

# BONES FEST XXIX

NATICK, MA  
AUG. 7-10 2025



**BONES  
IN  
BEANTOWN**

## *Program*

## Welcome to Natick, Massachusetts and Bones Fest XXIX

It's an honor to cohost this Bones Fest in my hometown of Natick, Massachusetts. Our event will be held at the Common St. Spiritual Center in downtown Natick. The Center has been gracious in allowing us to use the facility on Saturday and Sunday, and I hope our Saturday event can raise some money to donate to the Center. I have been hosting a Drum Circle there for the past seven years with the help of Dave "Drumhead Curry," who will be doing the sound for the performances on Saturday night. The town is known for many things: the home of the Natick Praying Indians, Doug Flutie, the Natick Mall, but most of all, it was the birthplace of the "Happiest Bones Player in the World," the late Jeremy Brown. This year's graphic was made with the help of AI and a few prompts for me. If you need anything during the Fest, please don't hesitate to call me at 774-286-0638. *Bruno Giles*

Welcome to Bones Fest XXIX! This is the third Bones Fest that I have been involved organizing, and the first that I cohost with another Rhythm Bone Society member, the incredible Bruno Giles! You will note from the schedule that there are perhaps two focus of this year's Fest. The first being jug band music as played both by the jug nuts on Thursday and the Busted Jug Band on Saturday. I so hope you enjoy it. The second will be a more international focus. From Kenny Wolin's fun with Latin rhythms, to playing in drum circles With an African flare, to an authentic Irish session, and multi-instrumentalist Fabio Pirizzolo introduction to the Indian drum language and Italian Castinettes we so hope you enjoy it. We have another chance to surprise people with a 'flash mob' on Saturday, and at last a chance to meet Graham Hargrove from Canada! Thanks so much for coming ! Bruno and I hope you enjoy it! Please feel free to contact me at any time if you need help or have questions. 978-727-2899. May your bones be with you! *Steve Brown.*

## **Bones Fest XXIX Program**

**Primary Venue Location:** Common Street Spiritual Center, 13  
Common Street, Natick, MA. 01760

### **August 7**

3:00 - 5:30 PM- Registration at the Hotel

6:00 to 9:00 PM - Jug band Jam @Morse Tavern, 85 East Central St.  
Natick, MA. 508-655-7878

### **August 8 - Common Street Spiritual Center (All events except as noted)**

9:00 AM - Coffee and Donuts, Bones Marketplace

10:00 AM - Introductions: It has been the tradition of RBS since its beginning to give each attendee an opportunity to tell their bones story. Each person has 10 minutes, depending on attendance.

11:30 - Group Photograph #1

12 Noon- Approximately 1 hour lunch on your own

1:00 PM - Workshops

1 PM - Fun with Latin Rhythms by Kenny Wolin

2 PM - The Graham Hargrove Experience

3 PM - Hubby Jenkins

4 PM - Introduction to Irish Session by Skeffington Flynn

5:00 - PM - Pizza Dinner

6 PM - Introduction to Drum Circle by Dave Curry

7:00-9:00 PM - Drum Circle - Play rhythm bones in a Drum Circle.

7:30-9:30 PM - Irish session at Morse Tavern, 85 East Central St.  
Natick, MA. 508-655-7878

9-11 PM - Jamming at Common St.

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**August 9 - Common Street Spiritual Center (All events except as noted)**

9:15 AM - Coffee and Donuts, Bones Marketplace

10:00 AM - Fabio Pirozzolo Introduction to Solkattu (Indian drum language) and Castagnette Marchigiane

11:00 AM - Steve Wixson - 19th Century Rhythm Bones Project

11:30 - Prepare for Flash Mob and performance - Group Photograph #2

12 Noon - Flash Mob @Market on the Common. Performance till 1 PM

1:00 PM - Beginner Workshop - General Public Welcome (or Lunch)

2:00 PM - Board Meeting and Open Instruction and Sharing continues with Paul Sedgwick on How to Play with Ensembles

3:00 PM - General Membership Meeting.

