

# The Northern Grass



Steve McCain - Editor

## Special points of interest:

- Association News
- Bluegrass In Northern Kentucky
- Concert Information
- Upcoming Events

## Inside this issue:

Bluegrass Museum	2
Appalachian Festival	5
Open Jams	4
NKBMA News	5
Review of Memory Pickett concert	5
Larry Sparks Review	1, 3

## Larry Sparks At Willis Music Performance Stage

By Mr. Ron Simmons

I thought the gathering for a Larry Sparks concert might be well attended but since audiences can be fickle, I wasn't overly confident. It was a full house. The one time guitarist and lead singer for Dr. Ralph Stanley filled a cozy concert hall at Willis Music with warm sunshine that the audience instinctively knew would brighten their evening. If Mr. Sparks ever had a bad show, it was not going to be a repeat on this winter evening.

The show was his from the moment he walked thru the front door with his band. Every word and every smile was as though you were the only one in attendance and he was performing for you personally. Every member of the band, The Lonesome Ramblers, including the legendary Larry Sparks was warm and personable on this night. They were all right there in our NKBMA living room and making us feel like we were the most important guests.

When I listen to Larry Sparks on CD, Radio or at a show,

there is an unmistakable sound when he sings, or fashions the words in a song he has written. It is distinctive and the reason why Mr. Sparks is a legend. Not to be overlooked is his style of "guitaristry", a gift from God, which Mr. Sparks is the first to acknowledge as a Blessing.

Another reason why the night was so good was the ability of the Lonesome Ramblers to respect Larry Sparks' bond with the audience by making the night all about him and the audience. Unfortunately there are fine musicians out on the "circuit" who believe they are just as important as the "star" of the show. Mr. Sparks was totally gracious about their ability and gave them all their chance to shine. They did, and did it as friends, like the shake of a hand when you are saying I'm so glad you're here.

The band was D. Sparks playing the bass, Jackie Kinkaid playing the mandolin, Tyler Mullins (a home townner) playing the 5 string banjo, and a wonderful surprise addition Mike Fagin playing his fiddle. Of course the band's guitar player was in fine form with that D model that looked up close like it had been around the world a few times.....and maybe used for a conference table once or twice. I am reminded of the song "Lefty's Old Guitar" which will apply to Larry's Old Guitar", in the Bluegrass Hall of Fame, along with its boss when he's done with it.

I could talk about the music selection the band did but why? If you know anything about Larry Sparks, it matters very little. I heard Chris Jones on satellite radio say it has been said of Mr. Sparks that "he could sing the names in

Continued on page 3

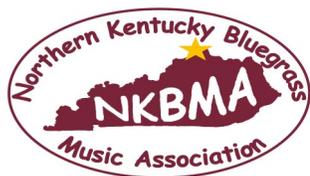
## From Our President. Mrs. Myrna Murphy

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE GARY PICKETT BENEFIT. THE BENEFIT WAS A SUCCESS.

IT LOOKS LIKE SPRING IS HERE AND THAT MEANS WE CAN LOOK FORWARD TO THE BLUEGRASS FESTIVALS. IT IS SUCH A PLEASURE TO MEET AND GREET OUR FRIENDS, OLD AND NEW.

HAVE A SAFE AND EXITING BLUEGRASS MUSIC SUMMER.

MYRNA MURPHY



**INTERNATIONAL  
BLUEGRASS  
MUSIC MUSEUM**  
Owensboro, Kentucky

If you would like to make a 4 year pledge, please call the museum @ 270-926-7891.



## History In Our Own Backyard

I was checking out my favorite website for Bluegrass history and found that the International Bluegrass Music Museum in Owensboro, Ky has launched a project to build a Bluegrass Music Center (mock up pictured below) that would be located 4 blocks from the current museum.

The website states that the city of Owensboro has pledged 3 million dollars to the project provided that the museum can raise an additional 7 million dollars.

Gabriella Gray writes that the museum has currently raised \$5.8 million dollars towards their goal of \$10 million dollars.

If they reach this goal, the museum would

move into a 3x larger building, with far more exhibit space, a 1,000 seat concert hall, an outdoor concert area for 2,000, a restaurant, expanded gift shop, an international hall, library, teaching rooms...and more.

The museum is also home the annual festival called ROMP that is on June 27th, 28th and 29th. Featured artist this year include Sam Bush, David Grisman, Merle Haggard, The Dell McCoury Band, The Punch Brothers, Doyle Lawson, Carolina Chocolate Drops and Leftover Salmon. The festival also includes camping, crafts and food.

