SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA SONGWRITERS ASSOCIATION

SVSA MUSIC NEWS

OCTOBER 2022

WWW.SVSASONGS.COM

BOB SCHMUCKER

OCTOBER FEATURE ARTICLE (REPRINT)

The art of self-promotion for performing musicians

by Bob Schmucker

So you're a guitar-slingin' golden-throated songwriter that is bound for the big time. What else do you need besides your trusty axe and a bag full of killer songs? Well, unless you've got a record deal with a major label that's going to provide a huge marketing and PR team to get your name out there, you've got to figure out that piece yourself.

Once your family and friends get tired of supporting your fledgling (or extended) music career, where do the paying fans come from and how do you attract them? That's something I've been working hard on lately as de-facto marketing director for 3rd Street Coffeehouse in Roanoke VA. I'm going to share with you some of what I've learned.

You probably know that social media is the dominant and potentially most effective way to get out your message, specifically when and where you'll be playing. But you need to know that not every post that you create will be seen in the newsfeed of your Facebook friends. To do that, you need to up your game a bit. Here are some things that you can do.

First of all, get on Facebook and create a Facebook event. That's a type of free advertisement that automatically improves the odds of being seen over a normal text

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The next meeting of the SVSA will be held **WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 26** in the LL Rice Room at the Jefferson Center in Roanoke VA.

Doors open at 7:00 p.m.; the meeting begins at 7:30 and will last until the last song critique is finished, or 10:00 p.m., whichever comes first.

Members may submit one song for critique (on CD, phone, computer, or you can perform it live) and should provide at least 25 copies of the lyrics.

Critiques are limited to members only but non-members and guests are encouraged to sit in on the discussions and exercises.

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Nothing is as effective as shaking a hand, exchanging a smile, and extending a personal invitation. That's how politicians get votes and it's a great way for performers to get new fans.

post by the miracle of Facebook programing algorithms. But you still need to create the content that makes it interesting and attractive.

Be sure to describe what you'll be doing and anything that makes it special. Maybe you'll be playing some new songs. Maybe it's a CD release party. Like a good song, there needs to be a hook to draw folks in.

And don't just post it (always public so it can be shared), go the next step and send invitations to your music loving friends. That way, it will absolutely 100% show up on their page.

Facebook does a great job of telling you how to do the rest of it. Just click on **https://events.fb.com/#create-a-great-event**. Share your event to local music based groups that may be interested. This is all free at this point.

Use videos to bring your events and other posts to life. Videos get a lot more views than a still photo or a text post, which a lot of people just scroll past. Keep them short though, around a minute or so max, and put your best stuff in the first 5-10 seconds because that's about what the average attention span is. Work on your delivery and don't post poor quality video.

Remember, you never get a second chance to create a good first impression. You don't have to have profession quality production - the average cell phone does a great job.

Boost your event with videos. For a few bucks, you can greatly increase the reach of your event and target specific geographic areas and demographics that are most likely to be interested in your event. Facebook will provide great metrics as to how many views or page clicks your event or video gets.

I try to boost the 3rd Street events two or three days in advance of the event ... and for about $5, you can get a couple thousand views. That's pretty cool. Click on this link to learn more about boosting: **https://www.facebook.com/business/help/www/547448218658012**

So those are a few social media tips. But what else can you do? My advice is for you to hang out and support the venues that support you, even when you aren't performing. The reason to do this is to meet the customers who are already there and promote your own upcoming show by telling them and inviting them to come. Nothing is as effective as shaking a hand, exchanging a smile, and extending a personal invitation. That's how politicians get votes and it's a great way for performers to get new fans.

In business, especially sales, you have what's called an elevator speech. That's the speech where you engage a stranger in the time span it takes to share an elevator ride.

Typically, in 30 seconds or less, you introduce yourself, tell them what you do, and invite the person to come see you. Maybe give them an incentive — it's fun, it's free, it's a great venue. Practice this speech until you could do it in your sleep. Try it out on your friends and family. Ask for feedback and listen to what they say. Ask other performers to help you out because chances are good they've got their own. Watch what other successful performers are doing and copy it. (Be sure to change the name!)

Finally, open mics are always

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a great way to show your skills to potential fans. You'll find a great list of open mics elsewhere in this newsletter.

The 3rd Thursdays at 3rd Street is a great place to hone or display your skills to a friendly crowd. And if you happen to see me there, I'll even help you make a video. It will be easier than you think and I won't even charge you. Before you know it, you'll be a viral sensation and fame and fortune will be yours! (Not valid in all states, some restrictions apply, batteries not included.)

EDITOR'S NOTE

No one sent in a front-page feature this month, so I went back into the archives and found one from July 2017. Some of the specifics may have changed (or become irrelevant) but, for the most part, the information is still sound and meaningful. We could actually stop writing new features altogether and reprint old ones (we've got quite an archive) but I don't think that's what we want. So, if you've got something to say, please send it in. We'll need one more for this year and then you'll have a whole month to come up with new ones for 2023.

SVSAer Aspen Black performs at the Liederkranz Club (with its interesting background) in Grand Island NE.

SVSA membership is beneficial — but you have to participate

MIKE PEARRELL

by Mike Pearrell

What does it take to be an SVSA member? The only requirement is a check for $35. We don't have any initiation rites — we only hope to improve our songwriting and talk and have fun with the like-minded.

To get the most for your $35, come to as many meetings and events as you can. The group needs you, your songs, and your wisdom.

"Come to as many meetings and events as you can. The group needs you, your songs, and your wisdom."

Some members come to meetings only when they have a song to present. I believe this is a mistake. Listening to other songs and other comments is an effective way to distill our own process and style. Thinking about other's songs and offering our own thoughts helps in the same manner.

Over the years we have worked to improve the helpfulness of our "critiques." We strive not to rewrite anyone's song, but to admire the good things and maybe offer a small way to make a song better. In the end, it is always the presenter's song, and they can take or leave any advice they receive.

We also often have mini workshops or quick writing lessons at the meetings.

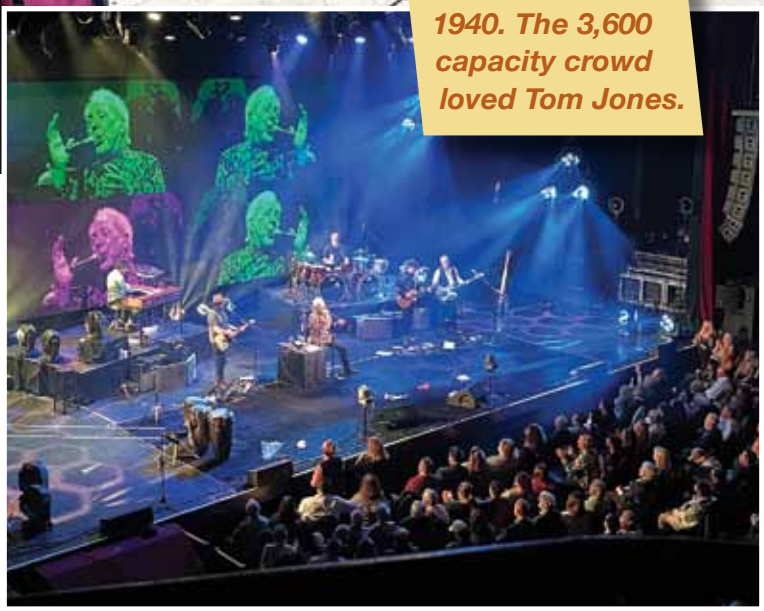
What makes the group work for its members is coming to meeting after meeting and participating with a friendly group that shares the same goal — getting better at songwriting.

I believe I am a better writer for coming to the meetings all these years — participating in workshops and listening to songs. The only thing I haven't learned is to be more prolific.

Our next meeting is October 26 at 7:30 p.m. in the Jefferson Center. Come on down. We need you.

Mike Pearrell (standing) was the headliner at 3rd Street Coffeehouse in Roanoke VA on Oct 7. He was backed by SVSAers (left to right) David Simpkins, Britt Mistele, and Kathy Acosta. (Photo by Linda Giuliano Pearrell.)

The palatial Chicago Theater was built in 1904, and renovated in 1940. The 3,600 capacity crowd loved Tom Jones.



