

HTMA President's Notes by Lynne Edmondson

A Walk Down HTMA Memory Lane 2020

Coffeehouses become Outdoor Coffeehouses.

January CoffeeHouse Dennis Parker, Cindy Musselwhite, and Ben Davis performed at Tangled Strings Studio. What a fun setting with a great turnout! February Coffeehouse Curtis and Loretta performed in Baron Bluff at Burritt. March-July Coffeehouses were canceled due to Covid-19. August we moved the Coffeehouse to the Gazebo, changed the name to Outdoor Coffeehouse, used members as performers, asked for Pay Pal donations to replace the door cover charge, and required masks and social distancing. August was rained out. September Outdoor Coffeehouse replaced our Members Gazebo Concert and Featured members Jerry LeCroy and Milltowne. October Outdoor Coffeehouse featured Philip Searcy, followed by Mike Perry and finishing with Don Corder. Our HTMA performance chair, Bob Heinisch, sat in with Mike and Don for several tunes. As we entered a high rate of infections in November 2020, Outdoor Coffeehouses came to a close for the year. They will resume early Spring 2021, weather and Covid dependent.

Jam Meetings turn into Zoom Jams

The first 2 months of the year, we met at Huntsville Library for our monthly 3rd Sunday of each month Jam Meeting. The book, Parking Lot Pickers Songbook by Dix Bruce is a resource with many of the traditional songs we play. In March those gatherings were put on hold. By August we replaced in-person Jam meetings with 3rd Sunday of each month at 1:30pm Zoom Jams. This an interesting way to stay connected with other



HTMA Membership meetings will be held virtually as Zoom meetings until we can safely resume normal indoor activities.

Please check the HTMA website to verify meeting times.

HTMA Coffeehouses are suspended until warmer weather, when we can again assemble outdoors.

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musicians at a variety of experience levels. The code for connecting within zoom is sent out to the member mailing list. We take turns playing with one person at a time leading a song, while everyone else mutes but plays along. I found it is a great chance to jam albeit with a new twist. Coming January 2021, HTMA will offer an increased number of Zoom Jams with breakouts by genre and skill level. Look for HTMA email notices, Web, and Facebook for information on the Zoom schedule and survey asking for your input in identifying and scheduling additional zoom jams.

Website and Facebook Page change focus

The website www.huntsvillefolk.org was updated in March and April when we realized we had few in-person events to advertise. We began listing listening and visual events broadcast on a variety of media and including HTMA electronic and distance happenings. We also memorialized some of our favorite musicians who passed away in 2020. We used our Facebook page, Huntsville Traditional Music Association, to keep the community informed as well. Updates provided by members can be sent to both Publicity and Webmaster, whose contact information are found on the website address listed above.

YouTube Channel created

And finally, in the spring of 2020 we started our HTMA YouTube channel. The channel and posted videos can be accessed from huntsvillefolk.org or <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkln311T2nNJA WwnHzr EnA>

If you'd like to submit videos to be featured on the HTMA YouTube channel, please send a message to webmaster@huntsvillefolk.org

Talk about turning lemons into lemonade.

I would like to give the HTMA board members so much credit for coming up with and manning/womaning multiple options to keep you listening, playing, and involved with Huntsville

Traditional Music Association. Please stay involved, keep in touch, and Happy Holidays my friend.

Lynne Edmondson, HTMA President

Editors Notes

By Jerry LeCroy

Dear Friends,

Your editor has about taken a year off from publishing this newsletter. The pandemic and resultant social distancing have required HTMA to cancel all but three of our planned meetings and coffeehouses. The two post-outbreak coffeehouses we were able to put on were moved outdoors to the Gazebo, to allow our audience to be safely distanced out in the fresh air outdoors. All of our retirement home gigs have been on hold since late February.

Because of the drastically reduced performance schedule, there has not been a lot of schedule news and reports to put into our newsletter. At the same time, I have not received much in the way of newsletter-worthy content sent in from members. To add to the dearth of news, earlier this year HTMA received a request to pay a license fee for a photograph we published that had been included in a column from an outside contributor. Turned out the writer had pasted in a picture of Pete Seeger that was owned by AP without obtaining permission. Your board spent a week or two scrubbing all of our old newsletters to make sure we were not exposed to any other claims for improper use of intellectual property. For me that experience put a real damper on desire to work on new newsletters.

