The SOCIETY
of OZARKIAN
HILLCROFTERS
Identifying and Preserving What Makes the Ozarks Exceptional

Volume 2 Issue 2 Summer 2022

Message from Hillcrofters President

My fellow Hillcrofters, as summer 2022 winds down, I hope that each and every one of you had the opportunity to experience a pleasurable Ozarks summer activity. The heat came on strong and rather early this year. We were well into 90-degree temperatures by mid-June. Fortunately, the Ozarks provides many options for relief from the heat. The Ozarks region is known to have plenty of water, and currently the majority of it is clean and clear.

My guess is that several of you visited one of the many lakes, possibly with a fishing or ski boat. Others may have enjoyed floating, in a canoe or kayak, one of the many rivers that crisscross the region. Others may have sought recreation and refuge from the heat by visiting one of the Ozarks big springs, or even exploring a cave with its pleasant, and constant, 60-degree weather.

Even in the heat and humidity of the summer, the Ozarks is a beautiful place to be. Each and every season in the Ozarks has something special to offer. As Hillcrofters, residents, or visitors of the Ozarks we cherish, we should not lose sight of how important it is to protect the natural features that have brought us joy, entertainment, and countless memories. It is important also to help ensure that future generations can enjoy the natural wonders of this region as well.

We have another great issue in store for you, and it is all because of talented authors who have contributed and the hard work of our talented editor, Marilyn Perlberg. In this issue. Ethan Smilie, in the first of a series, tells us about Laura Ingalls Wilder's farm journalism. Gwen Simmons relates the history of the fruit and jelly kitchen at College of the Ozarks. Emalee Flatness has a fascinating interview with DA Callaway. Emily Garoutte takes us on a trip to Sorghum Days, and Bob Kipfer teaches us about milkweed and insects, and the role they play In the natural Ozarks. We also have an update on the Historic

(President's Message continued on next page)

OUR GOAL

To identify attributes that make the Ozarks region exceptional, raise awareness of these attributes, and document the attributes to benefit future generations.

OUR AREAS OF INTEREST

Ozarks Nature/Conservation
Ozarks History/Historic Sites
Ozarks Folklore/Folkways
Contemporary Ozarks Culture
Notable Ozarks Personalities

IN THIS ISSUE . . .

Springfield-Harrison Roadside Park (home of the infamous Murder Rocks) project.

And don't forget to come out to the Old Country Fair Music Festival on September 24 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.! The place is Weddings at the Homestead, 262 Collins Rd., off T Highway . . . details are below.

As always . . .

I appreciate very much your continued interest in the Society of Ozarkian Hillcrofters. We will work hard to address our goals and projects through leadership and your volunteerism. We will also do our best to ensure that you, as members, find your participation to be an enriching, positive, and productive outlet for your interest in the Ozarks. We expect to provide you with ongoing opportunities to learn more about the Ozarks and the people who have a similar passion for this wonderful region. It is my great pleasure to welcome the members who have recently joined us.

Most sincerely,
Curtis Copeland

The newsletter is distributed to members and contributing authors by email. Newsletters in hard copy are sent by traditional mail to requesting contributing authors and requesting members.

New Board Member

Rob Flatness

Rob is a lifelong resident of the Ozarks, with most of his younger years spent in Strafford. He currently lives in the Willard area on a small hobby farm. His immediate family consists of his wife Rene, son Dawson, and daughter Emalee.

Rene teaches for Willard Public Schools and Dawson is a senior there. Emalee is a senior at Missouri State University, where she is a History major with a minor in Ozarks Studies. Dawson also plans to pursue a History degree. History is a passion for the Flatness family, with most of their travels centered around the mountains and history destinations.

Both Emalee and Dawson are musicians. Dawson plays the banjo at Sac River Cowboy Church, and Emalee performs in multiple bands playing bluegrass, folk, and country music. Emalee is also in the cast of the Shepherd of the Hills Outdoor Drama.

Rob is a graduate of Missouri State University and the University of Central Missouri. He is department chair for the Agriculture Department at Ozarks Technical Community College, where he has taught for fourteen years. The Agriculture Department is located at the Richwood Valley campus in Ozark, where there is a small farm with sheep, cattle, a greenhouse, and horticultural plots.

--Photo courtesy of Rob Flatness

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website at:
societyofozarkianhillcrofters.com

Find our group page on Facebook

CONTACT US

Email:
information@
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Traditional mail:
PO Box 682
Ozark, Missouri 65721

MEMBERSHIP

Individual Membership
- $20 per year

Student Membership
- $10 per year

Membership application forms may be found on our website:

societyofozarkianhillcrofters.com/membership

You may order your membership online through the website, or send a check or money order to:
PO Box 682
Ozark, Missouri 65721

Project Update

Positive progress is being made at the Society of Ozarkian Hillcrofters latest project for Ozarks historic preservation: the Historic Springfield-Harrison Roadside Park. It is situated along Highway JJ, south of Kirbyville and east of Hollister, Missouri, along the route of the old Springfield-Harrison Road. In addition to its location on the historic farm-to-market freight route that existed before the Civil War, the park features the infamous Murder Rocks site, a haunt of the Civil War era bushwhacker, Alf Bolin.

On July 16, sixteen Hillcrofters volunteers cleared and improved the base for a six-hundred-foot trail from the parking area to Murder Rocks. The volunteers also dug holes in the extremely rocky, dry soil for four signposts and an informational kiosk. Trailhead, no littering, and parking signs were also installed. The parking area and driveway were cleared earlier in the summer.

A date will be determined in either late October or early November for the mulching of the trail and seeding of the green spaces around the parking area. We will be seeking volunteer Hillcrofters once the date is selected.

Pictured left to right: Brad Ore, Kelly Wagner, Rob Flatness, Sam Thompson, Jennifer Luna, Jack Thompson, Danny Talkington, Rob Lacore, Sebastian Benedict, Lyndon Baizendine, Crystal Copeland, Coulter Copeland, Curtis Copeland.

Not pictured: Hayden Head, Bobbi Glenn, Tammy Morton.

Photos by Tammy Morton.

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The Society of Ozarkian Hillcrofters

From the Minutes of the Board Meeting April 19, 2022

Officers and Board of Directors members met at Bonniebrook and virtually through Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. CDT. In attendance were Curtis Copeland, Crystal Copeland, Rob Flatness, Susan Scott, Bob Kipfer, Tammy Morton, Ken Henderson, and Jeremy Lynn. Bob made a motion to approve the previous minutes. All attendees approved.

A project report for the Springfield-Harrison Roadside Park (Murder Rocks). It was reported that Jeff was working on bringing in gravel. Needs included bringing in mulch, volunteers, possibly a skid steer. A workday was set for July 16, with July 23 as a rain day. It was reported that a purchased kiosk was stored at Tammy's warehouse. Tammy was writing kiosk information and Curtis was working on a map.

