

Memories flood back: String band marks 50 years

BY LEE WARD

THE DAILY INDEPENDENT

ASHLAND A local band will mark 50 years of performing with a New Year's Eve birthday party at 7:30 p.m. at Alchemy Theatre's Geneva Kent Center for the Arts, 68 Holley Ave., Huntington.

Charlie Bowen, the only original member remaining of The 1937 Flood, the Band, not the Natural Disaster, said the band will play two full sets, followed by a jam until the toast at midnight.

"We trace our roots back to a party at Dave and Susie Peyton's house on Dec. 31, 1973," Bowen, guitar player string band's leader, said.

Bowen, who grew up in Ashland, said string bands like The Flood date to the Civil War and made some of the first recordings in the early 1900.

"A string band would come to a party and try to play whatever anybody asked for, whether it was a traditional fiddle tune, an old blues number or a Tin Pan Alley hit somebody had just heard on the radio. I like to think we do the same thing," he said.

The band has done shows aboard the famed Delta Queen riverboat and at the Paramount Theater in Ashland, the Culture Center in Charleston and Tamarack in Beckley.

The band did its first CD in 2001 and have done a half dozen more in the years since.

"Lately, we've been performing monthly at a wonderful Ashland venue called Sal's Speakeasy," Bowen said. "The decor makes it look for all the world like a 1920s speakeasy."

The current lineup

If You Go

The Flood at 50 bash will be at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 31 at Alchemy Theatre's Geneva Kent Center for the Arts, 68 Holley Ave., Huntington. Ticket are \$20 and include live music, finger food and a toast at midnight. Tickets will be available at the door and can be ordered online by visiting FloodAt50.com.

includes:

- Jack Nuckols, of Ashland, a friend of Bowen's for more than 50 years. He joined after jamming with the group on assorted percussion instruments.

- Sam St. Clair, of Huntington, a harmonica player who joined the

- Paintsville native Randy Hamilton, who joined in 2012, who plays bass guitar, acoustic guitar and also sings lead or harmony vocals.

- Joining in 2022, Danny Cox was born and reared in southern Ohio. He's played in several bands in the area.

Bowen added: "Although she never takes the stage, my wife Pamela is a key member. She's our business manager, photographer and videographer and generally keeps us in line."

The Flood also offers free, weekly podcasts.

"The podcasts have formed the basis for one of the group's most ambitious project to date. Radio Floodango is a free music streaming series, built on a continuous randomly generated playlist of tunes automatically selected from some 700 released in the podcasts over the past dozen years or so," Bowen said.

For more information on The 1937 Flood band, visit 1937Flood.com.

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Members of The 1937 Flood enjoy a jam session.

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