

HTMA President's Notes

by Lynne Edmondson

Lots of updates.

HTMA Coffeehouse Cabaret Series in partnership with Burritt on the Mountain continues July through October. Tickets are advance sales on the Burritt website. Find the link on our website: huntsvillefolk.org under coffeehouse. The concerts are scheduled for outdoor Gazebo area, but will move into Baron Bluff in the event of rain.

Meeting Jams. In June, 3rd Sunday Meeting Jams moved from a Zoom format to in-person outdoors at Constitution Hall Park (formerly Constitution Hall Village) at 109 Gates Ave in downtown Huntsville, just caddy corner to the Early Works Museum, 1:30pm -4pm. No matter what your ability level is, join us. We can have a breakout group if you are not ready to play with the regulars.

Nursing Home Gigs are gearing up. We have one location scheduled to start up again. Contact Jim England (Huntsvillefolk.org) if you are interested in participating.

Benefits of membership. Play as an opening act for coffeehouses. Contact the performance chair, Alex Dieterich, for this opportunity. Play at the Gazebo Concert October 3rd. Contact HTMA president, Lynne Edmondson, for this opportunity. Be a regular at 3rd Sunday Jam. Just show up. Post your songs to our youtube channel. Contact Chris Kidd for this opportunity. Write articles for our newsletter. Contact Jerry LeCroy. Members also get access to instructional opportunities.



HTMA Membership meetings have resumed, initially as outdoor activities.

Please check the HTMA website to verify meeting times.

HTMA Coffeehouses have resumed as outdoor gatherings at the Burritt Gazebo.

Instructional opportunities. Meeting Jammer Members who are not ready to jam with the large group, contact Pat Long (find her on Huntsvillefolk.org). She has been offering a beginning jam. Another instructional opportunity for members is a tuning workshop taught by Wayne Erbsen. All 2021 paid members will be sent an invitation to the workshop, which applies to tuning all instruments.

Volunteer opportunity. Please thank all the volunteers who keep the organization running! I want to welcome the newest volunteer, Jani Brill, who is reaching out to participants at our events. We have a volunteer position open for someone to store and bring the sound equipment to coffeehouses. Please contact Jerry LeCroy if you can help out on this critical chore.

Board members are doing a great job; putting in hours every month. You can contact the board members/committee chairs by emails found on the HTMA website: huntsvillefolk.org under board members.

Last, but not least, let's applaud all the musicians who perform, jam, serenade, immerse, encourage and instruct the community of North Alabama in the various folk music traditions..

Lynne Edmondson, HTMA President

Editors Notes

By Jerry LeCroy

Dear Friends,

We now have had a couple successful 2021 un-coffeehouses under our belts. The May show with the Tosha Hill band drew a big audience – about 100. The June gig with Randy Waller and friends did not quite get 100 people out to Burritt, but everyone who came out was able to enjoy a great show.

We are in the process of making a small improvement in the HTMA gear bag. About twenty years ago we bought a set of stage lights with a MIDI controller, to provide lighting for coffeehouse acts. The controller died after about five years, but we have kept using the same PAR36 laps, just plugged into a power strip. This year, though, the light stand has broken. As a result we are about to move into the 21st century by getting a set of LED-based stage lights. I am looking forward to having controllable lights that are a lot easier to schlep to the events. Ideally the audience won't notice the small change in lighting, but I expect that Sound/light volunteer George Williams will like having wireless control of the lighting.

A Remembrance of Sylvia Williams

By Pat Long

At my very first HTMA meeting (nearly 20 years ago), I initially met George and Sylvia Williams. We were comrades-in-arms, uncertain but also eager. Sylvia and I immediately “clicked” and if you knew Sylvia you knew it was impossible not to like her and her enjoy her presence. She was full of laughter, stories, and self-deprecating humor.

Immediately we agreed to support each other at the next HTMA meeting. We were determined to find a way to “crack” into that circle of what we viewed as very accomplished musicians and singers. In pursuit of that, Sylvia would come by my house one evening a week after I got home from work. Our plan was to learn a couple of songs to sing at the next HTMA meeting.