But that was then, and now we are looking forward to a new year. I am hopeful that in the next three months many of our members will have received the COVID vaccine jabs. Also hoping that the people we play for and the staff at retirement homes we visit are all vaccinated, so we can restart

the retirement home performance schedule. I expect that we are all anticipating a return to something close to pre-pandemic activities, though I'm guessing that mask-wearing in public will be with us for a while.

HTMA Executive Board

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Performance Chair

This position needs a volunteer!

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Acting Newsletter Editor

Jerry LeCroy (Position open!)

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!

We still don't have any public performances or coffeehouses scheduled for 2021. There are a

Schedule of Upcoming Events

HTMA Membership Zoom meetings will normally be held at 1:30-4:00 on the third Sunday of each month. Please contact Bob Hicks if you would like to be on the invite list for this Zoom meeting.

Beginning in January Pat Long will host an HTMA Zoom meeting for musical beginners the second Sunday of each month, 1:30-4:00. For details contact Pat.

Coffeehouses are suspended at least through March 2021. We hope to restart the series as soon as the health environment and weather permit.

Jim England's retirement home gigs are also suspended for the present. We hope to return to those public service engagements as soon as we can do so safely.

couple reasons for this. First, of course, we can't really start to plan in-person meetings and coffeehouses until the threat of Covid exposure has subsided. Just as crucial is that the HTMA Performance Chair position is currently unoccupied, so we don't have anyone working to book artists to play at our gigs. I am hoping that a volunteer for that position stands up real soon. What could be more fun than thinking of musicians you really like and arranging for them to do shows right here in Huntsville for HTMA? It's a great opportunity if you like music and know performers or bands that you want to see up close and personal. I think that the performance chair is arguably just as important to the success of HTMA as an organization as the President.

We have had a string of pretty good Performance Chairs, dating back to before we actually named that position. President Herman (Levi) Garrett was

doing the booking when I first started going to HTMA meetings. I believe that Shelley Heard took over when Herman moved to South Carolina, and I did the booking (with a lot of help from other members) for a few years. Jim Holland did a terrific job bringing in talent in the early oughts. Jim likes to go to music festivals everywhere, and invited in many artists he met at those gatherings. Lou Beasley took over when Jim's work travel got too hot for him to carry on, and then Ken Winchester held the chair for a couple years. Ken is a terrific bluegrass player, and we were treated to several top-notch bluegrass bands through his contacts. Ken was succeeded by Karen Newsom, who has hosted a number of song-writing workshops. Through Karen's contacts we enjoyed seeing a number of talented singer-songwriters. Bob Heinisch took over for 2020, and did a great job lining up a full slate of outstanding talent for our coffeehouses, until his entire plan was undone by the pandemic. Now we need a new hero to step into the position and help us re-start the coffeehouse concert series next year.

Happily, we aren't needing the new Performance Chair to step up and book acts for the first quarter of 2021 right away. But we badly need to fill that critical position.

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 Jim Holland and son Jake at an HTMA concert in July 2002
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



2 Jerry LeCroy with Sue Charles and Danny Charles at the 2007 Christmas gathering
(photo courtesy Lou Beasley)



3 HTMA members enjoying a gathering at the Berry Patch in 2008
(photo courtesy Lou Beasley)



4 Former HTMA President Joe Berry telling a story at the Christmas gathering in 2007
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



5 Sue Charles accompanied by Jim Holland and Chip Gulbro, also at the 2002 concert
(Photo courtesy J. LeCroy)

The Times Are A Changin'!

By Jerry LeCroy

This past month I read a couple notes in the news about the music business. The first was the widely reported contract where Bob Dylan sold rights to all his songs (though NOT the master recordings) to Universal Music Group for a figure reported to be near \$300M. Now that is really monetizing art.

The other music-business-related news that struck me was that in 2020, for the first time since the

late 80s, sales of vinyl records exceeded CD sales. It's not that vinyl sales grew – they were up only about 3%. The news is that CD sales dropped by nearly half. Maybe 2020 is an outlier – since shopper visits to music stores have to have declined during the pandemic. But the precipitous sales drop appears to be a sign of a real shift in the music market, from music fans buying physical copies of artists work to getting their music from downloads or streams. That kind of market transition has large implications for the music publishing industry. If you don't have to have a large CD factory or a product distribution organization to sell music product, a lot of the rationale for operating a huge business like Sony, BMG, or Warner may be evaporating.

