



Artwork by Emily Isbell

THE GRASSY GAZETTE

June 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Letter from the President
 - Greeting from the Newsletter Chair
 - 2021 Willa Beach-Porter Scholarship
 - A Visit to Calton Cases
 - Return of the CTBA Calendars
 - We Have a Jam or Two For You
 - Return to Pearl!
- Women in Music Spotlight: Lisa Machac of Omni Sound Project
 - Strictly Bluegrass on KOOP Radio
 - Summer Bluegrass Reading List
 - Mike's Chamber of Bluegrass Horrors
 - Benefit the CTBA While You Shop

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Summer is here, and along with the Texas heat it has also brought the opportunity to meet with friends and family once again!

My daughter and I went to **Bluegrass Night at Radio Coffee & Beer** for the first time in almost 16 months and the magic was absolutely palpable. The music was



electric, smiles were radiant, hugs lasted a bit longer and seemed a little more meaningful. Watching the kids play together, bobbing to the beats between mystical oak trees was pure joy. The unspoken, communal sigh of relief could be felt throughout the night. Everything felt right again.

We have endured so much this past year, to be on this side with the music, the pulse of our community, is nothing short of

incredible.

This summer will undoubtedly be filled with an abundance of music and the CTBA is here to support every moment. While browsing our website, check out the growing number of **local events** and **jams** including the **CTBA Jam at Oskar Blues (just about) every Sunday from 3-5.**

You can also find information regarding programs such as our **2021 Willa Beach-Porter Scholarship** - applications are **due on July 15th**, and all **Texas residents aged twelve and above** are eligible to apply!

We are so grateful for the continued support and help in sustaining this organization. Our success, is truly the power of music and community. We can't wait to see you again!

Happy pickin' y'all!

Libby Brennan

GREETING FROM THE NEWSLETTER CHAIR



Hello Friends and Supporters of the CTBA,

Welcome to the newsletter of the **Central Texas Bluegrass Association**, which features articles written by board members and other interested people.

If you know of a CTBA member who is interested in receiving a **scholarship** for bluegrass musical instruction. See our article in this issue.

We also have an article with some great ideas for your **Bluegrass Summer Reading List**. And many articles about

what's going on in our area regarding bluegrass events.

I'd like to encourage you to **become a member** or **re-up** if your membership has lapsed. And if you're ready to roll up your proverbial sleeves and really contribute to our association, **consider running for the CTBA Board of Directors**, positions open for 2022-2023.

We hope from reading our newsletter you are entertained, informed, and moved to join our **43-year-old** association. We also hope that you are provoked to dust off that banjo behind the couch and take it for a spin.

Mike McKinley

2021 WILLA BEACH-PORTER SCHOLARSHIP

The time to apply for a **CTBA scholarship** is **NOW** - *applications are due by July 15th!*



There are very few in-person bluegrass camps scheduled for this year. So, as in 2020, the CTBA has partnered with **ArtistWorks** to offer **year-long subscriptions** to the recipient's choice from the many fine ArtistWorks teachers. As last year, scholarship eligibility is for **Texas residents aged 12 and over** who otherwise **would not be able to afford** the lessons.

More information available at CentralTexasBluegrass.org/Scholarship. Get your application in today!

A VISIT TO CALTON CASES

by Jon Lundbom



Over the past year or so I've had some time on my hands and started buying, selling, and trading instruments like crazy. And, ultimately, I was able to turn some modestly-priced instruments into some more historic and highly-prized ones. Which meant it was time to improve my instrument-protection game. And while there are a few big players in the high-end case market, it so happens that the most highly-praised instrument case manufacturer is located right here in Central Texas.

Calton Cases started out in England in 1969, moving to Canada in the late '80s, then to our very own Austin in 2012. I called them up and made an appointment to meet with their head of sales, Mr. Matt Linville. Then came the hardest part: the choices. Calton offers, frankly, too many color options for the exterior and interior, both. (Joking, of course, the range is outstanding.) Did I want to keep it simple, a white exterior I can cover in stickers? Did I want to match the colors of my instrument? Did I want a cool-as-all-getout case that would stand out, or something less appealing to thieves that would blend in? Ultimately, I chose a white exterior (won't absorb heat) with their granite finish (won't show scratches) and a black interior (I'm boring).

