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Next Jam: 1-5 PM, Mar. 21, SW Conservation Club, 5703 Bluffton Rd., Ft. Wayne, IN 46899

## President's Corner - Joe Steiner



As I write these words, many are no doubt wondering if NIBGA will be holding its Memorial Day weekend bluegrass festival. Unfortunately, I am wondering the same thing! As I mentioned last month, the NIBGA board is proceeding as if the festival will take place; however, in these times, that is far from certain.

Shortly after this newsletter hits the mail (or email), the NIBGA board will be discussing the May festival at our February board meeting. I'm hopeful we will be able to make a final decision on the festival at that meeting. We have set a deadline of March 1 for the decision, since we will need to begin moving forward on many items by that date if the festival is a go.

Our decision will be based partly on the constraints we will face if we hold a festival and the risks and liabilities involved. Since some are still cautious of venturing out to public events, we also need to consider potential reductions in attendance as well as potential touring constraints/concerns on the part of the bands. In addition, our contract with the Noble County Fair Board has expired, and we will need to negotiate a new agreement for the Fairgrounds.

We will post information on the NIBGA web site and Facebook page as soon as it is available.

As I was thinking about the May festival my mind began to wander, and helping my mind to wander were some old bluegrass magazines that Jim and Linda Winger had shared while they were cleaning up their house a while back.

I first became interested in bluegrass music in the late 1970's, and, except for 2020, I don't think there was a single year since then that I didn't attend a single bluegrass festival. I just can't wait for festivals to start up again!

Thinking back on those earlier days, when I first started attending festivals, I remembered some of the bands

appearing. Although Bill Monroe had firmly set the groundwork of the "bluegrass" sound with Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs some thirty years earlier, the music was still very much developing.

Don Reno was still touring regularly with the Tennessee Cutups, while Bill Harrell had left the Cutups and was touring with Darrell Sanders and Ed Ferris as the Virginians. Bill Monroe was touring with the Bluegrass Boys, of course. Jim and Jesse were steadfastly at the helm of the Virginia Boys, while the Osborne Brothers were stretching things out, experimenting with drums and electric instruments.

Lester Flatt had the Nashville Grass with Marty Stuart, Kenny Ingram, and Curly Seckler (who would take over the group upon Lester's death in 1979). Earl Scruggs, however, had gone a different direction by this time, moving into mainstream country rock with his sons as the Earl Scruggs Review.

Doyle Lawson had left J.D. Crowe a few years earlier to join the Country Gentlemen, and J.D. had changed the name of his group from the Kentucky Mountain Boys to the New South. One of the classic bluegrass albums, J.D.'s eponymous album now known as "Rounder 0044" featuring Ricky Skaggs and Tony Rice, was still relatively new. Ricky and Tony were just a couple years away from contributing to Emmylou Harris's "Roses in the Snow" album, while Doyle Lawson was getting ready to wrap up his tenure with the Gentlemen in order to start Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver.

It is fun to think back on, and read about, those days. The music was trendsetting and great, full of energy and enthusiasm. But I will have to say that today's bluegrass music certainly is cut from the same mold, exploring new directions and full of creativity. Maybe we should have some features in future newsletters on the history of bluegrass music!



Don't forget to use your Kroger's card to donate to NIBGA. It doesn't cost you a cent, but contributes to our coffers. Kroger Donations from October 2020 to December 31, 2020 totaled \$49.48. This came from 13 households.

## NIBGA Club History

During the winter months, when bluegrass news is slow, it seems like a good time to present a little history of NIBGA. This is the third of several articles that were originally written by Charles Carnes and meticulously typed on a typewriter, not a computer. The pages were recently scanned, converted to MS Word and edited by Jim Winger, Vice-President, for the newsletter. So, in Charlie's own words...

### **The Night The Pond Burned Down**

The pond at Tri-State campgrounds near Angola, IN had a huge brush pile along side of it. When the owner of the campgrounds, Harold Householder, was asked why he didn't burn it he replied "The weather was never right when he had the time to do it." Jack Davis, the person who had made the inquiry, asked Harold if it would bother him if the brush pile caught fire that night. Harold replied no and sure enough the brush pile caught fire.

Jim Clark was the MC for the show and had been told what was going to happen. At an opportune time someone ran up to the stage and said something to Jim. Jim announced on the speakers that he had just been informed that the pond was on fire. This cleared out the audience since they all left to go watch the pond burn down. When everybody got to the pond and saw the brush burning they all had a good laugh and returned to the show. We can only imagine what they expected to see.

### **The Early Bird Gets The Worm**

At one festival at Tri-State, Joy Thompson pulled in on a Thursday so he could get the full benefit of a long week-end of bluegrass music. After he had been there a while the owner of the campground walked down and asked Joy what he was doing. Joy replied that he was there for the bluegrass festival, at which Harold replied "That's all well and good but you are a week early."

### **The Motorcyclists**

Right from the beginning there was a group of motorcyclists that came to the festivals. In the middle and late 1970's there was still an image of bikers, real or imagined, as being trouble makers. They camped together away from the other campers and pretty much stayed to themselves, except when they would come down to listen to the music or go to the concession stand. They never caused any serious problems but there was always a fear among some of the other bluegrassers that they would. On one occasion a rumor got started that they were going to tear the stage down. The fears spread and before long some of the regular bluegrassers were organizing to defend the stage. Some of the wives of the regulars started talking about carrying guns and before long those that weren't worried about the bikers were worried about getting shot accidentally. There was never an attempt made to tear the stage down. The bikers were a cross section of society, pretty much like the rest of the bluegrassers.

