

# Pete Goble

## *A Songwriter's Journey*



The world of bluegrass music has been blessed with many good songwriters in addition to musicians. Many songwriters, writers who have given us some wonderful stories about life include the likes of Harley Allen, Carl Jackson, and Tim Stafford. Harley Allen's heart warming song, **The Little Girl**, (though a country hit) is a perfect example of the heart warming themes in this music. Carl Jackson's song, **Winding through Life**, and Tim Stafford's **Clay and Audie** are by far two of the most thoughtful songs ever recorded.

Another song writer the bluegrass world is fortunate to have is Pete Goble. He has authored a number of well known songs like *Blue Virginia Blues*, *Big Spike Hammer*, *Tennessee 1949*, *Julianne*, *Colleen Malone*, and most recently recorded by Tim O'Brien, *Fiddler's Green*. These are but few of the many songs that Pete has written, and has had recorded by the Country Gentlemen, Doyle Lawson, The Osborne Brothers, Hot Rize, and J.D. Crowe to name just a few.

Pete was born and raised in Prestonsburg, Kentucky and grew up around a variety of music. He had always been a fan of Eddie Arnold, but didn't really have much exposure to bluegrass until he saw Flatt & Scruggs perform in Lexington, Kentucky at the Clay Gentry Arena in 1948. He was also witness to thirteen year old J.D. Crowe's appearance with Flatt & Scruggs as he picked *The Mamma Blues* with Earl. J.D. apparently stole the show.

Years later after Pete moved to Michigan, he once again ran into J.D. Crowe as he was beginning his playing career with Jimmy Martin. Pete had the opportunity to spend some time with Crowe, and Jimmy Martin as they worked out a number of songs together, many of which Pete had written. Through the years Pete and J.D. became very good friends and spent time together playing music, and goofing around.

Pete recalls a story about an automobile accident he and Crowe got into in Lexington, Kentucky. Apparently, Crowe was driving his younger sister to the doctor's office when a grass hopper flew in the window of the car. Pete said that he took the grass hopper and stuck it down the back of Crowe's shirt. J.D. was trying to get the grass hopper out of his shirt but then lost control of the car and took out three big fence posts and big 2 x 10 railings from the fences as well. One railing came through the front window of the car, out the back window. Miraculously, it went between J.D. and his mom in the front seat, and Pete and Crowe's sister in the back seat.

Pete first learned to play the guitar from a guy he met while in the service as they used to sit around the barracks and pick. "This guy showed me a few chords and how to strum, and that's where my playing began." Prior to his introduction to bluegrass music, Pete used to play and sing Eddie Arnold songs, but after he saw Flatt & Scruggs he said "Wow, this is what I have to learn!" Pete didn't play much music until he came to Michigan, but then he met up with local Detroit pickers, Billy Gill, and Carl Vanover who were playing together. "Billy liked my style, and he could really sing well. We got together and cut two forty-five records for Happy Heart Records." Pete remembers when he first met Jimmy Martin. "One day Carl said let's go over where my buddies are playing, though I didn't know he was talking about Jimmy Martin. We went to the Yale Bar over near John C. Lodge and Warren in Detroit; he introduced me to Jimmy Martin, Sam Hutchison, and Earl Taylor."

That night Jimmy Martin invited Pete to get up on stage, and with the encouragement from his friend Carl Vanover he got up and sang with Jimmy. "I got up and sang *Down the Road*, and got a big huge hand from the audience. I was feeling butterflies in my stomach, but after I got off the stage Jimmy told me "man, they really liked that, I want you to take my place next Friday because I have to go to Nashville., So I agreed to it." The next Friday, Pete came back to fill in for Jimmy, and sang a number of Mac Wiseman songs. This was easy for Pete since he could sing like Mac and even phrase the songs the way Mac phrased them. Pete became a real hit and found himself performing often.