I swung by Calton the following week. While I was not able to get a full tour (thanks, COVID), I could see how large and interesting an operation it is. Production is in one big room with over a dozen people working hard to churn out cases of all shapes and colors. (Their new yellow with splatter paint finish looks crazy cool in person.) Matt - who couldn't be a nicer dude - took my instrument for an hour to get its exact measurements, and that was it. Unbelievably easy.

Four weeks or so later, I went to pick up my case. It is, of course, perfect. I feel better having some world-class protection for my instrument, a worthy investment indeed. And supporting a local business while I'm at it. Thanks Calton!

RETURN OF THE CTBA CALENDARS

BLUEGRASS EVENTS	BLUEGRASS JAMS
Saturday, June 12 6:30pm Sieker Band @ Dahlia Cafe in Liberty Hill	Saturday, June 12 11:00am Boerne Pickers Bluegrass Jam 3:00pm Fayetteville Picking Park
Monday, June 14 7:00pm Bluegrass Night at Radio Coffee & Beer	Monday, June 14 6:30pm Cypress Bluegrass Jam
Thursday, June 17 6:00pm Mo Pac Traffic Jams at Ginny's Little Longhorn Saloon 7:00pm Grassy Thursdays at St. Elmo Brewing	Tuesday, June 15 6:30pm Manchaca Baptist Church Bluegrass Jam
Saturday, June 19 3:00pm The Greenlawn Rangers	Wednesday, June 16 8:00pm Butterfly Bar Bluegrass Jam
Sunday, June 20 2:00pm MoPac Traffic Jams (Round Rock) 3:00pm Eddie Collins' Fathers' Day Celebration	Saturday, June 19 2:00pm Burnet Bluegrass Jam
Monday, June 21 7:00pm Bluegrass Night at Radio Coffee & Beer	Monday, June 21 6:30pm Cypress Bluegrass Jam
Thursday, June 24 7:00pm Grassy Thursdays at St. Elmo Brewing 8:00pm Sol Chase Bluegrass Band	Tuesday, June 22 6:30pm Manchaca Baptist Church Bluegrass Jam
Saturday, June 26	Saturday, June 26 11:00am Boerne Pickers Bluegrass Jam 12:00pm Kieb Woods Bluegrass Jam (Tomball)

During the pandemic, the CTBA made a decision to suspend publishing of the **Bluegrass Events** and **Bluegrass Jams** calendars at CentralTexasBluegrass.org.

As restrictions have eased, however, we have decided to reinstate and begin once again updating our calendars! A brief glance will show you all you need to know about what bluegrass concerts, events, or jams are happening on any given day across Central Texas.

If you have a gig or jam or event you'd like to promote, we would be thrilled to list it on our calendars. Just drop us a line at

Events@CentralTexasBluegrass.org. And if you're a CTBA member, you can email us or use the **member event submission form** at [CentralTexasBluegrass.org](https://www.CentralTexasBluegrass.org).

Not a member? **Join the CTBA today!** We encourage you to become a member of the CTBA, both to ensure our continued viability as an organization, and to continue to provide many benefits to our members. To **learn more about the benefits** of membership, check out the CTBA membership page at [CentralTexasBluegrass.org/Join](https://www.CentralTexasBluegrass.org/Join).

WE HAVE A JAM OR TWO FOR YOU

By Chris Jones, CTBA Vice-President



If you love to play bluegrass..... STOP, Back up! I was asked to write an article about CTBA jamming and started to direct it to those who play a stringed instrument. But this article is also for those who love to listen to bluegrass as well. We are proud to host a number of jams every month and have found that more and more people are coming out just to listen to the jam, not just play.

So if you love to play or listen to bluegrass, we have a jam for you! And we have tried to make CTBA jams all inclusive, regardless of your playing level or experience. Everyone is welcome.