Stay tuned next month for more NIBGA history, including the fishing hole!



Look what was found recently on eBay! Jim Winger contacted the seller and got this story:

"There is no evident sign of any name ever having been on this jacket anywhere front or back. I found the jacket about 6 years ago here in a thrift store in a small bedroom town of Portland OR, called Gladstone, which is about 10 miles south of Portland.

When I found the jacket, I gave the jacket...as a humorous Christmas gift...to my best friend and world famous...and former resident of Indiana...guitar luthier John Greven, who moved to Portland from Indiana in 1999. Back then, besides building his guitars and working as the repair shop foreman for George Gruhn at Gruhns Guitars from 1969 to 1975, he also did play in some local bluegrass bands. That kind of ended when he accidentally sliced off about the first inch of his left middle finger using

his planer while building a guitar, though he can still play fairly well.

He got a kick out of the jacket, but he and his wife are downsizing all their stuff in anticipation of moving up into Washington State, in the next year or two, so he felt that the jacket was not something he would need or wear much at this point. So I figured, I might as well put it out here and see whom might be interested.

Thanks again for getting in touch!!! All The Best. Duffy"

## Over Jordan



The bluegrass community suffered a huge loss January 18, 2021, with the passing of **Jack Chaffins**. Jack was a wonderful friend to so many of us who were fortunate to have known him. Jack was born and raised in the coal fields of SE Ken-

tucky near the community of Mousie, in Knott County. Like so many from this area, Jack moved north to Indiana as a young man. He always held his home state and it's culture near and dear to his heart.

While Jack was a fixture in the Northern Indiana bluegrass scene, he played and recorded with numerous bluegrass bands in the KY/IN/OH/MI region through the years including Ray Slone, Clyde Bowling & The Southern Bluegrass Boys, The Moore Brothers, The New Highland Ramblers, Rick Prater & The Midnight Travelers, and last

but not least, as a long-time member of Echo Valley.

Having traveled with Jack quite a bit through the years I have many fond memories and witnessed many things that still amaze me. Jack always had time to help other pickers whether it was demonstrating a certain lick or tune or showing them how to properly set up their banjo. If he saw someone was struggling with their picks, needed a capo, a bridge, or a different set of strings he would see they got them and asked for nothing in return. If nothing else, Jack enjoyed the company of others over a cup of coffee and a good conversation.

From the first time I met Jack around 1983 I always felt he was more like family than a friend, a feeling he often shared with me as well as my family. As I was a teenager at the time Jack was very patient and took me "under his wing." He was a great mentor to not only me but to a countless number of young musicians. These are times that I will always cherish.

To call Jack a legend in the local and regional bluegrass community would likely be embarrassing to him. He was much more than that. He was a humble man and a much loved and respected person by those who knew him and he returned that love.

You will be missed, Jack. RIP  
~ by John Arms



Previously...

**Delores A. Richards**, 85, of Churubusco, Indiana, passed away on Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2020, at her home. Delores was married to **Robert "Duke" Richards**, Duke preceded her in death on June 29, 2020. Both were long time members of the club and could be seen at the festivals parked up on Michigan hill generally hosting Donnie Voiles and Echo Valley.



## (Major Lack of) Events

Until things get back to normal, we are just listing events that have been brought to our attention. Please let me know if you have something we can include. Email [News@NIBGA.com](mailto:News@NIBGA.com). Please contact venues before driving there.

**WHEN** 3/26, 4/30, 5/28, 6/25, 7/30, 8/27, 9/24, 10/29 (last Friday March thru Oct)

**WHAT** Bluegrass Night at Fibonacci Brewing

**WHERE** Fibonacci Brewing Company, 1445 Compton Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45231

**WHAT** Enjoy an evening of lively bluegrass music with **Vernon McIntyre's Appalachian Grass**; lightning fast instrumentals, close harmonies, and entertaining novelty songs. Fibonacci Brewing Company is a nano brewery in Mt. Healthy serving a wide variety of craft beers. Food Truck eats available on site during the show. The Fib-

nacci folks are in the process of constructing their beer garden and indoor concert venue and hope to complete the project soon. If you like beer, Fibonacci's is the place to be!

**PRICE** free admission, **TIME** 7pm til 9

**CONTACT** 513-832-1422, **WEB** <http://fibbrew.com/>  
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**WHEN** March 12, 2021

**WHERE** Virtual 2nd Friday Concert

<https://oxarts.org/portfolio-view/virtual-2nd-friday/>

**WHAT** Enjoy a FREE evening of lively bluegrass



music with **Vernon McIntyre's Appalachian Grass**; lighting fast instrumentals, close harmonies, and entertaining novelty songs at the Oxford Community Center's Virtual Second Friday Concert. The performance will be

streamed live on March 12 from 7:30pm-8:30pm. Contact Oxford Community Arts Center for details: 513-524-8506 or [info@oxarts.org](mailto:info@oxarts.org).



The monthly board meeting and community bluegrass jam is always the 3rd Sunday of the month. It is at the Southwest Conservation Club, 5703 Bluffton Rd., Fort Wayne, from 1 - 6 p.m. Admission is free. Food available for purchase to benefit the SWCC. Bring your acoustic instrument, or just come to listen. Social distancing and masks are required.

Northern Indiana Bluegrass Association  
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Fort Wayne, IN 46804-4946

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**Next NIBGA Jam - Mar 21, 2021**