

National acts to join local favorites on stage

Pickin' on the Plains will bring in some familiar faces to Thomas County as well as national acts.

The New Old Timers are a Celtic and bluegrass band from Hill City. The group plays traditional and "newgrass" styles. They are responsible for the "Blue Grass in the Park" event in Hill City each August.

Wayne and Millie Lauritsen make up the Sappa Strings. The pair, from Gem, now live in Woodland Park, Colo. Wayne plays the guitar and sings cowboy ballads while Millie plays the autoharp and dobro.

Larry Booth is a fixture at Colby events, especially Pickin on the Plains and Picnic in the Park.

The Millers

A family band from Missouri, the Millers have performed all over southwest Missouri from Branson to Conway as well as in Oklahoma and Arkansas.

The quartet consists of father Cliff, lead vocals and guitar, mother Joanne, bass fiddle, daughter Megan, fiddle, and son Austin, banjo. Cliff has been a musician for more than 30 years and likes to incorporate humor into his performances to get the audience into the act. Joanne was taught to play the mandolin by her grandfather at an early age. Her uncle, Johnny Mullins, is an award-winning songwriter.

Megan has been playing the fiddle since she was 11. She also does harmony vocals for the band. Austin, who has been playing banjo for

three years, also harmonizes while playing.

The band has released two albums, "I Believe" in 2007 and "The Millers" in 2008.

Cody Shuler and Pine Mountain Railroad

Led by Cody Shuler, the bluegrass and gospel quintet from Knoxville, Tenn., known as Pine Mountain Railroad recently had their album "Pickin' Praisin' Singin'" rank within the top five on the national bluegrass charts.

Shuler has been playing since he was 12. He joined the band in 2004, bringing his mandolin and tenor singing. He took over the band in 2006. Bill McBee plays acoustic bass for the band. He is also a member of the Veterans of Vietnam Motorcycle Club and Rolling Thunder. Matt Flake, fiddle, also joined the band in 2004. He previously played with bluegrass band Blue Tradition of Kentucky. Jerry Cole plays guitar as well as contributing both tenor and baritone vocals. Seth Taylor picked up the banjo when he was 8 and won a contest at Merlefest in North Carolina when he was 14.

Michael Cleveland and Flamekeeper

Michael Cleveland has been playing fiddle since he was 4 years old and has won numerous awards and competitions. He formed Flamekeeper in 2008, bringing together musicians he had played with in other bands.

Jesse Brock, mandolin, played with his family's band at the age of 9, and has toured

with national acts as well as producing his own solo album. Tom Adams, guitar, is an award-winning banjo player as well and writes a monthly column for a national banjo magazine. Marshall Wilborn plays bass for the band as well as being an instructor. He has

produced a number of instructional videos for bass players. Jessie Baker taught himself how to play guitar at age 11 before switching to banjo. Still a teenager, Baker has toured with a number of bluegrass bands as well as Flamekeeper.

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