

PICKIN' POST

The official publication of The Louisville Bluegrass Music Association

Fall 2017 issue 62



Louisville's "Ida Clare" Winners of the 2017 John Hartford Memorial Festival

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Band Contest



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Many thanks to the following renewing members, for their continued support of BA and its mission

Slick & Peanuts Bush: Louisville, KY
Keith Chasteen: Louisville, KY
David Craig: Depauw, IN
Marshall Shelor: Louisville, KY Included generous donation to BA with his renewal. Thanks bunches!
Roger Miller: Louisville, KY
Robert Smallwood: Louisville, KY
Bill Thixton: Mt. Washington, KY

* Included donation for Berk Bryant's public radio show with their membership renewal.
Sunday Night Bluegrass with Berk Bryant every Sunday, 8:00 – 11:00 pm ET, 91.9 FM, WFPK.org



Congratulations to BA Board Member Rebecca Minnick and her husband Chris Walls as they celebrated a very beautiful June wedding at Cave Hill Cemetery followed by a reception at the German American Club.

Pickin' Post

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The Louisville Bluegrass Music Association
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Bluegrass Jam Etiquette

Bluegrass Jam: Group effort at making music

Purpose of a jam: Having fun and allowing people to come TOGETHER to play bluegrass music, each song a journey where each person has equal participation.

Reason for jam etiquette/guidelines: Easier for the goal of playing music together to be reached.

3 MUSTS:

- Be in tune, before starting and when in doubt
- Be on the right chord
- Stay with the beat

Be Considerate

- Musicians usually sit in a circle and sequentially SHARE song choices, usually clock-wise.
- Inform participants the key of your chosen tune. Explain chord progression, if needed.
- Suggest songs that fit the overall jam level.
- Do not play anyone else's instrument without permission. Don't play over other's breaks. Everyone who wants a break can generally have one.
- Sing harmonies on choruses only. Verses are generally sung solo.
- Watch your volume. Allow all to be heard, especially featured singer or soloist.
- Pay attention and let people around you know if you want a break or not, usually by head nod.
- No noodling on your instrument between songs. This is usually a time for musicians to tune or discuss possible song choices.
- Give everyone a chance to shine. Be encouraging.
- Enjoy Yourself!

Noteable



- Bluegrass mandolin player and song-writer, **Glenn Alford** (Blue River band), of Shepherdsville, Kentucky wrote two songs, "Me & Becky (Hand in Hand)" and "Detroit Blues", and co-wrote "Let Them Know I'm From Virginia" on Big Country Bluegrass' newest disc, "Let Them Know I'm From Virginia" (Rebel Records). With this newest disc Big Country celebrates 30 years as a band. "Me & Becky" has been getting lots of air time on Sirius Radio and its a stellar bluegrass tune. Glenn also wrote "The Boy From the Country" on Big Country's disc "Country Livin'". To order the discs, go to BigCountryBluegrass.com. Congrats, Glenn!
- **Aaron Bibelhauser** will have an EP of new bluegrass songs out in September 2017. It will be available as a CD, via download and streaming sources and will feature Aaron as a songwriter, vocalist, multi-instrumentalist, and producer, along with guest artists Michael Cleveland and Buddy Melton (Balsam Range). The record will showcase collaborations with award winning co-writers Milan Miller, Brink Brinkman and Thomm Jutz.
- Take some time and check out the new renovations at **Music Go Round** on Hurstbourne Lane. Changes include a new HUGE acoustic section with banjos, dobros, guitars, basses and more!
- Banjo picker, **Mark Payne**, won the 2017 Parking Lot Picker Award at Festival of the Bluegrass, The Horse Park, in Lexington, KY. in June. This is Mark's 3rd hubcap award. FOB representatives who awarded Mark his prize said that site #202 had the best jams throughout the festival weekend. Congrats, Mark!

IF YOU HAVE OTHER NOTEABLE NEWS FOR THE PICKIN POST PLEASE EMAIL US AT LOUISVILLEBG@GMAIL.COM

WE ALSO INVITE YOU TO SHARE ANY STORIES, ARTICLES OR INFORMATION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN THE PICKIN POST

