



# A Different Strummer

## Grassahol performs at January FolkSide Coffeehouse

*Interview by Bill Cohen*

JANUARY WILL BE A TIME TO GET OUT OF THE HOUSE AND ENJOY THE WARMTH OF THE "FOLKSIDE" – WITH GOOD MUSIC AND GOOD COMPANY. JOIN US AT OUR COFFEEHOUSE ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 25 AT 8 P.M. TO HEAR GRASSAHOL.

"THEIR SONGS ARE A REFLECTION OF THE MANY MUSICAL INFLUENCES OF THE BAND MEMBERS THEMSELVES – BLUEGRASS, AMERICANA, FOLK, BLUES, JAZZ AND EVEN ROCK. BLUEGRASS UNLIMITED MAGAZINE CALLED THEIR MUSIC, 'ORIGINAL, CONTEMPORARY BLUEGRASS AT ITS FINEST.'"

BILL COHEN INTERVIEWS ALL FIVE BAND MEMBERS IN THE ARTICLE BELOW. ADDITIONAL CONCERT DETAILS ON PAGE 5.

**Bill Cohen:** How would you describe the music you play, and what adjectives would you use to describe your performances?

**Chas Williams:** We play a mixture of Bluegrass, old time, swing and modern tunes in a bluegrass setting. It's rare that Grassahol will play two songs that sound the same back to back. Our performances are fun and intense, and emotional all at the same time. Bluegrass and its songs are primarily expressions of straight forward emotions, much like country music, just not as self-absorbed. That's what I like about it. It's right up front. You always know where you stand in Bluegrass music, whether it be dead and floating down a river, going up to meet the creator, riding that midnight train, or drinkin' dark whiskey. It's all good.

**Heidi Haupt:** If we all like the song, it's fair game. We've strayed from traditional Bluegrass without disrespecting the original form.



*Grassahol is a popular favorite at the Central Ohio Folk Festival. Photo by Linda McDonald.*

**Scott Brooks:** We have tried, with limited success, to verbally describe our music to booking agents and have come up with phrases like roots-based, acoustic music influenced by bluegrass, folk, blues, minstrel, swing, country, rock and jazz. But, the fact is that the five instruments: banjo, guitar, mandolin, fiddle and bass make such a perfect combo that when you add some voices you have a musical palette from which you can create a variety of musical ideas. And that's what we do. We

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## CFMS Celebrates the Big 20!

The Columbus Folk Music Society celebrates 20 years of existence! Technically, its 22 years, but we're taking the 1993 date of our Articles of Incorporation as the starting point (at least for the purpose of this year's celebration.)

Mark your calendar for Saturday, November 30. If you're in town, please seriously consider attending our coffeehouse that evening for a very special celebration. There will be an hour and a half of open mic performers (some of whom will be new faces to the CFMS) followed by an hour and a half of open jamming. We'll have a memorabilia table with CFMS "artifacts," old photos, an anniversary cake, our traditional bake sale AND just plain good camaraderie and musical fun. Our 2014 CFMS calendar will also be for sale.

We hope to see you there!

**SATURDAY, NOV. 30TH**

*Sponsored by*



*Open Mic Performers 7 - 8:30 p.m.*  
*Open Jam 8:30 - 10 p.m.*

*Suggested Donations at the Door:*  
\$1.00 CFMS members  
\$3.00 Students  
\$7.00 General Public  
Under 12 Free

**THE FOLKSIDE COFFEEHOUSE PRESENTS:**  
**A CELEBRATION OF 20 YEARS COLUMBUS FOLK MUSIC SOCIETY**

Refreshments - "History" Table  
- Bake Sale - & Good Music !!

QUESTIONS: [billcohen@cfmsociety.com](mailto:billcohen@cfmsociety.com)  
OR [josh.robert@gmail.com](mailto:josh.robert@gmail.com)

HOSTED AT THE COLUMBUS MENNONITE CHURCH  
21 Parkland Park Blvd., Columbus, OH 43207  
In Columbus

# SEASONAL NOTES



The Staff of "A Different Strummer" wish you and yours the best during the coming holiday season.

We will "see you again" with the February issue (a polite way of saying there will be no January newsletter).

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The Columbus Folk Music Society now has its 13-month full-color 2014 folk calendar available. Please consider getting calendars for your family or friends for a Christmas gift or for any kind of gift for that matter.