Left to Right, Billy Gill, Herman Lewis, Pete Goble, James Cobb and Leonard Styles

---

by David Russell

---

# Pete Goble *a songwriter's Journey*

Jimmy Martin was planning to leave Detroit and go back to Nashville to record, but he told Pete that he needed some new songs. Pete then wrote *You'll be a Lost Ball, I'll Never Take no for an Answer* and *I'll Drink no More Wine* for Jimmy. "I remember when J. D. Crowe came over to my house and I sang *You'll be a Lost Ball* and he said that Jimmy would like that song, and he needs songs to record. That evening we went over to where Jimmy was living on Woodward Avenue in Detroit, and Crowe kept after me to sing *You'll be a Lost Ball*, so I sang a verse and a chorus for Jimmy, and he immediately liked it and told me he wanted to record it within two weeks. So I went home and finished the song, and they immediately started rehearsing it. That was the first song I wrote for Jimmy, and in fact the first song I had ever written."



**Jimmy Martin, Pete Gobel and Tom T. Hall**

Pete later met up with the Osborne brothers in Huntington, West Virginia at the Wheeling Jamboree. He got to know the Osborne Brothers and was invited to come down to visit with them at their home. It wasn't long after that Pete got an idea for a tune that eventually became a hit song for the Osborne's called *Big Spike Hammer*. Other songs they recorded include *Windy City*, *Midnight Angel*, *Charlie Cotton*, and *This Heart of Mine Can Never Say Goodbye*.

Doyle Lawson has recorded a number of Pete's songs like *Julianne*, *Knee Deep in Bluegrass*, *God sent an Angel*, and many others. Additionally are the bands, The Country Gentlemen, Mountain Heart, Third Tyme Out, Special Consensus, Marty Rayburn, The Alan Munde Gazette, Hot Rize, and most recently Tim O'Brien who recorded *Fiddler's Green*. It goes without saying that Pete has established himself as a significant songwriter among notable bluegrass musicians.

Pete has worked with long time friend and co-writer on a number of songs, Leroy Drumm. Together they worked on the lyrics for the songs on two CDs, **Tennessee 1949**, released in 1987 (Webco WLPS 0123), and **Dixie in My Eye** released in 1989 (Webco WLPS 0128). These albums were recorded with banjo player Bill Emerson. These two albums were re-released in 1995 as **Emerson & Goble**, Webco Classics Volume One, (WEB-CD-6001). There are fourteen songs from the original albums. *Tennessee 1949* was voted IBMA song of the year in 1989 awards show. Webco, owned by originally by Bill Emerson and his son, was eventually sold to Pinecastle Records in 1994.

One interesting note about Pete's song, *Tennessee 1949*, is that he didn't think it was that good of a song and that it probably wouldn't be well received. Pete had traveled to Bill Emerson's house with the intent of recording a bunch of his songs, and he began having doubts about *Tennessee 1949*. Emerson talked Pete into recording the song, and it would eventually become an award win-

ning hit. Pete chuckled and said, "Sometimes these things happen, and the song you think isn't going to make it winds up being a hit for you."

Pete gave his perspective on the future of bluegrass music, and the direction it seems to be heading. "The way I feel about it is that bluegrass music is going to get more popular, and mainly because we have so many good, young pickers coming up through the ranks. So many more women are coming up through the ranks in bluegrass, and that's a good thing." But what about the sound these new bands are creating? Is it moving in the right direction? "Too many bands today, talented though they may be, tend to over pick the songs they're playing, and they're too busy around the singer. Some pickers tend to over pick a song while the vocalist is singing lead, and when you do that you don't hear the lyrics. This is okay if you're doing instrumentals, but when you back up a singer you don't want to collide with him. You don't want to hit too many fancy off notes because that takes away from what the vocalist is doing. In the end, you have to know when not to play in order to make the music come out right. We do have some great talent that has learned to play it correctly, and that is an encouraging sign for the future of bluegrass music."

Pete is also encouraged at the spread of bluegrass throughout Europe and other parts of the world and also the sales of bluegrass instruments world wide. "We have a lot of good promoters that believe in the music and know how to put together good shows. The good bands need to find a way to get more exposure and better promotion behind them. That's going to help encourage them to keep pushing on."

