

January 2010
Volume 2, No. 1

This Month at BASC

The Bluegrass Association of Southern California

PO Box 10885
Canoga Park,
CA 91309

Board of Directors

Harley Tarlitz
Jeffrey Fleck
Bob Cesarone
Ben Weinberg
Nanette Weinberg
Jim Silvers
Walden Dahl

[Click here
to visit us
on the Web](#)

Editor
Jeffrey Fleck
(310) 390-4391
Jeffreyfleck@mac.com

The Special Consensus

We got them! January 28th in Encino.
Tickets on Sale Now. Hurry, Limited Seating!



BASC presents **The Special Consensus** at 8:00 PM, January 28, 2010 at the CTMS Center for Folk Music in Encino Park, 16953 Ventura Blvd., Encino CA. Don't miss the thrill of a live performance

Special Consensus is a superb bluegrass outfit in a classic vein but with more than enough modern sensibilities to attract every ear in this now pleasantly fractionating genre. The vocals are spotless, the playing as shiny as a newly minted penny, and music like this is the reason people come to love bluegrass -- **Mark S. Turner, Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange**

Yes, Special Consensus may be Chicago's very own veteran bluegrass band, but talent like this is the property of the world.

— David Royko, Chicago Tribune

in an intimate setting by one of today's premier Bluegrass bands. A favorite of the festival circuit back East, TSC has 26 CDs to its credit. *Signs*, the title cut of their latest CD, was the #1 played bluegrass recording on Sirius Satellite Radio earlier this year and remains #10 on the Bluegrass Unlimited top album chart after six months.

There are only 75 seats available in the Center for Folk Music, so reserve your tickets now by calling (310) 390-4391, ordering on-line at our website. or using the coupon on page 4. Tickets are also on sale at all BASC events and at the Blue Ridge Pickin' Parlor in Granada Hills.

[Click here to order
tickets On-Line](#)

Jams Around Town

The Soup Jam
3240 Industry Dr,
Signal Hill, CA
Tuesdays 7:00 PM
Don Rowen 562-883-573

The New Westside Jam
Industry&Jazz Cafe
6039 Washington Blvd
Culver City, CA
1st Monday 7:30 PM
Jeff Fleck 310-390-4391

The Altadena Jam
Coffee Gallery
2029 N. Lake
Altadena, CA
2nd Sunday 12:30 PM
Dave Naiditch
french10@pacbell.net

The "Strictly Bluegrass" Jam
Robano's Italian Kitchen
10057 Riverside Drive
North Hollywood CA
2nd & 4th Weds 7:00 PM
Paddy Hill
paddyh036@gmail.com

Blue Ridge Pickin' Parlor
17828 Chatsworth St
Granada Hills, CA
1st Saturday 7:30 PM
(818) 282-9001

Orange County Archery
18792 Brookhurst St.
Fountain Valley CA
1st & 3rd Thursday, 6 PM
Shelah Spiegel
(714)454-1976

Zoey's Cafe
451 E. Main St.
Ventura, CA
2nd & 4th Mon., 6-10 PM
Gene Rubin
generubinaudio@earthlink.net

Tuesday, January 19th
BASC Night at the Braemar

Braemar Country Club
4001 Reseda Bl. Tarzana 91356
7:00 to 9:30 PM

Featuring...
Simon Pure

Simon Pure is Cowboy slang for "the real thing", and that's what this group of top-notch musicians from Southern California endeavor to be.



Their music is real Americana ranging from Bill Monroe to Beatgrass. The band combines close three and four part vocal harmonies with instrumental dazzle.

Simon Pure has enjoyed rave reviews from those who have heard them performing at venues ranging from a few to a few thousand. It makes no difference to them, they just enjoy playing the music they love—And it shows. Buffet dinner served from 7:00 PM and the music starts at 8:00 PM. \$15.00 for dinner and the show, or \$5.00 with soft drinks, coffee, or tea only. Advance reservations suggested but not necessary. Call Harley Tarlitz at (818) 221-4680

Sunday, January 24th
BASC Bluegrass Jam in the Park

Encino Park
The Center for Folk Music
16953 Ventura Bl. Encino 91316
1:00 to 4:00 PM

Meet your bluegrass friends (and make some new ones) at the great BASC Bluegrass Jam in the Park. If its cold outside, we'll jam inside the Center for Folk Music courtesy of

our friends at the California Traditional Music Society. If the weather is nice, we'll be outside on the grass. The Jam in the Park welcomes pickers and grinders of all skill levels. The point is, be comfortable and enjoy the music. The Center for Folk Music is located at the front of

Encino Park facing Ventura Blvd. at the corner of Balboa. Look for the big BASC Banner

Gotta Travel On

Ron, the proprietor of Vincenzo's Pizza of Chatsworth and a great friend of BASC, has informed us that he can no longer host the BASC Bluegrass Pizza Night due to licensing issues.

This is sad news. The Bluegrass Pizza Night, with its unique, if serendipitous, sit-in-with-the-band structure, has yielded some great nights of bluegrass and some interesting combinations of bluegrass talent on stage.

We are looking for a new venue for this event and we're open to suggestions. Know of a place that might fit the bill? Email the editor and let us know.

