



## Despite Challenges, Folk Fest 2019 Was a Huge Success

by Bill Cohen



The old saying is: The show must go on! And it did.

Rain on day 1 brought soggy grass, puddles, and mud, but

hundreds of festival-goers braved the elements to enjoy a wide variety of folk arts activities. And when day 2 dawned, the rain stopped, and the afternoon brought sunshine that helped boost overall attendance to 8,900.

Despite the dreary weather at the start, about 75 folks braved the elements to attend the festival kickoff, a sing-along that featured songs

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## CFMS Officers/Board Election Notice and Slate of Candidates

The Annual Election of Officers & Trustees for the Columbus Folk Music Society will be held on Sunday, June 30 at the General Meeting (first part of the June potluck picnic/jam gathering (1:30–4:00pm), hosted at the home of Deniese & Alan Newman. The 2019–20 slate of nominees: Officers: President: Mike Hale; Vice-President: Hugh Farthing; Secretary: Diane Boston; Treasurer: Charlie Flowers. Trustees: Carl Yaffey, Bill Cohen, Dan Clarke, Dave Fultz, Linda McDonald, Jackie LaMuth, Barbara Wright, Jennifer Cohen-Jorden, Pete Insabella, and Bob Lipetz.

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made famous by the late folk music icon Pete Seeger. It was nearly 100 years to the day that Pete was born, so a beautifully-decorated birthday cake was sliced up and served to the crowd.

Acts on the Kirby Main Stage featured our broad definition of folk music. There was Irish traditional, Americana, singer-

the Bailey acoustic stage, highlighted even more musicians that performed Scottish harp, Americana, bluegrass, and “folk music for grown-ups.”

At the dance tent, there was Scandinavian, clogging, Scottish, international, Israeli, Mexican, contra and square dancing. There were magical moments of spontaneity as

dulcimer, ukulele, recorder, and more. Other folks bought materials and learned how to assemble a rustic guitar out of a wood plank and a cigar box.

In the children’s area, as parents looked on, kids made drums from oatmeal canisters and fashioned headbands from gorgeous artificial flowers. As a bubble machine blew hundreds of bubbles into the air, the



Left to right: Daniel Dye / Showcase Stage; Cari Ray / Kirby Main Stage; The Matchsellers “sci-fi bluegrass” / Showcase Stage

songwriter, blues, bluegrass, gospel, and hammered dulcimer. Plus, storytellers showed off the magic of the spoken word.

The Showcase tent featured nearly every folk music style including “science fiction bluegrass,” played by a group that claimed to be from 100 years in the future.

A new addition this year,

some performers convinced audience members to come on stage and learn some steps. During the Israeli dancing, even one smiling child in a wheelchair joined in.

While almost all the daytime activities were free, dozens of people were willing to pay \$10 for a full day’s worth of workshops. They featured instruction on how to play guitar, banjo, mountain

kids also gathered around the instrument petting zoo. They picked up violins, guitars, banjos, ukuleles, and rhythm instruments, and they got advice on how to play them.

All the while, other kids were entertained in a nearby tent with special songs and stories for the young and young-at-heart. Festival mascot, Darby Duck, attracted many

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youngsters, whose parents snapped photos of their children with Darby.

The jam tent was yet another high-energy highlight. Every hour and a half, the theme changed. There was Irish music, dulcimers, ukuleles, bluegrass, and more.

Rain washed out Saturday's planned drum circle, but when the sun came out Sunday afternoon, kids and parents alike flocked to the circle. They beamed as they pounded on traditional drums and also handmade drums, fashioned out of square wooden frames wrapped with many layers of clear packing tape.

The Saturday night concert had two groups in the spotlight. The Small Glories performed original tunes. They had driving instrumental rhythms and tight unusual 2-part vocal harmonies that delighted the crowd.

Sugar and the Mint stretched our definition of folk music with their own original songs, creative ultra-modern bluegrass instrumentation, and silky 3-part harmonies. Many in the audience were astounded that



Clockwise: Darby Duck leads children's parade; Square Dancing; Jam Tent; Sarah Perry instructs two engaged learners on how to play the fiddle in the Instrument Petting Zoo.

the oldest band member was 22.