The music that Sylvia introduced me to at those week-night sessions will stick with me forever. She had the first copy of the Joan Baez songbook I'd ever seen and of course I immediately procured one from ebay. The book contained many of the old traditional “Child Ballads”, ripe with murder and deceit. We joked and laughed about their dark themes. In my copy of that book to this day I can see where I've written notes on harmony or keys to sing with Sylvia.

Another favorite was the Dolly Parton album *The Grass is Blue*. We sang and harmonized our way through most of that compilation of old bluegrass and traditional songs but some that I most recall are *Silver*

Dagger" (made famous by Joan Baez), *I Wonder Where You Are Tonight* and Johnny Cash's *I Still Miss Someone*. Even today I still find myself singing these songs and thinking of my singing partner.

As far as harmony singing - I had sung alto harmony in high school chorus but I'd never truly understood harmony singing and how it was derived. Our alto parts were prearranged for us and we memorized them. But when Sylvia and I started singing together, it came to me that harmony was fundamentally based around the chords I was playing on my guitar. I started transcribing parts for us to sing so that I could remember them. Sylvia didn't need my sheet music and theory to sing the parts - it was so natural for her to simply hear the parts. What a great ear she had. She was a natural singer with a wonderfully clear folk-singer's voice. I once asked her how she could sing a part so well. Her answer was that she had learned it as a child in church. But interestingly enough, she also told me that she always harmonized with songs on the radio while she was driving. What a creative way to pass some otherwise boring time. That's a practice I've taken up and I think has saved me on several occasions from falling asleep while driving late at night!

About a year or so into our weekly sessions, Sylvia began playing the dulcimer and I picked up my first mandolin. Sylvia's dulcimer playing was amazing – sometimes powerful and not always the gentle, dulcet

tones you might associate with the instrument. Her Appalachian-style mountain folksinger's voice blended so well with the dulcimer that they seemed as one instrument. Who could forget her version of *Old Blue* or *The Cabbage Head Song* once they'd hear Sylvia play and sing? Eventually Sylvia was, like the rest of us, bitten by "Instrument Acquisition Syndrome" and added several beautiful instruments to her collection. At one point I asked her "Sylvia, how many dulcimers do you have?" Her quick reply back to me was "I don't know, Pat, how many mandolins do you have?" Touché, my friend, touché.

As time went on, Sylvia and I saw less of each other, either because of various health issues on her part or a busy work travel schedule on my part. But whenever we did see each other, the hugs were free-flowing and she was always her usual upbeat and smiling self. I can without doubt say that if it weren't for Sylvia I would not have continued with HTMA involvement and would still be playing in my proverbial basement. We gained so much confidence from each other.

So, rest well, my dear friend, and continue teaching others how to harmonize. Goodness knows we can all use a little more harmony.

Schedule of Upcoming Events

HTMA Membership meetings will normally be held at 1:30-4:00 on the third Sunday of each month. Please check the website for locations, as we are playing where to play by ear each month

Since January Pat Long was hosting an HTMA Zoom meeting for musical beginners the second Sunday of each month, 1:30-4:00. That series is cancelled.

Jim England's retirement home gigs are planning to restart in July, though places and dates are not firm at our publication date.

For more information about HTMA or current events, you can visit our website at

www.huntsvillefolk.org

You can join up or renew membership using PayPal at

<http://www.huntsvillefolk.org/paypal.htm>

Note that ALL HTMA memberships expire at year's end, so if you haven't yet renewed your membership, it's time to do that.



*1 Barbershop quartet performing in a 2002 HTMA coffeeshouse
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)*

HTMA Executive Board

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JERRY LECROY (Position open!)

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The leadership of HTMA invites YOU to be an active part of our great organization, whether you play an instrument, or want to share in any other way, we welcome you and thank you for your support!



2 Lynne Edmondson doing emcee duty at the June 2021 concert
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



5 Pretty good audience at the June 2021 concert
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



3 Randy Waller and friends playing the June 2021 HTMA concert
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



6 George Williams managing the sound mix masterfully with HTMA's new iPad and WiFi-enabled digital mixer
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



4 Randy Waller and Dustin Young
(Photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



7 Phil Riddick in HTMA's June 2021 coffeehouse
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)

Summer Un-Coffeehouse

Operational Changes!

