

FOLK CLUB OF SOUTH FLORIDA

FOLK NOTES

Contemporary, traditional, roots and alternative music

January 2009

ACOUSTIC UNDERGROUND

CONCERT SERIES *PRESENTS:*

Grant Peeples

Saturday, Jan. 3, at 8 p.m.



Grant Peeples does a number during Annie Wenz's show at the Luna Star Café in December. Photo by Barry White.

Grant Peeples doesn't shlep down from the Florida Panhandle to bring us your grandfather's country music. He's probably closer to Eric Schwartz and a little further to the left than others from his home town. He's alternative country with a fist, a left-wing Hank Williams delivering issues-oriented twang. Smart, in-your-face stuff. A sucker punch at Nashville.

Grant calls his music "alternative Southern." It's not a genre or sub-genre that one finds on song manifests, but it fits this unique songwriter well. This music is implicitly political, cultural and most of all, relevant. These are songs about a South that wheezes

in the shadows of ruinous real estate developments and suburban sprawl, and the steeple of the staid Episcopal Church. It is bad teeth, pit bulls and body odor, dirt under the fingernails, fast-food obesity, chain smokers, tattooed faces, shady county sheriffs. There are meth labs and racism and guns. A fearless guy on Death Row and a guy who ties his cheating girlfriend to the railroad tracks, only to console her with sips of whiskey as the train comes chugging around the bend. "This is real country," explains one of these hard-hitting songs. "And it ain't pretty."

It is Flannery O'Conner set to music. These songs almost gloat on the ugly underbelly of a class-divided society, while sticking their collective tongue out at the lame sentimentality of what Peeples labels neo-country music. The sound is classic, sparse, twangy, and guitar driven, and cut from the same thread of which songwriters like Guy Clark, Lucinda Williams and Ray Wylie Hubbard knit their own tunes.

It's all sung with Peeples' commanding, seasoned voice. It's a rough, edgy voice that works like a bucksaw on his recurrent themes of poverty, hypocrisy and environmental ruin. From one song to the next, the mood shifts quickly from dark to comedic and back again. The dark is foreboding, the comedy ironic – always at the expense of one convention or another: church, state, the executive branch, or Peeples' own rural America.

*"By turns knee-slapping and gut-wrenching, Peeples's lyrics call bull**** on hypocrisy whether he smells it in the bedroom or the halls of power."*

–Will Thomas

Links:

www.grantpeeples.com/
cdbaby.com/cd/grantpeeples

Saturday, Jan. 3, at 8 p.m.

LUNA STAR CAFE

775 NE 125th St., North Miami, phone 305-799-7123.

Requested contribution \$7 for member of any folk club; \$10 for non-member.

THE PREZ SAYS . . .

McCutcheon, those less fortunate, endowment, Bluegrass

By Barry J. White

If you missed John McCutcheon at the Labyrinth Café the other night, you did not



experience the special feeling he inspires in you as a member not only of his immediate audience, but as a participant in our greater society. He looks at family, parenting, baseball, military

service, politics and life in America and brings our everyday experiences into focus.

He is the Gold Standard for folk music. Hopefully, it will be less than seven years before we see him again in South Florida. Thanks, John. Happy travels.

As at all Labyrinth Café concerts, several people with disabilities were the guests of the event organizers. Following a tradition started by Robby Greenberg, Susan Moss and her associates provide free admission to several van loads of people. We understand that Ellen Bukstel and Brian Wolfsohn do the same at Shack in the Back shows. Thanks to these fine people who find the time for acts of loving-kindness as they dedicate countless hours to bringing us the music we all love. They are also bringing us an example of what can be accomplished when we decide not to go through life without touching the walls. Their handwriting is plainly there.

In case you are not aware of it, The Folk Club of South Florida, as a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation, can accept tax-deductible contributions for our Endowment Fund. The interest from the Fund helps us fulfill our mission of bringing folk music to the widest possible audience. The Club has no paid staff; all work is done by volunteers so that all revenue goes toward our work. Please contact us for more

information.

The South Florida Bluegrass Association is in danger of losing its home of 30 years off of Ives Dairy Road. Please see the article below and visit their website – www.southfloridabluegrass.com/ – to learn the whole story, then send a letter or e-mail as requested there to express your concern. Once again, art is the victim of mindless, bureaucratic Philistines. Join the fight; don't sit on the sidelines. Touch the walls.

