

the Central Ohio Folk Festival Celebrates 20 !!



This is our story...

History of the Central Ohio Folk Festival

the story of a festival

The Great Black Swamp Dulcimer Festival

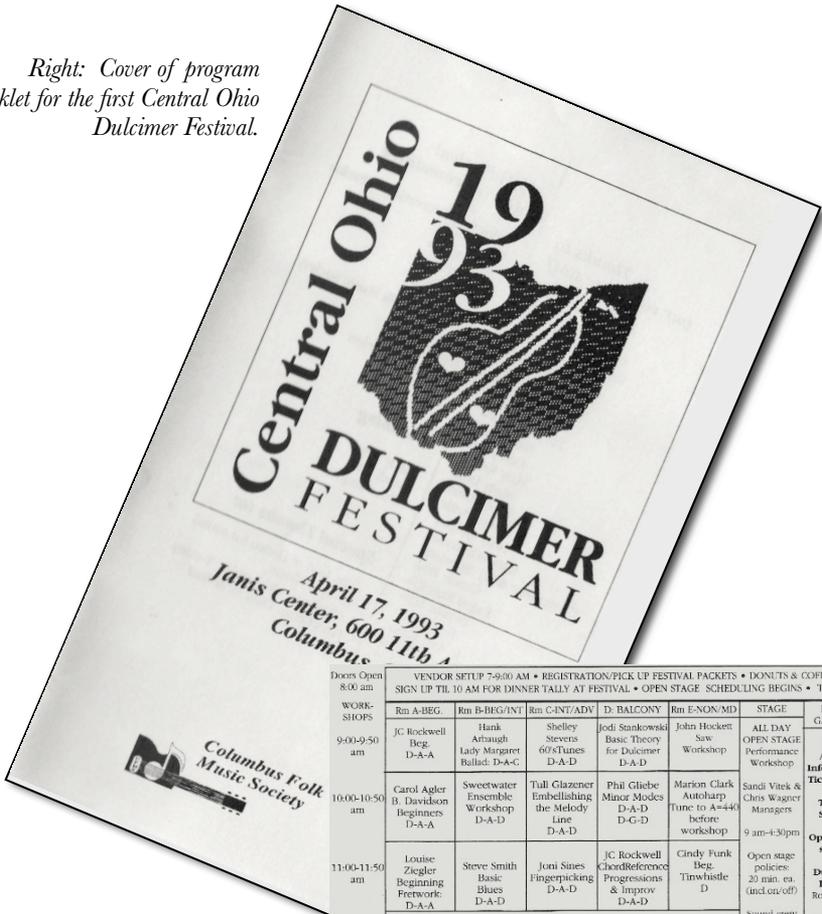
From an article in a Columbus Folk Music Society (CFMS) newsletter dated Winter, 1995: "The Third Annual Central Ohio Dulcimer Festival. . .will be held April 1 and 2, 1995. The festival rose above dreaded obstacles in 1994; a last-minute site change, revamped schedules, unexpected stacks of construction materials that hid McDowell Center and its parking lot from arriving guests. . .however, the crowd had a great time, enjoying 65 music workshops, the concerts, and the camaraderie. Attendees in 1994 came from 77 Ohio counties and seven other states as well. Of 35 workshop presenters, eleven were CFMS members."

In 1993, the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department and the Marion Square Pioneer Dulcimers & Singers group launched the *Central Ohio Dulcimer Festival*. The festival was, in part, an effort to fill the void left by the discontinuation of the *Great Black Swamp Dulcimer Festival* where thousands of "dulcimer players – not to mention saw players and auto harpists and bones players and fans of American folk music – were thrown together at The Ohio State University Lima Campus for 14 straight springs from 1979 through 1992."¹

The Central Ohio Dulcimer Festival

Like the Great Black Swamp Dulcimer Festival, the Central Ohio Dulcimer Festival was a teaching festival and its inaugural year boasted 30 workshops, 6 mini-concerts/presentations and an evening main concert over the one day event which attracted 250 folks. Held indoors at the Martin Janis Center on 11th Avenue in

Right: Cover of program booklet for the first Central Ohio Dulcimer Festival.



VENDOR SETUP 7-9:00 AM • REGISTRATION/PICK UP FESTIVAL PACKETS • DONUTS & COFFEE SIGN UP TIL 10 AM FOR DINNER TALLY AT FESTIVAL • OPEN STAGE SCHEDULING BEGINS • TUNING							
DOORS OPEN 8:00 am	Rm A-BEG	Rm B-BEG/INT	Rm C-INT/ADV	D-BALCONY	Rm E-NON/MID	STAGE	HALL/ GALLERY
9:00-9:50 am	J.C. Rockwell Beg. D-A-A	Hank Arbaugh Lady Margaret Ballad: D-A-G	Shelley Stevens 60's Tunes D-A-D	Jodi Stankowski Basic Theory for Dulcimer D-A-D	John Hockett Saw Workshop	ALL DAY OPEN STAGE Performance Workshop	HALL: All Day Info Desk & Ticket Sales
10:00-10:50 am	Carol Agler B. Davidson Beginners D-A-A	Sweetwater Ensemble Workshop D-A-D	Tull Glazener Embellishing the Melody Lane D-A-D	Phil Gliebe Manx Modes D-A-D D-G-D	Marion Clark Autoharp Tune to A=440 before workshop	Sandi Vitek & Chris Wagner Managers 9 am-4:30pm	Tuning Station Open Stage signup
11:00-11:50 am	Louise Zaegler Beginning Fretwork: D-A-A	Steve Smith Basic Blues D-A-D	Joni Sines Fingerpicking D-A-D	J.C. Rockwell Chordreference Progressions & Improv D-A-D	Cindy Funk Beg. Tinwhistle D	Open stage policies: 20 min. ea. (incl.on/off)	Dulcimer Doctor Ron Ewing
LUNCH BREAK 12:00-1:30	Some a la carte items are available at the canteen; the box lunches you ordered via your pre-registration form may be picked up there. Ask for our map of close by eateries. If it's a nice day we can eat outside—remember to recycle. Note: Open stage performances continue through lunch break, but food and drink may not be taken into the auditorium.					Sound crew ONLY moves microphones & equipment	Builders: Ron Ewing J.C. Rockwell John Hockett
AFTER- NOON 1:30-2:20 pm	Mary Knight Beg. C-G-G	Andy Beyer HalfTimeOns & Pickoffs D-A-D	Tull Glazener How to Play Back-Up D-A-D	Chris Wagner Marketing for Musicians	Sylvia Miller Spoons	Be Backstage 10 minutes before your time slot or your place may be taken	Cases Tinwhistles Doug & Lee reit Thiesledew
2:30-3:20 pm	Carol Agler B. Davidson Beginner D-A-A Chords	Almarnal Sines Cabbage & Chording D-A-D	Sweetwater Ensemble Workshop D-A-D	Marij Hazen Public Domain	John Sherman D-A-D-G-A-D Guitar	Evening performers may not be on open stage.	CMMS Membership Info
3:30-4:20 pm	Brenda Vetter Basic Chorus D-A-A	Betsy Salt Ohio History Song Sampler D-A-A	Ron Ewing Using the Capo D-A-D	Phil Gliebe Celtic Airs D-A-D, D-G-D	Hank Arbaugh Mandolin	No performer may appear on open stage more than once (solo or with group).	GALLERY: The Year of American Craft: Exhibit of handmade instruments from Central Ohio
BREAK 4:30-6:30	Two-hour break. Did you put your name on the list for supper at the canteen? Sound checks for concert performers. Ticket sales for evening concert. Vendors pack up.						Performers & Workshop Leaders' tables
EVENING CONCERT 6:30- 9:50	Steve Smith J.C. Rockwell & Bob Bellamy Andy & Becky Beyer INTERMISSION Rita Kohler: Story—How the Dulcimer Got Its Name Marij Hazen SWEETWATER						
JAM 9:30- 10:30	After-concert, festival finale jam & sing for all instruments & singers, lead by Chris Wagner.						

