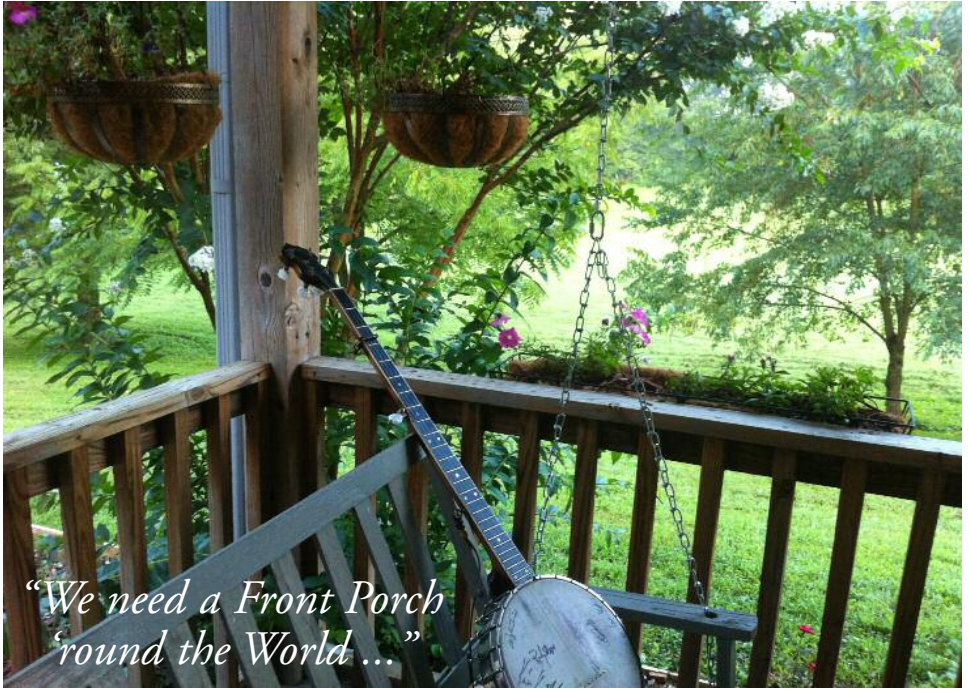


WOODSONGS®  
Front Porch  
ASSOCIATION



SongFarmer Program  
AND  
Front Porch Compendium



Take a Copy • Pass it on • Visit [SongFarmers.org](http://SongFarmers.org)

# Become a SongFarmer



Join the WoodSongs Front Porch Association

## Musicians, Writers, Poets, Painters, Artists, Performers, SongFarmers, Fans, Families and Front Porch Pickers

The WoodSongs Front Porch Association (WFPA) is an international community of “front porch” minded musicians, artists, and dreamers who play music for the love of it.

We call our members  
**SongFarmers**

A “SongFarmer” is an artist who uses music and art to make their families, their lives, their careers better. The Gathering is our festival celebrating the amazing, musical world of SongFarmers

Your membership to the WFPA supports artists, the **GATHERING Festival** and the **WOODSONGS CLASSROOM** projects ... free to all teachers and home school families. Our **SONGFARMER MUSIC CLUB** project is an international initiative to bring neighbors together with music.

*Join the global community  
of front porch artists*

**SongFarmers.org**

# A "SongFarmer" is an artist who plants musical seeds to cultivate a stronger sense of community in their hometowns



*America was built on organic, rural music.*

Front porches and living rooms were the grand stages of musicians everywhere. It wasn't just entertainment. It was community, family, friends, fun and a sense of humanity.

But what happened? Music went from the Front Porch into stores and bins. Now the "bins" are gone, and so is the sense of community.

Let's get it back.

Let's reintroduce Front Porch music in thousands of hometowns, families and schools nationwide. That's the work of a SongFarmer.

*The WoodSongs Front Porch Association is grateful to these friewnds who help make the Gathering, the School Programs and SongFarmer Music Clubs possible:*



SHAKER  
VILLAGE  
of Pleasant Hill



# Good friends PICK together, they don't pick ON each other.

*That is the beauty of simple, organic, rural music.  
It builds friendship, family and community.*



## **The world is very angry ... but we don't have to be.**

Have you ever considered that musicians are the greatest soldiers of peace in the world? People don't fight when they listen.

