

CK: Today is March 16th. I'm in the Alpena History Room of the Alpena County Library. My name is Cindy Kus and we're speaking with Bonnie Bartz, Nurse Practitioner and Midwife and we're going to be talking to her about her role in music in Alpena as part of the Musicians of Northeast Michigan Oral History Archive. Also in the room with us is Kirstine Furtaw. Bonnie...um... welcome.

BB: Thank you.

CK: I want to start out...I know that in addition to your role as president of the Thunder Bay Folk Society that you're a musician in your own right. What got you started in music?

BB: Well, as a musician I have to say I'm just a vocalist. I don't play any instruments except a little percussion here and there.

CK: Oh, ok.

BB: But, um, I think I always enjoyed singing and I was in choir in grade school and high school but when I met my husband at the young age of sixteen, um, he was very interested in music and had the unusual background of being raised in the 60s and 70s but never listening to any popular music or rock music. He was a dyed in the wool fan of the blues.

CK: Oh.

BB: And that's all he ever listened to. But we went to our – I went to my first music festival when I was nineteen years old. I went to Wheatland Music Festival in 1979 and it was one of those eye opening experiences for a young woman, um, but just fell in love with music, just the variety of music I was exposed to and the dancing and really the music from all over the world, from Africa and Ireland and Scotland and, um, just really couldn't get enough of it, and from that point on our summer vacations were really focused around going to the various music festivals around the state of Michigan and have continued to be such. So, I think that's really what got me started in my interest with music.

CK: So, was Wheatland, at that time, was it considered a folk festival? Because it seems to me now, it's more bluegrass...

BB: It is more focused on bluegrass but in the 70s and 80s, um, it was really quite eclectic and had music from just all over the place. It was more of a folk music festival, um, and we actually stopped going to Wheatland in the 1990s at some point because it just got so big and our kids were small and we just started going to the smaller music festivals, um, like Bliss and Nor-East'r and just got the music that we wanted but kind of a smaller, nicer atmosphere.

CK: More low-key...

BB: More low-key.

CK: Mm-hmm.

BB: Mm-hmm.

CK: Are you from this area?

BB: I'm from Grand Rapids. So, I moved here, um, in 1987, um, when I was pregnant with my oldest son. I had just gotten out of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps, um, and my husband is from Hubbard Lake so he always wanted to move here and to raise his children so we've been here since.

CK: Was there any music in your family growing up?

BB: Um, my - I have two older brothers and they both played stand-up bass in, uh, both high school and college orchestra in Grand Rapids. They both went to Calvin College. And, uh, I have to say, that was about my family exposure is right there. I did learn to play guitar and mountain dulcimer, um, in my early twenties but when the kids and the career come along you kind of don't have much time to practice that so...(laughter)

CK: So, it sounds to some degree like your husband was very influential in your own musical development.

BB: Extremely. And because he is very interested in music and continues to play and to sing and to write, um, of course my interest remains in that same category because it's something that we enjoy together and can do together.

CK: And your children-are they involved in music at all?

BB: Yes, they are. (laughter) Um, my son Bill is 26 and he plays guitar and can sing beautifully. Although he's very busy as well so he doesn't participate much. And we have a daughter Emily who is 25 and growing up she loved music. She could sing like a bird, she knows how to play guitar, um, and she took violin lessons and, um, piano lessons, and clarinet lessons, and she is really a natural musician. She can play by ear, um, and right now she is pursuing her graduate degree in anthropology so again her career is kind of taking the place of the musical interests but I'm sure she'll get back to it someday.

CK: At some point.

BB: (laughter) Uh, huh.

CK: So, when did you first perform?

BB: Oh, goodness.

CK: (overlapping) How did, how did that evolve? I know that you're with the-playing with the band now.

BB: (overlapping) That is a good question. Okay, yes. Um.