SVSAers Greg Trafidlo and Kathy Acosta, (above) along with Greg's wife Judy Larson, recently spent a six-day holiday in Chicago, the "Windy City.". Here, they view the "The Bean" (Cloud Gate Sculpture) in Millennium Park. At right, the legendary Tom Jones at the Chicago Theater. Regarding the 81-year-old Jones, Greg said, "We were surprised to hear the same voice he had on his hit records. He took the audience on a trip through the history of pop/rock. His tight five-piece band really supported the songs."

Alice Black, the SVSA's youngest member, flew to Albuquerque NM on September 27 to meet up with her friends to play at the Durango Gathering in Durango CO. At right, Alice takes the stage at the Youth Rising Stars Showcase at the gathering.

The next SVSA monthly meeting
is LIVE and IN-PERSON this coming
Wednesday October 26
in the LL Rice Room at the Jefferson Center, Roanoke VA.
Check your inbox for info.

A very special upcoming Traveling Troubadour Concert

The Traveling Troubadour House Concert Society invites you to a special concert at the **KING GEORGE INN B & B** on **Nov 5** in **Roanoke VA**.

Lynn Hunt will host for the Saturday evening event and the featured entertainer will be Nashville Singer/Songwriter **Sam Robbins**.

Sam Robbins is often described as an "old soul singer songwriter." A Nashville-based musician whose music evokes classic '70s singer songwriters like James Taylor and Neil Young, Sam adds a modern, upbeat edge to the storyteller troubadour persona. An avid performer, he has gained recognition from extensive touring and as one of the six 2021 winners in the Kerrville Folk Festival New Folk competition, one of the largest and most prestigious competitions in the country.

Opening the event will be award-winning singer/songwriter **Mike DeGiorgi.** Mike is a talented and witty performer and a former SVSA President.

Refreshments will be served, please bring an appetite and a dish to pass around. There will be a festive feast at the old KING GEORGE INN on November 5th!

BYOB

Please RSVP in advance, minimum $10 per person donation appreciated.

Concert starts at 6:30 p.m. with a mingle hour at 5:30 p.m.

Dan Hildebrand — The Traveling Troubadour

The KING GEORGE INN — 315 King George Ave SW, Roanoke VA

Darrell Scott returns to Floyd Country Store

SVSAer Bob Schmucker (left) got to get up close and personal with the famous performing songwriter Darrell Scott before Scott's performance on October 8th at the Floyd Country Store in Floyd VA. Scott's songs have been covered by the Chicks, Patty Loveless, and many others. He performs in the southwest Virginia region fairly often and there's always an SVSA contingent on hand to learn and see how it's done.

SONGS OF THE SERVICE

AN ESSAYETTE
BY DICK RAYMOND

In my previous remarks on traditional songs and the composing thereof, I have kind of skated around much discussion of Service songs. In today's heavily partisan world, to bring up the topic often results in a lot of rancorous exchanges which should have no part in the mellow collegiality of SVSA. Yet, to be candid, even these deserve a place in the rich fabric of American songwriting. So here goes.

The whole bunch seems to sort itself into two groups: songs of home and songs of war. And to subdivide these by era, Civil War, World War I, and World War II. (There were little inclusions in between — and they'll be mentioned, briefly.)

Home songs deal with the eternal plaint of the soldier (or sailor), "O Lord, let this be over and let me go home to mama and her apple pie." The War category may include some rousing patriotic tunes, intended to stir up spirit for the conflict. So we proceed.

I'm not sure if anyone gave the subject much thought, but the Civil War (or, in these precincts, the Brutal

Aggression of Yankee Abolitionists) really gave songwriters North and South some great opportunities.

From the former we have *Rally Round the Flag, Tenting Tonight On The Old Camp Ground; Bonny Eloise; Just Before The Battle, Mother;* and, best-known of all, *The Battle Hymn of the Republic.*

From the latter, besides the immortal *Dixie* (written by Yankee

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Dan Emmett), *Goober Peas, The Bonnie Blue Flag,* and that sappy-sentimental ballad *Lorena.* It was actually written by a Northern pastor, but soon became the epitome of a Home song, beloved by Johnny Reb *and* Billy Yank.

Wikipedia notes, "During the American Civil War, soldiers on both sides of the conflict thought of their wives and girlfriends back home when they heard the song *Lorena.* One Confederate officer even attributed the South's defeat to the song. He reasoned that upon hearing the mournful ballad the soldiers grew so homesick that they lost their effectiveness as a fighting force."

Well, that's as may be. Here's a short chorus from *Goober Peas,* a great thumb-to-the nose to the whole notion of armed conflict:

Sunday after supper
  our colonel hears a row,
He says, "The Yanks are comin',
  I can hear their rifles now"
Then he looks around,
  an' what d'ye think he sees?
The Ge-or-gi-a milishy
  eatin' goober peas!
Oh, peas, peas, peas, peas,
  eatin' goober peas,
Goodness how delicious
  eatin' goober peas.

Incidentally, the beautifully-mournful notes of *Taps* were composed by Union general Dan Butterfield, with the help of his Brigade bugler Oliver Norton. The lyrics now applied to the haunting tune, "Day is done, gone the sun …" came later, with a number of other versions. It means, "Rest, soldier, your work-day's over." At military

funerals, it often brings tears. And that legend of its being found on the body of a Confederate soldier has been thoroughly debunked.

Moving on, the next time-period would be the Spanish-American War of 1898, followed by the Philippine Insurrection, which lasted over 10 years. The only tunes associated might be *A Hot Time In The Old Town Tonight,* and the Navy's bit of buffoonery, *The Monkeys Have No Tails In Zamboanga.*

The Great War of 1914-18 brought forth a flood of great songs, many of them of British origin.

To them we owe *There's A Long, Long Trail A-Winding, My Buddy, Roses Of Picardy,* and *It's A Long Way To Tipperary.*

American composers such as George M. Cohan countered with *You're A Grand Old Flag* and *Over There.* But the soldiers loved *How Ya Going To Keep 'Em Down On The Farm (After They've Seen Paree?)* and *Mademoiselle From Armentieres.* Among the many tunes popped up an early anti-war protest, *I Didn't Raise My Boy To Be*

A Soldier, which spawned a number of bawdy parodies, viz. *I Didn't Raise my Girl To Be A Virgin,* etc.

The Second World War had Tin Pan Alleyites grinding out morale-boosting songs by the score (score, get it?) Some, again, started in the United Kingdom: *Bless 'Em All, There'll be Bluebirds Over the White Cliffs of Dover,* and that tear-jerker *Now is the Hour (Maori Farewell).*

Home songs, mostly, *We'll Meet Again* (a Vera Lynn favorite) and a few laughers, *They're Either Too Young Or Too Old* and *Right In Der Fuhrer's Face,* a Spike Jones killer. Among the fighting tunes were *Praise The Lord And Pass The*

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SERVICE

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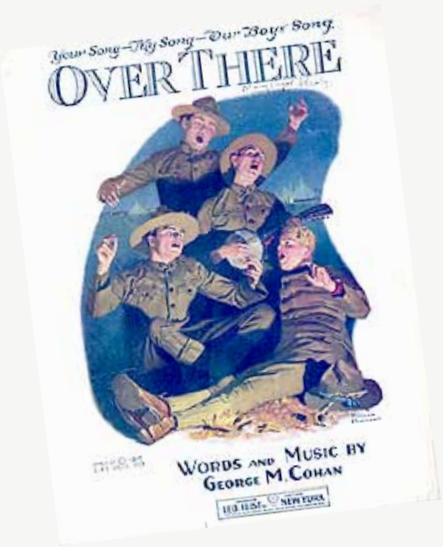

Ammunition and *We'll Remember Pearl Harbor.*

I really can't leave this subject without a mention of the service Academy songs.

From West Point we have football rousers such as *On, Brave Old Army Team,* and the chill-bumps chorus *The Corps.* Annapolis comes in with *Anchors Aweigh,* and *Eternal Father, Strong To Save.* The Air Force even now is too new to claim old traditional melodies, so they chime in with *Wild Blue Yonder.*

I could fill a dozen more pages with notes and quotes, but Brother **David Simpkins** would cut me off short. But I know a good many of these, and when drunk enough may be persuaded to sing a few.

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Wed Oct 26
at 7:00 p.m.
in the LL Rice Room
at the Jefferson Center,
Roanoke VA

(Below)The Wayback Machine takes us to February of 2017 when SVSAers Britt Mistele, Marc Baskind, and Bob Schmucker were adding vocals to a Trifolkal tune at Blackwater Studios in Wirtz VA. (Photo courtesy of Larry Sakayama.)

