

Volume 3, Issue 11

JAMMIN' TIMES

November 2008
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THE WAY I SEE IT

Wayne Morrissey

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Well here we are, they've gone and elected me President.

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I wasn't looking for it and to be completely honest I was certain things would follow their natural course and the old silver fox who's been running this show since it began would be the first official President...but as the old saying goes..."the best laid plans"....

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Since that fateful election day in November I have said to myself a few times "OK now you're the President, what are you going to do with the position?" I keep coming to one obvious conclusion. The best way to do the job is to do everything in my power to help the rest of your newly elected executive keep the Westman Jams family musically healthy and happy...to make sure the circle is never broken...and everything else will look after itself.

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From the day I first walked into the hall at Sprucewoods intending to just sit and listen and Reg made me go and get my guitar, I have felt a part of something very special. I happened to be in a restaurant in Brandon awhile ago and I heard somebody say "hey, there's one of the Westman Jammers." I was then introduced to that individual's whole family who was visiting from out of town. I'm sure other jammers have had similar experiences and I'll bet it made them feel just as tall as I did that day.

Do you have anything you would like published?

We need input to keep our newsletter alive.

Send submissions to Wayne at email below or call 834-2130

I couldn't be happier with those you have picked for me to work with on the executive over the next two years, Reg Jones, Cathy Olsen and my own lovin' spouse Jenine, (hmmmm...ought to liven up the discussion around the Morrissey household over the next couple of years).

You can read the monthly newsletter by email or in person by picking one up at the Jams.

To add your email to the subscription list (ITS FREE!!)

send your email to:

wayne@westmanjams.ca

Or call 834-2130 (Carberry)

What's in the cards for Westman Jams down the road? The next item on the slate is to become incorporated as a non profit organization. I'm on that one like white on rice so stay tuned. What else is coming down the pike? I can't predict the future but this I will guarantee you; your executive will work constantly to promote the interest and well being of your organization and you our members. If you have anything you think we should hear in the interest of the organization don't be afraid to tell us.

Continued on page 4...

REGGIE'S RAMBLINGS



A Musical Tale

Once upon a time in a province bordering on Manitoba, there blossomed a man who would make his mark on Westman Jams. One thing led to another and his love of fire engines took control over him. Yes, indeed this child grew up to become quite a siren. This obsession drove him to become the person he had been dreaming of. Now it just so happened, that a town in northern Manitoba needed a fireman, so he packed up his hoses and headed for Thompson.

Now this is where he spent a number of years putting out fires and taking the heat for a lot of folks who lived around there. Now as life progresses, as quite often does, some changes had to be made. Around this time he decided that an office job might be a nice change, so he became a city administrator. All the while on this road he was walking he picked up a guitar and learned all the chords he needed to be able to sing his songs. This is how he must have developed his pleasing personality and easy going manner. From what I hear, most of the folks around Thompson didn't even know he played and sang. I guess we'll just call this his **closet** years. Hmm... I can think of a lot of our jammers who really aren't much different. A couple of years after we got Westman Jams rolling he walked into the hall one day and sat down and sang for us all. The only problem we had was with the mic stands. They all had to be re-adjusted to suit his stature. In fact, a couple of 'em broke down from the constant up and down motions and we had to find some new ones. After all, to make enough room for his immense knowledge and talent, a large frame to house it all in, had to grow up with him. It was obvious we had to get this guy more involved in our jams, so I asked him if he would like to assist me with running and wiring the PA system. Thankfully he accepted. I quickly noticed after spending some quality time with him, that he had far more reaching talents than messing with some electrical gadgets and such. His organization and people skills are second to none. Now as it also turned out, he has a flair for writing constitutions and we took advantage of these skills as we ironed out some details, for our newly forming official club. Any club needs some officers to manage and maintain it's day to day operations, so we all voted for these officers. Hence on Nov. 16th, in the city of Brandon, we completed a vote and everyone but him, decided he should be our president. We couldn't have made a better choice and I hope we will all attempt to make this a pleasant experience for him. Congratulations Wayne! May the force be with you, 'cause we all want to live happily ever after.

Remember!, no matter where you are...There you go.....

Reg

MUSICIAN OF THE MONTH - CATHY OLSEN



Cathy was born in Portage La Prairie and moved to Grandview Manitoba at the age of four years. She started playing guitar and learning music in 5th grade at the tender age of 10 yrs old when her older brother bought her a guitar. He played in a band and felt that music was important so he got his little sister started. One wonders if he knows what a gift he created?

By the age of 13 Cathy was playing and singing with a local band called The Generations in Grandview

She has since played and sung all over the country as a solo act as well as with bands including Dauphin's Melody Kings, in Northern Saskatchewan with Country Express, in the Yukon with Yukon Sack and Hank Karr and in the Swan River Valley with Richard Adams & Foxfire.

Cathy now lives in Rivers with her daughter, Kailyn and has been a Jammer since 2006. Her daughter has accompanied her at the Jams on occasion and has a sweet voice of her own. Cathy also has 8 years of "painful" (*her words*), piano lessons and dabbles in keyboard but we have yet to hear that talent.

We're proud to showcase Cathy as Musician of the Month because she truly is an entertainer and accomplished musician. She is always willing and eager to help struggling Jammers and has now become a great asset to our volunteer force as our new Secretary.




