



Butch Ross Opens CFMS' Concert Season

INTERVIEW BY BILL COHEN

Mountain dulcimer "maestro", **Butch Ross**, will be the featured performer at the first Folkl/Americana concert of the 2022-23 season **September 24 starting at 7 pm** at Columbus Mennonite Church, Oakland Park Avenue.



Bill Cohen: You are nationally-known for playing all kinds of "non-dulcimer" songs on the dulcimer – everything from Beatles' songs to the theme song of the old "Lone Ranger" TV show. How did that come about? Did you start out as a traditional dulcimer player?

Butch Ross: I started out playing Punk rock, then alternative music, then I became a singer/songwriter. I didn't know what folk music was when I started playing it. I literally checked a video out of the library to learn about it. So then a few years later—when I started playing dulcimer—I also knew nothing at

[See Butch Ross, pg 3](#)

A song ain't nothing but a conversation fixed up to where you can talk it over and over without getting tired of it. -Woody Guthrie

A Different Strummer Newsletter Highlights

BUTCH ROSS
INTERVIEW PG 1

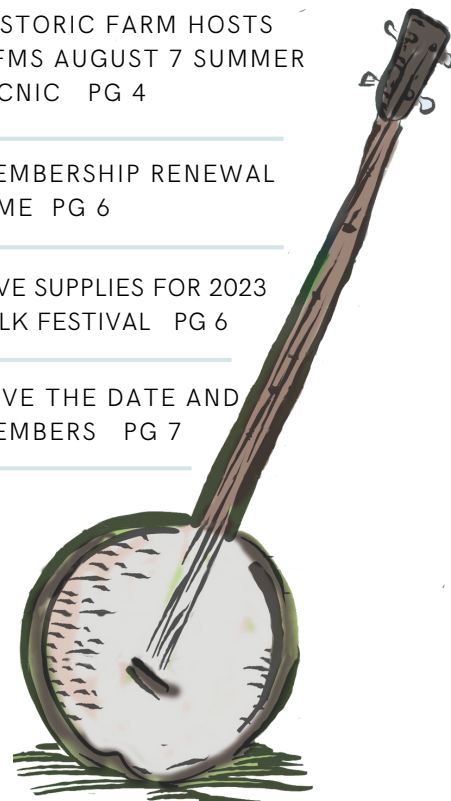
WOODY GUTHRIE
CELEBRATION PG 2

HISTORIC FARM HOSTS
CFMS AUGUST 7 SUMMER
PICNIC PG 4

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL
TIME PG 6

SAVE SUPPLIES FOR 2023
FOLK FESTIVAL PG 6

SAVE THE DATE AND
MEMBERS PG 7



Woody Guthrie Personified Folk Music, So Let's Celebrate His 110th Birthday

BY BILL COHEN



Left to right; Entrance just inside the Woody Guthrie Center in Tulsa, OK; Nocterra Brewing Company in Powell, where upcoming Woody Guthrie Tribute will take place.

When the Depression of the 1930's threw millions of Americans out of work and into poverty, Woody Guthrie told us their stories through song. He saw migrant workers slaving for pennies, penniless hoboes riding in empty railroad boxcars, and the infamous Dustbowl windstorms of Oklahoma stealing the land out from under the farmers.

Always for the underdog, Guthrie challenged America to right wrongs and to live by its ideals of hard work, compassion, equal opportunity, and fairness. His songs made us laugh, cry, remember, and question.

And so, in memory of all that Woody did, on September 11, a month after the 110th anniversary of his birth, Columbus will recall this common man troubadour. Together, we'll sing some of his famous and unknown songs, hear details of the highs and lows of his life, and enjoy a visit from the spirit of Woody "himself."

The songfest will be led by four veteran Columbus Folk Music Society performers: Phil Hart, Teresa Schleifer, Jeff Putnam, and Bill Cohen. In addition to songs that Woody wrote and sang, they'll spotlight some tunes made famous by other folk music icons that were inspired by Woody. Among them: Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, Phil Ochs, and Malvina Reynolds.

In the spirit of Woody Guthrie, admission will be free. But we'll be asking for \$10-\$15 donations to help produce next May's Central Ohio Folk Festival, since it's carried on his legacy of spreading folk music for more than two decades now.

Please bring family, friends, and co-workers to help us celebrate this icon.

- Where: **Nocterra Brewery, 41 Depot Street in Powell, Ohio.**
- When: **Sunday Sept. 11, 1 – 3:30 pm**
- **Craft Beer from Nocterra and Ray Ray's Hog Pit food truck** will offer delicious creations for purchase.

For more info, call Bill Cohen at (614) 263-3851 or billcohen@columbus.rr.com



“ The CFMS has a soft spot in my heart. You guys actually gave me my first standing ovation. ”

– Butch Ross

Butch Ross, from pg 1

all about old-time and traditional music. The first song I played live on a dulcimer was “In the Air Tonight” by Phil Collins. Having played guitar all those years, a lot of the techniques transferred to the dulcimer, so I never felt the need to take lessons. Because of that, no one ever told me that I couldn’t, so I did.

