

DESERT BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION



GRASS CLIPPINGS

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Editor's Note: While surfing the web, entertaining myself by visiting different Bluegrass related sights, I stumbled upon the article below. I found it on the Picker's Corner webpage of the Southwest Bluegrass Association (SWBA) website, (<http://www.s-w-b-a.com/>). I thought it very informative so I asked the SDWBA Leadership for permission to reprint it in our newsletter. I received permission from Eric Nordbeck, President of the SWBA, in a very timely email. The SWBA is located in Piñon, California, San Bernardino County.

JAMS AND JAM ETIQUETTE FOR PICKERS AND GRINNERS

By Roger Russell

Disclaimer: *The opinions offered in this article are strictly those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of anyone else (such as, the Board of Directors or membership of SWBA). Further and for the record, the author freely acknowledging participating in jams during which he and/or others did indeed fail to follow one, or more of the features of jam etiquette discussed below.*



What is a bluegrass jam?

A bluegrass jam, or any kind of jam for that matter, is an event in which musicians come together to play and sing unrehearsed music with and for each other. They may, or may not, know each other in advance - often in a given jam some do know each other, while some don't. They may have different levels of experience and/or ability

for playing, or singing, or both. There may be observers, an audience of sorts, but the main thing for those jamming is having fun playing music together.

Pickers and grinders: When it comes to the matter of jam etiquette, then, there are those guidelines that apply to the musicians (pickers) and those that apply to the listeners (grinders). And each are there to help with the goal of jamming, in the first place.

Primary goal of a bluegrass jam

Given what a bluegrass jam is in the first place, it's easy to see that the primary goal is having fun making music together. It's an opportunity for musicians to play together.



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JAMS AND JAM ETIQUETTE FOR PICKERS AND GRINNERS (Continued)

Simple as that.

The reason for jam etiquette, rules, guidelines, whatever.

And the reason for any sort of etiquette, guidelines, or rules for behavior in a jam, is to make it easier for that goal to be achieved. Simple as that. Some of them apply primarily to the jammers (pickers), the musicians singing and playing, while others apply to those listening (grinners). They all have to do with achieving the goal of jamming: Having fun playing and singing bluegrass music.

If a group of musicians, some who may know each other and some who may not, and some of whom may have different levels of musical ability, come together to jam, and if they have some idea in advance about what's expected, they can get down to the business of playing together without preliminary discussion, or negotiation about how they should proceed. And that makes it an easier, more enjoyable experience.

Which is NOT to say that such discussions won't occur, because sometimes they do, for various reasons. But having a basic understanding of what is going on in a jam helps facilitate the playing and even helps any discussion that may be arise.

Variations in jam etiquette

There are lots of opinions, ideas, suggestions, commands, directives, etc. regarding bluegrass jamming and how to participate. And while some might

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JAMS AND JAM ETIQUETTE FOR PICKERS AND GRINNERS (Continued)

be rather dictatorial, insisting that the rules, or standards, or whatever, that apply to jams and jamming absolutely must be followed, the simple fact is that it depends...it depends on what kind of jam it is, it depends upon who is playing in the jam, it depends on the phase of the moon, time of day, etc.

For example, some will say ONLY bluegrass can be played in a bluegrass jam...but, guess what, there are differing opinions about what constitutes bluegrass (is it only "traditional" or can it include "contemporary," or "progressive" bluegrass?), AND some folks in some jams are willing to include folk music, or Old Time music, or Country-And-Western music, or even Bluegrass-style renditions of popular tunes and songs.

For another example, some will say that ONLY certain acoustic instruments (such as guitar, banjo, bass, mandolin, resonator slide guitar, and violin) can be used in a bluegrass jam... But, again, that can vary, and sometimes an autoharp, or a harmonica, or hybrid instruments like a "banjolin" (banjo mandolin), or an amplified base, or a hammered dulcimer, or even an accordion will find it's way into a jam.

So not all jams are the same. Consequently, not every jam follows exactly the same etiquette. It all depends on who's in the jam and what they collectively find acceptable.

And probably the most important thing is being aware of the major goal for jamming (having fun making music together), and from there what the range of expectations and preferences are that serve that purpose.

In other words, while it's beneficial to know the general etiquette that most follow in a jam, it's also important to get a sense of what's expected, accepted and being done in a specific jam, especially if it involves musicians one has never played with before. And probably the best way to do this is to listen and observe, and when appropriate ask questions.

Editor's Note: This important article will be continued in the December/January Grass Clippings.

FALL FESTIVAL: THE SITE SEARCH CONTINUES

By Andy MacLeod, DBA Trustee
Tucson's Desert Bluegrass Festival Coordinator



A search is underway to find a new venue for Tucson's Desert Bluegrass Festival. We hope to be back up providing some of the best bluegrass bands and festival experience for you, our loyal members, in the fall of 2015. Yes, you read that correctly there is no festival this fall, October 2014.