A task punch list was discussed: (1) wood chips on the trail provided by White River; (2) seeding and straw, wild flowers—Bob could help identify what to plant and source of seed; (3) poster information from Tammy; (4) kiosk installation with White River the possible source of an auger; (5) signage—suggested sources for wording were Tom Motley and Carl Bonnell of Missouri State Parks; (6) installation of a dusk-to-dawn light; (7) having no trash can would avoid the need to empty or patrol dumping; (8) a ribbon-cutting event could occur later this year; (9) volunteers were needed from Scouts Troop 201, Scouts Troop 546, and Hawkin's Young Men's Group.

May 4 events recap included (1) the new state park renaming, with recognition and good press for Hillcrofters; and (2) conclusion of Notch Post Office project with ribbon cutting at Shepherd of the Hills.

It was reported that Missouri State Parks requested a workday.

New business discussions covered (1) D and O insurance—insurance options needed research; (2) organizational restructuring—Rob and Bob to work on a base document for the next meeting; (3) Old Country Fair on September 24, 2022—Hillcrofters to park cars and have an information booth; (4) social media issues—Bob motioned for a Board member to approve Facebook posts, and none opposed; (5) plaques and Smithsonian strategy—plaques made to thank Kehoe and Parson for their work on the state park renaming and Notch dedication; (6) restart quarterly member meetings—look at in 2023 along with discussions of hybrid meetings in person and on Zoom.

Committee reports included the newsletter, grants, and social media. Bob moved to place the newsletter on our website, backdated 6 months; none opposed. No new information existed on grants.

Accounts and membership status reports showed the main account at $3,862.10, fundraising account at $11,317.61, and 75 current members.

Bob moved to adjourn; none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

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Articles Section

Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Missouri Ruralist* Journalism, 1911–1915: The Farm Woman—Both Self-Reliant and an Equal Partner

by Ethan Smilie

This is the first in a series of articles examining Wilder's publications in the Missouri Ruralist from 1911–1924*.*

With the byline "Mrs. A. J. Wilder, Mansfield, Mo.," Laura Ingalls Wilder's first article for the *Missouri Ruralist* was published February 18, 1911. Titled "Favors the Small Home," it was the first of a dozen articles she would publish sporadically in the newspaper during a span of five years. Beginning in 1916, her columns became regular features in the newspaper (typically published bimonthly) for a stretch of nine more years. Wilder's first article is emblematic of the more than 170 articles she would publish for the farm journal during her fourteen-year tenure. Its opening lines advocate for what years later would become known as the back-to-the-land movement:

> There is a movement in the United States today, wide-spread and very far-reaching in its consequences. People are seeking after a freer, healthier, happier life. They are tired of the noise and dirt, bad air and crowds of the cities and are turning longing eyes toward the green slopes, wooded hills, pure running water and health giving breezes of the country.

For Wilder, the Ozarks offer the ideal destination for this movement.

This better life is realized, Wilder claims, on a small farm, some aspect of which she extols in nearly every article she would write for the *Ruralist*. She also sets forth a presupposition that underlies her conception of a home throughout her writing: it is "made by a man and a woman together." Wilder expounds on this traditional conception of marriage in a way that diverges from many of her contemporaries: by repeatedly emphasizing the wife's role in an equal partnership. In this inaugural piece, as is the case throughout her publications, Wilder describes and lauds the integral and difficult work of farm wives.

So as to not intimidate city folk from the tasks awaiting them on the farm, she promises them that "conditions have changed so much in the country within the last few years that we country women have no need to envy our sisters in the city. We women on the farm no longer expect to work as our grandmothers did." Nowadays, farm women have all the advantages of oil stoves, cream separators, and gasoline engines that run water pumps, washing machines, and sewing machines, with the prospect of electricity in the near future. Perhaps more importantly, farm women no longer face the isolation

(Wilder's *Ruralist* Journalism continued on next page)

endured by their grandmothers, as mail service, newspapers, telephones, circulating libraries, and reading clubs keep women connected to one another and to local, national, and international current events.

In "Shorter Hours for Farm Women," Wilder further praises the role of farm women: "Thinking persons realize that the woman, on the farm, is the most important factor in the success or failure of the whole farm business." Nonetheless, as more and more women's rights' activists were advocating for a nine-hour workday, farm women and their work were being "overlooked in the march of progress." Since the success of the farm depends on completing the necessary work, regardless of how many hours it takes, Wilder proposes several practical suggestions to help mitigate the difficulties of their hard tasks.

Most importantly, however, communication between spouses is integral to the success of the farm. To Wilder, the successful farm requires the full partnership of spouses when it comes to planning and labor, which necessitates the farm wife to display her "executive ability and business talent." This, in turn, requires the farm woman to study, by reading farm papers, for instance, to become an expert at her important work.

Spouses Laura and Almanzo Wilder, ca. 1885. Courtesy of https://en.wikipedia.org/

Frequently Wilder discusses women's clubs, and she was an active member of many. As she explains in "Good Times on the Farm," the clubs serve two important functions. First, as suggested above, such communal activities help to combat the potential isolation of rural life. Women are able to socialize with their peers, and "recipes may be exchanged, good stories told, songs sung and jokes enjoyed." Second, these meetings are often used for the dissemination of information, especially that which most pertains to the farming business in which these women are executive partners.

Just as Wilder will not allow that city life possesses social advantages over country life, neither will she allow that women's personal appearances must suffer from rural living. In "A Plain Beauty Talk," she acknowledges that "it is more difficult for country women than for those in the city to make a well-groomed appearance, for they usually do rougher work and they cannot go to a beauty parlor and have themselves put in trim as the city woman can." Nonetheless, the independent farm woman can take matters into her own hands. All she needs is "some good, pure soap, a bottle of dioxogen and some orange wood sticks, a bottle of glycerine and rosewater and a good tooth brush."

Wilder's self-reliant, making-the-best-of-things philosophy coincides with the stereotypical image of the independent Ozarker and is developed in later articles within a more explicitly libertarian context. Even in these early articles, though, her discussion of self-reliance is not confined to personal appearance but

(Wilder's *Ruralist* Journalism continued on next page)

encompasses all aspects of farm women's lives, including cooking. For instance, if farm women do not have access to a roaster, she provides instructions for improvising one from two iron dripping pans.

Thanks to recipes she learned at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (while visiting her daughter, Rose Wilder Lane, in San Francisco in 1915) and published in "Magic in Plain Foods," farm women can prepare national dishes from all around the world in their farm kitchens. Indeed, Wilder's articles about her time at the Exposition (while visiting her daughter, Rose Wilder Lane, in San Francisco in 1915) and published in "Magic in Plain Foods," farm women can prepare national dishes from all around the world in their farm kitchens. Indeed, Wilder's articles about her time at the Exposition allow rural women some opportunity to experience the wonders of the world and of travel.

