

September, 2026



## A newsletter for all SongFarmers

**IMPORTANT** – The 2026 SongFarmer Gathering has been postponed until May, 2027. Combined with a stormy May, then unforeseen circumstances in October, it was determined to schedule the next Gathering until May 28 and 29, 2027.

I go to a LOT of Jams. Different types of Jams. Different genres. Different demographics. Different snacks (that is important). Different settings.

This topic can apply to all OPEN Jams. Open Jam meaning its advertised to the public with no restrictions on the type of music played. A few jams may be advertised as “acoustic only”, or “Bluegrass”, or “blues” jams. However the “OPEN” does not restrict the participants to age, political influence or any of the alphabet groups. Anyone can come and sit in and play, or just listen.

Chapter Leaders should be aware of newcomers and their skill level. They may be professional level, or they may be into their first month of leaning and still struggling to tune correctly, much less know how to play a song in Bb, with 5 or six chords.

Open jams that are well attended by newcomers run much smoother if the circle is tight, tempo is moderate, and chord progressions are limited to 3 or 4 chords (1, 4, 5, 6m). Loose jams create hearing/volume issues. Burning fast songs become garbled noise and confused beginners. Complex chord progressions become breeding grounds of hesitation and fear for beginners. Slow, simple, and audible are a recipe for a successful Jam. Burning fast complex songs that are not familiar can easily become a Train Wreck.

Another topic to consider. I’ve visited some jams that have visitors or even regular folks that come to listen (and snack). It seems like a very welcoming gesture to invite the visitors to select or call a song that they want to hear. More times than not, the visitors will request some obscure song or tune that most of the circle doesn’t know. And inevitably someone will say “Sure, we can do that song”. But it immediately turns into the Train Wreck. My own preference when leading a jam, is to ask the PLAYERS what song they want to lead. At least they should know the capabilities of the circle. Train Wreck avoided.

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 [jpbake5@gmail.com](mailto:jpbake5@gmail.com)

That’s it for September, 2026

**Perry Brake**

**SongFarmer and doer - Good at finding the Shade**