

Spring
Edition

Northern Kentucky Bluegrass Music Association

May
2024

Keeping Bluegrass Music Alive in the Northern Kentucky Area

IN THIS
EDITION



Festival Season!

Message from the President

Tom Bushelman Jr.

Howdy pickers and grinners. I hope your winter was a woodshedding experience both in practicing our fine music and getting firewood to keep you toasty. With winter now behind us, festival season is all set to go and Clay City has had its last daily Saturday show.

I knew in the back of my mind that something was going on there all along but until this year I didn't realize that within an hour and a half, there was a great show and fantastic cooked cabbage going on every single Saturday night. I highly recommend it starting in the fall next year. Ricky Wasson runs a great operation. They even host JD Crowe Festival this summer.

I couldn't even begin to name all of the great festivals that are starting up but I hope you have the opportunity to go to many. In between festivals both near and afar (not to be confused with "on fire") there are more jams than you can shake a stick at in the bluegrass mecca of Northern Kentucky. Every Friday, Wednesday, Tuesday, and plenty more.

This newsletter contains some great information, including details on the upcoming Appalachian Festival on May 11th-12th still at

Coney Island Park. You may have heard that the park has been sold and thought the festival was a bust but not so. The music is still on.

53rd Annual Appalachian Festival

The Appalachian Festival is Cincinnati's Mother's Day weekend tradition. We are happy to announce this tradition will continue at Coney Island for 2024 along the scenic Ohio River. Transforming Coney Island into an authentic pioneer village celebrating the area's rich Appalachian heritage.

FESTIVAL HOURS:

Saturday, May 11th - 10:00 am - 9:30 pm

Sunday, May 12th - 10:00 am - 6:00 pm

LOCATION:

Coney Island Park
6201 Kellogg Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45230.

ADMISSION:

\$15 for adults
\$5.00 for kids, 5-17
4 and below free

Bring your friends and family for a knee slapping good time fun that's hard to resist.

Details continue on page 2.

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Appalachian
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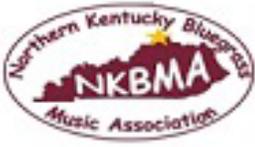
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**53rd Appalachian Festival
Celebrating Appalachian Tradition
Coney Island, Cincinnati
May 11 & 12, 2024
The festival is presented by
The Appalachian Community
Development Association.**

All proceeds go to a grant fund to give back to the Appalachian community for education, food, and projects.

Cincinnati, Ohio - The Appalachian Festival is Cincinnati's Mother's Day weekend tradition. We are happy to announce this tradition will continue at Coney Island for 2024 along the scenic Ohio River. Transforming Coney Island into an authentic pioneer village celebrating the area's rich Appalachian heritage. The Appalachian Festival will take place on Mother's Day Weekend, May 11 and 12, 2024. Our festival hours are Saturday, May 11th - 10:00 am - 9:30 pm; Sunday, May 12th - 10:00 am - 6:00 pm. The Appalachian Festival is held at Coney Island Park, 6201 Kellogg Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45230.

This year we're featuring mountain music on two stages, with some of the greatest local bluegrass bands, including: Ron Thomason & Dry Branch Fire Squad, Danny Burton & The Thunderbirds, Cecil Jackson & Dry Ridge, Sammy Adkins & Sandy Hook Mountain Boys, Wayfarers, Vernon McIntyre and Appalachian Grass, Forest Hills Bluegrass Band, Red Idle Rejects..... and regional favorites!

Storytelling is ingrained in our Appalachian culture. So deeply rooted you might even say it's the cornerstone of the entire cultural foundation. We are excited to announce that we will have new local storytellers sharing their stories all weekend long. Be sure find what our Snake Oil Salesman Stephen "Doc" Hollen and Hanna Sue Cooper has in store for you. They will be performing at Doc's Wagon Twain right by the living history area.

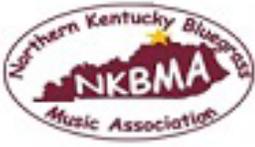
Our local dance troupes will be performing a variety of energetic clogging and line dances on our dance stage all weekend long. No experience is necessary while you dance the night away at the Saturday night Fun Dance which we're excited to bring back to our Dance tent this year.

The Appalachian artisan shops, mouthwatering food, and Pickin' Porches line the walkways, as you stroll through various Appalachian traditions. Immerse yourself in our authentic Pioneer Mountain Village which features Native American dances with Southern Singers. Take time to learn how life was with our demonstrators while they show you their trade in tin smithing, blacksmithing, broom making, soap-making, spinning, and more.