SVSA CONCERT REVIEW

STEVE FORBERT AT THE SPOT ON KIRK, ROANOKE VA

by David Simpkins

On October 16, my wife Kathy Acosta and I traveled to The Spot On Kirk in Roanoke VA to see one of our favorite performing songwriters, the legendary Steve Forbert.

Forbert has been a favorite of ours for many years. We've seen him at the Kirk Avenue location three times now (and once in Greensboro NC) and he's been great every time.

At the Kirk, he was backed by guitarist George Naha, a long-time compadre and a member of Forbert's current band, The Rough Squirrels. The show was sensational. The room looked to be at full capacity and it wasn't too loud.

Not only were we treated to a selection of songs from a *bunch* of Forbert's albums (20+ in all) but also covers of Gordon Lightfoot's *Early Morning Rain* and Elvis's *Big Hunk O' Love* as well.

It's remarkable that someone who had his last hit (*Romeo's Tune*) in the early '80s can still fill rooms across the country. It's a testament to longevity and, of course, to immense talent. What a trooper!

Forbert is a national treasure. *American Songwriter* magazine says, "Those that have followed his career even casually over the course of nearly 45 years can recognize that Steve Forbert is among America's greatest singer/songwriters."

Forbert was born in 1954 (he's *my* age) in Meridian MS. He helped pioneer the Americana genre. He's been a torchbearer of that sound, navigating a career that's taken him from NYC's CBGB to Nashville's Bluebird Cafe; from his 1978 debut album to his latest release, 2022's *'Moving Through America.'*

Romeo's Tune became a hit single in 1979 and its accompanying album went gold. Forbert weathered the New Wave scare of the '80s, continuing to produce organic roots music that often blurred the lines between genres.

A dedicated "road dog," he has also remained a prolific songwriter, writing music that's spry and relevant.

Forbert is also a member of the Mississippi Music Hall of Fame, and author of the memoir *Big City Cat: My Life in Folk-Rock,* which I can heartily recommend as a great read.

Forbert also received a Grammy nomination for his tribute to Jimmie Rodgers, *'Any Old Time.'*

Forbert's songs have been recorded by Rosanne Cash, Keith Urban, Marty Stuart, Webb Wilder, and many others.

In 2017, a tribute album, *'An American Troubadour: The Songs of Steve Forbert,'* was released, with covers of his songs by 21 artists.

Steve Forbert (right) at The Spot On Kirk, Roanoke VA, with George Naha. (Photo by Kathy Acosta.)

Shelor family keeps Bristol Sessions heritage alive

EDITOR'S NOTE

SVSAer **Greg Trafidlo** suggested that this article might be of interest to SVSA members. Author **Randolph Walker**, also a member of the SVSA, said, "One of my music students, Jesse S. Shelor of Roanoke VA, mentioned recently that his grandparents had recorded at the famous Bristol VA Sessions in 1927. Ninety-five years later, Shelor descendents are still keeping the songs alive. Here is my article in Cardinal News:

CARDINAL NEWS
SERVING SOUTHWEST AND SOUTHSIDE VIRGINIA

by Randy Walker

People die, but songs live forever, if people keep playing them.

Ninety-five years ago, the Shelor Family was invited to the Bristol Sessions, later heralded as the "Big Bang" of country music by the Smithsonian-affiliated Birthplace of Country Music Museum in Bristol VA, and called "the most important event in the history of country music" by Johnny Cash.

On Aug. 3, 1927, the family band, consisting of Jesse J. and Clarice Shelor, Jesse's brother Pyrhus, and Clarice's father, Joe Blackard, performed four songs for producer Ralph Peer. The Shelors were preceded by the Carter Family, who recorded on Aug 1 and 2, and were followed by Jimmie Rodgers on Aug 4.

The Bristol-era Shelors are gone, but other Shelors are still bowing the fiddle, strumming the guitar, picking the banjo, and singing the songs.

On Sept 3, 2022, the Shelor family gathered for their annual reunion in Meadows of Dan, in Patrick County, a couple of turns off the Blue Ridge Parkway. They shared a potluck meal and sang shape-note hymns at Concord

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Shelor Family band, 1927. Standing (from left): brothers Pyrhus and Jesse Shelor; sitting: Joe Blackard and his daughter Clarice Blackard Shelor. (Photo courtesy of Clay Shelor.)

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Primitive Baptist Church.

Some checked the progress on Jesse and Clarice's old home on Squirrel Spur Road, which is being restored by a great-grandson. They played the old music (and newer songs, too) at another family home nearby.

Down the road from the old homeplace, Jesse J. and Clarice Shelor rest side by side in the cemetery at Meadows of Dan Baptist Church, adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway, where soon, the hardwoods will turn yellow and red. Jesse died in 1985, Clarice in 1989.

Jesse S. Shelor, a grandson of Jesse and Clarice, was asked what his grandparents would think of their descendents still playing their music.

"Granny would love it," he said, "and Granddad, he'd think it was great."

Jesse and Clarice (pronounced CLARE-iss) never bragged about being part of the Bristol Sessions.

"My grandparents were not the bragging type," Jesse S. said. "In fact, if we bragged about something, Granddad had a wicked sense of humor, and he was good at putting us down a peg or two."

Bristol was recognized decades later as a foundational event in the commercialization of country music.

"To them, given when it was, and the times, it was an opportunity for some money," Jesse S. said. "And I don't think they realized what was going to come of the Bristol Sessions. And even after the Bristol Sessions, I don't think it really made a big difference to them. They didn't think it was a big deal. I didn't know about it until after they were gone, that they participated in that. And I don't remember my dad or my uncles ever talking about it."

The family still doesn't make a big deal of it.

"No, no, we don't," Jesse S. said. "We don't put on airs about it. It's just a nice piece of family history."

An essay on the Shelor and Blackard families by Ray Alden (died 2009) can be found on **fieldrecorder.org**, the website of the Field Recorders' Collective, "an IRS-recognized nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and distribution of noncommercial recordings of traditional American music."

Alden and another researcher spent time with the family in Meadows of Dan in 1975. The Shelors made recordings for them, although, Jesse S. Shelor said, "my grandmother did not feel comfortable around those 'boys whose hair was too long,' as she described the two researchers."

"Jesse Shelor (born Dec 1894) was the youngest boy of the 14 children of Reverend William Ellis Shelor," Alden wrote. 'Even though all of Jesse's brothers played fiddle or banjo, it was not their influence,

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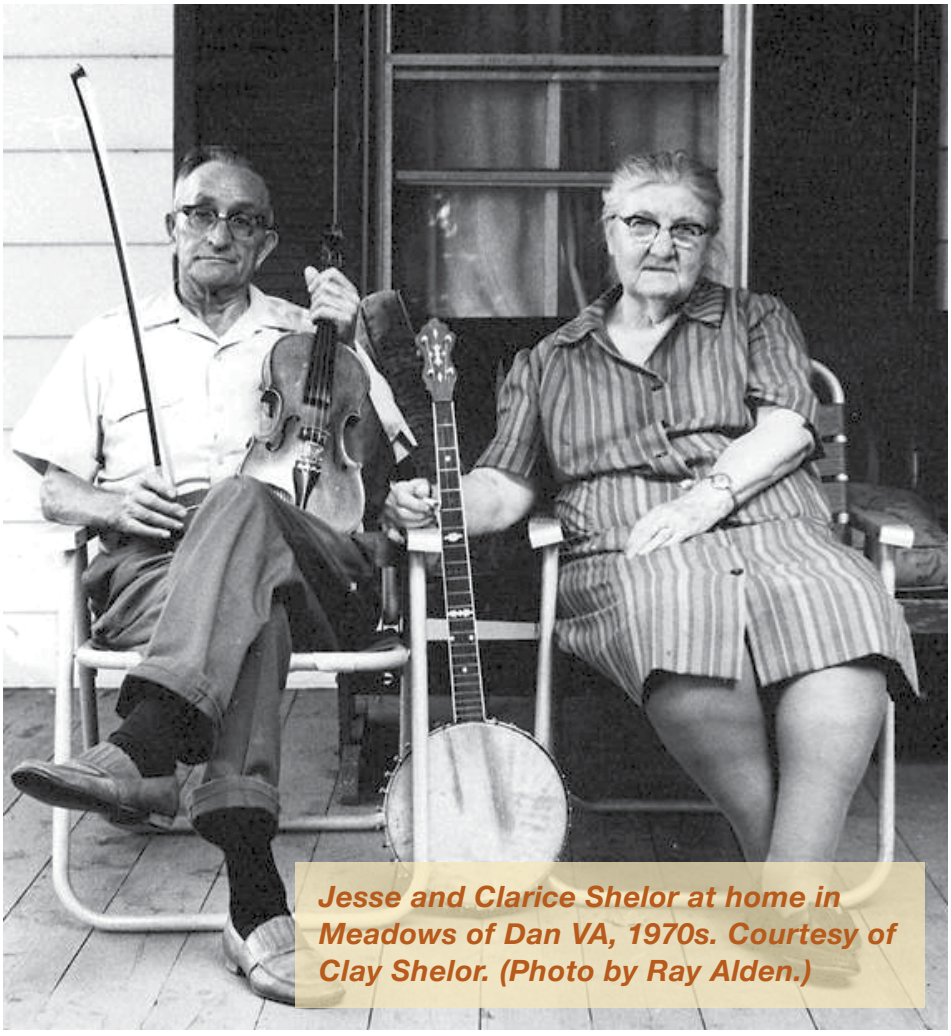

Jesse and Clarice Shelor at home in Meadows of Dan VA, 1970s. Courtesy of Clay Shelor. (Photo by Ray Alden.)