Pete has just released a new CD titled **Knee Deep in Bluegrass** (Fireheart Records). This CD is a line of some great tunes like, *It's Amazing What Sunshine Can Do*, *Born To Be A Drifter*, *Call Of The Whippoorwill*, *Highlander's Farewell*, *It's Too Late Now*, *Janie's Really Gone*, *When I'm Knee Deep In Bluegrass*, *Lesson In Love*, *Lovin' Ain't Been Easy On My Mind*, *Roses Remind Me Of You*, *Thank God For The Highways*, *Too Close To The Flame*, *What About Tomorrow*, and *The Whole World Must Be Knowin'*. For more information you can click onto [www.fireheartpro.com](http://www.fireheartpro.com).



**Pete in his home recording studio**

---

David L. Russell is Editor of the *Tri-State Bluegrass Journal*, CEO of Westvon Publishing, and picks the banjo and dobro. He may be contacted at [Dave@Westvon.com](mailto:Dave@Westvon.com)

# The Radio List

## Bluegrass Radio Shows

### Ohio

#### Banks of the Ohio:

##### Music From the Homeplace of Bluegrass

Yellow Springs/Dayton WSYO 91.3 FM  
www.FredBartenstein.com

#### Rise When the Rooster Crows

##### Bluegrass Gospel Music Show -

Yellow Springs, OH - WYSO 91.3 FM  
Since 1972, Sunday mornings from 6 - 8 a.m.

#### Sunday Ramble - WCWA 1230 AM

Toledo, OH - from 7 - 8 p.m. on Sunday s  
J.J. O'Shea and Jim Van Deilen

#### Bluegrass Breakdown

##### WRUW-FM 91.1 Cleveland

Mondays 5-7 pm EST  
www.wruw.org (live streaming audio)

#### Ohio Bluegrass

WAOL-FM 99.5 - WOBO-FM 88.7 - WAIF-FM 88.3

#### Bluegrass Day - Ohio University Radio

Southeast Ohio - Sunday - 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

#### Bluegrass Gospel "Happy Hour"

##### WZLP 95.7 FM

Loudonville - Monday - Friday 5-6 pm  
Michael Stroffolino (330) 378-5909

#### WOUB - FM 91.3

Athens, OH - Regular Bluegrass Show  
Contact for times

#### Bluegrass Special - WOBC Radio 91.5 FM

Oberlin, Ohio - Wednesday 2 p.m to 6 p.m.  
www.wobc.org

#### WBZI AM 1500 - Xenia, OH

#### WFKI AM 1090 - Wilmington, OH

#### WEDI AM 1130 - Eaton, OH

Hymns from the Hills - Weekdays 2-3 p.m.  
The Joe Mullins Show - Weekdays 3 - 5 p.m.  
www.MyClassicCountry.com

### Michigan

#### Bill Monroe for Breakfast

##### WCBN 88.3 FM

Saturdays 10 a.m. - Noon  
Washtenaw County - Ann Arbor, MI

#### Daybreak in Dixie CJAM-FM 91.5 MHz

Windsor, Canada - Sunday 8am-10am  
(313) 963-6112 xt. 3630

#### Grassroots - WMUK 102.1 FM

Kalamazoo - Saturdays - 8 p.m. - 10 p.m.  
Sundays - 10 a.m. - 12 noon

#### Blue Lake Public Radio - WBLV 90.3 FM

Muskegon - Saturdays - 8 p.m. - midnight

#### Progressive Torch & Twang - WDBM-FM

Tuesdays from 8 p.m. to midnight  
Michigan State University



## Bluegrass Radio in Ohio

### Joe Mullins: Bluegrass Musician, Radio Entrepreneur

Joe Mullins is no stranger to the world of bluegrass music, and in fact he comes from family of musicians well known not only in Ohio, but throughout the United States. Those of you familiar with the band, Traditional Grass, know that the solid, punchy banjo behind it was none other than Joe Mullins.