3:30 PM - Jamming with Busted Jug Band subset

5:30 PM - BBQ Dinner

7:30 PM - Public Performance - Sign up before hand

9:30 PM - Jamming at Common Street Spiritual Center

**August 10**

9-11 AM - Sunday Breakfast at the Hotel - Goodbyes

10 AM - Noon - Free Visit to Boston Museum of Fine Arts

## Attendee Biographies

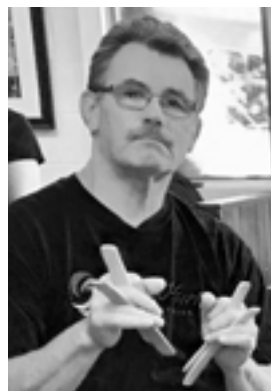
**Steve Brown (Jennifer)** - Steve Brown is Co-Host of this year's Bones Fest. He grew up playing drums and percussion highly influenced by his big brother Dennis. In 1978 his brother introduced him to Percy Danforth and he began playing rhythm bones, playing them later led to making rhythm bones. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Rhythm Bones Society since its inception in 1999. He became the Assistant Director in 2002, and Executive Director in 2003. In 2003 and 2004 he won the All Ireland Bones Competition, and in 2016 he became the only non-Irish person to judge the senior competition.



**Sky and Jessye Bartlett** - I learned to play rhythm bones from Ernie Duffy when I was thirteen. Ernie was gracious enough to take me around to all sorts of events where I had the opportunity to play, and eventually to Bones Fests. I met my wife, Jessye, at the Bones Fest in Alexandria, VA. She is an excellent fiddle player. We hosted Bones Fests XXII and XXVII.

**Ron Bruschi (Marie)** - Ron Bruschi has been dabbling in various forms of hand percussion as far back as he can remember. About 10 years ago, while playing spoons, his minstrel-banjo-playing friend asked if he also played rhythm bones. He didn't, but his wife Marie had recently bought him a set of Percy Danforth Bones (still his favorites). He started practicing and has been playing constantly ever since.

Ron and Marie have both been involved in traditional folk music and dance since the revival of the 1960's. They regularly teach several types of traditional dance: Cajun, Zydeco and Irish Sets. They have been attending Bones Fests since Bones Fest XX in Homer NY in 2016 and enjoy both the camaraderie and the talent.





**Tommy Brynes** - Musician, composer, producer, studio engineer

**Andy Chase** - Andy Chase is a perpetually distracted multi-instrumentalist from north-central Massachusetts. He found his way to rhythm

bones while playing 19th century banjo music. In addition to various flavors of banjo he plays other stringed instruments, and has been known to dabble in concertina and theremin. He can be found at <https://andychase.net>



**Jonathan Danforth** - Jonathan, Melissa, and Emmett Danforth live in Westport, MA, near New Bedford where they hosted Bones Fest X. Jonathan learned to play rhythm bones from his granddad when he was five or six years old, but didn't meet other rhythm bones players until he and Melissa met Steve Brown at NEFFA in 2001, and attended Bones Fest V that year. Jonathan likes to keep it simple on rhythm bones, and loves teaching rhythm bones to beginners almost as much as playing them. He'll be happy to play a fiddle tune with



you, too.

**Ernie Duffy** - I was born and raised in New Hampshire and live within a few hundred yards from the home where I grew up. So, it was a rewarding experience for me to travel to many of the Bones Fests in other parts of the country. It is very exciting for me to have the Bones Fest in my home state last year so I can share the beauty of the White Mountains with my bones playing friends. I want to express my sincere appreciation to Sky and Jessye Bartlett for hosting it last year. They have worked hard to make it a fun filled few days. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone soon!



**Lynn Fantelli** - I'm new to rhythm bones, but my boyfriend is a super excellent rhythm bones player...so...well, I figured I'd give rhythm bones a try!



**Skeffington Flynn** - I got my first set of rhythm bones in 2009 and attended my first Bones Fest in 2010. I was welcomed with open arms from the very beginning, and I am still



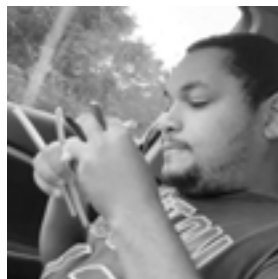
enthralled by the musical possibilities of our instrument. The Rhythm Bones Society has really helped me to develop as a player, and I cherish the many connections I have made as a result. I joined the Board in 2011, hosted Bones Fest XIX in Shepherdstown, WV in 2015, and I promise to do whatever I can to steward this amazing musical community as Executive Director. I look forward to engaging with you all in Natick, MA!

**Bruno Giles** - I am a Co-Host of this year's Bones Fest with Stephen Brown, from whom I bought my first set of "Bones" at the New England Folk Festival in 2013. My first Bones Fest was in Homer N.Y. back in 2016. I



am a retired Department of Corrections Officer, spending most of my time playing music, reading and writing.

