



American Banjo Museum Quarterly

Summer 2019



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Upcoming Events

A three-day celebration of the banjo known as BANJO FEST will again take place in Oklahoma City during the weekend of September 5-7, 2019. With concerts, informal performances, parties, jams, and the American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame Gala – all open to the public - BANJO FEST delights locals while focusing the attention of the banjo world on Oklahoma City.

The BANJO FEST weekend begins with a reception Thursday evening, September 5th at the American Banjo Museum. The evening will feature the grand opening of a new exhibit, *Reflections Of Our Past – The Jim Bollman Collection*. With live music provided by the Hall of Fame banjoists Debbie Schreyer and Lee Floyd joined by four-time national five-string banjo champion, Gary “Biscuit” Davis, the evening’s festivities will also include the presentation of the prestigious *American Banjo Museum Awards of Excellence*.

On Friday afternoon two very special programs will take place at the American Banjo Museum. Banjoist Bob Carlin will present an intimate memoir of renaissance musician, John Hartford, based on his nearly 20-year association with the iconic new Hall of Fame member. Following Carlin’s presentation, an in-depth look at the exhibit bearing his name will take place

when world-renown banjo collector Jim Bollman visits with museum guests and does Q&A about his amazing collection.

The main event takes place on Friday evening, September 6th as the 2019 inductees to the *American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame* are honored at VAST located in the Devon Tower in downtown OKC. This year’s Hall of Fame honorees have each displayed lifelong commitments to the banjo and changed the way the world sees and hears America’s instrument. This formal event is open to the public and will include a reception, dinner and ceremonies honoring the 2019 inductees Alison Brown, Jimmy Mazzy, John Hartford, Bob Snow & Rosie O’Grady’s, Janet Davis and Johnny Baier.

ALISON BROWN - Five-String Performance - Born in Hartford, Connecticut, Brown began playing banjo at the age of ten. After winning the *Canadian National Banjo Championship* and appearing at the Grand Ole Opry, she attended Harvard University and, in 1987, was asked to join *Union Station*. Brown spent three years with Union Station and was named the *International Bluegrass Music Association* “Banjo Player of the Year” in 1991. The 1990 album *I’ve Got That Old Feeling*, which Brown played banjo on, won a Grammy and saw her gravitating toward a blend of bluegrass with jazz and folk idioms

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From the Director



9 East Sheridan Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73104
405-604-2793
www.AmericanBanjoMuseum.com

MISSION

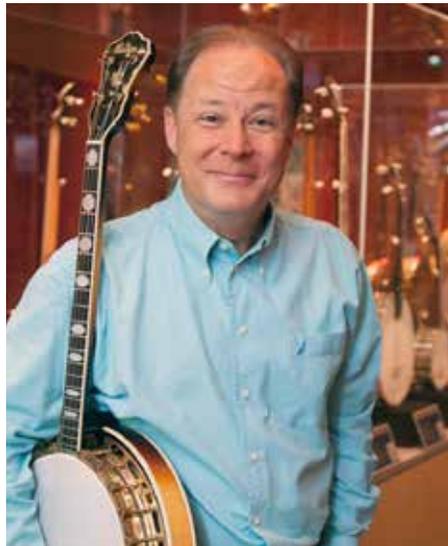
The mission of the American Banjo Museum is to preserve and promote the banjo while expanding appreciation and understanding of its history and music.