In a way, that may be not be all bad news. Historically the big publishing houses acted as a filter, limiting the artists they select to maximize product sales. In practice that has meant that a favored few artists get tons of money, and the vast majority of musicians who don't have recording contracts live on the dregs. If all music becomes more-or-less equally accessible to the public, there may be a more level playing field for performing artists.

This year's drop in CD sales is a continuation of a trend. CD sales peaked about twenty years ago, at just under a billion discs per year. In 2019 CD sales were down to less than fifty million. The slide in CD sales and income has moved the economic levers for popular bands, who now can make more money touring than they do from sales of recordings. That's a shift from twenty years ago, when bands toured mainly to drive up sales of their recordings. You can observe the market economics of this evolution by noting the resultant growth of concert ticket prices. In 1985 concert tickets averaged about fifteen dollars, and in 1988 Pink Floyd band held the lead in concert income, bringing in \$27 million on their year-long tour. By 2015 average concert ticket prices edged up to

about \$75, and that year Taylor Swift earned over \$200M on the road.

In case you find the mention of Pink Floyd's 1988 tour brings back fond memories, *The Delicate Sound of Thunder* was remixed last year and just came out in a boxed three-LP set. How's your record turntable? Worn out? Then take a look at the Uturn Orbit turntable – made in America at what appears to be pretty reasonable pricing for audiophile gear. [U-Turn Audio](#)

2020 was clearly a ruinous year for live music productions. Artists, agents, promoters, and venue owners are all hurting. We can only hope that there is some recovery of the music business later in 2021, once enough COVID vaccines are distributed to allow concerts to be presented without becoming super-spreader events. In the meantime, it wouldn't hurt if you visited the websites of your favorite artists and plunked down a few dollars for recordings or downloads. You can bet that they will appreciate the income.

One fly in the ointment for returning to live music concerts may be the vaccine uptake rate. I have read that in some communities only sixty percent or so of the population say they are willing to take the vaccines being offered. If general vaccination rates are that low, it may be a long time before a sufficient number of the people who choose to decline the shots get Covid and are no longer susceptible because they recovered or died. If enough people turn down vaccination, the large unvaccinated population may delay general "herd immunity" well out into 2022.

I'm hoping that as the efficacy and safety of the vaccines become established with tens of millions of people treated, the anti-vax contingent will shrink and we will get to where we can once again enjoy public indoor concerts. But for us to arrive to that point, there are going to be a lot of shots given and attitudes changed.



6 Bryan Bowers in a 2006 HTMA Concert
(photo courtesy Sue Charles)



7 Dale Ramsey playing at an HTMA Coffeehouse in May 2008
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



8 Davis Raines in HTMA's January 2008 coffeehouse
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)

Breakin Up Winter Festival Review

By Larry Halterman

Several months ago I had the opportunity to attend Nashville 's Old Time String Band Association's (NOTSBA) 25th Annual "Breakin Up Winter Retreat", located outside of Nashville, TN at the Cedars of Lebanon State Park. Originally, I was made aware of this event last year from fellow HTMA member Bill Cassell. I attended and enjoyed the event but not the drive, (2 hours each way). It could have been quicker, but I'm not a fast driver and my 4-cylinder Subaru has its limits. I guess you could say I flew in under the radar on the event this year as the thought of a large gathering didn't seem to be of a major concern to most of us at that time and I was eager to try out my new camping set up and check out some Old Time Music.



*9 Fireplace at the Breaking Up Winter Event
(photo courtesy V. Halterman)*

The general vibe of the event was low key and you can come and go to the workshops as you please. The Assembly hall had a large fireplace that always had a fire going and high open ceiling which gave the room great acoustics. The event staff was friendly and there were the usual vendors selling books, CD's, T-Shirts, capos, etc. you know the drill at these events. I did my part to support the local economy and bought a cool T-shirt and a capo which was competitively priced to an internet purchase. In addition to the lectures and workshops there was an ongoing jam session at the adjacent lodge. Again the atmosphere was relaxed

and warm, the lodge had a fire and the jams were led by NOTSBA members. I liked the slow jam sessions as half the songs were unfamiliar to me but I sat in the back and worked on trying to figure out the melodies to the tunes I didn't know and Clawhammered along to the ones I did.