In April, as the committee was in the early stages of band selection process and developing our strategy for the 2014 Fall Festival, we were notified that the AVA Amphitheater would not be available for our use. AVA is a wonderful venue, and we were saddened by this decision. In order to provide the top-quality festival we are known for, we felt that rushing to find replacement

venue on short notice would have been detrimental.

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FALL FESTIVAL: THE SITE SEARCH CONTINUES (Continued)

Changes were in the works this year as I agreed to take over from Mike Headrick who had been guiding the festival for over ten years. These are no small shoes to fill, as Mike is a manager extraordinaire. You can contact me at rivermapper@me.com with any questions or if you'd like join us on the Fall Festival committee.

Be sure to mark your calendars for the Marana Bluegrass Festival on April 10-12, 2015. The headliner this year will be Jeff Scroggins & Colorado along with Tucson and Phoenix area bands.



WHERE HAVE ALL THE ACTIVISTS GONE? By James Reams



The recent passing of legendary folk singer and activist Pete Seeger touched more than just a musical chord with me. I knew Pete from back in the Greenwich Village days. His passion for social justice and ability to transform those feelings into songs that have remained in the hearts and on the playlists of generations will be greatly missed.

And that got me to thinking about who has picked up the social justice torch in recent years. What singers/bands are writing and performing those songs that will galvanize this generation into action? More specifically, what bluegrass musicians are taking a stand – politically, socially, and morally – with their music?

It's not like there isn't a whole mountain of issues out there to choose from. Unfortunately, we're still dealing with wars, poverty, pollution, and inequality.

Punk, hip hop, rappers, and rock musicians have been holding court in the area of protest songs for the last couple of decades (think Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, John Cougar Mellancamp, Eminem, Townes Van Zandt) so — to paraphrase one of Pete's songs — where have all the activists gone (at least in the world of bluegrass music)?

We've had some heavy hitters in the past like Zilphia Horton (1910-1956) and Aunt Molly Jackson (1880 – 1960). Both women used their music to affect change. Working in rural Appalachia, Zilphia used folk music as direct action on the picket lines of the labor movement and later in the civil rights movement. Zilphia adapted an early gospel song into the unofficial anthem of the African-American Civil Rights Movement. Pete Seeger later changed “will” to “shall” and “We Shall Overcome” became a rallying cry in the 1960s.

After several mining tragedies struck Aunt Molly's family, she wrote many protest songs in support of miner's rights. She commented that folk music is “what folks composes out of [real] lives; out of their sorrow, their happiness, and all.” Listening to her sing “Hungry, Ragged Blues” epitomizes the full gamut of social injustices associated with coal mining. She performed this song in 1931 in front of the Dreiser Committee, investigating the Harlan County War and workers' living conditions. Both women were a huge influence on the folk music revival of the 40's.

Then there's Hazel Dickens (1935-2011) an American bluegrass singer, songwriter, double bassist and guitarist that garnered a long list of awards in her career including the

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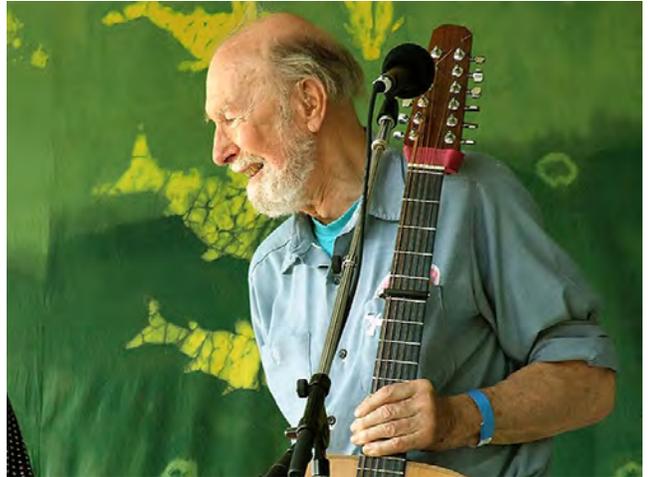
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WHERE HAVE ALL THE ACTIVISTS GONE? (Continued)

Award of Merit from the IBMA. Like many of her fans, I hope induction to the Bluegrass Hall of Fame will happen soon (hint, hint!). Her music was characterized not only by her high, lonesome singing style, but also by her provocative pro-union, feminist songs and her outspoken support for the plight of coal miners. The New York Times called her "a clarion-voiced advocate for coal miners and working people and a pioneer among women in bluegrass music." Just check YouTube and you'll find a whole slew of her songs including the haunting a cappella version of "Black Lung" that's sure to put a catch in your throat.



