

Leber Schlesinger Awarded DBA Lifetime Membership

By Bonnie Lohman



Leber taking a break at the 2018 Festival

Our little bluegrass group was pretty naïve in the early days of the DBA. Looking for a place to jam, we rented a room at the old KGUN studio for \$50. Considering the thin purse of the DBA at the time, this was a considerable hit to our meager resources. It was Leber Schlesinger who first broached the idea of playing music in restaurants and other establishments where the owners would appreciate the free music and increase in business. We would not have to pay rent! Yeah! He then organized our first jam at the Texas T-Bone.

After the DBA became “legal” as an organization, Leber was one of the very first dues-paying members. Leber brought considerable experience in harmonies to the jams because of his background in Barbershop. He also has a special rendition of a Birthday song which is popular with our grinners.

In our early festival days, Leber could always be seen around the DBA tent, helping out with merchandizing and promotion, chatting up anyone who asked about the organization or music in general. Leber was in frequent attendance at the jam at the Rincon Market for years.

Leber has been a faithful participant in the jams, helping hold down the Thirsty’s jam and singing his favorites: “Aragon Mill;” “If I Needed You;” the two-verse song, “I’ll Break Out Tonight,” for which he wrote a third touching verse; or any number of bluegrass/folk songs. He does an amazing version of “Soldier’s Joy” on the mandolin.

Leber is a WW II veteran, enlisting after fudging on his age. He was only 15. Mike Headrick notes, “The other interesting thing about Leber is that all generations of DBAers know him. Not just old timers like you and me who know him from jams, but the newer members from the workshops know him as well.”

The DBA board voted to grant Leber a Lifetime Membership. Leber joins an exclusive Bluegrass club consisting of only a few members. This is an honor that has been bestowed upon only three people in the past: Sam and Georgia Brown, and Ted Pence. I can think of no one else more deserving to be recognized for his years of faithful attendance at all things DBA.

