

2011 BCTMA Christmas Party - December 17 - Comments by Rob Cuthrell

Tonight I want to talk a little about Gratitude -

You see, I'm very grateful for all of you, for being Members, Sponsors, Volunteers and Supporters of the BCTMA and for becoming involved in this vision, this dream that has become the Beaufort County Traditional Music Association.

Gratitude is thankfulness, gratefulness, appreciation . It is a feeling, an emotion, an attitude - in acknowledgment of a benefit that one has received or will receive. I have received such very real and lasting benefits because of being involved in the BCTMA - and I hope that you feel that way too.

Robert Cushing said, "The fact is, that to do anything in the world worth doing, we must not stand back shivering and thinking of the cold and danger, but jump in and scramble through as well as we can."

Three and a half years ago, I walked into the Beaufort County Arts Council (after eating several Bill's hotdogs) and asked if Joey Toler was in. He was, he took the time to see me, and he listened to an idea I had about getting some pickers together to do some picking. He said, "I think it's a good idea and I'll be glad to support you." I am very grateful that on that day I met Joey, and I am very grateful for the support that he has provided to me personally and to the nurturing of the BCTMA ever since.

Thank you Joey.

Joey and I identified some folks in the area that we knew had an interest in homemade acoustic music and asked them to get together to discuss the concept of what is now the BCTMA. One of these folks was Justin Casey, a young fellow that I discovered was talented in many ways and enthusiastic about helping get the group going. Justin was and is creative and generous with his creativity. He provides his visual graphics, and musical performance and production talents to help make it possible for so many of us in the BCTMA to "Shine".

Thank you Justin

It was decided that our first activity would be to have a jam on Saturday mornings down on the waterfront during the Saturday Market. A motley crew of pickers and singers started showing up and the group kept growing and growing. Sidney Moore was the first new friend to show up at the jam, followed by Devon Mish, Don Skinner, Big Poppa Sid, Mary Walter, Andy Wallach, - and more and more and more just kept coming.

Thank you - All of you that came out in those early days to make music, build friendships and have fun together. You have all helped define the BCTMA. You have made it what it has become and I hope you will continue to enthusiastically guide it into the future.

One day at a jam, this lady showed up with a little bittie guitar. She seemed a little intimidated at first, but it wasn't long before she was having just so much fun – and helping every one else have so much fun – and holding us together, and caring. After awhile, I asked her if she might be willing to help lead the BCTMA and she said “Yeah, I think I'd like to do that.” and she's been doing it ever since. I like to call her the BCTMA's heart and soul because that's what she is.

Thank you Linda Boyer for always “Bringing the Fun”.

Then one day while we were out picking under the tree, this fellow showed up and said “ I've got a great idea! You folks can come down and play in my building when it gets too cold to sit out here on the corner” - and folks here we are – at the Union Alley Coffeeshouse at the Inner Banks Artisans' Center.

Thank you Bob Henkel.

Folks, I could sit here and tell about so many folks – including most every one of you – that I've had the pleasure to meet, and hang out with and play music with and do stuff with over the past three and a half years. And I could tell about what a blessing you have been to me – but that would take all night.

Albert Schweitzer said- “ At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.” I hope that for each of you, that someone in this room – someone in the BCTMA family - has at some point and in some way provided you with a spark that has rekindled the flame within you. I am grateful that so many of you have and still do provide that spark for me whenever we make music together.

I just want you all to know that I'm grateful to all of you for helping to make the BCTMA a good cause - and that by doing so you have all made me very happy.

I just hope that the BCTMA has made each of you Happy too.

Thank you all!

Well, here we are – all together for a Christmas Party!

And what a good time to think about gratitude towards our God. Gratitude has been said to mold and shape the entire Christian life. Martin Luther referred to gratitude as “The basic Christian attitude” and today it is still referred to as “the heart of the gospel.” As each Christian believes they were created by a personal God, Christians are strongly encouraged to praise and give gratitude to their creator. In Christian gratitude, God is seen as the selfless giver of all good things and because of this, there is a great sense of indebtedness that enables Christians to share a common bond, shaping all aspects of a

follower's life. Gratitude in Christianity is an acknowledgment of God's generosity that inspires Christians to shape their own thoughts and actions around such ideals. Instead of simply a sentimental feeling, Christian gratitude is regarded as a virtue that shapes not only emotions and thoughts but actions and deeds as well.

At this time of year, it is most fitting that we acknowledge gratitude to our God and his most selfless gift of his Son, that by his coming to this earth, we all have hope of an eternal life of glory with him. (I hear that there is a lot of picking and singing in heaven too - Yeah!)

Thank you Lord!