More commonly, Wilder cites her own experiences of farming just east of Mansfield, Missouri. Though such examples can be found throughout the articles, two early articles are especially focused on her own farm life and provide concrete examples of the above-mentioned virtues of farm women and country life. "The Story of Rocky Ridge Farm" (now the site of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Historic Home and Museum, visited by more than 30,000 fans each year) describes how with equal partnership, "heroic effort," and their "bare hands" Wilder and her husband, Almanzo, were able to transform "the rough, rocky, brushy, ugly place" into a beautiful, productive farm. Just two decades later, this farm would be the site of the composition of Wilder's famous *Little House* novels.

The subsequent article, "My Apple Orchard," describes a significant addition to their farm, the planting of 1,000 apple trees (the seedlings came unplanted with the purchase of Rocky Ridge). Noteworthy in this article is Almanzo's use of natural pesticides: by prohibiting hunting on his property, quail saved his trees from borers that destroyed a neighboring orchard. Wilder advocates for other conservationist techniques in later articles.

Wilder recognizes the importance and difficulty of farm women's work. Her articles seek both to reduce the drudgery of such work and also to instill in farm wives a sense of that work's dignity. Women, she knows, will need to use all their ingenuity to make farm life pleasant and prosperous. Thus, she offers her advice gained by experience regarding cooking, the raising of poultry, the planning and planting of crops, maintaining health and beauty, and living socially in one's community. In almost all cases, such activities entail a robust self-reliance alongside an equal partnership with one's husband, both of which are modeled by Wilder herself and, later, in her *Little House* novels by the Ingalls family.

Author's Note

Wilder's *Missouri Ruralist* articles can be found in Stephen W. Hines's *Laura Ingalls Wilder, Farm Journalist: Writings from the Ozarks*, which contains his useful introduction and an excellent index (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007).

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Fruitcake: An Ozarks Treat

by Gwen Simmons

Photos courtesy of Lyons Memorial Library, College of the Ozarks

Flour, sugar, butter, eggs. Typical ingredients for any cake. Add in nuts and candied fruit, though, and you've got a special occasion fruitcake. Today we associate fruitcake most with Christmas. Some folks like the taste, others ridicule it as the gift that can be re-gifted forever. Whether you are a fan or not, fruitcake has been an important part of the Ozarks for many years.

The origins of fruitcake can be traced back to European explorers of the late Middle Ages. As they returned from expeditions to the Americas and Asia, explorers brought back spices, fruits, and sugars heretofore unknown in Europe. These ingredients quickly found their way into cakes because of their taste but also because sugar and dried fruits act as preservatives. However, those new ingredients weren't cheap, so cakes using them were considered luxury items, only served for special occasions. Christmas was one such occasion with many European countries developing their own recipes and traditions. American colonists brought those recipes with them, so that today's typical American fruitcake most closely resembles the fruitcakes of Great Britain (Levene 33–35).

In the early twentieth century, bakeries, particularly in the American South where pecans were handy, began selling fruitcakes via mail order, and an industry was born. At about the same time, the School of the Ozarks (now College of the Ozarks) was born. Little did anyone suspect that the trajectories of the school and the fruitcake business would intersect.

In 1934 the Great Depression was at its height, and School of the Ozarks (S of O) was struggling to make ends meet. That August the school signed up for a relief program sponsored by the federal government. S of O would receive funds from the Federal Relief Commission in exchange for canning beef in the school's canning factory. A requirement of the program was that qualified personnel oversee the process, and so Annabelle McMaster, a Drury College graduate and dietitian, was hired. Students could work up to 16 hours per week at $0.32 per hour. The factory ran 24 hours a day with 320 quarters of beef processed each day. That amounted to about 10,000 cans of beef each day. All of the beef was delivered to the Commission for distribution to the needy (Uncle Sam Runs Our Canning Factory 1, 4).

Annabelle McMaster, creator of the S of O fruitcake recipe

When she wasn't supervising the canning project, Mrs. McMaster taught home economics classes. In 1934, just before Christmas, students in her class were making fruitcakes as a donation of pecans had arrived and black walnuts were readily available. The

(Fruitcake continued on next page)

fragrant smell of the baking cakes attracted S of O President R. M. Good. When he saw the fruitcakes, he asked if he could have some to mail to donors. He promised that if anyone sent a check in response, the home economics department would get an electric stove (Godsey 348–49). The result was $1,100 in donations, a new stove, and a new project for the school. The success of the first batch of fruitcakes led Dr. Good to ask for more the next year. Within a few short years, people began asking to buy them.

Soon, baking fruitcakes were no longer a Christmas class project but a year-round job. In 1950 the cakes were sold by mail order. The first fruitcake order form was published in November 1955 in the school's newsletter. A two-pound fruitcake sold for $3.00. The school also produced jellies and preserves which could be ordered along with a fruitcake (Lane).

From its original location in the basement of the Green building, the fruitcake enterprise moved first to the Bailey Science Building (now Berger Hall), and then to the basement of the Thompson Building (now the Christian Ministries building) which also housed the cafeteria. The fruitcake kitchen was able to share ovens with the cafeteria. Eventually the cafeteria moved to the newly constructed Good College Center, but the fruitcake kitchen stayed in Thompson. Renovations over the years have allowed the kitchen to add space by moving their baking operation upstairs, keeping the basement for storage and shipping.

As orders flooded in during November and December, the kitchen closed and all workers moved to the basement to pack and ship thousands of fruitcakes and jars of jelly. Today, packaging and shipping are handled by a separate group of workers, but they still are located in the basement. The bakery crew upstairs focuses on year-round production.

Fresh from the oven

Production peaked in the 1990s when 40,000 fruitcakes would be baked each year. Not coincidentally, that peak in the 1990s paralleled the Branson tourism boom. As more tourists found their way to Branson and the school, newly named College of the Ozarks (C of O), more began visiting the fruitcake kitchen. They would tour the facility and often make a purchase. Many of those visitors came on tour buses with twelve buses in 1986. Just ten years later in 1996, more than a thousand tour buses stopped by between April and December—with as many as twenty in a single day (Fruitcake Season). Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic ended access to visitors with no immediate plans to resume.

Today, the kitchen will bake 15,000–20,000 fruitcakes, but the list of other products produced there has grown. There are three other varieties of cake with gluten-free versions of all of them.

(Fruitcake continued on next page)

Jellies and fruit spreads come in a variety of flavors with sugar-free options available. Items produced for the campus restaurant and gift shops include apple butter, roasted nuts, cookies, caramel, and ice cream. Mail order still popular, although cookies, caramel, and ice cream. Mail order is still popular, although most of those orders are placed on a website rather than by phone or with a paper order form. About 20 to 25 students work in the kitchen under the watchful eyes of two full-time supervisors (Crisp).

The recipe for the fruitcakes has remained relatively unchanged over the years. Papaya has replaced citron as one of the included fruits. Margarine is used rather than butter, both because it is cheaper and because it holds up better in storage. Black walnuts are the only Ozarks ingredient. In contrast to the other well-known Ozarks fruitcake produced at the Assumption Abbey near Ava, no alcohol is found in the ingredient list.

