

HTMA President's Notes

by Lynne Edmondson

Hi Musical Members and Music Lovers,

We are comfortably into our HTMA Coffeehouse Concert Series. It is a great bargain for main acts of traditional professional musicians at \$10 a person and children free (advance ticket purchase through burritonthemountain.com link can also be reached at huntsvillefolk.org).

HTMA members get an opportunity to be opening acts. The next dates are usually the 4th Tuesday of the warm months: May 24 Walker Street Opry, June 28 Cold Turkeys, July 26 Lowery and Friends, August 23 Milltowne, and September 20 Curtis & Loretta. Performance location is Burritt on the Mountain at Gazebo, with alternate weather locations of the Burritt's Pavillion, Barron's Bluff, or Old Church. HTMA is usually serving free coffee. Burritt sells snacks and drinks. BYOC: bring your own chair.

We continue to gather for our Meeting Jams at the Huntsville Downtown Library Auditorium, often but not always the 3rd Sunday of each month 1:30-4pm. Bring an instrument and or your voice and play along. We go around the circle and give each person a chance to lead your favorite traditional song. Call out the key for the rest of the group to play along. Many songs we



HTMA Membership are monthly gatherings in the Auditorium at the Huntsville Public Library at 915 Monroe Street.

Meetings are usually the third Sunday of each month, 1:30-4:30.

Please check the HTMA website to verify meeting times.

HTMA Coffeehouses have resumed as outdoor gatherings at the Burritt Gazebo. Advance tickets are available at the Burritt Museum website, for \$10. Tickets at the gate will be \$15.

**June 28th
Cold Turkeys
opening by Jerry LeCroy**

**July 26th
Lowery and Friends
opening by Huntsville Community Drumline**

**August 23rd
Milltowne
opening by Alabama A&M Spiritual Choir**

**September 20th
Curtis and Loretta
opening by Randolph Avenue Motleys**

play can be found in the Parking Lot Pickers Songbook by Dix Bruce. There are several versions for different instruments; I play violin but use the guitar version and it works just fine. This is a great way to meet and play with other members. Mark your calendar with these dates: 5/15, 6/5, 7/10, 8/21, 9/18, 10/16, and 11/20

HTMA members can play at the annual Folk Music Festival on Sunday afternoon, October 9 in the Old Church at Burritt. We need member volunteers for this event! Need to begin organizing soon. Contact person is Lynne Edmondson (email address can be found on website under board members or info@huntsvillefolk.org).

Other Jams you can participate or watch: if you are a senior vaccinated for COVID, Madison County Senior Center on Drake Ave, Huntsville, Wednesday and Friday mornings, 9am-10:30am.

HTMA members had been playing at various nursing homes around the city. There has been talk among some folks who participated to resume that activity. They are trying to decide if they want to start up again based on personal health risks and the risk of spreading disease to those people in the nursing home who may be unvaccinated or maybe even vaccinated but at high risk for disease. They don't want to create a problem by trying to do something good. If you are interested in playing music with this group, contact Jim England (his email can be found on the website under

board members or harpatune@yahoo.com).

What you can expect when you visit our website, huntsvillefolk.org

Read about HTMA history and mission

Become a member, get a free tuning activity

Get on the mailing list

Confirm dates of events and more info about events

Reach out to someone with questions, ideas, concerns, or to volunteer

See who you will be working with as a volunteer

HTMA has an open board position Operations Chair and the associated Sound Technician Position. The Operations Lead/Sound Technician volunteer will need to become familiar with using Mackie Master Fader software. We will help you to learn, but it will require some effort on your own. This is a chance to learn and gain experience in the exciting field of live sound production. Benefits are to gain experience of set up and running sound and lights for performances that usually take place once a month on Tuesday evenings. Salary: all positions with HTMA are currently VOLUNTEER \$0. with guaranteed annual salary increases of 50% and an annual bonus of a bottle of Aleve or Ibuprofen. See newsletter article for more complete descriptive information. Contact persons are Lynne Edmondson and Jerry LeCroy.

