

The SEBA Breakdown Newsletter Guidelines

October 18, 2005

The SEBA Breakdown is the monthly newsletter of The SouthEastern Bluegrass Association (SEBA). All contributions of articles, photos and artwork are welcome and will be considered for publication. All articles are subject to editing for content, length and style. *Your cooperation in reading and following these guidelines is greatly appreciated!*

DEADLINE FOR ALL CONTRIBUTIONS IS THE FIRST OF EACH MONTH

OVERVIEW: *The Breakdown's* purpose is to inform, enlighten and entertain its readership, presenting a wide variety of news, articles, features and columns that explore and celebrate bluegrass music and its practitioners, particularly those within SEBA's membership ranks. *The Breakdown* recognizes that most people are not professional writers. However, contributors should take care to follow established rules of grammar and punctuation. There is no remuneration for contributions, but published contributors will receive a byline.

In general, writers should write as objectively as possible and avoid the overuse of the personal pronoun "I." Focus on the person, event or activity you are writing about and avoid putting yourself in the story. If you are writing about a workshop or another instructional activity, however, in which you were a direct participant, your personal experience may be the focal point and you may write in the first person.

Please note: It is recommended that contributors first contact the editor, via e-mail with a brief description of the article you propose to write. Contact breakdown@sebabluegrass.org

DOCUMENT FILE TYPES: *The Breakdown* is produced on a PC platform. A number of file types are acceptable: Microsoft Word and Simple Text. You may also simply paste your article within the body of an e-mail. Hard copies may be sent via regular mail; please see address at the end of this document.

NEWS ARTICLES: News articles should be written in standard newspaper style, using third person voice and presenting facts in a who, what, when, where and why fashion. **MAXIMUM LENGTH: 400 words**

PRESS RELEASES: Standard newspaper style, as described above. Press releases should include the submitter's contact information for clarification of facts. **MAXIMUM LENGTH: 250 words**

FESTIVAL REPORTS: Please follow standard newspaper style, as described above. As most bluegrass festivals tend to have similar activities, it is better to present a brief overview and then focus on an interesting person, band or situation you encountered, rather than recapping details that are likely almost identical to a dozen other festivals. **MAXIMUM LENGTH: 350 words**

FEATURE ARTICLES: Features can be about anything under the bluegrass sun: the music, the bands, the songs, the venues, the instruments, the culture, the history, the movers and shakers behind the scenes -- the list goes on and on. Contributors are encouraged to tap into overlooked, under-appreciated and obscure subject areas, rather than rehashing shopworn subjects.

MAXIMUM LENGTH: 1,000 words

RESEARCH ARTICLES: Research articles, taking a scholarly tack on the roots and branches of bluegrass music, are always welcome. However, space limitations may require some articles to be serialized in two or more issues. **ALWAYS CONTACT THE EDITOR** for specific guidelines before writing a lengthy research piece. **LENGTH: 600 - 2000 words**

CD, BOOK and DVD REVIEWS: Reviews should focus on the content of the work and help the reader decide whether or not to purchase it. Reviews should never be wholly negative in tone and should always seek to point out the positive aspects of the work. Technical and artistic merit, musicianship and overall entertainment value are key factors to explore in your review. *Please note: Most reviews are staff-written.* **MAXIMUM LENGTH: 300 words**

“FIRST PERSON” COLUMNS: If you are passionate about a particular bluegrass subject, this is your outlet to expressing yourself. Perhaps there is an unsung band you want everyone to know about, or maybe you are sentimental about a beat-up old guitar that has been your “best friend” for years. Share your thoughts and feelings, in the first person, on things that matter to you. **MAXIMUM LENGTH: 500 words**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: *The Breakdown* encourages readers to write to the newsletter’s “Our Mailbag” column. Letters may be about *The Breakdown* in general: something you like, something you don’t, something you would like to see. Kudos, beefs, and suggestions -- all are welcome and will be considered for publication. Letters may also concern something going on in the SEBA community or in the bluegrass community at large. While letters do not necessarily have to be positive in tone, they should never contain sarcastic, mean or profane language, and should never attack specific individuals. All letter writers should include their full name and city and state of residence, which will be published; anonymous letters will not be considered for publication. **MAXIMUM LENGTH: 100 words**

OBITUARIES/EULOGIES: Most obituaries of national bluegrass figures are obtained from the Associated Press and other news sources. However, please feel free to advise *The Breakdown* of the passing of local and regional bluegrass figures. Obituaries should be written in standard newspaper style. More personal eulogies, written in the first person, will also be considered. **MAXIMUM LENGTH: 300 words**

CLASSIFIED ADS: Classified ads are free to SEBA members and are NOT available to non-members. Ads must relate to bluegrass music in some way. Classified ads will run for a specified period and may be renewed, if desired, after the cancellation date. Ads in the **lessons category** will run for three months; ads in **all other categories** will run for three months. Please contact *The Breakdown* at any time to cancel your ad early. For identification purposes, persons submitting classified ads are asked to state that they are SEBA members and to indicate when they last renewed their membership.

PHOTOS: In general, photos should be submitted in digital format with a .jpg extension. (Example: BillMonroe.jpg) Set your digital camera to “highest quality” and submit your photo in

the largest file size possible, without exceeding 1 MB per photo. *The Breakdown's* printer specifies a minimum 300 ppi (pixels per inch) for photos; if you have the ability and expertise to provide photos meeting these specs, God bless you! Otherwise, *The Breakdown* will try to work with your photos to the best of our ability. A good rule of thumb: If the photo is on a website, it is **NOT** suitable for printing purposes; please do not waste your time and ours submitting it for publication. All photos will be converted to grayscale and adjusted for best print results in Photoshop. Photos are credited to the photographer, when known.

PRINT PHOTOS: Print photos, color or black and white, may be submitted by standard mail and will be returned, if requested.

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT: Please identify all persons in your photo, making sure to spell all names correctly. Please do not send a photo to *The Breakdown* and promise to send the IDs later: Provide the photo and the names in a single e-mail, *or don't bother sending either*.

PHOTO COMPOSITION TIPS: Focus on a small group of people, rather than a large one; candid shots always make better photos than posed ones; avoid overcrowded, busy scenes in which your main subject may get lost; choose a good background that contrasts with your subject; avoid backgrounds that have the same color as your subject's hair or clothing; for outdoor photos, consider the sun's position and watch for shadows, which may cast dark areas on your subject.

OTHER GRAPHICS: For CD, book and DVD reviews, *The Breakdown* prefers to publish a graphic of the work's cover. If you are scanning the item yourself, size it at 50% of actual size and set the resolution at 300 ppi. Submit a color or grayscale image. Actual review items may also be "loaned" to *The Breakdown* for scanning.

ORIGINAL ARTWORK: Rarely, *The Breakdown* may publish an original piece of bluegrass-related "fine art." Please contact the editor before submitting.

WHERE TO SEND MATERIALS:

E-mail: breakdown@sebabluegrass.org

Regular mail 1: SEBA, PO Box 20286, Atlanta, GA

Regular mail 2: SEBA Breakdown, c/o Mike Warga, 1230 Parkland Place, Smyrna, GA 30082