

# Table of Contents



12

## The Music Survives

An intimate interview with Ojibwe multi-instrumentalist Don Couchie on music and his legacy.



## Stories of JD Crowe

Friends share their memories and thoughts at the passing of the man some call most influential on today's banjo players.

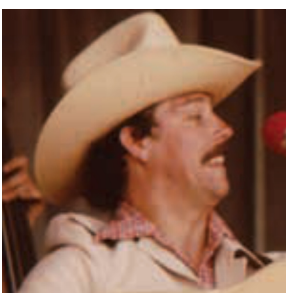
17



## Last Time in the Groove

Longtime Bluegrass Canada columnist Tom McCreight leaves the world but not our hearts. Friends share their thoughts.

20



## These are the Times

The career and the glory of Bert Baumbach remembered.

24

# Bluegrass Canada

Volume 16 Issue 2

## Columns

- 5 President Murray Hale's Message
- 8 Out West with Linda Thorburn
- 51 Editor Mike Kirley's Message

## Lessons

- 6 Banjo with Denis LePage
- 10 Mandolin with Emory Lester

## News

- 40 What's Going On
- 42 The Dill Pickle Rag

## Listings

- 34 Radio on the Air
- 37 BMAC Organization Listings

## On the cover

Don Couchie with guitar.



**B**luegrass lost one of its own in lifelong musician and longtime *Bluegrass Canada* columnist Tom McCreight. The community he nurtured now sends its well wishes back to the man himself. Here's what bluegrass has to say about Tom McCreight:

A photograph of Tom McCreight, an older man with white hair and a beard, wearing glasses, a blue shirt, and a grey vest. He is smiling and playing a double bass. The background is a plain wall.

# *So Long Bandmate!*

By Mike Kirley

Tom was one of the founding members of BMAC. He was also a winner at the Central Canadian Bluegrass Awards – Bass – 2002 to 2006 Entertainer – 2004 to 2006. He also worked with Gene Gouthro on the North to Ontario CD Projects. I've had the pleasure of jamming with him on a few occasions. He will be greatly missed by the Bluegrass community.

~Roly Aucoin  
BMAC Treasurer



On Saturday I lost my best friend and music partner of almost 40 years. Tom McCreight and I shared so many times together, both good and bad, over many miles and so many venues.

I am honoured to have shared the last moments of his life with him, as Judy and I comforted him through his passing. We had a kinship that was rare and treasured and I will miss him forever. Sincere condolences to Judy.

Tom was one of Ontario's bluegrass treasures. Not only a multi award winning performer, but he was also an ambassador for Canadian bluegrass music. A contributor to many bluegrass publications, music publisher (Coot Records), songwriter, merchandiser (Coot Music), MC at so many events and shows, and on and on. Most notably for me, as my co-producer of the "North To Ontario" series of albums featuring original material by Ontario bluegrass bands. Through Tom's connections, these albums were played by DJs in many countries around the world, and many cuts still enjoy regular airplay.

~Gene Gouthro

*To the tune of My Favourite Things*

*Banjos and dobros and guitars for picking  
Fiddles and basses and harmony singing  
Mandolins fitted with black diamond strings,  
These are a few of my favourite things.*

*Campers and trailers, tents and fifth wheelers  
Baritone, lead, and high tenor squealers  
Wrist bands and lawn chairs and campfire sings  
These are a few of my favourite things.*

*Microphone cables, and monitors too  
MCs and speakers and a busy stage crew  
Picking with friends all camped in a ring  
These are a few of my favourite things.*

*When a string breaks,  
When the pick slips,  
When I'm feeling sad  
I simply remember these festival things,  
And then I don't feel so bad.*

*Tom McCreight*



Tom McCreight was a fixture on the Ontario Bluegrass scene for over forty years. Whether he was an emcee, running a CD concession, or playing bass onstage, you could always count on his genteel manner and big smile. His level of dedication and style will be sorely missed by the Ontario Bluegrass community. Tom's column, "In the Groove" was always looked forward to by BMAC magazine readers.

Tom was in the band Hometown Bluegrass with me for years. We had many a laugh and philosophical discussion around the old campfire. Like myself, Tom was a retired schoolteacher.

I am reminded of the song by the Country Gentlemen,

"A Letter to Tom": I wandered by the village Tom, I sat beneath the tree... Upon the schoolhouse playing ground, that sheltered you and me. But none are left to greet me Tom, And you are left to go. That played with us upon the green, just fifteen years ago.

So long Tom. It's been good to know you!! Hope to jam with you again someday.

~Mike Kirley

I didn't know Tom McCreight that well. Somehow Tom and I would end up having a brief chat at the awards in Huntsville or a festival somewhere. I always enjoyed our visits. There was always a laugh or words of wisdom from him. I knew him as a kind and gentle man.

Tom's passing obviously is a great loss to his family, but he is also a great loss to the world of Bluegrass in Ontario. For whatever reason in 2006 he decided to record and put out a CD called North to Ontario. The CD was received so well that he went on to produce one every year up to and including 2010. Featured on this series were such popular Ontario long gone bands as Silver Birch, Lorne Buck & Friends, Northbound, Pam Brooks & Lonesome Wind and many more. I'm sure Tom's intent back in 2006 was to feature and entertain us with some good home spun bluegrass music but what he had really accomplished with the North to Ontario samplers was to inadvertently make a permanent record of what Bluegrass in Ontario was like in the early 2000s. All good stuff! Thank you, Tom, for what you have done.

~Dennis Casey, BMAC Executive

*To the tune of Wildwood Flower:*

Sadly, Tom McCreight's final "In the Groove" column is in the January issue. Tom and I played music together in Bluegrass Revival for about ten years, 1972 to 1982 when I left to join Denis LePage in Limited Edition. Tom was a great friend of mine for over 50 years, and I will miss him greatly. Keep up the good work producing this very fine publication that grew out of the original Pat and Jack Bутtenham magazines.

~Mike Higgins

*Oh we fondly remember  
when we had brown hair  
We combed and we brushed  
it with nary a care  
We never imagined our  
locks going grey  
And all of the colour  
soon fading away*

*Oh I let it grow long back  
in seventy eight  
It was wavy and dark  
and really looked great  
And then one by one the  
grey hairs appeared  
Not just on my head but  
also my beard*

*When it started to change  
I thought I would dye  
There's dozens of products  
a person can try  
You can change your whole  
look in less than an hour  
Or leave it the colour of  
Martha White flour.*

*Oh we'll dance and we'll sing  
though our hair may be grey  
'Cause we're ever so  
happy it didn't go away  
Bald is no problem we've  
heard fellows say  
But if they had a choice I  
bet they'd choose grey.*

*Some ladies wear wigs,  
the truth to conceal  
How can we tell what is fake or is real  
But gals if you're wondering  
what you should do  
Just take a good look  
at Miss Emmylou!*

