



Last Friday night, for three hours, I sat on the very front row, 8 feet away from a bank of speakers roughly the size of my truck and soaked in the best entertainment I've had in many years.

The entertainment: Bluegrass Music's just named Female Vocalist of the year, Dale Ann Bradley and Coon Creek. The venue, Colonel Nat Paul's Bluegrass Music Hall just outside Berea. Both are among the best kept secrets on earth I sometimes believe.

It's no secret to anyone who knows me that I am a huge bluegrass music fan. There's something about that high lonesome sound that runs in my blood, but last Friday night was more than special. It was, in fact, much more a spiritual experience than a simple sit back and listen affair.

Dale Ann does that to you if you have mountain blood in your veins. The only thing surprising to me about her getting the big award is that it didn't happen ten years ago. And she has a band now that compliments her to the max.

Good friend, Vickie Simmons, plays bass and sings harmony. Michael McClain, the baby son of the famous McClain Family plays banjo and some lead guitar. Eddie Miller from Monticello and a long time Nashville studio musician is the mandolin/fiddle player and when he takes a break on either you have to hang onto your seat to keep the shivers from shaking you out of it.

East Kentuckians and mountaineers all. Dale Ann was born and raised in the head of a holler in Bell County. Vickie's roots go to Perry County. Michael was born in Knott County.

I've heard people talk and preach about hearing the angels singing all my life. About half the songs that Dale Ann did last Friday night were gospel and I mean no disrespect to the heavenly hosts but I can already tell you that if I ever make it to heaven, the rest of you can go listen

to the angels but I want to be in a corner listening to Dale Ann if she ain't in that Angel Band.

Music gets no better, and in my experience, very rarely gets as good as what I heard last Friday night.

We will try to keep you posted as time goes by, but why don't you mark your calendar right now for Dale Ann Bradley and Coon Creek's big festival coming up May 17, 18 & 19 at my good buddy, Jim Bowman's Oh Kentucky Campground in Berea.

Ralph Stanley will be there-Larry Sparks, John Conley, Larry Cordell, Southern Harvest and a host of others. But Dale Ann and Coon Creek will steal their own show.

In the meantime, if you want to learn where Dale Ann and Coon Creek will be playing next or get more details on the festival, simply go to daleann.com on the Internet where you can also find the rest of this story.

And also in the meantime, if you live within 200 miles of Berea, Colonel Mar has a band at the music hall every Friday and Saturday night. Admission is never more than 10 bucks (8 to see Dale Ann last Friday).

It's a family place where the strongest drink allowed on the premises is left over coffee, though they keep a fresh pot made too for the faint of heart. All kinds of stuff at great prices off the grill and take my word for it, the best tenderloin sandwich in Kentucky till they run out.

You can turn your kids loose and let them wander around and the end-system is not so deafening that you have a headache for days.

To get to Mar's Bluegrass Music Hall, find highway 1016 running from Berea to 421. No matter which way you're coming in it's a mile and there you are.

Phillip Akemon & Flat Lick will be there this week (16th) and Southern Harvest (17th). Dave Maggard Senior plays with Southern Harvest, by the way. Coming up, Continental Divide on March 10, J.D. Crowe and

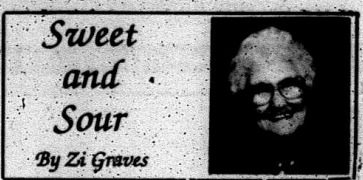
New South on March 17. In fact, there are 20 bands booked between now and mid April and it's like reading a Who's Who of contemporary Bluegrass Music.

Call the Colonel at 859-966-2523 or 582-5306 and ask them to mail you

a schedule.

And if you are dying to catch up with me, Colonel Mar is going to be my Friday night hangout for the foreseeable future.

You all come.



The Changing World

An article about all the changes that have taken place in the world I have been living in for the past 87 years would fill volumes of books and still leave many out. So, I'll take over many and touch only those I have tucked away in some remote part of my memory box.

An incident the other day in the lobby of the restaurant I was enjoying caught my attention and instantly brought to mind the difference in times when I was a girl in Carter County, and now. It was of a woman casually walking amongst the people, either browsing or being waited on at the cash register, with a phone held close to her hand and evidently talking to someone. Suddenly I realized my 87 years had been entirely lived in vain. I was witnessing the latest thing in modern technology. A phone that didn't need the inconvenience of a wire dangling along or a switch board where a person was always present to complete the call, or give assistance if needed.