You can even check out the calendar on our website. Suggested donation of \$10. All proceeds support the CFMS. Calendars will be available at the monthly coffeehouses beginning in November. For mail order, a



check or money order can be made payable to The Columbus Folk Music Society (please add \$2.00 S&H) and sent to: The Columbus Folk Music Society, P.O. Box 20735, Columbus, OH 43220. Thank you for your support!

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Also, if you're looking for a Christmas gift with a folk music twist, please check out the CFMS "FolkSide Shop" on the web at Cafe Press. Click on <http://www.cafepress.com/folksideshop>. Clothing, mugs, tiles, totes and more – all with our logo and a saying. Its also a great way to "spread the word" about the CFMS!



## FOLK'S FAMILY FEUD; TRADITIONALISTS VS. SONGWRITERS

by Scott Alarik

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE IS A REPRINT FROM SCOTT ALARIK'S BOOK ENTITLED "DEEP COMMUNITY: ADVENTURES IN THE MODERN FOLK UNDERGROUND" AND WAS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN JUNE OF 1999. ALARIK SAYS OF THE ARTICLE NOW: "THE TRADITIONALISTS VS. SONGWRITERS STORY IS ONE OF MY FAVORITES IN THE BOOK. SINCE SO MUCH OF IT IS THE HISTORY OF THAT FEUD, IT'S STILL TRUE. BUT THE FEUD HAS DIED DOWN A LOT IN RECENT YEARS. MANY IN THE YOUNGER GENERATION OF BOTH TRADITIONALISTS AND SONGWRITERS DON'T SEE IT AT ALL – TO THEM, IT'S ALL FOLK MUSIC, ALL PEOPLE'S MUSIC."

The popular mythology says that the folk wars began at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965. Singer-songwriter Bob Dylan appeared with an electric guitar, singing obscure, introspective songs, and was booed off the stage by hordes of

intolerant traditional purists. Since then, songwriters and traditional folk musicians have been a-feudin' and a-fussin'!

Like most enduring myths, it is not entirely true. Dylan played all the songs he had intended to that August night and was, for the most part, enthusiastically received. In fact, he was brought back for two encores.

But also like most enduring myths, it endures because it is built upon a bedrock of truth. The worlds of traditional folk music and the acoustic singer-songwriter have not quite been armed camps, but a very cold war has raged between them since the dawn of the 1960s folk revival.

"I think there was always a gulf between songwriters and traditional folk people," said Eric Andersen, who rose to stardom with the first wave of '60s songwriters, which included Dylan, Tom Paxton, and Phil Ochs. "For a songwriter,

it was tough at first, because nobody took you seriously. The first people who played at Club 47 in Cambridge, for instance, they all tried to play just like [Southern traditional musicians] Doc Watson or Clarence Ashley. I mean, imitating them was like a stamp of authenticity, and songwriters were looked on as weird, upstart-type people."

John Roberts and Tony Barrand are among the most respected of singers of traditional British folk songs in this country. Barrand, who grew up in England, also teaches folklore and psychology at Boston University, and said he believes most of the animosity, at least originally, came from traditionalists.

"The singer-songwriter thing was seen as a rejection of this amazing traditional material, this heritage," he said. "I



See Folk's Family Feud - page 3

*Folk's Family Feud - from page 2*

remember being at folk clubs in England in the '60s, and the purists – these people who were just then intensely discovering the old songs – saw it almost as a travesty to create songs when there were so many great traditional singers to listen to and imitate, and all these amazing old songs to learn.”

As the folk revival gained commercial viability, however, the traditional artists got left by the wayside. At coffeehouses like Club 47 and major festivals like Newport, the constant, seductive hum of what Joni Mitchell called “the starmaker machinery” could be heard. But then as now, pop wanted its stars young, hip, attractive – and singing contemporary songs.

Steve Tilston, who sings both traditional and original songs, came of age in the waning days of the British folk revival and remembers how hardened attitudes had become by the early '70s.

“I still remember a few faces looking daggers at me,” he said, “wondering, ‘Why am I paying money to hear this post-adolescent sing about the fact that his latest girlfriend's bugged off?’ I suppose that's forever to be the case, and it seems even more so in America. I know a lot of people resent the singer-songwriter, see them as using the resources that were built up and maintained by people in the traditional scene. So when I come up to the States, I sense a bit of resentment that the folk scene is so swamped with singer-songwriters.”