We caught our first look at Grant Peeples when he took the stage at the very special Annie Wenz show a few weeks ago at Luna Star Café. What a wordsmith and writer he is – irreverent, insightful, funny! Read the story on page 1 and mark January 3 on your calendar. If he'll drive from Tallahassee to play for us you should invest an hour or so to go hear his really fine stuff.



We need the space, we need a place where the Spirit's free to dwell

By Laura Joy Levene

Can you imagine a magic bubble within earshot of I-95? There is one due east of Madie Ives Elementary School and north of Ives Dairy Road. It's a microcosm of what's left of the natural areas of half a century ago – green swatches of Florida pine and oak hammocks.

It still exists, but it may be in jeopardy. For more than 30 years this special place was home to the

Ives Optimist Club and the home of the South Florida Bluegrass Association's Sunday concerts and other workshops and festivals.

The Miami-Dade School Board gained control of the property in September 2008 when the Optimists Club lease expired.

Now the club has moved to a nearby park and a monstrous fence, 12 feet high, has cordoned off the beloved Oak Grove and the humble stage and buildings that supported countless hours of music, fellowship and relaxation for South Floridians.

I called Mike Levine in the Facilities Department at Miami-Dade Public Schools, and he assured me that there were no concrete plans for the



land or structures, and that he was open to suggestions for restoring the Oak Grove portion of the property for use by the Bluegrass Association or other artistic groups.

One day later, I was surprised to see that the buildings on the property, including the stage, were marked with "Scarlet Letters" which seem like a sign for demolition. The meeting hall, the log cabin, the stage, each now wears a different letter – C, D, E, etc., – the bold, bright paint signaling an uncertain fate.

I called Levine again, and he confirmed that the buildings had indeed been marked for demolition -- but he said all such plans are on hold due to economic restraints. He also said that while the Miami-Dade School Board has no funds to spend on renovation or rebuilding at the Oak Grove, funds could be raised some other way, perhaps by the

County Parks Department or through grants. He agreed to keep me informed of future plans that the School Board may have for the property.

The voices and tunes of Bluegrass that echoed through this grove for decades are part of our tradition and history. They must be allowed to continue. Our voices are one of our most precious gifts. We call upon all proponents of education to cooperate to keep alive our heritage and values with honesty and dignity.

I want to return to the Oak Grove and listen to Bluegrass under the magnificent natural canopy.

I want my friends and children to join me and perpetuate a beautiful tradition!

Laura Levene is an Ives Estates resident and retired teacher.

Editor's Note: The January Bluegrass festival is moving to Greynolds Park, about two miles southeast of the Oak Grove. Go east to 20th Avenue (Highland Lakes Boulevard), right to the first light, left to 22nd Avenue, then right to Miami Gardens Drive. Cross the intersection and enter the park 200 feet on your left. For more, see www.southfloridabluegrass.com/.

Song Swap and open house

The Folk Club of South Florida had a fabulous open house, holiday party, and song swap in December that was enjoyed thoroughly by all who came. We thank Nellie Lee for graciously serving as the hostess.

The next open house and song swap will be held on Sunday, Jan. 11, 2009, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Our host is Rae Newoman. To participate, please bring your contribution for the pot-luck dinner, i.e. salads, main dishes, or desserts.

The address is 7921 SW 100th St., Miami. From the Palmetto or U.S. 1, turn west on SW 104th Street, right on SW 79th Avenue, then left on SW 100th Street. Rae's place is on the right. Telephone: 786-229-2275 or 305-595-5483.

You don't have to be a Folk Club member or a musician. Bring friends and family if you like.

I wish all of you happy holidays and hope to see you soon.

--Linda Singer



Four days in banjo heaven

By Tony Thomas

Picture a room with walls lined with tables mounted by 100 banjos, most by great 19th and early 20th century makers like Bacon, Fairbanks, Cole, and Stewart, a few pre-Civil War minstrel banjos, and some of the best banjos made by contemporary artisans like Kevin Enoch and Pete Ross. Usually, someone brings to the Banjo Collectors' Gathering a special banjo like Virginia old-time legend Dock Boggs's Mastertone or North Carolina Round Peak banjoist Tommy Jarrell's Kyle Creed. I have played them both there.

