

May, 2026
SongFarmers "Cultivator" Newsletter
"Dogwood Winter"



Hello SongFarmer Chapter Leader,

Enclosed are some of the new SongFarmer brochures, hand them out! Some of you know that I live in a very small town in east Tennessee. Population 850, 13 miles from the nearest traffic signal. Several weeks ago we experienced three seasons in one day! A real Dogwood winter day. Awesome! I tell new residents of east Tennessee – "Never pack your sweaters away until May"!!

The newsletter topic this month is how to set up your SONGFARMERS music jam and song circle. Bottom line and simply put - its' all up to you but I'll share some ideas. I'm talking where folks gather in a circle or oval and play facing each other and playing for each other.

Your biggest challenge here is going to be "Can the players hear the other players". Well, if you play softer, will the folks sitting across from you hear you? Can you hear the other players? Can you hear the bass, can you hear when there is a chord change (remember we try and play simple 3 or 4 chord songs). Can you hear the tempo (that's the job of the bass player). Can you hear the lyrics?

That's a LOT of things dealing with hearing. However, I continuously see jams set up in large rooms with chairs circling the outside walls. Sometimes these circles are shaped like eggs. Long and skinny. Sometimes 20 or more feet across and larger lengthwise. And when we consider the "age/stature" of most of our jammers, the need to hear gets harder as we lose our hearing!!

I remember the absolutely BEST one I ever experienced. It was set in a circle of chairs not more than ten feet across and we were almost arm to arm from our neighbors. But we HEARD everything! As more people joined the jam they added chairs behind the first circle but stayed as close as possible. We ended up with an inner and outer circle and we could hear everything.

I'm not saying every SongFarmer Gathering will be that way, it won't. But it solved the problem for that night of not being able to hear, or be heard. Sometimes you just have to deal with your room layouts and do the best you can with what you have. Please try and refrain from having to PLAY LOUD to be heard. That's not good.

We are seeing continued roots growth of local SongFarmers Clubs. Please don't hesitate to contact us with your suggestions. The Contact for newsletters is me, Perry Brake – my email is jpbrake5@gmail.com

REMEMBER: the next SongFarmers Gathering happens at Michael's cabin near Lexington, KY, **May 21 - 23, 2026**. Info, schedule, workshops and details at SongFarmers.org ... Make plans to attend and spread the word! That's it for May 2026. - Be well and play on the porch!

Perry Brake

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