



Bluegrassin'

Volume 8, Issue 3

May-June 2006

The Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association is a non-profit association dedicated to promoting preserving and sharing our love of bluegrass music in a spirit of family and friendship.

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Bluegrass Calendar

- ♦ **May 6, 2006 – Pat Davis' 50th Birthday Jam** – In Great Falls at the Black Eagle Community Center. 10am-noon hours of the morning. Happy Birthday Pat!
- ♦ **May 26-29 - Conroys' Memorial Day Campout** – Little West Fork Campground, 23 miles south of Darby. Details on page 3.
- ♦ **June 9-11 – Lewis and Clark Bluegrass Festival** – Pasco, Washington. Featuring Prairie Flyer, Lost in the Fog, Hakanson Family, Camaraderie, Badger Mountain Dry Band, Zach Driscoll and 3/4 Time, and Top String
- ♦ **June 19-25 – Rodeo Pickin' and Carnival** – Newport, Washington
- ♦ **June 23 & 24, 2006 – Last Chance Gulch Bluegrass Festival**– Helena. Featuring Hit&Run, John Lowell, Anne&Pete Sibley, and Broken Valley Roadshow.
- ♦ **June 26, 2006 – Pine Mountain Railroad** – 6:00pm at Raynae Redman's property on Big Flat Road in Missoula. Cost is a package deal that includes a BBQ steak dinner and concert.
- ♦ **July 7, 8, & 9, 2006 – Bitterroot Bluegrass Festival** – Hamilton Fairgrounds. Featuring Kane's River, Hit & Run, Tennessee Gentlemen, Buncombe Turnpike, Leftover Biscuits, and John Reischman & the Jaybirds
- ♦ **July 14 – Bluegrass on the Bay** – Great Falls – Featuring Mike&Tari Conroy, Broken Valley Roadshow, and the Wilders
- ♦ **July 27, 2006 – Lost Highway & 3rd Generation Bluegrass** – 6:30 at Fort Missoula on the lawn beside the museum. The cost will be \$18 for general public and \$15 for MRBA members.
- ♦ **August 11-13 – Bluewaters Bluegrass Festival** – Medical Lake, Washington. Featuring The Biscuit Burners, The Wilders, Jackstraw, Broken Valley Roadshow, Anne&Pete Sibley, Big Red Barn, the Panhandle Polecats, and Bluegrass Conspiracy
- ♦ **August 25-27– Bannock County Bluegrass Festival** – Pocatello, Idaho. Featuring Cold Creek, Heaven Bound, New South Fork, Buckhorn Mountain Boys, Deadline Ridge, Drew Williams & Ryan Tilby, and the Wild Coyotes

Recurring Shows and Jams

- ♦ MISSOULA– Tuesday s ,Top Hat(134 W. Front St) - Bluegrass jam. 7pm.
- ♦ MISSOULA– Tuesdays, Top Hat – Pinegrass plays around 10pm.
- ♦ KALISPELL – Saturdays, Pizza Hut – Bluegrass jam from 8-11pm. Contact Steve: 257-1597
- ♦ GREAT FALLS – 1st and 3rd Thursdays, Bert & Ernie's(300 1st Ave South) 7pm. Call 453-8003 for info.
- ♦ MISSOULA – Tuesdays, Wheat Montana – Moozoola Opry 6PM till 8PM the Cuzin Ray band plays. Admission is free we just ask that you buy a sandwich or soup from the fine folks at Wheat Montana as you sit back and enjoy an evening of music.
- ♦ HAMILTON – Saturdays, Charlos Heights Clubhouse – Bluegrass jam.
- ♦ CHINOOK– first and third Tuesdays, Past Time Bar -- Bluegrass, Old Time, and Old Country jam at 7pm. Contact: Tim Whitney 357-3840.

President's Notes

I'm writing this while spending some time visiting family in Henderson County, Tennessee. I haven't been back in the springtime where I grew up for a long time. Guess I forgot how wonderful this country is this time of year. The dogwoods and spring roses are in bloom. The trees are all leafed out. We wake up to mocking birds in the morning and go to sleep with the whippoorwills. Although we have to keep one eye out for tornadoes already the hot and humid weather has not yet arrived.

We had a great festival on April 8th. Attendance was up significantly, we enjoyed some good food and jam-

ming and the music was great. We have lots of folks to thank. First are the members who came out and supported the event.

We also want to thank all the volunteers who prepared and served food, helped out at the admissions and membership table, and sold merchandise and CD's. We couldn't get by without them. A special thanks go out to Mike and Tari Conroy for lining up the outstanding musical talent and their work in recording the event. Last, the board of the MRBA want to thank the musicians for the wonderful music and for donating their time, effort and expenses at this event. Without them we would not have this day. We raised \$2710.00 to support the association for the upcoming year.