Highbanks park staffers were

extra helpful. They not only directed festival-goers to parking spots but also spread straw to help people navigate

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Left to right: Cara Luft from *The Small Glories* (Sat evening concert); Glory Glidden from *Sugar & The Mint* (Sat evening concert); "dancing with the stars." Last and below photos courtesy of Bill Cohen, rest of photos courtesy of Linda McDonald.

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the puddles and mud. And 3 times, park personnel went way beyond the call of duty. They created a small campfire to ward off the chill on day 1. They helped a festival volunteer break into his own car after he accidentally locked the key inside. And when our rented truck loaded with heavy equipment after the tear-down got stuck in the mud, they helped get the truck back onto

the road.

Dozens of festival volunteers worked countless hours. They ran the registration table, set up tables and chairs and the dance floor, ran sound equipment, emceed concerts, schlepped equipment and people on golf carts, sold merchandise at the festival store, and many other tasks. Without the volunteers, there would have been no festival.

Obviously, no modern folk festival can compete with the history-making Woodstock festival of nearly a half century ago. But this year's Central Ohio Folk Festival had 2 major similarities to Woodstock. First, both festivals endured rain, mud, and muck. And second, both festivals had audiences who left, feeling weary but inspired, energized, and just plain happy.



**"Loved this - all of it!"** ML Andrze

**"Love it! Awesome way to introduce our kids to folk music"** N.L.



# CFMS Member Highlight - Pete Insabella

interview by Bill Cohen

**Bill Cohen:** You're a relatively new member of the Columbus Folk Music Society, and yet, you dove right in, volunteering to welcome people and take their donations as they attend our monthly concerts at the Mennonite Church, and also volunteering to edit our monthly newsletter the last few months. What do get out of your work with us?

**Pete Insabella:** I get a sense of community. The people who volunteer to keep CFMS running, and the people who attend CFMS events as spectators, are all brought together for a common purpose...to keep folk music alive at a time when rap music dominates the airwaves and every female vocalist thinks she is a Whitney Houston or a Beyonce who needs to torture each note to death.

By contrast, folk music is very clean and pure.

**Bill:** We often see and hear you playing in the jams on the Worthington Green and at the Worthington Mall and at our monthly concerts. Please tell us why that's important to you.

**Pete:** Like so many who play at the various CFMS jams, I grew up on folk music and always wanted to play it myself. I started playing finally at age 60, learned some songs, learned some more, got a good acoustic guitar (Gibson Hummingbird), got another good acoustic (Guild), and started playing

at the various CFMS jams, especially the Saturday morning one. I'm 75 now, and I've gone through a number of guitars and banjos. I seem to have



Pete Insabella (center) at Worthington Jam

settled down with the Gibson, the Guild, and two banjos (Gold Star, Deering). And I've learned a fairly large repertoire of songs along the way.

**Bill:** Tell us about your own history with folk music. When did you first hear it, like it, and decide to focus on it? And what is it about folk music that you find particularly appealing?

**Pete:** The Kingston Trio got me excited about folk music. They were lively and they had a real appreciation of the songs and the traditions behind them.

When Joan Baez came along, she knocked my socks off with the purity of her voice and her delicate guitar finger picking. Many other folk artists followed and it was a golden age of folk music. When I look back on the period of the late 1950s to the early 1960s, I remember it as a

time of tremendous optimism... ...a New Frontier, when just about anything was possible. That all changed, unfortunately, with the assassination of Jack Kennedy.

**Bill:** What is your favorite folk song or your favorite folk music performer? and Why?

**Pete:** My fave folk performer? I can't choose; there are so many. But I'll just mention two favorite folk songs. Both are characterized by hauntingly beautiful vocals and excellent guitar finger picking. The first is "Tiny Sparrow" by Peter, Paul and Mary (vocals by Mary Travers), and the second is "Geordie" by Joan Baez (Child Ballad No, 209).