The NOTSBA organization for some reason has an abundance of fiddle players of all skill levels, though most seemed advanced to me and it was a little intimidating. I'm not sure why that is, maybe it's a regional thing, just as HTMA seems to have a large number of highly skilled guitar players, again maybe it's a regional thing.

NOTSBA's Breakin Up Winter event is something I recommend checking out next year if we still aren't still six feet apart from each other. I forgot to mention if you plan ahead you can rent cabins (kind of pricey), and there are group hall accommodations (reasonable), as well as a nearby campground, (RV and Tents allowed). The only nearby food was at the Dining hall which required a pre-purchased ticket, I did that last year and the food was very good and they even made me special vegetarian dishes. This year I cooked at the campsite. Next year, if there is an event, you'll see me there.



*10 Breaking Up Winter auditorium
(photo courtesy V Halterman)*

Three Music-Related Things I Enjoyed During The 2020 Pandemic

by Bill Cassels

Here are three music-related things I did in 2020 that helped me get through this challenging year. I joined events that I learned about through a GoogleGroup; I read a physics of music book; and I attended Virtual Maine Fiddle Camp.



I joined the Google Group “Friends of Old-Time Banjo Jam” (aka FOB or FOBJ) in order to be on the distribution of emails from Rosemarie Nelson, who notifies the group about online music (primarily old-time) jams, concerts, festivals and workshops such as the nightly Quarantine Happy Hour, the upcoming Festival of Texas Fiddling, and a free clawhammer banjo group lesson from Cathy Fink that I took last month. Tonight I plan to join the Baltimore Old-Time Jam, led by Ken Kolodner (fiddle, hammered dulcimer) and his son Brad (banjo, fiddle, guitar, bass), which I learned about from an FOB group email yesterday. To receive these emails, do a search for “Google groups” and follow the instructions for finding and joining.

I read a book on the physics of music: “How Music Works: The Science and Psychology of Beautiful Sounds, from Beethoven to the Beatles and Beyond”, by John Powell. I learned more about equal temperament, harmony, decibels, different scales (pentatonic, major, minor,

other), why two violins don’t sound twice as loud as one, and what makes a C note played on one instrument sound different than a C played on another instrument, along with a lot of history and quirky humor.

I also “attended” Virtual Maine Fiddle Camp (VMFC) one weekend in June. VMFC was a great experience. It differed from other resident music camps that I’ve attended such as Common Ground on the Hill in Maryland, and Alabama Folk School at Camp McDowell. MFC was more welcoming, more like the Nashville Old Time String Band Association’s (NOTSBA’s) Breakin’ Up Winter event. Even in the virtual setting, I was drawn into the MFC family feeling. A flavor of that family feeling is revealed in the MFC video, Road To Boston, that was posted on the website just prior to the 2020 VMFC [see link below] The musicians you see on that video are MFC staff and instructors – which MFC campers get to be a part of.

VMFC tried to retain MFC schedule and traditions in the virtual setting: a 9am morning meeting for all, then breakout workshops at 9:30am and 11am, a noon lunch break, followed by breakout workshops at 2pm, 3:30pm and 4:30pm. The evening included livestreamed concerts, and jam sessions (which, of course, were “one-way” jams, as remote jammers had to mute themselves).

During VMFC I watched a lot of great old-time and traditional music being played, but I mainly attended fiddle workshops (and one accordion workshop). There were hundreds of online participants, mostly fiddlers, but also banjo, dulcimer, bass, accordion, whistle, singing, cello, harmonica, mandolin, and guitar. Each attendee was assigned to a “bird nest” depending on instrument and level of play. I and about 50 others were assigned to the Loons nest taught by Steve Muise, a great teacher. He presented techniques and practice tips, and answered questions, while teaching us several tunes. One was Yarmouth Light, composed by Steve. After we learned it, we

were each invited to submit a video recording of ourselves playing the song, which the VMFC techies arranged into an ensemble music video.

A highlight of VMFC was surprise guests Jay Ungar and his wife Mollie Mason. Jay composed Ashokan Farewell, the theme music for Ken Burn's Civil War documentary. That song, and his playing of it, were a motivation for me to learn to play the fiddle after I retired. Jay and Mollie, who joined us from their home, seem like wonderful, wholesome people. They gave us a concert and led a workshop on playing another beautiful song, one they composed together, Lover's Waltz.