It was then I decided to flip back a few pages of time and go over a few more things I have witnessed, some being a real help to humanity and quite a few being a nuisance to many of us.

When my life began in 1918 I was the fifth child in a family of nine and was delivered by a midwife, to two hard working parents living on a small farm close to Olive Hill with no modern conveniences but with the know-how and love enough to raise children and teach them to "honor their father and mother" and earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, along with their a-b-c's, and writing

their own names. Our music was the beautiful voice of our mother singing ballads and hymns or lullabies to the babies.

The first phone I ever heard of was when I was about five and lived close to my grandfather where one was hanging on the wall that could only be reached by the adults and was controlled by a switchboard operator somewhere in the distance. I had no idea what it was or how it worked. That was also where I first saw an automobile and the last I saw till we moved to Ohio in the early twenties and my oldest brother bought one. It was a Metz and chain driven. How I don't know, but it was a car and my brother was proud of it for it got him to and from where he wanted to go. The Metz was the only car I ever knew of that was chain driven and has been obsolete since I was a child. The next car to take its place was one that had to be cranked to get it started and the one doing the cranking didn't watch out the handle would kick backward and could break his arm by doing so. The little narrow tires with inner-tubes inside to hold the air had to be pumped frequently and changed often for they were easily punctured. The owner of a car always had to carry equipment such as patches, pump-and-jack to fix the flat tires caused by a blow-out or punctured by unseen nails.

Automatic starters, and tires without inner-tubes came later. So did the design of bigger and better cars. Model T Fords were the most popular cars at that time but soon bigger and more popular cars for those who could afford them became the preference such as the Oldsmobile, Packards, Buicks and Cadillacs.

About this time in my life oil lamps were being dismantled and replaced by gas lights for the home in areas where progress was being used to change the world in which we lived. Often the old pipes that furnished the fuel to the house would be left for the next tenant to dispose of when the newest way of lighting the house with electric became available. This was truly the turning point of many people's lives. Lights could be in every room at once, the old sad irons thrown away or used for doorstops, and replaced with ones that got its heat from a big wire plugged into an outlet made special for it. A wondrous old world had opened sleepy eyes and was facing the sunrise to a new one.

When we heard the first airplane go over our heads we had no idea we were hearing the future way of traveling, and one day these lead miracles of the air would be circling the earth, going to the moon and visiting a space ship beyond the clouds. And that phone now securely hooked onto the wall, could one day be plugged into an outlet and used from a chair close to the fireplace, and still later, untampered by lines leading to it, be used anywhere and time one wanted to make a call, even Europe, the land beyond the ocean.

Then the miracle of highways taking the place of dirt roads and paths used since the country was settled by our pioneer forefathers and mothers, bloomed before my very eyes. At first the muddy roads were leveled by hand so the owner of a car could get over them, but soon after gravel was used and the former road broadened for passing and to accommodate the increasing traffic. Often, when I was small, one would find a stretch of road, especially through small towns, laid with brick. The small town I lived in had one of these and the street car track was laid down the middle of it. Trains and street cars were popular when I was a child, the streetcars for local use and the trains for long distance traveling. A steamer on the

Ohio River was also used if one lived close to the docks. Once our whole family used one, "The Maryanne," to take a trip "back home" to see our kinfolk. It was much easier for a mother to take five kids on a big boat with cabins to sleep in, and meals served three times a day, plus something different to look at the whole time they were getting to their destination. Every time a dam was reached the boat had to stop above the dam and wait till the water could be lowered to the next level by hired laborers before we went on our way. These were interesting times too for we could romp and call out to those watching from the shore. We docked at Ashland and Mom with her brood took a train to Olive Hill where we were greeted by familiar faces.

Then smooth highways began to appear almost as fast as the cars that

would use them could be put off the assembly lines where they were being made. Still that wasn't enough for the travel hungry people wanting to see the world or "go home" usually the Kentucky Mountains, so more highways and byways were built until now, we have more roads and concrete in Kentucky than we do bluegrass, or mountain sides, or so it seems.

So, as I watched the horse and buggy days slip into the past, the automobile take its place, the train and boats almost a rarity to the new generation, and the skies filled with flying machines, and then good death disappearing beneath concrete, I can look about and see the results of progress. Good or bad, it is there for all to see and be benefited by or hurt by what you see.

My life has been spent during the time invention and progress was in its infancy and God, in His wisdom, was exploding, by way of education, the minds of men with the wonders of creation and what lay before the human race if those whom He had blessed with ingenuity used it wisely. Have we, and are we, doing so today?



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