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but rather a more startling event that started ten-year-old Jesse fiddling.

"One day Jesse's father came home, picked up a fiddle, and played *Callahan.* This impressed young Jesse greatly since he had no idea his father played! ... Community pressure against a Baptist minister playing the 'Devil's Box' was strong."

Clay Shelor holds the Sears, Roebuck fiddle played by his grandfather, Jesse Shelor, at the Bristol Sessions in 1927. It is occasionally played by Clay and by his daughter, fourth-generation fiddler Jamie Shelor. (Zoom capture by Randy Walker.)

While working in Danville VA, Jesse and his older brother Pyrhus (pronounced "Purse") began to play music with a local boy. After World War I, Jesse returned to Meadows of Dan VA.

"He renewed his music by playing with his old mentor, Wallace Spangler and with Joseph Blackard, who often played clawhammer banjo with Wallace. Jesse also renewed his friendship with Joe Blackard's two piano playing daughters, Lorna and Clarice."

Clarice, born 1900, was among the last generation to remember when the chestnut grew tall in the Blue Ridge, a source of split rails and barn frames and food and cash; children collected bags of chestnuts which were traded at local stores for shoes and clothes.

"In 1919, Jesse married Clarice Blackard and they began to play music nightly in their home with Pyrhus and Joseph," Alden continues.

When Cecil Sharp was collecting songs for 'English Folk Songs From The Southern Appalachians,' published in 1917, "he found Joe Blackard a rich source."

Joseph sent Clarice to 'singing' school every summer. "The school would be a full day and lasted two weeks. At night, Joe helped Clarice associate the new shape notes with the more familiar 'do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do.'

Even though there was a pedal organ in the Blackard home, Clarice begged for a piano. When she was seven, she got one. Joe now wrote 'C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C' on paper and put them behind the white piano keys. Again Clarice learned to associate these letters with 'do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do.'

"At first, Clarice only played melody behind her father's singing and banjo playing. He'd stop and correct Clarice's every mistake. Then, she added the bass notes. Finally, using her imagination, she added her own special notes to the tunes. When Clarice was 13, she could play even the fastest tunes up to tempo. That meant music nightly in the Blackard home.

"The music would have stayed only in the home, except for a talent search by Victor Records. The owner of a Victrola record store in Hillsville VA, Mr. Walter Howlette, held auditions for local bands and Joe Blackard brought his group." The Victor Record representative liked them and gave them a recording date in Bristol.

Bristol TN, site of the sessions, is about 125 miles from Meadows of Dan. It was a long car trip; U.S. 58 did not exist yet.

"Joe, Clarice, Jesse, Pyrhus, and seven-year-old Joseph [Jesse and Clarice's first child] arrived

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in Bristol on Aug 2, 1927. The recording session took place in a dusty millinery [hat] shop."

Clarice, according to Encyclopedia Virginia, recalled that the studio men "said they had more instrumental than singing records and said that singing helped sell the records." Joe wrote out the words to several songs for Clarice to sing.

"Pyrhus patted his foot so loudly that they finally had to put a pillow under his foot," Alden continues. "Little Joseph was crying and getting dirt from the shelves on his face.

Even with these less than ideal recording conditions, the group cut S*andy River Belle, Big Ben Gal* (incorrectly labeled *Big Bend Gal*), *Billy Grimes The Rover,* and *Suzanna Gal,* producing four sides on two 78 rpm records."

The return trip was an ordeal.

"They left Bristol before dark," Alden wrote. "Crossing the New River by ferry, they had to straddle large holes in the ferry's rotting timber and at the same time calm Little Joseph. After that it was driving in complete fog. Jesse drove for hours with his head sticking out of the window. They arrived home at three a.m. Jesse had a stiff neck that lasted days. Even though the family was asked back to record, they never returned."

Victor released *Billy Grimes* and *Big Bend Gal* as A and B sides of a 78 credited to the Shelor Family, while *Suzanna Gal* and *Sandy River Belle* were credited to Dad Blackard's Moonshiners.

Clay Shelor, a grandson of Jesse and Clarice, said he wasn't sure why two different names were used, but "I never ever heard them refer to themselves as Dad Blackard's Moonshiners."

Neither Clay nor Jesse S. Shelor owns one of the historic 78s.

According to the record pricing website **popsike.com**, an original 10-inch copy of Victor 20865, *Billy Grimes/Big Bend Gal,* auctioned for $516 in 2015.

Continuing the story after Bristol, Alden wrote: "Jesse and Clarice had six children of whom three, Joseph, Paul, and Jimmy,

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Dayne, Jamie, and Clay Shelor. (Photo by Randy Walker.)

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Jamie Shelor. (Photo by Randy Walker.)

became particularly interested in playing music.

"Currently [1975] all the children bring their families over every Sunday. Paul's daughter, Susan Shelor, has learned many of her Grandmother Clarice's piano pieces. And so the tradition is passed on."

Susan Shelor Deck, 61, was in eighth grade when the Field Recorders visited Meadows of Dan. She lives in Stephens City VA, near Winchester VA. A retired schoolteacher, she's the director of music ministries at Macedonia United Methodist Church and plays piano, guitar, banjo, and "a little bit of hammer dulcimer.

"I was always into the music and drawn to it. Granny taught me how to play the fiddle tunes on the piano." Deck can still play *Mississippi Sawyer, Big Ben Gal, Callahan* and *Old Richmond.*

"Granny, when she would go to a show when she was a young girl, she would listen to the music and she would immediately come home and sit down at the piano no matter what hour it was, and play until she had it. And you know, Pa Blackard and Ma would fuss at her for playing late at night. She said, 'I have to do it now so I remember it.'

"Well, I took classical piano from first grade through 12th grade, and I had worked up, in high school, Scott Joplin's *Entertainer,* the real version of it. I mean, it took me months to master it. And I came here one Sunday afternoon and played it for Granny. And she just [said] 'play it again, play it again.' I must have played it 10 times that night. When I came back the following week, she played it all — all the movements of it, everything. And I was just like, she was amazing."

The most prominent musical Shelor is Sammy Shelor, banjoist and leader of the Lonesome River Band. Sammy Shelor said he is distantly related to Jesse Shelor through an ancestor in the 1700s, but is more closely related to the Bristol group through the Blackards. Joe Blackard's sister was Sammy's great-great-grandmother.

Jesse and Clarice were not full-time musicians; they ran a cattle farm. Their descendants aren't full-time pickers either, but many play.

Clay Shelor, 56, is the son of Jesse and Clarice's sixth and last child, James. He grew up in Stuart VA and attended Virginia Tech. He lives in Cary, NC and works in IT.

As a child, Clay was frequently taken to Jesse and Clarice's house. "And so we would go there pretty much every Sunday … and Granny would play piano, Granddad fiddled, everybody sang, my uncles played various instruments.

"And I remember, as a child, one of my favorite toys, whenever we would have a cardboard box that we were throwing away, is I would cut it in the shape of a musical instrument and play music with it, 'til I got my first stringed instrument, which was a ukulele that a cousin … gave me.

"And then one year after the Shelor family Christmas gathering, my dad borrowed a fiddle from my grandfather. And dad wasn't much of a fiddle player, but he could scratch out some tunes. And so I said, 'Hey, would you show me how to do that?'