Before COVID, CTBA sponsored a longstanding **beginner and intermediate jam** at the **Wildflower Terrace Senior Apartments** (3801 Berkman Dr, Austin, TX 78723). Perfect for those just starting out playing music! We are happy to report the Wildflower Terrace jam is **starting up again on July 8th**, and will continue on the **second and fourth Thursdays** of each month from **2-4PM**. The jam is hosted by Steve Mangold, if you need to get in touch just drop us a line at CTBA@CentralTexasBluegrass.org.

And we are happy to report that on June 27, we kicked our **Sunday jam** back into effect at **Oskar Blues Brewery Austin** (10420 Metric Boulevard #150, Austin, TX 78758). We will be jamming at Oskar Blues (just about) **every Sunday** starting at **3PM**. It is not uncommon for enough people to show up that we have to split into more than one jam, and if the weather is nice, we sometimes play outside. Oskar Blues has been great to us and staple crowd of listeners are usually on hand for this jam.

We know of two other great jams close to Austin that are back up and running every month. First is the famous "**Pearl**" Jam located at the **Pearl Community Center** in Pearl, Texas. This is multi-day jam that includes a Saturday stage show on the **first Saturday of the month**. Camping is

available. The stage show is free to attend. Jamming is usually going on Friday evening and all day Saturday.

More information on Pearl bluegrass jam can be found at PearlTxCommunityCenter.com.

Another great jam is on the **second Saturday** of the month in Fayetteville at **Fayetteville Picking Park** on the town square. Jamming usually starts about **3PM**. For more information contact **Lou-Lou Barbour** on their [Facebook group](#).

We have worked hard to make it easy for you to find a jam, especially as things begin to start back up after COVID. The [CTBA website](#) has a great interactive **calendar** that allows you to display all bluegrass jams for the month. Find a day you are looking to jam, and there is probably a jam somewhere in Central Texas that will accommodate you.

As new jams start up again, we will post them on this calendar. And if you know of a jam that is **not listed**, [please let us know](#) and we will get it on the calendar.

Pick on!

RETURN TO PEARL!

By Chip Bach



When I departed a nine-month consulting job in southwest New Jersey to make a permanent move to the Austin area at the end of 2017, I was concerned. I looked forward to being back with family. However, that corner of the mid-Atlantic states (DE, MD, NJ, and PA) is rich in bluegrass. I was anxiously hoping to find similar bluegrass enthusiasm in my new home state. A visit to **Pearl** (after finding out about it on the CTBA webpage) in January 2018 proved to this easterner that bluegrass was quite healthy here in Central Texas. And the bluegrass, while retaining and honoring the traditional styles was obviously influenced by Texas music (read ... swing is king!).

Pearl has reopened and on **July 3rd** bluegrass music will once again ring through the halls of the schoolhouse on the hill. I'm planning on it! The music has been great, and those skies are amazing for those who enjoy celestial views! Oh and the PIE is back!!

WOMEN IN MUSIC SPOTLIGHT:

LISA MACHAC OF OMNI SOUND PROJECT

By Libby Brennan

Omni Sound Project began as a response to the lack of visibility of female-identifying, trans and non-binary musicians and engineers in the music world. Just as Omni was getting off the ground, the pandemic hit which presented an important challenge for Lisa and the organization which now has a faculty of six teachers and a number of virtual classes, including *Audio Engineering Basics*, *Film Sound* and *Music Production* to name a few. I had the opportunity to connect with Lisa via email to discuss the past, present and future of Omni Sound Project.



How has Omni grown since beginning last year?

When we started, we were aiming to be a local organization and anticipated having 20 people at each class. After four in-person classes, we started hosting online classes in response to the pandemic. Now, we have 50 to 100 people at our online events, which we host monthly, and there are 325 Omni Sound Project members!

What was the greatest take away during the pandemic?

I learned to be more inclusive of all genders, and not focus exclusively on women. I have to admit that I was new to gender issues when I started Omni, and the community has helped to educate me and make us more inclusive. So now our classes include all genders and membership is free to female-identifying, non-binary, and trans people.

What do you hope for the future of women in audio and music?

