



Quarter Notes

Volume 24 Issue 3

Summer 2006

Plank Road's Regular Events:

- **SING-A-ROUND** (Two Way Street Coffee House) 1st & 3rd Saturdays: June 3 & 17, July 1 & July 15, August 5 & 19, September 2 & 16.
- **Plank Road All Volunteer String Band** 2nd Saturday: On hiatus until Fall.
- **BLUEGRASS JAM** Two Way Street Coffee House) : 4th Saturday. June 24 cancelled for Heritage Festival, July 22, August 26, September 23.
- **LAST THURSDAY: "It's Our Turn!"** (Two Way Street Coffee House) Last Thursdays. June 22, July 27, August 24, September 28
- Go to www.plankroad.org for full details!

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Help us celebrate over 25 years of acoustic music in the Western Suburbs!

Festival Line-Up

Downers Grove's Heritage Festival

FOLK STAGE (Saturday, June 24th at Fishel Park, 10 am to 5 pm)

Artist:	Performance Times:	Description:
Sonny Millet Band	10:00 a.m. & 1:20 p.m.	Traditional bluegrass, folk & original songs
The Wandering Endorphin	10:20 a.m. & 1:40 p.m.	Singer/Songwriter, riveting guitar style
andi and i	10:40 a.m. & 2:00 p.m.	Pop, swing & fun songs
Andy Young	11:00 a.m. & 2:20 p.m.	Exciting hammer dulcimer & Irish flute
The Jones Family	11:20 a.m. & 2:40 p.m.	Our first family of folk
Darlyne Cain	11:40 a.m. & 3:00 p.m.	Blues, jazz, and a lot more
Glen Ayre	12:00 p.m. & 3:20 p.m.	Traditional Irish & Scottish songs
McNamara & Neeley	12:20 p.m. & 3:40 p.m.	Guitar & banjo, enthusiasm, vitality & joy
Leonardo	12:40 p.m. & 4:00 p.m.	Extraordinary songs of ordinary people
Long Gone Lonesome Boys	1:00 p.m. & 4:20 p.m.	Alt-country songs, great harmonies

Heritage Festival will also feature strolling performers, amusement & pony rides, evening fireworks, a craft show, a car show, dozens of food and services vendor booths, and a wide variety of music performers. The Festival runs Friday, June 23 and Saturday June 24 from 10 am to 10:30 pm and Sunday June 25th from Noon to 10 pm. The Festival grounds include much of downtown Downers Grove with the Saturday Folk Music Festival located at Fishel Park.

Go to <http://visitor.downers.us/fest/> for more details.

Music By The Yard!

- June 17th At Anna Stange's House in Blue Island 13125 S. Winchester, Blue Island, IL 60406 home phone: 4- 10 pm 708-389-7957, cell phone: 630-660-1156
- July 29th at Lone Jim Zethmayr's House, 1010 South Edgewood Lane, La Grange, IL in LaGrange Park. E-mail: jimzethmayr@earthlink.net, home phone: 708-579-3987 3pm-?? Jim supplies the meat and beverages
- August 5th at Scot & Peggy Witt's House 5S306 Stewart Drive, Upper Naperville, 630-717-8226; 4pm- around 10 or so; Meat and Free Beer- bring a dish to pass if you'd like.
- More details on the Plank Road website!



From The PRFMS President

Goin' Down The Old Plank Road

Dear Friends,

On this beautiful June Sunday afternoon, there's a banjo picker on my porch (I swear the birds are singing in the same key) and barbeque on the grill. Summer's here at last! We look forward to seeing you at our outdoor events this summer. Stop by Heritage Fest, Arts on the Prairie, or our Music by the Yards parties. You don't have to bring an instrument, just come and enjoy the music and visiting.

If you have any questions or ideas for future Plank Road events, please contact me at plankroad.org or at 708-442-0823.

I'm getting my guitar...that banjo player could use a little backup. See you this summer!