Come out and support this great festival and museum of the music that we all love Visit [www.bluegrass-museum.org](http://www.bluegrass-museum.org) for more information.



Donate to the International Bluegrass Music Center



Located across from the Florence Mall and next to H.H.Gregg on Mall Road, our Florence Superstore has it all. Store manager Rick Fuchs brings years of service and experience to meet your every need. Our Florence location also features a 24 track digital recording studio and performance center in addition to the Kate Young Music Makers studios and lesson center.

7567 Mall Road

Florence, Ky. 41042

859-525-6050

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

Contact us for of all your surveying needs!

We travel statewide!



Tom Bushelman  
Ky PLS #3722

4844 Burlington Pike  
Burlington, Ky 41005  
Tel: 859-689-SRVY (7789)  
Fax: 859-689-0774  
Cell: 859-743-2424

[pls@CommonwealthSurveying.com](mailto:pls@CommonwealthSurveying.com)  
[www.CommonwealthSurveying.com](http://www.CommonwealthSurveying.com)

NKBMA.com

**NKBMA.com**

**Click It To Get It!!**

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

# Thank You

From Judy Pickett and Family

Page 5

Sunday, March 24th was a rather gloomy and cold day outside, but inside Sid's Red Barn the NKBMA was gathering in warmth and love for a very special member. Our dear friend, Gary Pickett, passed away in January, and our group pulled together to hold a benefit to help his widow, Judy, with his final expenses. Sid offered the space and many of our local musicians and bands came together to entertain us for the day. We had simple concession food and held a silent auction of donated items. Donations were taken at the door and door prizes were passed out to lucky ticket holders. Everyone had a wonderful time and came together for a great cause. Judy sent a thank you card and asked that we print it in this newsletter.

"To each and every one of you - I could never begin to tell you how very much I appreciate all you did for Gary and I. He was looking down on us and was enjoying the wonderful bluegrass music.

To all the bands and musicians - You went above and beyond and sacrificed your time. I will never forget that. It is the greatest club that anyone could ever be part of and I will always be there for all of you.

To Myrna - who worked her backside off. You did the greatest job, but you always do.

Emma and Jack - You are wonderful and I can't say enough good things about you.

JoAnn - you are a saint to travel from Corbin and bring the good food and the donations, not knowing what weather you were going to face. God was with you to make it home ok.

Ron - you are a true friend. I will never forget the way you stood by Gary and I. You were a great friend to Gary and he sure knew that.

Steve - for the wonderful tributes in your newsletters - I don't think Gary realized how well he was liked, but he sure knows now.

Pam and Tom - are the cutest and sweetest young couple I know and so talented. I appreciate them so much and thanks for the honey. It will be put to good use. Love you both!

To all the Club members that I cannot name because of space - know that I love you all and I thank you more than you will ever know.

God bless you all!"

Judy

EVERYONE  
HAD A  
WONDER-  
FUL TIME  
AND CAME  
TOGETHER  
FOR A  
GREAT  
CAUSE.



## NKBMA Business News

- ◇ 2013 NKBMA BOARD OF OFFICERS - **PRESIDENT** - MYRNA MURPHY - **VICE PRESIDENT**—RON SIMMONS - **SECRETARY** - JIM MOORE - **TREASURER** - GENE THOMPSON - **SENIOR ADVISORS** - JACKIE BOWLING, LUTHER HENSLEY, PAM MESSER
- ◇ NEXT NKBMA BOARD MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR May 1st, 2013 AT WILLIS MUSIC ON MALL RD. IN FLORENCE KY. MEETING STARTS AT 6:30 AND NORMALLY LAST UNTIL 8:00. NKBMA MEMBERS ARE MOR THAN WELCOME TO ATTEND.
- ◇ NKBMA always needs volunteers to help during jam sessions, concerts and other special events throughout the year. If you can help call Myrna at 859 586 5443



## Larry Sparks

Continued from page 1

the phone book” and it would be compelling to listen to.

His very personal interview with our Gene Thompson as host and moderator, revealed the miles and milestones that have graced the career of Larry Sparks, the man and the entertainer. It hasn't all been easy, but it has been worth the trip. Hopefully, he will be back again to the Willis Music Center's Performance Stage. Talk to Gene.

**PS:** Please pardon my fickle attempt at photography for this concert. I assure you, the show was worth a better camera and will be dealt with when Mr. Sparks comes back.

