

Notes from Along the County Line

by Betty Westmoreland

Southerners expect that when we're deep into summer, the grass will be brown, the crops will be burned up from the sun and the heat, and things will be pretty dry. **The County Line Old-Time Music Jam** may be responsible in part for the fresh green appearance of area lawns, flowers, trees, and shrubs. Perhaps the lively music and great harmony vocals at the jam have called up Nature's kinder side, leaving the world a greener, happier place. There has been rain—lots and lots of rain, along with some flooding, and even tornadoes. We have 'muddled' through, and the weather has caused some terrible puns to sprout, as you have just seen!

The County Line Old-Time Music Jam met at **Sheffield Antiques Mall** in Collierville, TN (US 57 at US 72), on August 2, 2009, at 2:00 PM CDT. The group meets monthly at the same location, and the first anniversary of the jam is rapidly approaching. The musicians who gathered to sing and play were: **Lee Cagle** (co-founder of the group), **Cecelia Chilton**, **Hilary Scheel**, **Casey Luttrell**, **Richard McFalls**, **Dean Dameworth**, **Randy Sell**, **Bill Erskine**, **Caroline Sanford** (co-founder of the group), **Mike Cannito**, and **Barney Hopper**. Several customers in the mall stopped to listen. Lori McFalls and this writer were also there to lend support. Folks of all skill levels are welcome!

Cecelia Chilton and Caroline Sanford returned from the **Swannanoa Gathering** at Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, NC. They picked, sang, ate, and enjoyed the fellowship at the Gathering—and they brought home some new (old) tunes they learned.

Old-time players sit in a circle and one player begins the first song. The choice of songs then moves to the right (or left) to the next person, who is free to start a song or pass to the next player. The instruments used are acoustic: guitar, mandolin, old-time banjo, upright bass, fiddle, autoharp, dulcimer, Dobro®, and often the bodhran and the bagpipes. It is the music of another place and time—the British Isles and two to three hundred years ago. When songs were brought to America, they may have been changed as they were passed around in the hills of Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina. Many tunes are relatively new; many are now in the public domain, since the songwriters may be long forgotten. Some older tunes are known by several different titles.

The song selection for the August jam session: The Storms Are on the Ocean, Railroading on the Great Divide, Going to See the King, Rosewood Casket, Sister Mary Wore a Golden Chain (No Hiding Place), Angeline the Baker (Angelina Baker), Sail Away Ladies, Banks of the Ohio, There'll Be No Church Tonight, Hobo's Lullaby, Cannonball Blues, All the Good Times Are Past and Gone, Will the Circle Be Unbroken, Blue Ridge Mountain Blues, Banjo Players in Heaven, Fair and Tender Ladies, Peg and Awl, O Sing to Me of Heaven (a *cappella*), Worried Man, Wayfaring Stranger, The Old Country Church, What Are They Doing in Heaven Today, Oklahoma Hills, Desert Blues, Man of Constant Sorrow, and Colleen Malone.

***Note:** We would be remiss if we didn't pause to remember the Seeger family. It's **Pete Seeger's** 90th birthday! Pete not only represents the movement for peace and justice...he IS the movement! The 50's and the 60's were profoundly affected by Pete Seeger and his many friends. **Mike Seeger**, Pete's younger half-brother is also a legend of folk and American traditional music. Mike has cancer and has recently opted for hospice care and no further treatment of his condition. Thanks to the Seegers (sister Peggy, too!) for their enormous contribution to the world of folk and traditional music!

Next scheduled jam: **Sunday, September 6, 2009, at 2:00 PM CDT**

Memphis Dulcimer Gathering & Folk Festival ~ Sept. 25-26, 2009, at Second Baptist Church, 4680 Walnut Grove Rd., Memphis ~ Info: Lee Cagle

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

More information is available at:

Google...for the Carter Family, the Carter Family Fold, Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard. Also www.thecrookedroad.org for Virginia's Heritage Music Trail. Check out The Museum of Appalachia at www.museumofappalachia.com, too. The schedule for the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View, AR, is at www.ozarkfolkcenter.com

Information about old-time string band music in Tennessee:

www.nashvilleoldtime.org or www.fiddleandpick.com (Pegram, TN) or www.clemmerdulcimer.com (Townsend, TN)

For local dulcimer and old-time music information:

E-mail: Lee@LeeCagleDulcimers.com or on the Web: www.LeeCagleDulcimers.com