See you down the Plank Road,

-Marianne Mohrhusen

First Fridays in the City

It's a blast. What I'm talking about is the First Friday "night of music and community" at the Old Town School of Folk Music, next coming up July 7. There are more activities than you can shake a ...fiddle?...at. Full disclosure: I'm part of it. I run a jam in the basement. (What fun!) Dropping in with me the last couple of months has been incredible bluesman Chris Walz. We draw folks with all kinds of instruments: guitar, harmonica, mandolin, fiddle, accordion, even (last time) a melodeon! (A drummer's coming in July). And vocalists are especially welcome! Our music is upbeat stuff -- leaning toward blues and upbeat folk, but as we go around the circle, we're open to anything. You're encouraged to bring your instrument, a couple of songs, dancing shoes, a date or friends. Doors open at 6:00pm, it involves only a \$4 donation. Upbeat is not your thing? Look at the bigger picture (doesn't this sound like a great evening?):

- 6:30 Song Circle , String Jam, Songwriters Critique and Exchange or Skip's Back Porch Jam (in B-1)
- 7:00 Student Ensembles Performance (main stage)
- 7:30 Square Dance - y'all come! (first floor)
- 8:00 Reel Music Documentary Series (resource center)
- 8:45 Featured Performer - July TBA (main stage)
- 9:00 Ecstatic Dance w/Andrea (I don't know either)
- 10:20 Open Stage (by lottery; come before 7 p.m.)
and there's other jamming too!

-Skip Landt

skiplandt@sbcglobal.net

The Peter son Strobo Flip Tuner Review

This is not your average tuner. Have you ever played a piano right after it was tuned by a professional? Big difference, right? Well this tuner sets the tempering just right on your stringed instruments.

Reading it takes a little getting used to. You must watch for the display to stop spinning to know you're in tune. It was well worth the time since all my instruments sound better. I decided to order the Strobo Flip which is the latest offering.

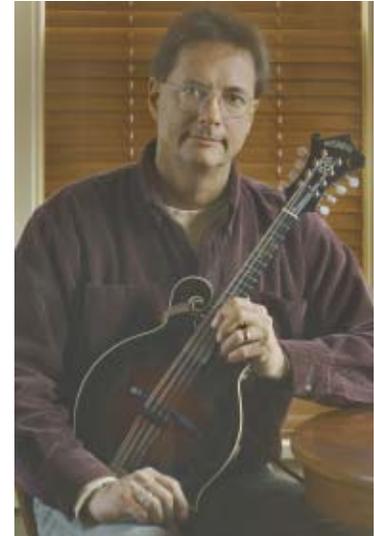
Go to www.petersontuners.com and check out the demo.

This tuner is for people who really appreciate the beauty of a well tuned instrument.

John Adams
Villa Park, IL

What's Playin'?

Gettin' It in Yer Bones



The end of the barn dance season brings to mind just how much I love old time fiddle music. Getting together with friends, (and even strangers!), to play a string of fiddle tunes is always very rewarding. The camaraderie, fellowship, and mutual enjoyment of this music make it an appealing genre. One can travel anywhere throughout our country and round up a group of fiddlers who all know at least a handful of the same tunes, and would be happy to share all of the others they know as well.

The question is, how does one learn these tunes? Being musically illiterate, there's only one way for me - note by note. I usually bring a small recording device with me when I know there will be an opportunity to hear a new tune, and then spend hours at home endlessly replaying it until it's embedded in my mind and my motor muscle memory. As the Russians say: 'Repetition is the mother of all learning.' I call it 'getting' it in yer bones' and, unless I can play a tune in my head at three in the morning, it just won't stick.

A better way to learn these tunes is to have someone break them down for you. An example of this took place during Pop Wagner's most recent visit to the Jones Family Music Studio in Lombard, IL the last week in April. Pop, a 'poet lariat' like Will Rogers, combined his wry wit and some interesting historic facts with the tunes he broke down for a group of students during an afternoon fiddle workshop. This year Pop gave us five different tunes to work on and Tom Jones was kind enough to record the whole affair and burn CDs for the students. Pop played every tune through and then lined out each part with us until we could all play the entire tune together. By the time we were into the fifth tune, however, we were getting a little overwhelmed, so Tom's CD came in very handy when I got back home. After a few weeks of practice our core group of fiddlers will have these tunes properly settled into their skeletal structures.

The process of sharing and learning fiddle tunes has repeated itself among the faithful for centuries. I am very pleased to be a part of this time honored tradition, and hope to be one of the folks who will pass it along to a new generation of 'dyed in the wool' fiddlers who will not allow this music to pass away.