Below: Schedule for the first Central Ohio Dulcimer Festival

"The Central Ohio Dulcimer Festival had its third anniversary party at the beginning of April [1995]. The planning committee [of which a number of CFMS members participated] knew there would be a heavy price to pay for scheduling it on the weekend that encompasses both April Fool's Day and, worse!, the day for setting clocks forward. . . our penalty was the loss of an entire hour out of the weekend – time that could have been spent jamming, going to workshops, tuning, or resting up. . .

"Like the human three-year-old, the festival has gone through its infant year and its terrible twos, and is finding its own distinct voice and character. . . . Festival participants . . . think it has a friendly, kind, and mellow atmosphere. . . . We are becoming known as a premium (perhaps even hyperactive) teaching festival, and Central Ohio as a good source of folk teacher-musicians.

"In 1995, 264 attendees came from 35 counties in Ohio and from 9 states."

- A Different Strummer (CFMS newsletter, Spring 1995 issue)

Columbus, the first event was co-sponsored by Columbus Recreation and Parks, the Marion Square Pioneer Dulcimer & Singers group and the Columbus Folk Music Society. Members of the folk music society contributed quite a bit of time and talent to the festival's tasks. It was such a success, that the Columbus Recreation and Parks asked that the festival be expanded to an entire weekend the following year.

In 1994 the festival did become a two-day event and prided itself in offering 65 workshops. Due to some construction work in the Janis Center area, the festival moved to the McDowell Center, at McDowell and Rich Streets in the Franklinton area of Columbus where it ran for three years. Of the 65 workshops offered in 1994, 43 focused on either the Mountain or Hammered dulcimer and the remainder covered a variety of informational topics and as well as other instruments that included the saw, bodhran, guitar, banjo, autoharp, accordion, penny whistle and spoons. In addition to two main concerts, there were opportunities for

festival participants to perform in one of the six 20-minute open stage performance slots. Participants were selected by a drawing from a “hat” of entered names.

In 1995, the Columbus Dulcimer Club took over and managed the overall running of the festival. The festival was co-sponsored by Columbus Recreation and Parks, the Columbus Dulcimer Club and the Columbus Folk Music Society (CFMS). In 1995, 75 50-minute workshops were presented, with 54 focused on the Mountain and Hammered dulcimer. In addition, in the auditorium of the McDowell Center, demos/performances were offered and the main concert occurred on Saturday evening. In 1996, 71 workshops were offered, with nine of them presented in a two hour format, allowing participants to learn in a “small, highly focused group.” The 1996 Saturday evening concert showcased Steve Schneider (whose hammered dulcimer credits included a Broadway musical), Stephen Seifert (a “mountain dulcimer champion” from Cincinnati) and folk singers/dulcimer performers Molly Freibert and Janey Robertson from Louisville, KY.

An important side note. . .

An important part of the development of the folk music society was the gaining of its non-profit status. Local music historian and CFMS member, Marji Hazen, recalled that around 1992, there had been a meeting between the Columbus Recreation and Parks and several others, amongst whom were Nancy Cline Bailey, Marji and Eric Fralick who were all involved with the folk music society. Columbus Recreation and Parks had previously approached Marji with their all-city dulcimer event idea and offered to fund mountain dulcimer activities to be open to anyone in the city. She suggested that the Columbus Recreation and Parks look at funding a more musically inclusive organization than a dulcimer group would be and was told by them that the Columbus Folk Music Society would need to become a 501(c)(3) in order to receive funding, a suggestion that

prompted the society to apply for a 501(c)(3) not for profit status, which was granted to them in 1995.

The torch is passed



Nancy Cline Bailey “in dialogue” – most likely about an important detail – at the 1st Unitarian Universalist space.



Fred Bailey, along with his wife Nancy (both now deceased), were key start up persons/organizers in the founding years of both the Columbus Folk Music Society and the Central Ohio Folk Festival. “And to his last day, the society remained in his thoughts. I think he saw it as part of his legacy to the folk music world.” -Pam Raver

The Central Ohio Dulcimer Festival ran from 1993 through 1996. In 1996, the Columbus Recreation and Parks’ folks decided that the scope of the festival had grown beyond Recreation and Parks mission to its senior clientele. The Columbus Dulcimer Club’s spearheading of the event was winding down, and an offer was made to Nancy Cline Bailey to combine The Central Ohio Dulcimer Festival with efforts of some members of Columbus Folk Music Society to create a new festival. This would be a festival that, amongst other things, would serve Central Ohio as well as be an event that would provide activities appropriate and fun for family members of all ages. What the Columbus Dulcimer Club asked for in return was a bookkeeper and a solemn promise that the society would continue to support dulcimer music. The Columbus Dulcimer Club continued to co-sponsor the event. Nancy’s husband, Fred Bailey, who was an accountant, handled the accounting and

Nancy, more or less, handled everything else. They became, by default, the initial directors of the first Central Ohio Folk Festival (COFF) held in 1997, and remained in that role until 2009. In 2005, it became apparent that the most feasible way to run the festival was to officially place it under the umbrella of the Columbus Folk Music Society, and its 501(c)(3) status. The festival continued to be run by the festival directors and steering committee, but reported its activities to the CFMS board. In 2010, the Festival direction was taken over by Art & Sharon Mittenbergs, who both volunteered with and were strong supporters of the festival since its inception in 1997.