BB: My husband and I went to Living Hope Church and we joined the praise band, uh, he was playing guitar and I was the vocalist and while there we met, um, our now good friend and fellow musician, John McLellan, who was also in the praise band and, um, Jim and John started getting together, uh, on their own and just playing music together and practicing and, uh, that's when we decided to form the band The New Disposition Blues Band again stemming from my husband's interest in the blues and that was in, I would say, 2006, I'm guessing? Um, but that's how we originally started and, uh, we first started playing around in some of the local bars and taverns and then, uh, got invited to play at the Alpena Blues Festival and we've played at the blues festival for three or four years in the past seven years, I would say. However, our interest kind of started to sway from the blues and found that there's not a lot

of people in Alpena who will come out to hear a blues band. They like more variety, I think. And so we decided to broaden the types of music that we play and we changed our name to Wild Rose & the Thorns and started playing some more variety of music. Um, you know, some country with Patsy Cline, some bluegrass and much more classic rock and roll. And, uh, we've just been enjoying that and, of course, there's five members in the band so we all have various and different interests so we try to, uh, go around the table and play things that, you know, that we all enjoy and like.

CK: Has appeal for each individual's, right?

BB: Right, and more appeal to the general public.

KF: Now, you've dropped the "& the Thorns" now? (Overlapping)Is that correct, yeah?

BB: (Overlapping)We have –

BB: We have – we started, uh, you know, we just thought that was funny –

KF: (chuckle)

BB: "Wild Rose & the Thorns". And then everybody started asking, "Well, who's the rose and who's the thorns and, and then, you know, I kind of got thinking about it, I thought, you know what, there aren't any thorns in this group so let's just drop the thorns. (chuckle) So, yeah, right now we're just "Wild Rose". (chuckle)

CK: Can you talk about who's in the group and what part they play in it?

BB: Sure, um, well, my husband Jim Bartz is the, uh, rhythm guitar player and he also does vocals and, uh, he is a songwriter, um, and we do some of his songs but a lot of, you know, other songs as well. His sister is Diane Bartz-Krajnik, spelled K-R-A-J-N-I-K, and she plays keyboard and accordion. And, then, our good friends, John McLellan, he plays lead guitar, banjo, percussion, harmonica, and just about anything else he can pick up. But those are the main instruments that he plays. And he also does some vocals. And then his wife is Paula McLellan and she plays bass.

CK: And you mentioned performing for the Blues – is it?

BB: (overlapping)It's the Alpena-

CK: (overlapping)Blues Festival –

BB: The Alpena Blues Festival, right.

CK: Where- what other venues, or where else do you play?

BB: Um, well, again we play at the taverns, which is where most people go to listen to live music. Uh, but we've also played, um, last summer at a Blues Festival at the Skyline Events Center in Cumins, MI. And, uh, we have gospel sets so we play in churches periodically. Um, we play at the Community Christ Church in Lachine about once a year and we've played at the First Congregational Church, um, and a couple other churches, and I hate to say, but I can't remember where they were, but, um....

CK: Have you ever been a part of the Guitar Summit?

BB: We have not.

CK: Yeah.

BB: No.

CK: OK.

BB: Uh, uh.

BB: And, of course, we play at the Thunder Bay Folk Festival.

(chuckling)

BB: Every year.

CK: Every year. (laughter)

CK: OK. (pause) I think that co- pretty much covers Wild Rose. Do you have any questions?

KF: No, I- I think that pretty much covers it.

CK: OK.

KF: Mm- hmm.

CK: Alright. So going on to the Thunder Bay Folk Festival...How did it get started?

BB: (laughter)

CK: (chuckling) Was that-you?