You're not going to want to miss an opportunity to say hello and hear Douglas Taylor, Master Distiller, talk about mountain distilling. Be sure to ask him about his signature Honey Peach Brandy.

Round out your weekend in worship on Sunday morning with a Mountain Church Service for our guests and campers. If you love being outside, close to the river while walking the historic Coney Island grounds, this is the one event you won't want to miss this year! Share with us your new tradition which is unbelievable Fun for the whole family! All proceeds go to grants that give back to the Appalachian community.

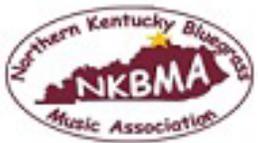
**For more information:
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Ron Simmons
Phone: (513) 623-5373
Email: simmons@fuse.net**



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The Day I Met Earl Scruggs

Sometime in the early 2000's I attended a SPBGMA Convention with a friend of mine, Quentin Terry, since deceased. There were almost constant jams, showcase bands, a new band contest, professional shows and an awards program. Included among the activities for attendees with a vendor pass was the opportunity to meet and/or get an autograph from Earl Scruggs. This was sponsored by The Gibson Company and was held in a spacious and well stocked room aptly named, "The Gibson Room". It was full of Gibson instruments for sale.

Quentin and I were there at the scheduled time and there sat Earl Scruggs himself. Earl graciously shook our hands as we sat across the table from him. I asked Earl if he would sign my banjo for me, which he promptly did. Then I asked if he would mind to pick a tune so I could hear what it sounded like with Earl Scruggs playing it. Without picks he went through small part of "Foggy

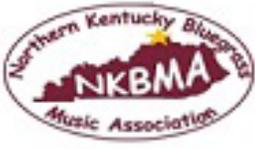


Mountain Special", and handed it back to me. I asked Earl for his autograph but the only thing I could find for him to write on was an old business card from a previous band on which he wrote, "To Barry, from Earl Scruggs". Next, I asked Earl if I could play the gold plated Gibson banjo for sale at the end of the table. Earl said that I would have to ask his wife. I asked Earl where I could find her and he pointed to a well-dressed, stately looking woman sitting across the room.

I went over to Mrs. Scruggs, introduced myself, and told her that Earl had sent me over to see if I could play on the Golden Gibson he had for sale at his table. She said, "Why of course". I felt like a little boy asking a stranger for ice cream. So I went back to Earl's table and told him his wife had said, "YES". Earl said, "OK", so I picked up that \$7,000 golden banjo and began to play. I wish I could tell you it sounded just like Earl Scruggs, and that licks I didn't even know began to fly off my picks, but.... it only sounded like me doing the same licks since 1972.



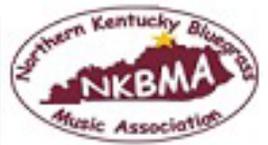
Barry Hartman



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Memories of Joe Parker



Joe Parker kept perfect time on every song he played. His bass was as tall as he was and he played it well. There was no song you could throw at him that would stump him for long. He was amazing. That's what we all loved about him so much. That and his comment, "Are we going to pick or what?"

One day Joe called me and said, "I'm playing for this Gospel group and they need a fiddle. They play out a couple of times a month. Can you come to practice with me?" I did and they were not expecting a fiddle player. Turns out we played out more than a couple of times a month. We played for senior citizen homes and it turned out to be very rewarding experience for everyone involved.

Our band broke up. New members joined. We became a new band and called ourselves Thompson Mountain Band after Gene Thompson. We were blessed to have Gene Thompson, Jim Phillips and John Young to join us. We played a few events over a couple of years and with Karen Thorner and Terry Stratman the harmonies were amazing. We did not break up. Joe died.

When I first met Joe Parker, it was in the backyard of Matt Glazer. Matt and Barb Blash had asked me to come and play fiddle in their group along with Joe and Ernie Phelps. It was a lot of fun and a little scary. Joe always kept perfect time. What a learning experience it was for me and how grateful I am to have gotten to know each of them.

As time went by and practice continued, Joe and I rode together to Matt's house for practice. It was safer that way and we got to know each other a little bit better. Our group was called "Almost There". We only played a couple of "gigs" or two but the experience was wonderful.

Bandmates break up. The Beatles broke up. If it's good enough for Paul McCartney, then it's good enough for the rest of us. But the music continues and it lives on. Our band broke up.

