



The official voice of the Kruger Brothers

The Krüger Brothers Newsletter

"all the places they have been to, all the things that they have seen"

In the News

Keep an eye out for Uwe on the cover of **Flatpicking Guitar Magazine**. He will be featured in a cover story in the July issue of the magazine. • Canadian dates have been added to the schedule for July, including the **Mariposa Folk Festival**, July 6-7, and **Music and Beyond** in Ottawa on the 10th. In August the KBs return to the **Goderich Celtic Roots Festival** in Goderich, ON. • The KBs are back on the boat! Join them on **Mountain Song at Sea** sailing February 3-7, 2014, from Miami to Nassau and Great Stirrup Cay, Bahamas, aboard Norwegian Pearl. You'll enjoy a luxurious ship full of all the amenities you'd expect – a pool, hot tubs, a casino and music on multiple stages, around every corner. As with last year's cruise, it's an opportunity to get together with artists who share a passion for their music and a community of like-minded fans. ►



www.krugerbros.com



This photo was taken steps from the door of the studio building. It is, quite simply, a magical place, surrounded by trees and wonderful views of the foothills of the Blue Ridge. Photo courtesy Julie Macie.

News

Another great year for the Kruger Academy

The Kruger Brothers Music Academy was held in mid-May, and attracted a diverse group that shared a love of music and a desire to play music well with others. And, for the three days of the Academy, that's exactly what they did. One of the participants was Dr. Jim Lewis, who wrote:

"Just when you think the Kruger Brothers can't get any better, they surprise you by getting better. The academy was superb last year. This year, it was even more polished and all-encompassing. I can't think of a better way to spend a weekend than with these people who are collectively one big friendly family. They are free with their time and advice, and somehow manage to make every single guest feel welcome and appreciated. My compliments for a great program." ►

New music

The Snyder Family's Building Bridges

The Snyders have long been favorites in Wilkes County, NC, but with this release, they're sure to find a broader audience.

By Glen Herbert

There is a novelty to being a family band, just as there is a novelty to being very young yet sounding like someone who has been playing for decades. There was a time when the Snyder Family Band was both of those things—I first heard them when a friend took me to the Cook Shack, a small, cozy roadhouse in rural North Carolina to see a little girl play fiddle.

There, surrounded by the Saturday morning pickers, Samantha Snyder's playing was truly enthralling. She just got up

there, so humbly, and played along with the others while her parents sat eating breakfast in one of the booths. Yes, her playing was perhaps immature, but she nevertheless was playing well beyond her years, and doing it in a group of people that were just having a lot of fun making music together, just as they did most Saturday mornings over breakfast. It was one of the those life affirming things, a reminder that stunning things can still happen, and if you are in the right chair and facing the right direction, you might catch them. The people passing on the road outside had no idea what they were missing.

Well, time marches on, and soon the Snyders were playing the smaller stages at MerleFest, and then they were playing gigs, and then there were the albums. There was always still a whiff of novelty to the group, and Bud (Zeb and Samantha's father) took up bass guitar, the story goes, when the family gave him a bass for Christmas and told him to learn to

play it. Samantha's voice was immature, in a clinical sense, because frankly she was so young. Zeb played guitar, beautifully, and while it could at times be a bit formulaic, what he was doing was still remarkable, and simply enjoyable, not only given how far he had come in his playing at such a tender age.

All that said, their new album, *Building Bridges*, is something different entirely. It's their first album of all originals, and as such, whether you are aware of it or not, is a unique expression of the musical community that they have grown up within. "Mountain Railway" is a composition inspired by the playing of Doc Watson, someone the Snyders knew and played with. On most of the tracks, Zeb plays the guitar that was built for him by Wayne Henderson, a celebrated luthier and player who, often as not, is right there at the Cook Shack with the rest of them. "Blue Bottle Blues" is an instrumental dedicated to a friend, Reggie Harris, who made Zeb's bottleneck slide out of, well, a bottle neck.