Please let us know of locally accessible opportunities for traditional music. We will distribute the information informally at our events.

Lynne Edmondson, HTMA President



1 HTMA President Lynne Edmondson instructing the audience at the August Gazebo Concert (photo courtesy J. LeCroy)

HTMA IS LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD MEN

Actually, women or girls will do just fine, and we really need only one volunteer to be HTMA's new schlepper-in-chief. This volunteer job is essential to keeping HTMA's long-time coffeehouse series going. What it entails is:

- a.** Delivering the HTMA PA (sound system) kit to Burritt on show days, arriving early enough to allow for the gear to be set up and a sound check run before each show.
- b.** Toting gear back home after each show
- c.** Storing the gear between our shows.

This assignment is not terribly difficult, but crucial. How much gear is there? Until a year or so ago, when he had a job change that prevents him from carrying on, Larry Halterman carried all the gear every month in the back of his Subaru wagon. So it isn't a ton of gear, and only takes up nine or ten square feet of floor space in the closet where it is sitting now.

How much does all that stuff weigh? The heaviest items are our main speakers, which clock in at about 37 pounds each. Everything else is lighter than that. A case for microphones, one for lights, and three bags for microphone, speaker, and light stands. A couple small stage monitor speakers (in gig bags) fills out the equipment list.

Jerry LeCroy has been delivering gear to HTMA gigs off and on since the mid 1990s, but he is about to retire his twenty-five year old truck, and the gear needed for our concerts will simply not fit in his compact car.

If you can help the association keep up our long tradition of live music performances with outstanding sound, please contact President Lynne Edmondson or Jerry LeCroy so we can work out details for the hand-over. And Thank You!

Editors Notes

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the late edition of the HTMA second quarter newsletter!

Why are we late going to press again? Same as last time – your editor is pretty lazy, and content from association members has been a trifle thin. Still, this newsletter, like so many other things, remains a work in progress.

I am always looking for new content, articles, essays, poetry, or pictures, from HTMA members. Even a collection of banjo jokes will be welcome! There is a soft requirement that there ought to be some kind of musical connection (requirement waived for poetry) and a hard requirement that it needs to be original – not a repost from some random web page.

Best Regards,

Jerry LeCroy

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.



2 Collier Rawls performing with HTMA musicians playing at Harbor Chase in 2017
(photo courtesy B. Cassels)

HTMA Executive Board

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jerry.lecroy@gmail.com

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!

An Aspiring Artists Perspective on the Performance Experience

By Lynne Edmondson

Let me start off this article by discussing who is an artist. Merriam Webster defines artist as “a person who creates art (such as painting, sculpture, music, or writing) using conscious skill and creative imagination.” So if I am not yet an artist, surely I am on a journey of aspiring artist. As an adult, I have dabbled in violin for about 20 years, jammed or practiced with others for about 15 years, and have performed at least 40 times. That doesn't mean I am highly skilled, but I am committed and love playing. Early on I bought an electric violin so I could play through headphones and not drive family members and pets crazy.

Some days I play better than others. Some days I click with a group or another individual and some days I don't. I can practice for hours, days, and weeks on one or a few pieces and I sound great in my quiet practice room. Add other players and you have just added another layer of complexity. Even if they know the music too, you need additional practice to play it together and sound harmonious. Add an audience and you have added an additional layer of complexity. You need additional practice to be absolutely over-ready and overcome the nerves that come with a public performance.

A jam is a good first step of public performance. You learn to deal with fear of playing in front of others. My experience has been the more you play with and for others the more confident you become doing so in the future. Jamming requires specific skills. You either need the notes or need to know how to improvise. First ask what key the leader is playing. The instrument you are playing will determine the mathematics involved in playing

along. Are you playing individual notes or chords? Are you playing melody, harmony, or long notes? Can you hear the note or chord changes? What if you know the song in a different key, do you understand easy tricks to change from one key to another? My jam experience began with the HTMA Meeting Jams and meeting with others in small groups. After playing together for a few years, eventually, worked my way up to successfully performing monthly at a saloon with other HTMA Jammers.