Mingle with great banjoists like Bluegrass master [Bill Evans](#), Kentucky traditional player [George R. Gibson](#), Elias Kaufman, the dean of classic banjo, and old-time revival stars like [Paul Brown](#), [Bob Carlin](#), and [Ray Alden](#). [Old-Time Herald](#) founder Alice Gerrard, known more as a singer, songwriter, guitarist, and fiddler, is always there. You can try to get a good deal on a banjo from Stan Werbin of [Elderly Instruments](#) or John Bernuzio of Rochester's [Bernuzio's Vintage Instruments](#). Expect banjo historians and folklorists like Cece Conway, Laurent Dubois, Bob Winans, Greg Adams, and Tony Thomas to be picking each other's brains and those of banjo collectors like Peter Szego and Jim Bollman, who own hundreds of banjos. Hear presentations about



Tony Thomas fell in love with Bob Carlin's Gold Tone cello banjo. Contributions requested to help him buy one! Photo by Jim Carrier.

banjo history, the banjo's African ancestors, and the construction of fine banjos as well as the annual show-and-tell on finding rare collectible banjos. Through all the breaks and late into the night, talk banjo, play banjo, buy, sell, trade, and lust for banjos!

This was the 11th annual Gathering, held Nov. 20-23 this year at Colonial Williamsburg. Once a buy, sell, swap, trade, and boast weekend meeting in a motel, the Gathering has become an invitation-only gathering of the elite of the open-back and old-time banjo world. Discussion of banjo history and, especially, African-American, classic, and old-time banjo have been advanced immeasurably by the gatherings and what they have brought about.

The fruit of the Gatherings was evident in Williamsburg. For years, the Gathering has been a meeting ground for those of us who've fought to get banjo-heads to write down what we know in scholarly articles and books. This year, a one-day conference of contributors to a forthcoming scholarly anthology on banjo history edited by Dr. Bob Winans – the first scholarly collection on the banjo – preceded the gathering. Already, several of us have been invited to participate in books and periodicals and presentations at universities and museums. We've been able to get the advice of leading scholars of African, African American, and blues music. An [online database of historic banjos](#) has also been launched.

I've been a big part of this. I have a chapter to work on for Bob Winan's book, an article based on my presentations at the Banjo Collectors Gathering to work on for the Old-Time Herald, and a chapter done in Hidden in the Mix, an anthology of African Americans and country music forthcoming from Duke University.

My presentation on 20th Century African-American banjo playing opened the gathering. Wait until the Old-Time Herald publishes it or give me an hour and some coffee. Presentations at the Gathering this year also included Dr. Cece Conway's talk about her films of the last traditional black banjoists, Ray Alden on acoustic dynamics and adjustments in banjo design and set-up, Bob Carlin on the roots of Earl Scruggs's banjo style. [Greg Adams](#) and Gainesville banjoist Chuck Levy on African ancestors of the banjo, [Hank Sapoznik](#) on "A Century of Banjo in Films," Peter Szego on early American guitars focusing on Martin guitars, and Bob Winans on



African elements in a mid-19th Century manuscript of banjo and fiddle tunes by early blackface minstrel Dan Emmett.

A panel of John Bernuzio and, here from left, Bob Carlin, who is also a banjo designer and an adviser to Titusville's Gold Tone Banjos; Stan

Werbin, president of Elderly Instruments at Lansing, Mich.; Bluegrass banjoist Bill Evans; and Elkins, W.Va., banjo luthier and music-store owner Bob Smackula on banjo market trends explained that many young players getting into old-time and jam-band music have produced an expanding market for inexpensive, quality open-back banjos.

To leave after four days in Banjo Heaven, where everyone wants to play and discuss banjos, where I can pick up banjos much more expensive than my car, and where everyone knows and shares my work, I just have to hold my breath and wait until next year.

Song-writing contest

Ellen Bukstel invites singer-songwriters to enter a competition for new songs about domestic violence and abuse. There's a \$1,000 first prize and \$500 each for two runners-up in this contest co-sponsored by Shalom Bayit, a program of the Jewish Community Services of South Florida.

The deadline for all entries is Jan. 30. Multiple one-song entries are acceptable. The 10 semifinalists will be notified by April 3 and the winners on May 21 at the Faces of Violence Jewish Domestic Abuse Luncheon, at the Ritz Carlton South Beach.

You may obtain an entry form at www.facesofviolence.com/ and should mail entries to Ellen Bukstel, 14640 Mustang Trail, Southwest Ranches, FL 33330. Online submissions may be made only at www.sonicbids.com.

December folk calendar

Concerts and shows

All events start at 8 p.m. unless time is given. Our club events are in bold.