Joe played with Barry Hartman's group, Big South Fork, for many years. They played out for several years at rather big events locally. Their band is listed on our website as one of our band member groups. They include Bill Bellan, Doug Johnstone and Dave Hansen. They played at the Bourbon and Bluegrass event in Union Kentucky for the last couple of years and did an amazing job.

Joe was always ready to play with anyone who needed him. He was just happy to play. How lucky are we that we got to know him along his life's journey. How lucky are we that we could play along side him. What a blessing he has been to each of us in our lives and we thank the Lord above that Joe Parker is now in Heaven saying, "Are we going to pick or what?"

Nancy Heagney



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My First Two Decades as a Bluegrass Jammer

I marked an anniversary recently that I wanted to share with my friends in the Northern Kentucky bluegrass community: 20 years ago, on March 1, 2004, I walked into my first bluegrass jam. And my life changed forever.

A few months earlier, on a rainy night in an over lit apartment in Lagos, Nigeria, I learned that my marriage of five years was ending. I had spent the previous 4 years as the "trailing" spouse of an Austrian diplomat in Damascus, Syria, teaching English Learners, exploring ancient ruins, partying, playing music, and camping with other expatriates and teachers. Still, it wasn't until we got to Africa that my now-ex told me that she had become unhappy in our marriage and didn't wish to continue with me.

I had a few weeks to lick my wounds; flights out of Lagos required a waiting list, so I used the time to plot my next move. I realized I wanted two things when I returned to my pre-nuptial New York City life. First, I wanted to live in Brooklyn. I was done with Manhattan, which is wonderful but can also be the loneliest place on the planet.

Second, I wanted to play bluegrass music. No more singer-songwriter. No more folk music open mikes. I'd had a taste of playing with some friends in Damascus as a band we called Burning Shrub. We played a few originals and lots of covers, all of us on guitar. But now I wanted to play the music I'd heard Steve Earle play with The Del McCoury Band, that Lyle Lovett and Gillian Welch and Emmylou Harris interpreted through their music.

My ignorance of bluegrass and its mighty originators was profound (it still is). But I wanted to learn and I wanted to play music with other people. I had a lot of healing to do, and nothing heals better than music.

On the internet, I found a furnished apartment in Carroll Gardens, a section of Brooklyn I had lived in before. On my third Saturday there, my downstairs neighbor, Katie Dixon, hosted a bluegrass jam. I later asked her about it and she told me about

the Sunday afternoon jam that was about to restart on March 1 at a bar called Smithwicks a few blocks away.

I showed up. I fell in love. I fell in love with the music. I fell in love with the fact that everyone sat in a circle and played their instruments and sang and traded songs and solos. I only knew one song that sort of fit the genre that day. It was John Prine's "Grandpa Was a Carpenter," and it had the elements that work well in a jam: three simple chords and an easy-to-follow chorus everyone can sing along with. And they did.

Most importantly, I fell in love with the people I met that day whom I still consider friends, though time and distance separate us. On March 1, 2004, I went from feeling depressed about my impending divorce to being a part of a community of people who truly cared about me.

That was huge. I started learning songs I could bring to my new friends, like a mangy cat offering yet another expired mouse. Within a year I'd built enough of a repertoire that I started my band Fresh Baked Bluegrass and a few weeks after that we were asked to play a bluegrass brunch, a gig that lasted more than 12 years and allowed me to jam with some amazing musicians, Billy Failing (Billy Strings Band) and Wes Corbett (Sam Bush) to name just two. A few years and lots of jams later, I moved here, to Fort Thomas, KY.

Since moving here in 2018, I've jammed with Missy, Artie, Brad, and Jeff at Molly Malone's and Gene Thompson at the Masonic Hall in Hebron and the fine folks who come to the Camp Springs Tavern, to name just a few.

I've now had 20 years of going to jams; I pray God gives me 20 more. These days I'm hosting a jam every other Wednesday at The Post in Fort Thomas, KY. We start at 7 pm. I do hope you'll join us. It's tonic for your soul.

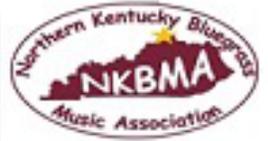
Doug Hatt



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Looking for an evening of fun entertainment and good homestyle cooking? Head south on I-75 to exit 159, Dry Ridge. The Bluegrass Mkt place has a gift shop, restaurant, and a dinner theater too, with family fun and great food!