Kathy Mattea has picked up right where Hazel left off. Her latest albums "Coal" (2008) and "Calling Me Home" (2012) have solidified her place in the social justice movement. Her intense and well written song "Hello My Name is Coal" describes the love/hate relationship between coal mining and those affected by it. Kathy has toured extensively to bring attention to the environmental and human devastation of coal mining and appeared on programs such as NPR's "Living on Earth" as she promoted the COAL project. She is a force to be reckoned with and her latest songs lean more toward bluegrass than country as she rediscovers her roots. All I can say is "Roll on, Kathy!"

Okay, that made me feel a little better. But where's the male counterpart in bluegrass music? Well, seems we're a little thin in that area. I could think of all kinds of songs about coal mining from bluegrass legends like Carter Stanley, Hobo Jack Adkins, Ralph Stanley and more; but scratched my head and thought long and hard to come up with any bluegrass songs about other social issues.

A couple of names came to mind like Steve Earle and Si Kahn. Though they're more recognized in folk music circles, both of them have dabbled in bluegrass and brought us face to face with some of America's sore spots. Steve Earle released his first wholly bluegrass album "The Mountain" in 1999 with musical accompaniment from the Del McCoury Band. The album was nominated for a Grammy in 2000. Steve is well known for his stand against the death penalty, prison reform, and for his anti-war sentiments. The album's title song "The Mountain" deals with the environmental effects of mining. And he swings over to folk music for "Over Yonder" about an inmate with whom Steve corresponded and whose execution he attended. Songs about prison reform and opposing the death penalty aren't popular and haven't found much support, but that doesn't make them a non-issue.

Si Kahn is a hugely talented individual and the founder and former director of Grassroots Leadership, a non-profit organization that advocates for several causes, including prison reform, improved immigration detention policies, and violence prevention. Most of the profits from Kahn's musical performances benefit this group. He's also been involved with Save Our Cumberland Mountains, an environmentalist group opposed to strip mining in Appalachia. Though Kahn writes songs about a variety of topics, he is especially known for songs about workers and their families, like "Aragon Mill" from the album "Aragon Mill: The Bluegrass Sessions (2013) featuring lyrics that resonate with many out-of-work middle aged men.

Unemployment is definitely a huge social issue facing Americans today but where are the bluegrass songs supporting anyone except ex-coal miners? What about farmers?

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WHERE HAVE ALL THE ACTIVISTS GONE? (Continued)

Returning veterans? Truck drivers? I hate to admit it but I had to resort to Internet searches to answer my own question! As someone who thought he had a finger on the pulse of bluegrass, that was an eye opener. I was looking for that rallying point...what is bluegrass music standing behind today? What gets our blue blood pumping?

Blue Highway came close with Shawn Lane's "Just to Have a Job" which supports the blue collar working man. But it just didn't quite make the emotional connection associated with songs that promote action. A closer look at some of their recent albums revealed Wayne Taylor's incriminating "Homeless Man" whose lyrics brought tears to my eyes as they sang about the unjust treatment of our country's military veterans. Now that's what I'm talking about. Also on the same album (Through the Window of a Train – 2008) is another song about the high price of freedom paid by our soldiers.

So I did some searching on songs about the homeless and I stumbled upon Detour's album "A Better Place" (2012) that contained a gem of a song entitled "Homeless of the Brave." The song was written by band member Jeff Rose after he was stunned by what he heard on a radio program "that there are approximately 70,000 homeless veterans in this country and over 600 in northern Michigan alone." The song is a story about American veterans who return home, only to find they can't get jobs, or in some cases, even find places to live and sleep. And this Michigan-based

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WHERE HAVE ALL THE ACTIVISTS GONE? (Continued)

bluegrass band is putting their money where their mouth is; they're donating proceeds from the sale of the song to help provide transitional housing for homeless veterans in Michigan. I have to say, my hat's off to them and they have my whole-hearted support.

Detour has followed up "Homeless of the Brave" with the release their 2014 album "Going Nowhere Fast" including songs about longing for home, a goose bump producing rendition of "America the Beautiful" and "Soldiers Sorrow" with the proceeds from that song being donated to help support homeless vets.

Could it be that bluegrass has found a modern day social issue that suits our staunchly pro-American sentiments? Possibly. It takes a lot of time and money to put out an album, even nowadays. To risk it all on an album that's hard-hitting on social justice issues can be too much of a gamble for most bands. So they bury these calls to action among more "acceptable" bluegrass songs. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with that. But the cohesiveness found in Kathy Mattea's Coal Project albums is missing and so is the impact that comes along with that kind of dedication. Mea culpa!

So here's the burning question: Should musicians use their talent and popularity to bring attention to social justice issues or should they stick to making entertaining music and keep their noses out of other people's business? Send me an email at james@jamesreams.com and let your voice be heard!

Side Note: This article by James Reams originally appeared on the California Bluegrass Association's webzine in June, 2014.