Our new Performance Chair Alex Dieterich has booked great talent to restart the HTMA performance schedule. The planned shows will be outdoors at the Burritt Museum Gazebo (weather permitting). As usual, showtime is 7:00. Burritt sets up chairs, and we will move indoors if weather turns out to be a problem.

Unlike coffeehouse shows in the old church, tickets will only be available for advance purchase on the Burritt Museum Event Webpage.

<https://burrittonthemountain.com/events/2021-07/>

Due to concerns about over-crowding on this socially-distanced outdoor event, the number of tickets is limited and no tickets will be available at the event – if you want to come you need to obtain your tickets in advance.

All tickets are \$10. Kids 12 and under will continue to be admitted free with ticket-holding family.

Thanks for your understanding of the event admission restrictions as HTMA tries to adapt to the post-COVID world.

Dry Creek Featured for HTMA

July 27th Show at Burritt Museum

As individuals, music has been a big part of our lives.

Each of us have traveled with our families to different churches/events, singing or playing an instrument for as long as we can remember.

Our ministry is built on faith and our goal is to spread the gospel and uplift our savior. All of us, (with the exception of two) grew up on Dry Creek Road in North, Alabama. Spending many nights picking a guitar and singing, our desire grew to share the news of Jesus Christ through music. Our ministry was born in 2016 and we are so grateful to be able to do what we love.

Dry Creek band personnel:

Lead vocalist: Crimsen Riddle

Mandolin/ Guitar: Brady Riddle

Guitar/ vocalist: Curtis Thornberry

Guitar/ vocalist: Caleb Thornberry

Bass/ vocalist: Tim Drinkard



*8 Phil Searcy playing at the June 2021 HTMA concert
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)*

Moondust Big Band Featured for HTMA August 24th Show at Burritt Museum

Moondust Big Band is a group of eighteen (or more) talented musicians in Huntsville, Alabama playing the classic big band music they love. Featuring vocals by Criss Ashwell and Dave McConnell, Moondust plays songs from the start of big band music in the '20 and '30s such as Duke Ellington and Kansas City charts, through the swing era classics of Glenn Miller and Count Basie, on into the Sinatra era, and up to more modern arrangements from Buddy Rich, Bob Mintzer, and Gordon Goodwin.

Walker Street Opry Featured for HTMA September 27th Show at Burritt Museum

The Walker Street Opry has been a musical force around Huntsville for over twenty years now, and been featured frequently on HTMA stages. WSO front man Ricky Taylor is a consummate musician and a talented songwriter. Ricky has organized several bands, but WSO focusses on that high lonesome bluegrass sound, and they do it well.



10 Phil Riddick and Adrienne Tabor at the June 2021 HTMA concert.
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



11 Russ Holder, Randy Waller, and Dustin Young
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



9 Walker Street Opry on stage at an HTMA concert at the UAH Chen Auditorium in 2004.
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



12 Jerry LeCroy and Steve McGehee at the
2007 Decatur Blues Festival

HTMA Membership

Your membership dues serve an excellent purpose, and are much appreciated. You can renew on-line via PayPal at: <http://www.huntsvillefolk.org/paypal.htm> or by sending a check made out to “HTMA” to Treasurer Pat Long, 414 McClung Avenue, Huntsville, AL 35801.



13 Autoharp impresario Brian Bowers in a 2007 HTMA concert
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



14 Robert Montgomery playing an HTMA coffeehouse in 2003
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)

Gazebo Concert Oct 3, 2021

By Lynne Edmondson

HTMA members are invited to perform at our annual Gazebo Concert held at Burritt on the Mountain Gazebo from 1:30pm-4pm. Each act will have 20-30 minutes depending on number of performers. Contact Lynne Edmondson if interested and provide the following information: Please name the band, and also each performer/instrument who will be playing.

That will help us do publicity properly, and knowing what instruments are coming helps with stage set-up. Admission to Burritt is free to all visitors and participants on this afternoon of music and fun! Bring a chair, refreshing drinks, and picnic basket.



