



Americana Folk Concert Series Features Dan Weber March 28

In a few short years since his debut to a standing ovation at the Sisters Folk Festival, former National Park Ranger Dan Weber has become a sought after national touring artist for his upbeat and engaging performances, insightful songs, and hilarious off-the-cuff stories.

Bill Cohen interviewed Dan Weber for this issue of the newsletter.

Bill Cohen: Let me get this straight. You were a park ranger, and only after you turned 40 did you start to perform music? How and why did this miracle mid-life change happen?

Dan Weber: I was actually a National Park Service Ranger for a fairly short period of time, when I much younger, in the mid 1990's. I was an "Interpretive" ranger in Canyonlands National Park, in a remote region of the park known as "The Maze." Sometimes I did multi-day backpacking patrols and others I stayed in a "shepherd" type trailer off the grid

where I led walking tours into Horseshoe Canyon. It has some of the most spectacular rock art paintings in North America, including the famous "Great Gallery," which has hundreds of painted figures on the canyon walls, most about 10' tall with no arms or legs, and sometimes large antennae as well. It's really otherworldly!

About that time I got my very first guitar but didn't really learn how to play it (or have anyone to teach me), since I was stationed 46 miles from the nearest paved road and about 168 miles from the nearest "real" town (Moab, UT). I eventually learned how to play it and got the songwriting itch in my late 30's. And when I turned 40 I made a promise to myself to get up the courage to play an open mic. I played a few and made some good friends and felt encouraged to keep writing.

Cari Ray: Both Dionne

Continued on p. 2

Inside this issue

Dan Weber.....1,2,3

Member Profile:
Jennifer Cohen-
Jordan.....4

The 2020 Bob Kirby
Scholarship.....5

Outrageous Song
Contest.....6

CFMS Donors Meet the
Challenge.....6

Meet n' Greet at 2020
Folk Festival.....6

Save the
Date.....7

Following Our Own....7

New Members.....7

Dan Weber on Americana Stage March 28

Continued from p. 1

Then I entered a few local song contests which led to some bigger national ones (like Kerrville, Woody Guthrie, etc.) and one thing led to another. Suffice to say when I started writing songs I never once gave it a thought that I'd be touring, making CDs, etc. It's been an interesting turn of events in my life to say the least.

Bill Cohen: Last year, you won the national Woody Guthrie song-writing contest with a tune about gun violence. Tell us about that song.

Dan Weber: The song is called "Ever Since Columbine." I wrote it one afternoon while overhearing a CNN report about two shootings in Wichita, KS and Kalamazoo, MI. Most people probably forgot about those two, which speaks to how we're inured to hearing about them. Since then there's been so many better-known other shootings—Orlando, Dallas, Las Vegas, Parkland, El Paso, Dayton, etc. The list just goes on and on. The shooting in Dayton hit me particularly hard, since I went to college there (I'm a UD graduate, class of '89), and spent a lot of fun nights in the Oregon district where that shooting happened.

The song was born out of the frustration I have that every time we hear of one of these tragedies there's a litany of outrage and condemnations, along with the usual promises of change, and yet there's been very little meaningful action or legislation that has stopped or slowed the shootings from happening. For emphasis, a friend of mine from Texas messaged me out of the blue one day and said "Are you Ok???" To which I replied, "I'm just working in the yard,

why?" Apparently there was an active shooting unfolding a mile or so from my house. There seems to be no end in sight and the song speaks to that frustration, and the hope that maybe by raising the issue in my small way, it will help move the needle some. To that end, "Ever Since Columbine" will be on the next CD that I'm recording with a release date of Spring 2021.

Bill Cohen: You've even written songs about Woody Guthrie himself, and your original songs have been compared to the ones that John Prine created early in his career. Tell us about the influence of those two musicians on your songwriting and singing, and tell us about any other musician heroes you hold dear.

Dan Weber: I think the influence of both Woody Guthrie and John Prine on my songwriting is mostly due to the straightforwardness of their writing styles. Both have that wonderful "turn of phrase," but they generally get to the point, be it saying something serious, funny, or ironic, etc. I love the poetic songwriting of someone like Dylan but for whatever reason as I've gotten older I've gravitated more toward songwriters who say something beautifully but not so much as to obscure the meaning. Or as Woody was supposedly quoted as saying: "Any fool can make something complicated. It takes a genius to make it simple." Other songwriting heroes? I generally love the storytellers: Gordon Lightfoot, Guy Clark, Tom Russell, Greg Brown, and Bill Morrissey. Bill is as responsible for me being a songwriter as much as anyone. I didn't really know his music but I won a radio contest to go see him in Seattle in 1990 on the Standing Eight tour and was completely knocked out by how great he was.



