The Future (If Any) of the CTBA: The “A” Stands for “Apathy”

If you’ve been a CTBA member for more than a couple of years, you may recall the crisis in which the association found itself two years ago. In fact, you may (continued on next page)
Historical photo archive: Ticket stub from Bill Monroe’s last performance at the Armadillo World Headquarters in Austin, 1980. This was one of the last performances by anybody at this historic venue. Photo by K. Brown

(continued from previous page) recall the postcard that was sent out asking whether we should disband the organization and transfer the treasury to the AFTM. In February, 2007, we had a membership meeting in the banquet room at ArtZ Rib House. Eighteen members showed up, a good deal of impassioned handwringing ensued, and ultimately the membership voted to keep the CTBA alive, and some board members were elected. And we have managed to muddle through for the past two years.

Unfortunately, we’ve returned to that crisis point again, or perhaps even beyond it. So what’s the problem? It isn’t lack of funds, or even declining membership, although it would help if we could build up our membership some more. The problem is apathy and lack of volunteerism. Two of our board members are on the verge of resigning because of health issues and, frankly, because of disgust with the level of apathy in the organization. After nine months of hard work, we presented a free show at the Cactus Cafe (Austin’s premier acoustic listening room) by a dynamic young touring band, Bearfoot, in celebration of the CTBA’s 30th anniversary. Fewer than a dozen CTBA members bothered to show up, and that total included the board members who were present. We were left wondering, “What do we have to do next? Pay the audience to show up?” Then, last month, a grand total of ten people showed up at Stubbs Barbecue to hear Claire Lynch and Jim Hurst. That wasn’t a CTBA-sponsored show, but it certainly was a disappointing lack of support for acoustic music. (continued on next page)

The Problem

The problem is that the same small cadre of people are having to carry the organization along, year after year. And they’re tired. They might be able to keep on a bit longer if it seemed anybody cared. But apparently nobody does. I’ve talked to a few people at the ArtZ jam (I won’t name any names) who have said, “Why should I join the CTBA? What’s in it for me?” Ironically, all of these folks were at a CTBA-sponsored jam, a jam that wouldn’t exist if the CTBA hadn’t started it at St. Michael’s church over 30 years ago.

So just what does the CTBA do for its members?

- It publishes this newsletter, to keep you informed of upcoming bluegrass events in the central Texas area. If you think you can get that information online, or from the Statesman or Chronicle, think again. They don’t have a clue about what constitutes bluegrass and they don’t keep track of the various jams and bluegrass festivals in our part of the state.

- It sponsors the Sunday jam at ArtZ Rib House. You may ask, why do we need the CTBA for that, especially since there’s no longer a jam coordinator? It’s true that the present jam is mostly self-perpetuating — it runs itself without any supervision — but if the jam had to move elsewhere for some reason, do you really think it could migrate without the official sponsorship of some recognized organization like the CTBA or AFTM? I doubt it.

- It sponsors a CTBA member band on the first Saturday of every month at ArtZ Rib House, and in view of the Rib House’s current financial difficulties, we’re now paying the bands. For many of them, this is a prime gig opportunity.

- It sponsors the annual band scramble every July, a perennially popular event that for many folks, is probably their only chance to get in front of a microphone.

- It sponsors a scholarship every year at Camp Bluegrass in Levelland. “How does that benefit me?” you ask, “I’ve never even been there.” (continued on next page)
Well, it educates young and old alike about bluegrass, it keeps the supply of new pickers coming, it strengthens regional professionalism in the music, and it generally just helps keep the music we love strong and growing.

- It sponsors the Sunday morning *Strictly Bluegrass* program on KOOP-FM. We’re a business sponsor there and have been for many years.

- It has, in the past, sponsored concerts like the Bearfoot show, or the free concert series at Zilker Park that we produced for many years, or the festival at Old Settlers Park in Round Rock. We’d be doing more of these if we had any support from the membership. We don’t often sponsor shows any more, but it’s not because we don’t want to.

