsty at the festival as there are plenty of vendors available for food, drinks and crafts. Bring the kids, also, and get them interested in live music. It's a very 'family friendly' event. And weekend camping is also available for a reasonable fee. Check with A. J. Jolly Park for details.

On a personal note, I am amazed every year at the friendliness of performers and their crews and friends. I've met so many simply down-to-earth folks in the bluegrass music field. But even better are the fine folks who assist in the production of this event and the many people I've met just roaming the crowd.

Sun Valley Bluegrass Festival is proud to bring Bluegrass music and culture to our part of the state where Bluegrass began. Please be sure to mark your calendars for July 11th. Hope to see y'all there! If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, email them to: jefftrauth3766@icloud.com or text them to 859-750-0505 - *Jeff Trauth, festival organizer*

NEW NKBMA APPAREL NOW AVAILABLE

Product looks great and is going fast! And we now have a variety of items in a variety of sizes and colors to make you the fashion talk of any group, jam or gathering. Here is a listing of items available:

- T-SHIRTS, sizes Large to 3x, 3 colors \$15.00 ea
- POLO SHIRTS, sizes L to 3x, 2 colors \$25.00 ea
- CREW SWEATSHIRTS, Large to 3x \$20.00 ea
- Zipper Front HOODIES, Large to 3x \$30.00 ea
- BALL CAPS , 2 colors \$10.00 ea

Be sure to check the items out at the next Willis Music Jam the 4th Friday of February



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Willis Music Auditorium, Mall Rd, Florence, KY

There is nothing better than a live music performance and the Willis Music Auditorium provides that up close and personal experience. Here are some of the groups scheduled in the next few months:

KENTUCKY BORDERLINE BAND

Saturday, February 15th - 7:00pm to 9:00pm

All are members of Larry Smith's **Tomorrow's Bluegrass Stars**, this group of youngsters have individually or collectively been featured on WoodSongs Old Time Radio Hour, made guest appearances with Rhonda Vincent at the Ryman, the Po' Ramblin' Boys, Ralph Stanley II, and more. Young Ashlyn Smith took Flatpicker of the Year Award and Brannock McCartan took Fiddler of the Year Award at this last year's Kentucky Bluegrass Music Kick Off. These young people are an act you cannot afford to miss! \$10 door donation goes to the band.



Kentucky Borderline

Vernon McIntyre and the Appalachian Grass Band

Saturday, March 14th 7:00 to 9:00pm

A favorite of the NKBMA crowd and no stranger to the Willis Music Auditorium stage, Vernon and Kitty return with their Appalachian Grass Band for an evening of lightning fast instrumentals, close harmonies, good traditional music and a few novelty songs. An NKBMA member band supporting bluegrass in the area for over 50 years, Vernon and Kitty know how to entertain an audience. Come out and enjoy their show. \$10 door donation goes to the band.



Vernon and Kitty McIntyre

The Willow Creek Band

Saturday, April 25th 7:00pm to 9:00pm

Hailing out of Lebanon, Ohio, The Willow Creek Band will entertain you with a variety of Americana, Bluegrass Classic Country and Gospel songs. Band members Harley Maynard, "Wild Bill" Sulfsted, Beverly Sulfsted, Jerry Bullmaster, and Frank Adams have been playing music as a group for many years. If you like good acoustic music come and experience this talented group up close and personal at Willis Music Auditorium. They will not disappoint you. \$10 door donation goes to the band.



The Willow Creek Band

For bookings call: 513-680-0907
Beverly Sulfsted

Willow Creek Bluegrass Band





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JAMS

Gene Thompson Jam

1st Friday of each month

Back at the Lodge

Hart Dr., Hebron, KY

Food and beverages available

Contact: Gene Thompson (859)689-7431

\$3 donation at the door



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:



NKBMA Gospel Jam

3rd Friday of each month

Back at the Lodge

Hart Dr., Hebron, KY

Food and beverages available

Contact: Gene Thompson (859)689-7431

\$3 donation at the door

NKBMA Monthly Bluegrass Jam

4th Friday of each month

Willis Music, Mall Rd,

Florence, KY

Main Stage Open Mic Fun! Backroom Jammin' Come and play or listen. *New Hours* 5pm to 8pm

\$2 donation at the door

Contact Rick Fuchs (859)525-6050

Camp Springs Bluegrass Jam

1st Sunday of each month 3:30-6:30pm

Camp Springs Tavern

7009 Stonehouse Rd, Melbourne, KY

bring your instrument and a friend or come out to listen. Details at:

Grab your instrument, come out and jam or mentor someone learning Bluegrass!



MONDAY NIGHT BLUEGRASS JAM
STARTS AT 8 PM

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MONDAY NIGHT BLUEGRASS JAM
STARTS AT 8 PM

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Fax: 859-689-0774
Cell: 859-743-2424
Email:

pls@commonwealthsurveying.com



Located across from the Florence Mall and
Next to SHOOT Point Blank 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 180) 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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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

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

JOIN the TEAM for 2020. Please send your annual membership dues to the NKBMA , remain a member in good standing and help keep Bluegrass music alive in the area. Membership benefits:

- ** Bands are listed on our website with links to their websites.**
- ** Members are also VIP customers at Willis and receive 10% on all accessory purchases and other discounts on equipment.**
- ** Musical Scholarships to acoustic Instrument students**
- ** Weekly Jams supported around the area**
- ** Annual picnic and Turkey Jam and Christmas Dinner**
- ** Quarterly Newsletters like this one mailed to members**
- ** Email notification/reminder network for events**

Send payment (\$15 Single, \$20 Couple, \$25 Band), your address

And your current email address to:

Northern Kentucky Bluegrass Music Association

P.O. Box 133

Hebron, Kentucky 41048

Join the team for 2019, become a Board Member or Volunteer

Enrollment forms also available at

www.nkbma.com



The FUTURE of the ORGANIZATION Depends Upon YOU



Address Label

NKBMA
PO Box 133
Hebron, KY 41048



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**Message from the Pres,
Scholarship Announcement
Appalachian Festival
WoodSongs Events
Jams and More**



**Pick up an instrument
And Mentor Someone!**