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As with any journey, the trip starts with a plan but, in hindsight, rarely follows the roadmap. Along the planned route new and exciting twists and turns result in an adventure which generally far exceeds the original itinerary... and so goes it with the American Banjo Museum. Our growth and acceptance within both the banjo world at large as well as the regional arts and cultural community have propelled us in directions we could have only dreamed of just a few short years ago. After the fun experience of bringing *Kermit The Frog* to the museum as part of the *Jim Henson: Life & Legacy* exhibit which runs through September, another seemingly impossible milestone occurred on June 2nd when actor, comedian and serious banjophile, Steve Martin, made a visit to the museum prior to his evening show here in OKC. As a

truly refined collector of modern art masterpieces, when Steve Martin described our museum as "Fantastic!" it was a moment of pride which our board, staff and supporters could all share in having a hand in making happen. When a journey travels on a river, calm waters generally give way to rapids. After a brief flurry of activity during our 4th annual AMERICANA FEST on June 22nd, we're in the midst of the "calm water" of Summer in preparation for the approaching rapids we call BANJO FEST. During the weekend of September 5-7 the eyes of the banjo world will be focused on OKC as the museum welcomes the 2019 class to the American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame amidst parties, jam sessions and another memorable BANJO FEST concert. While most journeys have a planned end, the conclusion of BANJO FEST 2019 simply marks a resetting of our clock as we begin preparations for the upcoming year. Our planned route - including our new *Women of the Banjo* exhibit scheduled to open in summer 2020 - will keep our eyes pointed to the future, always on the lookout for those new and exciting opportunities to grow our important mission which might unexpectedly greet us at any time, making our unending journey all the more memorable.

Johnny Baier
Executive Director



We have always known the American Banjo Museum is the best! Recently USA Today Travel agreed ... they listed the ABM as the "Best Museum in Oklahoma" April 29, 2019



BANJO FEST continued from page 1

in a manner similar to those of Béla Fleck and David Grisman. In addition to performing, Brown is a co-founder of Compass records and has cultivated an impressive repertoire as a record producer.

JIMMY MAZZY – Four-String Performance - Mazzy is one of America's best known traditional jazz banjoists and vocalists and has been a popular attraction in the traditional jazz circuit since the 1970s. Mazzy has performed extensively in the United States and worldwide, regularly appearing at jazz festivals including the Sacramento, San Diego, Essex, and several Connecticut festivals. Mazzy is a member of The Paramount Jazz Band as well as the Wolverine Jazz band and also freelances with other groups including the Yankee Rhythm Kings, the Magnolia Jazz Five, and the Back Bay Ramblers.

JOHN HARTFORD - Historical - An internationally known multi-instrumentalist, singer, songwriter and entertainer, John Hartford became the face of the banjo to a new generation during the 1960s. After penning the megahit *Gentle On My Mind*, Hartford was a regular guest on the *Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour* as well as the *Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*, all of which gave him the financial independence to pursue his passions of music and river boating. Always musically adventurous, Hartford was a co-founder of the *Newgrass* movement in the late 1960's while remaining passionate and faithful to his roots in tradition music. With many songs left unsung, Hartford passed away in 2001 at the age of 63.

BOB SNOW/ROSIE O'GRADY'S - Promotion - In 1972 a former Navy pilot and Dixieland jazz trumpet player named Bob Snow opened a jazz club called *Rosie O'Grady's* in a derelict area of downtown Pensacola, Florida and established a prototype for urban entertainment complexes around the country. Snow's own version of the concept known as *Church Street Station* in Orlando, Florida opened in 1974 with Rosie O'Grady's Goodtime Jazz Band setting the tempo for years to come. With the banjo being prominently featured in tens of thousands of shows at Rosie O'Grady's as well as in the company's advertising, promotion and imagery, literally millions of people enjoyed the music and good-time entertainment associated with the banjo because of Bob Snow's visionary efforts.

JANET DAVIS - Instruction & Education - Although most associated with the retail music business which bore her name, it is in her role as a musical educator which Janet Davis has made her most lasting contributions to the banjo world. As part of the tiny music instrument and accessory business which she began with her husband, Jim, in 1978, Davis began selling self-produced instructional publications as well. Since then, after establishing herself as a respected clinician and author, appearing at hundreds of musical events around the country as well as regularly contributing to the *Banjo Newsletter*, Davis has evolved into one of the world's most prolific authors of banjo instructional publications, with over 100 titles published by *Mel Bay Publication* alone.