That’s what we do. If that isn’t enough reason for you to join, or maintain your membership, or volunteer to help with the work of the association, then maybe there is no reason to sustain the CTBA. We’re now in our thirty-first year of existence, but how much longer can we persist? Ola Belle Reed sings “I’ve endured, I’ve endured, how long can one endure?” Maybe that ought to be our theme song. A small number of people do all the work and keep this organization going. Many of the board members have served multiple terms. John Hood served as the newsletter editor for many years, doing not just the writing and information gathering, but taking the copy to the printer, making sure the printing got paid for, maintaining the membership and mailing label database, printing out the labels, folding the newsletter, applying the postage and seals, and then sorting and taking them to the post office, month after month, year after year with, of course, no pay. Roy Glover, as editor, and Russell Gunn as treasurer have done yeoman service as well.

All of this is, frankly, more than a little puzzling. I see a lot of interest locally in learning to play music. The ArtZ jam is always popular. We have a consistently high turnout there. And the bluegrass jam at Fiddler’s Green is well-attended also. Likewise, some of the other jams around town, like Steve Mangold’s slow jam, are equally well-attended. Clearly, there’s a lot of interest in playing the music. But somehow, that interest does not translate into attending live music concerts or supporting your local bluegrass association.

For perspective, let’s look outside central Texas. Let’s take a look at the Houston area-based Bay Area Bluegrass Association. I invite you to take a look at their rather spiffy web page: [www.bayareabluegrass.org/](http://www.bayareabluegrass.org/) They have a president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, seven directors, and a position labeled “general counsel.” They have over a dozen corporate sponsors, including the Shell Oil Company. They put on very successful spring festival, *Fire on the Strings*, at Montgomery. Every year the festival attracts hundreds of people (in comparison to the dozen or so that might show up at one of our shows). This year’s festival features, among others, Michael Cleveland and Flamekeeper, and the Williams & Clark Expedition, along with the Texas State Flatpicking Championship, the winner of which gets to compete at Winfield. With the stage shows held indoors in a large air-conditioned pavilion, the campground outside has room for dozens of RVs on concrete pads, and several dozen cabins arrayed around a big fishing lake. Most of the cabins are packed with jammers picking late into the night. BABA also sponsors a summer “Bluegrass in the Park” concert at League City, much like the Zilker Park summer concert series that the CTBA used to sponsor (continued on next page).
And the club also sponsors periodic workshops during the year for guitar, banjo, mandolin, bass, and dobro pickers.

In short, BABA is a dynamic, energetic, viable bluegrass club that can call on the support of its members when it needs to. Somebody has to maintain the web site, manage the club’s funds, plan and book talent for the festival, operate the sound system, arrange for facilities for workshops, manage festival vendors, sell tickets, set up and take down folding chairs, arrange for festival publicity, oversee and judge the contests, and solicit corporate sponsors. That’s a lot of work, folks, but the people there in Houston are getting it done. They’re getting it done because when they need volunteers, they can find them. Why is BABA viable, while CTBA is moribund? I’ve often thought that nonprofit organizations like ours depend mainly on the labor of retirees, because they’re about the only people with time to donate. I don’t know if Houston has an overabundance of retirees, or Austin has a deficit, or what. I know the median age for Austin is probably lower than most cities of its size, but is there no one at all in central Texas with both time and a love of bluegrass? Why can’t we find just a few people who want to help?

Last fall I went to the IBMA meeting in Nashville. Nearly all the jamming that I got to do took place in the two suites rented by the California Bluegrass Association. The CBA is a statewide organization that is just as active as BABA. They publish a tabloid-format newsletter (the one I picked up in Nashville is 24 pages long) called the Breakdown and sponsor the Father’s Day Festival, an associated CBA Music Camp, the Sonoma County festival, a series of “campouts” in spring, summer, and fall, and a series of concerts in different parts of the state. Take a look at the CBA’s web site: www.cbaontheweb.org/index.asp Both of these organizations, BABA and CBA, ought to be models for us to follow. At this point, though, I’d be satisfied if we could simply persist in a static mode — that is, muddle through like we’ve been doing for the past few years. But I don’t know if that’s even possible under the crushing weight of apathy that afflicts us.