BB: Well, it was a group of four of us, uh, you know, I've already spoken about my love for music festivals and, of course, Jim and Diane usually go to the festivals as well and we just always enjoyed it and we would come back from a summer of festivals and say, "Gosh, I wish there was a great music festival right here in Alpena. Wouldn't the people of Alpena just, you know, love that and, um, maybe we should think about trying to get one started." And, meanwhile, Diane played with her friend Kevin Ballmer who is another well-known, uh, guitarist here in Alpena and gave guitar lessons frequently. Well, Kevin was talking to another musician, Lee Kitzman, and Lee was telling him how he would love to get a music festival started in Alpena. So, Kevin was really kind of the common link and so, um, he told Diane, "Well, there's another man that's also interested in starting a music festival, maybe the four of us should get together " and, uh, we did. So, it was Lee Kitzman, Kevin Ballmer, um, myself and Diane. We met, um, for the first time in, oh, let's say, the summer of 2012 and started talking about, uh, forming a non-profit organization so that we could apply for grants and, uh, get some funding and it wasn't until, uh, September of 2014 that we were able to put on our first, um, Thunder Bay Folk Festival and in the year between that we were applying for our non-profit status and doing fundraisers and trying to round up the local, um, musical talent in the area to come on board and give us some support. So this September will be our third annual, uh, folk festival and, uh, it has been growing – the first year about 250 people attended and last year 500 people attended. So it would be awesome this year if we could make it to 750. (chuckling)

CK: I saw that last year it was held out at the Tractor...

BB: (overlapping) Showgrounds, it's called. Right.

CK: (overlapping) Showgrounds. Is that – has it always been held there?

BB: Yes. Yes. And it probably will be for some time because we really find that's the perfect venue for the festival. It's got the, uh, covered barns so there's a covered mainstage that seats at least 150 people and there are indoor bathrooms which is a big plus when it comes to music festivals and there's camping on site, uh, which is also wonderful and it's just a beautiful grounds, um, there's a woods back behind the barn where we're able to have a drum kiva at night, um, which is always very fun and, uh, it's about 50 acres so it's got a lot of land for everything we need to set up - the music workshops, the vendor space, uh, children's activities...

CK: Parking?

BB: Parking, right.

CK: I had just read that – that that was the location and I had been there once previous for a wedding reception and I thought what a perfect place.

BB: Yes, it's beautiful.

CK: It's ideal and you're out and away from-

BB: Away from –

CK: People who might –

BB: Right –

CK: Be disturbed by-

BB: Yes. (chuckle)

CK: All the activity. Right.

BB: There are a few houses out French Road there, um, but I figure if they live there they must enjoy music. (Laughter)

CK: So, how long is the festival?

BB: It's two days.

CK: Two days, ok.

BB: Yeah, it's a Friday and a Saturday and, uh, on Sunday morning last year we did have a band come in and do a gospel set for us as well and we're hoping to get them again this year. But, officially, it's two days.

CK: Nice. And how do you go about recruiting bands?

BB: Well, we really try to showcase our local talent as a priority, um, but then, of course, to be successful we need to book some well-known bands from around the state with some bigger names to draw people in and to expose the people of Northeast Michigan to some, um, really first-rate, uh, traditional music. Um, so, uh, we have a committee, um, of two or three people that, um, know a lot of musicians from around the state and, uh, have approached them and then we just start listening to

some of their music on YouTube or go out and listen in person, um, and then start negotiating with them or their manager about availability and pricing. But we try very hard to, um, get an eclectic mix from rock to, um, regional music whether it be regional Appalachian or Cajun, bluegrass from the Americas, or even, you know, Scottish and Irish and, um, polkas from Poland or Germany.

KF: So, you're trying to stick to that, um, all-inclusive folk music-

BB: (overlapping) Yes-

KF: -idea rather than, you said - mentioned Wheatland is kind of oriented more towards bluegrass now-

BB: Right-

KF: You're kind of going for that original idea?

BB: Yes, we are, and, and the term folk music is such a broad category because it really means "the music of the people", so you can think of that in, in a very worldly, global view, um, or you can think of it in a very small, community view, um, but it really encompasses a very large degree of music. It can be rock or jazz or, um, Cajun music or dance music, um, but it's just really traditional music.