As the folk revival dissolved in the wake of the disco and punk waves of the '70s, the music went underground, maintained in small coffeehouses by the most ardent activists and lovers of the form. But it was not only traditional people who fought that hard, good fight. Passim, the descendant of Club 47, for example, was run by Bob and Rae Ann Donlin, who were devoted to literate singer-songwriters. On tiny stages like theirs, the folk movement rebuilt itself, but when it reemerged in the 1980s, it was seen almost entirely as a songwriter revival.

Among folk's first new stars was Christine Lavin, who remains among its wittiest and most enduring popular

performers. She said she recently ruminated with Greenwich Village folk patriarch Dave Van Ronk [now deceased] about why so little traditional music as been part of the current folk revival.



*Christine Lavin*

“He said, ‘Look, if you go to a bluegrass festival, you'll see 10-year-old kids with little cowboy hats and banjos who can name all the bluegrass players from the beginning of time and play all the standards. Folk music today does not have that.’

“And he's right; singer-songwriters don't have that deep, long connection to the traditional music. My theory is that to begin to play folk music, you only need to know two or three chords. You don't have to learn to play other people's stuff first, just to get the technique. You don't have to go to teachers, who would tell you about

**DAVID TAMULEVICH IS CONVINCED THAT THERE IS AS LARGE A POTENTIAL AUDIENCE FOR FOLK MUSIC NOW AS THERE WAS IN THE '60S. . . . “AUDIENCES WANT THOSE ROOTS AND WELCOME THEM WHEN THEY FIND THEM,” HE SAID. “THEY WANT ALL THE THINGS THAT FOLK MUSIC OFFERS; THAT FEELING OF CONNECTEDNESS AND INCLUSIVENESS AND TRADITION. BUT THEY DON'T KNOW THEY WANT IT UNTIL THEY SEE IT, AND THEY SIMPLY DON'T SEE IT IN THE MEDIA TODAY.”**

the masters who came before and have you study their music, the way they do in other forms, whether it's bluegrass or opera. In folk, you can just take off on your own. And it really is to the detriment of the form if new people come up who don't know what came before them.”

Lavin also said she thinks it is unfortunate that traditional folkies and

songwriters aim their animosity at one another.

“I'm sure that television and radio have helped to escalate the split. Folk gets so little airplay and almost no television, and it tends to be the most popular performers, the ones closest to the pop mainstream, who get what little attention there is.”

This strikes at the central tragedy of the schism for David Tamulevich, whose Fleming-Tamulevich is the nation's largest folk management and booking agency. He also performs in the smart traditional and contemporary folk duo Mustard's Retreat.

“I think the real gulf opened when the media decided folk was going to become a four-letter word,” he said. “In the '70s, pop culture moved away from the folk revival toward other things, and basically declared it dead. Folk people get all emotional about that, but, you know, it's an impersonal industry, as all capitalist industries are. They want quick money, no investment, and they're always moving on to the next thing.”

He is convinced that there is as large a potential audience for folk music now as there was in the '60s. As an agent, he is forever helping grass-roots organizations start their own folk venues, watching happily as word spreads from friend to friend, neighbor to neighbor, that folk music still exists.

“Audiences want those roots and welcome them when they find them,” he said. “They want all the things that folk music offers; that feeling of connectedness and inclusiveness and tradition. But they don't know they want it until they see it, and they simply don't see it in the media today. It's like the industry and the media just pulled the curtain on it. And that's not the fault of anyone in folk music; it's not the songwriter's fault and it's not the traditional artists' fault. It's the media's fault and the music industry's fault.”

Eddie From Ohio is actually a quartet from Virginia, among the hottest new folk bands. Its quirky, hilariously smart-alecky songs are bringing young fans to folk and a welcome spirit of fun to the often-dour world of the songwriter.

*See Folk's Family Feud - page 6*

*Grassahol – from page 1*

sing and play just about anything we like and they all come out sounding like – Grassahol.

**Bill:** Your members have many years of musical experience, and some have been in musical groups besides Grassahol. Can each of you tell us how many years you've been performing, how many groups you've been in, and how many instruments you each play?

**Carl Yaffey:** I started in 1962. [I've] probably been in 15 groups or more. I play banjo primarily but also play guitar, mandolin, and bass.