15 Deborah Packard and John Mock in a 2003 HTMA coffeehouse
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)

My Favorite Mondegreen

By Vincent Halterman

This Pandemic had me thinking that I should make the most of my time at home, so there I was organizing my notes when I realized I had not written anything cohesive throughout most of the year. Sure, there were an abundance of two or three line starts in my notebook but nothing complete. I couldn't say it was writers block because there was plenty of writing just no follow through.

So, I presented myself with a challenge to complete a poem based on one of my favorite misheard lyrics from the song "Rocket Man" by Bernie Taupin and Sir Elton John, where at the end of the chorus he sings, "Rocket man, burning out his fuse up here alone."

Now, having heard this song when I was probably ten or eleven, my brain at the time heard, "Burning out our dreams of Avalon." and until the advent of the internet I was perfectly happy to believe that this song was weaving Arthurian imagery into it, and I still like to believe so, but in the context of the whole song I'll have to concede to their original writing efforts.

Ok, so now the magic happens, (A process also known as editing.) I utilized the "cut up method" of William Burroughs from existing notes and strung together the misheard quote with a stream of conscious line and "Voila!" a poem.

My Favorite Mondegreen

Our small town
Pining beyond her gangly heights
to her finest show.
Young city shine.
Till your lights pollute the darkened
skies
and far stars are no longer seen.
Burning out our dreams of Avalon



16 Lisa Busler and Blain Anderson in an HTMA concert in 2007
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



17 Vickie Ramsey playing a coffeehouse in 2004
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)

Is Stephen C. Foster relevant today?

By Lynne Edmondson

I play with a strings group imagined by Jane Norrell and headed by Phil Sanders from the Fret Shop. Many of the same players have met at Sunday practice for over 15 years. I love several Stephen Foster songs, Beautiful Dreamer, Hard Times, Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair, Oh Suzanna, Angelina the Baker, My Old Kentucky Home...So recently I suggested we perform a set of Stephen Foster compositions. Living from 1826-1864, he was viewed as America's first composer. We practiced and we practiced, until a few of our number questioned if Foster was appropriate for our times. After all he was a white man singing in raw black dialect. Was his form of entertainment at the expense of slaves? Was he an abolitionist against slavery? His music was composed for the minstrel stage and was performed in blackface. "In years when debate about slavery was intensifying, he became increasingly sensitive to the suffering of African Americans....his tunes began investing Black Americans with greater dignity" (<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/foster/>). In later years Foster tried unsuccessfully to write more high-brow songs, and died a penniless alcoholic with the final lyrics in his pocket "dear friends and gentle hearts."

Well, I still play some of the more beautiful Stephen Foster songs. As Jerry LeCroy says,

"I understand that we are all products of our times, and the positions that seemed natural 100 years ago might be unacceptable today." Fortunately, I don't sing well and won't be singing any of the early more raw lyrics. But dear friends, as time and knowledge led Foster to a more gentle heart, so too today it is with the sensitivity of the day that this discussion took place.



18 Jim Holland strumming a fretless banjo at an HTMA coffeehouse in 2003 (photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



19 Kate Campbell in an HTMA concert in 2007 (photo courtesy J. LeCroy)

HTMA

Local Music Resources



Do you have an item for sale? Are you looking for an instrument? Are you wanting to acquire, trade or sell musical gear, recordings, books, get something repaired.... Do you need music lessons? Are you wanting to join or find a new group or band member? This section of our newsletter is for members to place ads for services or instruments or anything related to music. It will be updated *for each newsletter*. If you have an item or advertisement you would like to be published, please send an EMAIL to jerry.lecroy@gmail.com to have your listing included in the upcoming newsletter. In your email, fully describe what you are offering or looking for, and how you want users to contact YOU, via email, phone or both, etc. Once your listing or item is no longer active, please also email webmaster@huntsvillefolk.org for removal of your listing.

Please note that HTMA makes this free service available to aid members and friends in finding, trading or selling music items and services only - and HTMA is not responsible for the completion or non-compliance of any transactions.

Members Gigs

Musical Instruments and Gear

Music Books, Sheet Music, Tab