DAN'S YARNS

Green Grass and High Tides: The Rocky Grass Academy



If you like the idea of taking lessons on your favorite bluegrass instrument while lounging in a lawn chair next to a clear mountain stream surrounded by towering red canyon walls, watching butterflies flutter by and listening to birds chirping in the bushes, you should check out the Rocky Grass Academy. Nestled in the gorgeous foothills of the Rocky Mountains, this outdoor bluegrass camp is held just outside the tiny town of Lyons, Colorado, in late July each year.

I was fortunate enough to snag a spot this year, which is not easy. So popular is the academy that participants must apply through a lottery, open only for a few days 8 months in advance (the lottery for the 2015 academy will likely open in early November). Spots sell out completely during that time, so if you want to go, you have to make sure to apply in time and cross your fingers to get your spot. This was my first time attending Rocky Grass, and it was one of the most special experiences in my short bluegrass career. The setting, the camaraderie, the instructors and the overall atmosphere all are one-of-a-kind.

The four-day-academy segues seamlessly into the annual Rocky Grass Bluegrass Festival, which is held on the same grounds, the Planet Bluegrass Ranch. This year's academy

DAN'S YARNS (Continued)



Lyons is a tiny town, but chock-full of folks who are passionate about acoustic music.

and festival were special also in light of the fact that Lyons and the Planet Bluegrass Ranch were all but swept away during intense rains last year, which had turned the gentle St. Vrain River into a roiling deluge of destruction, taking out homes, vehicles and much of the festival grounds. Thanks to a Herculean effort by the Planet Bluegrass crew, the organizers were able to rebuild the



Meandering around the Planet Bluegrass Ranch, the St. Vrain River offers great opportunities for an inner tube ride or splashing around between classroom sessions.

facilities once the waters had receded. Accordingly, a spirit of the Phoenix rising from the ashes created an even stronger sense of community both during this year's academy and festival.



Creative juices flow during a songwriting exercise.

When you sign up for the academy, you specify a first and a second choice, to enhance your chances of getting in even if your first choice doesn't work out. My first choice was songwriting, and even though I'm a guitar player, I signed up for dobro as my second choice, knowing that trying to compete with lots of guitar players would diminish the odds of getting into the academy at all. In an effort to keep classes small, the organizers impose stringent limits, and I was not able to get in for songwriting. My second choice, dobro, did secure my spot, however. Once I got there, I figured, I'd check and see if I might negotiate with the songwriting instructor to admit me to his or her class – that was my strategy. A month or so before the academy, I checked back with the organizers, and low and behold, a spot in songwriting had opened up, and they let me switch. I strongly recommend that if you don't get your first choice, follow up with the organizers in the months between signing up and the academy to maximize your chances of switching.

The Rocky Grass Academy is extremely diverse with respect to the classes offered. You can sign up for your main course of study in guitar, banjo, fiddle, dobro, mandolin, bass, vocals, songwriting, but also instrument building. Next time

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October 2014

S M T W T F S

			1 WORKSHOP (NW SIDE) 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Marana Community Center 13251 N Lon Adams Rd., Marana	2 JAM 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm Rincon Market 2513 E. 6th St.	3	4
5 JAM 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm Udall Park Ramada 7200 E. Tanque Verde Road	6 WORKSHOP (EAST SIDE) 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Christ Community Church 7801 E Kenyon Dr	7	8 WORKSHOP (NW SIDE) 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Marana Community Center 13251 N Lon Adams Rd., Marana	9 JAM 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm Sticks & Strings 8796 E. Broadway Blvd.	10	11
12	13 WORKSHOP (EAST SIDE) 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Christ Community Church 7801 E Kenyon Dr	14	15 WORKSHOP (NW SIDE) 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Marana Community Center 13251 N Lon Adams Rd., Marana	16 JAM 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm Pinnacle Peak Restaurant 6541 E. Tanque Verde Rd.	17	18 CLINIC Mike Purdy Guitar 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm Chicago Music Store 5646 E. Speedway
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26 JAM 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm Thirsty's Neighborhood Grill 2422 N. Pantano	27 WORKSHOP (EAST SIDE) 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Christ Community Church 7801 E Kenyon Dr	28 JAM 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm Emeritus Senior Living 8151 E. Speedway	29 WORKSHOP (NW SIDE) 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Marana Community Center 13251 N Lon Adams Rd., Marana	30	31	