Mullins began playing the banjo at age thirteen, and was influenced by the playing of Earl Scruggs, Sonny Osborne, Don Reno, and J.D. Crowe. The Traditional Grass was put together in the early 1980s, and soon experienced success. Among the albums they recorded with Rebel Records there is **The Traditional Grass - 10th Anniversary Collection, Howdy Neighbor Howdy, Songs of Love and Life, and I Believe in the Old Time Way**. They produced a powerful traditional sound, flavored with harmony that will set your soul free. The band is not officially together these days, but Joe still does some performing and stays at the banjo. Joe also spent time in a band called Longview which featured the talents of Dudley Connell, James King, Don Rigsby, and Glen Duncan. In the style of the Traditional Grass, Longview was a band second to none.

So what has Joe Mullins been doing these days? Currently, he owns and operates radio stations in Xenia, Wilmington, and Eaton, Ohio. These stations bring to listeners all over central and southern Ohio, Northern Kentucky, and Eastern Indiana, Classic Country music from greats like George Jones, Hank Williams, Dolly Parton, The Osborne Brothers, Merle Haggard, Connie Smith, Buck Owens, Ernest Tubb, and many other country music legends. Bluegrass music, no doubt, has remained an important part of the airwave line up along with the classic country hits.

Joe's father, Paul Mullins, who played fiddle with Joe in the Traditional Grass, was also involved in the radio business for over forty-five years. He started his radio career in Kentucky in 1964, and later worked at WPFB AM in Middletown, Ohio, the first radio station the Osborne Brothers performed on. Paul Mullins continued in radio working for Joe until this year.

Joe Mullins continues in the radio business, but he also promotes quality bluegrass shows. His next venture (The Southern Ohio Indoor Music Festival) is scheduled for November 11th and 12th at the Roberts Convention Center in Wilmington, Ohio. The line up is a virtual potpourri of bluegrass greats including Rhonda Vincent, the Wildwood Valley Boys, the Cherryholmes, Mountain Heart, Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver, The Grascals, The VW Boys, Blue Moon Rising, Gerald Evans and Paradise, and Paul Williams and the Victory Trio. In addition to a great line up of bluegrass music they will also be offering Music and magic kid's show, a regional band showcase, and a banjo workshop with Joe Mullins. This is the biggest bluegrass event in Ohio, and well worth the time to attend.

For more information on the Southern Ohio Indoor Music Festival please check out their website at [www.somusicfest.com](http://www.somusicfest.com) or call 1-937-372-5804.

If you live in central or southern Ohio, please make sure to tune into one of the following station. WBZI AM 1500 in Xenia, WFKI AM 1090 in Wilmington, and WEDI AM 1130 in Eaton. You'll be treated to solid gold classic country, and bluegrass music. You can catch Joe Mullins, show Hymns from the Hills Monday-Friday 2 - 3 PM, and the Joe Mullins Show Monday ^ Friday 3 - 5 PM. If you don't live in southern Ohio, no problem, now you can listen all day long via the internet through streaming audio. Check it out at [www.myclassiccounrty.com](http://www.myclassiccounrty.com)

### Hymns from the Hills & The Joe Mullins Show

Host- Joe Mullins

Weekdays, 2 - 3 p.m. and then, Weekdays from 3 - 5 p.m.

WBZI AM1500 - WFKI AM 1090 - WEDI AM 1130

Southern Ohio region and streaming audio on the internet

[www.MyClassicCountry.com](http://www.MyClassicCountry.com)

# The Radio List

## Bluegrass Radio Shows

**The Folk Tradition - WKAR 90.5 FM**  
East Lansing - Sundays 6-7 p.m.

**Folks Like Us - WDET 101.9**  
Detroit, MI - Saturdays 12-3 p.m

## Indiana

**WVUB-FM 91.1 FM**  
Vincennes, IN 47591 (812) 885-5354

**WFIU-FM 103.7 FM**  
Bloomington, IN 47405 (812) 855-1357

**Fields of Bluegrass - WICR 88.7 FM**  
Cary Allen Fields - Fridays 9 p.m.  
Indianapolis, IN 46227 - (317) 579-0028  
www.fieldsofbluegrass.com

