

'Picking powerhouse' to play Tar Landing Jam



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If you know much about music, you've heard the name Doc Watson. Fewer people, however, would likely know the name of the man who sat next to Watson onstage for 20 years, who, according to many traditional musicians, is one of the best flatpickers playing today: Jack Lawrence.

Lawrence teams up with one of the founding members of The Bluegrass Experience, Tommy Edwards, at the Tar Landing Jam Nov. 3, the two headlining the Beaufort County Traditional Music Association's signature fall show and capping off the day-long event.

In a press release this week, BCTMA Chairman Linda Boyer wrote, "Tommy and Jack's combined performance is like having two old friends — that just happen to be two of the most accomplished guitar pickers you'll ever hear — sitting around swapping tunes."

According to Rob Cuthrell, BCTMA past chair and host of the jam, Lawrence's picking speed and precision put him on par with the great guitarists of the genre.

"(Lawrence) has only put out one album and that was years ago," said Cuthrell. "But the people on it are like a who's who of musicians."

Lawrence and Edwards will take the stage at 8 p.m., following a slew of local talent beginning at 5 p.m.: The Skinner Family Trio, Tiki Roadhouse, The Flathead Zingers and Ann Meadows. Prior to that, traditional musicians of all stripes are invited to join in the community jam starting at 2:30 p.m.

Twice a year, the public is invited to the jam at its unique venue near Bath — an enormous barn complete with stage, lighting and sound system. Proceeds raised at the jam go to support other community endeavors: the spring show benefitted the Beaufort County Arts Council; last fall, the proceeds went to "Save the Margaret" and used to help rescue the 107-year-old sloop stranded inland by Hurricane Irene. Money raised with Saturday's Tar Landing Jam will go to Bath High School Preservation, the organization backing renovation of the old Bath High School as a community center.

"It's a way to bring the community together to help support a worthy cause," said Sylvia Mish, one of BCTMA's supporting musicians.

For Boyer, the Tar Landing Jam is a chance to build awareness and appreciation of live music: "We have a special opportunity to bring in more professional musicians who have played traditional music their whole lives and are just excellent quality musicians," Boyer explained.

For more information about, and directions to, the Tar Landing Jam, visit www.bctma.org.

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