-Bob Smith

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## Festivals

- ⇒ June 30-July 3: FitzGerald's American Music Festival , 6615 W. Roosevelt Road, Berwyn. 708-788-2118 [www.fitzgeraldsnightclub.com](http://www.fitzgeraldsnightclub.com)
- ⇒ July 8 & 9: Ninth Annual Chicago Folk and Roots Festival , two-day event with live music, dancing, children's entertainment, cooking demos and more. Welles Park, 2333 W. Sunnyside Avenue (Lincoln and Montrose Avenues), Chicago. \$5. 773-728-6000. [www.oldtownschool.org](http://www.oldtownschool.org)
- ⇒ Sept. 16 & 17: Celtic Fest Chicago Grant Park, Chicago: two day festival in Chicago's Grant Park celebrates the music, dance and traditions of many Celtic cultures. <http://egov.cityofchicago.org>
- ⇒ August 12 and 13: Arts on the Prairie, A PRFMS Jam! 31rst and Constitution Drive, west of Wolf Road in Westchester (watch your e-mail Inbox for details in July)

-Contributed by Diane Callahan Mastny

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The Season of the Banjo

It was summer by the time I learned to play the banjo, I had had one, an instrument borrowed from a friend, since the Christmas before. It sat neglected most of the winter and much of the spring, needing a string, needing to be tuned. I had the Pete Seeger book, *How to Play the 5-String Banjo*, and a couple others that I paged through from time to time.

A bunch of us were putting off adulthood for another year, contented to learn more about picking and singing, curious about old-time mountain music, stricken by the reedy voices that echoed through our stereo speakers ... The grass was wet in the backyard of my parents' home. I was in my bare feet and remember them being wet and speckled with grass clippings.

It was morning and I was sleepy. The sun was up over the house already and it felt warm on my shoulders and face. You remember these sorts of details when the fortunate moment arrives, the moment your mind and body assemble enough knowledge and skill to first spark the strings of a 5-string banjo.

That was twenty-four summers ago, enough time to get pretty good on a banjo. And enough time, reckon, for some of the perceptions of youth to harden into pure fact. Wars are bad. Working people have it rough. Nincompoops, cheaters and the willfully blind are among those in government and corporate leadership.

Twenty-four summers after first learning to play banjo, life blazes by with...cable modem speed. I can do email but am still new to cell phones. In the time it took to figure out how to download a song on to iPod, sixty four million television viewers elected the new American Idol. And now the Catholic Church has become fearful of a movie made by Opie Taylor...But I'm not going to think about any of this today.

It's summer and I've got the day off. It rained last night and it's a lovely morning. I'm on the back porch having coffee, listening to the birds and Art Thieme's new CD.

It's warm and damp and pleasant and everything is green. After a while I may walk down by the river to see the geese. Maybe I'll kick off my shoes and pick some banjo...

-Mark Dvorak

MarkDv@aol.com

Editor's Note: No real wonder why Mark's latest CD, *Every Step of the Way*, is winning critical acclaim. His story telling abilities are becoming legend. If you don't have your very own copy, **get** one at <http://waterbug.com/>!

PLANK ROAD MEMBERSHIP & ORDER FORM

Cut out the order form and send to address below. Please make checks payable to the
Plank Road Folk Music Society
 Post Office Box 386, Downers Grove, IL 60515

Memberships

- \$10 for 1 year/Individual
 \$20 for 1 year/Family
 Other: _____

I'm interested in helping with:

- Events (ticket sales, concessions, set-up, take down, hosting, etc)
 Workshops, Community Appearances, Sing A Rounds
 Nitty Gritty: Promotion, Publicity, Finance, Archive

I would like my Quarter Notes sent to me:

- Don't bother, I'll take it off the website
 By regular mail
 Email and regular mail
 By e-mail

Membership: \$ _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

CD Review

I've Got the House to Myself

I didn't "just" buy this CD. I bought it 3 years ago on my last trip up to Alaska. I saw David Grier play at the Seldovia Summer Solstice Festival and bought one of his CDs then.

I liked it so much that I kept loaning it out to other guitar playing friends, because I was sure they would like it too. I loaned it out so much, that I bought myself another copy recently along with one of his older CDs.

Wow! David Grier is a fabulous guitar player! He's a flat picker in basically bluegrass style, but his playing goes WAY beyond bluegrass. The CD is "I've Got the House to Myself" by David Grier, © 2002 Dreadnought Recordings. I ordered online at www.davidgrier.com.

My favorite tune is Ookpic Waltz, or Bill Cheatum, or Black Mountain Rag, or ???

