



# DCBU

*Newsletter of the D.C. Bluegrass Union*

*Fall 2015*

## 2nd Annual Hazel Dickens Song Contest

### Open for Entries!



**Honor the legacy of one of bluegrass music's most beloved songwriters. Cash prizes for top three songs! Expert judges. Entry fee \$30 per song. All proceeds help fund the DC Bluegrass Union.**

Find more information on submission guidelines and rules at [www.dcbu.org](http://www.dcbu.org)

## The Magic Touch

The first thing you notice about Danny Knicely's musicianship is the effortlessness. He has the ability to make playing look arrestingly easy though your ears will tell you otherwise. Whether on mandolin, guitar or fiddle, Knicely lays down a groove and never lets up.



He comes by it honestly. Born to a deeply musical family in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, Danny's father, Glen, plays bass and banjo. His mother, Darlena, sings "and she dances and plays a little of everything," he says.

Danny's grandfather, A.O. Knicely, continues to play fiddle – at the age of 97.

The household was always full of musicians when Danny was growing up. “I played a lot with my parents’ friends,” he recalls. They were great players, and they had good instruments. “That gets you inspired.”

Danny’s first instrument was bass. He played in the family band, *Heartland*, and sang baritone. They performed Carter family songs, country material and some gospel.

By the time he hit his teens, Danny started playing classic rock with some high school buddies, which led him inevitably to an interest in electric guitar. But he didn’t own one. Danny lobbied his school to get one for the pep band.

I went to town and found a pearl-white Les Paul studio model and talked the school into buying it.

But traditional music never really receded to the background. After high school, Danny picked up the mandolin – and started experimenting with the fiddle. “Some people will tell you that’s not the best idea,” he says wryly.

Danny’s natural talent was obvious. He jammed and networked at area festi-

vals, including Galax, and soon formed the group, *McGraw Gap*, with guitarist Larry Keel in 1995. They played local shows and won the band contest at the Telluride Bluegrass Festival that year. Knicely also won the mandolin contest and Keel grabbed the blue ribbon in guitar.



Everybody noticed.

The group recorded a CD and started touring as the warm-up band for *Leftover Salmon* on a string of western dates. For the next few years they played primarily rock and jam-grass venues and toured in China in 1998 and 1999 before disbanding in 2000.

Along about that time, Knicely started performing with David Via and his group, *Corn Tornado*. Wonder where that name comes from? Swirl a mason jar half filled with

moonshine and you’ve got your answer. (And don’t forget to drink up.)

Still, the farthest reaches of the globe beckoned. “I got a bug for travel and world music,” he says. That led to several trips to Nepal starting in 2004 and a keen interest in the indigenous music of that region. Thus was born the Mountain Music Project, an investigation of the striking similarities between Himalayan and Appalachian string styles.

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“I went to town and found a pearl-white Les Paul studio model and talked the school into buying it.”

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“I met these guys that played the music and I really related to them,” Knicely says. He wanted to record the local Nepalese players but needed money to do it. After some investigating, his partner in the project, Tara Linhardt, found there weren’t any grant dollars available for audio recording. But there was for video. “So we decided to make a video about making a recording,” Knicely explains.

The final project includes musical cameos by Tim

O'Brien, Mike Seeger, Sammy Shelor, Curtis Burch and fiddler Buddy Pendleton, among others. The video is well worth watching and can be purchased at Mountainmusicproject.com.

Knicely stays very busy these days working with a varied coterie of musicians including old-time player/composer James Leva, David Via, manolinist Buddy Dunlap, Tim O'Brien, and Malian musician Cheick Hamala Diabate. Danny is part of the Virginia Folklife apprenticeship program mentoring younger players. He also continues to travel, and recently finished tours in France and Russia.

Danny just released a new album with Dunlap called *Chop, Shred and Split*. Next up, Knicely is working on a CD with guitarist Wyatt Rice and bassist Mark Schatz.

--Randy Barrett

## Seeking New Treasurer

DCBU is in search of a new board member to handle the book keeping of the organization. If you're a numbers person who likes to be involved in bluegrass, this is the perfect gig. It pays a hearty handshake from the

rest of the board and the satisfaction of helping out a good cause.

If you have interest, please contact Randy Barrett at 703-405-6230, or [mrbarretone@gmail.com](mailto:mrbarretone@gmail.com)

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**Renew your membership today at**  
[www.dcbu.org](http://www.dcbu.org)

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## New Venue in DC!