When I first began performing, it was with a variable size string group that plays complex pieces from sheet music. We prepared months in advance and met weekly to practice together. As time has gone on and we have played more gigs each year, sometimes we found ourselves in a timeline crunch with new material. Learn what timeline you need and stick to it! Three to four weeks seemed to be a minimum to learn half a dozen new songs, but then we needed to allow another 3 weeks to learn to play these new songs together as a group. Sometimes a large group has more complex problems than a small one. Really, the final indicator, which can sometimes take more than 6 weeks is: do all members feel ready and can we consistently play the songs well together? Can all members hear both themselves and the rest of the group? . If I felt out of step at times, instead of making errors, I quit playing for a measure, or three, or however long it took to get back on point. This required listening not just to yourself, but also, the other players and group as a whole.

So my aspiring artist perspective on performing: it is a journey not a destination.



3 Jim Holland, Sue Charles, and Chip Gulbro at an HTMA concert in 2002
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)

**Mark Your Calendar for
these
Upcoming HTMA
Coffeehouse/Concert
Dates**

**(all shows 7-9,
doors open at 6:30)**

June 28

July 26

Aug 23

Sept 20 (not a 4th Tuesday)

**HTMA meeting jams at the
Huntsville/Madison County
Downtown Library
Auditorium
1:30-4pm**

June 5th

July 10th

August 21st

September 18th

October 16th

November 20th

Coffeehouse Operational Changes

For 2022 HTMA will continue producing outdoor concerts. Our shows will be normally be presented at the Burritt Museum Gazebo. If it is raining on the show date we will move over to Burritt's new outdoor pavilion, which will keep off the rain. As usual, showtime is 7:00.

New for 2022 is the need for our guests to bring their own seating, lawn chairs or blankets, as Burritt staff will no longer be setting up chairs for our shows. As always, youngsters who don't mind standing up all evening or sitting on the grass need not bring chairs.

Advance tickets are available through the Burritt web page:

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

Burritt will continue to provide a bar table at the show for our guests, with wine, snacks, and a limited number of charcuterie boxes available for purchase.

We hope that you and your friends are all vaccinated/boosted by now, but if not we would appreciate it if un-vaccinated guests will do us the courtesy of donning masks, even in our outdoor venue. The HTMA audience includes many older folks who are health-challenged due to age-related issues, and HTMA's younger families may bring children who are vulnerable because they are too young to receive vaccinations.

Advance tickets are \$10, and limited tickets may be available at the door for \$15. 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 our post-COVID world.



*4 Jim Holland playing fretless banjo at an HTMA Coffeehouse in July 2003
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)*



*5 Robert Montgomery playing an HTMA concert in 2002
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)*

Who's coming to Dinner

The Coffeehouse?

By Jani Brill

Hi, I'm Jani Brill, Co-Performance Chair and along with my Co-Chair Larry Halterman, we have attempted to craft a line up for our 2022 Season which we hope will have you looking forward to hearing some of your favorite performers from past seasons, along with acts which we have not had play for us previously. So, let's take a look at the line up so that you can mark your calendar and purchase your tickets each month as soon as they go on sale.

June 28 - The Cold Turkeys keep things interesting by entertaining us with a setlist of blues, from the honkytonk days with a dash of classic country hits which I recall hearing my parents listen to, you will as well – Hank, George Jones and Elvis. Just to keep you and I on our toes, the occasional original composition reveals why they will be around for years to come.

Opening for the Cold Turkeys is our own Jerry LeCroy, someone who's lilting vocals and elevated guitar skills provides a riveting listening experience.

July 26 – Lowery Riethmaier with Mary Swanstrom on fiddle will entertain us with a unique ability to perform a wide range of genre's whether it be blues, rock, folk or blue grass with such skillful harmonizing that you will be torn between listening and singing along.