- Dec. 7 - Debbie Beaudry Dec. 8 - Abbey Cluett
- Dec. 8 - Lorraine Vickery Dec.9 - Harold (JR) Whittingham
- Dec. 10 - Kaz Rudniski Dec. 13 - Barb Forbes
- Dec. 13 - Del Laderoute Dec. 25 - Joyce DeGroot

Want your birthday added?
Call or email Wayne
wayne@westmanjams.ca

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I would like to take this opportunity to encourage our members to become involved in helping us run the organization. There are any number of committee positions that need to be filled. We just held our most successful Christmas Jamboree and I'm here to tell you that it was due in extremely large part to the hard work by dozens of dedicated volunteers working tirelessly in the background that we were able to pull it off. We, the musicians, who get to stand in front of the public and take the bows and the applause, certainly must share the credit with those hard working individuals.

My point in all of this is that we know we have capable people within the organization who can get the job done so my message is come on out and we'll give you another thankless job to do.

Keep on pickin'

Wayne Morrissey, President

Editor's note: This edition of the Jammin' Times is late due to technical computer problems. There will be a complete report on the 5th Annual Christmas Jamboree in the December edition.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MUSIC

Westman Jams

Merry Christmas/

Volunteer Appreciation Potluck Supper

Sunday December 7, 2008

4:00 P.M.

Sprucewoods Community Hall

Bring your instruments, a loonie and

A non-perishable food item for Sprucewoods Lions Club or CFB Shilo Christmas food hampers

Westman Jams ANAF Jam

Sunday December 14, 2008

2:00 - 5:00 P.M.

Army, Navy & Air force Hall

31 - 14th Street

Brandon

Supper to follow jam



OLD TIMERS

by Ken Harman

"TIME WAITS FOR - NO MAN"

The above saying became a reality for me on a recent Friday evening as I sat in the Casino Regina theatre to enjoy two acts from the past. **The Good Brothers** followed by banjo great **Earl Scruggs**.

"The Good Brothers" as many of you will know began their careers around 1969 when Bruce and Brian Good teamed up with James Akroyd to play country, folk and some bluegrass mainly in Ontario. They later toured Canada and the US with other rising "country" stars like, Ian Tyson and Gordon Lightfoot. Later on James quit and a third brother, Larry joined up to play a pretty decent banjo. They were recognized in 2004 with induction into the Canadian Country Hall of Fame.

On this particular evening in the Regina Casino all three brothers were playing guitar, autoharp, dobro guitar, banjo, fiddle and a second generation son, Travis on mandolin. All are very good musicians and played many of the old tunes that they built a career on -- but something was missing -- I couldn't get a grip on what it was for awhile. The sound system was disappointing which didn't help the performance any and the Casino crowd were not as appreciative as true fans would be, but there was something else. Later on while sitting around having coffee with my buddy Paul, daughter Terri and her husband I think we hit on it -- The pure JOY that is a hall mark of a good professional live performance seemed to be missing...I can't help but wonder if over 35 years of nearly non-stop performing and scheduling hasn't taken its toll on this fine group. As we watched the stage being set up for the second act, "Earl Scruggs" we were dumbfounded to see them setting up a drum set and plugging in a Stratocaster electric guitar. "This can't be Bluegrass, what happened is Earl not here?" -- But yeah here he comes, recognizable by the banjo hanging off his poor old bent shoulders as he shuffled with an old man's gait to sit centre stage on a chair set up in front of a mike.

Born in 1924 in North Carolina he loved playing the banjo from the time he was eight years old and it wasn't long before he had began picking the distinctive three finger style that became known as the "Scruggs style" of picking that banjo players have been trying to imitate ever since.

He gained fame playing with Bill Monroe and his Bluegrass Boys back in the 1940's but soon began playing his own style when he formed a band in 1948 with Lester Flatt. It was during this partnership they became and recorded the title theme for "The Beverly Hillbilly's." famous by writing tunes like "Foggy Mountain breakdown", which was used during the filming of the hit movie "Bonnie & Clyde."

Earl is truly a traditional Icon in the bluegrass music world with recognition by many awards and successful recordings.

- 1969- First "Grammy" award for "Foggy Mountain breakdown."
- 1985 - Inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame.
- 1991 - Inducted into the Bluegrass Hall of Fame
- 2002 - Second "Grammy" award for "Foggy Mountain breakdown."

....continued on page 6

He also has known sorrow in his life with the passing in 2005 of his wife who was also his business partner and booking agent. One can only guess how that loss affected him.

During the one hour show he played very little but sat and seemed to stare at the audience, saying nothing, showing no emotion, not even giving that grin he was famous for. When he did take a picking break it was fabulous, he has not lost his ability with the banjo. He also did a very credible job of finger picking a guitar break to **“Who will sing for me.”** A young lady in the group played a smoking’ dobro guitar and a young man on the flat top guitar picked out some dazzling breaks. They were animated and smiling at the audience and were enjoying their part in the show but otherwise again, there seemed to be a pronounced lack of JOY in both Earl and his son.

I suppose that I have fallen into the trap common to many of us “Ole Timey” geezers of - - freezing the memory in a time and place and ignoring the passage of time and how it effects the way people act and look, (until I look in a mirror I don’t think of myself as -- Elderly. (shudder).

So many of the traditional performers that I grew to look to as role models in country and Bluegrass music are no longer young. Many have left us and “gone home” while others are invalids or unable to perform any longer.

On that Friday evening in Regina I was shocked to see Mr. Scruggs as he is and not as the younger figure I have always pictured him to be -- A lesson to me in reality: *Getting old is not a Sin; Maybe forgetting to live in the present and enjoying things as they are is?*

God Bless you Earl and thank you for all the great years of providing your fans with the enjoyment of hearing your talent and giving us a role model to try and live up to in our own musical trials.

So (as Reg Jones says) there you go -- remember to have fun with our hobby and try to let others know that you are enjoying yourself. Even more importantly let other pickers know how much you appreciate them.

God Bless and happy pickin’ .

Ken Harman