CK: And it sounds like the Thunder Bay Folk Society embraces the idea of the large—

BB: Very much—

CK: (overlapping) grouping, right.

BB: Very much so.

CK: from all the people you've said you've invited to come.

BB: (overlapping) Right, yes.

BB: And it can even include the blues.

CK: Mm-hmm.

(laughter)

CK: Um, how has community support been?

BB: It's growing. It- the first, you know it's always a struggle to start something new. People are not familiar with it. Um, just this year as we're starting to focus our efforts on fundraising again, I think we're at year three and people are finally saying, "Oh, yeah, the music festival". Um, but it's been hard to introduce the concept to this community because so many people are just not familiar with music festivals. They- they, um, kind of waver about the-the ticket prices because they think that, you know, they should pay - be able to come in for \$10 and come in for an hour and then leave. Um, so it's been a struggle trying to get people to understand that it's not a concert- it's an event. You know, it's an all-day event or it's an all weekend event and we can't monitor you to make sure that you leave in an hour, you know, you have to come in and we invite you to take place, take part in all our activities – the workshops, the dances, the music, the drum kivas, the camping, the children's activities, I mean, there's just so many things going on that, um, that it's, it's really not just a come and go event so I'm hoping that they're starting to catch on to that. (laughter)

CK: There's a learning curve.

BB: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

KF: What is the- what is the pricing again for...?

BB: Um, if you buy your tickets in advance-

KF: Mm-hmm.

BB: Um, it's \$25 a day or \$40 for the weekend and the gate prices are \$30 a day or \$50 for the weekend and \$15 per vehicle for camping for the entire weekend.

KF: So, you can go for just one day-one day of the event, you don't have to do the whole thing, so, okay.

BB: (overlapping) Sure. Right, right.

CK: And you have kid's activities so fam- it's -it's a family orient-

BB: (overlapping) It's-it's family, it is very family oriented. Um, we can't guarantee quiet camping because traditionally musicians love to play their instruments and sing all night long. (laughter) Um, but we do not sell alcohol, um, to raise money for the event, um, we do allow alcohol on the grounds, um, but we have a separate children's area with some scheduled events like whether it be building, um, bug houses or bird houses or, um, making big bubbles or, um, you know, doing finger painting, hula hooping, um, we try to have a few activities to keep the kids engaged and-and have something to do.

CK: How have sales from outlying areas been or are you advertising in a broader geographical area?

BB: As of last year, we- we were able. The first year, we really could not afford to. We didn't really have much money. But, last year, the Alpena Convention and Visitors Bureau, uh, gave us a \$2600 grant to do advertising outside of the Alpena area. So we were able to place ads on NPR for a month before the festival, um, which we thought was a good market because that's where a lot of folk music is played and listened to and then we also took out full page ads in all of the major music festival programs around the state. So we had a presence in the Bliss Fest program, the Hiawatha program which is up in Marquette, um, Nor-East'r Music Festival which is right here in Mio and in Wheatland. And, um, so we last year did draw people from Detroit and Ann Arbor and Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids and Canada and Wisconsin...

CK: That's great.

BB: It was wonderful and, um, you know, that's where the benefit to Northeast Michigan comes in because we're drawing in people from all around the Great Lakes region and introducing them to Alpena and we just hear comments over and over again. "I've never been here before. Wow, is this ever beautiful!" And we say, "Yes, it is." (laughter) Please think about vacationing here.

CK: Will you be able to get that grant again?

BB: We have certainly requested it and that decision is pending.

CK: Mm-hmm.

BB: Um, but we, um, have very positive feedback from, uh, Mary Beth Stutzman, who's the President of the Visitors Bureau. And, uh, she is solidly behind us but, of course, it's a board decision. So... we've got our fingers crossed.

KF: Now, you mentioned fundraising. What other, um, fundraising events have you done?