Ron Simmons

## Thoughts and Prayers



MR. JAMES PAYNE HAS PASSED AWAY. HIS LAYOUT WAS ON APRIL 10TH. JIM WAS A FAITHFUL NORTHERN KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS MUSIC MEMBER. JIM ALWAYS CAME TO WILLIS FOR THE JAM AND ALWAYS A FAMILURE FACE IF SOMETHING BLUEGRASS WAS GOING ON.

THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS GO OUT TO JIM'S FAMILY DURING THIS PERIOD OF LOSS

### OPEN JAMS

**GENE THOMPSON JAM** - HEBRON MASONIC LODGE. 1ST FRIDAY OF EACH MTH. **CLOSED FEB. 1ST** DUE TO LARRY SPARKS CONCERT - RE-OPEN MARCH 1ST. Contact Gene Thompson at 859- 689-7431

**RUSSELL TURNER JAM** - 2nd FRIDAY EACH MONTH - LOCATION - 6TH AND PARK STREEN NEWPORT, KY - CONTACT RUSSELL TURNER AT [rturn@zoomtown.com](mailto:rturn@zoomtown.com)

**LUTHER HENSLEY BLUEGRASS JAM** - - 3rd TUESDAY EACH MONTH - CLARYVILLE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS, ALEXANDRIA, KY.

## BLUEGRASS STYLE MUSIC LESSONS

Fiddle  
Mandolin

Guitar  
Banjo

1740 Adams Rd, Cincinnati, OH  
Northern Kentucky University, Cold Springs, KY  
Immanuel Church, Lakeside Park, KY  
**513-607-1874** [fotmc@iglou.com](mailto:fotmc@iglou.com)

## theSoundWorkshop

**RECORDING STUDIO**

Located within Willis Music on Mall Rd. in Florence. Contact Rick Hopkins for all your music recording needs at phone #

513-607-9855 or visit their website at [www.soundworkshop.net](http://www.soundworkshop.net)

2013 44th Annual

# Appalachian Festival Application

May 10, 11 & 12 2013

@ Coney Island



## Featured Artist



The Tillers



Nightflyer



Wildwood Valley Boys



Steve Bonafel & One Iota



Missy Werner Band

Sound Equipment Sponsor



# Music that takes us from our roots to our branches!



Comet Bluegrass All-stars



Appalachian Grass



Tommy Brown & County Line Grass



Appalachian Grass

The Northern  
Kentucky Bluegrass  
Music Association

NKBMA  
PO Box 133  
Hebron, Kentucky  
41048

### Got Bluegrass News?

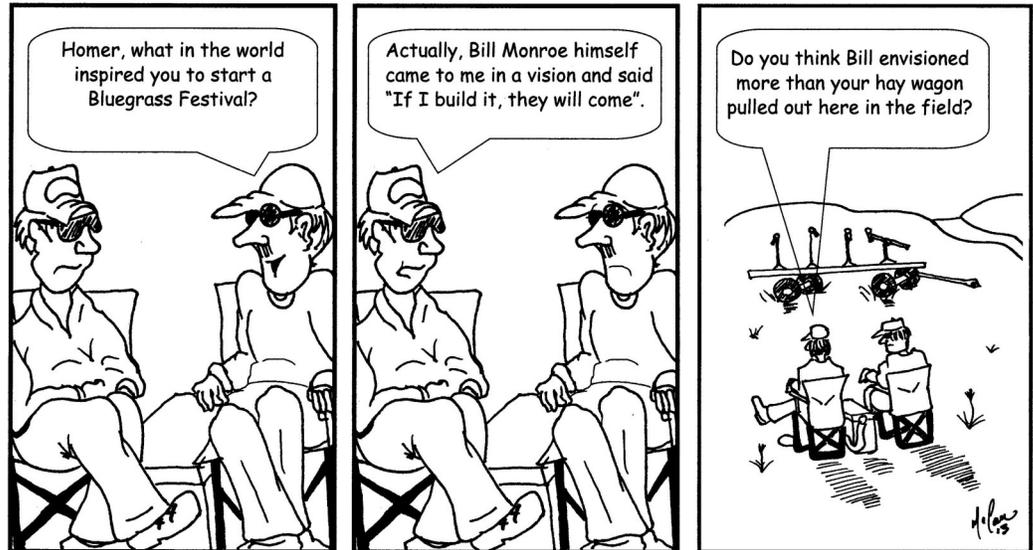
Send it my way to hit the next  
newsletter to the attention of  
Steve McCain  
gmccain@fuse.net

Visit Us On The Web  
[www.nkbma.com](http://www.nkbma.com)



## Playing In The Grass

By Steve McCain



Visit Us On The Web  
[www.nkbma.com](http://www.nkbma.com)

