

1937 Flood to perform live at CD release party

By **DAVE LAVENDER**
The Herald-Dispatch
lavender@herald-dispatch.com

HUNTINGTON — It's fitting that in the rainiest year on record there's a new outpouring of songs from The 1937 Flood — known as "the band, not the natural disaster."

Long noted as West Virginia's most eclectic string band, The 1937 Flood releases its first CD in eight years, "Wade in the Water," with a live concert CD release party at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 30, in the Ballroom of the Renaissance Center (former Huntington High School), 900 8th St.

Admission is \$10, or \$5 for seniors. Door proceeds go to Arts Resources for the Tri-State. The new 15-song CD cut at Bud Carroll's Trackside Studios, will be for sale at the concert and online at www.1937flood.com.

Although originally formed as a small group in the 1970s when newspapermen Dave Peyton (autoharp) and Charlie Bowen (guitar and vocals) hooked up with fiery fiddler Joe Dobbs, The 1937 Flood has been out of its banks for years taking in an eclectic mix of musicians.

Not to mention welcoming in dozens of guests such as Rob McNurlin, Randy Brown, Jim Rumbaugh and the many others who stop by their weekly Wednesday night Southside jam session at the home of Charlie and Pam Bowen. Those sessions are recorded and tossed onto the Flood's website in the form of a weekly Thursday podcast.

For about the past dozen years, the band's jug-band tunes have come packed with flavor from multi-instrumentalist Doug Chaffin, harmonica players Sam St. Clair, female songbird, Michelle Walker, Dave "Bub" Ball rhythm guitar and more recently, its youngest member lead guitarist Jacob Scarr, who began playing with the band when he was only 14.

Bowen said Scarr first began working at Flood gigs helping Ball with sound then started playing guitar with the band at the weekly jams bending and bluesing his way into becoming the youngest Flood member in its 40-year history.

"In a way, this new CD is a tribute to The Flood's "Jacob years." After Chuck Romine

stepped down five ago, we were looking for a new sound," Bowen said. "For six years, Chuck's tenor banjo had given us a rollicking kind of Dixieland-meets-jugband quality, and we figured we'd never be able to replace Chuck, so it was time to try something new. Jacob came to us with young ears and eyes, but with an old soul's love of blues and swing and folk."

In fact it was Scarr's summer departure for college in Boulder, Colo., that was the impetus for the Flood to get back into the studio to capture the blues-basted sound of Scarr's lead guitar on the Flood's eclectic riverboat and folk-revival-fueled string band fare.

St. Clair hooked the Flood up with Trackside Studio to capture 15 songs in one night, just like one of the weekly coffee-fueled jams.

In true newspaper deadline fashion, Bowen, Peyton and crew jumped into the studio on the very last day Scarr was in town to capture the Flood's fourth CD that features a mix of standards such as Walker singing "Fly Me to the Moon," and "Walking After Midnight," Joe Dobbs' fiddle tune "Whisky Before Breakfast," Dave Peyton's folksy rendition of Aunt Jennie Wilson's "Banks of the Old Guyan" and Scarr featured on such songs as "7th Son/Hoochie Coochie Man."

Bowen said it was a wonderful evening that went down like a sweet-sounding Wednesday night among friends.

"This is our fourth CD and every one of them we never did a second take on a song — not that we are so great we only need one take but we've always had this feeling that a CD should be a reflection of how everybody felt and played on a particular day in that particular year," Bowen said. "We've never regretted that. Could we have done the song better, maybe, but there's been times when we did that song worse. When you play as much as we do and play every week at the jam session you know how it's supposed to go and you're enjoying it and everyone's in a good mood and it will reflect in the music and that is what happened on that night. It was a wonderful evening and kind of bittersweet. We knew that we wouldn't see Jacob again for a while but it was a celebration of his time with us."