This is happy music. It makes me happy just to listen to it. Tim O'Brien writes in the liner notes, "All guitar fans need to hear the latest from this truly original artist." I completely agree. I also think he spends entirely too much time with the house to himself. (Okay, so I'm a little bit jealous--I'd love that much time with the house to myself!) Listen online and buy this CD.

You'll be glad you did.

-Anna Stange





**Post Office Box 386
Downers Grove, IL
60515**

PRFMS Contacts:

General: Dave Reynolds, (630) 964-0305
e-mail: info@plankroad.org

PRFMS Communications Questions:

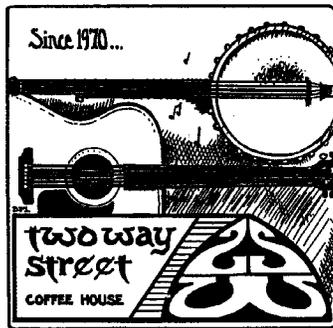
Scot Witt, (630) 717-8226
e-mail: webmaster@plankroad

Plank Road Folk Music Society

Marianne Mohrhusen, President
Dave Reynolds, Past President
Scot Witt, Secretary, publicity, website
Joel Brossard, Volunteer Coordinator/Board Member
Troy LeValley, Treasurer
Jeanne Halama, Board Member
Dave Humphreys, Board Member
Rich Jacobs, Board Member
Cathy Jones, Board Member
Cheryl Joyal, Board Member
George Mattson, Singarounds
Carol Sommer, Board Member
Bob Smith, Board Member

Folk Resources Next Door:

- **Plank Road Folk Music Society**, PO Box 386, Downers Grove, IL 60515. (630)889-9121 or (708)442-0823
Web: www.plankroad.org
- **Two Way Street Coffee House** 1047 Curtiss St., Downers Grove, IL 60515. (630)969-9720 Website:
www.twowaystreet.org
- **Jones Family Music Studio**, Lombard. (630)916-1356. Web: www.jonesfamilymusic.com
- **Maple Street Chapel**, Main & Maple, Lombard, 60148. (630)629-2630 or (630)964-4871 Web: www.tccafe.com/msc
- **Acoustic Renaissance Concerts** Unitarian Church of Hinsdale. (708) 802-0236 Web: www.acousticren.com
- **Folk Lore Center & Acorn Coffee Bar**, 29W140 Butterfield Rd, POB 762, Warrenville, IL 60555. (630)393-1247
- **Woodstock Folk Music/Festival** (815)338-4245 Website: www.woodstockfolkmusic.com
- **Fox Valley Folklore Society**, 755 N Evanslawn Ave, Aurora, IL 60506 (630)897-3655. Web:
www.FoxValleyFolk.com
- **Warrenville Folk Music Society**, POB 248, Warrenville IL 60555 (630)717-8495 e-mail: Warrenville-folk@aol.com
- **Lake County Folk Club**, Box 847, Mundelein, IL 60060, (847)949-5355
- **HANDS (Hammers & Noters Dulcimer Society)**, Box 181, Morris, IL 60450(708)331-6875 Web: www.gwdf.org
- **South Suburban Dulcimer & Folk Music Society**, P.O. Box 455, Park Forest, IL 60466. (708)756-3857
- *Tune in to "Folk Festival" with George Brown Tuesdays 7 to 9 PM and "Strictly Bluegrass" with Larry Robinson Wednesdays 7 to 9 PM on WDCB, Public Radio from College of DuPage.* WDCB presents many other fine folk programs, as well as jazz, classical, reggae, opera, and news and information. For a program guide, call (630) 942-4200.



TWO WAY STREET COFFEE HOUSE

1047 Curtiss Street • Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

www.twowaystreet.org • 630-969-9720

(Across from the Public Library)

Folk Music Every Week since 1970!