Over its history the festival has seen performers such as: The Cantrells, James Keelaghan, Lee Rowe, Mike Seeger, and Jean Ritchie and, like its festival predecessors, continued in the tradition of providing a multitude of instructional workshops. In 2014, Fred Bailey

"In 1997 it was such a thrill to perform at the very first Central Ohio Folk Festival.

"I still remember that first year; standing in the doorway at Immaculate Conception Parish, watching the rain coming down in buckets! Inside was a great feeling of community and fun!

"All the wonderful and sad memories flow together. . . the wonderful friends I've made and reconnected with over these past 20 years and [the memories] of those who have left us.

"Here's looking forward to a 25th. . . 50th and beyond! I already have them all on my calendar!"

- Dave Hawkins



Art & Sharon Mittenbergs preparing the "COFF registration table" when the festival was held at the 1st Unitarian Universalist Church in Columbus.

Right: Excerpts from the first Central Ohio Folk Festival's promotional pamphlet.

Below: Beginning years' Central Ohio Folk Festival program booklet cover



The Columbus Folk Music Society
The Columbus Dulcimer Club
present the second annual

Central Ohio Folk Festival

Saturday, May 30, 1998
First UU Church
93 W. Weisheimer
Columbus, Ohio

69 workshops • 16 mini-concerts

7:00 PM Concert
THE CANTRELLS
SARA GREY
BOB "HUTCH" HUTCHINSON



Above: Central Ohio Folk Festival registration packet design

described The Central Ohio Folk Festival as “the jewel of the crown”. . .of the Folk Music Society.

The Central Ohio Folk Festival, conducted annually every spring, has occurred at several different locations within the Columbus area. The first year was a one day event and was held on May 31, 1997 at the Immaculate Conception Church in Clintonville. The Spring 1997 issue of *A Different Strummer* enthusiastically invited folks out to the first time event. Nancy Bailey wrote: “What better way for folkies to launch into the spring/summer festival season than at a first-time quality festival? Phrases come to mind: small but mighty; quality over quantity; Columbus needs this festival; Central Ohio needs this festival. . . . What’s your pleasure? Traditional folk? Old timey? Bluegrass? Sixties folk? Childe Ballads? You name it – it will happen. . . .We are excited – you should be too!”

The very first folk festival was indeed a success. The Autumn 1997 issue of *A Different Strummer* reported, “Neither rain nor gloom of night stopped upwards of 160 people from attending the first annual Central Ohio Folk Festival.

“We started out doing set up and helping at the store [at Immaculate Conception Church space]. We were assigned to the on-site registration table First Shift [at 1st Unitarian Universalist space], which was an experience never to be forgotten.

“Being the first shift people was exciting since the participants were lined up outside the door from about 7:30 until 8:30 AM when Fred unlocked the door. Classes [workshops] began at 9:00 AM, so everyone wanted to get registered and find the classroom they needed. What a RUSH !

We continued with that registration desk duty for many years. Greeting our featured performers like Jean Ritchie, Maddie MacNeil, Jerry Rockwell, Sarah Grey, and so many others was a thrill, to say the least, to us.”

–Sharon & Art Mittenbergs



Emcee, Norm Whitman, introduces a musical act at one of the early Central Ohio Folk Festivals held at the 1st Unitarian Universalist Church.



So who said we don't have a sense of humor?

“Actually, the fun began the night before at a jam session that lasted until the wee hours of the morning.

“Saturday dawned and with it came the rain – and the folkies.

The sign out front announced ‘Central Ohio Folk Festival – Here Today (Gone

Tomorrow!).’ The parking lot filled and the event began. Forty-eight workshops, 12 mini-concerts and eight hours later, it was time for a delicious vegetarian dinner served by the folks from Simply Living. Then, magically, the dining hall became a concert venue, the lights dimmed, and the evening concert began. . .

[When it was over] after all the classrooms were returned to ‘normal,’ the performance venue was again a gym, and all the clean-up was done, Nancy was heard to remark, ‘we did real well.’”

From 1998 - 2002, the festival was held at the 1st Unitarian Universalist Church in Clintonville and it continued as a one-day event, although Friday night jamming grew to become part and parcel of the overall festivities as well as a few other Friday night offerings.

An article giving a preview of the second festival in the Spring 1998 issue of *A Different Strummer* read, “we pulled off the [first] festival, meeting our attendance projections, and a good time was had by enough people to encourage us to create the annual event that we’d hoped our project would become. . . .With

the larger space, we will be able to host 56 workshops [there ended up being 69]. . . and child care space should be more toddler-friendly.

“Accommodations for festival-goers have again been secured with Best Western University Inn, who is also providing space . . .so we can jam our little hearts out without waking neighbors. . . .On Friday night there will be a contra/square dance at the church, featuring the music of the Pit Bull String Band.”

In 1999, because the festival was able to get a substantial grant from the Ohio Arts Council, festival organizers booked



Music related vending has always been a part of the festival. Shown here is the vendor area at one of the festivals held at the 1st Unitarian Universalist Church.

renowned dulcimer performer, Jean Ritchie, as the headlining Saturday evening act. The number of workshop attendees totaled around 170 and the evening concert drew 400+ appreciative folks. The bottom of a commemorative poster read: “Jean is featured on the cover of the *Columbus Dispatch’s* ‘Weekender’ section; The Saturday night concert sells out.”

Fred Bailey said in 2013, “Count me with the many of us who felt that we had finally arrived when we brought Jean Ritchie in for a sell-out 1999 COFF concert at the UU Church. It was a lot of hard work and sweat that began with Nancy winning our

“Until this year [2016], AbNormal Sines was part of every Central Ohio festival since it was a dulcimer festival. I guess that makes us ancestors (or maybe just old). Indoors or out, rain or shine, the festival has always been a great success.

“COFF began on a dark and rainy day at Immaculate Conception Church. It was exciting to have it grow from a dulcimer festival to a full-blown folk festival. The weather certainly did not dampen the mood inside.

“What we remember most is not the workshops nor the performers, but rather the feeling of camaraderie and the friends that we made.

“Perhaps it is because we stayed at Fred and Nancy Bailey's house that we got to really know so many of the behind the scenes workers as well as the workshop leaders and performers. The after-hours gatherings at the Bailey home were wonderful! Plenty of food, plenty of jamming (even if I did frequently fall asleep on the living-room floor) and plenty of wonderful conversations. So many marvelous people that I am hesitant to start naming for fear of leaving someone out.” – Joni Sines

first financial grant. It turned into a full house and a fat profit for distribution to the local musicians as well as praise from Jean herself for our professional production. And we all went home humming sweet Kentucky melodies.”