**Chas:** I have played in over a half dozen musical groups, and have been playing folk music, old time, rock and bluegrass for too many years to count at this point. I started in middle school, but played piano before that. I play the piano, guitar, harmonica, kazoo (does that count?), mandolin, fiddle, and banjo. I just sold my hammered dulcimer, so I don't play that anymore. My instrument in the band today is the fiddle (and kazoo, if that counts.)

**Heidi:** I spent my youth at the piano and learning to sing harmonies with my musical family. I picked up the guitar in a fingerpicking style when I wanted to start singing at coffeehouses and bars in college. Soon after, I met my husband (the drummer) while singing in a rock band. After hearing live the incredible quality of Bluegrass musicians both instrumentally and vocally I knew that's what I needed to be doing. Since I am helpless with a pick in my hand, I learned to play the bass so I could sing harmonies with my friends. I met Carl at a Bluegrass jam and Grassahol was born shortly after.

**Lacy Wright:** Mom taught me how to sing harmony parts when I was six. I can't sing harmony in a song now without thinking of her.

I started playing seriously during the 60's. I've played classic rock, country and oldies over the years. I play guitar primarily but also play bass guitar and pedal steel guitar. I can fumble some with a banjo but Carl's position isn't in jeopardy.

**Scott:** Music for me, started in my family, singing around the piano. Everyone in my family played a band instrument and sang.

I had an early interest in musical production and worked in radio, advertising and my own recording studio. I only moved to the performance side of things a few years back, after picking up the mandolin. My primary interest is still in singing – especially harmonies.

**Bill:** Who are your musical influences and heroes ?

**Scott:** So many: the Beatles, CSNY, too many jazz folks to mention – Miles, Brubeck, Chet Baker – mainly cool and be-bop. I'm really into music from the swing era – the Great American



*Grassahol on stage at Byrne's Pub in Grandview Heights. Photo by Linda McDonald.*

Songbook. My bluegrass heroes are Monroe, Lester Flatt, and the Bluegrass Album Band and I really dig the new sound bluegrass is taking root in with Chris Thile, Stringdusters, Steel Drivers, Cadillac Sky and others.

**Carl:** Earl Scruggs, Jens Jruger, Chris Thile, J.D. Crowe and Tony Rice.

**Lacy:** Vocally, Merle Haggard and probably Conway Twitty and Tony Rice. On electric guitar, Albert Lee, Danny Gatton and George Harrison. Tony Rice is the king of bluegrass guitar in my opinion.

**Chas:** I have so many heroes. I love the founding fathers: Bill Monroe, Ralph Stanley, Flat and Scruggs. I love the modern players, too: Tony Rice, David Grisman, Sammy Shelor, Jerry Douglas, Ricky Skaggs, and Alison Krauss. Of the fiddlers, Kenny Baker comes to mind, and Brad Leftwich, Aubrey Haynie, Mark O'Connor, and lots of others.

My banjo hero is Carl Yaffey. Wait, he's in the band. (Does that count?)

**Bill:** Please give us an example of what you consider the best and most satisfying performance Grassahol ever did.

**Heidi:** We recently played at a retirement center in Westerville. The room was packed with folks with walkers and wheelchairs with big smiles on their faces. When we started the intro to "Tennessee Waltz" I heard a collective sigh from the audience and they were all singing along for the entire song. I almost couldn't continue singing because it moved me so.

**Scott:** I guess the time we played in the atrium of the Ohio Statehouse, a huge space with marble floors and walls. The place sounded like a giant echo chamber and really made everything sound amazing. That, coupled with the honor of being there and the pomp and ceremony, made for a pretty cool gig.

**Carl:** Playing at a Thom McCain house concert.

**Lacy:** I agree with Carl – playing at a Thom McCain house concert. Those folks listen close and appreciate your efforts. As performers, we feed off that.

**Chas:** My favorite Grassahol performance is any performance where we are asked to do an encore. I am an absolute idiot about encores. Other than this, there have been lots of great shows. We did a summer show at Buckeye Lake this year, the sun was setting over the lake, boats were floating by, folks were drinking summer wine, the weather was glorious, we played great, and everyone was on board. That was a Zen moment for the Band. Finally, you can't beat the crowds at Byrne's on the right Friday night. Familiar faces all around and a love for the music. What's not to like?

**Bill:** What do you recall as the worst performance situation Grassahol ever faced ?

**Chas:** Early this spring we played in Centerburg for a city festival that got rained out. We played to 3 people. They had fun, but we didn't. 'Nuff said.