Baking a fruitcake starts about a month before baking day when a batch of fruit is mixed. The day before baking day, dozens of eggs are separated, margarine is softened, and dry ingredients are measured. On baking day, ingredients are mixed, egg whites are whipped, fruit is added, and batter is poured into baking pans with most being a one- or two-pound size. The cake is decorated with fruit and nuts, although the pattern has varied over the years, mostly at the suggestion of students. Then pans are loaded into an oven and baked at 325 degrees for 45 minutes.

The rotating oven

An interesting sidenote to the history of the college's industry is the technological progress in the ovens. The first was a simple electric oven. Gas-fired industrial ovens with multiple racks served for many years, but pans had to be rotated by hand so that they would bake evenly. Today's oven is self-rotating and can hold 2 to 3 batches of fruitcake at a time. There have been similar developments in canning equipment for jelly and fruit spreads. Although copper kettles are still used when cooking apple butter and other products, jars are sealed with heat and a one-piece lid for a more reliable seal (Crisp).

Once the cake comes out of the oven, it is allowed to cool before being placed in cold storage. It's a common misconception that the fruitcakes are frozen. They are not. They are stored in a cooler and allowed to season for about six months. Because the college's recipe uses fruit juices rather than alcohol, freezing the cakes would prevent that seasoning.

The longevity and durability of the fruitcakes means that they have been shipped to all 50 states and many foreign countries. They found their way to battlefields during the Vietnam and Gulf wars.

(Fruitcake continued on next page)

Distinguished visitors to the campus are always given a fruitcake, with many of those guests touring the kitchen during their visit.

A special fruitcake was produced in 2007 as the college began its 101st year of existence. That treat was a fruitcake weighing 101 pounds debuting at the college's Homecoming celebration. However, baking that cake was a two-year process. A special pan, measuring 29 inches across and 12 inches deep, was crafted by the college's sheet metal shop. The normal recipe was re-engineered to account for the size. Three test cakes were made to get the recipe and the baking time right. The final cake came out of the oven after 13 hours and featured the centennial logo of the college instead of the usual design (Cone).

A trial version of the 101-pound fruitcake before it went into the oven

After its Homecoming appearance, the cake went to cold storage where it remained for several years. It was eventually thrown away, but the one-of-a-kind baking pan remains in case it is needed again.

Fruitcake probably doesn't last forever, but there is no denying its impact. This dense, sweet treat has given generations of Ozarks students a chance to earn a College education while helping families around the world celebrate special occasions.

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DA Callaway, An Innovative Performer

Interview by Emalee Flatness

DA Callaway, longtime employee of the Silver Dollar City theme park near Branson, Missouri, is known by many as an icon of Ozarks culture. Since the 1970s, he has provided entertainment at the park. In his more recent years of employment, he has become increasingly known for his time as an award-winning entertainment manager at the park. This Ozarker perhaps provides for tourists a character that represents everything they expect from the region—welcoming, witty, and animated. On October 27, 2021, at Silver Dollar City I conducted an interview with Callaway to dive deeper into what created the personality that so many now know and love.

-- Emalee Flatness

DA Callaway at Cabin Fever 2022
Photo by Curtis Copeland

DA Callaway was born in Santa Barbara, California, in the early 1950s—perhaps an unexpected background for a man of importance in Ozarks culture. His mother moved from the Ozarks to the Golden State to pursue a university education, and it was here she met Callaway's father who was "freshly out of the U.S. Navy." The pair met in their church where they sang duets together.

When Callaway was still an infant, the family moved back to Missouri. After they arrived, they had three more children, all of whom were boys. Their mother became a single mother when the children were very young, taking on the task of raising vivacious boys and caring for a farm. This, according to Callaway, made for a very happy childhood. Their activities may be recognizable to many others who grew up in the rural Ozarks. The boys picked up walnuts; raised chickens and collected eggs; milked cows; and picked and shucked corn.

It was on this little farm that Callaway's musical career took root. He claimed that he and his brothers "could maybe sing before we could talk." His mother played the piano while the boys sang in a quartet, performing gospel songs, donned in what he described as "little suits." They performed at an array of venues, including revivals, funerals, and weddings. Callaway was the lead singer.

Interestingly, Callaway credited his entrance into music as a career to having his right eye "poked out" when he was only twelve years of age. This, of course, meant that he could not play sports in school as many young children do. Instead, his mother had him begin piano lessons. "The piano was my friend," Callaway stated. "I could be by myself and just mess around with the piano and no matter what you're feeling . . . you can talk to that piano and it'll talk back to you."

(DA Callaway continued on next page)

After taking lessons, Callaway began advancing his skills on the piano by himself. He went on to play the baritone horn, tuba, and trumpet in the school band. When he graduated, he got a job playing the piano. He attended Southwest Missouri State (now Missouri State University) in Springfield for two years. Here, he studied music, singing in the choir and taking voice lessons. Callaway said with a chuckle, "You had to sing Italian. Well, if you're from here and they're making you sing Italian, it doesn't really go together that well. So I didn't finish my degree!"

Callaway described his start at Silver Dollar City by commenting on the role of the Herschend family, the current owners. The Herschends began operating the Marvel Cave Park, already a tourist destination, in the 1950s. Callaway said, "The family had an entrepreneurial dream—and they worked so hard at it." To occupy tourists while they waited for their cave tour, the Herschends began building attractions above ground. Callaway said, "They eventually had developed Main Street of Silver Dollar City with a general store and a post office, the blacksmith's shop and the church."

During this time, Callaway was playing different gigs around the region. One night in 1976 he was playing at a restaurant. When he got off work, around midnight, a friend called him and told him that Silver Dollar City was looking for a ragtime piano player. Callaway said, "I was really interested in rags at the time. I played Scott Joplin's music." He auditioned for the job and was selected. "The guy who auditioned me for the job heard me play one song and said, 'you're hired!' I found out later I was the only one who auditioned!" During this period, Callaway played in the saloon and in the medicine show.

When he first came to Silver Dollar City, and for several years afterward, Callaway made his living playing the trumpet. In 1981, the theme park had a Dixieland Jazz Band, which shared the same stage as Callaway's performances at the time. Callaway would watch and admire this band, particularly the trumpet player. However, his admired jazz musician developed a heart condition and could no longer play. Callaway already had an established history in trumpet playing. That summer, he began taking lessons in Springfield until he felt ready to audition as a trumpet player. When auditions rolled around, Callaway got the job.

This Dixieland Jazz Band became the now legendary Silver Dollar City band named The River Rats. Callaway played with this group for eleven years. He declared that "it was just goofy. We played Dixieland jazz, but we also played Spike Jones, Homer and Jethro—any old novelty song that we could find. That became our niche. We weren't playing straight-ahead traditional jazz, we were playing funny songs . . . essentially, we did whatever it took to keep the audience from walking off."