Bill Wolfe ~ A Louisville Bluegrass Cornerstone

by Sonya Cotton

ent, kind picker, who has loved the music for all of his adult life. Bill took up the guitar at age 15, 1956, after his cousin, also named Bill Wolfe, started playing the banjo. The cousins grew up listening to Bill's Dad, William, "Bill" Sr., playing rhythm guitar along with his father, Elzie, who played drop-thumb banjo. When cousin Bill took up the banjo it inspired Bill to pick up a guitar, a Gibson J-50. He remembers practicing "Billy in the Low Ground" over and over until something "clicked" and then the cousins played together often. Their early influence was Don Reno, since cousin Bill played that same style of banjo and sang tenor. Bill credits his Dad as his earliest guitar mentor. In 1966, while getting a trim at his barber, Bill mentioned that he had taken up the guitar and was playing bluegrass music. His barber said that he needed to meet Eddie "Slick" and Anna "Peanuts" Bush, another local couple who played and sang bluegrass music. Bill began to play music with the Bushes and this marked the first time that he was part of a bluegrass group. He quickly met other local musicians who loved the music as much as he did. Those musicians, banjo players all, included Harry Bickel, Marty

What a rich bluegrass history Bill Wolfe has. Almost anyone who plays bluegrass music in the Kentuckiana region knows him. They know him as a fun, tal-

Wilson, Bob Smith (banjo maker) and Larry Burba. In the late 60's he also met Eddie Wells (guitar) and Danny Jones (mandolin) whom he credits with helping him with bluegrass harmonies. Until Danny's death late 2016 the friends continued to regularly play together. These days Bill sings lead or baritone harmonies. One of his favorite bluegrass songs is "Footprints in the Snow", because he loves to hear anything in the E-chord.



Bill Wolfe

He attended his first bluegrass festival in the summer of 1967 when he and his brother attended the initial Bill Monroe's Bluegrass Festival in Bean Blossom, IN. When they arrived at 8:00 a.m. that morning, there were only about eight other spectators at the park, but the crowd soon grew. Bill came back from that festival excited about the venue and told friends about it. He began attending regularly. This year marked the 50th year of his attending the summer Bean Blossom festival. He and wife of 57 years, Linda, made it a family vacation some years, taking their children along with them. They now head to Bean several days before the 10-day festival begins and enjoy catching up with all of their old pals and pickin' around the clock. The love and close relationship between Bill and wife Linda is evident when you're with them. He says that she never complained about his playing music. One year he bought a bass for her, hoping that she'd take up playing, but instead their daughter, Linda, took up the bass and played for many years with her Dad.

He's played in multiple bands including Kentucky Blend with Gary Martin (mandolin), Ivan Guernsey (dobro), Paul Goodpaster (fiddle) and his daughter, Linda (bass). The bands that included Slick & Peanuts were Bluegrass Kentuckians and another called Seldom Heard. The Bluegrass Kentuckians entered the Band Contest at Bean Blossom in 1971 or 72 and won 2nd place. He was the long-time bass player for the Blue Hollow Bluegrass Band with Michael Cleveland (on mandolin), Aaron Law, Loren Johnson, Bryan Allen, Eddie Wells and Donnie Hughes. One of the evolutions of this band that included Bill entered the 25th Annual SPBGMA Band Contest.

He met Mike Cleveland (multi award winning fiddle player) in the early 1990's in Henryville, IN. Mike was just a youngster then but they became friends and are still very close. In 1994 or 95 Joe Killmel, nicknamed "Killer", played bass in the Blue Hollow Band, a band Mike performed in. When Killer couldn't make a gig that the band had scheduled at the Louisville School for the Blind he called Bill to sit in for him. After that event Bill began to play rhythm guitar with the band and sit in on bass whenever Killer was unavailable. In 1999 the band traveled to Los Angeles, CA when Mike won an award from the School for the Blind to play a music festival there. Blue Hollow was well known as a band that performed at weddings, parties and gigs throughout this region. In these later years he has regularly played with Eddie Wells and the Kettle Creek Ramblers and performs with Tony Meyers and Old Louisville Express at Jack's in New Albany, IN monthly. Along with Tony, Billy Edlin and Bryan Allen, they are often joined by Mike Cleveland, Allen Phelps or Matt Phelps at the monthly show.



L-R Bill Wolfe, Bobby Wiley, Slick Bush, Loren Johnson

Bluegrass music has filled a lifetime love for Bill. When asked if he had anything on his bluegrass bucket list, he replied "I'd like to play mandolin with my friends and contribute to the jam." We could have asked many folks in our community to make a comment about Bill, but here are just a few:

"If anyone ever writes a definitive history of Bluegrass music in Louisville, Bill Wolfe will certainly be included. He has influenced several generations of this area's musicians. I first met Bill in the late 1970s. He was a fixture at all of the area Bluegrass gatherings: Festival of the Bluegrass in Lexington, Bean Blossom in Indiana, and of course, the KFC Bluegrass Festival here in Louisville. Every picker I can think of that has spent time here over the last 50 years has played with Bill at some point. Memories of jam sessions with Bill are many, but a few are particularly memorable. These occurred at the KFC Festival that took place on the Belvedere in downtown Louisville. Bill Wolfe may be the only person I know in Bluegrass who has a geographic location named after him. The topography of the Belvedere has changed over the years, but back in the late 1970s and 80s there were large berms there with trees planted on them. Every year when the festival rolled around, Bill would set up shop under a shade tree on top of one of those earthen mounds. Those of us who played back in those days would refer to that location as 'Bill Wolfe Hill.' Where are we going to jam tonight? Meet me at Bill Wolfe Hill. Thank you, Bill, for many great music memories!" **Mike Schroeder**, mandolin player, Hog Operation & founder of The Louisville Mandolin Orchestra

"I've learned more about music and life in general from Bill Wolfe than anybody else I can think of, apart from my Dad. I'm convinced that if he had wanted to, Bill could have been a great band leader. He knows how the harmony parts go and what each instrument is supposed to do in order to sound like a collective unit. He's not a pushy teacher type of guy, but if you ask, his musical knowledge is endless." **Michael Cleveland**, Michael Cleveland & Flamekeeper

"If someone were to ask me to name some local Bluegrass musicians, Bill Wolfe would always be at the top of the list. Bill is both a fine musician and singer and a lot of fun to be around. He is always laughing, joking and having a good time. I don't think I've ever known Bill to turn down a chance to play. I have no idea where I first met Bill or how long I've known him. I just know that as long as I have been involved in Bluegrass music, Bill has been around. We've been on stage together as well as at festivals, parties and a host of jam sessions. Bill was a regular at the Bluegrass Hotel back in the 70's and 80's. I can tell you one thing for sure, based on my own experience. If you need to get hold of Bill Wolfe, just throw a pickin' party. He's always the first one there." **Harry Bickel**, banjo player, Buzzard Rock String Band



L-R Alan Phelps, Eddie Wells, Bill Wolfe, Murrell Thixton, Matt Phelps, Mike Cleveland

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Remembering Roy W. Gentry

by Sonya Cotton

Roy Gentry was born July 23, 1946, passed over on July 19, 2017, following a stroke. Roy was born into a musical family in the central Kentucky cave country. Blind Boy Roy was a rare master of the unique style of syncopated "finger-picking" technique on the guitar, where one player can sound like two by using the thumb to play rhythm and bass while fingering simultaneously to play melody. Left to cherish his memory are ex-wife Rebecca "Memphis Beck" Gentry; son, Orville Gibson Gentry; sister, Donna (Frogy) Gentry, and many friends. Marshall Shelor, friend of Roy, writes "I met Roy around 1968, through his girlfriend of that time, Nancy Johnson. We were all Southend Louisville youngsters. Roy played guitar and was learning banjo, while trying to form a bluegrass group, which later became "The Ohio River Valley Boys" and was the first bluegrass band to play for Ken and Sheila Pyle at their Roundtable Theater, and said by many to be Louisville's first bluegrass band. Roy later formed the "Fall City Ramblers" which played a variety of acoustic music, based loosely around bluegrass music. The Ramblers played all around the Eastern US and in Louisville, made some recordings, and based the band home in China, Indiana for many years. After the break-up of the Ramblers, Roy lived in the Madison, Indiana area and played solo and with electric and acoustic groups, of various musical styles. Roy was a musician, songwriter, instrument collector/trader, knowledgeable of instruments, records and novelties and retained mountains of trivia about many subjects pertaining to bluegrass music, as well as other subjects." Roy was a member of many bands throughout his lifetime, most notably The Ohio River Valley Boys, The Falls City Ramblers, Roy and Memphis Beck, The Bo-Danglers, the Manville All-Stars, the D-Rangers, Blind Boy Roy and the Searchers, The River Newts, The Click River Rockets, Snake Oil Conspiracy and a Cincinnati group called the "Hair Farmers". Roy will be missed tremendously by those who knew and loved him. Condolences to his family and friends.



Ida Clare takes first place in the John Hartford Memorial Festival Band Contest 2017!