People don't argue when they listen.

Musicians get people to stop. And listen. And feel. That's why using music for things other than trying to sell albums is so very important.

Have you ever picked up your guitar and made a four song visit to a battered women and children's shelter? Or a children's ward in a burn unit. Performing for aged folks in a retirement home will bring your heart payment far greater than anything you can put in your wallet.

# Organic SongFarmer

*That's really what "folksingers" are.*



Anyone who knows the value of the heart over a chart, who understands that music is best used for community good and family entertainment, that music should be more part of your life than your livelihood ... that's a SongFarmer. If you play an acoustic instrument like a banjo or fiddle, well ... you're an "organic" SongFarmer :)

We have friends, Adler and Hearne, who named their homestead in Texas the "Spring Hollow Organic Song Farm."

Don't you love that?



That's what our WoodSongs Gathering is, a national convention of organic SongFarmers helping musicians plant musical seeds in a beautiful artistic garden.

*“The difference between technology and slavery is:  
slaves are aware that they are not free”*

Nassim Nicholas Taleb



*Once upon a time  
folks actually talked  
to each other ...*

Families would gather around a big table and share meals and stories of their day. Summer evenings were spent on front porches, living room couches by a fireplace in winter, pulling out their instruments and singing the evenings away.

Then TV and air conditioning enticed them from their front porches and imprisoned them indoors as they sit quietly in darkened rooms, barely speaking less they interrupt the Ajax commercial. Today, the internet has created the most isolated generation in human history ... all the while convincing people they have unseen “friends” in a flat-screen world.

The times have a-changed too much, we think. Media is in fact a brilliant, helpful tool but not if it replaces real, human, organic interaction. Media is the "paper" not the book.

The WFPA celebrates our organic musical heritage and, with the help of a volunteer team of teachers, we are sending folk, bluegrass and blues music with lesson plans into thousands of schools nationwide. For FREE.

That's right ... if folks won't come out to the front porch then, ding-dang it, we will bring the front porch inside to them.

Visit the **CLASSROOM** page of  
WoodSongs.com or SongFarmers.org





*"Lost time is never found again."*

**Ben Franklin**

Time is like precious coins - there are only so many in the bank and life gets spent one coin at a time, with or without your participation.

Many dream about playing an instrument, writing a song, creating a play or publishing a book. What are you waiting for? Most often we are stopped by the illusion of success and false promise of money.

And it always ends with the crippling thought  
*"I'm not good enough."*

Well, the human spirit is ALWAYS good enough.  
YOU are always good enough.

So, stop wasting time.

You might not be Garth Brooks, but you can be a superstar on your own front porch. Be a passionate, generous and artistic SongFarmer.



*"Music is the art of the prophets that calm the agitations of the soul; it is one of the most magnificent gifts God has given us."*

**Martin Luther**

Twenty thousand people screaming in an arena isn't "calm."  
Paying \$100 or more for a ticket isn't exactly calming either.

Sure, in its place it's fun. But sunsets, front porches in the rain,  
fireplaces when it snows ... now that's the stage for real organic,  
rural music. This is the music America was built on, families were  
built on, homes and communities were built on.

Let's turn the clock back a bit,  
let's build a front porch around the world together  
and calm things down.



*"He is richest who is content with the least ...  
for contentment is the wealth of nature."*

**Socrates**

Let's get one thing over with: you're not Bob Dylan.  
You won't be singing in front of 30,000 adoring fans.

OK, now that we got that out of the way, what do you do with all that passion, heart, music and song? What do you do with all those boxes of CDs sitting on a shelf in your garage? Before you can step forward into a new career path, you have to accept the destination.

For most folks, that would simply be: Joy.  
Joy in life, joy in the size of your audience,  
Joy in who your actual audience is.



*"I would rather sit on a pumpkin and have it all  
to myself, than be crowded on a velvet cushion."*

**Henry David Thoreau**

Freedom is best cradled in the arms of contentment. We are sold on the idea that "stardom" and selling millions of albums is the goal of making it in the music business. Yet, all too often, those who "made it" are unhappy, frustrated and miserable.

