

THE CAT'S MEOW



PO BOX 50806 Columbia, South Carolina 29250 803-432-1504

Reggie

Charlie Willbanks Brings His Banjo

Lourie Center at Maxcy Gregg Park (just off Pickens near Blossom)
2:30-5:00 pm, Sunday, April 3, 2016

Charlie is a man of many talents. Until his retirement, Charlie was a key researcher at Milliken Corporation where he holds a number of patents. What's more, he earned those patents back in the day when a patent was issued only if the idea was "useful, novel and non-obvious. Sadly, to my mind, patent requirements have been changed (to match European practice I think). Today, patents are issued based on much flimsier work than in years past.



But I doubt you would ever hear anything about all of his technical accomplishments from Charlie. And I suspect you could talk to Charlie a long time without finding out that he is also a talented banjo player. I am glad that Charlie makes the trek down from Spartanburg to sit in with our guys at our concerts. Charlie is also the organizer of the "Windjammers", a Dixieland jazz band that has been active for many years in the Spartanburg Area. In keeping with their philosophy of "giving back", they include a lot of charity concerts at nursing homes and retirement homes.

THE CAROLINA JAZZ SOCIETY was founded in 1958 to enjoy Dixieland Jazz, one of America's original art forms.

Concerts are \$10 for non-members, \$5 for members, free for Patrons and young people under 18.

I'm often at a loss when I sit down to write the newsletter and I try to think of something I haven't talked about. I figured Charlie plays the banjo and there must be several hundred banjo jokes. And that would be different.

I went on the internet and I found lots of banjo jokes – **all of them bad**. Here's one, "If you drop a plectrum banjo and a tenor banjo from the leaning tower of Pisa, which would fall faster?" The answer, "who cares as long as they both are smashed to pieces at the bottom". I will spare you any of the others on the long list of equally bad jokes.

Jokes aside, I like the banjo in the hands of a good player and Charlie is a very good player.

Lot's of Subs for This Concert!

We are lucky to have Dick Goodwin as band manager. Without his extensive contacts, we would be in real trouble this month. I've given up trying to keep track of which band member will be out of town and when. But never fear, Dick is here! We'll have a good bunch of musicians on the bandstand and everyone, musicians and audience alike, will have a good time.

Butch Thompson

I received a nice note from Butch Thompson, the wonderful pianist from Minnesota. I donated to the pledge drive for radio station KBEM in Minneapolis in support of a program Butch does on Sunday Evenings from 7 to 8 pm (his program is podcast and I listen to it on my computer). His program is special because he often plays rare recordings of early jazz musicians, including recordings that were never released. And he provides a nice historical context for the songs.

I have several CD's that Butch has recorded and I really like one of his compositions, "Ecuadorian Memories". Butch wrote the piece after a tour of South America sponsored by the State Department. Here's a link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U47ya3ud3TM>

I found out that Butch and the Carolina Jazz Society go back a long way. When Butch was stationed at Camp Gordon across the river in Georgia, he used to come to Columbia and sit-in with our guys. He played clarinet rather than piano on these occasions because Ralph Goodwin, a founding member of the society, was our regular pianist. Butch tells me that George Buck, one of our founding members, introduced him to the "Columbia Jazz Society" (as we were known back in the day). Of course George went on to form Jazzology records and made recordings of some local band members before moving his operations to New Orleans.

Red Smith, Editor (farrensmith@bellsouth.net)