**Carl:** Playing outdoors near Lake Erie with the sun in our eyes and 20 billion mosquitos feasting on us.

**Heidi:** The venue will go unnamed, but we travelled quite a distance three times on the promise that the sound reinforcement had been improved. Bad sound takes away all the joy.

*See Grassahol - page 7*

## Shining the Light on the CFMS with Hootenanny & Talk – Friday Jan. 10

Simply Living is a unique community group that aims to show people how they can lead simpler, less stressful, and more meaningful lives by consuming less, downplaying the rat race for money, doing more people-oriented things, and protecting the environment.

Each month, activists from Simply Living have picked another community group to meet with, network with, and socialize with. And for January, Simply Living wants to meet with our members in the Columbus Folk Music Society.

Our two groups share some common values, so we think the

meeting will be worthwhile, interesting, and fun.

We'll meet in the old Clintonville Community Resources Center at 14 W. Lakeview at 6:30 p.m. Folks from each group will talk about what their group does. Then, we'll have a discussion and question-and-answer session. Light refreshments will be served, and we'll end the informal evening with a brief folk music sing-along. The Folk Ramblers (Carl Yaffey on banjo and Bill Cohen on guitar) will lead the hootenanny, but everyone from the CFMS is invited to lend their singing voices and join in the discussion.

The more, the merrier. Let's show Simply Living how much energy, spirit, and fun we often generate!

The entire meeting won't last more than 2 hours, but we think it could help us make some new friends and perhaps lead to future partnerships


with a group that has hundreds of members, much organizing experience and growing respect in the community.


### *What is the origin of the word Hootenanny?*

According to Wikipedia, Pete Seeger, in various interviews, said he first heard the word hootenanny in Seattle, Washington in the late 1930s. It was used by Hugh DeLacy's New Deal political club to describe their monthly music fund raisers. After some debate the club voted in the word 'hootenanny,' which narrowly beat out the word 'wingding.' Seeger, Woody Guthrie and other members of the Almanac Singers later used the word in New York City to describe their weekly rent parties, which featured many notable folksingers of the time. In a 1962 interview in *Time*, Joan Baez made the analogy that a hootenanny is to folk singing what a jam session is to jazz.


## SAVE THE DATE . . .

 **The Saturday Music Jam** at the **Worthington Farmers' Market** has relocated to *The Shops at Worthington* for the winter months. **9:30 - 11:30 a.m.** All are welcome to come play. Consider bringing a chair.

 **Saturday, November 30 – FolkSide Coffeehouse** (Special Schedule)  
**7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Open Stage**  
**8:30 - 10 p.m. Open Jam.** *Columbus Mennonite Church*, 35 Oakland Park Avenue (just East of High St. & one block North of E.N. Broadway), Coles, OH. \$7.00 donation; CFMS members \$5.00; students \$5.00; under 12 free.

 **Friday, January 10 – Columbus Folk Music Society is special guest at Simply Living's Monthly Social.** **6:30 - 8:30 p.m.** Simply Living folks seek to learn more about the CFMS and to share a little about themselves. Bill Cohen (and other interested CFMS members) will have the opportunity to talk about the CFMS and the diverse folk music traditions in central Ohio. Bill & Carl Yaffey will also lead the group in a Sing-a-long – Hootenanny style. All are invited. Location: Clintonville Resources Center, 14 W. Lakeview Ave., Columbus 43202. Contacts: Chuck at [Chuck.Lynd@gmail.com](mailto:Chuck.Lynd@gmail.com) or

614-354-6172; Bill Cohen at [billcohen@columbus.rr.com](mailto:billcohen@columbus.rr.com).

 **Saturday, January 25 – FolkSide Coffeehouse**  
**6:00 p.m.** Open Jam  
**7:00 p.m.** Open Stage  
**8:00 p.m. Featured Performer: Grassahol.** *Columbus Mennonite Church*, 35 Oakland Park Avenue (just East of High St. & one block North of E.N. Broadway), Coles, OH. Suggested donation: \$7.00; CFMS members \$5.00; students \$5.00 under 12 free.