Why? Because they over reached their ability to be happy.

Maybe the stage you seek is not an arena. Maybe it's a quiet moment playing alone in the woods, or on a front porch with your friends and family. It could be as powerful as performing to a group of school kids, bringing a joyful moment to residents at an old folks home or welcome distraction to a cancer ward in a hospital.

There is so much you can do with music that has nothing to do with "business." And, oddly enough, that's the best business model for all musicians to follow.

*"Without music, life would be a mistake."*

**Friedrich Nietzsche**



Music is, in fact, the universal language.  
It is the language of comfort and peace and love  
between families, neighbors and countries.

That's why we encourage everybody to pick up an instrument,  
play their three chords and the truth, and turn your living room  
couch into the greatest stage in the world.

Be a star on your own front porch ... your own family and  
neighbors can be the greatest audience on Earth.



The above painting used on our flyers and posters was created by the very talented artist Walt Curlee from Phenix City, AL. The painting is called “Porch Music - Mountain Music” and Walt kindly gave us permission to use it. Visit Walt’s website to see the incredible array of his paintings, you can even get a print for your home, at [WaltCurleeArt.com](http://WaltCurleeArt.com)

**This program, all of our flyers and brochures were printed because of the generous support of AgCredit**



Serving the financial needs of rural farms  
and families in central Kentucky

**AgCreditOnline.com**



*"A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer,  
it sings because it has a song."*

**Maya Angelou**

You have a song, and put your heart and life and spirit into it. Now it's on your new album. And your CD sits on your shelf in boxes and nothing happens.

The music business has changed, friends. Heck, there aren't any more record stores to sell your album in. So what do you do? The WFPA shows artists how to step back from the old-school illusion of what the music business used to be and recreate it into something real, something calming and something of value.

Pete Seeger, Bill Monroe, Uncle Dave Macon and so many others carved brilliant careers because they loved the music and their audiences. Heck, the Beatles never brought albums and merch to any of their concerts ... and they did just fine.

Times may have changed but the spirit of what they taught us has not. Focussing on art - and not commerce - can create a truly beautiful, productive garden for all of us. It can be a musical paradise for songwriters, artists, poets, writers, fans and families

