

The Ross Nickerson presentation 4/16/11  
Miscellaneous Gleanings by Spike Wolfensberger

These are notes I made during the Ross Nickerson workshop on the afternoon of 4/16/11

1. Ross said, "Learning by your self is difficult!"
  2. He demonstrated playing of "Rough and Rocky". I noticed how his eye preceded his playing as he worked up and down the neck.
  3. His thoughts on how to practice:
    - Left hand needs lots of work to develop "muscle memory."
    - Work on left hand (fret board) exercises.
    - Left hand needs also to be relaxed in its work.
    - Right hand needs to have control in a small area there by the bridge.
    - Use a metronome for left hand work up and down the neck.
    - Count with a metronome at 100 / 190 beats per min., he suggests 140.
    - Count with the metronome by its self to get stable timing.
    - Keep it simple for a while.
    - Next, try cut time by its self. That's twice normal time.
  4. His Children's Songs Made Easy book is a good place to start learning.
  5. Try Skip to My Lou.
    - First, just count through the tablature without your instrument.
    - Get familiar with the left hand requirements.
    - Work first on any weak or difficult spots you find.
    - Look for repeating sections. And work with phrases.
    - Practice muting a lower (3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup>) string right after picking it, making a sharper sound.
  6. Practice accenting a particular note in your picking rolls.
    - Then change the note that you accent in the roll, and practice that
    - Even try to vary the volume of each roll.

*(End of first hour)*
  7. As you work up the neck, playing only two notes of your chords allows you to use inversions easily.
  8. Stay on the higher strings for better tone mostly using just the two highest strings for your chords, even for resolving sections of a tune.
  9. Build your songs around the chords.
  10. Practice slides into your licks.
  11. Practice to use both forward and backward rolls.
  12. Seventh chords can be used for backup chords.
  13. Use triads for seventh progressions.
  14. Change your locations for each measure whether a chord changes or not.
  15. When playing up the neck, limit your "grab" for a chord to prevent lower sounding string from making a muted sound.
  16. First, learn your "C" chords and "D" chords. Have the same chords at two positions, one up the neck. Use the 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> strings at the nut, with 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> up the neck.
  17. Again try muting your 4<sup>th</sup> (or 3<sup>rd</sup>) strings for sharpness after sounding it.
- (End of second hour.)*  
*(End of my notes)*