

BY EMILY WICHMER,
Staff Reporter

Bluegrass music is a cross between country and blues music, full of twangs and upbeat melodies. Tim Graves, Farm Hands Quartet member, said the music has a fascinating history and is worth preserving.

The Farm Hands Quartet recently performed in Kirksville and plans to return within the year.

The Farm Hands Quartet, formed during 2011 in Nashville, Tenn., enjoys playing traditional bluegrass music mixed with religious messages, Graves said. The group is dedicated to bluegrass and wants to share their love for it with others, he said.

Graves plays the dobro, an acoustic guitar with a round metal resonator centered over the body of the guitar which amplifies the sound, Graves said. He credits his uncle with incorporating the dobro into bluegrass and introducing Graves to the genre. Graves has played bluegrass for 38 years, he said.

The Farm Hands Quartet shared bluegrass music with many audiences by performing at many festivals, churches and concerts from Pennsylvania to Texas, Graves said. The Farm Hands Quartet also performed at the First United Methodist Church in Kirksville for approximately 130 people. Graves said the performance went well and the group enjoyed exposing audience members to the sound of bluegrass.

Though the Farm Hands Quartet has performed all over the country, Graves's favorite experience was performing at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tenn., he said.

"The Opry was wonderful," Graves said. "I became good friends with some of the Opry stars and it felt like one big musical family."

The Farm Hands Quartet was nominated for numerous awards from the Bluegrass Music Awards, including Band of the Year, Gospel Band of the Year and Entertainer of the Year, Graves said.

He said The Farm Hands Quartet plans to participate in the Bluegrass Festival sponsored by the Society for Preservation of Bluegrass Music of America in Kirksville during the fall.

BJ Allen, Circle M Music co-owner, said she thinks bluegrass music has a great history. She said bluegrass melds blues and country music, and sparked the birth of rock 'n' roll.

"Bluegrass music has a characteristic sound because the instruments are mostly acoustic,"

Band brings Bluegrass to Kirksville



Submitted photo
Above, from right to left, Tim Graves, Bennie Boling, Daryl Mosley and Kevin Williamson, members of the Farm Hands Quartet, travel the country performing traditional bluegrass music that emphasizes religious messages. Below, Boling and Williamson play during one of their performances.

Allen said. "Depending on where you are in the country, bluegrass could sound more like country or blues music."

She said bluegrass is more popular in mountain regions and bluegrass bands from southern states show more blues influences.

Allen said Circle M Music hosts performances every Thursday featuring country and bluegrass music. The jam sessions allow performers to promote their band and put different bands in collaboration with people and performers they might not know, Allen said.

She said she enjoys the bluegrass music at the jam sessions because they feature several different sounds. Typical bluegrass instruments include guitars, upright fiddles, banjos, mandolins and dobros, Allen said.

"Bluegrass is so different than other genres," Allen said. "From its history to its instruments, bluegrass really is unique."



Speakers share success stories with campus

Visiting authors to speak
about liberal arts backgrounds
during Truman State visit

BY EMILY BATTMER

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When English professor Joe Benevento received writer Lee Slonimsky's biography along with his first poetry submission to the "Green Hills Literary Lantern" magazine, he noticed a surprising combination — a creative writing degree and a career as a hedge fund manager. After hearing recent negative comments about the liberal arts, Benevento said he got the idea to invite Slonimsky and his wife, novelist Carol Goodman, to speak on campus March 4 and 5.

Goodman received her undergraduate degree in Latin — not typical of

award-winning authors, Benevento said. He said he thought Slonimsky and Goodman embodied the mission of the liberal arts and would serve as good examples for students at Truman State.

"Both of the people coming have liberal arts degrees and have gone on and done something you maybe wouldn't have expected," Benevento said. "Both of these people are great examples and can articulate what a liberal arts degree can do for you and how your own creativity is a part of that process of figuring out where to go with that degree."

Their success stories are inspirational during a time when the liberal arts are "being questioned and assailed throughout the country," Benevento said.

For example, he said it might be hard for some people to understand getting a degree in classics, but Goodman has found success as an award-winning novelist with her Latin degree.

"Right at this school now, people probably question, 'Should we keep the classics department?' but it's the foundation of what a liberal arts school is about," Benevento said. "Obviously, somebody can be very successful [with a liberal arts education] and there are other things you can do with that background and training."

Usually a reading like this would be sponsored by the English department, Benevento said, but because of the interdisciplinary nature of these writers, they also have received sponsorship from the School of Arts and Letters, the C.V. Huenemann Lectureship and the School of Business.

Business professor and department chair Jason Lin said Slonimsky will speak to one of Jin's finance classes.

"This class is a capstone for finance majors and I don't think we normally have the opportunity to hear face to face

from a hedge fund manager," Lin said. "I think the opportunity is quite unique for the students at Truman."

Lin said he was surprised to hear a hedge fund manager had a creative writing background, and he is interested to hear what Slonimsky has to say about his career path and how literature prepared him for his work in finance.

"I think students will learn from his current position [in the finance industry] and also learn from his liberal arts background," Lin said.

In addition to visiting classes during the day, Slonimsky and Goodman will give evening presentations Monday and Tuesday, Benevento said.

The presentation, "Creative Career Choices and the Liberal Arts" will take place 7 p.m. Monday in the SUB Alumni Room, and both writers will be reading from their respective works at 7 p.m. Tuesday in the Alumni Room.



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