



Buckhannon Opera House set to host The J. Max McKee Band

By David D. Taylor

BUCKHANNON – Bill Monroe, known throughout the world as the ‘Father of Bluegrass’ was once quoted, “bluegrass [music] has brought more people together and made more friends than any music in the world. You meet people at festivals and renew acquaintances year after year.”

The J. Max McKee Band comprised of bluegrass musicians J. Max McKee and Ken Scoggins have continually caused new friendships to form, year after year, as they crisscross the country performing at bluegrass venues and more, new, friendships will develop as the band is set to perform for an evening performance at The Buckhannon Opera House Thursday, June 27.

“For some time, we have wanted to start a music series in the Opera House and this concert can kick it off,” said C.J. Rylands. “We are most fortunate to have Ken and J. Max making the trip from South Carolina and jump-starting this music venture for us and pointing us in the right direction.”

Rylands said cost of admission will be \$5 person and the band will perform from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Scoggins is a veteran professional bluegrass musician whose singing style is reminiscent of first-generation bluegrass musicians. He has traveled extensively throughout the country performing for receptive crowds at many of the nation’s larger bluegrass venues.

Born in the small farming community of Ogden, just outside of Rock Hill, South Carolina, Scoggins graduated from the University of South Carolina with an honors degree in Criminal Justice and later successfully attended the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy followed by graduating from the elite FBI National Academy. Scoggins holds honors degrees and certificates from Winthrop University as well as the University of Virginia.

In August 2017, Scoggins was appointed Chief of Police of the Winthrop University Po-

lice Department, the position he still holds today.

Scoggins prides himself in being a huge supporter of organizations whose ministry and outreach programs benefit children in need. He is a member of A.F.M York Lodge 385, A.A.S.R Rock Hill Valley (32nd. Degree), and a Noble of Hejaz Temple.

“When touring throughout the country, everyone is always asked to throw in an extra dollar at my CD table,” said Scoggins. “Every single dollar collected goes directly to benefit the children at Shriner’s Hospital.”

Blending together a challenging law enforcement career along with an equally demanding bluegrass touring schedule doesn’t leave Scoggins with my free time by any stretch of the imagination, but he certainly has managed to hold onto his distinct southern sense of humor.

“I certainly don’t have much free time and, therefore, I don’t have many hobbies,” remarked Scoggins jokingly. “But I do enjoy dealing with undependable people... occasional, marginally-irritating unsolicited vocal commentary... whiners... tales of woe... bosses that require frightfully taxing amounts of self-affirmation... talking to my imaginary friend.... anonymous letter writers... slow drivers in the fast lane... impatient people...those with a propensity to bloviate... cheese puffs and... warm buttermilk!”

One of the biggest personal and professional accomplishments in Scoggins bluegrass music career occurred on the evening of November 24, 2018. During the Atlanta Country Music Hall of Fame Awards Show held in Atlanta, Georgia, Scoggins was inducted into the Class of 2018 Hall of Fame.

The second half of the J. Max McKee Band is Shelby, North Carolina, native who is best known as the King of the Hard Driving Banjo, J. Max McKee.

McKee, a professional musician, has performed at numerous major bluegrass festivals from Washington, D.C. to Branson, Missouri, and Florida, and all other points in between over the decades.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Ken Scoggins, left, and J. Max McKee with bringing their South Carolina style bluegrass to the the Buckhannon Opera House June 27.

Entertaining audiences with a wide variety of styles which include arrangements by all the greats like Earl Scruggs, Ralph Stanley, Don Reno and Raymond Fairchild, McKee is certainly not an imitator, but rather an innovator whose energy and mastery of the banjo is reflected by his own exclusive style.

One of McKee’s interests is the composition of novel material focusing around the banjo and its seldom seen or heard capabilities, as is demonstrated in such original songs as “Hummingbird”.

“I credit my early influences on the likes of Don Reno and Hubert Davis,” McKee said. “And also, Earl Scruggs.”

McKee was recently recognized with a featured article in Bluegrass Unlimited. He is regularly written about in other bluegrass music related publications nationwide.

Often described as a traditional, high energy bluegrass

picker, McKee has his heart in his music.

“Good, solid, family-style entertainment is always what we strive to achieve, at every single show” said McKee.

McKee is also a member of the Atlanta Country Music Hall of Fame.

This year’s central West Virginia tour will take the J. Max McKee Band to the Braxton Country Jamboree in Gassaway on Friday evening, June 28, followed by the Jerry Run Summer Theater in Webster County on Saturday evening, June 29.

To learn more about the J. Max McKee Band you can visit their website at www.kenscogginsmusic.com.

The Buckhannon Opera House is located at 12 East Main Street in downtown Buckhannon next door to CJ Maggie’s Restaurant. For additional information regarding the Opera House you can call 304-472-8369.