Opening - Huntsville Community Drumline – their first time performing for us, will entertain us with cadences by the Mini Masters, 1st – 4th Graders, Stick Masters, 5th – 9th Grade and closing out their show will be the Grands, the “young at heart” retiree's. Be sure to bring the young un's as they will surely be mesmerized by the talent of the young Mini Masters!

August 23 – Milltowne is a band that for me, is pure sonic ear candy. Along with smooth guitar picking, they bring dynamic banjo, fiddling, mandolin, upright bass and unique percussion which leaves me wanting more. With a repertoire which ranges from the Beatles to Bill Monroe, they will keep us all intrigued.

Opening for Milltowne is another first-time group of artists to our stage – The Alabama A & M University Choir. Continuing a choral tradition reaching back to 1875, they will surely raise and shake the rafters with their soaring Acapella spirituals, regardless of which of the Burritt venues they perform in, don't miss a unique opportunity to hear this outstanding choir.

September 20 – Curtis and Loretta. By pure kismet, HTMA has had the good fortune to be able to close out our Coffeehouse series with Curtis and Loretta headlining. If you have yet to experience them, mark your calendar NOW, while you are reading this newsletter. Hailing from the Twin Cities, these two award winning storytellers will keep you mesmerized as they perform with no less than a selection of ten instruments, including the hauntingly beautiful Celtic harp and mandocello.

Opening act will be the Randolph Avenue Motleys – HTMA members Larry Halterman, Phil Searcy, Mike Perry and Dan Malloy, newcomer member, just returning to Huntsville after residing in Italy, where he became enchanted with the mandolin and has added it to his collection of stringed instruments. Picking in my parlor this past year, I have come to appreciate their clearly unique styles and talent, with Phil's crisp finger picking, Larry's quirky repertoire of rare selections, Mike's original compositions with his pure vocals, and Dan's strong, overall talent and broad mastery of a myriad of styles, whether it be mandolino or guitar, these gentlemen are talented entertainers.

Come out to join us at one of the three available venues at the Burritt – the historically interesting Little Church, the stellar (pun intended) Gazebo with the majestic views of our town and valley twinkling below, or the new Pavilion, with its solid flagstone rear wall serving as a “curtain backdrop” of sorts for our bands. Spread the word to your family and friends about our upcoming performances, we look forward to seeing you!



6 Sue Charles and Steve McGehee playing with Blue Shift in 2001
(photo courtesy the artists)

Learning New Songs

By Stephan Onisick

The process of learning a New Song varies from individual. All I can relate to you is the way I go about this process.

What causes me to want to undertake to learn new material varies. My desire could come from hearing an old song or a song performed by a member of our HTMA group, and it could also come from a suggestion from my guitar instructor.

Once I've decided to learn a particular song, I seek printed versions and

musical recordings that look within my playing ability. I frequent UltimateGuitar.com (about \$100/yr for Pro Membership), YouTube, MusicNotes.com, and [Jerry's Guitar Bar - Guitar Lessons, Tabs & Chords \(jerrysguitarbar.com\)](http://jerrysguitarbar.com). Also, my instructor, Gabe LaRose, sometimes does recordings of songs that he is teaching.

On UltimateGuitar.com, I look for a specific key or, with their tools, transpose the song to my desired key. UltimateGuitar.com offers printouts, pdfs, and sometimes Guitar Pro versions of the song. [editor's note - Ultimate Guitar (Ultimate Guitar USA LLC), also known as Ultimate-Guitar.com or simply UG, is one of the largest online communities of guitarists and musicians. Its website and mobile application have one of the largest guitar tablature catalogues and chord sheets.]

