



**27th Joe Val Bluegrass Festival
February 17 - 19, 2012**

**Sheraton Framingham, Framingham, MA
Presented by the Boston Bluegrass Union**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS CONTACT: Gerry Katz, (617) 515-8383 gkatz@bbu.org www.bbu.org

**BOSTON BLUEGRASS UNION ANNOUNCES
2012 BBU HERITAGE AWARD WINNERS**

BOSTON – The Boston Bluegrass Union (BBU) is proud to announce the recipients of the 2012 BBU Heritage Awards. The awards are presented each year by the BBU to honor those who have made substantial contributions to furthering bluegrass in New England. The awards will be presented during the 27th annual Joe Val Bluegrass Festival, Presidents Day Weekend, February 17-19, 2012, at the Sheraton Framingham, Framingham, MA.

This year's Music Industry winner is:

The Crooker Mulligan Family, Bringing National Bluegrass Artists to Brunswick, Maine for Over 30 Years – In 1979, Pati Crooker Mulligan presented the first Thomas Point Beach Bluegrass Festival over Labor Day weekend at Thomas Point Beach Park—the seaside recreation area outside of Brunswick, Maine that her parents Harry and Marion Crooker purchased in 1956. Through 2008, Pati hosted the Labor Day Thomas Point festival, each featuring a range of established and upcoming talent in a relaxing beachside atmosphere, with ample camping and ‘round the clock jamming. Taking only two years off (she skipped year 13 for good luck, then took time another year to care for her elderly father), Pati decided to conclude the festival’s run in 2008. They sealed a selection of memorabilia—along with all of the festival-related contact information and mailing lists—into two time capsules, and buried them fifteen feet down and not to be opened for thirty years.

After spending two years fundraising for area non-profit community based organizations, and caring for her elderly mother, Pati and her son Michael Mulligan felt the need to resurrect the Thomas Point Beach Bluegrass Festival—this time in tribute to the memory of her now-departed parents. “My parents loved this festival,” she told *Bluegrass Unlimited* magazine. “They were a huge part of it.” With all of her contacts inaccessibly locked in the time capsule, she and Michael started again from scratch. Despite having lost much of their prior information, the 2011 Thomas Point Beach Bluegrass Festival featured their biggest pre-sales ever: A stunning affirmation of the Crooker Mulligan family’s tireless dedication to presenting bluegrass music to New England audiences for over three decades. The festival continues its proud return in 2012.

This year's Musician award winner is:

Bill Keith & Jim Rooney, Pioneering Boston-Based Bluegrass Performers – Having grown up in Massachusetts—Keith in Brockton, Rooney in Dedham—this pair of visionary performers saw a place for bluegrass music amidst the urban folk music revival that swept Boston in the early 1960s. Having met while both were undergraduate students at Amherst College, Bill Keith and Jim Rooney began in earnest as performers in 1962, when Keith was stationed at the Boston Army Base and Rooney was a graduate student at Harvard University. Entranced by the bluegrass they heard on records and by the area performances of the Lily Brothers and Don Stover, they started playing regularly at Cambridge's Club 47 (later Passim). Rooney was the congenial frontman and vocalist, while the quiet, focused Keith was a dedicated student of Earl Scruggs's banjo style. Their shows helped to galvanize the nascent New England bluegrass scene, and their classic Prestige LP *Livin' on the Mountain*—which celebrates the 50th anniversary of its release this year—is a timeless document of New England bluegrass and features Joe Val on mandolin, Herb Applin on guitar, Herb Hooven on fiddle and Fritz Richmond on bass.

Beyond New England, Keith revolutionized bluegrass on an international scale, as he developed a remarkable new melodic banjo style that enabled banjo players to play fiddle tones note-for-note and subsequently inspired such groundbreaking banjo mavericks as Tony Trischka and Béla Fleck. When the two went their separate ways, they continued to contribute to the spread of bluegrass and roots music. Keith hit the road as featured banjoist with Bill Monroe, the father of bluegrass music, and demonstrated his technique to larger and larger audiences, before leaving to work as a solo artist, sideman, author, teacher, and builder (he designed and constructed the self-contained locking tuners favored by banjo players for quick changes of tuning). Rooney managed influential roots music venue Club 47 for a two and a half years, and continued to work as a solo artist, but eventually discovered his gifts were best suited to producing other artists. He has since helmed influential and acclaimed projects by such artists as Nanci Griffith, John Prine, Bonnie Raitt, Townes Van Zandt, Hal Ketchum, Iris DeMent, and more.

The Boston Bluegrass Union is a 501(c)3 non-profit, all volunteer organization, dedicated to preserving and promoting this original American music genre. Celebrating our 36th season, the BBU is the premier source for events, education, and information on bluegrass music in the Northeast.

Additional Media Information: Contact Gerry Katz at gkatz@bbu.org or (617) 515-8383 for additional information, images, or interview requests. Visit www.bbu.org for details on the 27th Joe Val Bluegrass Festival, including Main Stage and Workshop schedules, artist biographies, and more.