What We Need

Here’s what we need, minimally:

1) at least two new board members, including someone willing to serve as president; additional board members may be needed later on;
2) someone to help with newsletter distribution (maintain the mailing database, apply labels and postage, and so forth)
3) someone willing to serve as webmaster; to keep the web site events calendar, newsletter archive, and other sections up to date and to post news when necessary.

If you don’t think the CTBA accomplishes much, if you can’t understand why it doesn’t do more, then volunteer to serve on the board! We’ll be glad to have help. We have a 31-year history of promoting bluegrass in central Texas. Don’t let this organization suffer a premature death. Our next board meeting is Saturday, March 7 at ArtZ Rib House. If you have something to contribute, come to the board meeting and let us hear from you. Either that, or send flowers to the deceased.
Events calendar: March, 2009

March 1, Sunday, 11 AM: Bluegrass Brunch with the Sieker Band at Threadgill’s North, 6416 North Lamar, Austin; 451-5440

March 2, Monday, 7:30 PM: the Sieker Band at Country Music Monday, Giddings

March 6-7, Friday (6-11 PM): and Saturday (1-10 PM): Argyle Bluegrass Festival; www.argylebluegrassfestival.com/index.html

March 8, Sunday, 11 AM: Bluegrass Brunch with Blacktop Bend at Threadgill’s North, 6416 North Lamar, Austin; 451-5440

March 8, Sunday, 11 AM-1 PM: Bluegrass Brunch with the Piney Grove Ramblers at ArtZ Rib House, 2330 South Lamar, Austin

March 12, Thursday, 6 PM: the Sieker Band at San Saba Civic Center, San Saba

March 13, Friday, 8 PM: house concert with Steve Smith and Chris Sanders; $15. Sponsored by Steve Mangold and Jacque Austin, 7214 Running Rope, Austin; (512) 345-6155. www.desertnight.com/

March 18, Wednesday, 11 PM: The Travelin McCourys at Smokin’ Music, 504 Trinity, Austin (SxSW)

March 19, Thursday, 7 PM: The Siekers at South Texas Opry, Corpus Christi

March 21, Saturday: Russ Barenberg workshop (2-4:30 PM, $15 advance) and house concert (7-9 PM, $50). 314 Post Oak Way, Shavano Park. Call (21) 842-2545 or E-mail Spikey.Boy@hotmail.com

March 28, Saturday, 9 AM-5 PM: Banjo setup workshop, Sagemont Presbyterian Church, Houston; Angie Sumpter, 1-877-450-4641


March 28, Saturday, 7 PM: The Sieker Band at the Walburg Restaurant, Walburg

Send news of events to the editor at: kbrown@mail.utexas.edu
March is Workshop and House Concert Month

Forget about south by Southwest — even without it, there’ll be a gallery of touring artists coming through our area in March for a series of house concerts and workshops. There ought to be something for just about everybody. Check the calendar page for the condensed version.

**Argyle, various workshops, March 6-7**
Vocal, songwriting, fiddle, guitar, mandolin, bass workshops with Dale Ann Bradley, Tony Rice, Clay Jones, the Gibson Brothers, Adam Steffey, Ron Stewart, Barry Bales, and others at the Argyle Bluegrass Festival;  www.argylebluegrassfestival.com/id59.html

**Austin, house concert with Steve Smith and Chris Sanders, March 13**
Mandolin picker (and Camp Bluegrass instructor) Steve Smith from Steve Smith and Hard Road (Las Cruces, New Mexico) with Chris Sanders. Sponsored by Steve Mangold and Jacque Austin. 7214 Running Rope, Austin

**San Antonio, house concert, workshop with Russ Barenberg, March 21**
At Joe McColley’s house in Shavano Park; the workshop is 2-4:30 PM, $50; the concert is 7-9 PM, $15 advance, $18 door. 314 Post Oak Way, Shavano Park; for reservations call Syd Smoot at (210) 842-2545 or E-mail Spikey.Boy@hotmail.com

Guitar guru Russ Barenberg needs no introduction, but if you need an introduction, well, go here:  www.russbarenberg.com/