Thursday is bluegrass night at Mr. Henry's on Capitol Hill. The restaurant is located at 601 Pennsylvania Ave, SE. Music runs 8pm to 11pm. No cover, two item minimum. Support local bluegrass!

## DCBU Fall Pick-Nic A Big Success

It was a great time at the Takoma Park VFW on October 10. The weather was perfect and the hamburgers and hotdogs were plentiful. A good crowd of pickers gathered, made hillbilly music noises and drank beer. What more could you want? The fall Pick-nic is hereby a DCBU tradition.

## Bluegrass Calendar

October 24, 2015 - Saturday

The Hillbilly Gypsies  
Barns of Rose Hill  
95 Chalmers Court, Berryville,  
Va. 22611

Phone: 540-955-2004, Email:  
kelli.hart@borh.org  
Time: 8:00 PM, Tickets: \$15 in  
advance | \$20 at the door

Bluegrass For Hospice  
Featuring: Joe Mullins & The  
Radio Ramblers, Junior Sisk &  
Ramblers Choice, and Hall of  
Fame Bluegrass Extravaganza  
featuring Joe Mullins & Junior  
Sisk

Flat Iron Farm  
Highway To Heaven Ln., Great  
Mills, MD 20634  
Time: 12:00 pm, Tickets: \$25  
advance/\$30 Gate  
Contact: Phone: 301-737-3004,  
Email: jaychelle1@verizon.net

Charles Frazier and Virginia  
Ramblers  
Lucketts Community Center  
Lucketts Rd, Leesburg, VA  
Time: Doors 6:30, Concert  
7:00PM  
Tickets: \$15.00

Flower Hill String Band  
Phone: 301-802-7453, Email:  
David.Adams@gmail.com  
Butler's Orchard  
22200 Davis Mill Road , Ger-  
mantown MD 20876  
Phone: 301-972-3299  
Time: 12:00

Josh Grigsby and County Line  
Phone: 540-376-2512, Email:  
countylinepickers@gmail.com  
Sumerduck Ruritan Bluegrass  
Fest  
11326 James Madison Hwy,  
Bealeton VA  
Phone: 540-219-4985  
Time: 1:00, Tickets: \$20.00

Orrin Star  
House Concert  
Boyd's, MD  
Email: dbeach@comcast.net  
Time: 7:30  
Email for address and reservations.

October 28, 2015 - Wednesday

Davis Bradley w/Tom Gray  
Ashland Coffee and Tea  
Ashland, VA  
Time: 7:00PM  
Contact: 804-798-1702  
October 29, 2015 - Thursday

The Kevin Prater Band  
Phone: 740-641-7884, Email:  
waldomusic72@hotmail.com  
The Coffeepot Roadhouse  
2902 Brambleton Ave, SE,  
Roanoke, VA  
Phone: 540-774-8256  
Time: 8:00  
No Cover Charge

Ashley Monroe  
Sixth & I Historic Synagogue  
600 I Street, NW , Washington,  
DC 20001  
Phone: 202.408.3100  
Time: 8:00 PM, Tickets:  
\$22ADV/\$25DAY

Crazy After Midnight  
Mr. Henry's  
601 PA. AVE. SE, WASH.,D,C,  
20003  
Time: 8-11PM

October 30, 2015 - Friday

Tim O'Brien and Old Man  
Luedecke  
The Hamilton  
600 14th St NW , Washington,  
DC, 20005  
Phone: 202.787.1000  
Time: 8:00pm, Tickets: \$17.00 -  
\$25.00

The Kevin Prater Band  
Phone: 606-477-4759, Email:  
waldomusic72@hotmail.com  
The Old 97 Restaurant  
4154 S. Amherst Hwy, Madison  
Heights, VA  
Phone: 434-473-0173  
Time: 8:00

October 31, 2015 - Saturday

Dark Hollow  
Lucketts Community Center  
Lucketts Rd, Leesburg, VA  
Time: Doors 6:30, Concert  
7:00PM  
Tickets: \$15.00

November 1, 8, 15, 22, 2015  
Wernick Method bluegrass jam-  
ming class / Taught by Ira Gitlin  
(ira@iragitlin.com)  
Private home, Olney, MD; ad-  
dress will be given out upon reg-  
istration.

**DCBU**  
**1429 Martha Custis Drive**  
**Alexandria, VA 22302**

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