Other unexpected highlights of VMFC, which motivated me to someday attend the in-person MFC, were videos of the MFC camp cooking staff describing how they cook food traditionally served at MFC: Famous sourdough bread (by Kate Wallace), and homemade yogurt and granola (by Janaan Scott). Janaan closed out her video by fiddling two wonderful Canadian tunes that were new to me – Reel de Montreal, and Le 24 Jun. VMFC also included a workshop/concert event which they called a "Maestro Bistro", an event which has continued regularly since the VMFC.

Recordings of many of the VMFC activities, including the "Road To Boston" (another great tune, new to me) video, videos related to the various "nests", the two cooking videos, and several Maestro Bistro sessions, are posted here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/MaineFiddleCamp/videos>. These videos are arranged, by default, in chronological order. So, to view the videos related to the VMFC, you need to scroll down to those posted about 5 or 6 months ago. Included there are videos of one of my new favorites, Quebec fiddler Pascal Gemme, who is always smiling, and, while seated, fiddles and dances rhythm with his feet. He introduced me to some wonderful Canadian tunes including "Hommage à Philippe Bruneau."

The MFC website, www.maine-fiddle-camp.org, is worth exploring. Check out the "tunes" tab where you'll find mp3's, videos and sheet music for many tunes; the "videos" tab, and a tab with information about MFC plans for 2021.

I'm certain that is more than you ever cared to know about MFC. As you can tell, I enjoyed the VMFC very much, and they made me feel like part of the MFC family. As you can see from the people in these MFC videos, they are a wholesome bunch of folks that I would never have met otherwise.

Finally, as a reward for reading this far, my VMFC "Loon nest" fiddle teacher, Steve Muise, posted a free eBook that he wrote on music theory, tuning, etc. It is directed toward youth in his school district who are getting involved in youth orchestra. I skimmed the eBook. It is wonderful. I was able to download it to my iPad by going to this link:

<https://books.apple.com/us/book/mbrsd-orchestra-ebook-2020/id1517446975>

If that doesn't work for you, at least you will see the book details there, and you can use Apple's "Books" app to find and download it.



*11 Bronwyn and Troy Young at Burritt Gazebo show in 2002
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)*

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.

HTMA is looking for a new Performance Chair for 2021

By Lynne Edmondson

Yes, HTMA is looking for a new Performance Chair for 2021. Knowledge of traditional music and a familiarity with regional traditional musicians is preferred. This new board member will work within a budget to book bands for approximately 7 Coffeehouses from March 2021 through October 2021. The performance chair continues as primary contact between HTMA and scheduled bands. Makes arrangement for gathering of promotional materials so other HTMA committees can promote each band. Makes arrangement for facilitating communication between the band and tech operations. Prepares a spreadsheet report for HTMA Board of Directors including: bands, relevant dates, contact information, and budget. Qualifications include advance-planning skills, open time in your personal schedule each month, and most importantly ability to develop contacts within the regional traditional and folk music scene.

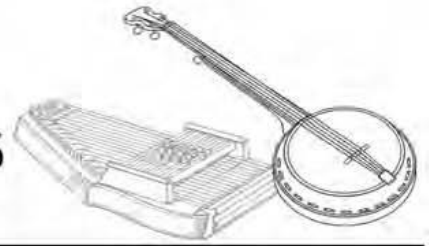
Karen Newsum said, “I would definitely like to comment on my highlight as the performance chair...getting to meet and be around super talented folks and then schedule them for our local audience to enjoy!” So if you: like seeing a happy receptive audience, like interfacing with regional and national talent, enjoy sharing folk and traditional music with North Alabamians, then you should contact a board member to discuss being Performance Chair.



12 HTMA President Lynne Edmondson with her emcee announcer notes for the 2019 Gazebo concert (photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



HTMA - CLASSIFIEDS



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 (preferably before the fifteenth of the month) to **jelecroy@knology.net** (Jerry) to have your listing included in the upcoming newsletter. In your email, fully describe what your 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 service available to aid our users in finding, trading or selling music items and services only - and we are not responsible for the completion or non-compliance of any transactions between members.*

Members Gigs

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