**Houston, banjo setup workshop with Wil Huckabay, March 28**
At Sagemont Presbyterian Church, 11303 Hughes Road, Houston, 9 AM–5 PM; $35 (lunch provided) for registration or more information:  http://tinyurl.com/724mgl

**Austin Guitar Show, March 21-22**
In conjunction with south by Southwest  (but with free admission, unlike most SxSW events) the Austin Guitar Show will be held at the Austin Convention Center (500 E. Cesar Chavez) on Saturday and Sunday, 10 AM - 6 PM.

www.texasguitarshows.com/NewAustin.htm

**New Releases**
Russell Moore and IIIrd Tyme Out will have a new CD on Rural Rhythm later this year; no title or release date announced yet. Jeanette Williams has a new CD  *(Thank You for Caring)* on Blue Circle Records. BCR-007, with guests including Tony Rice, Tim Stafford, Randy Kohrs, Aubrey Haynie, and many others. And Johnny Williams has a new one, too:  *Last Day of Galax* (MMR-CD1004). The new CD by Audie Blaylock and Redline (RHY-1042) has been out for several months now and is getting lots of airplay. The long-awaited biography of Tony Rice  *(Still Inside)* by Caroline Wright and Tim Stafford is to be published in April.
CTBA Artists and Bands

Austin Lounge Lizards
Mike Drudge
615-262-6886
www.austinlizards.com

Blacktop Bend
George Rios
512-619-8536
guitarios@yahoo.com

Blazing Bows
Mary Hattersley
512-873-8925

Bluegrass Vatos
Danny Santos
512-218-4141
danny@dannysantosmusic.com

Buffalo Grass
Don Inbody
512-295-6977
don@inbody.net

David & Barbara Brown
361-985-9902
ddbrown004@grandecom.net

Dear Henry Band
Chris Brewster
512-693-4648
www.dearhenryymusic.com

Eddie Collins
512-836-8255
www.eddiecollins.biz
tuneman@austin.rr.com

Grass Onions Band
Tom Duplissey
512-454-9313
picker2@austin.rr.com

Hard to Make a Living
John Hood
512-376-7767
hardtomakealiving@sbcglobal.net

Manchaca All-Stars
B. Buchanan
512-282-2756
manchacaallstars@email.com

Out of the Blue
Jamie Stubblefield
512-295-5325
jamie5011@aol.com

String Beans
Mike Montgomery
512-517-6753
mike-mon@astro.as.utexas.edu

Teresa Garner Bluegrass Band
Teresa Garner
512-963-4612
rgbgrass@yahoo.com

The Ledbetters
Spencer Drake
830-660-2533
kthdrake@wildblue.net

The Piney Grove Ramblers
Wayne Brooks
512-345-6609
www.pgrammers.com

The Sieker Band
Rolf & Beate Sieker
512-733-2857
www.siekerband.com

The Grazmatics
L. Wayne Ross
512-303-2188

Two High String Band
Geoff Union
512-563-9821
Geoff@highstring.com

Wayward Pony
Dale Albright
dale-mandolin@austin.rr.com
www.irishsessions.webhop.org
www.waywardpony.com

All bands listed are members of the CTBA. See the membership form on the back cover page for information on band membership.

Thanks to Roy Glover

In April, 2007, Roy Glover took over the editorship of this newsletter, and he’s put in two years of hard work since then. Roy first started sitting in on the board meetings, saying he just wanted to observe and help out a bit, and before he knew it, he was a full-fledged board member and had complete responsibility for the Bluegrass Bulletin. The editor’s job is a pretty thankless one. You finish one issue only to discover that you’re already behind on next month’s. And when you ask folks for feedback, they usually say, “Oh, I haven’t read it yet.” You’ll hear from them if you spell their name wrong, though.