~ by Ernie Hill



L-R Robin Thixton, Tom Burkhardt, Jim Wheatley, Lea Cockrell, Mark Miller
Photo courtesy of Jules Dunlap Photography

Two years ago, John Hartford Memorial Festival Organizers John Hotze and Tom Burkhardt decided to have a one shot fall festival over at Dogwood Park in Muhlenburg County. The highlight was a band contest. They had a successful turnout, but decided to concentrate their energy and effort into the main gig, the John Hartford Memorial Festival, held each Memorial Day week at the Bill Monroe Music and Camping Park in Bean Blossom, IN. This year was the first official John Hartford Memorial Festival Band contest. Numerous bands submitted songs, video and bios online and 13 bands were selected to compete on site with the promise of big cash and a performance contract for the 2018 festival. The contest, organized and managed by Tom Burkhardt and Scott Nelson, was a huge success with the winning scores going to Louisville's own Ida Clare. Ida Clare took home \$1000 and a unique handmade trophy made by Tom Burkhardt along with a Hartford Stage performance contract for 2018!

Ida Clare is an experienced performing group of pickers and songwriters from diverse backgrounds who know how to entertain naturally, and have a great time doing it. Ida Clare plays an eclectic mix of Bluegrass, Country, Old-time and original material. Ida Clare is mandolin player and song writer Jim Wheatley, powerhouse vocalist Lea Cockrell, bass man Mark Miller aka the "Detroit Dawg", and banjo player Robin Thixton. Nearly everyone is a vocalist and multi-instrumentalist and the depth of both stage and studio experience is obvious. The band has an intuitive understanding of

performance dynamics. When you hear Ida Clare you will have a smile on your face and your toes will be tapping. The body of music the band performs is wide ranging but the back-bone is always Bluegrass.

As media director for the festival, I pursued and interviewed the charming and super talented banjo picker for Ida Clare, Robin Thixton. Here's what I found out about this eclectic and talented band of Bluegrass pros!

Where does the name Ida Clare come from? Clever. - Our former band name was Total Strangers, and when you Google that name you will find about 10 different bands by the same name. We decided to change it, but we couldn't come up with something unique that wasn't already taken, or that fit us. We all had quite a few laughs at some of the names that we came up with during this process. Well, my husband loves a play on words, and for two months or more we would be driving around or sitting at dinner and he'd just spit out something. I would Google it and sure enough, there would already be a band by that name. One day he said "Ida Claire". Well, I was too afraid to look it up because I loved it instantly. I searched online and couldn't find a band by that name but we did find a little tea room in Texas called "Ida Claire". Everyone in the band agreed that it was a fun name so we changed the spelling to "Ida Clare" and here we are.

Are you all songwriters? Jim, our mandolin player, is our main writer. He has collaborated some with Lea our guitar player and lead vocalist who gives him words and melodies to work from often. I just had my first collaboration with Jim. A few weeks ago a melody popped into my head. I played it for Jim and he came back less than a week later with lyrics! Jim has a knack for writing a very catchy melody and hook line. His tunes will ear worm you immediately.

Was this your first JHMF? Yes, the first for all of the band members but I've been to the Bean Blossom bluegrass festival many times before.

How did it feel to play on the stage that Bill Monroe built? Had you performed on this stage before? It was the first time for my band mates and they were in awe. I performed there years ago when I played banjo with Petticoat Junction. Was an honor then, is an honor now. We are super excited to come back and play.

Your impression of our fest: Extremely well run. Fabulous bathroom facility for the bands!! Incredible crowd. Great food vendors. We're all foodies in the band so we were on the lookout for something tasty. The BBQ truck was my favorite, Jim and Mark loved the beer vendor. The pretzel maker was another fave. The lineup of bands was a nice mix. Anyone can find something they like to listen to. They have it all.

How about the rest of the band, what feedback did you get from them? Same sentiments. Great vibe from the crowd and everyone we worked with was professional, and very helpful, and we all loved the family atmosphere. After we found out we were coming back in 2018 they all started making plans to bring their families and camp.

What was your contest set list? All original songs. First set on Friday: "You're Not There" a great collaboration between Jim and Lea about a regular customer at Lea's coffeeshop who passed away and how his absence was noticed, "Don't Let Me Go" a sweet tune Jim wrote about when he and his wife met, and "No Time Like the Present", one of my favorites, about lost love and moving on. The second set on Saturday: "Road Of Tomorrow", Jim's take on heading into one's autumn years. I can't concentrate too hard on the lyrics because they will make me cry. "Take A Chance On You", a tune that Jim wrote specifically for Lea to sing, and "Hold On" from Jim about his Mother's battle with Alzheimers. Another tune that will give you a lump in your throat.

I asked Robin what she would do to improve our festival. She said, "Honestly...just keep doing what you're doing. Keep the band lineup fresh. It was very well run. My family used to put on a Bluegrass festival on our farm and I know how much work goes into it. You give people good bathrooms, good food, good music...they will be happy."

