FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

8/19/2024

On Sunday, September 1st, the 21st Annual Papa Joe Smiddy Mountain Music Festival will honor the memory and legacy of Dr. Joseph “Papa Joe” Smiddy. The event is presented by the Cove Ridge Center Foundation. It will be held in the amphitheater at Natural Tunnel State Park in Duffield, VA starting at 5 PM.

There will be **no admission charge** to this year’s festival thanks to the generosity of our sponsors. Attendees may give a donation to the Cove Ridge Foundation to support its Scholarship Fund.

This annual gathering seeks to promote the musical heritage of the area’s Appalachian Mountain culture and honors the tireless work of “Papa Joe,” who promoted the music of our region for many decades. In addition to being an accomplished old-time banjo player, entertainer, and educator, Smiddy was Chancellor Emeritus at the University of Virginia’s College at Wise. This year’s performers will be Dr. Joe Smiddy & Reedy Creek, the Empty Bottle String Band, Twin Taters, an old time student band from the ETSU Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Roots Music program, the DGB Band, and Fiddlin’ Red and the Bluegrass Harvesters.

Dr. Joe Smiddy & Reedy Creek​ have played together for more than four decades. Reflecting the broad musical tastes of Papa Joe, the band plays a variety of old-time music and original songs. Papa Joe started ​“Pickin’ in the Park,”​ the summer Sunday afternoon get-togethers at Natural Tunnel designed to encourage children and families to play music.

The Empty Bottle String Band was originally formed to play a one-time stint at a local farmer’s market but have already reached new heights in popularity all over the Southeast US. They specialize in playing toe-tapping, highly danceable traditional Appalachian music and are known for their upbeat fiddle tunes and feel-good music. Their impressive stage presence is coupled with a delightfully self-effacing strength and confidence in their music. Their sound is inventive, while still staying close to the old-time string band tradition of the 1930's.

Twin Taters is a string band in ETSU’s old-time music program, as part of its world-renowned Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Roots Music Studies program. Members of the band are from Indiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Washington. Together they are a versatile band that enjoys harmony singing, rare fiddle tunes, and digging deep into Appalachian music and beyond. All members play professionally in groups outside of school but enjoy studying the music at the university. They recently won third place in the band contest at the 6th annual Upper East Tennessee Fiddlers Convention in Flag Pond, NC.

Straight from the heart of Bristol, TN, “Dan Carty's Basement” (DCB) is a bluegrass band that brings the soulful sounds of Appalachia to life. Founded in 2022 by frontman Dan Carty, this group of seasoned musicians has been delighting audiences with their foot-stomping rhythms and heartfelt melodies ever since. Band member include Dan Carty (Vocals and Mandolin), Randy Blevins (Vocals and Guitar), Tim Carter (Vocals and Bass), Matt Bright (Vocals and Guitar), Doug Lewis (Vocals and Mandolin), and Matthew Cruby (Banjo)

DCB's music is a testament to the timeless appeal of bluegrass, with influences ranging from the pioneers of the genre to modern innovators. Drawing inspiration from the likes of the “Bluegrass Album Band, DCB infuses their performances with a unique blend of tradition and innovation that sets them apart. Whether they're performing at local venues in Bristol or headlining major festivals, DCB never fails to captivate audiences with their infectious energy and undeniable talent and humor. For fans of authentic bluegrass music with a modern twist, Dan Carty's Basement (DCB) is a must-see act that promises an unforgettable musical experience every time they hit the stage.

While there is fixed seating under roof, additional seating is available and used on the grass behind the fixed seating, so festival-goers are encouraged to bring a lawn chair or blanket. A shuttle will be available for festivalgoers with mobility issues, it will take them to the backstage level and bring them back up to the parking lot when they are ready to go home.

An on-site concessions stand will be available to provide food and refreshments. In addition, food vendors, Backdraft BBQ, Flour to Flower Pastries and Sweets, and the Blue Line Ice Cream Truck will be at the amphitheater that evening.

In 2024, festival admission is free of charge, there is a $5 per vehicle parking fee. Festivalgoers are welcome to donate to the Cove Ridge Foundation, but no payment will be expected. For additional information on the event, you may call the Cove Ridge Center at (276) 940-2674 or by visiting the Center’s webpage at [www.coveridge.com](http://www.coveridge.com) or by visiting its Facebook page.

Proceeds from the festival go into the Cove Ridge Foundation’s Papa Joe Smiddy Scholarship Fund. The Papa Joe Smiddy Mountain Music Festival is an affiliated site on the Crooked Road.