Dan Weber: Folksinger

I was still a few years away from even getting my first guitar but he was the first solo troubadour/raconteur type that I saw live that made me think, "I want to do this someday."

Bill Cohen: You are a three-time finalist at the prestigious Kerrville Folk Festival that celebrates songwriting. What broad range of topics have your songs dealt with? Where do you get the inspiration for your original songs?

Dan Weber: I feel like I write about anything and everything but that my writing is informed by my life experiences. There's definitely been a lot of inspiration from the landscapes I've lived and traveled in—the canyons, mountains, rivers, etc. And I spend a lot of time on the road, so I meet some pretty interesting characters. But mostly I'm attracted to good stories and themes that have some universal truth to them, like my songs "I Ain't Done Ramblin' Yet" or "I Deal with Crazy All Day." And I especially love songs that you naturally just want to sing along with.

As far as my process goes, I generally write in the early morning, like 6 – 9:00 am, before I read the paper, check emails, Facebook, etc. and pick up one of my guitars and just play around until some chord or progression resonates with me. And I start writing with that until something sticks. And then I wonder "What's THAT about?" and go where the story or the muse takes me. I like to write when my brain is still as close to the dream state as possible, where it's free to wander (and is less critical in an editorial way) before all the events of the day have intruded into my mind.

I also keep a pretty active running list of things that I hear or things that hit me

as interesting. So if I overhear something that strikes me, I'll write it down in my phone or a notebook and go back to that on occasion. In some ways I really believe that listening is the most important quality for a songwriter to have.

Bill Cohen: Is music now your full-time career? How much touring do you do every year? What's your most memorable performing experience?

Dan Weber: Music is my full-time career. It's now been 12 years since my first open mic and despite knowing exactly how I got here it still kind of amazes me that it's happened at all. I don't feel like I chose this path as much as it chose me. It's been one of, if not the most, amazing chapters in my life. I feel very grateful to be able to write songs, make records, tour, and meet so many wonderful people along the way. My life is so much richer for it. I play about 75 shows a year. Summer is mostly fairs and festivals and in the Winter I try to stay closer to home in the Pacific NW or head south where it's less likely to snow. For the most part I play a mix of folk series, festivals and house concerts.

I've had so many memorable performing experiences it's hard to single out just one, but probably the best moments were when I was starting out and still very unsure of myself and was lucky enough to play the Sisters Folk Festival (in Oregon), or Kerrville or the Woody Guthrie Folk Festival where I was well received and had this feeling of "Oh I really CAN do this!" Those experiences were very validating in terms of inspiring and encouraging me to keep writing, keep playing, and keep pushing myself. I'm very grateful to have had those opportunities.

Dan Weber on Becoming a Folksinger/Songwriter

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Member Profile: Jennifer Cohen-Jordan



Jennifer Cohen-Jordan is a good example of how someone can get deeply involved in the Columbus Folk Music Society in a relatively short amount of time. She moved to central Ohio in 2016 for a scheduled surgery and follow-up treatment at the Ohio State Medical Center. Following the surgery, she convalesced with her daughter in Columbus. It was during an afternoon spent volunteering at the Wesley Glen Retirement Community in Columbus that she came in contact with the Worthington Square musicians, who played at Wesley Glen twice per month.

She was intrigued.

The Squares players told her how they always welcomed new members and added her to the mailing list. And before long she became a regular player, adding fiddle backgrounds and breaks to the folk and bluegrass songs in the Squares repertoire.

Early Musical Background

Jennifer Cohen-Jordan's interest in music started in grade school. She studied violin using the Suzuki method and continued playing through high school, including a stint with a local symphony orchestra. After moving to North Carolina in her 20s, she became

acquainted with Bluegrass and old-time mountain music and warmed to it immediately. Several years of performing and jamming with local Bluegrass and mountain musicians increased her love of the music and the traditions behind the music.

Medical Issues

It was while teaching Appalachian Studies and Women's Studies at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, that Jennifer was diagnosed with a brain stem tumor. The condition short-circuited her teaching career and also her musical career. She has had two surgeries to remove the tumor (the second at Ohio State) and will be undergoing a third surgery in the near future.