Don't forget that the MRBA festival CD featuring all the groups who played at the festival will be available at the end of May.

Bluegrass speaking, things are cranking up. The Conroy's Memorial Day campout is on schedule again this year. See more information in the newsletter. The calendar contains several upcoming events. Start thinking of the Bitterroot Valley Bluegrass Festival in July. Mark and the crew have put together some outstanding talent again this year.

Hope to see you soon.

Ben

Banjo Jokes

How many banjo players does it take to screw in a lightbulb?

None, but hum a few bars and I'll fake it!!!

Listener: Can you read music?

Banjo Player: Not enough to hurt my playing.

Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association

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Bluegrassin' is a bi-monthly publication of the Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association

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Got Something to sell? Advertise in *Bluegrassin'*!

Full Page – \$25.00, 1/2 Page – \$15.00, 1/4 Page – \$10.00 Classified – \$5.00



Conroy Annual Campout is Right Around the Corner

Mike and Tari Conroy's annual memorial weekend campout is again scheduled for May 26-29. There will be (as always) heated wall tents for Jamming. It takes place again at the Little Westfork campground, a Forest Service campground with no charge for camping. It is a beautiful place with an outhouse and creek right next to it. There's lots of room for big rigs to park at the campground which is on the edge of the Selway Wilderness. You'll find great hiking, biking, and 4 wheeling there.

The campground is approximately 23 miles south of Darby, MT (50 miles south of Hamilton).

Directions: Head south out of Darby and take the Westfork Highway. Go 14 miles up the West Fork Highway and turn right (just past 14 mile marker) on the Nez Perce Rd. Go 4 miles and turn right at end of Pavement. The campground is on the right. There will be potluck dinners at 6 pm on Saturday and Sunday. Monday morning the Conroys will furnish and biscuits and gravy breakfast at 10 am. All bluegrass lovers welcome!!!

For more info call mike or tari at 1-406-821-3777 or email Tariconroy@webtv.net

Pa Conroy Says "Y'all Come!!!"

Wedding Invitation

Brian Herbel and Caroline Keys are getting married on July 22 and would like to invite all their MRBA friends to join in the celebration. The ceremony will take place at the Marshall Mountain ski area with a pot-luck reception, a set of music by the bride and groom, an open condenser mic, and plenty of space for jamming. There's more information at www.briansaidyes.com and more details will appear in the next MRBA newsletter. See you there!

Membership Application

MONTANA ROCKIES BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION

333 Pine Hollow Road, Stevensville, MT 59870

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone No. _____

E-mail _____ Individual (\$10.00) _____ Family (\$15.00) _____

Featured CD

Fred and Emily – The Montana Sessions

By Ben Essary

For those of you who may not know, the Fred and Emily of this CD are the multi-talented Fred and Emily Frank from Idaho Falls, Idaho. They both bring lots of things to this CD. From Emily, it is her lovely voice and inspired songwriting. From Fred, it is his accomplished leads on three different instruments.

There's lots of things to like about this CD. The selection of songs, the vocal quality, the solid rhythm, the top notch instrumentals and the technical quality of the CD are all to be noted.

The songs repertoire is broad. It consists of five originals by Emily, four instrumentals, three well-chosen songs from the past and one gospel song. Taken together it is a thoroughly bluegrass CD.

Fred and Emily are assisted by a strong cast of musicians. Tari Conroy brings her solid rhythm guitar playing and harmony singing. Jeff Forbes is wonderful on fiddle and adds a quality missing in a lot of bluegrass albums of today. What can one say about Ivan Rosenberg? He adds much to any musical effort he is involved with. His dobro sound is especially appropriate given the soulful selection of some of the songs. Mike

Conroy brings his bass fiddle rhythm playing but perhaps more importantly his skills in the technical quality of the CD.

Emily is outstanding with her vocals and her songwriting shines. Themes of lost love, pain of past relationships, personal growth, betrayal, and consequences of love thread throughout her songs.

Fred is featured on mandolin, banjo and guitar. All are thoroughly enjoyable. Fred is featured on mandolin, banjo and guitar. All are thoroughly enjoyable. He also shares the lead singing on a couple of the songs and provides harmony on some more.

