

The Circuit

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BOB RYAN

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>> He opened his used-car dealership — the longest-lived lot in Jefferson County — in 1953 after moving here from his hometown of Cleveland. Selling cars wasn't all he did. For 10 years, 1958-'68, Ryan also hosted a country-music radio show broadcast from his car lot, first on (now defunct) WKLO and then on WTMT. His guests? "I had Gene Autrey. I had Tex Ritter. I had Johnny Cash. I had Patsy Cline," he says, along with regular appearances by Louisville's own Pee Wee King and his Golden West Cowboys.

Here's how Ryan recalls his radio contract: "I said, 'You don't have to pay me nothin'. You just let me mention all I want about my car lot while I'm on the air.'" No problem in that era.

He pulls down a 1963 photo of Muhammad Ali, cursively scripted "To Bob Ryan from Cassius Clay, next champ." "I sold him his first car," says Ryan, "a Cadillac." With all the bells and whistles? "Oh yeah."

The lower level of his timeworn sales office is covered wall-to-wall with photos of '50s and '60s celebrities who dropped in: Raymond Burr, Jayne Mansfield, Clark Gable, Hank Williams, Count Basie, the Everly Brothers.

Business isn't real good these days. "I've scaled it way down," Ryan says. "I used to sell a lot of cars. I don't try as hard as I used to." But he says he wouldn't miss a St. Paddy's parade for the world.

You have to ask — could the parade ever be the same without him? "I hope not," Ryan says. "I hope I'm a *big* part of the parade."

— Jack Welch



✕ Klein (right) gets slap-happy during improv time.

GROWING YOUNG

Miriam Klein says she's a shy person, but you'd never suspect it by the way she bops around and sings to a room filled with toddlers — sometimes she's so enthusiastic it's hard to tell her from her small students. Klein, 47, is a registered HeartLand Music Together teacher who's been jamming with the sprite set since 2004. "I started with one class and six families and today I have 10 classes and 92 families," she says.

A certified Suzuki cello instructor, Klein believes in learning through play. "I was interested in bringing music to children in a way that was gentle and validating, not punitive and full of correction," she says. Her association with HeartLand, the Louisville affiliate of a Princeton,

N.J.-based program, was a natural. "Their curriculum is strongly research-based and there is an emphasis on parent involvement," says Klein.

She's an unlikely music teacher, having suffered from serious performance anxiety well into her adulthood. "I never sang out loud. I didn't feel safe singing — my husband had never even heard me sing," says Klein. The turning point came after her son was born and she wanted him to experience music. She began by learning to sing lullabies from a book, which started her on a musical journey that has included repairing instruments and a later-in-life affinity for playing the cello.

A typical class features a mix of songs. "If

you think of rhythms and tonal styles like vitamins, the music is really vitamin-packed," says Klein. The tunes are catchy and enjoyable even for those adults who cringe at the thought of listening to Barney songs. There is plenty of movement play — Klein has even been known to do somersaults as part of her repertoire. However, perhaps the most anticipated part of class is an instrumental improvisation of sorts, when children are encouraged to grab an instrument (drums, sticks and bells, to name a few) and rock out acoustically. And parents are encouraged to join the singing and dancing. "It is important the adults have fun," says Klein. "Children learn by watching adults."

— Melissa Duley