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Vernon McIntyre



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STATUS OF LOCAL JAMS

Jams are starting back up around the area. Here are a few that we have been made aware of. If you know of more, drop us a note at nkbma.com/contact-us.html

Hebron Jam at the Lodge 1st Friday of the month starting **March 4th** 6-10pm, \$3 donation, snacks, beverages, food available. Hart Dr, Hebron, KY. For info: Gene at 859-689-7431

Newport Lodge jams, 2nd Friday of the month, 6-10pm \$6 donation, potluck dinner. 5th and Park, Newport, KY For info contact Russel at russturner22@gmail.com

Hebron Gospel Jam at the Lodge 3rd Friday of the month starting **February 18th** 6-10pm, \$3 donation, snacks, beverages, food available. Hart Dr, Hebron, KY. For info: Gene at 859-689-7431

NKBMA Jam 4th Friday of the month We are excited to be at the Boone County Extension office. Multiple rooms available for many jam groups. 6028 Camp Ernst Road, Burlington, KY

The Post in Fort Thomas, KY 1136 S Ft Thomas Ave. every other Wednesday at We start at 7 pm.

Camp Springs Tavern, every other Thursday, 6-10pm 7009 Stonehouse Rd, Melbourne, KY, favorite libations available. Details at campspringstavern.com

Molly Malone's Monday Night Jams, 7pm, 4th and Court St., Covington, KY. Artie Werner and the Missy Werner Band lead this popular jam. Food and beverages available.

Augusta Pub Bluegrass Jams, 3rd Sunday of the month, 1:30-4:30pm, 120 Main St, Augusta, KY 41002 For information call (606)756-9910

"Old Time Jam", Bean & Barley Coffeehouse and Taproom in O'Bryonville, 2005 Madison Rd. Cincinnati, OH. Every Sunday. Bring your acoustic instrument and help celebrate traditional music from Appalachia.

Old Time Fiddler's Jam, 2nd Sunday of the month, 1-4:30pm, Whitewater Community Center, 6125 Dry Fork Rd, Cleves, OH. All acoustic only.

Old Time Music Co. Jam, every Tuesday 7-9pm. Famous Old Time Music Co, 1196 Ross Millville Rd, Hamilton OH. Call ahead of time to ensure the jam is still on.

Member Band News

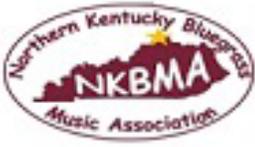
Do you have a band? We offer promotional support for our member bands. Join NKBMA as a band and members (up to 5) are members also. See Page 11 for details and visit our 'Member Band' page at <http://nkbma.com> for links to member band web-

The Art Of The Pun

I can't stand Russian dolls. They're so full of themselves.

Have you heard about the new corduroy pillow cases? They're making head lines all over town.

Why did the hipster burn his mouth on pizza? Because he ate before it was cool.



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Updated NKBMA website now Apple Compatible

Go to www.nkbma.com for all the latest news, special events, and jams plus our huge archive of old photo slideshows, member band news and past Northern Grass issues.

Plus our own Facebook Page 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 KathyWolfe@kw.com

JOIN the TEAM for 2024. 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.**
- ** Musical Scholarships to acoustic Instrument students**
- ** Weekly Jams supported around the area**
- ** Annual Summer Picnic, Turkey Jam and Christmas Dinner**
- ** Quarterly Newsletters like this one emailed to members**
- ** Email notification/reminder network for events**

Your membership fees help pay for our liability insurance, our PO Box, our website and domain name, and the costs of publishing this newsletter, music scholarships and more.

Send your name, mailing address, current email address and payment to:

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

**Current rates: \$15 Single, \$20 Couple, \$25 Band
Join the team for 2024, become a Member or Volunteer.
Enrollment forms also available at www.nkbma.com
The FUTURE of the ORGANIZATION Depends Upon YOU!**

NEW NKBMA APPAREL NOW AVAILABLE

Products looks great and are 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 each
 - POLO SHIRTS, sizes L to 3x, 2 colors \$25.00 each
 - CREW SWEATSHIRTS, Large to 3x \$20.00 each
 - Zipper Front HOODIEs, Large to 3x \$30.00 each
 - BALL CAPS , 2 colors \$10.00 each
- Be sure to check the items out at the next Hebron Jam.

Address Label



NKBMA
PO Box 133
Hebron, KY 41048



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Festival News, fun stories

Member Band News

And more



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