While Callaway posited that, although the park has remained essentially the same throughout its existence, there have been a few noticeable changes along with technological advancements. Silver Dollar City, in its beginnings, had no microphones or form of amplification for musical groups. "Bands would just play under the trees," he said. "At times we had ten, or twelve, or more bands at Silver Dollar City that would just play here or there—wherever they could find a shady spot."

(DA Callaway continued on next page)

The festival that was once the big musical event of the year was the Mountain Folks Music Festival, which began in 1975. For ten days every June, musicians would come from across the region to share their talent. Callaway said, "There were no professional musicians that were invited to our festival. It was all mom-and-pop family bands—people that played on the loading dock of the feed store . . . everybody dressed up in old-timey clothes and played music they inherited from their grandparents . . . no matter who they were, they paid all the musicians forty dollars per day. That was the Mountain Folks Music Festival." This festival eventually morphed into the park's annual celebration of bluegrass music.

Callaway identified Max Hunter, known also as the "song hunter," as the man behind the park's musical foundation. Hunter was at the head of the music festival when it began in 1975.

> He went around to general stores and all kinds of country events with a tape recorder, recording people's folk music. . . . He was kind of an apprentice to Vance Randolph, . . . a very popular American writer. [Vance Randolph] studied the Ozarks extensively even though he wasn't born here. He became a deputy sheriff in Boone County, Arkansas, as a way to get to know the people. He documented the lifestyle, the tools, the agrarian lifestyles, and everything the people did to make a living—whether it was chopping wood, or floating the river, or catching fish, or deer hunting. I think Max Hunter was his apprentice and helped him document especially the poetry and the folk songs of the Ozarks. A long time after that, Gordon McCann came in, helping Max Hunter. Gordon was also the accompanist for Art Galbraith, the Missouri fiddle player. All these things tie together over the decades."

Both Hunter's and McCann's collections of music are published through the Missouri State University Libraries.

According to Callaway, old-time music, which was the genre played at the start of the Mountain Folks Music Festival, differs greatly from the bluegrass music that many associate with today's Ozarks region.

> Our old-time music came from Appalachia, which came from Europe. Those musicians essentially knew how a song went because they learned it from grandma and grandpa. They played note-for-note what they learned. Bluegrass music is like jazz . . . because you play what you call the head. You play the melody the first time through . . . after that the musicians are innovating rides over the chord changes. So you can basically play anything you want to as long as it goes along with the chord changes. We used to think of bluegrass as 'grandpa's music.' The music was about cornfields, coal mines, mules—it was agrarian music. Now we're writing bluegrass songs about current topics. Bluegrass music will always live as long as it keeps adapting to current situations. It's a living, breathing art form.

Callaway described the park over the years. According to him, all the employees treated the park as a fantasy world where guests and employees could escape the hustle and bustle of modern living. He said

(DA Callaway continued on next page)

that the late owner of Silver Dollar City, Mary Herschend, wanted the park to be just as much fun to work at as it was to visit. Callaway states that he believes this stands true today.

The most significant difference in the park, Callaway said, is that "at some point we went from being a pioneer village to a theme park. . . . I don't think the Herschend family ever intended to build a living history museum. I think they were trying to do something in keeping with the cultural heritage of the Ozarks because it was an attraction. [Even today,] everyone wants to meet a colorful indigenous character in the Ozarks." However, even through this transition to a theme park, there was still a focus on the heritage of the Ozarks. Every ride has a theme that relates to the region's history. The park continues to display Ozarks craftsmanship.

Callaway ran the Bluegrass and BBQ Festival for several years. The park holds the festival annually in May, which he described as "icing on the cake." The festival began around 2005, and the organizers started booking nationally renowned bluegrass musicians as opposed to exclusively local talent. "In 2011, IBMA [International Bluegrass Music Association] gave us an award for 'Event of the Year' for Bluegrass and BBQ. We've since gotten seven awards from the SPBGMA [Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music of America] organization for 'Promoter of the Year.' In 2017, IBMA gave Silver Dollar City a special award for 'Distinguished Achievement in Bluegrass Music.'" Callaway, an ever-humble man, attributed most of this success to the advanced skill of the technical department and the employees who make the performers feel at home.

One of Callaway's greatest inventions at the park has been the KSMU Youth in Bluegrass competition. He described the formation of this event, saying, "I was at a house party of Mike Smith—Seldom Heard Music's been his radio show for years. . . . Gordon McCann was there, the Chapman brothers were there . . . and Mike and I were talking—what could we do to keep this music going and going? We hit on the idea of having a contest. I think we had eight bands . . . and we had three judges and we gave away five hundred dollars. That was the start of that contest." The contest continues to grow, with groups from all across the nation coming to compete. Callaway also said that deep connections have formed throughout the bands that compete, with many friendships and several marriages being attributed to the competition. This, to him, has been the most meaningful thing.

Callaway recently retired from his position; however, he could not stay away from the park for long. He stated that "I want to be here as a personality—as a character to interface with the artists that I know so well. I still want to be in the parking lot when the bus rolls in."

When asked about the relationship between Silver Dollar City and The Shepherd of the Hills attractions, both of which have been integral in the preservation of Ozarks heritage, Callaway said,

> Both outfits started officially in 1960. Mary Herschend had this park. Mary Trimble had the Shepherd of the Hills farm. I think both those people knew that the attraction in drawing

(DA Callaway continued on next page)

> tourists to the Ozarks *was* the Ozarks and the Ozarkian people. Mary Trimble had the book *The Shepherd of the Hills* that she patterned her pageant after. She had Old Matt's Cabin, which was in the book. She did a great job of bringing people to the Ozarks and Mary Herschend was the same way. She used that lure of the Ozarkian characters to get people to the Ozarks. Of course, the train started running to Branson around 1904 [1906] so that was kind of the start of tourism to the 'Shepherd of the Hills Country.'

Callaway also said that both attractions have done a great job of adapting to modern times while still preserving the heritage of the region. The lure, of course, is now both the attractions and the people of the Ozarks. Therefore, Branson will always incorporate both.

Callaway continues to act as a charming frontman for the culture of the Ozarks. Indeed, he is often seen chatting with tourists with a sizeable smile on his face. It is not unlikely that this icon of Ozarks culture and the history of Silver Dollar City will continue to be remembered as an integral piece of the preservation of the Ozarks for generations to come.

About the Interviewer: Emalee Flatness

Emalee began playing the fiddle at the age of ten after being inspired at church by an old-time fiddler named Roy Craft. She started performing as soon as she began taking fiddle lessons. At fourteen, she started her bluegrass Po' Anna. Her first venues were mostly churches, but eventually she began playing at festivals and events throughout the Ozarks. She now plays the fiddle and guitar in three bands: Po' Anna, The Honkytonk Renovators, and Magnolia Wind. Emalee's favorite place to perform is the Shepherd of the Hills Outdoor Drama, where she acts as Mindy Ford and sings during the party scene.