BB: Um, the first year we did a couple fundraisers. One at the Black Sheep Pub with local musicians and then we repeated it at Latitudes again with local musicians and just asked for donations and we also have Folk Society sweatshirts and t-shirts and coffee mugs printed up that, um, we sell for a profit. Um, this year on April 30th we have a Spring Fling Fundraiser coming up, um, at the VFW hall and we're going to charge \$10 admission. It's going to go from 2 p.m. till midnight and have music inside, um, all ten of those hours, um, with dancing and then the VFW will provide, uh, food and drinks for sale. And outside we're going to have art vendors, arts and crafts vendors, and, um, this is being organized by Nikki Cornelius, who's a local artist. And she's also sponsoring a Trash Art competition where artists can just put together "bits and bobs", as she would say, because she's from England, um, and come up with some trash art and the winner will receive two weekend tickets to the festival.

KF: That's nice.

BB: Mm-hmm.

KF: So, the VFW hall are you talking about, um, the one, I'm trying to think of where that is...

BB: It's on Brooke.

KF: Yes, okay.

BB: Brooke and Grant.

KF: Yeah, yes so okay, in the parking lot there?

BB: Yeah...

KF: That's where you're going to have your outdoor activities?

BB: The outdoor activities. Right. And then inside will be the music and food.

KF: Okay.

CK: What is the date?

BB: April 30. It's a Saturday. Um, and then the other fundraising that we do is, uh, Lee Kitzman is our grant writer and he writes for various grants and I'm hoping to get one from the Michigan, um, Humanities Council this year. Um, and we've received grants from, uh, DTE, which is Detroit (something) Energy, I think.

CK: Yeah.

BB: Um, so it's just an ongoing process year to year of-of looking for, uh, cultural sponsors, as well as business sponsors in Alpena.

CK: So, is the primary focus for the Folk Society the festival? Or--

BB: Yes, it is. Yes. But along the way we also, you know, our mission statement is “fostering traditional music and arts in Northeast Michigan”. Um, we’re also – want- to promote our local artists because we have such a vast amount of talent in a small area. It’s really quite amazing. I don’t know if every community feels that same way but, wow, do we have some great musicians around here. And, um, we also hope to expand to being able to do some educational sessions in the schools or at the Boys and Girls Club about the history of music or, you know, focus on a certain region, like, maybe Appalachian music or, uh, polkas might be more, uh, pertinent to Alpena, um, and then put on music workshops for the local musicians to come in and hear an expert about, you know, songwriting or scales or, um, you know, just become kind of a resource for-for the local musicians of this area. Help other activities book their, um, musical talent, you know, like the Brown Trout Festival. I’ve been speaking to Peggy Donajkowski about helping out with booking talent there and the Maritime Festival – we’ve offered there. So, we’d like to become kind of the- the go-to people, um, if people need music or if musicians want to, uh, get hooked up with, uh, other venues.

KF: So, you mentioned that you’re already working with Brown Trout Festival or have offered your services to them and to the Maritime Festival to help with booking...

BB: Right.

KF: Correct? Um, some of the other things you mentioned – how far along are you on, um, actually doing some of those activities or is that more down the road?

BB: That would be down the road because until just recently the board was very small. It was just the four founding members, um, and then we added a treasurer and a secretary to become six members and putting on a two day music festival is a lot of work for six people so that really has been our only focus. But our board is now up to nine members and we have more people attending our monthly meetings every month and so with the added help, I believe next year we will start to be able to expand and do some of the other activities that we dream of offering in the area.

CK: So, what is your membership now, number-wise?

BB: I believe our membership is about 50 people.

CK: Mm-hmm.

BB: And membership fees are only \$5 a year and basically, you know, you’re supporting the society and we send out emails and newsletters and let people know about local activities and, you know, what we’re up to and, um, some advanced notice about ticket sales and things like that about the festival.

CK: Do you look for volunteers when festival time comes?