JOHNNY BAIER - Four-String Performance - Well known in recent years as the Executive Director of the American Banjo Museum, Baier continues an impressive performance career that began in 1971, leading the sing-alongs at Shakey's Pizza Parlor in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Through passion, study, practice and performance, the intervening years have seen Baier develop a unique solo tenor banjo style which is equally engaging to banjo players as well as the general public. Nowhere was this more apparent than during the 15 years spent in Orlando, Florida performing countless shows for the tourists at Church Street Station as well as the Walt Disney World Resort. While his professional performance career is now overshadowed by his administrative role with the museum, Baier continues a lifelong quest for excellence in performance and the elevation of the perception and musicality of the banjo.

Following an evening of jams and socializing activity begins anew on Saturday, September 7th at the American Banjo Museum. Beginning at noon, informal performances will take listeners through a virtual tour of the banjo's long and colorful evolution. From Dixieland jazz styles of Hall of Fame member, Lee Floyd to one-of-a-kind renditions from *IBMA Banjo Player of the Year*, Ned Luberecki to the unique classic banjo style of Ron Hinkle to the bluegrass and beyond five-string banjo fireworks of four-time national banjo champion, "Gary Biscuit" Davis, listeners will experience the banjo's story presented by a veritable "whose who" of performing artists.

The performance crown jewel of the
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Well known visitors

You never know who is going to walk in the doors of the American Banjo Museum on any given day. On a Sunday afternoon in June Steve Martin unexpectedly visited the Museum. Martin tweeted "...not enough banjos. Har."

Also in June, Bela Fleck and the Flecktones visited the Museum with their stage crew. They enjoyed a guided tour of the museum including a behind the scene visit to archives.



Americana Fest 2019

The American Banjo Museum's fourth annual *Americana Fest* featured great music, kids activities and fun for the entire family.

Over 200 people attended the event on June 22nd to enjoy some amazing bands. This year's lineup performing in the event room on the second floor included Oklahoma's own *Byron Berline* and *Steelwind* along with the *All Stars Youth Banjo Band* from Houston, while Bill Bond and Wayne Cantwell performed on the first floor. Outdoor activities included kids arts and crafts, summertime treats, and a children's stage hosted by News4's *Rise and Shine* personality Lucas Ross.

Throughout the day drawings were held for door prizes which included passes to the Oklahoma City Zoo, Myriad Gardens Crystal Bridge, tickets to Bela Fleck at Tower Theater, gift certificates to Hudsons Public House and SONIC, as well as a grand prize for a brand new Deering Goodtime Banjo!

This year's *Americana Fest* was sponsored by the Bricktown Association, BancFirst, KFOR-TV, and SONIC America's

Drive-In. This event was also made possible by a generous grant from the Oklahoma Arts Council.

Thanks to the many volunteers that made Americana Fest a success.



One of our youngest volunteers helps with cotton candy during Americana Fest.



Several youth from Texas enjoying the Learning Lounge.



Byron Berline Band performs during Americana Fest.

ABM Welcomes Jamie Herrera



Jamie Herrera

Greetings! Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to be a part of the American Banjo Museum team as Director of Development; what a special gem this Museum is. The dedication of the musicians, benefactors, staff and volunteers to ensure this space became and remains a national treasure is undisputable. As an Oklahoman, I am proud that this Museum is in Oklahoma City as I know there were many options across the country in which its home could have been located. I am deeply grateful for the confidence that has been bestowed upon me as Administrator and Director of Development and I hope I can meet or exceed your expectations.

I grew up in Ada, Oklahoma. I played piano, tried other instruments, danced, performed in musicals and sang in various choirs. I was taught from a young age to appreciate the arts and was fortunate to grow up in and around creative individuals for which I will always be grateful.

Prior to joining the ABM team, I served as the Deputy Secretary and Chief of Staff for the Oklahoma Department of Commerce where I had the privilege of helping existing Oklahoma companies expand and

work with companies outside the state and internationally to move to, or invest in, Oklahoma.

