

Bubba Award 2013
presented by Suzanne Savell

Good Evening. Many of you here tonight knew Bill Martin, some of you knew him very well. And for those here who may not have know Bill very well - or really known him at all, simply by being here at the Gathering, you have been touched by the amazing spirit of that man we all fondly liked to call King Bubba.

This summer while Bill was living out his last months at Hopewell House, he was anything but convalescent. He was full of ideas and energy, and he spent his last days gathering his friends around him and sharing with us his dreams for what he wanted to see happen for this wonderful community and teaching us all that he could to help us carry on the work that for so many years he and Nancy did to grow and support our community.

Bill and I had a lot of fund this summer dreaming up a vision and outline for a memorial fund that would support the work that he wanted to see happen in our community. I am happy to announce that thanks to a generous matching donation of \$10,000, we have been able to get a jump start on Bill's memorial fund - the Bubba Fund. I invite each of you to stop by the Bubbaville table this weekend to learn more about Bill's vision for this fund. And, of course, you can help us raise the matching \$10,000 by making a donation or purchasing a Bubba King of Squares T-Shirt or pint glass this weekend!

I am so honored tonight to introduce one of the first projects that Bill wanted his memorial fund to support. The First Annual Bubba Award.

The Bubba Award strives to honor a special person in the Northwest old-time community who has committed a good portion of his/her life to making it a fun, inspiring group to be a part of. The ideal person is someone who may often not be noticed or rewarded - perhaps because he/she serves behind the scenes and does not tend to gravitate towards the spotlight - but who has contributed something unique to the community over the years.

In vetting nominations for this award, we considered the following criteria - tenure, service, community building, a wicked sense of humor and a unique sense of style.

This year's winner has been working quietly behind the scenes since before the first Portland Old Time Gathering happened 14 years ago. He is an artist, a musician and a community organizer, and without ever asking for any recognition, he lends a sense of credibility, style and coolness to everything he touches. He is always ready to think the best of everybody, and he often sees connections among people and communities that aren't always obvious to others.

It is with joy and DEEP ADMIRATION that I proudly present the 1st Annual Bubba Award to BRIAN BAGDONAS.

From what I've heard, Brian first got involved with what became the revitalized Portland old time scene by playing bass with the Dickel Brothers. Soon after, he and Michael Ismerio took a road trip to Weiser, got inspired and came back to Portland and organized a "halfway to Weiser party" that became the awesome annual event we know as the Portland Old Time Music Gathering. Then, from there on, Brian brought his distinct and rockin' upright bass playing to create the incredible driving sound of the original Foghorn Stringband. And we all know that what happened when Foghorn met Bill Martin has benefited everybody in the Northwest old-time community! Behind the scenes, Brian also helped found the non-profit Bubbaville, and all throughout his tenure has provided amazing artwork and letterpress printing to the old time community - with cd packages and posters - and even the Bubba King of Squares t-shirt design that Bill was so very proud of.

Brian has always been a natural community builder - continually seeing connections that others might not think of and taking the initiative to not let the NW old time community become insular or detached from the spirit, history and culture of the music that the community was coming together around. For Brian it was never just about the music - but also about building community and cultural understanding, and he reached out to connect the NW old-time community with the broader Appalachian music community he met while touring with Foghorn - which led to bringing Appalshop's films to the Gathering and building a strong connection between Kentucky and Portland, among other places!

His humor might often be understated, but Brian always finds ways to make folks laugh. Not in a big guffaw kind of way but in a twinkle of the eye, chuckle that builds up and makes you feel awesome.

And his unique sense of style has been referred to as “A delightful mix of dapper 1940's and hobo couture.” Not to mention that you can always tell what season it is by his facial hair.

I present to you, the winner of this year's Bubba Award - BRIAN BAGDONAS.