"And so dad taught me *Mississippi Sawyer* and several other tunes. And then another cousin of the family and … master of the fiddle, a guy named Buddy Pendleton, started coming over to our house and he … would just sit around and play tunes with me and that's kind of how I got started.

See Shelor, page 18

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

"Sometimes when you're really up close and familiar with something, you don't appreciate it or you might even look down on it. It was just the music that was around us.

"I went through a phase … where I lost interest in my teens and early 20s in old-time, and as I approached 30-ish I got interested in it again."

Clay often brings his son Dayne, 26, and daughter, Jamie, 18, to old-time festivals, including the Old Fiddler's Convention in Galax VA, the Grayson County Old Time and Bluegrass Fiddlers' Convention in Elk Creek NC, and the Mount Airy Blue Grass and Old-Time Fiddlers Convention.

In 2021, Handmade Music School in Floyd VA conducted its Southwest Virginia Traditional Music Contest online. In the folk song category (adult), Jamie, then 17, took first place for her video submission of *Billy Grimes The Rover,* with Clay backing her on fiddle. Her arrangement combined the Bristol version with a 1975 recording by Clarice.

Of playing her great-grandparents' music, Jamie said, "I definitely don't necessarily think about how special it is all the time when I play. But yeah, when it comes down to it, it is pretty special that I get to keep playing their tunes and teaching other people their music. And I play my great-granddad's fiddle here and there. So that's been really special to have his instrument."

Dayne Shelor, like his sister Jamie, lives in Weaverville NC, near Asheville. "But I've been staying up here in Meadows of Dan working on this house," said Dayne, a carpenter. Clay and Pam Shelor own Jesse and Clarice's old home, which was built around 1925, Dayne said.

"I play fiddle, upright bass, and guitar," he said, "and I started playing guitar when I was 12. My dad took me to the Galax Old Time Fiddler's Convention and I was pretty much hooked since then. He taught me my first chords, and then his dad, Jim Shelor, my grandpa, he really taught me a lot of guitar stuff."

"I grew up listening to them play all the time, and then I finally wised up enough to realize how important this was."

~ Jesse S. Shelor

Jesse S. Shelor, 64, a son of Paul and grandson of Jesse and Clarice, grew up in Dublin VA, along with his sister Susan. "Sadly, I cannot say how it felt to play music with either my grandparents, my father or my uncles," he said. "Regrets for things I did not do."

In his younger days he was more interested in Bob Dylan, the Beatles, and Elton John than in his grandparents' music.

"But I grew up listening to them play all the time, and then finally, wised up enough to realize how important this was." Now he plays the lap dulcimer, an Appalachian instrument.

No art puts the artist more in the moment than music. On the other hand, music, especially in the folk tradition, also offers the artist the chance to put his mark, or his family's mark, on something organic and living that transcends the human lifetime.

"You know, there's a lot of songs even that my grandparents played that were standards," Clay Shelor said. "*Suzanna Gal* is one, yet they had their own distinct twist to it. So I was in a jam last week at Galax, in an old time jam. And before we played, I said, 'I want to do the second part of this song the way my grandparents did, not the way everybody else plays. Yeah, here's the chords. Here's how it goes.'

"It's really exciting for me to get to play songs the way they did it … And I love to play those songs in a jam just to put them out there in hopes that somebody young will like it and will want to play that song."

"We would go there pretty much every Sunday … and Granny would play piano, Granddad fiddled, everybody sang, my uncles played various instruments" **~ Clay Shelor**

Photo by Mary Colleen Aakern

BETHEL LUTHERAN HOME residents and patrons of the Madison Public Library heard Western music at its best on Wednesday when Kerry Grombacher (left) and Aspen Black presented two concerts in Madison. The singer-songwriters shared both the songs they had written and the experiences which inspired each, but they started their concert by talking about the usefulness of the Southern expression, "y'all." With classic Western instrumentation and harmonies, they sang about everything from barrel racing and traveling U.S. Highway 281 to a note found in a thrift store jacket and the range of the buffalo. Grombacher, who is from New Orleans, and Black, who is from Virginia, tour together several times a year, but both also tour as solo artists. Grombacher reported putting more than 500,000 miles on his last vehicle, but noted, "There are still roads I have not traveled."

Front-page newsmakers

Concerts by SVSAer Aspen Black and her performing partner Kerry Grombacher were featured on the front page of the Oct 11 Madison Daily Leader in Madison SD. The duo also had an interview and article leading up to the shows and newspaper coverage of their concerts in Gillette WY and Ellendale SD.

Below, Kerry and Aspen perform at Pat's Place in Hot Springs SD.

Businesses brace for cautious shoppers

Prep sports roundup

Madison Daily Leader

Joe Hubers seeks to put small-town stories on the big screen

Veterans Honor Park used for flag retirement ceremony

BSA Troop 255 involved

Country western music

Your Daily Leader forecast

HOW I WRITE SONGS

Editor's Note: This year, the SVSA Board decided to forego scheduling "pro" workshops in favor of requesting its own members to deliver their own presentations. The workshops will cover various topics. One major one will be the "How I Write Songs" series. **David Simpkins** was the fourth presenter with this discussion-producing insight into his own songwriting process.

There are more questions than answers in the songwriting process

By David Simpkins

When I started this project, I got off on the wrong foot. Instead of thinking of it as "how I write a song" I kept thinking of it as "how to write a GOOD song." After getting that sorted out, I was able to begin.

Okay. So how *do* I write a song? My first thought was a question. Then I realized that since I was bereft of any hard and fast answers, *everything* was a question. And that gave me my starting point.

The questions themselves almost always dictate how (and if) my songwriting process begins.

First off, I ask myself if I'm inspired to write a song in the first place. (If I'm *not,* then the whole process stops right there.) If I *am* inspired, then do I have a chord progression or a lyrical idea that begs moving forward?

If I do have something I think might turn into a song, then the next question I ask is whether I'm truly inspired to write or whether I feel like writing "just to be writing." The latter is merely a technical exercise (valid in its own context); the former is what **Greg Trafidlo** calls a "real song."

I might go either way — but the "real songs" are the ones that usually end up as "keepers."

> "The 'real songs' are the ones that usually end up as 'keepers.'"

Next, on the musical side, I'm thinking of a tempo. I ask myself what my chord progression suggests. If I'm still in need of rhythm inspiration, I might pick out a beat from the selection on my cheap keyboard. Or, I might listen to some of my favorite songs and see if there a rhythm there I can adapt to what my new song needs.

Lyrically, I may start from a title or from a hastily scribbled verse or chorus. Mainly, I want to write something that *means* something to me, so this often takes the most time. I rarely write all the lyrics at one sitting but I write enough to get the process started.

As the initial lyrics, chord progression, and tempo comes together, the rest of the lyrics often write themselves. If I can establish some sort of mood or direction in my first attempts, then I know I'm on my way.

A bit more on the chord process: If I've written the same old chord progression, I try to think of ways to add to it or subtract from it. The last thing I want to do is keep writing the same three or four chord progressions over and over again. (You know, minor chords for the slow and sad ones; major chords for the bright and peppy ones.)

If I can't come up with

See Songs, page 21

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

something different and interesting, then my focus goes to the lyrics. At this point, the lyrics *have to be* the focus because the chord progression itself isn't strong enough to hold interest on its own.

Lyrics. To me, that's where the real emotion of the song rests. Lyrical ideas come from everywhere. I've been known to mine Bruce Springsteen interviews for song ideas. When I first started writing "real" songs, a *lot* of my lyric ideas came from Springsteen interviews. (The first song of mine that ever got on the radio was *You Wanna Ride, You Gotta Pay* — a title taken directly from a Springsteen interview.)

Above all, though, the lyrics have to hit me emotionally. When I first started writing, I believed that a lyric was no good unless it made me cry. (I've moved on from that ... sort of, maybe, kind of.) The important thing is that the lyrics make me *feel something.* If *I* feel it, then maybe a listener will as well.

Songs walk a fine line between tossing in the kitchen sink and throwing the baby out with the bath water. Sometimes I cram too much in. Sometimes I edit and/or revise the feeling right out of it.

I try to see that songs aren't novels, they're short stories. They're not documentaries, they're news briefs. My philosophy is "get in, get out, nobody gets hurt."

So — does the new song hold up to constant scrutiny? If so, proceed. If not, toss it out. Is the initial feeling still there? If so, proceed. If not, toss it out. Is it the "same old same old" or is it carving out some new facet of my songwriting? If so, proceed. If not, toss it out.