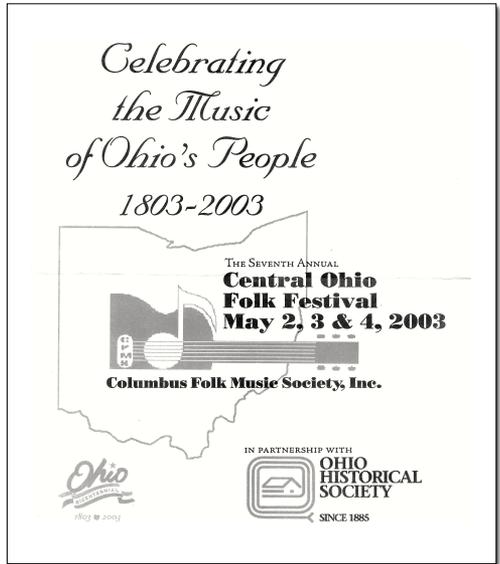
In the year 2000, the festival featured 47 workshops and 8 spotlight concerts. The promotional flier for the festival stated: “The Central Ohio Folk Festival has grown from a tradition of teaching festivals. In addition to hobnobbing with an awesome array of fine musicians and folk artists, you’ll be able to attend your choice of hands-on workshops and showcase performances during the day. . .and a fabulous evening concert – for the cost of a one-hour music lesson!” 200 folks attended the one day festival/ workshops and the Saturday evening concert showcased the Holy Modal Rounders, Michael Hurley, and Tull Glazener and Jim Sperry. The bottom of a 2000 commemorative poster read: “The Holy Modal Rounders are featured on the cover of the *Columbus Dispatch’s* ‘Weekender’ section. (Word has it that the *Dispatch* admires the [COFF]

Steering Committee's nerve for booking them); Headliner Michael Hurley designed the Festival T-shirt [for that year].”

In 2001 the festival presented 50 workshops and 5 showcase concerts and the evening act featured Mike Seeger and Lee Rowe. In 2002 there were 56 workshops, 7 spotlight concerts (in addition to a Young Musician's Showcase spot) and the evening concert featured James Keelaghan and Maddie MacNeil.

In 2003, the festival was moved to the grounds of the Ohio Historical Center in Columbus and was given the distinction of an Ohio Bicentennial Event. Sharon Mittenbergs recalls: “Lots of room and lots of fun.” The event was sponsored by The Columbus Folk Music Society in partnership with the Ohio Historical Society.

The three day event started at 5 p.m. on Friday with Jam Sessions and was followed by Contra Dancing (and included “waltzes, circle-dances and, of course, squares, as befits the Bicentennial.” A description of the dance band, *Pickle Liquor* in the program booklet read: “Pickle



Central Ohio Folk Festival 2003 registration packet design



Some of the participants enjoy outdoor opportunities during the 2003 festival held at the Ohio Historical Center in Columbus.

Liquor – which is hazardous waste produced by the steel industry – was conceived as a fiddle-tune but born as a band name. Pickle Liquor, for our purposes is: Andy Ardito-fiddle; Marian Funk-fiddle (imagine!); John Schomburg-fiddle, Janet Schomburg-guitar; Bruce Dadisman-bass & mandolin; Bill Miller-banjo & fiddle; Whitt Mead-fiddle; and other guests, most likely.” The event offered approximately 55 workshops on Saturday, along with 6 spotlight concerts and an evening concert featuring Kenny Sidle and his Caney Creek Band and Sweetwater and on Sunday closed with a number of group sings.

The festival Steering Committee for the 2003 seventh annual festival was listed as consisting of:

- Hank “The Potentate of Puns” Arbaugh
- Fred “Samurai Bean-Counter” Bailey
- Nancy “That’s POOBAH, not Pooh Bear!” Bailey
- Andy “The Dulcimerist Always Strings Thrice” Beyer
- Charlotte “Who’s Your Target Audience?” Custis
- Keith “Have Dulcimer, Will Travel” Diehlmann
- Khrysson “Sparkplug *ne plus ultra*” LeFey
- Art & Sharon “Goodwill Ambassadors Extraordinaire” Mittenbergs
- Jerry “Gotta Get That Theory Down!” Rockwell
- Janet & John “Old Time Hats & Music” Schomburg
- Cathy “Queen of Membership and Mother of Prince Michael”
- Larry “Jugs-to-Jaw-Harps” Staats
- Andrew J. “Whirling Workshop Dervish” Verhoff
- Sandi “Printsess of Print” Vitek

Festival moves to Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park

In 2003, Jan Staats, a CFMS member and long time volunteer at the Metro Parks, approached park naturalist Tim Taylor at Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park and asked about the possibility of utilizing an outdoor space at the park located on the

southwestern outskirts of Columbus. Nancy Bailey penned in the 2010 folk festival program booklet, “Tim Taylor, the Naturalist at Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park, deserves more recognition than we can ever give him. Without Tim, we wouldn’t



A collage of photos highlighting just one of the varieties of expansive tracts comprising the 7,000 acre Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park.

have a festival. The Naturalists, the Park volunteers, the Rangers were all convinced by Tim that this was a worthwhile venture. . . . It was Tim who convinced John O’Meara, Executive Director of the Metro Parks, that this was a good idea.”

It was in 2004, that the Central Ohio Folk Festival began to be held in the beautiful, green outdoor space at the Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park, a location it has enjoyed ever since.

Tim Taylor, a long time employee of the park system, was an enthusiastic and willing collaborator with the society and, over the 13 years it has been held there, helped facilitate the festival by coordinating many park logistics and the many man hours

“In 2004 we moved to Battelle Darby Metro Park. Our tents were set up during rain on Friday afternoon. The ground at that first site did not drain well and needless to say everyone was SOAKED. We moved the evening concert to the Cedar Ridge Lodge because of lightening and thunderstorms. On Sunday, when we arrived at the main tent there was a sign posted “NO WAKE ZONE” due to having 6 inches at least of water moving through the middle. We decided to cancel workshops and had one huge jam led by several of the workshop leaders. Everyone enjoyed themselves and the festival was considered a success regardless of the weather.”

– Sharon & Art Mittenbergs



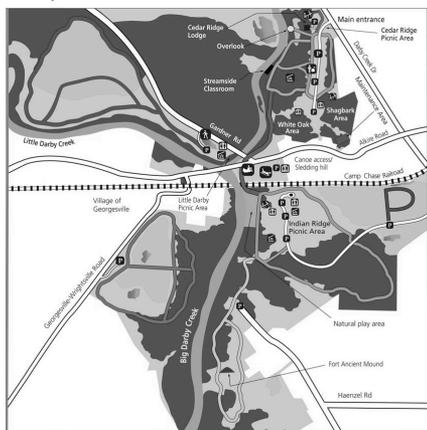
Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park Naturalist, Tim Taylor

of park personnel needed to assist the society in producing the festival. The festival now serves the public by offering most all of its events for free and has become one of the largest events occurring in the park. In a 2013 interview in *A Different Strummer*, Tim recalled the festival beginnings at the park:

“Jan Staats was a long time volunteer with the Metro Parks, specializing in preschooler education. Jan especially loved reading to the children during our programs for the tots. Jan approached me one day and explained that she was also a member of the Folk Music Society and they were looking for a new venue for their annual Folk Music Festival. I thought this was a wonderful idea.