Emalee met DA Callaway when she was fourteen and competed in the KSMU Youth in Bluegrass Contest at Silver Dollar City. She was immediately intrigued by DA's charismatic personality and popularity with all of the other young folk. Since then, she and DA have conversed many times at Silver Dollar City and become great buddies.

Born and raised in Willard, Emalee currently resides in Springfield. She attends Missouri State University where she is majoring in History with a minor in Ozarks Studies. She plans to relocate to Taney County after her graduation this coming winter.

Emalee Flatness and DA Callaway
Photo courtesy of Lara Menard

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Sorghum Days at the Mailes Farm

by Emily Garoutte

Photos courtesy of Taylor Mailes

As the October scenery summons many out to explore its splendor, friends and community members gather for an authentic Ozarks harvest at a farm operated by the Mailes family near Seneca, Missouri. Amongst the patchwork landscape of the surrounding farmland, the annual sorghum days festival has served as a vital ember in the community since 1989. Close ties among Mailes family members, who host the event, are evident in the camaraderie that is a feature of this cherished fall tradition.

Sorghum cane

Along the hills of the Ozarks, sweet sorghum cane—the plant that produces sorghum syrup and sorghum molasses—fools many. These lengthy stalks are not corn stalks after all. Sorghum stalks can be identified by their thin and slick appearance.

The cultivation of sorghum has been a long-standing tradition in the Ozarks. Its regional success was due to its vitality in moist and warm climates. Sorghum served as a primary sweetener for many families settling in the Ozarks until the 1950s. It was especially prevalent during times of war when sugar was a rare commodity. The crop was essentially "juiced" and used as syrups and even a primitive multivitamin.

Compared to cane sugar, sorghum contains nutritional substance while cane sugar is void of any vitamins or minerals. Today, sorghum is still used as liquid sweetener substitutes and spreads. Though the tradition has become less prominent in the Ozarks, several multifunctioning farms across the Ozarks still press and evaporate their sorghum each fall.

One of the torch-bearing farms in the Ozarks is operated by the family of Janice and Maurice Mailes. Cecil Humbyrd, a family friend, and Maurice Mailes began pressing sorghum and worked together for many years to perfect the product. After Cecil passed away several years ago, Maurice and his son, Cory, kept the fire burning.

"You'd have to talk to the old-timers, because they knew what it [sorghum] should taste like," Cory Mailes said. Since Cory joined the legacy of sorghum making, he has helped by tinkering with the process himself to ensure the best taste. The whole operation functions on the arms of the multigenerational family and volunteers from the Seneca High School Future Farmers of America. The Mailes children and grandchildren are all involved in the stripping or cooking of the cane. "I couldn't do it all without the kids and the grandkids," remarked Maurice Mailes, who turned 87 in March of 2022.

(Sorghum Days continued on next page)

The event begins in the young hours of the day by stripping the leaves off the cane. All of the crop is pressed before noon, and the entire harvest is complete in a single day. A sorghum press is placed as the focal point of the festival and is rotated by a tractor. In former days, however, a mule or horse was often used to lead the stripping process in a slower fashion.

The sorghum press

Feeding stalks through the press

Sorghum stalks are manually fed through the press and a dark tinted liquid is produced. The purified sorghum is then transferred to the evaporator, where the heaps of juice are poured and cooked to become void of excess moisture.

Upholding an even consistency is necessary in the process of sorghum making. This is achieved by maintaining an even fire under the evaporator and by promoting motion in the liquid with large push sticks. Specialized fins are used in each cooker to move each batch up. After three to four hours, one batch is completely cooked down, and a honey-like substance is left to be jarred. From about a half-acre of planting, four to five gallons of sorghum are produced.

The evaporator

Promoting motion in the specialized fins

(Sorghum Days continued on next page)

The scene is set by the grandchildren scurrying around the property in the thrill of curiosity over the family's activity. Musicians serenade the activity with old-time music through various times of the day on a stage next to the Mailes's home. New faces are welcomed by the Mailes family just as a familiar friend would be. What is done with the sorghum is one of the best indications of the Mailes family's character and hospitality. "We don't sell it, we just give it away," Cory Mailes said."

The guests are offered a jar of sorghum to accompany their visit, as a token of their time and experience. After just one visit to the farm, though, it is evident that guests take home much more than a jar of sorghum. They receive a taste of the past, a reminder of fellowship, and a remnant of tradition in full bloom. For the Mailes family, however, generosity and community zeal are nothing out of the ordinary; it's just how things ought to be in the Ozarks.

Author's Note

Personal attendance at the Mailes farm during Sorghum Days inspired this article. Interviews conducted on October 9, 2021, with Mailes family members provided the essential information about sorghum processing. I am grateful for the kindness shown to me at the Mailes farm that day. I owe special thanks to Taylor Mailes for permission to use his photos.

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Loading harvested sorghum for processing

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Milkweed: Not Just for Monarchs

by Bob Kipfer

Photos by Bob Kipfer except as noted

Milkweed Pod. Photo by Mary Anne Borge, the-natural-web.org

Everywhere you come across the word "milkweed" in the press, it is tied to Monarchs. The butterflies' populations are down from loss of milkweed because of extensive roadside mowing, herbicide use, and monoculture farming in rural areas. These practices have led to a major effort to grow milkweed in parks, other public spaces, and even our yards. As it turns out, this isn't the first time that Americans have been encouraged to grow milkweed.

There was an earlier program during World War II to plant and harvest milkweed for military use. The seed pods were collected and shipped to central collection stations for use in life jackets. Milkweed floss is more than five times as buoyant as cork, and a lightweight life jacket was both effective and easy to store. It was also warmer than wool and six times lighter, perfect for aviators flying over the ocean.

Because milkweed is best known for being the obligatory host plant for Monarch caterpillars, it is easy to forget about the value of milkweed in nature. Several species are native to Missouri. Common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) grows in the eastern two-thirds of the United States. To the 450 species of insects that feed on it, it must look like Walmart.

In our backyard, a lot of other insects can be found on the plants. The Large Milkweed Bug (*Oncopeltus fasciatus*) has orange stripes. This bright aposematic color advertises its accumulation of toxic chemicals from the plants and says, "Don't even think about eating me!" As true bugs (Hemiptera), they go through five juvenile life stages, all resembling smaller versions of the adult.

Large Milkweed Bug

(Milkweed continued on next page)

Milkweed Tussock Moth (*Euchaetes egle*) caterpillars also collect toxins as they chew away on the leaves. You would think that predators would look at all those hairs and say, “Yuck!” The adult moth also makes ultrasonic clicks to warn bats and other creatures to stay away.