I want to see women and marginalized genders equally represented, hired, paid, and promoted in the industries. Unfortunately, we have a very long way to go, as evidenced by the incredible imbalance we see in our own community (at venues and festivals). At this point, maintaining gender imbalance in audio and music is a willful act, as it's incredibly easy to find and book talented professionals of all races, genders, and abilities. To fail to do so now displays intentional sexism and racism, and I won't stop working until those who are hiring and booking change their practices.

What was your first concert?

Helen Reddy at the Houston Summit. I was five years old and my favorite song was "I Am Woman (Hear Me Roar)".

For more information on Omni Sound Project, classes and memberships visit: OmniSoundProject.com

STRICTLY BLUEGRASS ON KOOP RADIO



The CTBA is a proud underwriter of KOOP radio program **Strictly Bluegrass**, airing **Sunday mornings** from **10AM-Noon** on **91.7 FM** out of Austin.

We recently updated our PSA message, it will be recorded with some nice bluegrass background and played every week.

It's important to the CTBA to support this locally-programmed show.

Public and community local radio programs have shrunk as talk and

news radio from the big providers proliferates. For KOOP to have supported a locally-produced bluegrass show and made it an important part of their programming says a lot about how they want to serve their community.

We thank **KOOP** and the programmers, **Sharon, Gary, and Ted**: you are an important link in the Austin bluegrass chain.

And of course you, dear reader, can support bluegrass on KOOP anytime, you don't have to wait for a pledge drive. Learn more and donate today at KOOP.org/Programs/StrictlyBluegrass.

From the KOOP website....

"Strictly Bluegrass is the only radio show in central Texas that features bluegrass music. We feature current artists and reach into the deep catalog of the founders of bluegrass and its roots, which include old time Appalachian and traditional black music. We air special programming celebrating the women pioneers and national holidays. We also feature live performances of local and traveling bands. All three hosts have large bluegrass music collections, play bluegrass music themselves, and regularly attend bluegrass performances throughout Texas. And they have long histories as hosts of traditional music shows on KOOP and other non-profit stations."

SUMMER BLUEGRASS READING LIST

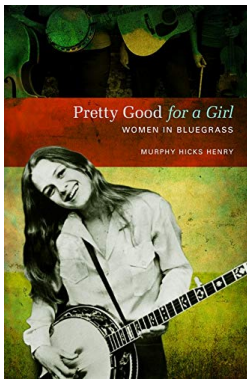
Do you have a little extra time on your hands this summer? Are you looking for some great reading relevant to bluegrass? This feature is for you! This is by no means exhaustive but it is a good list from some of our board members...

Recommended by Chip Bach....

Pretty Good for a Girl: Women in Bluegrass

by Murphy Hicks Henry

The first book devoted entirely to women in bluegrass, *Pretty Good for a Girl* documents the lives of more than seventy women whose vibrant contributions to the



development of bluegrass have been, for the most part, overlooked. Accessibly written and organized by decade, the book begins with Sally Ann Forrester, who played accordion and sang with Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys from 1943 to 1946, and continues into the present with artists such as Alison Krauss, Rhonda Vincent, and the Chicks. Drawing from extensive interviews, well-known banjoist Murphy Hicks Henry gives voice to women performers and innovators throughout bluegrass's history, including such pioneers as Bessie Lee Mauldin, Wilma Lee Cooper, and Roni and Donna Stoneman; family bands all-girl bands, Laurie Lewis, Lynn Morris, Missy Raines, and many others including the Lewises, Whites, and McLains; and later pathbreaking performers such as the Buffalo Gals and others.



Recommended by Mike McKinley...

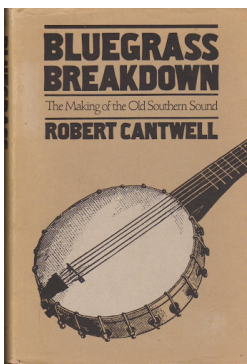
Bluegrass: A History
by Neil V. Rosenberg

Our next book is the first and still best scholarly bluegrass book ever written. This book was originally released in the mid 1980s and has undergone several revisions and updates since then. This is the most complete and credible telling of the bluegrass story, written by banjo player and historian Neil Rosenberg.