*Above: photo of Battelle Darby Creek.
Below: current map of the Metro Park. In 2004 the festival was scheduled for the Cedar Ridge area of the Metro Park. In 2005 the festival moved to the Indian Ridge Area, where it continues to be conducted.*



“Besides natural history education, another one of the missions of the Metro Parks is cultural history education. I also grew up listening to my parents playing folk music, mostly Irish, on the stereo and have been a fan for years. Jan gave me some background on the festival and how the Festival Committee thought it would be wonderful to take the festival outside. I approached our administration with the idea and ten years later

I'm telling the story of how it got started in the park."

The 2004 festival was considered a three day event (which ended up being soaked out and moving indoors to the lodge), began with the informal *Meet 'n' Greet* at the lodge on Friday evening. The festival offered a Young Musician's Showcase Tent (Tent #7) which would exclusively feature young performers (ages 12 through 17). Previous to that, Young Musician's were offered a showcase spot on the "spotlight stage" as part of the overall programming.

Traditionally, folk festivals have been places that parents could bring children to help instill love for the music as well as provide an opportunity for family fun. In 2004, "Sunday in the Park with Children and Families" was planned where special shows and activities for children would be offered (and scheduled in Tent #8)!

To the 2004 Steering Committee list was added:

- Joe "I can Make That Work" Baringhaus



Cedar Ridge Lodge photo (from 2007 festival, Friday nights' Meet 'n' Greet).



Indian Ridge Picnic area of the park where the festival relocated to in 2005.



Young musician's are showcased on the main stage (2005 Central Ohio Folk Festival).



Sacred Mushroom "Reunion" at 2005 festival.

“ . . .As I recall, the director, Nancy, asked several of us who were there [at the Lodge on Sunday in 2004] if we could all lead workshops at the same time in the big room by agreeing on a song to be taught, forming an inner circle of teachers facing outwards, and having those who wanted to learn an instrument sit in the outer circle facing in to get some specific instruction. I sat outward with my autoharp as instructed . . .and we tried this method for a song or two (or maybe it was half or a quarter of a song) before it broke down completely. It became more of a general jam circle after that. . . .At one point, Mustard’s Retreat shared a story. As soon as they were done and before the applause had died away, somebody else popped up and told another story. So it continued. . . as several of us participated in a rapid story-off (although some of the stories were not quick).

“Much later, I wandered off into the hallway and found a large mountain dulcimer class being led mostly by Stephen Seifert almost blocking one hall and was somewhat amazed at how many people had stayed through all the rain. What a hearty group we must have been in our younger years!”

– Bill Schilling

- Pam “I Need that Art and Copy. . .NOW” Raver
- Jan “Mistress of HTML and All Things Webby” Staats.

Nancy Bailey wrote in the program booklet, “We have come a long way since the first festival in 1997. . .for me, the joy is in walking through the festival and seeing several hundred folks talking, learning, greeting old friends, making new friends, and playing and playing and playing. . . *lovely*. We have done some things right and some things . . .well, have been opportunities for change. But the goal has never changed: **COME SHARE THE MUSIC. WELCOME TO YOU ALL.**”

Year 2006 marked the 10th anniversary of the festival. Nancy wrote: “I can only see a bright future for this Festival as we continue our partnership with The Metro Parks.” The featured act was stand-up fretted-dulcimer player and master storyteller, David Masengill, “who captivated a tent full of cold

"We revere, celebrate, and keep alive the best of the culture of the past, for a society that ignores its past has no future."

"The Folklore of the future is being created now. What we will study and celebrate in the years to come will be filtered through what we, and the whole society, are doing now. . .

"Respect and love for the best of the past, coupled with respect and appreciation for the best of the present, will go a long way towards ensuring a healthy cultural climate in the future."

– "A Different Strummer" #11, 1994

The 2009 festival program book welcome quoted from "Americans for the Arts/ National Arts Index" (by Roland Kushner & Randi Cohen):

(partial quote) ". . .we believe that the arts are essential to the health and vitality of our communities and nation: "Aesthetics: the arts create beauty and preserve it as part of culture; Creativity: the arts encourage creativity, a critical skill in a dynamic world. . .; Identity: art's goods, services, and experiences help define our culture. . .; Preservation: arts and culture keep our collective memory intact."

The festival continues to be run as a musician's co-op and Nancy writes, "after all obligations are met, net proceeds are distributed among artists on a per-unit basis. The honorarium varies, but we're happiest when we can offer \$50 or more."

The 2007 festival schedule included 11 spotlight concerts on a Spotlight Stage where "some of our workshop leaders and other guest performers play for the enjoyment of both Festivalgoers and those who comprise the park's regular weekend traffic." ² The Spotlight concerts, as with the "Sunday in the Park with Families" activities were free, open to all and required no registration. A tent full of instruments was provided in the children's area. The program booklet read: "We know it's not much fun being told, 'Look, but don't touch!' around those cool instruments, so we provide a tent full of instruments specifically for little (and big) hands to touch as much as they want. We try to keep the 'petting zoo' staffed at all times, and especially

during SitPwF hours.” Someone must surely know what “SitPwF” means.

The Sunday morning sing would include “inspirational songs of gospel and non-sectarian persuasions” and a campfire circle wound up the weekend.

The Worst Song in the World Contest continued to be a success. An article in February, 2007 issue of *A Different Strummer* states: “Friday night, at Cedar Ridge Lodge at the main entrance to Battelle Darby Creek Park is the setting for the Meet ‘n’ Greet/ potluck supper/jam kicking off the festival.

“The highlight of Friday nights has become the ‘World’s Worst Song’ contest, a friendly (well, okay, cut throat) competition to see who can present the most outrageous, tawdry, tasteless, or incongruous song of the evening.

“The winner receives bragging rights for a year and a truly stunning T-shirt for which the Steering Committee has spared every expense.

“MC John Locke insists – really, he does – that talent is not a consideration in judging. He affirms with a straight face that the only criterion is the merits – or liabilities – of the song.”



Joe Baringhaus presents Nancy with a coveted bread recipe written in Russian by his wife Lydia, a Russian dictionary, and the rest she was supposed to figure out.



The 2008 festival presented Ann & Phil Case and Mustard's Retreat for the Saturday evening concert and 12 spotlight concerts slots, two of which featured Young Musicians.

There was a jam tent and five workshop tents which accommodated the 54 workshops.