## FOLLOWING OUR OWN. . .

**Thursday, December 5: Grassahol – Mudflats Bar & Grill**, 31 W. Columbus St., Galena, OH **7:30 - 11:30 P.M.** (740) 965-5700

**Friday, December 13: Grassahol – Byrnes' Pub**, 1248 West 3rd Ave., Columbus, OH **7 - 9 P.M.** Free 614-486-4722



*Folk's Family Feud - from page 3*

Robbie Schaefer, who writes many of the group's songs, wonders if the schism is



*EddieFromOhio band members.*  
[www.eddiefromohio.com](http://www.eddiefromohio.com)

as wide as many folkies think. He is constantly being warned about “folk police” or even “folk Nazis,” traditional purists bent on assailing young neo-folkies like himself. But he has never met one and, in fact, has felt warmly welcomed in even the most traditional folk venues.

“The experiences we've all had tell me the gulf might not be as large as a lot of us think,” he said. “I think people who grew up with folk music probably guard it jealously, as they should. It is a precious thing, and it takes nurturing, especially nowadays. As a fan, you really have to seek it out, seek out the CDs, the shows, to be really proactive. This is not a passive form of entertainment. What I think the newer stuff is doing is drawing younger people into folk music who would never have listened to it otherwise – and may not

“... TO ME, THE OVERVIEW IS THAT THEY [SINGER-SONGWRITERS] ARE CARRYING ON ONE OF THE OLDEST TRADITIONS EVER, BECAUSE THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN SINGER-SONGWRITERS. THERE HAVE BEEN TROUBADOURS GOING BACK THOUSANDS OF YEARS, AND THEY HAD SONGS FOR EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED IN PEOPLE'S LIVES.”  
Steve Tilston

realize they're listening to it now. And I think that's a great thing. Somehow, people have to get their first exposure to the music.”

Both Lavin and Tilston said they feel more connected to folk tradition than some purists might give them credit for being.

Tilston said, “I'll hear people say, ‘Well, what's the difference between these singer-

songwriters and pop singers?’ And you could say that, but to me, the overview is that they are carrying on one of the oldest traditions ever, because there have always been singer-songwriters. There have been troubadours going back thousands of years, and they had songs for everything that happened in people's lives. I mean, songs are written by singer-songwriters; that's how they've always been written.”

For Andersen, though, the gulf is a permanent feature of the folk terrain. People who discover its vast fields are naturally going to be drawn to different corners, though he made it clear it's not only the traditionalists who think the scales may have tipped a tad too heavily toward the songwriters these days.

“I was in that first wave, when there were maybe six songwriters in Greenwich Village,” he said. “Now it's like there's more songwriters than there are ATMs, 7-Elevens, churches, and Wal-Marts put together. But I don't know if this is a gulf that needs to be narrowed. I mean, it's like saying swing music should get closer to free-form jazz or bebop. Maybe the differences are good. That's what makes the form so vital.”  
— Reprinted with permission.

**WELCOME TO OUR NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS:**

- Fred Bailey
- George Bennett
- Linda Bolles
- Diane & Kathleen Boston
- Tom and Patti Burkett family
- Joanie Calem
- Dr. Lee & Tinya Cherney family
- Dan Clarke
- Robert Dunham
- Ruth & Hugh Stanton-Farthing
- Charlie Flowers & Denise Bronson
- Karen Fries
- Suzanne Koebel
- Steve Hopkins
- Peter Insabella
- Terry & Dee Keller family
- Jim Luckhaupt
- Linda & Richard McDonald family
- Art & Sharon Mittenbergs family
- Steve Moore (Opossum)
- Larry Myers
- Hal Pepinsky & Jill Bystydzienski
- Pam Raver
- Shelbiana Rhein
- Allen & Mary Rubnitz family
- Rick Schlegel
- Stephen Seiple
- Cathy & Steve Sheets family
- Larry Staats
- Margaret Swisher
- Jane VanAuken
- Sandra Vitek



**The Amazing Rakes: True to their Name** by Bill Cohen

“We never meant to be a performing band.” That's how bass player and vocalist Heidi White describes the 6-member Amazing Rakes. But on November 9, more than 100 folks were delighted that the Rakes performed anyway.

The scene was a food pantry fundraiser at an old church on Columbus' south side, and the rafters echoed and rang with the Rakes' tight 3, 4, and even 5-part vocal harmonies. Plus there were the many instruments the band played seemingly effortlessly: guitar, mandolin, fiddle, bass, banjo, and drum.

At first, the Rakes presented a somewhat bluegrass sound. But quickly, they showed an amazing versatility. They did their own unique takes on early 1960's rock (Under the Boardwalk),

mid-1960's Beatles (Here Comes the Sun), 1970's soft rock (Dance with Me), 1930's Cowboy music (Cowboy Sweetheart), modern-day country pop (Would You Go With Me), and other musical genres.