"Real songs" aren't chalk marks on a blackboard, x marks on a calendar, or notches on a gun handle. Is the song "writing just to be writing" or a technical exercise (both fine if that's your intent) or is it a "real song?" At this point, I'll decide how much more effort and time I'll put into it.

I'll often try to fool myself. I've put lipstick on a *lot* of pigs in my day; I've tried to make a *lot* of purses out of sow's ears as well. In the end, though, time is the determining factor.

> **"If I feel it, then maybe a listener will as well."**

If the song holds up over multiple performances to varied audiences; if the song still *moves* me after some length of time, then it's a keeper. If not, then I toss it out and resolve to do better next time.

Next time. Another question: Am I writing to please *myself* or to please someone else? I've found that my excursions into the latter almost always result in the song getting tossed. If *I'm* not happy with it, how can I expect someone *else* to be happy with it?

More questions: Am I fooling myself (again), is this another paint-by-numbers attempt at something new and different? Do I *dare* listen to it critically? Is it far enough along to bring it to an SVSA meeting for feedback?

And those questions open up *more* questions: Is my new song so locked in my head that I can't consider revisions? Am I capable of revising it myself (by incorporating outside opinions and suggestions) or is it down for the count? Again, is the song *worth* the effort?

Lastly, the question that's the hardest to ask and most difficult to face: *Was I hard enough on myself during the process?* Did I sell myself out due to laziness or fear?

Most often, I'll decide that I wasn't hard enough on myself. When I'm asking people, often people who don't necessarily know me (or maybe *do* know me) to hear my latest effort — do I care so little for them to "inflict" something on them that could be better or more interesting or different (in a good way)? How dare I be so arrogant? How dare I be so ... so ... so *mediocre?*

All my songs go through this process. (Often, unexpected questions pop up that I can't foresee or anticipate. Those questions must be answered, too.)

Some songs don't cut it — and when I grind out a bunch of crappy songs in a row, I get downhearted and lose confidence in my songwriting. That's why the bad ones are really, really *bad.*

Ah, but the ones that *do* cut it! They make the whole process worthwhile. I've pushed myself hard to create something out of nothing that I — at least *I* — think is worth listening to.

Final question: In the end, isn't that what it's about? To create something that has worth, that has meaning, that has feeling, that can move people in some way — if a songwriter can do that, then he or she has written a song that *deserves* having an audience.

The SVSA Music News functions for members in many ways. One of the most overlooked is the **FREE** classifieds section.

There are two restrictions: One is that all classifieds must be music-related; the other is that classified ads may be submitted by paid members only. And that's it!

Remember: An ad is much more successful when accompanied by a clear photo and a complete and detailed description. The ad must contain a working e-mail or cell number. *The SVSA Music News* will not forward ad enquiries.

Take advantage of this free service now. Classifieds will run monthly until pulled by the person who submits the ad.

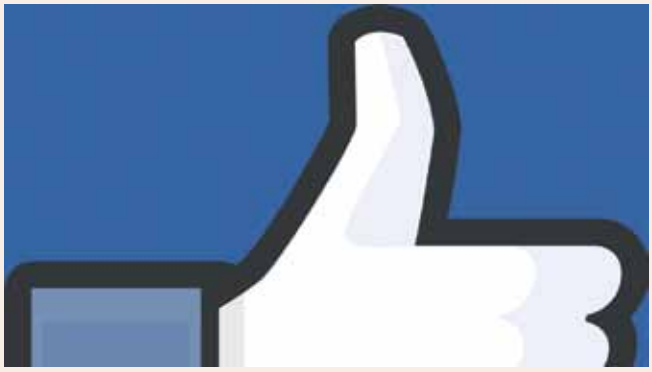
Members, e-mail your classifieds to svsa.songwriters@gmail.com or amosflame@aol.com.

SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA SONGWRITERS ASSOCIATION

SVSA For Sale

SVSA member **Britt Mistele** is selling an **Emerald X30** carbon fiber six-string guitar. Candy-stripe Paduk top. It has an LR Baggs Anthem pick-up system and plays like a dream. No worries with heat or humidity. Comes with a Hiscox hard-shell case. Mint condition. **$3000.00.** Contact Britt at **276-728-6529.**

3rd Street Coffeehouse is selling a brand-new-in-box (never opened) Insignia™ 55" Class F50 Series QLED 4K UHD Smart Fire TV. Comes with Amazon Fire. It sells at Best Buy for $339.99 plus tax but you can get it for **$300 obo**. Call SVSA board member **Bob Schmucker** at **540-521-4507**.



WOULD YOU "LIKE" TO HELP THE SVSA GET MORE FOLLOWERS ON FACEBOOK?

That's all we need you to do. Just go to our Facebook page and "like" us. That's it. Your "like" will cause Facebook's algorithms to start considering the SVSA's page for shares, postings, and a greater all-around presence.

Of course, we'd also appreciate your input. You can share things to our page, comment on posts, memes, and images, and generally help make our page become more active and seen by more Facebook users.

As we said, it doesn't take much. Just pop the following URL into your Google (or whatever) search box, go to the Facebook SVSA page, and "like" us. We'd really "like" it if you'd help us out! Thanks!

https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=southwest%20virginia%20songwriters%20association

Help SVSA sustain Jefferson Center Music Lab

by Mollye Otis

SVSA is a sponsor of The Music Lab, a progressive music and production program at the Jefferson Center in Roanoke VA. We are making an annual contribution of $300 to the tuition fund that is distributed to worthy students from the greater Roanoke area who show talent and promise.

The Music Lab presents an extraordinary opportunity to about 30 students each year, offering state-of-the-art production studios, music lessons, and learning alongside professional guest artists.

Mickey Nelson, a longtime SVSA member, astute songwriter, and frequent performer saw the value in supporting the next generation of writers and co-founded The Music Lab. The SVSA created The Mickey Nelson Songwriter of the Year Award in his honor as an incentive to the Music Lab students, a way of "earning" our investment.

Jordan Harman, the Education and Outreach Coordinator for the program will guide and advise the students who will create and submit their work to an SVSA committee for adjudication at the end of the Spring Semester.

A plaque featuring Mickey Nelson is now prominently displayed in the Music Lab Production Room. Another plaque that will displayed will show the names of the winner of The Mickey Nelson Songwriter of the Year Award each year. Then, also yearly, a public presentation will recognize the winner and SVSA's part in this program.

Please consider donating $5 on behalf of the Mickey Nelson Award to help support our commitment.

There are two ways to pay, either by clicking the tab on the pull-down menu within the dues-paying page of the SVSA website or by sending a PayPal payment to **SVSAFunds@gmail.com**. You may also mail a check to PO Box 2901, Roanoke VA 24011.

We value songwriting as we value our organization and its members — and we hope you might make a small donation to help sustain this important outreach.

NEWS & NOTES FROM

3RD STREET COFFEEHOUSE

Great shows upcoming, positions need filling

by **Bob Schmucker**

3rd Street Coffeehouse is continuing a streak of great shows and special events as we cruise toward the end of the year. Here's some of what's going on and what to expect:

We are continuing our transition in the booking operation as **Josh Jones** is transitioning out and **Mike Franke**, Ron Goad and **Bob Schmucker** are transitioning in. We will continue to use the **booking.thirdstreet@gmail.com** address for booking shows. As of this writing, there are seven feature dates left for 2023 but a lot of opening dates.

We are happy to announce two major promotions on our staff. **Mike Franke** is now "Executive Director for Audio-Video Productions and VP of the Blues." **Aspen Black** is now "Senior Vice President of Audio/Video Production and Ambassador to the Western United States." Their contributions to the quality of the LiveStream and in-house sound with the new sound system are greatly appreciated. **Bob Schmucker** is now "Operations Manager / Big Cheese." More promotions are forthcoming as we head toward the new year.

We have two current volunteer opportunities on our staff. The first position is "Audio-Video Wizard" to augment our audio-video team for expanded broadcasts, like Season 3 of Tuesday Tunes for Feeding Southwest Virginia. You can see the complete job description at **https://www.facebook.com/jobs/job-opening/3218919171756790/?source=job_ats**.

The other position that we are trying to fill is "Social Media and Promotions Wizard." The complete job description can be found at **https://www.facebook.com/jobs/job-opening/400056591981789/?source=job_ats**.