Tussock Moth Caterpillars

The Southern Milkweed Leaf Beetles (*Labidomera clivicollis*) are again brightly colored and pick up toxin, but they believe in moderation. They will cut the vein of the leaf to drain out some of the sticky milky sap before chewing the leaf.

Southern Milkweed Leaf Beetle

The adult Red Milkweed Beetles (*Tetraopes tetrophthalmus*) feed on sap from the leaf veins where the toxic latex is more diluted. Both they and the larvae feeding on the roots acquire some of the toxin which they advertise with their red aposematic colors. When startled, they make a shrill noise; and when interacting with another beetle, they make a “purring” noise. (As for my hearing range, I will have to take the word of the entomologist audiologists.)

Red Milkweed Beetle. Photo by Noppadol Paothong. Courtesy of Missouri Department of Conservation

(Milkweed continued on next page)

Milkweed aphids (*Aphis nerii*) feed on the sap and get a little chemical protection. They can push noxious secretions out their little tailpipes called cornicles. Scientific studies have shown that when this secretion is applied to a spider's mouth parts, the spider will retreat and wipe its mouth (and presumably make a terrible face!). This shows that the secretion is an effective deterrent. It also suggests that some entomologists have way too much time on their hands.

Looking at the ant above, you might think that these aphids are toast, but they actually have a more interesting relationship. The aphids suck sugary phloem from the plant and excrete excess sugary secretions which may collect on the plant. Ants get this nutritious drink from the aphids, and it protects them. In return, the ants tend the aphids almost like a farmer with dairy cattle.

Meanwhile, back to the butterfly. Monarchs (*Danaus plexippus*) spend the winter in Mexico, then fly north to the southwestern states where they mate, lay their eggs on milkweeds, and die. Their caterpillars munch, grow, shed their skin five times, and then form a chrysalis and emerge to fly north. They do this through three generations, each time settling down where milkweeds are in season. Then miracles occur, and the last migratory generation, which lives up to nine months, flies back to the Mexican forests which their great-grandparents migrated from last spring! How they find that wintering spot without a GPS, no one knows.

Monarch Caterpillar

Female Monarch Nectaring on Native Aster Flowers. Photo by Noppadol Paothong. Courtesy of Missouri Department of Conservation

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Ozark Mountain Music Association Thanks the Hillcrofters

One of the goals of the Society of Ozarkian Hillcrofters is to preserve Ozarks culture. An important way to accomplish this goal is to invest in our future generations. We seek to inspire young people to learn about the rich history and culture of the Ozarks, create a lifelong interest in the region, and encourage preservation and conservation of the Ozarks for the future. The Society of Ozarkian Hillcrofters holds fundraisers for scholarships to award to youth in the Ozark Mountain Music Association (OMMA).

The OMMA is a nonprofit organization with a mission to preserve and promote traditional Ozarks music. It provides music camp opportunities and musical instruments for children and young people. The OMMA and its students are grateful, as shown below.

--Curtis Copeland

_____

June 17th, 2022

Wendy Wright
Ozark Mountain Music Assoc.
127 Stoneridge Drive
Branson, MO 65616
Ozarkmountainmusic1@gmail.com
417-631-2442

Dear Board Members of the *The Society of Ozarkian Hillcrofters*,

Ozark Mountain Music Bluegrass Camp 2022 is in the books and it was a blessing to everyone involved. We had 54 students and 21 instructors. Approximately 300 people attended the End-of-camp Show and fun was had by all. I wanted to reach out to you all and express the profound gratitude of our board, our students and parents to the Hillcrofters for your generous scholarship donations. Camp fees are $500 and it is our policy to give $200 per person as the fund allows, to those who are in financial need.

(OMMA continued on next page)

Here is a breakdown of the contributions made by the Hillcrofters to Ozark Mountain Music Association.

9/30/21. $500 (scholarships) plus $500 to cover OMMA expenses for The Country Fair
4/13/22 $2,000 (scholarships)
$2,500

We gave the following students a $200 scholarship in the name of *The Society of Ozarkian Hillcrofters*.

John Ezell (Lone Jack, MO)
Maggie Ezell (Lone Jack, MO)
Charlene Parker (Mt. View, AR)
Gordon Parker (Mt. View, AR)
Jordan Brannon (Mt. View, AR)
Truett Brannon (Mt. View, AR)
Elliot Crockett (Branson)
Makayla West (Bruner, MO)
Koltyn West (Bruner, MO)
Nash Boldman (Branson, MO) ($500, special exception)

There is currently a $200 balance on the Hillcrofters' scholarship account that we will hold over until Bluegrass Camp 2023.

I also wanted to note, that because the Hillcrofters provide a way for these students to attend Bluegrass Camp, it enables OMMA to have a surplus at the end of camp. That surplus allows us to host an Old Time Music and Dance Camp in Mountain View, AR. This camp operates at an approximate $8,000 deficit because we have an incentivized price of $99 for that 3-day camp. The reason we do this, is because the old-time music of the Ozarks that was specifically meant for dance, does not have the same following that Bluegrass does, nor are there as many events that entice youth to learn these tunes and dances from the past.