Before joining the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, I served as Director of Regulatory and Political Affairs for Chesapeake Energy Corporation where I managed a portion of business development specifically related to use of natural gas for power generation and industrial utilization as well as energy policy. Additionally, I worked to advance the company's interests in legislative and regulatory bodies across the United States.

My role at the Museum is exceptionally exciting. It's such a wonderful combination of the Arts in general, the Banjo in particular, Creativity, Community Involvement and Entrepreneurship. The energy in this building is extraordinary. Having spent nearing all my "free" time in volunteering in the nonprofit space, I have spent a great deal of time raising funds and building advocacy for entities for which I

care deeply. The American Banjo Museum is a remarkable place and I hope to be another great ambassador for this American treasure.

I received my Master's and Bachelor's degrees from the University of Oklahoma. I am active in Junior League of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Festival of the Arts, Leadership Oklahoma City, Positive Tomorrows, The Oklahoma City Philharmonic and am a member of various leadership organizations.

I am married to Norman Herrera, CEO of Sparq Natural Gas and we enjoy visiting Major League Baseball stadiums and being outdoors with our two Weimaraner dogs - Tucker Tisdale and Paco Red.

I very much look forward to meeting you all at BANJO FEST in September if not before. Again, I thank you for this opportunity.

Gratefully,
Jamie J. Herrera
Director of Development

The Jim Bollman Collection



Jim Bollman

Jim Bollman has been researching and collecting 19th century banjos and other fretted instruments since the 1960s. Bollman has generously loaned some rare items to be on exhibit at the Museum through June 2020. Included in the exhibit are rare banjos, signs, photographs, figurines and toys.

An exhibit opening *Reflections of our Past - The Jim Bollman Collection* will be held Thursday, September 5 during the BANJO FEST Welcome Reception 6-10 PM. Then on Friday, September 6th at 2 PM Bollman will be present for a Q&A session on his extensive collection.

Better know a board member



Jens Kruger

Q: Tell us about your early experiences with the banjo. How were you first introduced to the instrument?

A: I heard instruments very early on, about seven years old. In Switzerland, I came from a very musical household. My mother played accordion and my father played harmonica. We had a tenor banjo but the neck was broken as my father had sat on it! I always loved the sound of banjo. Dixieland was prominent at the time, but what I heard first was bluegrass: a version of John Henry. As a kid I didn't make the distinction between four-string or five-string. Nothing was better than the other. I still feel that way today! I remember listening to the Firehouse Five Plus Two and how happy the sound made me feel as a child. George Lewis' live albums were a big influence as well.

Q: How old were you when you first started playing?

A: By the time I was nine I started playing. Once I picked it up, I never stopped. My friends and I put a jug-band together in fourth grade after seeing it on Sesame Street. Soon I was playing with Dixieland bands. At ten years old I got my first paying gig as a banjo player with the Swiss National Radio Orchestra.

Q: Do you remember the first song you learned?

A: Yes! Pete Seeger's *Stagolee!* I had his blue *How to Play the Five-String Banjo* book. That book was our Bible.

Q: How were you introduced to Seeger?

A: My mother was a kindergarten teacher and one of her students had an American father who was a G.I. from New York. He introduced us to Seeger, taught us how to play folk music.

Q: As you became an adult how did you continue to perform? When did you come to the United States?

A: For a long time my brother and I lived on the streets and played where ever we could. We lived on trains, overnighiting from Berlin to Paris back and forth until we got a contract deal at 18. That changed everything.

Q: Since then you have won many awards and accolades. From playing the Grand Ole Opry with Bill Monroe to winning the Steve Martin banjo award.

A: I loved getting to play with Bill Monroe, my wife and I even lived on his farm for a bit! Bill only ever introduced two banjo players that weren't in his band: Earl Scruggs and me. He would often remind me of that! I got to meet Chet Atkins and even hug Dolly Parton! Getting the Steve Martin prize changed our career. We got to play the David Letterman show. Millions of people watched that. Whether they liked our kind of music or not it gave us a legitimacy.