The 2009 festival brought featured acts Butch Ross, Mustard's Retreat, Matt Watroba and Kitty Donohoe, offered a few free workshops for the public in the Adirondack shelter and provided a little over 48 workshops for registrants. There were 12 spotlight concerts on the spotlight stage, now named the "Bob Kirby Spotlight Stage" after the recently deceased long time friend and supporter of the festival, Bob Kirby.

The Spotlight performers in 2009 were: Larry Drake, Dave Hawkins, At Wits End acoustic trio, the North Fork Rounders, Grassahol, Tim O'Connor, the Smokin' Fez Monkeys, Rob McNurlin, the Great Mad Hoax

(bluegrass and folk believe it or not), Bill Schilling and Linda Sigismondi, Halfway Home and a 'Sing! for Pete's Sake' sing hosted by Matt Watroba in honor of Pete Seeger.

In 2010, "Saturday and Sunday in the Park for Families" programming was introduced. Now there were two days instead

In the May, 2007 issue of "A Different Strummer," at the time CFMS President, John Locke, wrote, "Nancy is known as the Go-To Woman if you want information. (She is also known as "She Who Must Be Obeyed.") Over the relative few years I have been living here, she has been a good friend, mentor, advisor, and inspiration; calm under pressure, and one of the important traits that I admire – a good sense of humor. She has devoted countless hours to this Society and the Festival. . .

The first Folk Society event I attended was a yard sale at the home of Nancy and Fred to raise money for the festival. I had not only moved into a new town, but also a new country. In the words of a recent new member, I had "found my people."

of one for special programs geared towards children. A second “Americana Stage” was attempted in the field adjacent to the main field area. The Saturday evening concert featured Smokin’ Fez Monkeys and The Yellow Room Gang which opened for James Keelaghan. Nancy officially “retires” as festival director and Sharon and Art Mittenbergs take on the role.

In 2011, the Saturday evening concert opened with Dave Hawkins and featured Annie & Rod Capps and Jason Dennie. There were five workshop tents providing space for the 56 workshops conducted over the course of the weekend. There was a main stage tent featuring the Bob Kirby Stage and a Children’s area tent/stage.

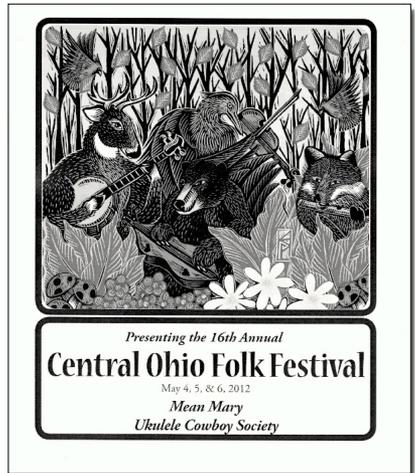
In 2012, the Central Ohio Folk Festival becomes colorful!

Well, we were always colorful. The festival program booklet cover showcased the musical animal print in full color. Mean Mary is the Headlining act, opened by the Ukulele Cowboy Society.

On April 7, 2013, Nancy



Cathy Sheets (who served as COFF volunteer coordinator for a number of years) reads a poem to honor the volunteers while David Tamulevich of Mustard’s Retreat



2012 festival program book cover features the animal print in full-color! Err. . . uh, well guess you can’t tell by this photo, but trust us.

“ . . .there have been many wonderful performers. It is sad that so many of our folk music friends are passing on. We miss them.

“Here is to 20 more years of COFF!” – Joni Sines

“It is sometimes amazing to me how many great friends I have made with people that I only see one or two times a year (at COFF and maybe at other festivals). What strikes me most about that is how much we have been able to share in grieving and celebrating the lives of mutual great friends we have lost when we see each other at COFF.”

– Bill Schilling

Cline Bailey passed away, leaving very large shoes to fill. She organized and watched over the festival for fourteen years and offered mentorship and advice up until the time she died. Chris Bolles, a long time member of the CFMS and volunteer at the festival also passed away and both were honored at a special memorial table at the 2013 festival.

Special guest, Scott Alarik was welcomed to both the 2013 and 2014 festivals. Scott Alarik covered the folk music scene for the *Boston Globe* for many years and is well known and respected among folk artist circuits. In 2013, the Saturday evening

concert featured Cathy Barton, Dave Para and Ed Trickett. Long time festival participants mourned the loss of Nancy, as did most especially her husband Fred.

In 2014, the festival welcomed Headliner, Joe Crookston.



And the festival grows. . .

The opening act was Square Thirteen. The festival offered 60 workshops.

A Young Musician’s Showcase Tent was re-introduced. The festival was recorded as having over 3,000 participants over the two day event. Since registration is only for workshops and the Saturday



Joe Crookston headlines the 2014 Central Ohio Folk Festival

evening concert, it is always difficult to assess the actual number of attendees. But Battelle Darby Creek Park personnel have it figured out; they install a clicking device

on the main road and are able to get a pretty darn accurate count of cars that “trigger” the clicker and calculate the number of folks based upon that.

In 2015, the festival featured Grassahol as Headliner, opened by the Dawson Cooper Band. The festival staff and friends who had been around for some time mourned the death of Fred Bailey, who passed away in September of 2014.

A special “Opening Sing-along” is introduced at the 10 a.m. concert slot on Saturday morning, which brought a good number of folks to the festival earlier in the day – so much so that the two adjacent parking lots were full by 11 am.

The number of workshop tents

“In ‘The Hobbit,’ J.R.R. Tolkien wrote, ‘If more of us valued food and cheer and song over hoarded gold, it would be a better world.’ I hope you enjoy the festival!”

– Cathy (Sheets), “A Different Strummer” May, ‘07

“Songs can go places and do things and cross borders which people cannot.”

“I call them all love songs.”

- Pete Seeger

“From time immemorial, folk musicians have told, retold, recorded the events, triumphs and tragedies, and stories of the people.

Sometimes recounting issues of great import, sometimes stories of the common people. But always, always, they told stories. They then left us to take from their tales what we could use to shape our own lives. This is the raison d’etre of folk music.”

– Nancy Cline Bailey, “A Different Strummer” Summer, 1997



From top to bottom – 2015 Central Ohio Folk Festival happenings: Square Dancing in the new “Dance Pavilion,” children’s craft area, Young Musician’s Showcase Tent and closing jam/song circle.

were pared down from five to four and a little over 45 workshops were offered. A dance tent dubbed the “Dance Pavilion” was introduced and featured Contra Dance, Square Dance, International Dance, and performances by other local dance groups and drew to the festival a number of folks from the local dance community.

A storyteller’s slot was re-introduced and became part of the programming on the Bob Kirby Main Stage. The Young Musician’s Tent grew in both participation and audience and helped attract younger folks to the event.