Recovery....and More Music

Since joining the Worthington Square players, Jennifer has branched out musically, adding guitar, harmonica, and banjo to her list of instruments. The two surgeries left her with a paralyzed vocal cord and it took some time before she could speak normally. She was sure she'd never be able to sing again. But with the help and encouragement of others in CFMS, she began, little by little, to use her voice at the various jam sessions and is finding now that the regular vocal efforts are strengthening her vocal cords.....another success story for the Worthington Squares!

Further Involvement in CFMS

Jennifer: "After playing for a while I decided I wanted to know more about the organization with which I was becoming increasingly involved, so I began to attend board meetings. I now sit on the board and last year I volunteered at one of the COFF workshops and in the kids' 'instrument petting zoo.' I look forward to volunteering again this year."

"Not only has my experience with CFMS been rewarding for what it has allowed me to do for others, it has been really good for me as well. I have developed a sense of community among my fellow musicians and other folk arts supporters and I have made such *very good* friends."

The 2020 Bob Kirby Scholarship for Folk Music

Traditional folk music represents a significant part of the American heritage. It is our goal to perpetuate interest in this music. The recipient of this award will have an opportunity to learn about the folk music tradition, make music of his or her own, and have fun with people who like to do the same.

History

Bob Kirby was a member and firm friend of The Columbus Folk Music Society, the Shamrock Club, and The Dublin Irish Festival. Bob supported folk music in central Ohio and believed in the importance of honoring and preserving musical traditions. In harmony with our mission, The Columbus Folk Music Society has established The Bob Kirby Scholarship In Folk Music in his memory.

Purpose of the Kirby Scholarship

- To assist young musicians from the central Ohio area by offering opportunities they may otherwise not experience
- To enhance musical skills
- To pursue a greater knowledge of, and appreciation for, folk music
- To offer performance opportunities

Application Process

- Open to Students in grades 3-12
- Submit a letter explaining your interest in music, your musical goals, what musical instrument you are interested in playing (or play) and if you sing.
- Interviews will be held with the top 5 applicants.

Benefits Provided by the Scholarship

- Access to all activities at The Central Ohio Folk Festival (May 2nd and 3rd at Highbanks Metro Park) including four tickets to the Saturday evening concert
- Optional: A brief performance at the scholarship award ceremony at The Central Ohio Folk Festival
- \$20 per day food credit at the Festival food service
- \$500.00 award to be used toward the purchase of an instrument or private lessons with a teacher of your choice
- The CFMS monthly newsletter "A Different Strummer" sent monthly to the winner.

For additional information contact the Scholarship Committee by e-mail:
lindamcdonald@columbusfolkmusicsociety.org

Application Form

To apply for the Bob Kirby Scholarship, please do the following:

- Complete the Application form.
- Write a brief description of your musical interest.

This application must be received at the following address by: March 20, 2020

The Columbus Folk Music Society c/o Linda McDonald
444 Oakland Pk Ave
Columbus, Ohio 43214

Interviews of the top 5 applicants will be conducted by April 1.

The winner will be notified by April 6, 2020.

NAME OF STUDENT _____

MUSIC TEACHER _____

GRADE IN SCHOOL _____ AGE _____

SCHOOL _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

NOTE: Students under the age of 16 must be accompanied in their attendance at the Festival by a parent or guardian. Admission for the accompanying parent or guardian is free.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/
GUARDIAN _____
(Required for ALL applicants)

The Most Outrageous Song Contest Is Coming

The Most Outrageous Song Contest (formerly the Worst Song in the World Contest) has been a staple of the Central Ohio Folk Festival for a number of years. The rules? Create your own song OR perform someone else's (solo or with others) before a listening audience who will judge as to whether it rates as the "most outrageous" song of the bunch. Songs can be outrageous in story line or in performance, or both. You may use a prompt sheet.

The Most Outrageous Song Contest will be held Friday, May 1, (7:30pm) at the customary Meet 'n Greet potluck and jam at the Northern Shelter, which kicks off the festival for CFMS members, volunteers and musicians. There is a second Outrageous Song Contest on Saturday, May 2nd (3:15pm) on the festival Showcase Stage immediately following the Bob Kirby Scholarship awards. You can enter both contests, if you are so inclined. We only ask you keep the songs family friendly. Consider putting your song together now in prepa-

ration for this year's festival. If you are interested in participating in this most dignified and rather fun event, contact Tom Nagel at: tom-nagel@wowway.com. If at all possible, let Tom know if you are participating prior to festival, as it helps with planning. A separate prize will be awarded for each event. Pictured below are some of the participants in last year's event.