Q: Is there a moment you are most proud of? You have full permission to brag!!

A: I have been commissioned to score music for national parks, Chamber music, arts endowments and more. When I received a package from Washington D.C. with the flag they had flown over the

capital for my cultural contributions on June 6th 2006. That was a day I'll never forget. Because of those opportunities I was able to get my green card. My compositions were reviewed by Berklee and Juilliard in front of a court. Earl Scruggs, Ricky Skaggs and others wrote letters on my behalf to help me gain citizenship. Going from being a street musician in Europe to an American citizen, I'm most proud of that.

Q: How did you become connected with the American Banjo Museum?

A: Johnny Baier came to see us perform at Byron Berline's bluegrass festival in Guthrie. He invited us to the Museum. I'll never forget Johnny driving us down. It was such a fascinating day. I've seen lots of great banjos but when I got to see all the cases in the basement of the Museum that's a whole different story. I love the connection to the people who played the instruments. Some have cases with stickers from India and other places, they're time capsules! Then I was asked to be part of the board. While my plate is very full from performing (120 shows in America alone this year!) composing, and working with the Deering family in developing banjos- I took it on. Even if I wasn't on the board, I would be part of it. I'm just part of the banjo. To be associated with the Museum makes me so happy!

Q: What do you hope to see in the future of the American Banjo Museum?

A: I hope the banjo will be identified as America's true instrument- one that more will try and play. I hope things like BANJO FEST continue to grow to where there's multiple stages and concerts all over town! For people to take pride in the instrument that's the idea. It's not our country's politics that attract people, it's the idea of America. The banjo is this idea. Seeger used it as a symbol, a lifestyle. To me the banjo is the celebration of the American idea - not political: humanistic.

Renew your commitment

Changing the strings on my banjo always gives me a feeling of renewal and recommitment, I know that sounds corny, but think about that for a moment. Taking off the old strings and putting on new ones renews the sound and the feel of your banjo. The old strings were tired and had lost the ability to produce the quality of sound that your banjo needs to be its best.

By that simple act of changing strings, you have given your banjo the ability to sound and perform at its very best. You have renewed the banjo and recommitted to continue playing the instrument for the foreseeable future.

The same is true when you make a new donation to the American Banjo Museum. When you make a new donation, you are renewing your commitment to support the mission, facilities and staff of the Museum. Your donations help us keep the Museum in top shape, performing at its best to fulfill our mission to Preserve, Present and Promote the Banjo.

Because of members and supporters like you, we have been able to move our mission forward. Just think of the accomplishments of the past few years, the *Learning Lounge*, *Jim Henson – Life & Legacy* exhibit, (with Kermit the Frog and banjo), the *Jim Bollman Collection* exhibit, Americana Fest, BANJO FEST, and so much more including many future exhibits and functions planned for the future. These are what make the Museum come alive and able to be interesting and vibrant to not just banjo players, but to people of all ages. It only happens because people like you are committed to seeing it happen and support the Museum both physically and financially.

If you are reading this, then I know you have already made a commitment by a donation to support the Museum, so let me say THANK YOU VERY MUCH! for your support and now I am asking you to renew that commitment. Your support is vital to our success, “Change the Strings”, and help us be the very best we can be at your American Banjo Museum.

Paul Poirier, ABM Board Member

Give Today
www.americanbanjomuseum.com

BANJO FEST

Continued from page 3

weekend takes place on Saturday evening, September 7th when the fourth annual BANJO FEST concert takes the stage at the Performing Arts Theater at the Oklahoma City Community College. Starring Grammy award winning banjo virtuoso, Alison Brown and her Quintet; Grand Ole Opry stars, The Grascals (featuring 2018 Steve Martin Prize winner, Kristin Scott Benson), and jazz banjo virtuoso Buddy Wachter & Johnny Baier – *Side By Side*, BANJO FEST promises an unforgettable night of music and entertainment from legendary members of the banjo world. Following the concert, the BANJO FEST weekend is capped off with a post-concert afterglow party at the American Banjo Museum beginning at 10 PM.