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S M T W T F S

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2 JAM 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm Udall Park Ramada 7200 E. Tanque Verde Road	3 WORKSHOP (EAST SIDE) 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Christ Community Church 7801 E Kenyon Dr	4	5 WORKSHOP (NW SIDE) 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Marana Community Center 13251 N Lon Adams Rd., Marana	6 JAM 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm Rincon Market 2513 E. 6th St .	7	8
9	10 WORKSHOP (EAST SIDE) 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Christ Community Church 7801 E Kenyon Dr	11	12 WORKSHOP (NW SIDE) 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Marana Community Center 13251 N Lon Adams Rd., Marana	13 JAM 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm Sticks & Strings 8796 E. Broadway Blvd.	14	15 CLINIC Michael Crownheart Mandolin 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm Chicago Music Store 5646 E. Speedway
16 JAM 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm Music & Arts 8320 Thornydale Rd Suite 150/170	17 WORKSHOP (EAST SIDE) 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Christ Community Church 7801 E Kenyon Dr	18	19 WORKSHOP (NW SIDE) 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Marana Community Center 13251 N Lon Adams Rd., Marana	20 JAM 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm Pinnacle Peak Restaurant 6541 E. Tanque Verde Rd.	21 Newsletter Inputs Due	22
23 JAM 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm Thirsty's Neigh- borhood Grill 2422 N. Pantano	24 WORKSHOP (EAST SIDE) 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Christ Community Church 7801 E Kenyon Dr	25 JAM 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm Emeritus Senior Living 8151 E. Speedway	26 WORKSHOP (NW SIDE) 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Marana Community Center 13251 N Lon Adams Rd., Marana	27	28	29
30						

DAN'S YARNS (Continued)

I'm tempted to apply for instrument building. It was pretty awesome to watch the participants in the shop every day, and by the end of the academy, return home with an instrument they built in only five days!

In addition to your main field of study, the academy encourages everyone to attend one of the daily elective classes, which offer a huge range of topics, from music theory to the anatomy of a fiddle tune, from songwriting techniques to publishing strategies for your own songs, from history of bluegrass to vocal harmonies – and many more. In addition, each participant is entitled to choose a one-on-one lesson with an instructor of his or



Practicing by the river.



Our band, "Spork in the Road," ready to tear up the stage in the band contest.

instrumentalists with few, if any, duplications. Bands are announced the first evening, and over the course of the next day practice two songs of their choosing. Bands play on stage during the preliminary band contest, where a jury selects half of those bands to move on to the finals. Our band did make it to the finals, but we did not place. It was a fantastic experience,

her choice during the academy week. Each night, after a stimulating day of learning, everybody gathers in the campground or in nearby Lyons to jam and have a great time playing music together. Again, the shared sense of community at this academy was just amazing. Within minutes of arriving at the campground, my future neighbors helped me with my luggage and lent a hand setting up the tent.

A special highlight was the band scramble and contest: Upon check-in, participants are encouraged to drop a slip of paper with their name and instrument in a hat. Over the course of the first day, the organizers randomly assign the bands, striving to make sure each band has a well-balanced mix of



Dear everyone at DBA,
 Our family is so grateful that Maria received a scholarship to Camp Bluegrass & that we were able to go. We had an absolute blast. It was more enriching than I could have imagined. Maria got great instruction & had a really good time & was inspired. We look forward to more wonderful & with you all. Sincerely,
 Caroline + Willi McArthur

Dear DBA, 7-29-14
 Thank you so much for scholarshiping me! I really liked the camp and I learned a lot. I thought Watch Lee was a great teacher. I liked how he gave me good stuff to work on. I also enjoyed the faculty concerts (very funny) and the student concert. I look forward to participating with the group back in Tucson. Sincerely,
 Maria J. McArthur

DAN'S YARNS (Continued)



Down to the river to pray: Laurie Lewis leading a gospel sing along on the banks of the St. Vrain River.

though. The support from our fellow academicians was amazing, and we got to practice playing and singing around a single microphone, old school, bluegrass style, the way it should be.

A day at Rocky Grass Academy starts with morning yoga on the lawn by the river – for those who feel so inclined – as well as free coffee and pastries, followed by a morning session of instruction. Lunch is provided through vendors selling tasty food on the grounds, although I, as a spendthrift, cooked my own food on my camp stove most of the time. Twice during the week, students and instructors are invited to mingle during a big barbecue.

As a newcomer to songwriting, the academy was transformative for me

in every aspect. Our group was mixed, from beginners like me all the way to experienced singer-songwriters who were no stranger to the stage. I came to the academy wondering if I should even bother to try and write songs, and came away with loads of encouragement, a shared experience of love for the craft and my first small handful of songs. I'll be back.

Next year, the academy will take place from July 19-23. Google "Rocky Grass Academy" to learn more and find out how to enter.

TWO RED SHOES FOR AN AVE MARIA: Beppe Gambetta at Pickin' in the Pines By Daniel Stolte



There is only one place in Arizona where the high lonesome tenor and the wailing fiddle mix with the clear chill of the mountain air, the smoke from campfires and the smell of pine trees – and that is at the Pickin' in the Pines Bluegrass and Acoustic Music Festival. Held at the Coconio County Fairgrounds just south of Flagstaff each year on the second weekend of September, this festival draws a huge crowd of pickers and grinders who don't care much for sleepin' for three nights straight.