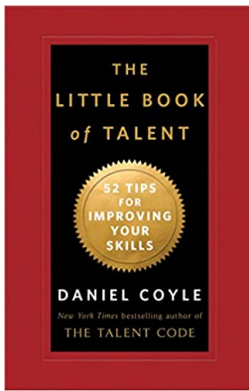
Ring the Banjar
by Lloyd Webb

This book details a major gallery exhibition centered around the most musical of instruments. It's from MIT, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



Bluegrass Breakdown: The Making of the Old Southern Sound
by Robert Cantwell

Then we have the bluegrass tome. This one is a challenge, a freewheeling deep dive into the roots of bluegrass as well as some of the stories and influences behind it. This one is a bit "thick." Author Robert Cantwell analyzes the social and commercial background of southern music, the "Big Bang" of bluegrass, African influences, bluegrass and jazz, and lots more.



Recommended by Lenny Nichols...

The Little Book of Talent

by Daniel Coyle

"The Little Book of Talent" is an easy-to-use handbook of scientifically proven, field tested methods to improve skills - your skills, your kid's skills, your organization's skills - in sports, music, art, math, and business. The product of five years of reporting from the world's greatest talent hotbeds and interviews with successful master coaches, it distills the daunting complexity of skill development into 52 clear, concise directives. Whether you are 10 or 100, whether you are on the sports field or the stage, in the classroom or the corner office, this is an essential guide for anyone who ever asked, "How do I get better?"

We hope you enjoy some of this reading material this summer. Thanks to our contributors Chip, Lenny, and Mike!

Time to celebrate the great stories that have been passed down through the years and preserved in our heritage... Especially the morbid and shocking stories. Welcome to...

MIKE'S CHAMBER OF BLUEGRASS HORRORS

*Hello music lovers! Again we shuffle over into the dark corner of the room and creep open the bluegrass anxiety closet. Let's have a quick peek inside to see what unspeakable situations are celebrated in the bluegrass cannon this month. This week we feature the old broadside ballad "**The Butcher's Boy**." This song is not funny, and underscores a problem that is still very relevant today. This is the familiar story of a jilted girl with a tender heart who has presumably gotten "into the family way" with the Butcher's Boy, who now has no interest in her or her baby. She feels she has no recourse, and so commits the predictable act.*

In London City, where I did dwell
A blue eyed boy, I loved so well
He courted me, my life away
And with me then, he would not stay

There is a strange girl in this town
And there my true love sits him down
He takes this strange girl on his knee
And he tells to her what he wont tell me.

It's grief to me and I'll tell you why
Because she has more gold than I.
But Gold will melt and Silver fly
True hearted love will never die.

I went upstairs to go to bed
And nothing to my mother said
But Mother said you're acting queer
What is the trouble my daughter dear?

Oh Mother dear you need not know
The Pain and sorrow, grief and woe
Give me a chair and set me down
With pen and ink to write words down.

Oh dig my grave both wide and deep
Place marble at my head and feet
And on my grave place a willow tree
That he may mourn and weep for me.

And when her father first came home-
"Where is my Girl, Where has she gone?
He went upstairs, the door he broke
And found her hanging from a rope.

He took his knife and he cut her down,
And in her bosom these words are found;
A silly girl am I, you know
To hang myself for the Butcher's Boy.

BENEFIT THE CTBA WHILE YOU SHOP

Did you know that you can provide a benefit to the CTBA while you shop at **Amazon** and **Randall's**? That just about covers anything you would need.



For every purchase you make with the **AmazonSmile** and **Randall's Good Neighbor Program**, you also **make a contribution to the CTBA at no cost to you**. These contributions help CTBA support and promote bluegrass concerts, radio programming, events, jams, bands, teachers, workshops, and so much more.

If you are not a member of one of these rewards programs, please consider joining **Amazon Smile** and/or **Randall's Good Neighbor** program and linking your rewards to the CTBA.

The Central Texas Bluegrass Association would like to **thank Amazon Smile** and **Randall's Good Neighbor** program for helping us be the glue that binds the bluegrass world together in Central Texas.

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