In addition to the Welcome Reception, Hall of Fame Gala, performances at the Museum, BANJO FEST Concert, and

Afterglow Party, attendees will enjoy other informal performances and jamming sessions. Open to the public, BANJO FEST tickets can be purchased by calling the American Banjo Museum at 405-604-2793 or online at www.banjofest2019.com.

The Holiday Inn Express Bricktown at 101 E Main Street, Oklahoma City, is host hotel for BANJO FEST with a discounted room rate of \$129 when using group code BFM. Reservations can be made by calling 405-778-8101 or 800-315-2621

ABM Membership

The American Banjo Museum wishes to recognize and thank new members and those that have renewed their membership the second quarter of 2019.

Individual Membership

Eric Harold Affsprung
Bill Brisotti
Alma Cochran
Ethan Garrett
Roy Hill
Sue Kern
Karen Lennox
Steven Loggie
Marty Sigwing
Glady Zwink

Couple Membership

Roger & Ellie Burns
Don & Marlene Dempsey
Mike & Deb Hignite
Bill & Nancy Majors
Bobby & Peggy McBryde
Kelly McCallay & Michelle Montgomery
Joseph & Anne Prezio
Charles & Melanie Speer
Michael & Jeannine Stein

To become a member, gift a membership, or upgrade a current membership call 405-604-2793 or visit www.americanbanjomuseum.com.



9 East Sheridan Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73104



September 5-7 . . . Make your Reservation TODAY!

Upcoming Events...

JULY

SATURDAY, JULY 13, 1 PM
Performance

Wayne Cantwell will perform traditional music of the open prairie on banjo, fiddle, and mountain dulcimer. Performance is free with museum admission.

SATURDAY, JULY 20, 2 PM
Pick-A-Tune with Lucas

For those that have never played the banjo and wanted to try, come "Learn to Pick a Tune with Lucas". Limited seating, by reservation only!

AUGUST

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 1 PM
Performance

Wayne Cantwell will perform traditional music of the open prairie on banjo, fiddle, and mountain dulcimer. Performance is free with museum admission.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 2 PM
Pick-A-Tune with Lucas

For those that have never played the banjo and wanted to try, come "Learn to Pick a Tune with Lucas". Limited seating, by reservation only!

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 12 PM Brown Bag-it with Banjos
Bring your sack lunch and enjoy a live performance during your lunch hour.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10, 2 PM
Banjos in Space

A family friendly music, puppet, banjo, variety show that will take you on a musical journey into outer space. Under 16 free, adults half-price.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 17 1 PM
Bluegrass Open Jam

Join other Bluegrass players for an Open Jam Session. Free admission when you bring an instrument and participate.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24, 1 PM
Celtic Open Jam

Join other players for a Celtic Open Jam Session. Free admission when you bring an instrument and participate.

SEPTEMBER

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 12 PM
Brown Bag-it with Banjos

Bring your sack lunch and enjoy a live performance during your lunch hour.

THURS-SAT, SEPTEMBER 5-7
BANJO FEST

Thursday - Welcome Reception
Friday - HOF Dinner Gala
Saturday - BANJO FEST Concert

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2 PM
Pick-A-Tune with Lucas

For those that have never played the banjo and wanted to try, come "Learn to Pick a Tune with Lucas". By reservation only!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1 PM
Celtic Open Jam

Join other players for a Celtic Open Jam Session. Free admission when you bring an instrument and participate.

OCTOBER

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 12 PM
Brown Bag-it with Banjos

Bring your sack lunch and enjoy a live performance during your lunch hour.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1 PM
Ukulele Open Jam

Join other players for a Ukulele Open Jam Session. Free admission when you bring an instrument and participate.

