

PBS affiliate to tape KFC Bluegrass Festival

The festival season completes its last full month with such major events as the National Flatpicking Championship in Winfield, Kan., on September 19-22 and the Kentucky Fried Chicken Bluegrass Festival in Louisville.

Clara Kinnan of Kentucky Fried Chicken reports that WKPC-TV, the Louisville PBS affiliate, will tape this year's KFC Bluegrass Festival on September 6-8. Plans are to offer a series of seven one-hour programs to PBS systems nationwide.

Fire On The Mountain's David Holt will host the coverage of the world's best-attended bluegrass festival, with talent ranging from Bill Monroe to Doc Watson to New Grass Revival.

The event will be a homecoming for NGR mandolinist and guiding spirit Sam Bush. He has a superb new solo album (astonishingly his first) on Rounder Records entitled *Late As Usual*. Sam explores everything from traditional mountain music to acoustic funk on the platter.

Watson is headed back to the studio this fall to record his first all-bluegrass album with help from Bush, Merle Watson, Belea Fleck and Alan O'Bryant. Watch for a spring release.

Tony Trischka, the trend-setting, banjo-picking leader of Skyline, has completed yet another solo record for Rounder, entitled *Hill Country*. "It's a more traditional sounding album than most of my work," he reported.

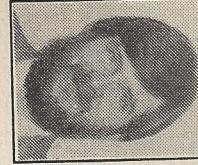
He recorded half of *Hill Country* in Nashville with modern pickers Tony Rice, Bela Fleck, Sam Bush, and Sonny Osborne, and the rest in Washington, D.C., with traditionalists The Johnson Mountain Boys and Del McCoury.

Skyline will tour Europe October 24 through November 2.

The Johnson Mountain Boys provide backing on *The Cheer Of The Home Fires*, the spartan reunion of former Warner Brothers artist Delta Bell and long-time duet partner Bill Grant. The Oklahoma duo has never sounded better on vinyl than on the recent Rounder release.

The Johnson Mountain Boys' fifth Rounder album, an all-gospel affair, should be out soon. Ken Irwin produced, with Jimmy Robeson behind the controls, at northern Virginia's

Another Country



Art Menius

the original lineup. New members are Allen Dyer, Mike Thompson, Harvey Arnold and Lorraine Jordan.

Neighbor's Stoney Rumm have recruited Kenny Duncan, formerly of Bobby Atkins and the Countrymen, as lead guitarist. They recently headlined Nashville's Station Inn. Tommy and Timmy Mendenhall and Vernon Alred, all one-time Balsam Gap Boys, have stirred up Hickory Wind with guitarist Mike Cockran and fiddler Paul Kick. The band captured the North Carolina Bluegrass Championship at Denton on July 11.

The Lonesome River Band made a quick hop to the continent in early August to play casinos in Monaco.



Trapezoid

Cathy Fink, Hazel Dickens, Si Kahn and John McCutcheon were among the instructors for "Songs of Southern Struggle," the vocal week presentation of the Augusta Arts Workshop. The seminars began on August 11, con-

cluding with the Augusta Festival in Elkins, W. Va., Aug. 16-18.

Elkins serves as home base for Trapezoid, the veteran eclectic band whose first release for Sugar Hill, *Cool Of The Day*, should be in the stores in a few weeks.

Veteran mandolinist Jimmy Gaudreau left the Country Gentlemen, with whom he spent nearly six years, on June 1 to join Tony Rice's new band.

Joe Val, perhaps the first New Englander to gain broad respect in bluegrass, died June 11 at age 58 after a lengthy battle with cancer. Val attracted attention with his clear, high tenor and precise mandolin work, but won admiration due to his genuine love and concern for others.

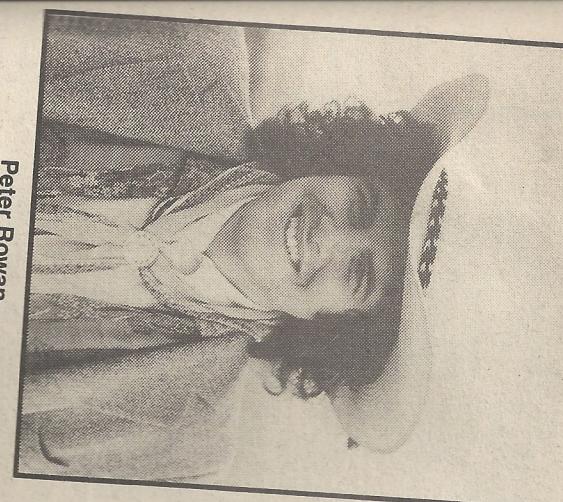
An Epic Records artist in the late '60s with the Charles River Valley Boys, Val had led the New England Blue Grass Boys, who recorded for Rounder, since 1970.

Art Menius serves as a consultant to *The Linear Group*, which produces the Liberty Flyer radio series, and as contributing editor and columnist for *The Carolina Bluegrass Review*. He is a former staff historian for the North Carolina Dept. of Cultural Resources. Please send correspondence for this column to Art at Rt. 1, Box 30, Pittsboro, NC 27312.

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The Virginia Squires, promoting their Rebel album, *Mountains And Memories*; Rounder's Nashville Bluegrass Band, pushing their debut *My Native Home*; and Peter Rowan, previewing his Bill Monroe tribute on Sugar Hill, *The First Whippoorwill*, recently appeared on The Nashville Network's *New Country*.



Peter Rowan

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The Squires, by the way, are set to record a gospel album, their third LP overall, this month. Fiddler Stuart Duncan, late of Larry Sparks, has joined the Nashville Bluegrass Band.

The Smith Sisters, Debbie and Megan, recently showcased tunes on *New Country* from their critically successful *Bluebird* on Flying Fish. They returned to Todd, N.C., and Northstar Studios in August to record a second helping of their old-time/new acoustic blend. Philadelphia area fans no doubt recognized ob Carlin during a brief glimpse of the Westester County (N.Y.) Fiddling Extravaganza on the *CBS Morning News* July 8.

Jeff Robbins of Black Mountain, N.C., returned to Northstar Studios to record a chil- dren's album and to cut a music video at the mint Todd General Store. Robbins recently established Crystal Productions, a booking agency specializing in cultural enrichment programs for schools. Swift Creek, based in Raleigh, N.C., entered the studio last month to record a second album. The group retains only fiddler Buck and sometime guitar player Mike Hul-

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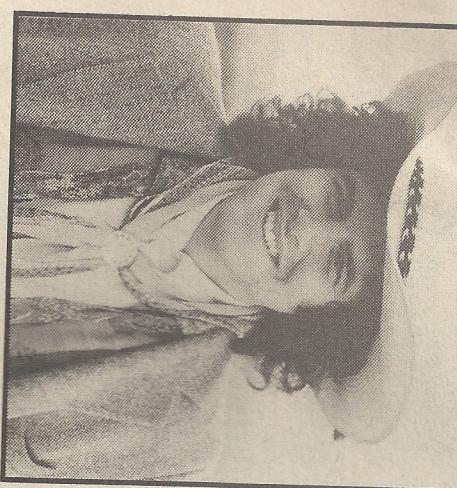
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