BB: Absolutely. There is no way we could do that festival without a lot of volunteers. We’ve had, um, over 100 volunteers both years and that’s really what we need to make it run smoothly. Anything from security to stage set-up, uh, you know, monitoring the workshop tents, um, food- preparing food for the musicians, um, or just a lot of organizing and work. (laughter)

KF: Mm- hmm.

BB: Front gate, ticket, you know, ticket, uh, sales, etc.

CK: Yes. You know, just hearing you say that I'm thinking –

BB: Yes.

KF: Mm-hmm.

CK: It's a lot- it's a lot.

BB: It's a tremendous amount of work, um, but very, very rewarding. Yes. (laughter)

KF: Where have you been pulling those volunteers from? Is it from your membership or just word of mouth?

BB: Um, it's – it's word of mouth and, um, like most music-like all music festivals that I know of, uh, the way you get volunteers is, uh, offering them free admission. Um, for our festival we just require that they work four hours to gain free admission and free camping for the entire weekend. Um, so it's wonderful for people that-that don't have a lot of pocket money and, you know, would really love to attend the festival but the-the amount of money, the \$50, would prevent them from coming because they just have to volunteer for four hours and they are welcome to come in.

KF: One of the things I heard you mention, you know, about these festivals besides the music it seems to do with the culture around it.

BB: Mm- hmm.

KF: The-the different events and dances. So, is-

BB: Right.

KF: Is there any, um, a focus on trying to, um, foster a love for certain traditional folk dancing? And things like that?

BB: Um, I think people that, you know, that like to dance, uh, just like to dance to whatever kind of music, you know

KF: Mm- hmm.

BB: Certainly they become expert at dancing the polka or clog dancing or two-step or whatever it is they are interested in but, um, I think people just like to get together and socialize and be active and, you know, be exposed to new types of things and, um, it's, uh, I just think it's interesting to, you know, see something new or see something from a different area of the world that you never saw before and, um, you know, you just never know what you're going to fall in love with next.

KF: Right. Well, I saw something on your website about, uh, contra- is it contra dancing?

BB: Contra dancing, right, it's a very old traditional dance from England and, um, it's where people would line up across from each other and I think you see this in a lot of the old English movies where there's a band and a caller and, you know, the two lines move together and then separate and then break off into groups of four and then the four people do various moves that almost looks like a square dance. But then they separate and go back in the two lines again and that's what contra dancing is.

KF: Ok.

BB: So, it's very old.

KF: Yeah. So, you see things like that come up at these kinds of festivals

BB: You do.

KF - just naturally, yeah?

BB: Usually planned.

KF: Okay, okay.

BB: We'll have a planned contra dance. Or, you know, we book a polka band intentionally or a Cajun band and a bluegrass band so people can clog or line dance.

KF: Mm-hmm.

BB: And, you know, you spoke of the culture of a music festival and it really is something that's a very unique and, uh, a feeling of camaraderie that I have just never experienced in any other situation. It's, like, everybody is here to enjoy themselves and to listen to the music and to, um, you know, experience different kinds of music, uh, people tend to be very open-minded and, uh, kind and generous and, it just almost becomes a sort of aura. Um, you know, as you enter the grounds and everybody's happy and laughing and having a great time and, uh, it's just a very unique experience that I've felt at many music festivals that I've attended.

KF: It seems – it sounds very supportive, you know, musicians supporting one another and playing together sometimes when-

BB: Very-

KF: - they've not had an opportunity to?

BB: Yes, that's – that is a- quite of a big event when the- when the main stage music ends which is usually midnight or 1:00 in the morning depending on which festival you're attending, that's kind of when the musicians start walking around the woods carrying their instruments. They'll stop in front of this bonfire or that bonfire, you'll sit in with these musicians for a few songs and then you might move on and sit in with some musicians, uh, you know, elsewhere and, uh, and just have, you know, the next five or six hours 'til the sun starts to peak up to (laugh) listen to just a huge variety of music and just have a lot of fun with it.