“A long-time festival favorite, the special children’s area, featured an ‘instrument petting zoo’ where kids could pick up real guitars, fiddles and percussion instruments. One father proudly talked about how, 2 years ago, his son picked up a guitar, was inspired to take lessons, and now does musical performances.”³

The temperature rose into the 70s and the festival was recorded as having over 4,700

participants over the two day event. Not that numbers are the ‘be all and end all’ sign of the success of the event. In our opinion, the ‘be all and end all’ measure of success is keeping this music alive in our culture and transmitting it to future generations!!

The year 2016 marks the 20th Anniversary of the Central Ohio Folk Festival and the 13th consecutive year it has been held at Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park.

We are hoping that at the 2016 festival you will be reading this story and . . . enjoying *the story of a festival!*

To be continued . . .

Notes:

- ¹ Remembering the Great Black Swamp Dulcimer Festival, by Greg Hoersten, 4/28/2104, LimaOhio.com
- ² *A Different Strummer*, February, 2007 issue, p. 3
- ³ *A Different Strummer*, June, 2015 issue p. 2

“I’ll be around – I couldn’t stand to miss all the fun!”
– Nancy Cline Bailey

MORE RECOLLECTIONS

My recollections of great workshops, inspiring performers and instructive jammers over the years at the Central Ohio Folk Festival events . . . (Hank Arbaugh)

“Following the code of folk process, I have chosen ballads that have come from people, not books or recordings – e.g. I learned “Palace Grand” directly from my friend Ed Trickett.

“Attending workshops, hearing other performers, and jamming can satisfy this type of educational purpose of a festival.”

– Hank Arbaugh

The original Central Ohio Folk festivals were focused on the lap and hammered dulcimer and held at the Senior Center in the near West end. Jerry Rockwell was an excellent dulcimer instructor, who also shared his expertise on jazz guitar. The most awe-inspiring lap dulcimer performer there was Doug Berch, whose style was as intricate and rich as a classical guitarist’s.

The best teacher and example of the folk style of learning was Molly Freibert from Louisville, whom I had

previously met at several out-of-state dulcimer festivals. She attended my workshop on playing “Palace Grand” and later made that song her own.

The next set of festivals were more far reaching in instruments taught and used, range of genres and styles, and national reach of performers – and were held at the UU Church on Weisheimer.

By far the most well received performers there



Chris Bolles leading off a song during a Friday night Meet ‘n’ Greet, with Tom Nagel and Hank Arbaugh looking on.

were Jean Ritchie and Mike Seeger. It was my pleasure to introduce Jean, but more to hear her family's rich tradition of music. Mike's playing a reconstructed African gourd banjo was singularly inspiring. Workshops by Ed and Elaine Bray from the Akron area were especially memorable, as well as Fred Bailey's sea chanty workshop and Sara Grey's on singing the Scottish ballad.

At another year's Saturday performance, Maddie MacNeil's rendition of "Somewhere over the Rainbow" was the unparalleled show stopper.

In 2003, the festival was held at the Ohio Historical Museum, a perfect venue for Ohio's BiCentennial. Especially impressive was the group Sweetwater, whose workshop on songs from Central Ohio, including songs from Dan Emmett and Ben Hanby, was thorough. Nancy Bailey did much to get this location.

The outdoor festival site expanded the range of folklore arts and most certainly the attendance from previous venues.



Jamming was, and remains, a common occurrence at the Central Ohio Folk Festivals.



The 2013 festival featured Cathy Barton and Dave Para and Ed Trickett.

The two most personally satisfying gatherings were those that, I think, Nancy planned for my benefit: The Sacred Mushroom Coffee House reunion (forty-year anniversary) and, at a later fest, Ed Trickett and Cathy Barton and Dave Para. Doubly pleasing, the Mushroom reunion year also

featured Tom Rush, a favorite artist.

Noteworthy workshops included the Schomburg’s on humor, Wolf and Raven’s on women in folk music and Larry Drake’s on open-C guitar tuning. Long conversations with lap dulcimer maker Paul Kerns, who instigated some great jams by his booth – especially with Wolf and Raven, were especially rewarding.

To come full circle, my conversation with Cathy Barton and Dave Para reminded me that a ballad from their native Missouri, “Palace Grand,” that I had learned from Ed, they too counted as a signature piece – ah, festivals and the folk process! ###

Milestone Events in the History of the Central Ohio Folk Festival (from our archives)

Time Line	
1997	Festival at Immaculate Conception School
1998	Festival at First Unitarian Universalist Church
2003	Festival at Ohio Historical Center and conducted as one of Ohio’s Bicentennial Events
	A Friday night dance occurs at the festival at the Historical Center
	The first Sunday activities - Celebration of Life, Sacred Harp (Shape Note) Singing, Gospel Sing
2004	Festival moves to Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park, Cedar Ridge Area
	Friday night activities at Cedar Ridge Shelter House
	Saturday night concert scheduled for Shagbark Shelter House but held inside at Cedar Ridge Lodge due to rain
	Workshops are also offered on Sunday for the first time
	Sunday Workshops held in Shelter house due to rain
	"Camp Swampy"

Milestone Events (cont.)

2005	Festival moves to Indian Ridge Picnic Area
	The first Friday potluck at Cedar Ridge Lodge
	The first "Sunday in the Park with Children" (it was planned to occur in 2004, but got rained out)
	First Gospel Sing
	Sacred Mushroom Reunion
2006	Saturday night Bonfire and Sing
	"Camp Artic"
2007	Gospel and Celebration of Life Sings
2008	First official (?) "Worst Song In the World" Contest
	Just Gospel Sing
2009	Just Gospel Sing
	"Sing for Pete's Sake" with Matt Watroba
2010	The first Saturday in the Park with Children
	First Bob Kirby Scholarship
2011	Last Gospel Sing
2012	First Spiritual Celebration
2013	Tribute to Nancy Cline Bailey
2014	Pete Seeger Tribute Jam
	Young Musician's Tent is re-introduced
2015	Dance Tent is introduced