**Pictured above: The Coon Creek Girls of Renfro Valley**

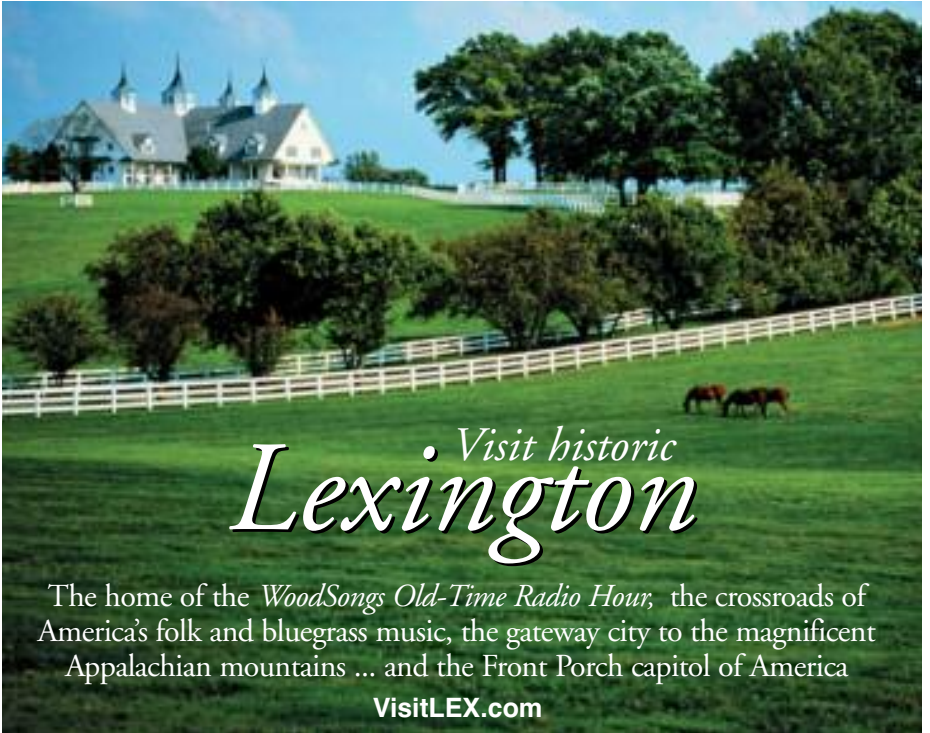


**SHAKER  
VILLAGE**

— *of Pleasant Hill* —

We are very grateful to the wonderful staff here at Shaker Village,  
a beautiful and historic home for the WoodSongs Gathering.  
Visit them all year long at [ShakerVillageKY.org](http://ShakerVillageKY.org)

*Think Green - Don't Throw It Down ... Pass It Around!*



• Visit historic  
*Lexington*

The home of the *WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour*, the crossroads of  
America's folk and bluegrass music, the gateway city to the magnificent  
Appalachian mountains ... and the Front Porch capitol of America

[VisitLEX.com](http://VisitLEX.com)



*"It takes a genius to make something simple."*

**Pete Seeger**

Do we really need all those amps and gizmos just to play a song?

Sometimes, sure, but how wonderful to pull out a wooden, acoustic instrument and let it "sing" along with your own voice. Mighty nations were built by brilliant people who lived simple lives and enjoyed simple evenings playing music together.

The goal of a SongFarmer is to reintroduce that simplicity back into this crazy, hitech, cyber-speed world.

Interested in forming a hometown SongFarmers Music Club? Here are eight guidelines to make the community sessions fun for all, created by SongFarmer **Perry Brake** of Tellico Plains, TN :



1- **TUNING:** It's ok if you are not sure how to tune your instrument, others will help you. This is important because someone sitting close to you may hear the out of tune instrument and get distracted. Being in tune is better for you, better for your instrument and better for the group. If you want to purchase your own tuner visit your local music store, they are not expensive and very easy to use. If you have a smart phone there are FREE apps you can use that are very accurate.

2. **TUNE OFTEN:** You are not being distracting or rude! Tuning should be done before you play your first song and you can easily check your tuning between songs and tweak when necessary. Some people actually check their tuning between every song.

3. **TIMING:** This is the speed and tempo of the song. If you're not sure of the tempo try to focus on the bass player. The Bass player drives the tempo of the song. This is a fun thing to learn. The person leading the song will usually also strum or pick several measures of the song at first to set the tempo. If the song starts to speed up (which is typical) the leader may call out "slow down." That's ok! Remember as songs become louder, they tend to become faster. Just follow the song leader and you will be just fine.

4. **SONG SELECTION:** A SongFarmer event is a community effort. Music jams like this are not intended to be a performance stage for individuals. There are no "stars" or spotlights at a SongFarmer jam, everyone is equal. So pick songs that the group can play together. Original songs can be fine but when someone wants to sing a song the group is not familiar with, or may have a difficult chord progression, it can leave many in the group out. We don't want that because we want everyone to have fun!

5. **SONGS WITH LYRICS** help players notice chord changes easier. Tunes without words - instrumentals - are more difficult for a large group to play.

6. **SONG KEY:** This is usually the first chord of the song. Tell the group what KEY your song is in so the group can join in. Remember: simple is best, first position chords are easiest to follow ... and some musicians don't have or like to use capos.



**7. SING FROM THE HEART:** Nothing about a SongFarmer Music Club is about “perfection,” it’s about love, joy, community and music. If you are doing a song with a fun chorus like *This Land Is Your Land* invite the other singers to join the chorus. Harmonize with the singer on the verses - but leave the melody for the lead singer. Even if you don’t play an instrument you can still sing and be a SongFarmer!

**8. VOLUME:** Here’s a good tip - if you can’t hear the lead singer you are probably playing too loud. The harder you use the instrument the quicker it will go out of tune. So if you can’t hear the lead singer (thus loosing your place) just pull back and play softer, that should solve it.

Remember – our goal in a SongFarmer event is to make everyone else have fun and sound better. The more you consider others the more you will shine. Your fellow SongFarmers will appreciate it ... so have fun!