Nearly every song highlighted harmonies that popped as clear as a bell and instrumental solos that you wanted to applaud right then but didn't, because it would have drowned out the compelling music that you wanted to keep hearing.

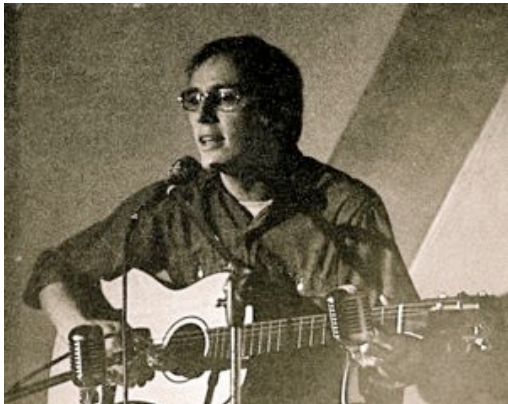
The audience could tell from the way these musical veterans smiled, laughed, and interacted with each other on stage, they simply love making music together. Perhaps that's why Heidi hints that performing publicly as a group is just the frosting on the cake.

If you ever get a chance to hear the Amazing Rakes, do it. I think you'll agree that adjectives like refreshing, joyful, energizing, and entertaining only begin to describe them.

**How can I find out more about the Columbus Folk Music Society and/or its events?** Visit our website for information at: [www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org](http://www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org).

Or you can join us as a member. Benefits include: camaraderie with the folkies in town, discounts on certain admissions, this monthly newsletter and the comfort of knowing that all events are family friendly!

A guy has an accordion in the back seat of his car. He drives to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to renew his license, and he goes inside and gets in line. But then, he's horrified when he realizes he has left his car unlocked and with the windows rolled down -- with the accordion in full view on the back seat. He rushes out of the BMV but when he gets outside, he realizes he is too late. Somebody has already left another accordion on the back seat.



### DECEMBER'S "NAME THAT PHOTO"

Take a guess who this is. However, you'll have to wait until the February issue of "A Different Strummer" to find out the answer!!

*Grassahol* –from page 4

**Bill:** When people see a Grassahol show, what do you want them to come away with ?

**Heidi:** "Boy, that band looks like it's having a great time!" Whenever I see a band like that I always have fun too.

**Chas:** What I want is for people to enter my world of music. I want to lead them willingly into the songs, to feel the stories, to be instructed by the lyrics, think about their own lives in context, and go away with a little "wow, that was a great show." It's like all theater. There has to be some suspension of disbelief; the audience should forget about the world outside and come into the world of great stories told in song and once back out in the real world feel uplifted.

**Carl:** Feeling like they had a great time. And, liking bluegrass if they weren't already.

**Bill:** We all know that folk music groups like Grassahol make big bucks (right), but besides the money, why do you perform with Grassahol ?

**Carl:** I love the challenge of working out the tunes, getting the arrangements right, and getting to play banjo with a great group of folks. It's fun!

**Chas:** I perform because I am a frustrated magician; because there is magic in music, because music is God's chosen language, and because music well done makes people happy.

In the end, we are here to make the world a better place. I can do that with my music.

**Lacy:** If it wasn't fun I wouldn't do it. And I like the challenge. For me music is my therapy, my escape from the pressures of life. And my band-mates are great! We enjoy each other and it makes working up new material great fun.

**Heidi:** I originally started playing Bluegrass because of the social nature of the music. Groups of people I met stood in circles in the kitchen and played and laughed all evening long. It never occurred to me to be in a band until Carl asked. Now all of the fellows who make music with me are like my brothers. And my favorite times are not on a stage, but in a circle, making tight exciting harmonies together.

**Scott:** The whole experience of playing with this band is such a positive social experience for me. The band has the camaraderie of a winning sports team. We support each other musically on stage. And, we spend many hours together practicing and performing our music together. And, we get the chance to expand our circle of friends to include the friends of our other band-mates and the many people who we get to know in our audiences. The Grassahol experience has introduced me to many cool people who I wouldn't have known otherwise.

## THE COLUMBUS FOLK MUSIC SOCIETY OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

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I enjoy the annual Central Ohio Folk Festival (early May): Lots   5   4   3   2   1   Not   (please circle one)