



## ENOUGH HOURS IN THE DAY

### CHARLIE SIZEMORE DOES THE MATH AND FINDS TIME TO TAKE HIS BLUEGRASS MUSIC ON TOUR

By Walter Tunis

#### The Charlie Sizemore Band

4 p.m. Aug. 18 at the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame, 2590 Richmond Rd., Renfro Valley. Free with admission. 1-877-356-3263. [www.kentuckymusicmuseum.com](http://www.kentuckymusicmuseum.com).

It's the sort of work schedule that seems unfathomable: trial lawyer by day, bluegrass bandleader by night (and weekends and, increasingly, a few weekdays, too). But for Magoffin County native and one-time Ralph Stanley protege **Charlie Sizemore**, all it took was some elementary math to make everything fit.

"Here's what a lot of people forget," Sizemore said recently from his Nashville law office. "There are 168 hours in a week, if my math is correct. A lot of people think there are only 40. All I do is make sure I'm doing things I want to do."

For guitarist-singer Sizemore, that started with a blooming bluegrass career that saw him taking over for Keith Whitley as principal vocalist in Ralph Stanley's Clinch Mountain Boys band at age 17. After touring steadily with Stanley for nearly a decade, Sizemore prepared to take on the law.

Within a month of his final Stanley gig, he was studying political science and history at the University of Kentucky. Graduate studies, law school and eventually his own law practice followed after a move to Tennessee. The seemingly dramatic career shift did little to quiet Sizemore's still active bluegrass career, though. Then came another job: family man.

"I eventually got off the road around 1998," Sizemore said. "I wasn't tired. I didn't even feel overwhelmed because I enjoyed everything I was doing. The problem was I was never around. My kids were pretty young at the time. I just wanted to watch them grow up. And so I did."

Now that his children have turned 19 and 21, Sizemore is getting out of court a bit more often to hit the bluegrass touring trail again. First up were infrequent performances with a newly formed band that includes bassist John Pennell, a founding member of Alison Krauss's band, Union Station; and a trio of Kentucky pickers: mandolinist Danny Barnes of Richmond, dobroist Matt DeSpain of New Haven and banjoist Wayne Fields, Richmond.

Then came a new record called *Good News* that spotlights Sizemore's spry singing on the Paul Craft country remembrance *Mama Turn Aloosa My Soul* and an original, whimsical ode to the present-day Union Station called *Alison's Band* ("I'd even drive her bus and hear her cuss when she's trying to teach me to solo").

*Good News* was released earlier this week on Rounder Records, the label that also is the home to Krauss's albums.

"We went down to Tom T. Hall's studio in Franklin (Tenn.) and cut 14 songs in two days," Sizemore said. "There were no click tracks and no overdubbing. I just wanted to make a record the way we did when I was in Ralph's band and the way guys I grew up listening to did when I was a kid.

"I assumed I'd just press up a few copies to sell on the road. But then (Rounder co-founder) Ken Irwin heard it and liked it a lot. So here we are."

Sizemore's performance Saturday is free with admission to the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame (\$4.50-\$7.50). Sizemore also will perform at the Magoffin County Historical Society in Salyersville on Aug. 31 and Mountain Arts Center in Prestonsburg on Sept. 29.