This album is thoroughly enjoyable - great singing, great instrumentals, and great songs put together in a tight

musical package. The CD is available by contacting Fred and Emily at fredfrank@cablone.net

The Players:

Fred Frank—Banjo, Mandolin, Lead Guitar, Vocals

Emily Frank—Rhythm Guitar, Vocals

Jeff Forbes—Fiddle

Ivan Rosenberg—Dobro

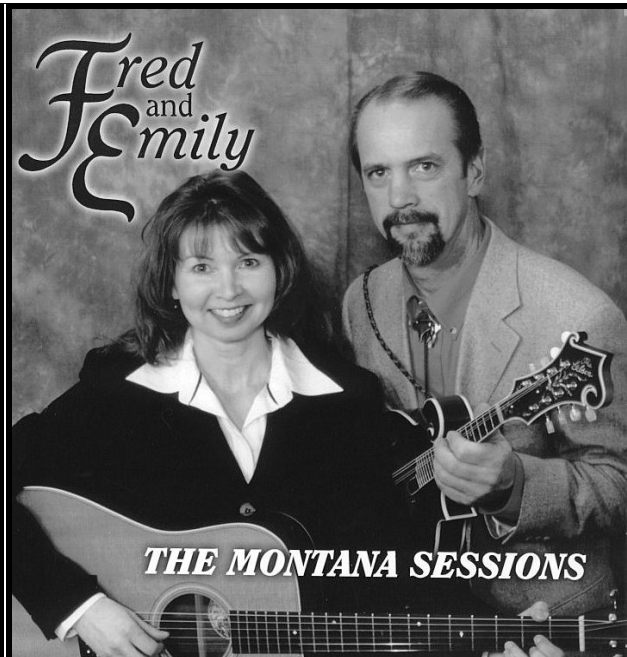
Tari Conroy—Rhythm Guitar, Harmony Vocal

Mike Conroy—Bass Fiddle

Recorded at Conroy Digital Sound Studio, Connor, Montana. Mike Conroy, engineer

The Songs:

1. Misery – Emily Frank
2. Just Someone I Used to Know – Jack Clement
3. Cherokee Shuffle – P.D.
4. Alone – Emily Frank
5. Wildflower Rose – Emily Frank
6. I Love You a Thousand Ways – Lefty Frizzell, P.D.
7. Farewell to Long Hollow – P.D.
8. Forgotten Vow – Emily Frank
9. He's Holding On to Me – Rob Block
10. Over the Waterfall – P.D.
11. One Way to Nowhere – Emily Frank
12. Is It Too Late Now – Lester Flatt
13. Pike County Breakdown – Bill Monroe



Interview with Rebecca Hoggan of Hit and Run Bluegrass

By Caroline Keys

CK: What is your first memory of bluegrass music?

RH: When I was eleven or twelve, my parents took me and my brother to a bluegrass concert in Richmond, VA, where we grew up. It must have been a local or regional band, because I can't even remember their name, but we were enthralled by the harmonies.

CK: Does anyone in your family play?

RH: My mother and father sing, and they are great singers. My dad was in Glee Club in college! My mom played piano when I was little, and my great-grandmother was a church musician.

CK: Are there any challenges or obstacles you've come across as a woman in bluegrass?

RH: No; in fact, I find that people are nothing but supportive of women in bluegrass! OK--sometimes, there might be an attitude of "women can't play bluegrass," but I don't really let it bother me. There are too many inspiring women to look to as role models, like Alison Krauss and Bryn Davies.

CK: Are there any advantages to being a woman in bluegrass?

RH: When I used to walk up to a jam, people often skipped over me for solos. I was a girl holding a guitar, so they just assumed I wouldn't take a solo. It's fun to take a solo and break the stereotype. There are actually many, many prodigious women instrumentalists in bluegrass. I can't wait till the day that people assume a woman is going to be ripping through solos at a jam. Till then, I admit, it helps to have something unique, in that there aren't many women flat-pickers. Another advantage is being

able to sing high. Bluegrass is focused on a "high, lonesome sound..." However, if everyone sang high, it would sound like a bunch of chipmunks! Thank goodness bluegrass isn't ALL women!

CK: Us Montanans are real proud that Larry Gangi Jr. is in good hands playing with Hit & Run. How's Larry doing?

RH: I can't begin to tell you what a



resounding response Larry has had in Boulder. When he flew down to audition in December, local pickers were saying, "Hire Larry! We need a great banjo player like that here in Colorado!" Larry plays with such phenomenal timing, and everyone appreciates his playing. He practically sold out of his CD's the first weekend he played with us. Larry has a great work ethic, and we can depend on him wholeheartedly. But he's fun and witty, and keeps us laughing in the van. We feel incredibly lucky that he wants to play with US!

CK: How about your other new band members, who are they?

RH: Our new Dobro player is David Richey, from Tulsa, OK. He moved out from Johnson City, TN, where he was in the bluegrass program at Eastern TN State University. He's a leftie Dobro player, and has a wonderful voice. Our guest bass player, and potentially our permanent bass player, is Steve Roy from New Hampshire. He's well versed in jazz, bluegrass,

folk, and other styles, and actually majored in music at UNH. He's also a great singer. So now we have five singers in the band--a first!

