

Flatpicking Rules at April 7th Gathering with Mike Hancock, Steve Scearce & Jon Singleton

The next CFS Gathering Concert and Jams will take place on the first Friday of the month, April 7th, to avoid a conflict with Good Friday. The evening's concert performers are three stellar musicians, **Mike Hancock, Steve Scearce, and Jon Singleton**. We're proud to say that they are all Folk Society members.

The hour-long concert begins at 7:30 PM in the Bryant Recital Hall of the Sloan-Morgan Building, 1220 Elizabeth Avenue, on the Central CPCC Campus. Gatherings are always free and open to the public. Donations, which entirely benefit performers, are appreciated. Free parking is available in the CPCC Staff Parking Deck, accessed off Fourth Street, between Independence Boulevard and Kings Drive.

Mike Hancock and Steve Scearce both came through their teen years in the '60s in the small mill town of Danville, Virginia. Both were faithful followers of Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs' weekly television program. Earl Scruggs' occasional guitar picking inspired each of them to take up the in-

strument. As a seventh-grader at Robert E. Lee Junior High School, Steve's only source of funds was his weekly lunch money. For three months he skipped lunches in order to save the \$30 needed to



Mike Hancock at the Harding Place Market

buy a Sears Silver-tone Spanish guitar. Mike's cousin loaned him an old Kalamazoo guitar and he invested \$1.75 for a set of Black Diamond strings. They were on their way!

Their paths crossed when Steve played lead guitar in high school with **John & Jerry and the Sensational Soulmasters**, an integrated twelve-piece soul band. **The Soulmasters** played at weekly teen dances sponsored by the Police Benevolent Association at the Danville Coke Plant and both Mike and Steve remember Mike's standing at the foot of the stage stealing guitar licks. Mike was a member of an integrated band, too; they played in black clubs in Martinsville, Virginia.

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Stellar Celtic House Concert April 22nd

The Folk Society is partnering with Amy Brady and The Celtic Trader to present four exceptional Celtic musicians performing in the intimate setting of a house concert. The lineup includes Scotland's **Brian McNeill**, founder of the legendary **Battlefield Band**, multi-instrumentalist, superlative songwriter, and author (www.brianmcneill.co.uk); **Ed Miller**, an Edinburgh native now living in Austin, folklorist, NPR folk music program host, guitarist, and singer with a sweet but powerful voice (www.songsofscotland.com); and **Jil Chambless** (lead vocals, flute, and whistles) and **Scotter Muse** (guitars and five-string banjo) of **Henri's Notions**, performers of traditional Celtic and American music, rooted in Southern heritage, openers for **The Tannahill Weavers**, Patrick Street, Paddy O'Brien and others (www.henrinotions.com).

The concert will take place on Saturday, April 22, 2006 at 7:30 PM at the home of Salem Macknee and Lee Howard, 14930 Hough Road, in Charlotte. Admission is \$12 for the general public; \$10 for CFS members. **Reservations are required; space is limited.** Call Salem Macknee at 704-573-0864 to make reservations for an evening to remember.

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As young adults, their lives diverged. Stationed in Arizona with the U. S. Air Force, Mike was wooed away from rock 'n' roll by a Phoenix band, **The Goose Creek Symphony**. A tour of duty in the Netherlands exposed him to the bluegrass and acoustic music scene there. Returning to the States, Mike heard the flatpicking of Doc Watson and Norman Blake and he was hooked.

Now living in Lincoln County and working for U.S. Airways in Charlotte, Mike Hancock is a familiar face at fiddler's conventions and he judges competitions at Fiddler's Grove, the Mount Airy Fiddlers' Convention, and the Stecoah Valley Mountain Music Championships. He sits in with **The Burford Brothers**, the **New Dixie Pharaohs**, and **Banjo Bob and the Cricket Hoppers**. Mike's CD on the Flying Cloud Record label, **Strictly Instrumental (Except for the Singing)**, is available online through CD Baby and there'll be copies for sale at the concert. Mike is joined on **Strictly Instrumental** by old friends who happen to be excellent pickers: champion fiddlers Tim Smith and Tommy Malboeuf, Jeff Foxall on mandolin, Danny Bowers on banjo, Doug and Taylor Rorrer on guitars, and Steve Block on bass.

Steve Scarce continued to play with **The Soulmasters** as he began studies of mechanical engineering in the nuclear field at Virginia Tech. The band became good enough to occasionally open for **The Tams (What Kind of Fool)**, Arthur Conley (**Sweet Soul Music**), and other soul singers of the era. Steve graduated in 1969 and he put down his guitar for nearly a decade as hard rock ruled the airways. Living in Columbia, South Carolina in the late '70s, Steve re-discovered bluegrass. Hearing Tony Rice (also a Danville native)

on a David Grisman Quintet recording inspired him to buy a flat top guitar and learn to flatpick.

As a contract engineer with Duke Energy, Steve has been involved with nuclear power plant startups in various cities in the Southeast. His travels have presented numerous opportunities to attend bluegrass, fiddlers', and flatpicking festivals. As a flatpicker, he's jammed with the **Amick Family**, a South Carolina family bluegrass gospel band, and with **Savannah River Grass**, a Georgia bluegrass band. Currently, he's playing Celtic music with a fiddler and an Uilleann pipes player around Augusta, Georgia.

A couple of years ago, when Steve was working in Charlotte on a Duke Power project, he joined the Folk Society. Forty years after going their separate ways, he and Mike Hancock met again at a Saturday morning old-time music jam at the Mecklenburg County Market on Harding Place. Their musical journeys have followed different paths, but they've arrived in the same place – with a passion for acoustic guitar flatpicking. Forty years ago, Steve's playing inspired Mike; today Steve describes having a chance to occasionally play with Mike as "a real treat and inspiration." They share both a friendship and mutual admiration.

Multi-talented Charlotte musician Jon Singleton will join Mike and Steve on fiddle, banjo, and mandolin. A teacher and performer since 1979, Jon has specialized in traditional mountain styles on fiddle, banjo, and guitar. His dedication to the preservation and passing on of

old-time music earned him a Charlotte Folk Society Heritage Award in 2004.

Jon plays often as a dance musician and, with Karen Seime Singleton, he ran a monthly community square and contra dance in Charlotte for eight years. In addition to playing in numerous old-time bands such as **Poultry in Motion**, Jon was a founding member of **The Bratonsville Gypsies** and **The Ruffians**, a band which played old-time, Celtic, and original music for ten years. Their CD, **A-Rovin'**, was released on The



Jon Singleton fiddlin' around

Celtic Trader label in 1994. The band toured the United States and British Isles in 1996. Jon frequently sits in with the **New Dixie Pharaohs** and joins **The Burford Brothers** in the guise of "Benny Burford." For several years he's been a leader of Ri-Ra's twice-monthly Sunday evening Irish music sessions.

In addition to teaching at old-time music workshops such as the Augusta Heritage Festival, Blue Ridge Old-Time Music Week at Mars Hill, and the Florida Frolic, Jon judges old-time and bluegrass fiddle competitions at Fiddlers' Grove, the Alleghany County Fiddler's Convention, and South Carolina's State Fiddler's Convention. Jon presently teaches 40 students each week through the Community School of the Arts and at Davidson College.

Have some refreshments with us after the concert and sample Carol Sawyer's killer brownies. Then join a song circle or a slow or fast jam session. You are also welcome to simply enjoy listening.