**WWBL-FM 106.5 David Foster**  
Petersburg, IN 47567 - (812) 254-4300  
www.wwbl.com

**WJPB-FM 89.9 FM Ernest Hero**  
Hebron, IN 46341-0446 (219) 843-4151

**WBDC-FM 100.9 FM Paul Knies**  
Jasper, IN 47546 (812) 683-4144

**WSLM 1220 AM - 97.9 FM Patricia Lindley**  
Memphis, IN 47143  
(812) 246-2192 plindley@gracelandschools.org

**WXLN 1600 AM Dave Marcum**  
PO Box 655 New Albany, IN 47151-0655

**WLJE-FM 105.5 FM Dawn Martin**  
Valparaiso, IN 46383 (219) 462-8125

**The Front Porch - WVPE 88.1 FM**  
Norm Mast - Sunday 7 - 11 p.m.  
Middlebury, IN 46540  
(574) 825-2286 www.wvpe.org

**Breakfast Blend - WGCS 91.1 FM**  
Larry Roberts - Weekdays - 6 - 9 am  
Elkhart, IN 46516  
(219) 522-2687 www.goshen.edu/wgcs

**WIKI 95.3 Charles Spencer**  
Lexington, IN 47138 (812) 866-2988

**WMDH-FM 102.5 FM Kelli Thompson**  
New Castle, IN 47362-0690  
(317) 529-2600 www.wmdh.com

**Roots for Breakfast - Sat. 8 - 9:30 a.m.**

**Rural Routes - Sat. Noon - 2 p.m.**

**WFHB 91.3 & 98.1 FM Jim Manion**  
Bloomington, IN 47404  
(812) 323-1200 www.wfhb.org



Bluegrass for  
your party, event  
or show.

Contact:  
Dale Keene  
(419) 471-0505

Visit our website at:  
[www.FultonCountyBluegrass.com](http://www.FultonCountyBluegrass.com)



# Go Americana.com

*Sounds and Sights of Americana*

## Bluegrass, Gospel, & Old Time Music

Visit Our Web Sites

### AmericanaMusicplace.com

Your Music Store For the Best of Bluegrass,  
Gospel and Old-Time Music.

Great Reviews • Player/Track Listings • Music Samples

### BluegrassAmericana.com

Your One-Stop InfoSite for Bluegrass, Gospel,  
and Old-Time Festivals, Associations,  
Photo Gallery and More.

*This has to be the most COMPLETE offering of Bluegrass  
music on the web! You won't be disappointed!*

- BuckeyeBluegrass.com



**Go Americana.com** • P.O. Box 5202 • Concord, NC 28027

## Bluegrass Kids.com

Join us as we begin to offer more information on  
kids that are playing bluegrass, family bands,  
instructors that teach kids, and resources  
and information about bluegrass for kids!



check us out on the web! [www.BluegrassKids.com](http://www.BluegrassKids.com)

BUY • SELL • TRADE

NEW • USED • VINTAGE

## Crossroads Guitar Shop

2439 Tremainsville Rd.  
Toledo, OH 43613

Phone: (419) 474-0578  
Fax: (419) 474-0626

# Bluegrass Kids

## Making Music Fun!



## Solly Burton

Solly Burton is an amazing young man, driven by the love of the mandolin. And he's good. Good enough to be winning adult competitions such as the Smithville, Tennessee Old Time Fiddlers and Picking Competition this year, getting the 1st place for adults after a long grueling day of competition. When it was all settled, it was 1:30 in the morning and only 40 people were still watching the contest out of over 4,000 from the daytime! He also placed first in the beginners category in the Kentucky State Championship Old Time Fiddler's Contest. He's the proud owner of 7 mandolins, all earned from his efforts at raising 4H hogs and selling eggs from his flock of fancy chicken pets! When he's not at home, learning his schooling from his mother, he's picking with a band called Crooked Creek at gigs around his hometown of Graysville, Indiana. Did we mention he's only 14?

Solly and his family enjoy bluegrass and his father plays the fiddle. Solly is currently being guided by Louie Popejoy, a musician teacher in the area who loves working with children and even has a showcase band called Louie Popejoy and the Young Heirs, where he offers kids a chance to perform and learn to love the music of bluegrass.