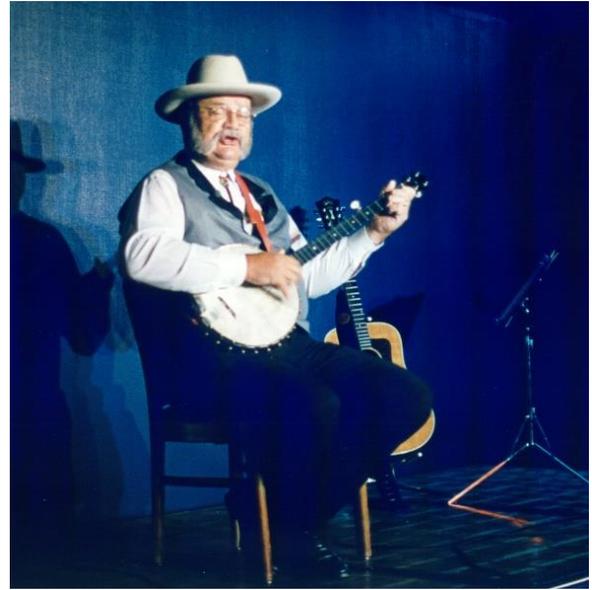
My friend Larry Halterman showed me by clicking the "Simplify" button, some of the more complex chord voicings are removed and replaced by just the basic chords required to play the song. *You might want to return to the more complex chords when you get the basics of the song down.*

Sometimes I can find a Guitar Pro version of the song on UltimateGuitar.com, in which I'm interested. I have the Guitar Pro 7.5 Version (about \$70), and with Guitar Pro, I can play the song or parts at

different speeds. [Editor's note – Guitar Pro has versions that run under Windows or IOS]

YouTube also offers several ways to practice. If you can find the song you desire in the key of interest, you can slow down or speed up the song with the gear icon. Under the playback speed of the gear icon, a menu of standard increments of 0.25 is shown. Also, notice another tab marked custom, which has a slider bar; I often adjust mine to about 0.9—slightly slower than the "normal" setting. The great thing about altering the speed is that YouTube adjusts the voice to sound as normal as possible.

MusicNotes.com also offers playable versions of the song.



8 Riverboat John Ferguson at an HTMA concert in 2001
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



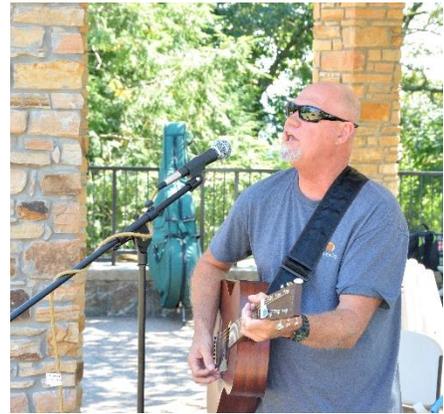
7 Jerry LeCroy at a 2002 concert



9 Blue Shift (Sue Charles, Steve McGehee, and Jerry LeCroy) at an HTMA concert in 2001
(photo courtesy the artists)



10 Orrin Star performing at an HTMA concert in 2010
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



13 Mike Perry at HTMA's 2019 Gazebo Concert
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



11 Abby Parker playing an HTMA coffeehouse in March 2017
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



14 Greg Stagg, front man for Cold Turkeys,
playing a 2019 coffeehouse.
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



12 Black Market Haggis playing an HTMA coffeehouse in 2019
(photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



15 Charelle Hudgins with Milltowne at an HTMA coffeehouse in June
2019 (photo courtesy J. LeCroy)



16 Walker Street Opry playing an HTMA coffeeshouse in May 2022
(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:

<https://www.huntsvillefolk.org/membership>

Or by sending a check made out to “HTMA” to Treasurer Pat Long, 414 McClung Avenue, Huntsville, AL 35801.

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

Jerry LeCroy has a lightly-used hammer dulcimer that needs a new home. Hand-crafted in 1997 by Enos Yeager. 13/14 course, with hard case, height-adjustable stand, tuning wrench, and three pairs of hammers. \$550

Contact jerry.lecroy@gmail.com



Music Books, Sheet Music, Tab