This year's headliners were Peter Rowan's Bluegrass Band and the Travelin' McCourys with renowned flatpicker Bryan Sutton. Each year, the festival also features one or two lesser known bands, which makes for an incredible experience. This was my fourth Pickin' in the Pines Festival in a row, and each

Continued on Page 20



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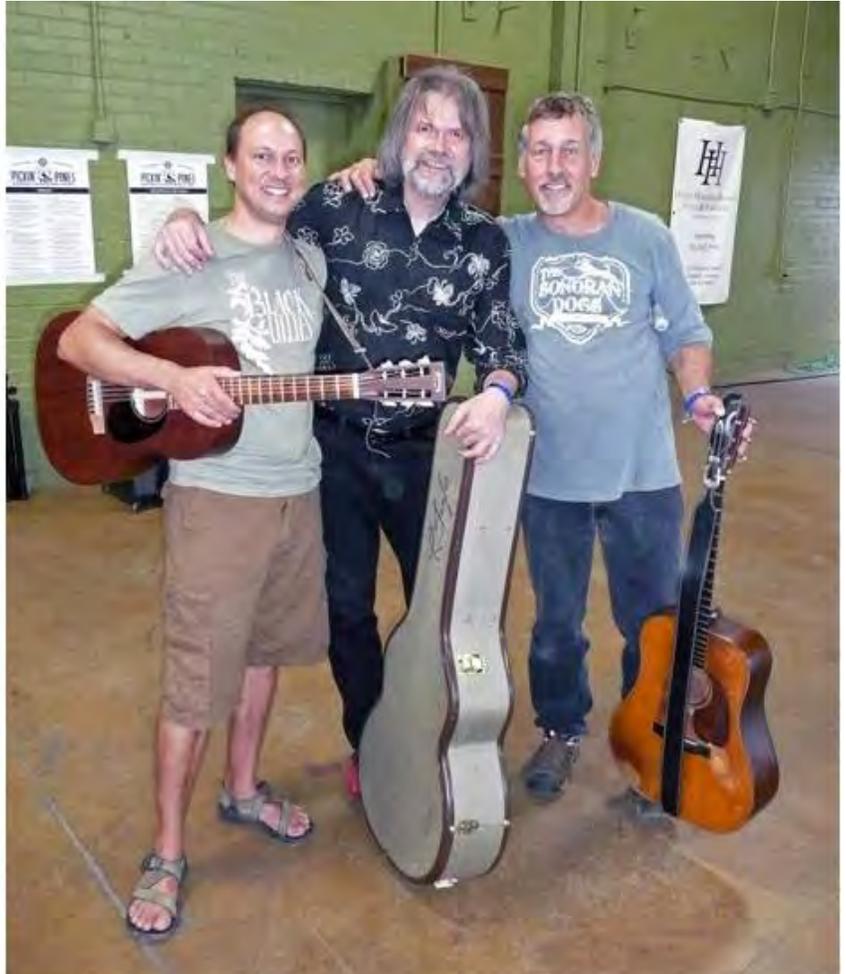
TWO RED SHOES FOR AN AVE MARIA: Beppe Gambetta at Pickin' in the Pines By Daniel Stolte

time I come away thinking, "They just can't top this next year." Yet, somehow the organizers, Flagstaff Friends of Traditional Music (FFOTM) manage to do just that. This year's up and coming band was Town Mountain from Asheville, North Carolina. Having been a longtime fan of theirs, I was thrilled to see them play two sets over the weekend. The Travelin' McCourys with Bryan Sutton tore up the stage on Saturday with an insane set of some of the best – maybe *the* best – musicianship I've ever seen.

Workshops included ukulele, harmony singing, old time banjo technique, fiddle, bass, band dynamics and arrangements, mandolin and more. One of the highlights of the festival was the appearance of Beppe Gambetta, an amazing flatpicker from Italy. If you're not familiar with him, check out his website (www.beppegambetta.com), and especially the album "Synergia," which he recorded live together with Dan Crary in 2001. At Pickin' in the Pines, Beppe played a highly entertaining solo set, during which he introduced the audience to old traditional Italian dance tunes and his version of a century-old "Ave Maria" from the island of Sardinia. Check it out on Youtube if you haven't heard it. His "Ave Maria" was one of the songs Beppe played at Doc Watson's funeral two

years ago. In Flagstaff, he told an amused audience the story of him showing up in his signature fire-engine red shoes at the memorial service: "We were waiting to get into the church for the service," he recalled, "and when I showed up in my red shoes, people turned their heads and started whispering. But those were the only shoes I had, so I briefly considered shouting to them, "the Pope sent me!"