Headliner Performers in the History of the Central Ohio Folk Festival

Main Stage	
1997	Ev'ry Fourth Child (Beckie Boeger & Sid Omasta) / 2nd Act: Doug Berch, with Ron Ewing & John Sherman
	Strings in the Glen - Duo: Christine Fraser Ramsey & Peg Buchannan O'Callan
	Dave Hawkins, with Peg Buchannan O'Callan & Neal Havener
1998	The Cantrells
	Sara Grey
	Bob "Hutch" Hutchinson
1999	Aubrey Atwater
	Jean Ritchie
2000	Tull Glazener and Jim Sperry
	Michael Hurley
	Holy Modal Rouders
2001	Lee Rowe
	Mike Seeger
2002	Madeline MacNeil
	James Keelaghan
2003	Caney Creek with Kenny Sidle
	Paul Laurence Dunbar Afro-American Concert Choir
	Sweetwater
2004	Stephen Seifert
	Mustard's Retreat
	Bob Bellamy & Wendy Barlow
2005	Ann and Phil Case
	Sisters of the Stirings
	Tom Rush
2006	Back Porch Swing Band
	David Massengill
2007	Guy Davis
	Sally Rogers
2008	Ann and Phil Case
	Mustard's Retreat
2009	Mustard's Retreat
	Butch Ross
	Yellow Room Gang (Mustard's Retreat, Kitty Donohoe, Matt Watroba)
2010	James Keelaghan
	Yellow Room Gang (Mustard's Retreat, Matt Watroba, Jim Bizer, Jan Krist)
	Smokin' Fez Monkeys
2011	Dave Hawkins
	Ann & Rod Capps with Jason Dennie
2012	Mean Mary
	Ukulele Cowboy Society
2013	Cathy Barton & Dave Para
	Ed Trickett
2014	Square Thirteen
	Joe Crookston
2015	Dawson Cooper Band
	Grassahol

Workshop Presenters at the Central Ohio Folk Festival (1997 - 2015)

Headliners who conducted workshops

Main Stage Performers who did workshops in the year they performed)

Atwater, Aubrey
Barlow, Wendy
Barton, Cathy & Para Dave
Bellamy, Bob
<u>Bizer</u> , Jim
Annie & Rod Capps
<u>Crookston</u> , Joe
Davis, Guy
Dawson Cooper Band
Dennie, Jason
<u>Donohoe</u> , Kitty
<u>Glazeer</u> , Tull
Dave Hawkins
Hurley, Michael
Jones, Mean Mary
<u>Keelaghan</u> , James
Krist, Jan
<u>Massengill</u> , David
McNeil, Madeline
Ritchie, Jean
Seeger, Mike
Seifert, Stephen
Square Thirteen
<u>Stampfel</u> , Peter
Rogers, Sally

Presenters
AbNormal Sines
Alarik, Scott
Answer Ladies
Arbaugh, Hank
At Wit's End
Bailey, Fred
Barnes, Henry
Bence, Bob
Bergmann, Tina
Beyer, Andy
Beyer, Becky
Black, Bob
Blue Water Ramblers
Boger, Beckie
Boosh Hawg (Stiverson & Campbell)
Bray, Ed & Elaine
Breakneck All-Stars
Brown, Foster
Brown, Paul
Buchanan, Peg
Burns, Christie
Calem, Joanie
Case, Ann & Phil
Cent. OH Harp Circle
Chandler, Jesse
Chern, Barry
Clemens, Eric & Harness, Dani
Clepper, Randy
Coffey, Pat
Cohen, Bill
Colon, Deborah
Conrad, Eric
Davis, J. Thomas
DeGrand, Jim
Dempsey, Merilee
Diamond, Marge

Workshop Presenters (cont.)

Domany, Dori & Tom
Drake, Larry
Dunham, Candyce
Elder, Laura
Ellison, Margie
Ely, Jack
Erb, Dave
Esch, Carol
Ewing, Ron
Fasone, Judy
February Sky
Felt, Doug
Felt, Lee
Fleming, Bill
Foerch, Jim
Foster, Donna
Fox, Bob
Funk, Marian
Giger, Jack
Gnezda, Eric
Gombaski, Vici
Grace Adele Quartet
Grassahol
Hardtackers
Hawkins, Dave
Hazen, Marji
Heath, Craig
Hicks, Beth
Hinds, Conrad
Hockett, John
Hough, Michael
Howard, Arnett
Jacobs, Neil
Jones, Ted
Kaplan, Michael
Keller, Terry C.
Keller, Terry C & McDonald Linda
Kirby, Sharon
Krohn, Becky

Laessig, Joanne
Lautzenheiser, Mary
Lee, Kim w/ J. Sines
LeFey, Khryssso
LeFey, Khryssso & Vitek, Sandi
LeMay, Joe & Reese, Sherri
Levenson, Dan
Levi, Chuck
Lewis, William D.
Locke, John
Lynch, David
Mace, Roger
McCain, Thom
McNurlin, Rob
Mead, Whitt
Miller, Bob
Miller, Jim
Miller, Pat
Miller, Sylvia
Miller, Ted
Moller, Stephen
Morris Dancers
Mosey, Jon
Mustard's Retreat
Nagel, Tom
Neeley, Rick & McNamara, Chris
Neeley, Rob
Northern Cross
O'Connor, Tim
O'Keefe McGhee
O'Neill, Tim
Palimpsest (Kinsley & Sisson)
Palms, Mark
Parks, Victoria
Powers, Caleb
Powers, Mike
Prairie Orchard (Reed & Hill)
Ramsey, Christine Fraser
Red Dog Jam
Reed, Sarah Goslee

Workshop Presenters (cont.)

Rees, Grace
Roberts, Kayton
Rockwell, Jerry
Rolfe, Leonard
Ross, Butch
Rowe, Lee
Rusalka Russian Chorus
Salt, Betsy
Saums, Brian
Savors, Rick
Schaiper, Tim
Schilling, Bill
Schilling, Bill & Sigismondi, Linda
Schilling, Bill & Sutch, Adam
Schomburg, John
Schomburg, John w/ Janet
Second Wid
Sheets, Cathy
Sheets, Cathy w/ Sines, Joni
Sherman, John
Sigismondi, Linda
Sines, Joni
Sines, Joni w/ Sheets, Cathy
Singh, Dev
Sisson, Mike
Smith, Steven K.
Smokin Fez Monkeys
Snyder, Bob
Squirrel Hillbillies

Stapleton, Steve
Staats, Larry
Starner, Fred
Steele, Steve
Stevens, Shelley
Stiverson, Tom
Stockwell, Steve
Stone, Jim
Streamer, Jack
Sutch, Adam
Szuch, Brian
Tamulevich, David
Trickett, Ed
Ukulele Cowboy Society
Van Kleff, Deborah
Verhoff, Andy w/ Bailey
Vetter, Brenda
Vitek, Sandi
Wade, Keenan
Wagner, Hilary
Wagner, Hilary & Rick
Wagner, Rick
Ward, Kendra
Ward, Kendra and Bence, Bob
Watroba, Matt
Weaver, Barry
Whitacre, John
Whitman, Norm
Wild Hares
Wolf
Wolf & Raven
Wolfe, Andi
Yaffey, Carl
Yellow Room Gang

Not the end. . .



The Central Ohio Folk Festival

(Presented by The Columbus Folk Music Society)

P.O. Box 20735

Columbus, OH 43220

www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org