**Devin Giles** - This will be my second Bones Festival. My first was with my dad in Homer NY.



**Graham Hargrove** - Canadian rhythm bones player and percussionist.



**Wally Jakubas** - Hi, I live in Hampden, Maine. This is my third attempt to attend a Bones Fest; hopefully life will not get in the way this time. I started playing rhythm bones three years ago after receiving them as a Christmas present. The present was a bit like a

blind date. I had never seen them played before and only heard them on the 1955 recording of Alabama Jubilee by Red Foley. I was surprised to see what they actually looked like but I was determined to learn how to play them. YouTube to the rescue! I like playing rhythm bones impromptu to New Orleans Jazz and to Irish music. I am hoping to learn some new skills and meet up with other players at the 2025 Bones Fest. I am hunting mushrooms in the photo.



**Hubby Jenkins** - “Hubby Jenkins is a talented multi-instrumentalist who endeavors to share his love and knowledge of old-time American music. Born and raised in Brooklyn he delved into his southern roots, following the thread of African American history that wove itself through America’s traditional music forms. As an integral member of the Carolina Chocolate Drops and later Rhiannon Giddens band, Hubby has performed at festivals and venues around the world, earning himself both Grammy and Americana award nominations. Today he spreads his knowledge and love of old-time American music through his dynamic solo performances and engaging workshops.



**Mary Gunderson King** - I remember with great fondness the first Bones Fest that I was a part of in 2015 hosted by Skeffington Flynn in Shepherdstown, WV. The joy of all the rhythm bones players was evident in their faces and in the music they created. Though I don’t play rhythm bones, it is a gift to make music with all who do, especially with Skeff. I play rhythm guitar and sing. Skeff and I have been making music together for fifteen years. It’s a joy to be with you all again!



**Evan Lattimore**  
- Percussionist and music teacher. Evan is a classically trained percussionist, New England Conservatory Bachelor of Music 1981, and music teacher, Rhode Island College Master of Arts-Teaching 1997. For the past forty years he has



traveled throughout New England, the east coast, and parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia, performing with symphony orchestras, choruses, and pit orchestras. In 2024 he participated in the Craciaen Festival, studying the bodhran in Ireland. Evan recently retired after 30 years teaching middle school music, band, chorus in Rutland, Massachusetts. Evan moved to Maine last year finding all kinds of new musical adventures there.

**Darryl 'Spike Bones' Muhrer** - "My first performance was as Dr. Spike in June 1978, and inspired by Percy Danforth from whom I learned to play rhythm bones, I soon changed my stage name to Spike Bones. I gather my performance 'vits' and pieces from the period 1840-1940, an era I call pre-TV entertainment. I have developed a lot of my character and material as a street performer in Chicago and New Orleans. Although I have played with a lot of Irish, Old-Time, Folk and Jazz bands, I consider myself as much a dancer as a musician. A twenty one year old membership with RBS has provided me with great inspiration, friendships, and rhythm bones insight into the art and history of rhythm bones.



**Alan Pugh** - Amateur piano/guitar player, hand drummer.

**Dean Robinson** - I am a retired attorney living in Bristol, Rhode Island. I learned to play rhythm bones in 2018 while attending the Craiceann bodhran school at Inis Oirr, Ireland. Because I learned how to play in Ireland I typically play one handed, although I use the two handed style on occasion. I have played rhythm bones at numerous Irish music sessions as well as at shows with the band Fáilte, and have participated in and conducted rhythm bones workshops in the US and Ireland. I also competed three times in the All Ireland Bone Playing Competition in Abbeyfeale, Ireland. My time as a member of the Rhythm Bones Society has been rewarding, as I have made many friends who have provided me with assistance and information on rhythm bones playing.



**Dennis Riedesel (Susan)** - I was working as an extra and on the wardrobe crew on an “Alamo” movie set and saw my first rhythm bones player.



Later, I saw another one at the San Antonio Folklife festival. I play many different kinds of instruments and here was a weird one that I knew nothing about. I found a set of rhythm bones



and an instruction book and tape from “Lark in the Morning” and ordered the set. I had to do a lot of driving so I used this time to learn to play with either hand and then when I was not driving I taught myself to play double rhythm bones.