ENTERTAINMENT SCHEDULE

Friday	June	30	McNAMARA & NEELEY — Chris' beautiful voice and Irish, Scottish & original songs, plus Rick's big voice, excellent guitar & banjo, and great American folk songs. One plus one equals three! Enthusiasm, vitality, & joy.
Friday	July	7	SUNNYSIDE UP — Folk, bluegrass and American roots music, plus great songwriting and harmonies. Fiery instrumental work too! Trio with Colby Maddox, mandolin & fiddle; Nelson Mandrell, guitar; Rob Anderlik, dobro.
Friday	July	14	DANNY SANTOS — Austin TX singer/songwriter melds his Tejano roots, a musical legacy ranging from Hank Williams to the Beatles, and a Texas-sized determination to create unique country/folk tinged with bluegrass and blues.
Friday	July	21	RICK PICKREN — He performs original songs from his newest CD, <i>Rails, Rogues & Wrecks</i> , plus traditional and cowboy songs, with great guitar, bouzouki, banjo and harmonica. "His songwriting shines!" (<i>David Royko</i>)
Friday	July	28	GREENCHOBY — Carolyn Green and Mike Choby sing about things that matter, and have fun doing it! Original songs with accessible melodies, and lyrics that face hard questions, but still know when to laugh. Guitar & bass.
Friday	August	4	COMFORT FOOD — Singer/songwriters Rich Ingle & Vicki Chmura join to present their entertaining songs written together and separately, plus country, blues and bluegrass covers. Some serious, some comic! Guitars, violin, bass.
Friday	August	11	BOB PATNAUDE — Upbeat and energetic folksongs, folk/pop classics, and country blues, originals and covers, with Martin 6-string and Guild 12-string guitars and bottleneck blues tunes with National steel guitar. A new CD too!
Friday	August	18	JACK WILLIAMS — From South Carolina, this outstanding and joyously reckless guitarist and singer-songwriter masterfully blends the contemporary with the traditional. "Best guitar player I ever heard." (<i>Peter Yarrow</i>)
Friday	August	25	OPEN MIKE — Anyone is welcome to perform, and we always have a great variety of acoustic performers. So popular we must limit the number of acts. 1-2 songs, 10 minutes max. Doors open at 7:30 for signups — first come, first served. Show starts 8:00. For more information, phone 630-968-5526.
Friday	September	1	SPARKY & RHONDA RUCKER — Throughout the US, they present original and traditional American songs and stories. Appalachian, railroad, blues, Civil War, work & slave songs, with guitar, banjo, harmonica & more!
Friday	September	8	DANNY SCHMIDT — From Austin TX, he's a songwriter's songwriter with understated sincerity and wry, topical relevance. "Perhaps the most poetic and powerful singer/songwriter of the past 20 years." (<i>Rich Warren, WFMT</i>)
Friday	September	15	MICHAEL J. MILES — Master of the clawhammer banjo, he's redefining its limits! Traditional, original and classical works, including some with his newly-acquired 1852 Ashborn banjo replica. Also great vocals, guitar, stories.
Friday	September	22	CHRIS WALZ — Virtuoso guitarist, singer, pianist & actor! He's toured with <i>Woody Guthrie's American Song</i> (as Woody), <i>Weavermania</i> (as Fred), and <i>Special Consensus</i> (as himself). Country blues, bluegrass, and much more!
Friday	September	29	JIM BIZER — A Detroit singer/songwriter, his songs are thoughtful, humorous and startling. Jazz, blues, country, reggae and more; he sings about faith, rivers, insanity and things you've never heard before in a song. With guitar.

July 1 & 15 August 5 & 19 September 2 & 16	Sing-Arounds — Our popular song circles where beginners and experienced musicians can learn and/or share songs. Listeners and singers welcome too! Songbooks provided. Plank Road Folk Music Society co-sponsors. First and third Saturday afternoons of each month at 2:00 pm.
Saturdays July 22 ** August 26, Sept 23	Bluegrass Jam! — Musicians of all experience levels gather to improve skills, learn/share tunes, and have fun! 4th Saturdays, 2:00-4:00pm. **We'll skip June 24. Enjoy Heritage Festival!
Thursdays June 29 July 27, Aug 31, Sep 28 7:00-9:30 pm Free!	LAST THURSDAY: It's OUR Turn! — Monthly unplugged open mike for high school & college age students. Last Thurs. of each month. Music, poetry, any performance art — 10 min. max. Signups begin 7pm — first come, first served. Info at twowaystreet.org or 630-968-5526.
Live entertainment is featured every Friday night beginning at 8:15. Doors open 7:30. \$5.00 donation requested. Beverages and snacks available. The <i>Two Way Street Coffee House</i> is a not-for-profit community project of the First Congregational United Church of Christ, Downers Grove.	
Member: Plank Road Folk Music Society, Fox Valley Folklore Society, Old Town School of Folk Music, Aural Tradition, and North American Folk Alliance. Please call us at 630-969-9720 for current entertainment listings and updates, or visit us on the web at www.twowaystreet.org	
COME HOME DOWNERS GROVE	