Saturday, Jan. 3

Leftneck Florida singer-song writer [Grant Peeples](#), Luna Star Café, 775 NE 125th St., North Miami, 305-799-7123. Folk Club of South Florida Acoustic Underground Concert (see page 1). [Small Potatoes](#), Shack In The Back House Concerts, \$15. Reservations required; ellen@bukstel.com or 954-880-0250.

Thursday, Jan. 8

Singer, composer, guitarist, pianist, and kazooist [Sol Ruiz](#), Luna Star Café.

Saturday, Jan. 10

[Friction Farm](#) at the [Labyrinth Cafe](#), Unitarian Universalist Church of Fort Lauderdale, 3970 NW 21st Ave., Oakland Park. Info and reservations: OzWoman321@aol.com or 954-478-8637.

Sunday, Jan. 11

[Lucy Kaplansky](#), 7 p.m. (6 p.m. potluck), \$15. Pre-pay reservations, [Glades' Edge House Concerts](#). Info: Dave Cambest, gladesedge@comcast.net or 954-742-9236.

Thursday, Jan. 15

Hymns for Her, [Luna Star Café](#).

Saturday, Jan. 17

Guitar workshop with [Michael Chapdelaine](#), \$30, Glades Guitars, 6754 Pines Blvd. – Suite A, Pembroke Pines, 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Reserve at 954-983-2510 or steve@gladesguitars.com.

[Michael Chapdelaine](#) with Doug Spears opening, Boumel House Concerts, Coral Springs. Call 954-341-0086 or e-mail aboumel@bellsouth.net.

[Diane Ward](#), Luna Star Café.

Sunday, Jan. 18

South Florida Folk Music Roundup: Live folk acts sponsored at [The Round-up](#), 9020 West State Road 84, Davie, FL, noon to 9 p.m. \$25, or \$20 for members of Broward Folk Club and the

Folk Club of South Florida. Info at 954-341-5953 or www.myspace.com/browardfolkclub.

Saturday, Jan. 24

[Mathew Sabatella](#) presents “Ballad of America,” Hallandale Beach Library, 300 S. Federal Hwy., Hallandale, 954-457-1750. Free. 2-3 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 31

[Ellen Bukstel](#) & Friends CD release concert, Shack In The Back, e-mail ellen@bukstel.com or phone 954-880-0250.

Play, sing or listen

You are welcome at these standing events, starting at 8 p.m. unless specified here.

Monthly regular events

Saturday, Jan. 3

Open mic, [Vegetarian Restaurant](#), 73 NE 167th St., North Miami, 305-405-6346.

Sunday, Jan. 4

[South Florida Bluegrass Association Festival](#), Greynolds Park, 18400 NE 22nd Ave., North Miami. For details, visit www.southfloridabluegrass.com/.

Sunday, Jan. 11

Folk Club of South Florida open house and song swap, 5-9p.m., 7921 SW 100th St., Miami. Call 786-229-2275 or 305-595-5483 (see page 3).

Wednesday, Jan. 14

Songwriters in the Round, [Luna Star Café](#), 75 NE 125th St., North Miami. Confirm 305-799-7123 or lunastarcafe@aol.com

Tuesday, Jan. 20

Irish music session, third Tuesday each month, [Luna Star Café](#).

Friday, Jan. 23

Bluegrass Gospel Sing and Jam, 2400 S. Pine Island Dr., Davie, 7 p.m. Details: (954) 578-1359 or (954) 663-3568.

Sunday, Jan. 25

[Broward Folk Club Music in the Park](#), Secret Woods. Julia Assembly Hall, Secret Woods Nature Center, 2701 W. State Rd. 84, Dania Beach, 954-791-1030.

Weekly regular events**Sundays**

John Brown's acoustic showcase, [JohnMartin's](#), 253 Miracle Mile, Coral Gables

Tuesdays

Lou's jam, [Luna Star Café](#), 775 NE 125th St., North Miami, 5-7 p.m.

[Old-time jam](#), Elks Club, 700 NE 10th St., Pompano Beach, 7-10 p.m.

[Chocolate Moose](#) acoustic open mic, 9118 SR 84, Davie, 9 p.m.

[Shauna Sweeney](#), Kingshead Pub, 2692 N. University Dr., Sunrise.

[Blues jam](#) at Nitecap Lounge, 15455 W. Dixie Hwy., North Miami Beach, 9 p.m.