I belong to a Civil War and Cowboy era music group called “Dr. E.T. Bushrod and the Tanner Family Medicine Show or “Col. Bushrod’s Tanner Family Wild West Extravaganza”. We usually play what our fiddle player calls Authentic Americana Folk Music. Sometimes, when we are all together, I get to play bones with the “Sweet Song String Band”, and the “Next Generation String Band/No Foolin’ String Band”. Also, very occasionally, our fiddle player switches over to his primary instrument, the “Blues Guitar” and I get to groove along with him!

I was on an Alaskan Cruise and found a piece of Mammoth Ivory at one of the tourist traps. I now have a set of Mammoth Ivory Bones!!

**Rob Rudin** - Rob Rudin received his first pair of Danforth rhythm bones from his cousin, Bob Rudin (!) and instruction from Bernie Stelman of Wethersfield, CT. After moving to Boston in 1994, Rob fell in with friends of the late John “Mr. Bones” Burrell and played with folk legend “Spider” John Koerner. Rob’s bag of tricks includes playing up to 4 rhythm bones in each hand, and he can be seen boning with The Busted Jug Band and radical-traditional band Einstien’s Little Homunculus.



**Jim Runner** - I learned to play rhythm bones from my grandfather, who used to jam with the radio, or play with my grandmother at the piano.

I met Percy Danforth in the seventies, and bought some of his rhythm bones. At that time, he was the only rhythm bones player I had ever met other than my grandfather. I like to fit rhythm bones into a wide range of musical styles, but I also enjoy them as a portable solo instrument. I take them hiking, particularly in rocky canyons where the terrain influences the echoes.

**Paul Sedgwick** - Paul had his first rhythm bones lesson with Rob Rudin more than twenty years ago. However, he had been playing banjo, guitar and ukulele for most of his life prior to that. He is a recently retired theatre teacher and arts administrator for the Boston Public Schools (ask him to recite Sonnet #65). He plays banjo, ukulele and bones in the Indie Americana band—LEMONSHINERS.



**Bruce Strong** - Made the mistake of attending a Rhythm Bones workshop Mr. Brown gave at NEFFA some years ago and got hooked ever since.

**Cliff Teixeira** - I'm an old drummer from way back and have recently in the past year renewed my love of playing the cajon in a local folk band. I've only been playing around with rhythm bones for a few months. I am 72 years old and still have a passion for jamming with others. Keeps me young. I'd really like to incorporate rhythm bones into the band I play with. We call ourselves "The Mashed Potatoes."



**Spencer Udelson** - "A New England based multi-instrumentalist, player, and builder, recently specializing in Old-time clawhammer style banjo.



**Steve Wixson** - I am your Secretary/Treasurer and Editor of the *Rhythm Bones Player* newsletter. I learned to play one handed from my butcher father and then, after finding Ev Cowett and attending Bones Fest II, I learned

to play two handed. I love to research and write about rhythm bones, but I really love it when members renew their membership and research and write articles for the newsletter. Right now that research is directed to finding more about 19th Century rhythm bones, and adding more detail to the rhythm bones Timeline.



**Kenny Wolin** - I've been a percussionist and resident rhythm bones player with "The President's Own" United States Marine Band since 1997, and have enjoyed many performance opportunities on rhythm bones touring throughout the United States, as well as at the White House leading its Celtic and World Music Ensembles.

I first learned to play rhythm bones from Percy Danforth at the 1979 Michigan Percussion Festival, attended my first Bones Fest in 2004, and have been teaching the advanced Bones Fest workshops since that time.

I met my wife Teri at Bones Fest IX, I proposed to her on stage at Bones Fest XIII, we hosted Bones Fest XIV with a Bones Fest wedding (our very own Tim Reilly was our Best Man), and celebrated our 12 year anniversary with some of you at our home at Bones Fest XXVI in 2021. Teri and I are looking forward to celebrating our 15 year anniversary with all of you in Boston!



**Teri Wolin** - I began playing rhythm bones in 2004 at the urging of my music students. I learned to play rhythm bones by watching Mel Mercier's VHS and joined the RBS later that year (reference to "VHS" is dating me!). My first Bones Fest was in Tennessee (Steve Wixon's) and was and still amazed at the level of rhythm bones-playing I witnessed there. My rhythm bones influences include Mel Mercier, Timmy Reilly and Kenny Wolin (just to name a VERY few). I am a multi-instrumentalist and vocalist originally from Buffalo, NY. Since I've moved to Northern VA, Kenny and I have performed together as the Celtic/Maritime duo, The Mollyhawks in the DC area as well as the Kennedy Center. Kenny and I are looking forward to celebrating our 15 year anniversary with all of you in Boston!

## Notes

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