CK: I think you - the fact that you are outdoors lends itself a lot to the whole experience, I mean, if you think of a similar experience if it were indoors...

BB: It's, yeah...

CK: It's not gonna be the same.

BB: No.

CK: It's just-

BB: It would never work inside. (laugh)

CK: It- it wouldn't work. No, and you're, again, the fact – it is an event. You're there for two days, maybe, but you have the possibility of doing that and-and so how you commune with people is different. You're going to likely run into them again –

BB: Multiple times.

CK: Multiple times.

BB: Right.

CK: It just becomes a group experience.

BB: It does. (laugh)

KF: Well, and it seems like, you know, the origins of folk music really were about those spontaneous getting together and sharing stories through song, you know.

BB: Oh, it absolutely was. Everybody meet on, you know, Mr. Jones' front porch and bring your instruments tonight, you know, we'll have a hoe down.

KF: Mm- hmm.

BB: So, yeah, it's really getting back to the roots.

KF: Well, and we don't have a lot of opportunities to do that anymore.

BB: That's so true.

KF: Yeah, so this seems like-

BB: Our neighbors don't really know us anymore, you know, or with the invention of the car and being able to live and, you know, out and not necessarily in town. Yeah, I think it's-its, uh, if we didn't have this kind of opportunity I think we would lose that and that would be a shame.

KF: Mm-hmm.

KF: Anything else?

(laughter)

CK: Thanks, Bonnie.

BB: Yes, thank you, ladies.

CK: Thanks for what you're doing

KF: Yeah.

CK: It's –it's a wonderful asset to the community and, my sense, sitting here listening is that, I think, a couple three years you're, the words gonna-

BB: I hope so.

CK: -spread.

KF: Mm-hmm.

BB: We've been told multiple times that, uh, the first five years minimum is always going to be a struggle.

KF: Mm-hmm.

BB: And, uh, but after year five it seems like that's when it really snowballs and picks up speed so...

CK: You're-

KF: Mm-hmm.

CK: You're established at that point.

BB: Yes,

CK & KF: Mm-hmm.

BB: And people are finally like, "Oh, yeah, I've heard of it. I heard it was a lot of fun." Um, so we're – we're hopeful and just try to keep that ball rolling until then but we did have several of the organizers from, uh, BlissFest unbeknownst to us, came to the festival last year and then just recently were starting to email again about our festivals and said, "Hey, by the way, we came to your festival last year. Thought it was awesome!" (Laugh)

KF: Oh, that's great!

BB: So, it was really cool.

KF: Oh, that's wonderful!

BB: Yeah.

KF: Yeah, I was wondering, you know, about the support from some of the other festivals. If you'd had any contact with them and if they were supportive.

BB: Yes, they're very supportive. Wheatland, they're all supportive, BlissFest, um, and Wheatland have given us financial support, um, the last two years and, uh, in two weekends, um, there's a Michigan Music Festival Round table where all the organizers, um, of the music festivals around the state are going to gather and try to network and share ideas and stories so Diane and I will be attending that in a couple weeks and look forward to being able to speak to some of these legends in the area. (laughter)

KF: That's wonderful-

BB: They've been doing music festivals for 40+ years, so...

KF: Good.

CK: That should be invaluable.

BB: Yeah.

CK: Yeah. Just sitting- I'm imagining being one of those people who go, "Oh, I remember the early years when we used to go before anybody found out about this festival".

KF and BB: Right.

(Laughter)

BB: I've said that myself many times. Remember the good old days when there was like 400 people here. (laughter)

CK: Right.

KF: And now- and now you're a part of the good ol' days-

BB: Right.

KF: - for this festival. You know?

BB: Yes. Yeah, yeah.

KF: That's great.

BB: Yeah, it's a lot of fun.

KF: Mm-hmm.

BB: Yeah.

CK: Alright.

BB: Okay, thanks ladies.

KF & CK: Thank you.