So next time you see Roy, tell him thanks. And if you see John Hood, you might tell him thanks, too. John put in several years as editor before Roy, and has served as president for a long time, probably the most burdensome job of all.
CTBA Business Members

Restaurant & Catering
contact: Art Blondin
2330 South Lamar Blvd
Austin, TX 78704
(512) 442-8286
Fax: (512) 442-9342
email: artzribhouse@juno.com
www.artzribhouse.com
Mon-Sat: 11am-10pm

Texas Pickin' Park
Fayetteville Courthouse Square
Dorothy Stall
P.O. Box 3
Fayetteville, TX 78940
(979) 378-2753 Telephone
(979) 378-2037 Fax
info@texaspickinpark.com
www.texaspickinpark.com

The Austin Center for the Treatment of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
Bruce Mansbridge, PhD
Director
http://austinocd.com
mansbridge@austinocd.com
6633 US Hwy 290 East
Austin, TX 78723
Office 512 327-9494
Cell 512 626-3900
Fax 512 637-5578

Salmon Lake Park
Where the Bluegrass is Best!
Floyd & Fannie Salmon
936-687-2594
936-687-4141
Summer Afternoon Hours Only
P. O. Box 483
Grapeland, TX 75844
www.salmonlakepark.com

Overton Bluegrass Festival
City of Overton Sponsoring Bluegrass and Gospel Music
www.overtonbluegrass.com
Don Eaves
bluegrass@cl.overton.tx.us
903-834-3171
Drawer D
Overton, Texas 75684
Charlotte Parrack
325-646-8531
300 Early Blvd.
Central Texas Bluegrass Assoc.
Merchandise

The Central Texas Bluegrass Volume 2 compilation CD is now available for only $10.00! This collection contains 23 songs from 13 different CTBA member bands, including (listed in order of appearance):

Austin Lounge Lizards
Cooper’s Uncle
Eddie Collins
Adam Wright and Max Zimmet
3rd Generation Gospelgrass
Max Zimmet
Out of the Blue
Ptarmigan
Manchaca All Stars
Cedar Break
Stayton Bonner
Wayward Pony
The Ledbetters

CTBA Logo T-Shirt
This 100% pre-shrunk cotton, high-quality T-shirt displays our logo in a blue design on the front. Available in white only, sizes S, M, L, XL, and XXL ($8).

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Total of Merchandise Items

Shipping Charges add: $1.50

Total Payable to Central Texas Bluegrass Association

Name ____________________________
Address __________________________
City __________ State ____________
Email ____________________________
Phone ____________________________

Mail check or money order to:
CTBA
P.O. Box
Austin, Tx 78766-9816

$10.00
$8.00
$8.00
$1.50
$
CTBA Area Jams and Events

AUSTIN AREA, CTBA
Beginner/Intermediate Jam 1st & 3rd Thu. 7-9 PM, Steve Mangold 512-345-6155
CTBA 2nd & 4th Sat, ArtZ Ribhouse, beginner/intermediate Jam 4–6 contact: Steve Mangold 345-6155
Jam Session: Sunday at ArtZ Ribhouse, 2-6 PM
Live Bluegrass Show: ArtZ Ribhouse Sunday 6 pm; 512-442-8283
AAAMS Jam 2nd & 4th Wed. Leander/Cedar Park Fine Arts Academy, 200 Buttercup Rd, Ste. 104, Cedar Park, 6:30 to 8:30 pm, 512-401-8863
AFTM Contradance: 3rd Sat. 3501 Red River 7:30 to 11 pm, $7 453-8936
AFTM Jam Session: 2nd Sun at ArtZ Rib House, 2330 S. Lamar, Austin, 2-4 PM www.brazoscountrygrass.com
FIDDLER’S GREEN jam session in the BARN out back behind the shop every 2nd and 4th Thursday from 7pm to 11 pm. Phone: 512-452-3900 (RESUMES APRIL 9)
www.fiddlersgreenmusicshop.com

BANDERA
4th Friday of each month at Silver Sage Corral– east of Bandera. Starts at 6:30 pm. For more info call (830)796-3969 (Not on Good Friday)

BELLEVILLE
Spring Creek Club Jam/Show Jan. thru Sept 4th Sat; 4pm Jam, 6:30 pm show. Coushatte Recreation Ranch 979-865-5250
garlandbluegrass221@ev1.net Plenty of RV camping and good food.

BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION,
Brazos Country Grass Monday Jam, J. Cody’s, 3610 S. College 6-9 PM www.brazoscountrygrass.com

CEDAR PARK, Irish sessions Jam, It’s a Grind Coffeehouse, once a month. Check out website: www.irishsessions/webhop/org

CLEBURNE
Show and Jam: 3rd Fri. Cleburne Civic Center, 1501 W. Henderson (Hwy 67) 7 PM $3 www.NTBBBluegrass.com

ELGIN
2nd Friday of each month: Elgin Jam –Back Forty Chiropractic/Rain Deer Productions-105 W. 2nd St. Elgin 7-10 PM
3rd Friday of each Month: Blue Fire-Station jam session FM 696 7-10

FAYETTEVILLE:
Beginner/Intermediate Bluegrass Jam 2nd Saturday, each month beginning at 6 PM on the Courthouse Square. Acoustic instruments only. For Info: info@texaspickinpark.com www.texaspickinpark.com

GEORGETOWN
Randy’s Rangers Thursday Jam: Duke’s BBQ Smokehouse, 7-9 PM, 512-869-8076 or www.sigi.us/RR
2nd Sunday Jam, held at 1 pm at the San Gabriel Park in Georgetown behind the football stadium. Contact Jon or Sigi 512-869-8076

GARLAND
Bluegrass on the Square: Saturday, March–November between Main and State Sts. At 6th, 7:30 PM to 1 AM

GEOEGEtown

HARWOOD
Stage Show & Jam Session 3rd Sat, 9 mi. E of Luling, Hwy 90, 2 to 9 PM
Ben Buchanan 512-263-7193

HONDO
Hondo Hootenanny, 1 PM, Hondo Community Center, 1st Fri each month 830-426-3438

LEAGUE CITY (BABA)
Jam & Free Bluegrass Show 3rd Sat: Jam 5 PM, Show 6:30 PM Jan–Nov., League City Civic Center, 300 W. Walker St. 281-636-9419

LIBERTY HILL
4th Sat. Jam Session at 1-6 PM, Hwy 29 West, contact Paula at 512-778-5410

MANCHACA
Open jam every Thursday night from 7-9 PM at The Railroad BBQ on FM 1626 in Manchaca

MEDINA
2nd Friday each month— The Medina Jam session will be held at the Masonic Lodge at 6:30 PM (bring covered dish)

MONTGOMERY
1ST SATURDAY Jam in downtown historical District from 10 AM– 2 PM. For discount coupons at local KOA contact Dr. Mike Davis: mld@consolidated.net

MUSKOGEE
2nd Saturday Jam  6:30 PM at 6:30 PM at the Muscogee Nation Pow Wow, 435 W. 16th St. Muskogee, 918-684-0840

PEARL
Jam & Stage Show, 1st Sat: Jam starts at noon, show 4:30 PM Hwy 183, 7 mi South of Purmela; contact: Ronald Medart 254-865-6013

SAN ANTONIO
Open Bluegrass Jam Session Tuesdays, 6-8:30 PM, Grady’s BBQ Store No. San Pedro Ave, at Jackson–Keller (beginner-friendly)
Beginner/Intermediate Bluegrass Jam 2nd Thursday 7-9 pm at 6418 Ridgehurst, San Antonio. Hosted by Clifton Bowren 210-602-5544 cliftonfiddler5@aol.com

SHULENBERG
RV Park community Center 2nd Tuesday of every month, 6:30—9:00 PM Laretta Baumgarten 979-743-4388 schurvpk@fais.net

WIMBERLEY
Bluegrass Jam Fri 8-12 pm, Lane’s Country Café, Wimberley

Editor’s note: this list of jams hasn’t been verified in a long time. Call ahead before checking out an unfamiliar jam, to make sure it’s still active. 
To:

Central Texas Bluegrass Association
P.O. Box 9816
Austin, Texas  78766-9816

P.O. Box 8916
Austin, TX 78766-8916

Would you like to participate on a committee?

I am interested in helping the following:

E-mail

Please list other AeTCS event like:


