



Rhythm Bones Player

A Newsletter of the Rhythm Bones Society

Volume 12, No. 4 2010

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Executive Director's Column

It's now the end of December, and the new year will be fast upon us, time, perhaps to reflect on the past and look to the future, while not neglecting the present. Let me first wish everyone the best of this Holiday season, and the very best in this coming New Year.

While this year produced one of the very finest Bones Fest's, it also saw the passing of one of our members who was well known in and beyond his native Georgia. John 'Mr Bones' Cahill was a most enthusiastic bones player. I met him at my first Bones Fest, and although he had had a stroke by then, he never let it stand in the way of playing the bones. He learned to play the bones the year I was born, 1950, and played a great variety of music. You can read more about him in the obituary in this issue.

Also sad news about our friend, Elwin "Shorty" Boulet, who remains in a nursing home, where he celebrated his 90th birthday on December 27, 2010. See the letters to the Editor for his address, and keep him in your thoughts.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Steve Wixson, who once again has out done himself in his efforts to improve the rhythmbones.com website for our members and the public at large. The improvements are amazing including access to our Newsletters, information about our members including those who have passed on, and video. Do take the time to read his article on the improvements, and have fun exploring the new site.

It is part of the human condition to look to

(Continued on page 3)

A New Look for rhythmbones.com

Martha Cowett created it. Jonathan Danforth gave it its great look. Now Steve Wixson adds video and new navigation and features.

The Rhythm Bones Society website, rhythmbones.com (now also rhythmbones.org), has a new look with features that members have requested. The new Home Page is shown in the Figure on this page, and keeps the same look and feel as in Jonathan's redesign of Martha's original.

The goals of the new look are three-fold; general education, rhythm bones instruction, and attract new members.

Navigation is at the top of each page and is

the consistent on all pages. The navigation button provide easy selection of website resources, and most of these resources are Jonathan's pages with navigation at the top.

Directly under the navigation buttons are two larger boxes that will change on a monthly basis.

The left box, titled *Player of the Month*, features some important rhythm bones personality, and clicking on that box will lead to more information—in this case, with Everett Cowett as the personality, it displays the newsletter that has an article

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New Home Page for Rhythm Bones Society Website

Editorial

There is sadness in the rhythm bones community with the loss of John 'Mr. Bones' Cahill. John had been in poor health. He was a long time member of the Rhythm Bones Society, and until recent times attended most Bones Fests. See his obituary in this issue.

The front page story is about the new look of the rhythmbones.com webpage. Many of the things that members have asked for are now on the website, and hopefully this will help us get our message out resulting in an increase in membership.

Please help us test the new website at www.stevewixson.net. If you discover something that is not working, please contact me at wixson@chattanooga.net. It may take a while to get all of the problems resolved, but as soon as we do, it will go live at both rhythmbones.com and the new rhythmbones.org.

Beginning now there will also be a monthly email with current information of interest, and something that you can easily forward to other rhythm bones players. Membership is down and we need recruiting help from all of you. Membership applications and renewals can be made now on-line using the test website and later on the real website.

We first met Ida May Schmich at Bones Fest IV in Chattanooga, and then again at Bones Fest XII in St. Louis. She is profiled in this issue of the newsletter. At 94, she continues to be a live wire, and a rhythm bones player I aspire to be like.

Steve Brown needs to move to Ireland, though as I have read the stories of his visits there in this newsletter, I wonder which of those wonderful places he would pick as his home. This issue has a story of a visit to another part of Ireland, County Sligo.

Letter to the Editor

As I write this it's snowing, and the wind is whipping around, just to let you know it's winter in New England.

On a more serious note I just got a letter from Shirley Boulet. Shorty is now in a rest home, and suffering the

effects of congestive heart failure. It is unlikely he will be able to go home again as he needs that level of care. For those of you who don't know, Shorty Boulet learned to play the bones at 10 years old in his native Vermont in Derby on the line. He won a talent contest that same year by playing the bones and harmonica at the same time. He's played the bones ever since, and celebrated his 90th birthday on December 27th. I'm wondering if folks might be willing to send him a belated birthday card to shower him with cards. His address is as follows;

Elwin "Shorty" Boulet
Morrison Nursing Home
6 Terrace St. Room 104
Whitefield, N.H. 03598

I have very fond memories of Shorty—from the first time I met him in the VFW in Belows Falls, VT to a number of bones fests, both national and regional. He was a true character, and played the bones with great enthusiasm. Thanks in advance, *Steve Brown*

New to the Website

There are four new historical items added to our test website.

The first is Beth Lenz Master's Thesis titled *The Bones in the US: History and Performance Practice*. Beth had access to all of the information that Percy Danforth had collected over the years, and she crafted it into an important work.

Several years ago RBS obtained a copy of her thesis from the University of Michigan where she did the work, and with her permission parts of Chapter 1 have been printed in the Rhythm Bones Player newsletter starting with Vol 8, No 2, and continuing in Vol 8, No 4, and Vol 9, No 2. Now she shares the entire thesis with the rhythm bones community and others via our website. Many thanks, Beth.

The second is from a presentation Joe Birl made at Bones Fest III where he described how he made, patented and sold his black plastic 'rhythm bones.' While there are some routine aspects to the process, there are some interesting and amusing parts also. Joe sold about 150,000 of these bones.

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Editor Steve Wixson wixson@chattanooga.net
Executive Director Stephen Brown Bones@crystal-mtn.com
Web Site Coordinator Jonathan Danforth webmaster@rhythmbones.com
Board of Directors Steve Brown, Executive Director Jonathan Danforth Gil Hibben, Assistant Director Mel Mercier Bill Vits Steve Wixson, Secretary/Treasurer Kenny Wolin
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Rhythm Bones Central web site: rhythmbones.com

The third is memorabilia of Ted 'Mr Goon-Bones' Goon a very successful rhythm bones recording artist in the late 1940s. There was a DVD given to members that contained this material, and now it is available on our website.

The fourth is internet research that Steve Wixson did back in 1999 which shows the state of rhythm bones then. He found only about 100 web pages while searching using several variations of 'bones playing.' A Goggle search today using just 'rhythm bones' returns almost 18,000 pages. RBS has and is making an impact on rhythm bones playing.

Website of the Quarter

The website of the quarter is our test site for the rhythmbones.com update with the internet address of <http://stevewixson.net>. Try it out and let him know if anything doesn't look right at wixson@chattanooga.net

(Continued from page 1)

the future with hope, and I am no exception to that. Bones Fest XV will be the first bones fest west of the Missouri River. It will be held in San Antonio, Texas, on the grounds of the Texas Folk Life Festival, with exceptional musicians, and the fest hotel will be across from the Alamo. Dennis Reidesel is hosting the Fest, and has done a fine job of planning. What more could we ask to encourage hope for the future of bone playing.

Thanks to all of you who make up the membership of the Rhythm Bones Society for it is with each and every one of you that the future of the instrument depends on! *Steve Brown*

Profile of a Member Ida May Schmich

The fracture didn't show up in the X-rays. Only when iodine was injected did the telltale crack show up in her pelvis. But Ida May Schmich was not going to go peacefully.

"Let me preface this visit with telling you I'm not the ordinary 93-year-old who is willing to sit in the chair and rock," she said brusquely to the doctor. "I square dance. I play my banjo and my bones. I'm active. Now tell me what's wrong and how long it's going to take to heal!"

From the get go, Ida May was a doer. She probably received that trait from her parents.

"My dad came from Copenhagen, Denmark, when he was 5. Later, he and a friend came down from Muskogee, OK, to St. Louis and became friends with a group of people," said Ida May. "I don't know how my parents met, but they both belonged to that same group and they would all go out on an island in the middle of the Mississippi—the men to fish and the women would bring bacon along just in case they didn't catch anything. They all had a good time."

Born in St. Louis, her mother tried to show her how to do things around the house.

"I was not domestic!" she said adamantly. However, she'd follow her carpenter dad around to various jobs, "helping" him oversee his work on

weekends.

Life was good for Ida May. She led an active existence and music became a part of her life at an early age.

"I took piano lessons when I was 10, but only practiced a bit before my Saturday morning lessons, so my mother decided she was wasting their money on me," she said, laughing.

It must have been watching her daughter on her bones that gave her mom the inkling Ida May had musical talent.

"My daddy made my first bones for me when I was nine," she said. "A man who lived down the street played the bones and showed me how. I kept persisting and he lent them to me for awhile. His were made out of rosewood and I had my dad make a pattern and make mine."

The bones have been a part of her life even since. In 1938 and 1939 she played her bones as part of a trio at the National Folk Dance meeting held at the Keil Auditorium in St. Louis.

"I bowled at that time and would swim at the Y. I bicycled for years—even hitting 2,000 miles twice on my cyclometer. Before that I was in the hiking club, I played tennis and I played volleyball with the Mother's Club from the PTA while raising my boys. And," she said with a grin, "I met my husband while I was roller skating."

Before her husband, Joe, died, he saw a notice on the bulletin board—Learn to Square Dance. Before long he and Ida May were square and round dancing all over.

"In 1957, I attended the 6th National Square Dancing Convention at the same Keil Auditorium." Ida May said. At 94, she is still dancing—able to dance the male or female role depending on her partners.

After Joe passed away in 1997 after 52 years of marriage, a square dancing friend convinced her to come down to the Valley, and Ida May settled into Winter Haven Park in Pharr, TX.

"I like the location because it's close to the parks where I square dance," she said. "But, my dancing was curtailed this year when I tripped over a microphone cord and fell flat on the concrete." That was the cause of her fractured pelvis.

Discovering Jams when she first came to the Valley, she took her bones and began attending.

"I would just sit there with my bones because you can't play the bones all the time," said Ida May.

"Somebody had an omnichord and I thought, 'I can play that. '"

Learning the omnichord, she would play that instrument at jams except when playing her bones. But here, these last few years, she's taken up the banjo, doing mostly chords at jams—always saving her bones for her specials.

When she thinks of the future she's mindful that she's still up—looking down—not looking up from the grass. She's grateful for that and shooting for 100 years old.

Hoping to be an inspiration to people by being happy, active and having fun, she's back to her square dancing after only eight weeks out.

There's only one thing Ida May is lamenting over these days

"I used to be go, go, go—fast, fast. Now I'm slowing down a little bit and I hate it!" She laughs and life is good. *Roda Grubb*

[Extracted from March 3, 2010 Original Winter Texan newspaper, and used with permission.



Ida May Schmich photograph by Roda Grubb

Bones Calendar

Bones Fest XV. June 10-12, 2011, San Antonio, TX.

NTCMA and Bones Contest. August 29-September 4, 2011. Bones contest on Saturday or Sunday.

John Cahill Obituary

John B. Cahill, Jr. (also known as "Mr. Bones"), 75, of Buford, GA, died Nov. 10, 2010 after a lengthy and courageous battle with a rare brain disease. He was born November 16, 1934, in Atlantic City, NJ, and graduated from Boys Town High School in Omaha, NE, in 1952.

While at Boys Town, he learned to play "rhythm bones," a musical instrument crafted from wood or animal bones, common in minstrel shows in the 1800s. It was a rare talent that became his lifelong passion.

John received a Bachelor's degree from Austin College in Sherman, TX, and served in the U.S. Navy for two years. He was an engineer for General Dynamics and Montgomery Ward before moving to Atlanta in 1969. He worked at the JC Penney Catalog Center in Forest Park until he retired in 1998.

After many years of playing the bones as a hobby, John began his musical career in 1990 as a street performer at Underground Atlanta.

Later that year, he joined Dr. Horsehair's Old Time Minstrels, a band playing popular music from the 1800s. For seven years, he performed with the group at festivals, conventions, fairs, Civil War re-enactments, and other venues across Georgia. The band was featured at the 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympic Games (including Centennial Park), Six Flags Over Georgia, Stone Mountain Park Antebellum Festival, Atlanta High Museum, Georgia Dome, Callaway Gardens, and The Omni.

John also brought his distinctive sound to the South Metro Concert Band and the Peachtree Jazz Edition Band.

In 1998, he formed Mr. Bones & Company, a four-member band that entertained at festivals, nursing homes, senior centers, churches, and other events.

Five years later, he and his wife Kay teamed up to form the bones/keyboard duo of Mr. & Mrs. Bones. They performed for a range of audiences in the Metro Atlanta area, and participated in the Summer Program for Kids at 20 Georgia libraries, tell-

ing stories and educating children about bones history.

Several of Mr. Bones' DVDs are being documented and preserved in the Library of Congress, along with the history of minstrel shows and bones. [Excepted from his formal obituary.]

John was a founding member of the Rhythm Bones Society, and the photograph on Page 8 shows one of his performances at Bones Fest III.

I had a few excellent conversations with John Cahill and his wife. They are in my treasure box. What did playing bones mean to an aging old man? He may have lost his ability to hear conversation level voices, but the bones' clicking is loud and clear. He may have lost his the ability for form complete sentences, but repeat phrases of rhythm were no problem. When he dressed up and stepped out on stage, he was a performer and loved by all. He grew old with grace and poise, with love all around him. Illness can take away physical and mental abilities, but the man on the inside was the same strong, witty, professional performer that so many have come to love. I had a brief moment in time to get to know John. I'll never forget him. *Mike Passerotti*

My sincere condolences to John Cahill's family, I remember his dynamic performance at Bonesfest VIII very well. The loss of any bonesman (or boneswoman) is a big one as there are seemingly so few of us out here! *Greg Burrows*

This is sad news but, alas, not surprising. John was a talented player and a man with many fascinating life stories. I will miss him *Michael Ballard*



Steve Brown in Ireland. See the article to right.

Up Sligo!

I must admit, I had to pinch myself several times to make sure it was real. There I was, a passenger in one of those right drive vehicles, making our way west from Dublin toward County Sligo. I was in Ireland again! This time quite impromptu, as my good friend, and flute player Raymond Henry had invited me to tag along on a visit to his birth place, Carnalech, in Clonacool, just outside Tubbercurry, in County Sligo. "Think of these places as a small box, inside of a larger box, inside of a larger box" he explained. This whole fantastic journey having been planned at our bi-weekly gig just a few short weeks before. Raymond, who was visiting his mother, would be staying at his own house near his brothers, and would already be renting a car. The temptation was just too much to pass up. And after getting approval from the big boss (my wife) I was soon sitting in my seat on another Aer Lingus flight, winging my way toward Dublin Airport.

In preparation for the trip, I made several inquiries by email, as to the possibility of performing, or doing a bone playing workshop as a way to earn a little extra money to defray the cost of the airfare. As luck would have it, I had the most willing of collaborators in 5 times All Ireland Bodhran Champion, Junior Davey, and his extraordinary wife Jelca. Junior and I had communicated several times by email, and he had been the recipient of a pair of bones I had made, given to him as a birthday present from his good friend and mine, bodhran and bones player Nicolas Dupin of France. Junior and Jelca were quick to arrange a workshop at the Coleman Music Center on the Saturday following our arrival., in Gurteen, just a few miles from where Raymond and I would be staying.

County Sligo is truly an amazing place for Traditional Irish Music. The birthplace to such legendary musicians as James Morrison, Paddy Kiloran, and perhaps the most influential Irish Fiddle player of all times, Michael Coleman, who emigrated to America in the early part of the 20th

century, and whose recordings were played all over Ireland. Today it is a strong hold of traditional music boasting a large number of musicians including Flute players Seamus Tansey, and Harry McGowan, the traditional band Dervish, and is host to one of the largest Summer Schools in Ireland, the South Sligo Traditional Music School in Tubbercurry.

Bone playing, though, is not as well known in the area, although it is known. Junior himself plays, as well as Cathy Jordan of Dervish. Much more known is the traditional Irish drum, the bodhran. A long history of playing the drum by "hand strikers" is seen in the area, as opposed to using the stick, which is seen more commonly around Ireland. Junior teaches the drum in the schools of Gurteen, as well as at the Coleman Center, and his students have gone on to win over 30 All Ireland titles in various age categories. Many bodhran players have played the bones in Ireland, including Peadar Mercier, Tommy Hayes, and Junior's inspiration, Johnny "Ringo" McDonough. Unfortunately, many of the younger bodhran players have not picked up the bones as much. Junior is committed to encouraging the Irish tradition of bone playing in hopes that this art will continue, and not be lost.

To say Raymond and I were lucky in the timing of our trip would be an understatement. The Week end we arrived Tubbercurry was host to a music festival, Ceol na Samhna, which included a concert on Friday night, workshops during the Saturday, and music sessions throughout the town all week end. In addition, far to our South, in County Clare, the Ennis Trad Festival would be running through Monday night. Combined with Junior and Jelca's invitation for the workshop, we were looking at a week rich with traditional music that the area is known for.

After settling in at Raymond's house, and meeting his two brothers, Fergus and Ignatius, we grabbed what we could of sleep, before Raymond headed off to visit his mother. Upon his return, I was quite surprised to learn that we had been invited to perform at the Friday night concert, where we could drum up participation

in the workshop the following day. Many of the local performers, some of the best musicians in Ireland, would in fact be performing that night, although Raymond seemed to have forgotten to tell me that before hand. I suppose ignorance is bliss, as we prepared our three sets, excited by the prospect, although sleep deprived.

We arrived on Irish time at the concert, 9pm for the 8pm start time. Soon we were joining the mc back stage, and walking out to do our little bit. We started with two reels, Maid behind the bar, and the Kilmaley reel, and when we ended, the response was over whelming. The locals seemed to truly enjoy these two Americans who had invaded their locality. Then came the jigs, our show pieces, the battering ram, and Gallagher's Frolic's. Again we finished to what we can only describe as thunderous applause, I kept looking around to see if someone else had come in. Truly charmed by the crowd, I was approached numerous times through out the night by the town folk, who expressed their appreciation for our performance, and remarked over and over again , ". with the two hands!"

We were home by 2am after a session in a local pub, and scrambling to make the workshop in Gurteen at 2pm. Outside the Coleman Music Center we were met and greeted cordially by Junior Davey. Junior himself comes from a rich musical heritage, his father, Andrew Davey having been a well known fiddle player. Junior is not only an All Ireland Bodhran Champion, but a very accomplished bone player. Playing in the one handed style that dominates Irish bone playing, he complements the music with some interesting syncopation, also evident in his bodhran playing.

I really had no idea what to expect at the workshop. I remarked to Raymond that perhaps it would be Junior, he and I looking at each other for the afternoon. As we made our way in side, we realized we were not going to be alone. We had 22 registered for the workshop, and now I was feeling the pressure. I've done numerous workshops over the years, usually lasting for an hour, but now I realized I needed to fill a three hour time slot

with bone playing. And to make it a little more challenging, I had small children from about age 8, adult beginners, and several adults who had been playing for some time. This was going to be a most challenging experience, I thought, to hold everyone's attention, and to provide them with a pleasant experience to encourage their learning in the future.

The workshop started out as planned, holding, learning the tap, and progressing to the rattle. Less than half were able to produce a rattle, and then we broke for tea, a welcome break for me, having given individual attention to each participant, and worked my way around the entire circle several times. After tea, a miracle had occurred. With less than half producing the rattle before the break, after the break more than 75% were producing a rattle, "What was in that tea!" I remarked. And I came to the stark realization that in that short time away from me, they had all learned what I had been trying to teach them, but without me present!

I must say that I had the great fortune to have some superb musical backing during the workshop. Not only from my good friend Raymond on Flute, and Junior on the Bodhran, but we were joined by an exceptional box (accordion) player PJ Hernon. PJ, originally from Connamara in Galway, was gracious enough to have come by at the urging of Junior, and played some great tunes in that inimitable style. The afternoon was rounded out by some individual performances by some of the children who danced sean nos style, and some of the more experienced participants who played along with PJ, Raymond and Junior.

After the workshop, Raymond and I enjoyed dinner with Junior, his wife Jelca, and their two children Adel, and Rachel, who both had participated in the workshop. More music at the restaurant, comparing bone playing styles, and a quick bodhran lesson for me. Then tea, and promises to see Junior and the family when they visit New York in February. Soon we were off to another late night session in Tubbercurry, and hitting the bed just after 2am.

With our formal obligations behind us, the rest of the week found us enjoying the company and hospitality of Raymond's family, including several small house sessions, and a larger house session which included local musicians Josephine Judge on accordion, flute players Michael Hurley, Father James, Harry McGowan, and Raymond, Michael's son Diarmud on bouzouki and bodhran, as well as Raymond's brothers Dermott on piano, Fergus on guitar, Ignatius on banjo, and Ignaticious' daughter Klina on flute and whistle.

On Wednesday we were asked by Junior to visit several schools in Gurteen to demonstrate American bone playing. Over the hour or two we visited two schools and several classrooms in each school. The children were delightful, asking for our autographs, and paying strict attention as I talked and demonstrated the bones. Once, two of the children played along with us, whistle and bodhran, and showed great expertise on the instruments. At each turn we were greeted with excited faces, eager to see and hear the bones.

In what seemed like a flash, the week was over, and we were making our way back to Dublin in the pouring rain. I can't thank Raymond and his family enough for their extreme hospitality, and to Junior Davey and his family, not only for arranging the workshop, but making me feel so welcomed and appreciated. Most of all to Raymond himself whose generous invitation made this great Sligo adventure possible. *Steve Brown*

Preview of Bones Fest XV

Texas is known for doing things big, and Bones Fest XV is no exception. The Fest hotel is beside the Alamo Compound, and we have a guided tour and IMAX presentation titled *Price of Freedom*.

The Fest is scheduled for the same weekend as the Texas Folklife Festival and we have stage time on both Friday and Saturday nights. On Saturday night, the Congo Line Finale will take us to the Riverwalk for a river-

Bones Fest XV

San Antonio, Texas
June 9-12, 2011



Host
Dennis Riedesel
riedeselD@uhv.edu

Full Program and
Registration
materials in the
next newsletter

boat dinner cruise on the San Antonio River.

We also have stage time in the Alamo Compound on Friday and Saturday mornings. There are workshops and jamming with lots of live music from several of my friends who can play about any kind of music; Irish, authentic Americana, folk, bluegrass, jazz, etc!

The Fest graphic drawn by Abbie Hanson, shown here in grayscale, is in color, and the Bones Fest XV t-shirt will be a keeper.

You Be Here, You Hear! *Dennis Riedesel*

(Continued from page 1)

about him.

The right box is the *Video of the Month*, and a rhythm bones video that will change monthly. The first video is the finale from Bones Fest XIII hosted by the Gil and Linda Hibben. There is a control panel in the lower left corner of the box with a button to start the video.

On the left side of the page under the Player of the Month box are four smaller boxes that should attract new members.

The upper left small box, titled What are Rhythm Bones, directs viewers to a brief description of rhythm bones. Clicking the DEM BONES box in the upper right corner of the page take you here also.

The lower left small box selects the Dr Edmunds rhythm bones on-line instruction page. From there one selects one of three basic or introductory lessons; How to Hold the Bones, The Tap, and The Triplet.

The upper right small box directs people to where they can buy rhythm bones and related resources, hopefully after they have tried the on-line instruction.

The lower right small box takes you to RBS pages for information, new member application and member renewals. We are trying PayPal for dues and a future On-line Bones Marketplace. Clicking on our circular RBS logo takes you here also.

To the right of the four boxes is a current news box that should be of interest to members. It has news outline in textual form and the reader can click inside the box to go to a page with the full news text. This should change frequently, but monthly at the minimum when the monthly Player and Video change.

The following is a more detailed look at how the row of navigation buttons at the top work. They are an up-to-three level index to most of the content on the website.

Home—Click this to get back to the Home Page

Current—Click this to bring up a pop-up list of current information.

Calendar—A Listing of dates of

upcoming rhythm bones related events. This is the most volatile page on the website, and most difficult to keep up-to-date. Viewers can use the new Contact Us page to submit new events. How long it take to post them on the calendar will depend on how much free time is available. The monthly update for Player and Video of the month will likely be when it happens.

News—A page with the full text of the news. Same as clicking inside the News box on Home Page.

Next Bones Fest—The latest information on the next Bones Fest.

Yahoo Forum—Clicking this takes you directly to the Yahoo Rhythm Bones Discussion Forum.

Players—Information about individual rhythm bones players

Biographies—Essentially the same information as on the current website.

Obituaries—This page is a way to honor and remember with stories, photographs and video of deceased members and other rhythm bones players of the past few decades.

Russ Myers Memorial Video One such remembrance is to Russ Myers, founding member and first Assistant Director. A video covering his rhythm bones life was produced and given to the Madison County, VA Historical Society in a memorial service held in his hometown with several RBS members attending. This video is now on-line.

Resources—It amazes me how much information Martha and Jonathan have placed on our website. The new Resource button controls three level set of buttons to the rest of this resource. Clicking it brings up a drop down lists of sub-menus.

Instruction—Instruction is important and it has been place first in the drop-down list.

Edmund On-Line Instruction—This on-line rhythm bones instruction is so important that it also has its own clickable box on the Home Page. (see review below.)

Reviews of Bones Videos—This presents reviews of all the known rhythm bones instructional

videos that can be purchased at stores or on the internet. The reviews originally appeared in several the Rhythm Bones Player newsletters, and are collected here for easy access and comparison.

Newsletters—The Rhythm Bones Player newsletter has been published quarterly since 2000 with one issue in 1999, and all but the last two years are available on-line. The most current two years are published in paper form and reserved as a benefit for members. Please join and help us promote rhythm bones and receive these newest newsletters. Note that the newsletter can be searched using the Adobe Reader Find function.

Rhythm Bones Society—Information about the Society.