Beppe invented a new form of crosspicking to play this traditional tune that sounds almost unreal. When he performed it on stage, I first thought he was using his loop pedal, which he affectionately calls his "Cousin Gino," but he wasn't. His fingers were simply moving too fast for the eye to follow and match his picking with the sound. Beppe held a great flatpicking workshop with our very own Peter McLaughlin from Tucson, during which the two played enough tunes together and told enough stories to even keep my girlfriend, who doesn't play guitar, greatly entertained.



I even got a short private lesson in crosspicking with Beppe Gambetta (middle) and Peter McLaughlin at Pickin' in the Pines. (Photo: Mascha Gemein)

FIDDLE ENTHUSIASTS & OTHER PICKERS



The Violin Makers Association of Arizona International (VMAAI) will be holding its annual convention and competition in Tucson from October 14-17, 2014. The VMAAI was founded in 1958 to encourage and develop the art of violin making. The centerpiece of the convention is the competition, where newly constructed violins and other string instruments from around the U.S. are played, judged, and given awards for tone and other qualities.

During the week of the convention and competition the VMAAI traditionally hosts an "open house" where Tucson area residents are invited to view and try out the competition instruments on display. At the open house, old time/bluegrass fiddlers, classical violinists, and other enthusiasts can sample a large number of fine instruments made by some of the finest makers. Visitors have an opportunity to chat with and query makers, and even make purchases.

Open House Details

Location: Four Points by Sheraton Tucson Airport

Address: 7060 S. Tucson Blvd.

Date: Wednesday, October 15, 2014

Time: 7:30 p.m. to approximately 9:30 p.m.

Contact: Mr. An Nguyen at Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, Tucson Airport (520)746-0271; or, Mr. Ray Leicht (208)869-3091

Costs: Open to the public free of charge

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THINGS LEFT UNDONE

**Darren Nicholson - www.DarrenNicholson.net
2013 Bearded Baby Productions
review by Marilyn Ryan Hulbert**

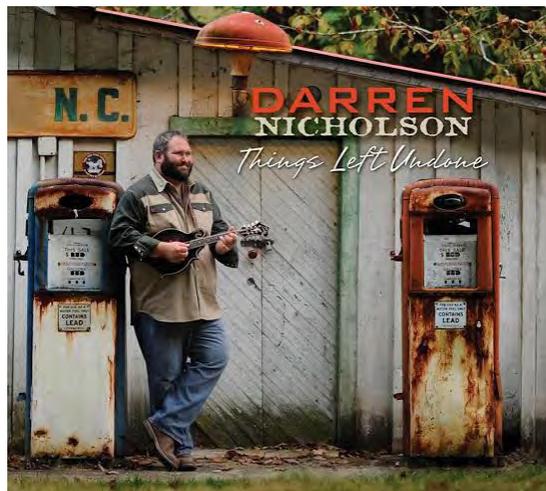


I was fortunate enough to be asked to be an emcee at the Thomas Point Beach Bluegrass Festival over Labor Day Weekend, in Southern Maine. Many wonderful CD's get passed around and there was tons of great music, but I chose to review Darren Nicholson's 2013 project "Things Left Undone" for this month's newsletter.

Darren plays mandolin with Balsam Range - one of my favorite bands, but he was so unassuming and sweet, and

waited quite a while backstage until he asked me if I wanted a copy of his CD. Oh, a happy me when I got home and played this one!

I want to begin with the special guests appearing with Darren. They are Rhonda Vincent, Carl Jackson, Steve Sutton, Tim Surrent, John Driskell Hopkins, Bobby Hicks, Milan Miller, Jennifer Nicholson, Audie Blaylock, Eddie Rose, Mike Ramsey, Aaron Ramsey, David Johnson, Steve Thomas, Tony Creasman, Jeff Collins, Griff Martin, and Kevin Sluder.



The first song "Things Left Undone", in three quarter time, begins the list of

Continued on Page 26

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Dennis Miller 8-10am	John C. Scott 8-9am
Mike Huckabee 10am-12pm	Hugh Hewitt 5-8pm
Bill Buckmaster 12pm-1pm	

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JAMS & OPEN MICS

DBA sponsored jams are listed at www.desertbluegrass.org & on the enclosed calendar.

Southern AZ Old Time Fiddlers Assn.