Perry Brake [jpbrake5@gmail.com](mailto:jpbrake5@gmail.com)



*“Trees are poems the earth writes upon the sky.”*  
Khalil Gibran

*“Listen to the trees as they sway in the wind. Their leaves are telling secrets. Their bark sings songs of olden days ...”*  
Vera Nazarian

*“When I hear music, I fear no danger. I am invulnerable. I see no foe. I am related to the earliest times, and to the latest.”*  
Henry David Thoreau

*“There is always music amongst the trees in the Garden, but our hearts must be very quiet to hear it.”*  
Minnie Aumonier

*“Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.”*  
Berthold Auerbach



Start a hometown

# SongFarmers Music Club



*There's nuthin' more lonesome than the  
sound of a perfectly good front porch  
with no music on it.*

Start your own hometown, front porch style picking sessions! It was a great suggestion made during last year's WoodSongs Gathering ... a simple local gathering of friends to pick and sing on a regular basis in your living room, front porch, local coffeehouse even a school room.

Join over two dozen hometowns with SongFarmer Clubs, bringing neighbors and friends together to pick, sing and share community friendship. It's simple:

a) **First** become an active member of the WFPA and read over the info on the Music Club page of [SongFarmers.org](http://SongFarmers.org)

b) **Second** ... create a Facebook page that looks like this: "**SongFarmers of (your hometown)**" and link to **SongFarmers.org**

Your SongFarmers local gatherings should always be free, non-ticketed, pot luck and involve as many kids as you can. One of the amazing things about these clubs is discovering the vibrant seedling community of young players. It is amazing, its easy, it's FREE and it's fun.

## Ready to Start?

Contact us by sending an email to [WFPA@woodsongs.com](mailto:WFPA@woodsongs.com).

We will send you logos and artwork you can use to start your own SongFarmers Music Club.

[SongFarmers.org](http://SongFarmers.org)

# WOODSONGS<sup>®</sup>

## CLASSROOM PROGRAM

**To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts."**  
*Henry David Thoreau*

Your membership in the WFPA supports our educational initiative that creates amazing roots music and arts lessons, available to teachers and home school families complete with lesson plans for middle, high and college level students.

Want to introduce students to the banjo? How about with Bela Fleck and Abigail Washburn. The guitar? Try Tommy Emmanuel. Traditional American jazz? How about the Preservation Hall Jazz Band. Bluegrass? Try JD Crowe, Doyle Lawson and Paul Williams.

There is an incredible banquet of music programs and projects available on the CLASSROOM page of WoodSongs.com and all are FREE to teachers and home school parents.

# SongFarmers-L

## List Serve



Join the global front porch conversation! **SongFarmers-L** is a new community service by the *WoodSongs Front Porch Association* and the University of Kentucky. It is a global email list serve to encourage conversation among artists, writers, radio, labels, and SongFarmers. Discuss art, writing, community building, music, instruments, songs, projects, bluegrass, folk, old time, poetry, authors, roots, blues and more all welcome. It's FREE to join ... your email address is not shared or sold ... and you do not have to be a member of the WFPA.

To sign up for the FREE SongFarmers-L international list serve:

- send an email TO: [LISTSERV@lsv.uky.edu](mailto:LISTSERV@lsv.uky.edu) with the SUBJECT HEADING of: **Subscribe**
- In the BODY of the same email type: subscribe SongFarmers-L (your name) ... example: "subscribe SongFarmers-L John Doe"
- AFTER YOU REGISTER: When you want to post to the group, just send an email to [SongFarmers-L@lsv.uky.edu](mailto:SongFarmers-L@lsv.uky.edu)

**For more information visit: [SongFarmers.org](http://SongFarmers.org)**



We think it's important for you to know who provides the guidance for the *WoodSongs Front Porch Association* and our *SongFarmers* community. The founding members of the WFPA creative board include:

**Michael Johnathon**

*folksinger, songwriter and producer of the WoodSongs broadcast*

**Art Menius**

*first executive director of IBMA, first president of Folk Alliance*

**Kari Estrin**

*Founding President/SERFA – Kari Estrin Management & Consulting*

**Josh Dunson**

*agent, journalist-author, social activist and creative force behind Real People's Music for 40 years.*