History—Presents a brief history of the origins of RBS.

Bones Fests—Presents an overview of our Bones Fests with links to the details of each Bones Fest.

Join RBS—A new page where people can join on-line using PayPal

Renew Membership—A new page that allows members to renew on-line using PayPal.

History of this Website—A short history of this website.

History—A few bits of history.

General—A brief history of rhythm bones.

Sue Barber's History—A history of rhythm bones written by Sue Barber.

History of Bones Contests. A short history of known rhythm bones competitions.

Mr. Goon-Bones—A collection of memorabilia from recording artists Ted Goon.

1999 Internet Search—The results of a 1999 internet search.

Video & Audio—A collection of rhythm bones media.

Mike Passerotti YouTube List—Mike has collected all known YouTube rhythm bones videos into one convenient index. Click a link and see the video.

Discography—A list of some audio recordings.

Videography—A list of some other videos.

Where to Buy—Works the same as the same box on Home Page.

Items for Sale—This is not yet implemented. We have a few t-shirts from previous Bones Fests that we could offer.

Contact Us—A new page so that viewers can send us messages.

Rhythm bones instruction arrives with the Bones Unlimited course designed by Dr Fred Edmunds who many consider the grandfather of the RBS (See RPB Vol 5, No 3.) While this course teaches the percussive style of rhythm bones playing, his introductory sections apply to both percussive and traditional styles of playing. The power of his instructional materials are formal exercises that progressively increase in difficulty. In the future we may offer the entire course on a DVD, and there will be a link to purchase it at the On-line Bones Marketplace.

PayPal. Many people who have difficulty paying in dollars have requested another way to pay dues, and PayPal is an option. An email was mailed to members asking if they feel comfortable using PayPal and only two members responded negative. Some people do not know that you can use credit cards with PayPal without having to sign up as PayPal member. Let's see if it works for us.

While this article describes the website as it is now, it will change. We ask members to use the Contact Us page and make suggestions for additions and improvements.

Had enough words! Well go and try it out. The test version address is stevewixson.net. When fully tested it will have the new address of rhythmbones.org (we are a society—not a business), and rhythmbones.com will continue to work.

If your screen doesn't look like the figure on Page 1, let me know at wixson@chattanooga.net.

Technical stuff. The website was updated with Adobe Dreamweaver CS5. The concept for the Home Page was inspired from member Gil Hibben's www.hibbenknives.com Home Page created by RBS friend Mike Carter. *Steve Wixson*

Recording of the Quarter

Minstrel Banjo Style:featuring Joe Ayers, Clarke Buehling, Bob Carlin, Bob Flesher (with John Cahill on rhythm bones), Tony Trishka, and Bob Winans. Rounder CD 0321

I was fortunate to have purchased a recording from Bob Winans, banjo authority, and player, at Bones Fest XIV this year. Not only is it a great introduction to the Minstrel banjo era, but it has several bone players featured on 8 of the 28 cuts. One of the bone players is our good friend who recently passed away, John Cahill. John didn't play on a lot of recordings, that I'm aware of, so it's particularly gratifying to me to have him on record. This recording is a compilation of six banjo players, playing in the style that was popular in this country in the mid 1800's. I'm not very knowledgeable about this type of music, so I really enjoyed hearing the tunes and songs, and becoming more familiar with the music that is so connected to the rhythm bones. Some of my favorite tracks would be Bob Winans' interpretation of Briggs jig, and Briggs



Steve Brown and Junior from Steve Brown's trip to Sligo. See article on Page 4.

Reel, featuring Ken Koons on bones, and Bob Flescher's version of Jim along Josie, featuring John Cahill. There's also a wealth of information in a small booklet that comes with the recording, although I found it a little hard to find the names of the bones players and other musicians who accompanied the banjo players. Ironi-



The late John Cahill performing in costume at Bones Fest III. His obituary is on Page 4.

cally enough I recently started playing with a minstrel banjo player who lives here in my own town. I would consider this a very good introductory recording for folks who want to hear music from a gone by era in America. This recording is available from Rounder Record Corp, One Camp Street Cambridge, Mass. 02140. *Steve Brown*

Rhythm Bones Society

1060 Lower Brow Road
Signal Mountain, TN 37377-2910

Address Correction Requested

Ida May Schmich at a jam in Pharr, TX, and wearing her Bones Fest XII t-shirt. Photograph by Roda Grubb, and used with permission.