Southwest Community Center
Cardinal Ave, Tucson, AZ
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Info: Wilbur 520-743-7086

Catalina Mountain Chapter of the AZ Old Time Fiddlers Association

3rd Monday at 7 PM
Info: Laura 520-743-9491

Tradition Acoustic Bluegrass Jam Sessions

Tempe, AZ
Wednesday 7-10 PM
Call for confirmation of dates
Info: Howard or Susan
480-897-7425

Saddlebrooke Jam

38759 S Mountain View Blvd
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Jam 4-6 pm
Info: Rich 520-881-0358

Open Mic at The Hut on 4th Ave

Every Monday 9:00 PM
Info: Rudy Cortese@gmail.com

Kibbey's Jam and Open Mic

Info: Jim Howard, 520-825-9413
Twin Lakes Drive, Catalina, AZ
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1st Baptist Church Jam and Open Mic

Wilds Road, Catalina, Arizona
Info: Jim Howard, 520-825-9413
Every Saturday, 6:30 PM-9:00 PM

Classified Ads:

Martin HD-28, in better than excellent condition, for sale with case, \$3000 OBRO. Call Bob Sisco (208) 724-4796 to check it out. I'll be back in Tucson again around the middle of October. It truly is a beautiful instrument with sweet sound, and I'm told (I'm not a guitar player) it plays very easily.

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THINGS LEFT UNDONE (Continued)

wonderful songs with a message of doing what's right! Gorgeous mandolin playing and lead vocals by Darren. Carl Jackson sings tenor vocal.

The 2nd Song "Durango" is written by Shawn Camp and Guy Clark. Jennifer Nicholson sings high tenor. Darren sings about a hippy girl waiting for a cowboy to lasso her heart and take it home - he pulled up in a mustang - works for me - uptempo and clever. Fiddle, dobro and 2nd guitar by David Johnson.

"I'm Not Going There Today". Rhonda sings high baritone harmony in this very sad song. Jennifer takes the tenor. Darren's voice winds through this like a trickling river.

"Dancin' In the Kitchen", written by Ashleigh Coudill, is a happy, quick tune that will make you want to dance too. Steve Sutton plays banjo and finger picks the guitar. Darren's voice is so pleasing!

"Bluegrass Stomp" - written by Bill Monroe. Great version of this always popular bluegrass tune!

"I Want you to Love Me Like My Dog" - written by Harley Allen and Scotty Emeric is funny - really funny. Kevin Sluder sings tenor and plays bass.

"Give Mother My Crown" written by Walter Bailes is a old tune of love for a wonderful Mom. Eddie Rose sings tenor on this one.

"Sugar Creek Gap" - fast, awesome!

"In a perfect World" - this has a some steel guitar, piano, mandolin, a bit of

Continued on Page 27



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International Bluegrass Music Association

2 Music Circle South, Suite 100
Nashville, TN 37203
615-256-3222
Toll Free: 1-888-438-4262
http://www.ibma.org

International Bluegrass Music Museum

Museum Entrance: 117 Daviess Street
Mailing Address: 207 East Second Street
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So. Arizona Old Time Fiddlers Association

3020 W. Avenida Cresta
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Info: Wilbur 520-743-7086

Tucson Friends of Traditional Music

Info: 520-408-6181
www.tftm.org

Tucson Kitchen Musicians Association

PO Box 26531
Tucson, AZ 85726
www.tkma.org

Tucson Old Time Music Circle

Banjo_brad@thegrid.net
Brad 520-818-0260
www.totmc.org

THINGS LEFT UNDONE (Continued)

violin and Carl Jackson singing harmony. Darren's vocal trills are shown off here and they are beautiful.

"Travelin' Teardrop Blues" - Darren kicks this off with some wonderful mandolin playing. The song is about traveling out West to Arizona and California. There are some interesting chord changes for the chorus of the song. Nice rhyming by Shawn Camp and Herb McCullough. You really have to hear this song - it's sooo great!

"Way I've Always Been" a song by Tom T. Hall with Bobby Hicks on fiddle is like the old country tunes we all love.

And last, but not least is "Can't You See" - "Can't you see, can't you see, what that woman's been doin' to me". Bluegrass rock. It's very cool! Kevin Sluder sings the lead.

Just please, if you haven't heard any of Darren's music, go to YouTube and give a listen. His vocals are like a silky combination of George Jones and Travis Tritt singing bluegrass. He chose a fine variety of songs and has an impressive group of friends.

Some people sure can play and sing! This is one of my all time favorite albums with plenty of songs for our radio show on WERU.fm. We stream live on weru.org every Thursday night 8-10 here in Maine. The show is Bronzewound.

Also give a listen to Balsam Range, if you haven't heard them.

You can write to me - bluegrassjamboree@gmail.com if you feel like it. We'll be back in AZ in November.

See you soon,
Marilyn

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Volume 19 Issue 4 October 2014/November 2014

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

Membership dues for the Desert Bluegrass Association are \$20 annually per family, due March 1st, and includes bulk mailing of the bi-monthly newsletter to each member.

Members joining after November of any year will have their membership extended through the next year. Those joining before November must renew the following March 1st.

First name: _____ Last name: _____

Street Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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Do you wish to be included in the Membership Directory? (check one) Yes No

What instruments do you play? Banjo Bass Fiddle Guitar Mandolin
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Complete this form then mail it, along with your personal check or money order payable to Desert Bluegrass Association, to:

Mike Headrick (DBA Membership Secretary)
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