Solly is a great bluegrass kid, humble and hardworking, dedicated to his music. He enjoys playing and can already dazzle you with some great picking. He's already had the opportunity not once, but three times to share the stage with Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder and has participated in a workshop with the mando-great, Sam Bush, as well, and joined him on stage during the event. If he stays with this music, and there's little thought that he's got any other plans, then he'll be a talent to keep an eye on.

## The Balos Family



When a local family band starts showing up at festivals such as Renfro Valley in Kentucky and the famous Bean Blossom park in Indiana, or opening up for the Lewis Family, you just have to take notice! The Balos Family is definitely blessed with musical talent as they tour about the region, bringing their harmonies and beautiful gospel bluegrass music to churches, shows and events throughout Michigan. The majority of their engagements are churches, however they have been also invited to take part in community festivals, theaters, restaurants, nursing homes, camp grounds and bluegrass festivals.

The Balos Family consists of Mike and Ramona Balos and their six children, Kenny, Ben, Bonnie,

Jimmy, Jenna and Nathanael. The children range in ages from 18 to 2 years old! Each family member plays various acoustic instruments and joins in to do the vocals as well. They have recorded a new CD, entitled "Beautiful Wings" which is currently getting nice airplay on various Christian, Southern Gospel and Bluegrass Gospel radio stations in several states of the U.S.A.

You can learn more about the family, their recordings and schedule of performances through out the area of Michigan and Indiana on their website. [www.TheBalosFamily.com](http://www.TheBalosFamily.com) Perhaps, soon, you will get a chance to hear this delightful family and the beautiful music they share.

Pa's  
Fiddle

## Happy Land



When I get a chance to write about two passions in my life, music and education, it's a great day! My daughters adore the Little House books by the classic children's author, Laura Ingalls Wilder, which detail her own family's history as they traveled through life as pioneers during the end of the 19th century. I believe that these much-beloved stories are the favorites of many families throughout the world. Throughout the books, Laura references over 125 different songs that her father, Charles 'Pa' Ingalls, would play on his fiddle in this musical overview of parlor songs, patriotic songs, Scottish and Irish ballads, catches and rounds, cowboy songs, school songs, folk songs and spirituals that weave a beautiful audio tapestry of the times. And here is a marvelous collection of a selection of the songs that will bring the music alive.

Happy Land, musical tributes to Laura Ingalls Wilder is produced by Pa's Fiddle Recordings and is the dear project of Butch Baldassari and Dale Cockrell, both well respected devotees of Americana music. Baldassari is an accomplished mandolin player, and widely respected as Adjunct Associate Professor of Mandolin at Vanderbilt University's renowned Blair School of Music. Cockrell is the director of the Program in American and Southern Studies at Vanderbilt University and Professor of Musicology and American Studies. He is widely published in the field of American music studies and is the founder of Pa's Fiddle Recordings, LLC; a record label dedicated to recording the music noted in the works of Laura Ingalls Wilder.

The quality of the performances is outstanding. Happy Land offers you the talents of a wonderful crop of Americana musicians such as Riders in the Sky, Dave Olney, Andrea Zonn, Pat Enright, Doug Green, Butch Baldassari, and many more. Each cut is delightful and brings you back to a time in history that music was the main staple of entertainment no matter where it was found; from minstrel stage, or harvest party to church and school. What a delightful way to introduce Americana, folk and bluegrass music to your children and grandchildren by bringing alive the sounds so lovingly detailed in the Little House books. You'll be compelled to start reading them again to the children in your life, with this charming and well-crafted musical backdrop to the stories that have so compelled us for many years. What a wonderful holiday gift Happy Land would make for the families on your list with young children, or anyone who fondly remembers the Little House in the Big Woods and imagined the sounds of Pa's fiddle warming the cold Wisconsin nights.

Visit [www.PasFiddle.com](http://www.PasFiddle.com) for complete information, discography and details on ordering. Or call toll-free 1-888-573-3902 for more details.

Do you know a special Bluegrass Kid that you'd like spotlighted in our column? Contact us and we'll be happy to consider that special youngster for our next issue!

(419) 250-1096 - [Sherri@BluegrassKids.com](mailto:Sherri@BluegrassKids.com)