



*Oregon Bluegrass Association*  
[www.oregonbluegrass.org](http://www.oregonbluegrass.org)

# Bluegrass Express

## Meet Clayton Knight: Our OBA President

**S**hortly after Clayton Knight assumed the leadership of the Oregon Bluegrass Association in fall 2018, Chairman Chris, as he is known to his many friends, met with me to talk about his vision for a more dynamic OBA.

Over eggs and bacon, we discussed the history of the OBA, what the OBA is doing now, what it can be, and what the OBA means. I also learned about Knight's history, his music experience and how he became involved in the OBA.

Knight's love of music began with violin and then with fiddles at the age of eight. When young Clayton was eleven, two things happened: the war (the Beatles problem on the hit ballads that had to be covered by first guitar) Knight became curious about how "The Beatles were making these new records and he started reading books on "the meaning, significance." Knight returned to himself as being "the most self-expressive" in those bands, because "myself" motivation to play was to get girls.

### FIRST EXPOSURE TO BLUEGRASS

In 1973, a friend invited to ride with Balloumen in Virginia and during the drive, Knight happened upon the Dixie Club



Bluegrass Festival in Gallopers, Virginia. The year, the festival featured legends such as Earl Scruggs, Monroe and the Oldies. Knight said he was "intrigued" by the sound. "The Bluegrass festival changed the way I listened to music," says Knight, "because I didn't have to struggle to figure out how the music is made!"

Two years later, Knight joined the Dixie, joined a band and built a career as a steel engineer, returned to school to study

By Chris Cooper  
introduction and played actively pursuing music. Knight regards the "natural opportunity" to go out to live music.

It was during a great cross-country road trip that Knight visited the Dixie Club in Gallopers and walked out with a mandolin. To spare the remainder of the trip, teaching himself to play his new instrument.

Soon Knight headed to Portland, where he discovered the Old Time Inn and the OBA. Another Inn, where he met Tim Sherry and April and Pat Parker. In 2001, Clayton attended "Bluegrass for the first time. It was in those "Bluegrass jams" that Clayton Knight experienced one of those "I've found my people" moments.

Knight observed that these jams at "Bluegrass included" "much of what I saw in Gallopers, Virginia" - the including the jams, the vibrancy on stage. "The industry is what I'd think makes these jams hot"

Knight continued, "The founder of Bluegrass grew up a blue when if you would think, you had to make it, you had to sing it. But those played the mandolin because for me the younger and that

*Continued on page 11*