CFMS Donors Meet the Challenge

For the third straight year, CFMS members have met a challenge from an anonymous contributor. He (or she or they) promised to match all member donations in November and December dollar for dollar, up to a total of \$700. Member Bob Lipetz got into the spirit by adding his own \$100 to the matching pool.

With a total of \$800 being offered in the 100% match campaign, CFMS members rose to the challenge and gave \$950, according to CFMS Treasurer Charlie Flowers.

Bottom line? CFMS coffers are now fuller, to the tune of \$1,750 as we head into the new year.

Meet n' Greet at 2020 Folk Festival

The Meet n' Greet at this year's Folk Festival will be held at the Northern Shelter at Highbanks Metro Park. The Shelter entrance is the 2nd road to the right after you enter the park. Weather permitting, we'll have the fireplace and the potbellied stove fired up for ambiance!

There is no microwave or stove available, so hot potluck items should be brought in crock pots. There is electric and running water. There are picnic tables in the shelter, but for jamming, you may want to bring your own chair. There will loads of good food and fun, mingling with COFF volunteers and CFMS members, and lots of jamming! The Friday, May 1 Meet 'n Greet runs from 5:00 to 9:00 pm, with the Most Outrageous Song Contest scheduled for 7:30 pm.

Save the Date

Concerts

Saturday, March 28: Americana/Folk Concert Series featuring Dan Weber. Concert begins at 8:00, Columbus Mennonite Church, 35 Oakland Park. Jam session at 6:00, open mic & sing-along at 7:00. Donations: \$10 members, \$15 non-members.

Saturday, May 2: Central Ohio Folk Festival. Saturday evening featured performer: Lindsay Lou, May 2, 7:00 pm. Tickets are \$15 and can be pre-purchased at Eventbrite or purchased on site.

Jam Sessions

2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month: Jam at Worthington Christian Village, 165 Highbluffs, Columbus, 2:00 to 3:00.

1st and 3rd Thursday of each month: Jam at Wesley Glen, 5155 N. High St., Columbus. 1st Thursday at Health Center, 2:30 to 3:30. 3rd Thursday at Special Care unit, 1:30 to 2:30.

The Saturday Music Jam at Worthington Farmer's Market 9:30-11:30am. Beginning in November, this jam moves indoors, to the Worthington Mall on N. High St. in Worthington. All are welcome.

New Jam event: Starting Tuesday, January 7 from 5:00 - 7:00 pm. The jam will be held at Seton Square, 1776 Drew Ave., Columbus 43235. Please park in the south parking lot. Qiming will meet musicians at the south gate 4:30-4:50. Looks like this will be a regularly-occurring event.

2nd Thursday every month Acoustic Jam – Picking Party, 7-10 pm. (Mike Hale/Mary Miller-Hosts)
Old Horseshoe Tavern & Restaurant
65 S Main St, Johnstown, OH 43031

4th Thursday every month Acoustic Open Mic, 7-10 pm.
Old Horseshoe Tavern, Johnstown

Following Our Own

Grassahol at Combustion Brewery Beers & Bluegrass Series. Friday, March 6, 7—10 pm. 80 W. Church St., Pickerington

BluesSwing at Avondale Senior Village, 6255 Delta Loop, Dublin. Saturday, March 7, 3:00 pm

Avalon Nine at Maple Syrup Pancake Breakfast. Sunday, March 8, 10:30 am. 2790 OH Rte. 61, Fulton, OH

Avalon Nine with Brian Szuch, Acoustic Trio. Sunday, March 15, 3 pm. 3230 Olentangy River Road, Columbus

Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

Natalie & Greg Whittman

Dagmar T. Wolcott

The Columbus Folk Music SocietyP.O. Box 20735
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www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org

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Phone: _____ (Cell): _____ If Band, website: _____

E-mail Address(es) (if a household / band membership): _____, _____, _____, _____

Membership renewals are due annually on September 30th. Check one of the membership levels listed below.

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Band Membership \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Silver \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Household \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Good Friend \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$200 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member \$500 |

For credit card transactions, visit CFMS website at: <https://www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org/member-application.html>Membership amounts may be tax-deductible. My place of work matches donations: ☐**Like to volunteer? Please click all that apply. We are an all-volunteer driven organization!**

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| <input type="checkbox"/> CFMS events | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing/Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> General Help | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Tasks | |
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Society, P.O. Box 20735, Columbus,
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