**Bill:** Is there a particularly uplifting, memorable, or humorous happening that you think symbolizes the CFMS and its people?

**Pete:** From the very first, when I attended the Columbus Folk Music Society's board meetings, I was impressed by the professionalism with which the organization was run. Meetings were conducted strictly according to Robert's Rules of Order, reports were delivered crisply by the various officers, and everyone took seriously the mission of CFMS and the fact that it's a non-profit organization dealing with thousands of dollars.

It's been a privilege to be associated with such a group of professionals.

# Two upcoming events



AT: Reeb Avenue Center, 280 Reeb Ave, Cols, OH 43207  
 Listen here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=DO9oit0u34I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DO9oit0u34I)  
 Join us at Reeb Avenue Center's First Friday event on June 7!

**Friday, June 7: 6:30–8pm:** CFMS' Americana Folk Concert series presents **THE RELENTLESS MULES**. The concert will be held at Reeb Avenue Center, 280 Reeb Avenue, Cols, OH 43207. FREE. Donations welcome, but not required. Come on out and enjoy some good bluegrass!

**Sunday, June 30: 1:30–4:00pm:** 1st CFMS summer potluck picnic / jam at home of Deniese & Alan Newman, 236 E. Torrence Rd, Clintonville. 1:30pm (for about 15 minutes) Annual General Meeting and voting for upcoming board/trustees of Columbus Folk Music Society. Questions? E-mail: Hugh Farthing at: [hugh8787@yahoo.com](mailto:hugh8787@yahoo.com).

## What the Columbus Folk Music Society does when it's not Festival Time

by Bill Cohen

The 2-day annual Central Ohio Folk Festival at Highbanks Metro Park may be our most concentrated project of the year, but we invite you to join in the many other activities that the Columbus Folk Music Society (CFMS) conducts:

### Monthly Americana/Folk Concert Series

These fun events usually have 4 parts: a folk music jam, an open mic, a 15 minutes community sing-along portion and a featured performer or group. The concerts take place the last Saturday of every month except June, July, August, and December. They're held at the Columbus Mennonite Church at 35 Oakland Park Avenue in Clintonville.

### Weekly Jams

... reaching out to the public. These informal jams feature CFMS musicians improvising as they play classic popular folk tunes. In the Winter, these take place inside of the Worthington Mall. In other seasons, they take place outside on the S.E. corner of the Worthington Commons at the corner of North High Street and Dublin-Granville Rd.

### Helping the Community

The Columbus Folk Music Society has provided singers, performers and other activities for "Run the Race", a project in Southwest Columbus that gets low-income children involved in education, music, and the arts and conducts bi-monthly performances at: The Laurels of Worthington, Wesley Glen,

Claremont Retirement Village, Worthington Christian Village, and Westminster Thurber (most all Memory Care units). Residents are encouraged to participate with rhythm instruments and even to sing along. In addition, the Society provides performers for a yearly Thanksgiving dinner served to those in need on the West side of Columbus as well as at other events around town.

The Columbus Folk Music Society conducts a Bob Kirby Scholarship program which is an award given annually to a young musician or musicians to assist them towards the purchase of ongoing lessons and/or an instrument.

### Special Concerts

Look for our members as they stage concerts all around Columbus and beyond. Some of these events are officially sponsored by the Columbus Folk Music Society, but many others are sponsored by other groups and fund-raising campaigns.

We'd love for you to get involved in these and other activities of the Columbus Folk Music Society. To do so, talk with any of our members or look us up on the web at: [ColumbusFolkMusicSociety.org](http://ColumbusFolkMusicSociety.org).

You can also ask to be added to our Folk-events e-mail list which will inform you of many CFMS activities throughout the year. E-mail us at: [webmaster@columbusfolkmusicsociety.org](mailto:webmaster@columbusfolkmusicsociety.org) to be included on the list. We don't send out frequent e-mails, but we do notify you of upcoming events.

## Save the Date (all are welcome)

**The Saturday Music Jam at Worthington Farmer's Market 9:30–11:30am** – each Saturday S.E. quad of Worthington Square. All welcome to play. Please bring a chair.