Our adventures atop Mill Mountain for our first, third, and fifth Thursday guitar pulls have continued throughout the summer and fall and have moved to Sunday afternoons for the remainder of the fall. The next one is scheduled for Sun Oct 30 at 2:00 p.m. If you want to join us either as a performer or a music lover, just bring a camp chair, a beverage if you like, and a song in your heart. As we get into fall, a flashlight is useful after dark. Side note: Tim "T-Bone" Woodrum of "T-Bone's Best of Roanoke Radio Show" recorded last weeks guitar pull and it will be aired this coming week on Radio Free Roanoke. It will also be broadcast on Tim's YouTube channel (same name). We'll post a link on our Facebook page when its available.

We have scheduled another Musicians Swap Meet for Saturday, Nov 12 from 11:00 a.m. till 2:00 p.m. at the coffeehouse. Musicians are invited to rent a table to sell or trade their underused instruments, equipment, or music-related wares (including CDs and records). Suggested donations for reserving tables are as follows:

- Six-ft tables $15 in advance and $20 the day of

See 3rd Street, page 25

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

the swap meet.

• Four-ft tables $10 in advance and $15 the day of the swap meet.

For advance registration, please contact Bob at **manager.thirdstreet@gmail.com**.

Our schedule for Friday night shows is super strong through the end of the year. Of particular note is another special Sunday show on Dec 4 featuring Abe Partridge, a.k.a. the "Alabama Astronaut." Abe is a unique and uber-talented songwriter who is produced by our good friend Shawn Byrne. In a world where so many songwriters are into the same groove, Abe stands out. I'm personally thrilled to able to introduce him on our stage. SVSA heavyweight **Forrest Baldwin** will open for Abe.

As for the rest of our Fridays, here is the schedule (subject to last minute changes):

Date	Feature	Opening
10/23/22	Special Sunday Show: Grace Pettis	
10/28/22	The Dan & Adonna Show	Jeremy Elder
11/4/22	Keith Rea	Michael Gutierrez-May
11/11/22	Ben Hurt	Caleb Meyer
11/18/22	Eric Sommer	Art Katz
11/25/22	Judy Paster	Bob Schmucker
12/2/22	The Paninis	The Dan and Adonna Show
12/4/22	Special Sunday Show: Abe Partridge (AKA the Alabama Astronaut)	
12/9/22	Andrew Kasab	Still Frisky
12/16/22	SVSA Showcase (no opener)	
TBD	Josh Jones Appreciation Night	

Volunteer Aspen Black runs audio and video at a recent 3rd Street Coffeehouse performance.

The ceiling at 3rd Street Coffeehouse in Roanoke VA.

SVSA newsletter honcho David Simpkins is with the Visible Shivers in 1998 at Tap's in Christiansburg VA. Let's hope he's playing Werewolves Of London. *Have a safe and happy Halloween, y'all! (Photo by Kathy Loan.)*

SVSA Performing Members' Upcoming Gigs

BOB SCHMUCKER:

- Sat Oct 29, 5:30-7:30 P.m., Solstice Farm Brewery, Catawba VA. Fundraiser for Feeding Southwest Virginia. $1 of each beer sold and all tips go to FSV. More info: **https://www.facebook.com/events/1261532928020710**

Coming back soon

LOCAL, REGIONAL OPEN MICS

Many local and regional open mics shut down due to coronavirus concerns.

The good news is that many of those same venues (and new ones as well) are finally re-opening. Keep an eye out for the return of our comprehensive Local & Regional Open Mic listings. It'll be sooner than later!

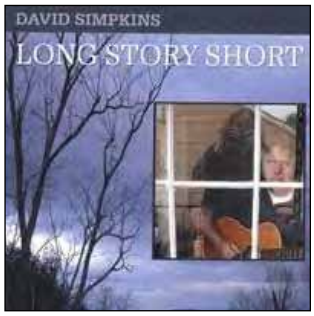
www.svsasongs.com

Autumn is flying past. Get out there and enjoy the remaining nice days while you can, like SVSAer Greg Trafidlo is doing at home. (Photo by Judy Larson.)

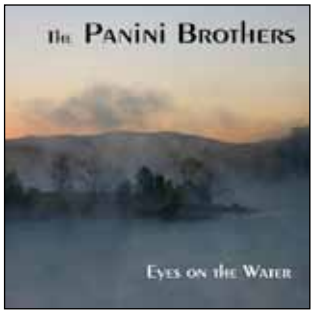
SVSA Members' Recordings

what's done is done

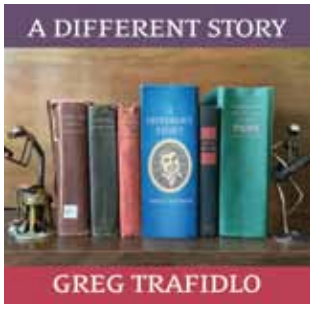
marc with a "c"



long story short



eyes on the water



a different story

the crawlspace tapes

carved in song

folk singular

Mike Franke

WHAT'S DONE IS DONE — A debut release of 14 original folk and blues tunes about everyday life and interesting people featuring Mike's fingerstyle and slide guitar.

Marc Baskind

MARC WITH A "C"— Sampler CD of covers and original songs offers a taste of the varied styles of this accomplished guitarist/singer.

David Simpkins

LONG STORY SHORT — Offers 12 original Americana tunes blending rock, folk, blues, and country.

The Panini Brothers

EYES ON THE WATER — Debut CD from a group comprised of SVSA members Larry Sakayama and Mike DeGiorgi as well as Chip Conway, Mark Earnhardt, and Scott Thomas. Jazzy, bluesey, eclectic, original tunes.

Greg Trafidlo

A DIFFERENT STORY — An eclectic combination of originals and covers featuring old friends and new, competently and professionally recorded and performed. And, as always, straight from the heart.

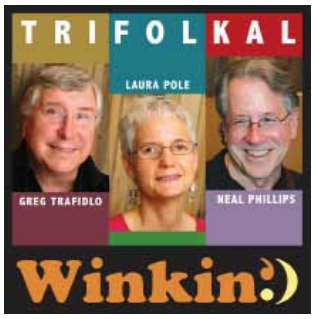
THE CRAWLSPACE TAPES — Greg's most joyful CD is a compilation of all his funny and goofy stuff. Tom Paxton says, "Loosen up, sourpusses. Greg is on the loose again!"

CARVED IN SONG— Most songs co-written with some of Greg's favorite songwriters. Listen to audio clips at gregtrafidlo.com.

FOLK SINGULAR— Greg's third solo CD reflects the diversity of his songwriting and production skills. With SVSA-ers on background vocals, and Marc Baskind on guitar and vocals.

SVSA Members' Recordings

silver



winkin'

pacing the moon

cup of contradictions

dimestore detective

dog joggin'

songwriter sessions

tales from the fire pit

Trifolkal

SILVER — The trio celebrates 25 years together with a "fan favorite" collection of covers from the Beach Boys to Tom Paxton.

WINKIN' — This top-notch release from that "trio fiercely dedicated to fun" tempers the fun with poignancy and heart.

Josh Jones

PACING THE MOON — Thirteen of the strongest songs Josh has written. For lyrics, short audio clips and additional information, please visit www.jonesgroupmusic.com.

Mike Pearrell

CUP OF CONTRADICTIONS — 13 original songs. Lots of SVSA musicians singing and playing.

DIMESTORE DETECTIVE — Mike's first solo CD features 14 original songs. Produced by Greg Trafidlo; with a number of guest SVSA musicians. Available at Mike's shows.

Steve Clark

DOG JOGGIN' — Eleven sweet and true amusing tunes comprise this quirky singer/songwriter CD. Available at cdbaby.com.

The Entwined

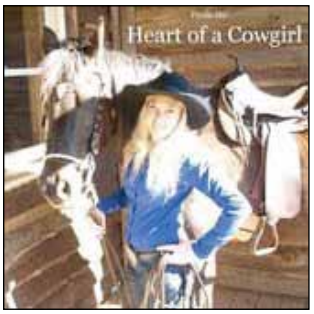
SONGWRITER SESSIONS — The CD was released at Francis Ford Coppola's Turtle Inn Resort in Belize in 2018. It's a mix of 13 songs written by Dan Hildebrand ranging from real-life ballads to feel-good ditties. Recorded at Blackwater Studios. Percussion and harmony by Adonna Lemon.

TALES FROM THE FIRE PIT — The most popular CD in Placenia, Belize for one week in 2018, the latest from the Entwined was recorded at Bad Monkey's music studio, located at the couple's home in VA, and features 10 original works.

