

November 20, 2008

Drew Carman says he's not really into metaphors, but he can't help but conjure one up when asked about the significance of the name of his group, The Corduroy Road.

A corduroy road is formed by placing logs side by side over swampy or muddy trails, making them passable, but still rough.

When banjo player Carman formed a music duo with long-time friend guitarist Dylan Solise, they chose the name because it was evocative of their Americana style. But Carman acknowledges that the road to success in the music business can be a bumpy, long process — like traveling on a log road.

"But if you stick with it, you get to your destination eventually," he observes.

The next stop on their path to fame is Salisbury, where they will be performing Friday night at the club Three Fifteen. When Corduroy Road played there early this year, Carman and Solise were a folk duo. Now they return as a band, having rounded out their sound by adding bassist Tim Helms and drummer John Cable.

The Corduroy Road is based in Athens, Ga., the indie music mecca brimming with bands. While Carman agrees that there's an overabundance of bands there vying for gigs, there's not so many playing in their progressive bluegrass style. So their schedule has stayed full, especially since the rise in popularity of groups like the Avett Brothers and Old Crow Medicine Show has made this brand of folk-rock more in vogue than ever.

Carman embraces the inevitable comparison to his friends the Avetts with whom he has shared the stage. Graduate school at University of Georgia was what actually drew Carman to Athens. He managed to juggle his music life and classes, then with a professional career in landscape architecture, confining his performing to weekends.

But now he and the rest of the band have put in their notices at their jobs. Throwing caution to the wind, they will soon be heading out on that bumpy road to success full-time.

They have a newly released, self-titled EP, and they are working with producer John Keane (of Widespread Panic and REM fame) to record a full-length album for Mule Train Records.

And they now have a local connection. The Corduroy Road's new booking agent is a newcomer to Athens but well-known to Salisbury's music scene. Cameron Thomas was a member of one of Salisbury's most successful bands, The Delta Drift, until last month when that group's members parted ways and drifted to different regions of the country.

Here's hoping that Thomas books The Corduroy Road frequently here so they can treat Salisbury audiences to their energetic performance on a regular basis.

You can listen to The Corduroy Road and read more about them at www.myspace.com/thecorduroyroad. The Corduroy Road will be appearing Friday at Three Fifteen, 315 E. Council St. The show starts around 10 p.m.