Robin nailed it. There is a recording coming in the future that will include all of their contest tunes. You can read more and follow the Ida Clare concert schedule at idaclareband.com and Facebook.

Ernie Hill-wordsofernest.com
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Photo courtesy of Tom Wickstrom



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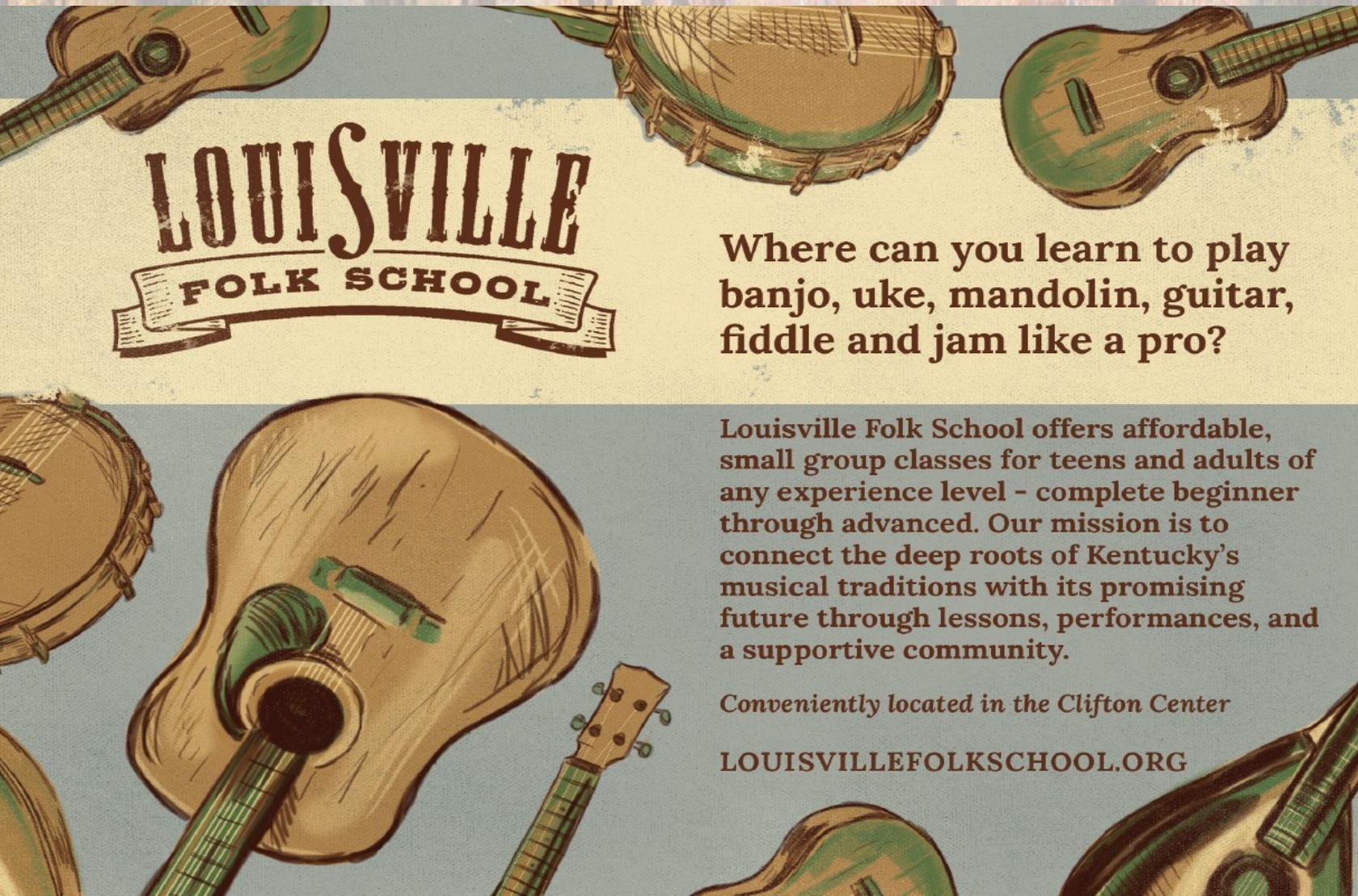


Mr. Marshall Shelor

BA Member Highlight

Marshall Shelor, bluegrass guitar picker, can be found at area jams, festivals and shows, supporting the music that he has played and loved for many years. Sit down and visit with Marshall and you can learn a lot about the history of bluegrass and old-time music in this region. Thanks for years of support to BA and this community, Marshall!

- Bluegrass Anonymous



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