SVSA Members' Recordings

tales from the road

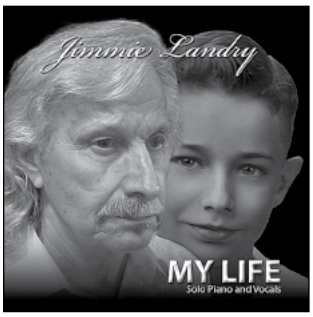
eastern western cowgirl



from the heart of a cowgirl

horsegirl poet

lovin' the west



my life

gumbo

style

Aspen Black

TALES FROM THE ROAD — 15 original poems with musical backup. Every poem has a tie to a road, although the road is never the subject. Either the road runs through it, shows up in a fleeting moment, or the whole story was inspired by, or witnessed "on the road."

EASTERN WESTERN COWGIRL — Eight original Contemporary Western songs. Available at CDBaby.com/aspenblack7.

FROM THE HEART OF A COWGIRL — Original spoken word poems adhering to the Western Music Association guidelines for the cowboy poetry genre. Available at CDBaby.

HORSEGIRL POET — Songs and poems about horses, cowboys, and rural life. Available at CDBaby.

LOVIN' THE WEST — This is the latest CD released by Western Music Association singer/songwriter – and SVSA member – Aspen Black. It features 10 original selections, seven of which are road-tested favorites.

Jimmie Landry

MY LIFE — Jimmie sings stories about his friends, family, and life on the road. A jazzy-blues New Orleans-style piano and vocals paint a picture of 60 years in music.

GUMBO — Hot and spicy down-home jazz, funk, and soul that goes down easy. Ten originals and three covers.

STYLE — A blend of standards and one original in a variety of grooves like straight-ahead swing, samba, jazz, waltz, and funky second-line blues.

"Instead of thinking, 'What information do I need to convey?' think, 'What questions do I want my audience to ask?'"

~ Derek Sivers

SVSA Members' Recordings

electric bill

acoustic bill

songs for veterans & patriots

eyes on the horizon

kaleidoscope

touch the sky

Bill Stanton

ELECTRIC BILL — Ten original songs of Bill's lyrics and melodies accompanied by former bandmates on electric instruments and vocal harmonies originally recorded in the 1980s.

ACOUSTIC BILL — Ten original songs with lyrics and melodies by Bill accompanied by former bandmates on acoustic instruments and vocal harmonies recorded from the early 1970s through 2000.

Jerry Gilmore

SONGS FOR VETERANS & PATRIOTS — covers topics concerning Vietnam veterans, POW/MIA warriors, the United States flag, military holidays, and the Medal Of Honor. The original compositions are performed in country, bluegrass, and southern rock styles. Available from CDBaby.

Barbara Martin

EYES ON THE HORIZON — Jazz and all originals with Robert Redd on piano, Chuck Redd on drums and vibes, Steve Wolf on bass, Mac Walter on guitar, Bruce Swaim on saxophone, John Jensen on trombone, and Matt Finley on flugelhorn.

KALEIDOSCOPE — Barbara's jazziest CD. All original songs, with co-writes with Joel Evans, Mac Walter, and Greg Trafidlo.

TOUCH THE SKY — Swinging acoustic blues and jazz from Barb Martin and Mac Walter.

SVSA DUES ARE DUE
Pay $35 on-line on our web site
or mail a check / money order to
PO Box 2901, Roanoke VA 24011

www.svsasongs.com

About Classifieds:

SVSA Music News free classifieds may be submitted by paid members only. All classifieds must be music-related. Members, e-mail your classifieds to **svsa.songwriters@gmail.com**.

About articles and other written contributions:

SVSA members write feature articles for the *SVSA Music News* throughout the year. Members can submit other articles and features at any time. Non-members may also submit articles and other written contributions but their inclusion will be subject to time and space constraints. All articles may be edited for space considerations and will be edited, as time allows, for spelling and grammar. E-mail submissions to **svsa.songwriters@gmail.com**.

About Announcements:

SVSA members may list music-related announcements in the *SVSA Music News*. E-mail them to **amosflame@aol.com** by the second Tuesday of the month. Announcements from members will be e-mailed to members as soon as they are received and, if still timely, published in an upcoming issue of the *SVSA Music News*. Announcements from non-members will be held for publication in an upcoming issue of the *SVSA Music News*.

About Members' Gig Listings:

SVSA members may submit their upcoming performance schedules for publication in the *SVSA Music News*. The submissions will be printed as submitted; the more information you provide, the more likely the response.

SVSA DISCLAIMER

The ideas and opinions contained in this newsletter are intended to be helpful to songwriters. The companies and organizations mentioned are believed to be legitimate; however, SVSA does not endorse any products or services and offers no guaranteed success based on the content.

We are always looking for articles about SVSA members and articles of interest to the songwriting community. Email articles and information to the Editor, David Simpkins, at amosflame@aol.com.

SVSA is a non-profit organization.

2022 SVSA Board Members:

Mike Pearrell – President
Mike Franke – Vice President
Celie Holmes – Treasurer
Mollye Otis – Secretary
David Simpkins – At-Large Board Member and Newsletter Editor
Larry Helms – At-Large Board Member

SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA SONGWRITERS ASSOCIATION

Southwest Virginia Songwriters Association
101 Church Ave SW
PO Box 2901
Roanoke VA 24011

www.svsasongs.com

THE SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA SONGWRITERS ASSOCIATION

WHO WE ARE

The Southwest Virginia Songwriters Association (SVSA), founded in 1981, comprises approximately 40 songwriters from diverse musical backgrounds who share the love of songwriting and interest in developing our craft. Our core mission is to meet monthly, listen to fellow writers' songs, and share feedback with one another in a supportive, encouraging, and engaging process.

The SVSA also offers workshops, social events, and performance opportunities for its members, along with a newsletter, web site, and a Facebook page that focus on members' creative engagement and outreach to Roanoke and the region.

If you are interested in becoming a part of this vibrant songwriting community, we invite you to audit two of our monthly meetings and then decide if you'd like to join the association. Once you've paid yearly dues, you can submit songs and contribute to the feedback sessions, plus participate in all our activities.

The greatest joy we have as a group is seeing writers growing and reaching their potential because of the work we do together. If you would like be a part of this songwriting community, please contact us at **info@svsasongs.com**

A BIT ABOUT OUR ASSOCIATION

We have among us people who range from seasoned professional and semi-professional performers to those have never been in front of an audience. Some of our members have many albums to their credit, while some have never set foot in a studio or on a stage.

Several members have sold songs to famous artists or have film and TV placements. Some play multiple instruments, and most play guitar or piano/keyboard but there are also non-instrumentalist lyricists in the mix. Some are singers, some non-singers, some with extensive music education, many with credits in the school of life experience who play by ear. There are writers who focus more on melody and harmony, and others who focus more on lyrics. Some writers are skilled producers/arrangers with a depth of technical know-how.

Our membership includes people of all ages representing a broad range of musical influences including folk, Americana, blues, gospel, rock, jazz, zydeco, pop, contemporary, country, bluegrass, Celtic, and theatre/cabaret. With this mix of diverse styles, interests, and skills, we share a rich knowledge base and learn through the exchange of expertise from multiple perspectives.

OUR METHOD

Unless otherwise indicated, The SVSA meets in the L.L. Rice Room at the Jefferson Center in Roanoke VA every fourth Wednesday of the month (with holiday exceptions). The doors open at 7:00 p.m. for meet, greet, and catch-up time. At 7:30, we may have business to discuss, then perhaps a brief period of activities such as writing exercises, mini-workshop presentations, videos, or other creative activities. Songs are then presented for listening and feedback sessions. On any given night, we discuss the songs in a robust, healthy exchange of comments and ideas. The meeting ends when all the songs have been presented or we close at 10:00 p.m.

Members and guests are required to submit their Covid vaccine record at check in, or, alternatively, email a photo of your card to: **mollyeotis@gmail.com**

Members may receive written feedback from other members in addition to the verbal feedback at live or virtual sessions.

Members are coached to be honest, thoughtful, and supportive of one another and respectful of the work. Our experience has been that our songs invariably improve after going through the feedback process.

If you would like to hang out with this welcoming group of songwriters, we would love to meet you! You are invited to audit two monthly meetings and then, should you decide to join, pay yearly dues of $35. Once a member, you may submit songs for consideration in our feedback sessions and will be eligible to participate in events and benefits of membership.