Bill: While most musicians play the dulcimer in a traditional way with the dulcimer in their laps, you often pick yours up and play it like a guitar. How did you develop that style? And why?

Butch: Again, coming to it from the guitar, it felt weird to sit it on your lap. The first dulcimer I had was a student model, and it was small enough to sit on your lap OR hold like a guitar (more like an autoharp really). So, I would do that. After like a year of picking it up and holding it wrong, I said to myself, “just play it like a guitar.” So, I did. Ironically, when I did that, lap playing began to make sense.

But it’s good that I did that. Playing it “wrong” made me approach everything in a very unique way. So unlike guitar—where I struggled for years to find my voice — I sounded completely unique pretty quickly. Okay, not completely, my entire right-hand technique is stolen from Jerry Rockwell.

Bill: How has our 2.5-year struggle with Covid impacted your performing, your creativity, and your musical career?

Butch: This is a very good question. I was lucky. Chattanooga has a fair amount of resources for arts organizations. When Covid hit, a lot of those places made money available to working artists. And I availed myself of some of that. Plus, most folk and dulcimer festivals went virtual pretty quickly, and thankfully the people followed suit. So, I’ve managed to keep my head above water. . . for the moment.

I think the media have got it wrong. “The Great Resignation” isn’t the result of the pandemic, but rather just a symptom. Lockdown forced everyone to have — what they call in the south — a “come to Jesus moment.” A re-evaluation of everything we’ve been doing. A day of reckoning. Everyone, everywhere with a job looked at their careers and asked, “what the F am I really doing?” and so did I. A lot of my peers did it too. I’ve been doing what I love for a living full-time since 2009, and I still asked myself the question.

My approach lately is to say yes to anything offered and evaluate if I want to keep doing it. It’s not the smartest career move, but it’s how I’m dealing with my

[See Butch Ross, pg 6](#)

Historic Farm House Hosts Unique CFMS Picnic

BY BILL COHEN

A scrumptious potluck and a fun folk music jam are the usual highlights of CFMS summer picnics at various members' houses. The August 7 picnic featured those two treats, but there was so much more. [NOTE: CFMS summers picnics are open to non-CFMS members as well].

The venue for this one was the Pickaway County family farm owned by the mother and father of CFMS member Anne Smith. Six generations of Anne's family have lived at the old farmhouse, parts of which were built in 1815. Anne, her 96-year-old father Jim, her husband Terry, and their adult children Eileen and Ken led tours through several buildings on the site, showing off a narrow winding stairwell, a 200-year-old pie cabinet, an "out kitchen" building constructed of bricks made from the farm's own clay, and many working fireplaces. They also told stories about great-great-great grandparents, great

Hosts Anne Smith (center) with her father Jim (left) and husband Terry (right) hosted CFMS August 7th picnic.



aunts, and other ancestors, some of whom had links to the War of 1812.

Terry also showed off the farm's array of solar panels and explained details of how they've helped to slash monthly utility bills. He also talked about how crops of soybeans and corn are rotated in the fields at the 237-acre farm. While most of the corn is field corn that's grown to feed to animals, a small amount of sweet corn is also grown, and CFMS picnickers were treated to roasted ears of that.

Decades-old trees provided welcome shade for more than 20 CFMS members and friends who dined and sang together on the lawn beside the farmhouse, filled with history and family memories.



Images courtesy of Randi & Bill Cohen

Renewal Time for CFMS Membership!



Folks join the Columbus Folk Music Society for many reasons.

Some members enjoy playing the music. They cover an entire spectrum: from the beginner to the professional. Many members are not musicians but are music fans and love the opportunities the Columbus Folk Music Society provides for listening to and appreciating the music we all know and love.

We are an active community of like-minded folks providing opportunities for everyone. Please renew your membership or consider signing up as a new member!

You can renew online via PayPal at: www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org/member-application.html. You can fill out the form on the back side of this newsletter and mail it in OR you can bring your membership form and dues to one of the upcoming coffeehouses or fundraising events. Memberships are due by September 30. **If you've renewed or joined in the last several months, no need to submit dues, we have you as a member until October 1, 2023.**

By either becoming a member of the Columbus Folk Music Society or renewing your membership, you show your

appreciation for and enjoyment of folk music, song, dance, storytelling, and other folk arts. You will also experience the pride of knowing that you are bolstering the growth and perpetuation of the folk arts in the Columbus area.

Remember to Save Items for 2023 Central Ohio Folk Festival Craft Tent

We're looking for oatmeal canisters and coffee cans for the kids to make and decorate little drums. And we're always looking for "fake" flowers for the young ones to make flower headbands! Our festival is growing more than ever, and we are attracting a lot of young families. Materials can be dropped off at the home of Linda McDonald, 444 Oakland Park Ave, Columbus, Ohio. Again, we thank you in advance!