**Loretta Sawyer**

*Chicago publicist, roots agent and author*

**Rik Palieri**

*Vermont folksinger and author*

**Doug Oines**

*President of the American Nyckelharpa Association*

**Dr. Ron Pen**

*Director of the John Jacob Niles Center for American Music (University of Kentucky)*

**Penny Lane Diersing**

*Radio DJ, host of the SongFarmers of Shelby County and national SongFarmer "mom"*

**Raymond McLain**

*Director of the KY Center of Traditional Music (Morehead State University)*

**Steve Martin**

*attorney, Board of IBMA, bluegrass DJ*

**Reggie Harris**

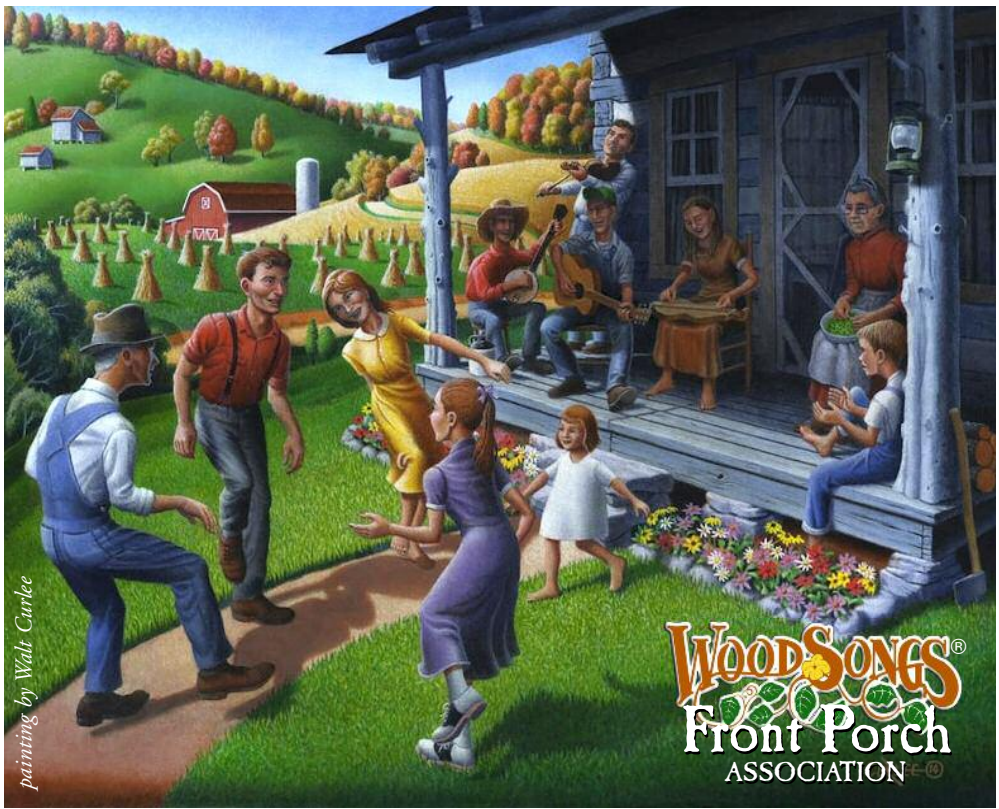
*folksinger, civil rights leader, educator*

**Elaine Meyer**

*Executive Director of the historic Museum of Appalachia and 2015 home of the first WoodSongs Gathering*

Write to any of them at  
WFPA@WoodSongs.com





painting by Walt Curlee

**WOODSONGS®**  
**Front Porch**  
 ASSOCIATION

*Love is the greatest transaction of the arts.*

Without it, nothing happens. Nothing is created. Nothing is received. Nothing matters. The only lasting connection between an artist, a song and the audience is Love. Fame is not "art" and pursuing it has no lasting value.

Without love no other transactions matter. Now, more than ever, this world needs artists who understand that. To join the global community of front-porch artists, visit [SongFarmers.org](http://SongFarmers.org)



**AGCREDIT**

*Supporting the SongFarmer community  
 and Front Porches everywhere*

**SHAKER VILLAGE**  
 — of Pleasant Hill —