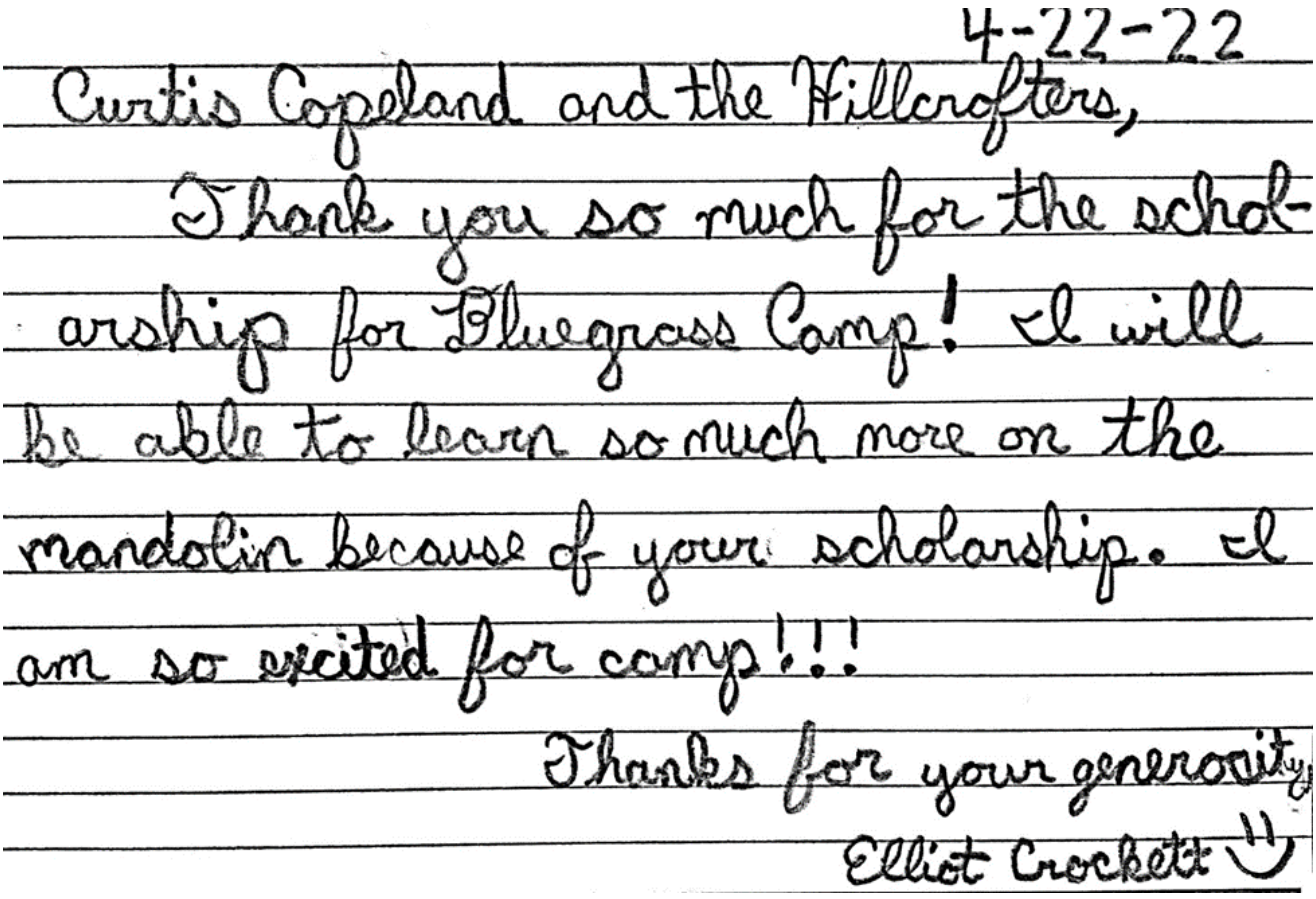
Thank you for helping Ozark Mountain Music Association fulfill our mission of preserving and promoting traditional music of the Ozarks by passing it on to the next generation. We appreciate the work that The Society of Ozarkian Hillcrofters do in our community and we are proud to partner with you.

Sincerely,

Wendy Wright
Director of Ozark Mountain Music Association

(OMMA continued on next page)

Two Thank You Notes from OMMA Students



4-22-22

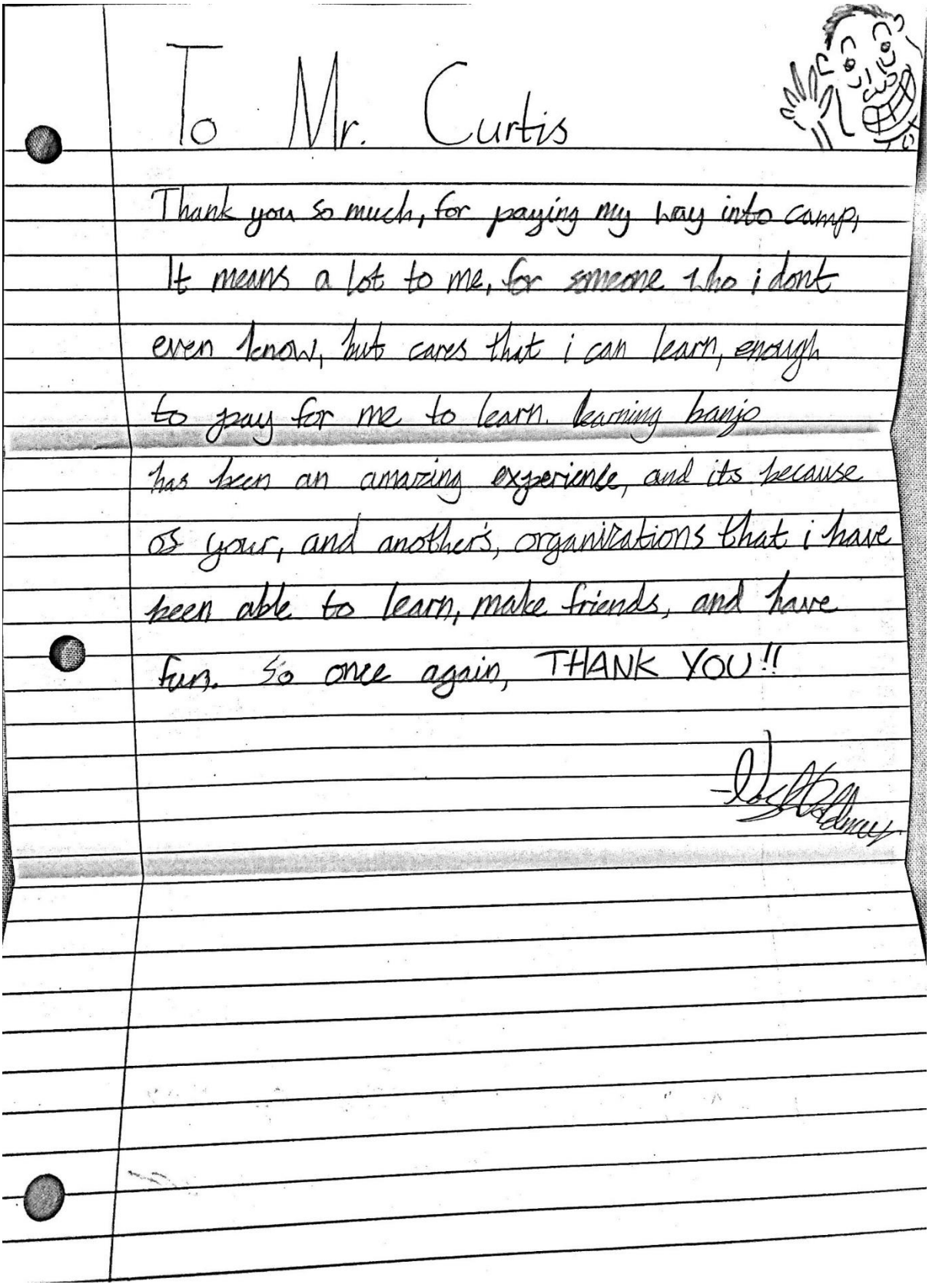
Curtis Copeland and the Hillcrofters,

Thank you so much for the scholarship for Bluegrass Camp! I will be able to learn so much more on the mandolin because of your scholarship. I am so excited for camp!!!

Thanks for your generosity,

Elliot Crockett

(OMMA student notes continued on next page)



To Mr. Curtis

Thank you so much, for paying my way into camp, It means a lot to me, for someone who i dont even know, but cares that i can learn, enough to pay for me to learn. learning banjo has been an amazing experience, and its because of your, and another's, organizations that i have been able to learn, make friends, and have fun. So once again, THANK YOU!!

-[illegible]

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