**1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month: Jam at Claremont Retirement Village.** 7041 Bent Tree Blvd., Columbus. 1st Tuesday at Memory Care unit, 2:00 to 3:00pm. 3rd Tuesday at main dining room for independent living, 2:00 to 3:00pm. Contact Mike Zajano (mikezajano@aol.com) for more info.

**2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month: Jam at Worthington Christian Village,** 165 Highbluffs, Columbus, 2:00 to 3:00pm . Contact Mike Zajano (mikezajano@aol.com) for more info.

**1st and 3rd Thursday of each month: Jam at Wesley Glen,** 5155 N. High St., Columbus. 1st Thursday at Health Center, 2:30 to 3:30pm. 3rd Thursday at Special Care unit, 1:30 to 2:30pm. Contact Mike Zajano (mikezajano@aol.com) for more info.

**2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month: Jam at Laurels of Worthington** (Memory Care Unit), 1030 N. High St., Worthington, 2:00 to 3:00pm. Contact Mike Zajano (mikezajano@aol.com) for more info.

**2nd Thursday every month: Acoustic Jam – Picking Party,** 7–10pm. (Mike Hale/Mary Miller-Hosts) Old Horseshoe Tavern & Restaurant, 65 S Main St, Johnstown, OH 43031

**4th Thursday every month: Acoustic Open Mic,** 7–10 pm. Old Horseshoe Tavern, Johnstown



## Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

Heidi Sherer

## Want to find out more about the Columbus Folk Music Society and its events?

Visit: [www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org](http://www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org)

**OR** you can become a member. Benefits include: camaraderie with fellow folk music lovers in town, discounts on certain admissions, this monthly newsletter and the comfort of knowing that all events are family friendly! A membership form is on page 8.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Our newsletter will be going on “hiatus” for the remainder of the summer.

## Following Our Own

**Sunday, June 2, 1–3PM Avalon Nine Acoustic Duo** at: Bexley House & Garden Tour.

**Saturday, June 8, 9:30–11:30AM Grassahol** at: Clintonville Farmer's Market.

**Thursday, June 13, 4–7PM Avalon Nine Acoustic Duo** at Bexley Farmers Market.

**Friday, June 28, 6–9PM Grassahol** at: Westerville 4th Friday Celebration in historic Uptown Westerville.

**Saturday, June 29, 7:30–9:30 PM Halfway Home** at: Clifton Opera House, 5 S Clay St, Clifton, OH. Sponsored by the Village of Clifton.

**Saturday, June 29, 7–8:30PM Bill Cohen in concert with theme “Facing Death – Celebrating Life”** at: Columbus Unitarian Church, 93 W. Weisheimer, Cols, OH 43214 Free admission, donations welcome.

**The Columbus Folk  
Music Society**

P.O. Box 20735  
Columbus, OH 43220



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**Next Issue in September**

**We're on the web!**

[www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org](http://www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org)

**BECOME A MEMBER OF THE COLUMBUS FOLK MUSIC SOCIETY**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  New  Renew Preferred Newsletter Format:  Digital  Hard Copy

Name(s)/ Band Name (if applic): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell): \_\_\_\_\_ If Band, website: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address(es) (if a household / band membership): \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership renewals are due annually on September 30th.** Check one of the membership levels listed below.

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Band Membership \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Silver \$250      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Household \$25  | <input type="checkbox"/> Good Friend \$50     | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$200  | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member \$500 |

For credit card transactions, visit CFMS website at: <https://www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org/member-application.html>

Membership amounts may be tax-deductible. *My place of work matches donations:*

**Like to volunteer? Please click all that apply. We are an all-volunteer driven organization!**

- |                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> May festival | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership            | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking / Baking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CFMS events  | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing/Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal        | <input type="checkbox"/> Desktop Publishing    |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising  | <input type="checkbox"/> Database              |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Help | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Tasks  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Musician     | <input type="checkbox"/> Music Instruction     |   |

*Please send completed membership form  
with payment to: Columbus Folk Music  
Society, P.O. Box 20735, Columbus,  
OH 43220*