

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES - Bonnie Manning, President, Hancock County Historical & Gen. Society

Members of the Historical Society want to express our heart-felt thanks and gratitude to those who in any way supported the Jimmy Martin Memorial BG Festival. Especially to our sponsors who felt the event was a worthy cause and, without their commitment, the festival would have been lacking in much needed facilities. To Powell Valley Electric who worked tirelessly to get the lights and other limited power installed, and, Nick Cantwell and his crew for construction of a well built stage. For men like Fred Blaylock (Audie's father) who worked side by side with my husband, Boyd. He was the one who suggested we paint the stage background blue and we certainly appreciated the guys who painted it. Those who helped with setting up and tearing down tents; the "4-wheeler boys" who kept the grounds clear of trash and directed people to designated parking areas.

Thanks to the American Legion for presenting the flag each day. And, how about those TN TN Pride Cloggers. I'm sure Jodi Hopkins is very proud of them. Jennifer Seal and her Girl Scouts gave a wonderful and moving tribute to the Veterans.

But, most of all, to members of the Society who had the volunteer spirit and can-do attitude to organize and host this event. Members like Ken Cantwell who made numerous improvements to the grounds and provided a beautiful setting for bluegrass fans to enjoy; and, Katherine who graciously provided drinks and snacks for the performers to enjoy in the hospitality tent; to my husband, Boyd Manning, who designed and oversaw the stage construction and labored days and weeks to make sure all the logistics were in place and on time; Ann Ferrell who brought in all those wonderful food booths and crafters. She and her husband, Claude, even rented a camper to have on site to see to their needs and ready to address any problems that arose. Charles and Sherry Mercer who worked the east gate cheerfully directing entertainers and handicapped to their designated areas. The west gate workers were Lonnie and Deanna Purkey as well as Jeanette Pillion and other friends of the Society. The Society's booth was managed by Mossie Ray who sold our historical books as well as family history books. She also sold the T-Shirts and hats which will become collector's items. Judy Trent, our Treasurer, managed the finances and promptly had the payroll ready at the end of each day. Her office was made available for ticket sales and she and Nancy Crumley answered hundreds of questions concerning the festival. Last but not least, members who worked in the background undergirding the Society to make sure we did not fall short of our commitments.

Our County Mayor, Greg Marion, was present both days and very well pleased with the outcome. Greg continually asked about the progress of the festival, lending support when needed. We appreciated the time he took out of his busy schedule to attend the planning meetings. Our thanks to City Mayor, Dean Rhea, and council members who voted to provide financial assistance and city workers who installed signs and "spruced up" the city. To Hancock County Today News and The Shopper who ran free, weekly ads and articles to promote the festival and radio stations all over the country who sponsored us.

The opening welcome on Saturday was given by Senator Mike Williams who along with the TN

State Legislature provided grant monies to the TN Arts Commission who awarded the Historical Society monies to help with costs of the festival. We know there is a great demand on his time and we appreciated the choice he made to be in Sneedville to help us celebrate a native son and the “King of Bluegrass.” And, Congressman David Davis who gave of his valuable time to give the opening welcome on Friday. I personally appreciated the time Beulah Ferguson took to visit with us and appreciated her uplifting compliments on the festival. She is Director of Special Projects at the Tourism Development Division in Johnson City, TN.

A huge thanks to Larry Carter, our Master of Ceremonies, who is to be commended on an outstanding job. He gave a live “Bluegrass for Breakfast” broadcast on Friday morning; worked long hours making sure performers were present and on stage at the scheduled time; kept up with announcements; recorded interviews, introduced visitors and invited guests; performed with his band, S&S Express, and, helped “Ms Bonnie” keep her wits about her.

We appreciated many friends of the Society who came from out of town to volunteer in the hospitality tent and at the ticket booths. Many distributed brochures and flyers and “talked-up” the festival.

Many off Jimmy Martin’s family were there and it pleased the Society to see them and thank them for being there to help us remember one of their own and celebrate his contribution to bluegrass music.

We are looking forward to next year and hope to see all the ones who came out this year. Several indicated they enjoyed the experience of being in this peaceful and pleasant place and loved the scenery as they drove through the mountains and hills. For a weekend of all day entertainment they felt the price was very reasonable and indicated they had paid that much or more in one evening just to hear two or three bands. We had local bands who are the “cream of the crop” and professional bands who are the best in the country and they played their heart out for this festival. Fans indicated they had never heard anything like it.....you can’t get better reviews than that!!!!.