The Festival Watch

The 48-Hour Jam

January 8-9th

Doubletree Hotel

3100 Camino del Rio Court
Bakersfield, CA 93308
(800) 222-8733

The annual 48-Hour Jam Sponsored by the California Bluegrass Association. Two days and nights of bluegrass jamming. Pickers of all skill levels and grinders are welcome. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

Blythe Bluegrass Festival

January 15-17th

Colorado Fair Grounds
591 North Olive Lake Blvd.
Blythe, CA
(760) 222-8166

The first major Bluegrass Festival of the year and one of the biggest Bluegrass events in the U.S.A. Two huge stages, jam-packed with musicians, all day long for 3 full days. BlueGrassers also enjoy the informal jams, contests, quilt show, food, and merchandise booths. Click [HERE](#) for info.

SoCal Bluegrass Resources

[California Bluegrass Association](#)

[Southwest Bluegrass Association](#)

[Folkworks](#)

[Alive and Picking](#)

On (Not) Defining Bluegrass Music

By Jeff Fleck

You all know the story about the four blind men who were asked to describe an elephant by touch. One grabbed an ear, another a tusk, another a leg, and another the trunk. Of course, each came up with a very different description. Even with full sight, it's hard to describe or define anything well. *Bluegrass* music, or just simply *Bluegrass*, is no exception. In fact, many folks object to the very effort. Making definitions sets artificial limits and boundaries, excludes too much, and stifles creativity. These are all bad things, right?

But every once in a while I come across something like this recent *Craig's List* entry: "Forming new punk-roots-bluegrass band; have banjo and guitar, looking for keyboard player and percussionist." It's at times like those that I start thinking the effort to define *Bluegrass* may not be a bad thing after all.

It's good to begin with origins. With bluegrass music, we're fortunate because we know who created it and when. That would be Bill Monroe and 1946. That was the year that Monroe, with the help of a young banjo player named Earl Scruggs, recorded the the sound that most people consider the first, classic example of *Bluegrass*.

At the time, Monroe thought of his new creation only as the *Monroe Sound*. So he was understandably upset when Flatt and Scruggs left his band to play "his" music on their own, and he quit Columbia records after they signed The Stanley Brothers who, to Monroe's mind, were imitating his sound. It wasn't until later that the music that all three played came to be called *Bluegrass*, and later still that Bill Monroe came to accept the fact that he had created more than a new "sound," but in fact had created a new *genre*.

Here's where I cop out. Instead of serving up my own definition of *Bluegrass*, I'm going to insist that, like the blind men, you touch it (in this case, listen to it) for yourself and come up with your own definition.

These days, the music that Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys, Flatt and Scruggs and the Foggy Mountain Boys, and The Stanley Brothers made in the 1940s and '50s is not hard to find on CD (Check out Amazon.com). This is the music with which you should begin your definition efforts. Obviously, bluegrass music has evolved over the past sixty years and different approaches and styles have proliferated. Suffice it to say for now that when folks argue about traditional bluegrass, progressive bluegrass, newgrass, jamgrass, or fill-in-the-blank grass, it's always by reference to that first generation of bluegrass musicians. In fact, if you listen intently to those early recordings, you will eventually discern that even then each group had its own particular approach to the music which we now call *Bluegrass*.

One other thing. An added benefit of listening to the the the early music of Monroe, Flatt and Scruggs, and the Stanley Brothers is that you will come to know a lot of the songs that are sung at typical bluegrass jams. So happy listening and happy jamming!

Have a comment, opinion, objection, or gripe about this article? Email me at jeffreyfleck@mac.com and I'll try to include it in next month's new feature, *The BASC Bluegrass Forum*.

About BASC

BASC – The Bluegrass Association of Southern California – is dedicated to the support and promotion of Bluegrass music at all levels.

We support Bluegrass at the amateur level with our monthly Jam in the Park and monthly Pizza Night where audience members are encouraged to “sit in” with the band. We provide a showcase for the best local Bluegrass bands at our monthly BASC Night at the Braemar.

We build interest in Bluegrass by bringing some of the best national bands to Southern California, including such artists as J.D. Crowe, Laurie Lewis, IIIrd Tyme Out, and most recently James King.

Most importantly, we provide a place where people who want to get connected to Bluegrass as pickers, as listeners, as volunteers or organizers – can get together and meet people who share their love of this great music.

Yes, I would like to join BASC and support Bluegrass in Southern California.

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

I would like to volunteer to _____

One-Year Membership

Individual \$20.00

Family \$25.00

Band \$30.00

Mail this coupon and check to:

Ben Weinberg
16799 Schoenborn St.
North Hills CA 91343

Please send me tickets to the Special Consensus concert on January 28th, 2010.

\$15.00 Advance
\$20.00 At the Door

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Number of Tickets _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Mail this coupon and check to:

Ben Weinberg
16799 Schoenborn St.
North Hills CA 91343

[Click Here](#)
[to order tickets](#)
[On-Line](#)

Editor's Comment

For this, the third issue of the BASC ENewsletter, we have added another page and a bunch of new features. Check out *Festival Watch* and *SoCal Bluegrass Resources* for the latest on Southern California Bluegrass festivals, associations, and websites. Use our new direct links to join BASC and buy tickets on-line to our January 28th *Special Consensus* concert.

It seemed fitting that our first article should tackle the definition of Bluegrass. The article is intended to be the first and not the last word on this topic in our ENewsletter. So please email your thoughts to us -- please keep them brief and civil! -- and we'll try to include them in next month's new feature, the *BASC Bluegrass Forum*.

January is shaping up to be a big month for Bluegrass in Southern California. I hope you get your share of the music!