Central Ohio Folk Festival Sun official logo. We think it's a fitting representation of folk art, a joyful event, and the great outdoors.



Image courtesy: Marji Heckman.



Butch Ross, from pg 3

"come to Jesus" moment. The upshot is that I find I'm treating every gig as if it were the last one I'll ever do there. So, I make it count. I want every gig to be a happy memory of something that ended well.

The CFMS has a soft spot in my heart. You guys actually gave me my first standing ovation. And I've been coming up there for long enough that I get to be "old" with you. Every artist, no matter how long he's been doing it, is always a "new" artist to some degree. But you and me, we have a history. That's not lost on me, nor do I take it for granted.

Bill: You're younger than many of us seniors in the CFMS, but, on the other hand, at age (holds hand over mouth), you're no spring chicken either. How optimistic are you that younger people and future generations will keep folk music alive?

Butch: Well, that depends on what you call "folk." And can we take a second here to acknowledge that the question "what is folk?" has been the start of countless online "flame wars" and the public arguments that are the bedrock of social

media [and our politics] these days. We helped invent that! And while this phenomenon may ultimately lead to the end of democracy as we know it, how often do you get to say you invented something? :-)

Seriously though, I have a Masters in folk studies, and I've thought about this A LOT. Are young people gonna turn on to Peter, Paul and Mary? No. Is anybody trying to learn Universal Soldier? No. But remember that those artists were for you. "Folk Music" today maybe doesn't sound like something an old folkie would like, but it's not supposed to. Would you have burned your draft cards to Glen Miller? Of course not. I remember watching an online concert of 21 Pilots (a Columbus band BTW). They were smart, talented and entertaining, undeniably so. I didn't enjoy a second of it. But I had to accept that they were all of these things, and that I didn't like them 'cuz they didn't make music for me. Nor should they.

But also look at how the seeds planted by Ochs, Dylan, Stuckey, Maguire, St. Marie and countless others in that generation are bearing fruit now. #OccupyWallStreet #ArabSpring #BlackLivesMatter #GeorgeFloyd #meToo are all the fruit of ideas planted by the "old folkies." To coin a phrase, the kids are alright. Maybe they ain't listening to your music, but they are listening to their own music, their folk music.

On the other hand, 9 months ago everyone on Tik-Tok was going gaga over sea shanties. So, what do I know?

See Butch Ross, pg 7



Welcome NEW and RETURNING Members

Martin Hertzendorf
Chad Wenger
Sylvia Miller



Save the Date!

Sunday, Sept 11, Woody Guthrie Tribute Concert, 1-3:30pm, Nocterra Brewery, 41 Depot Street, Powell, Ohio. Food & beverage service for purchase. \$10-\$15 donations suggested.

Concert Series

Butch Ross, Sat, Sept 24, 7pm

Open Mic: 7 pm; Open Jam: 6 pm.
Butch goes on stage at 8pm.

Venue: Columbus Mennonite Church,
35 Oakland Park Ave, Cols, OH
Donation at door: \$15/\$10 CFMS
members. *No need to pre-register.*
Masks recommended but not required.

Zoom Jam Sessions

Mon, Tues: 10am-Noon; Sat: 9:30-noon; Thurs: 10am-Noon weekly nursing home event. For current link to the sessions, contact Jane at: vanaukj@gmail.com

In-Person Jams

Sat mornings from 9:30-11:30am,
Whetstone Park

Sat, Sept 10, 9:30-11:30am, Wolf Park, 105 Park Dr, PKD Fundraiser

Mon, Sept 12, 19, 26, 6-8pm, 4th Avenue Christian Church, 296 W 4th Ave

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Editor (interim): Diane Boston

Regular Writers: Pete Insabella, Bill Cohen

Layout: Sherry Hubbard

Distribution: Pete Insabella

CFMS Event Photos: Linda McDonald



Butch Ross, from pg 6

Bill: Without giving away any planned surprises, what can people who attend your September 24 concert expect to see, hear, and feel? What do you hope they'll carry away with them after they experience your show?

Butch: I just told you. This might be the last time you see me. :-)

Seriously, This will only be the second "long" show I've played since the pandemic started. There's lots of stuff I haven't had a chance to play in front of folks. And a lot of chestnuts I haven't really had the time to play in a while. There'll be new instruments, weird instruments. Traditional songs, cover songs, story songs and when I get it right, all three at once.

But the jokes will be the same. I'll tell the same five dad jokes I've been telling for the last 22 years.

Butch Ross at CFMS' Americana/Folk Concert Series Sat, Sept 24.

Venue: Columbus Mennonite Church. Evening start time: 7pm. \$15 door donation



The Columbus Folk Music Society

P.O. Box 20735

Columbus, OH 43220

VMB: 614-470-3963

CAMPUS PRINTING

2415 N. HIGH STREET
COLUMBUS, OH 43202

www.campusprinting.net

info@campusprinting.net

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*