Wednesdays

"Rock a Little Softer" with Raffa and Rainer, featured artists, & open mic Churchill's Pub, 5501 NE 2nd Ave., Miami. Featured artists:

Jan. 7, [Beijinhos](#) & [Alina Celeste](#);

Jan. 14, [Valerie C. Wisecracker](#);

Jan. 21, [Kim Drake](#);

Jan. 28. [Jacob Miller](#) & [Jacob Jeffries](#)

Thursdays

Open mic, [Elks Club](#), 6304 SW 78th St., South Miami. [Open mic](#), D.P.'s, 200 N. Hollywood Broadwalk, 954-922-7993

Saturdays

[Bluegrass jam](#), Lake Forest fire station, SW 39th Street and 41st Avenue, Hollywood, 3 p.m.

[Luna Star Café](#), open mic Jan. 10, 24 and 31 at 75 NE 125th St., North Miami. 305-799-7123 or lunastarcafe@aol.com

[Chocolate Moose](#), acoustic open mic, 9118 SR 84, Davie, 8:30 p.m.

Fuller detail about events and venues may be found at www.gotfolk.com. To revise or add a concert, open mic or other folk event to our February calendar, e-mail Tony Thomas – writerrad@aol.com – before Jan. 18.

Are you ready for the Round Up?

I was delighted by the talent represented in the list of Folk Round Up performers I received from Arlene Boumel, president of the Broward Folk Club. It'll be worth your while on Jan. 18 to be at 9020 W. State Road 84, Davie, between noon and 9 p.m.

Tickets are \$20 until Jan. 11 for members of the Folk Club of South Florida and the Broward Folk Club. They can be purchased online at www.browardfolkclub.com. Now would be a great time to join one (or both) of the Folk Clubs. Limit for these discount tickets is two per household. Children 16 and under will be admitted free.

For non-members, orders placed after the 11th, or sales at the door, tickets are \$25. Credit cards are not accepted for tickets – but may be used at the event to purchase food or beverages from the Round Up, the country & western nightclub we'll be using.

Wear your dancing shoes! And if you plan to play in the outdoor jam sessions, bring a chair.

If you miss me at the Round Up, chances are I'll be indulging another social passion at Bike Miami Days in downtown Miami. It's free! Take a look at www.greenmobilitynetwork.org.

I'm looking for music-lovers to write in Folk Notes. Want to review a favorite club or open mic, share your musical explorations, whatever? Fire off a note to jdj-miami@att.net and tell me your idea.

–John Hopkins

FOLK CLUB OF SOUTH FLORIDA

Is a non-profit organization (501-C) and member of The North American Folk Music and Dance Alliance. We proudly support Friends of Florida Folk and the radio station WLRN in Miami, Florida.

President and director **Barry J. White**, 305-251-1960, bwtamia@bellsouth.net
Vice-President and director **Valerie Caracappa**, 305-891-3528
Secretary and director **Karen Goldstein**, kargol47@yahoo.com
Treasurer and director **Jane Matthews**, mommamatt@aol.com
Director Carol Foster, Mangomum2@aol.com
Director Tony Thomas, writerrad@aol.com
Director Bob Ingram, ringram42@bellsouth.net
Director Charlie Rathburn, CRatMiami@aol.com
Director Michael Stock, 305-995-2264 or mstock@wlrn.org
Members-At-Large: Nellie Lee, Win Lippert, Grant Livingston, Linda Singer, Andrew Susman and Frost Walker

Newsletter: John Hopkins, 786-242-0766 or jdh-miami@att.net

Barker House Concert Series: www.floridamusic.org
Broward Folk Club: www.browardfolkclub.com
Local Folk Music Resources: www.gotfolk.com
North American Folk Music and Dance Alliance: www.folk.org
South Florida Folk Festival: www.southfloridafolkfest.com
Palm Beach Folk Club: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/pbfcchat>

WEBSITE LINKS

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Miami, FL 33176

Annual membership entitles you to a special rate on concerts, a monthly newsletter and admission to our annual party featuring complimentary food and music. Please choose the membership that is best suited for you and your family:

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DON'T MISS:

- GRANT PEEPLES at the Luna Star Café, 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 3
- SONG SWAP in Continental Park, 5 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 11, phone 305-595-5483
- FOLK & ACOUSTIC MUSIC with MICHAEL STOCK, Sundays 2-5 PM, WLRN 91.3 MHz