

Notes from Along the County Line

by Betty Westmoreland

We hear by the grapevine that the April gathering at the county line was mighty fine. Sorry we missed it. This writer can attest to the fact that the NCAA Women's Final Four in St. Louis, MO, was definitely a thrill! And that 'concrete' (complete with bits of Heath Bar swirled in) she enjoyed out at Ted Drewes' Frozen Custard Stand in St. Louis was complete bliss! The name 'concrete' comes from the fact that the shake is so thick that the server demonstrates the thickness by turning the shake upside down, with nothing spilling out! The tradition of that custard stand goes back to 1929; even the present stand has been at its location since 1942. Now, that's old-time, in our way of thinking!

Fast-forward from frozen delights to musical ones. **The County Line Old-Time Music Jam** players gathered at Sheffield Antiques Mall in Collierville on Sunday, May 3, 2009 (first Sunday of the month at 2 PM). Located near the intersection of US 57 and US 72, the mall is managed by generous folks who arrange for the group to pick away the hours in a backdrop which is perfectly suited to old-time string music. Colorful old quilts, rocking chairs, lamps, hard-to-find dish and silverware patterns, and pots and pans just seem to call for the down-home acoustic sound.

The special sound that so many old-time players strive for can be heard from guitars, fiddles, mandolins, dulcimers, autoharps, banjos, and an upright bass. The County Line Jam welcomes players of all skill levels, and of course it's all-acoustic, as it was in Grandpa's day on the farm 'way back in the hills. A player kicks off the first song in the circle where the musicians are seated, and from there the choice is passed to the right. One may choose a song to play or pass it to the next musician. It is always a treat to see shoppers as they pause to listen to the music or to ask what a particular instrument is called.

The musicians who came in to pick and sing on that Sunday were **Bill Erskine, Mike Cannito, Casey Luttrell, Janice Bird, Randy Sell, Barney Hopper, Hilary Scheel, Karl Gray, and Donna Gray**. Old-time music fans **Valerie Gray** and this writer were joined by several shoppers who stopped by to listen to the music.

The song list is as follows: Heart of the Appaloosa, Joe Hill, Me and My Uncle, The Glendy Burke, Shenandoah, Waterbound, My Little Darlin', Kentucky Waltz, Whiskey Before Breakfast, Old Molly Hare, Cannonball Blues, East Virginia Blues, The Santa Fe Trail, Redwing, Can't Get a Letter from Home, I'll Be All Smiles Tonight, The Girl I Left Behind, Jimmy Brown the Newsboy, From Earth to Heaven, Poor Little Orphan Boy, More Pretty Girls Than One, Diamonds in My Crown, Be Nobody's Darlin' but Mine, Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes, Dark as a Dungeon, Lord Thomas, Will the Circle Be Unbroken, Tennessee Waltz, Claire de Chute, and Colleen Malone.

Next scheduled jam: **June 7, 2009 at 2 PM CDT**

Thanks to the owners and staff of Sheffield Antiques Mall in Collierville, TN, for the space and time to play old-time string band music!

Need more information? You can google the Carter Family, the Carter Family Fold, Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerard. Or check out Virginia's Heritage Music Trail known as The Crooked Road at www.thecrookedroad.org. Also see The Museum of Appalachia at www.museumofappalachia.com

For more information about old-time string band music in Tennessee: www.nashvilleoldtime.org or www.boogertowngap.com

For local dulcimer and old-time music information: Lee@LeeCagleDulcimers.com or www.LeeCagleDulcimers.com