The music here is varied from swing, to country, to even some jazz touches on "Reed's Overture" and elsewhere. It's a delight throughout, but it's also a reminder that we can enjoy music on so many levels. There is joy in listening to good recordings, but there is also joy in being aware of where music comes from and why. And there is something wonderful about just sitting in a circle and making music together, not to compete or compare, but just to make a sound. This album, when you scratch a bit below the surface, is about all of that. ►

Zeb and Samantha Snyder have played the Kruger Brothers' Carolina in the Fall event in 2007. They were also profiled July 2011 issue of this newsletter.



Profile

Where would we be without Miss Moneypenney?

Christine Bell runs the Kruger Brothers' office and a lot more.

by Dan Shearer

I'm sure Christine Bell, or as the The Kruger Brothers affectionately call her, "Moneypenney," (a nickname familiar to you James Bond fans out there, coined for the fact that one of Christine's main responsibilities is to keep track of the money - coming and going) has a title, but like so many others who work in the background, doing what it takes to support those in the limelight, a job title would fall short.

Christine and her two brothers and sister were born and raised on a tobacco farm in Yadkin County, NC. When I asked Christine how she liked to spend her time when not in school, she told me, "When your entire family, including aunts and uncles raises tobacco, you spend all of your 'free time' working on the farm, six days a week, doing whatever needs to be done - all the way through high school." And that was before mechanization; everything was done by hand. Working on her parents' farm came with being a member of the household, but when working for her uncles, Christine commanded twenty-five cents an hour.

After graduating from Stone Mountain High School in 1976, Christine enrolled in Wilkes County Community College (home to MerleFest) where she earned an Associates Degree in Computer Programming. Soon after graduation she went to work as an office employee at a nearby realty company.

In 1986, Christine married Jackson Bell, a local building contractor, and for twenty-five years "took care of the business." After Jackson retired, Christine took a job in the billing office at Tyson Foods, where she continues to work, primarily on the shipping end of the operation, all the while raising three children.

When it came time for Jens and Philip to build their homes in North Wilkesboro, Jackson was recommended for the job by friends of Philip Zanon for whom Jackson had built a vacation house. It was during this time that Christine first met the Krugers and their families. Then, when The Kruger Brothers were ready to build a studio, they again asked Jackson for assistance, which came in the form of putting the studio "under roof," including the foundation, framing, roofing, siding, setting windows and doors, and plumbing. "Philip knew that I managed the office for Jackson Bell Construction, so once the organization became large enough to require outside help, he asked me if I would be interested," reports Christine. "The answer obviously was 'Yes!'"

Listing Christine's duties working at the studio is a challenge, but here goes: handling all of the business correspondence, paying the bills, managing the payroll, doing the accounting and bookkeeping, managing the online store, ordering supplies, taking orders for CDs and mailing them, and working with CD retailers like Amazon. Or, as Joel says, "handling all of the intricacies of running our operation from the back office." Plus, she keeps the merchandise inventory and packs "Joel's merchandise trunk" whenever the Krugers go on the road, or when the band's events are far away, ships the CDs. She also grants the licenses to, and collects the fees from, agents who use The Kruger Brothers' tunes.

"This is my fun job," says Christine proudly. "It's my passion. It provides me with an outlet for enjoyment. I love music (Jens always tells me that I need to learn an instrument, and I say, 'No, you're the player; I'm the



Joel, Uwe, Jens and Christine Bell at the offices of Double Time Music Inc

listener.'). Working for The Kruger Brothers has allowed me to meet people from all over the world and to make a lot of new friends. And no matter where I go, the music brings people together. Take the Academy for instance; many of the participants had never met, yet soon they were jamming all over the place!"

According to Joel, Christine is "the one 'invisible' (only to the general public, that is) member of our team, but probably the most important. She is the cheerful voice you hear when you call Double Time Music for information, and The Kruger Brothers rely on her for all of our administrative matters. She has such a wonderful attitude, always managing to brighten our day when we're busy rehearsing or recording. She really "keeps the wheels rolling." ►



The Kruger Brothers Newsletter is compiled and edited by Glen Herbert. Send comments or story ideas to glenherbert@sympatico.ca. To subscribe or unsubscribe visit www.krugerbros.com.