CK: What kind of new material have they brought to the table?

RH: Well, Larry has some great tunes he recorded on his solo outing, "Fistful of Lonesome." David has brought some great tunes that he sings--wonderful classic country and bluegrass songs. Steve actually sings Chuck Berry's "Maybelline" in the band, and the crowd goes nuts! David is our third singer, so our three-part harmonies have a different ring to them--two guys and one girl, instead of two girls and one guy. And since Steve is a pro jazz player, he's able to knock people over with his fluid, impressive bass solos. We also have the ability to mix up the singing combinations, which is fun--for example, sometimes the guys will do a 3-part harmony, and I'll just play guitar. Or Larry will sing bass--he has a wonderfully deep voice. Also, Larry plays guitar in the band on some ballads, and we LOVE his guitar playing.

CK: What is the difference between a "Colorado Bluegrass" and a "Montana Bluegrass"?

RH: I've met so many insanely talented Montana bluegrassers--Julie Elkins, John Lowell, Larry Gangi, Mason Tuttle, Ivan Rosenberg, and the list goes on. I've met Montana transplants--Thomas Sneed, Martha Scanlan, Jake Schepps. To be honest, I notice a common thread among Colorado and Montana bluegrassers. They are spectacular, well rooted musicians. Yet these folks enjoy living in a beautiful, mountain setting, so bluegrass is usually not the only element in their life. They may enjoy kayaking, hiking, skiing, or snowboarding as well. It's a great combination, music and the outdoors. ▣



Presenting Raynae Redman's



Raynae's Letter of Thanks

I was so touched by what you all did for me presenting me with that plaque, and I want to thank each and every one of you for all that you're doing now to keep my dream alive and expanding it beyond belief, to where we can bring this music to more and more people, and can help people who have a desire to want to learn to play themselves too.

You are my bluegrass family and I love all of you and consider you my good friends, friends that I know I could turn to at any time if I needed to and you would be there at my side to help me or shore me up in a crisis. That's what this music is all about, and that's why people can feel of our spirit when we play. It's because of all of your efforts that this association has taken off like it has, and will continue to grow so that we can do even more for the music we all love. I was deeply touched yesterday when you all came up on the stage and showed me how much this association has meant to all of you. That was my goal when I started it, was to bring us together so that we could have fun times and become better friends as a bluegrass family.

Mike, your idea to hold this festival way back the first year was a total

inspiration and has done the most of anything to promote the music in our area. I hear from bands all around our area as to how they look forward to this every year and have so much fun coming and playing it. It's you and Tari who got it off the ground that first year and kept it going so well. It's getting bigger and better each year. I love how it gives a chance to our members to perform, and to learn how to perform and gives some of the pickers who wouldn't ordinarily get that chance a spot to shine and have fun with. It's a friendly, fun festival where everyone can feel a part of the association and a part of our Montana Rockies Bluegrass Family. That's what I love the best, just seeing people having so much fun and feeling a part of us no matter what their ability. Everyone knows they can come and have fun playing at the jams and coming to the camp-outs, getting to feel like they belong to our family. That is such a wonderful thing for me to see.

I can think of many personal experiences that have brought me so much joy I can't even begin to start. When I see Verna Molenda taking the stage with Bill and singing and performing, that has been a personal highlight for me. For years Bill sang and played and Verna was his great support, but she has always

loved to sing too, and now because of this association she has been made to feel more a part of things and has started learning Dobro and singing and performing with him. I feel so much in my heart when I see these kinds of things.

I think of Sue Downey and all the hardships she's had to go through in these past few years and and I see how she has a family with her bluegrass friends that she can turn to and can get support from. We have made a difference in her life and when I see her eyes light up and her enjoying playing and singing, it just makes my heart swell with happiness because our association has had a direct impact on her. That's what we're all about.

I want to say thank you for the kind words and the beautiful plaque yesterday. It really meant a lot and I was so taken aback that I couldn't even gather my thoughts enough to be able to say what I really wanted to so now this morning I can write to each of you and let you know how much I appreciate your time and effort to keep this association going and not only going but moving forward in a good direction and helping others to enjoy bluegrass, and feel a part of our family.

-Raynae

MRBA FESTIVAL FINANCIAL REPORT			
	2004	2005	2006
<u>INCOME</u>			
Admissions	\$ 1,050.00	\$ 1,206.00	\$ 1,303.00
New Memberships	\$ 190.00	\$ 185.00	\$ 190.00
Renewal Memberships	\$ 100.00	\$ 180.00	\$ 230.00
Merchandise	\$ 352.90	\$ 482.00	\$ 731.00
Food	\$ 463.13	\$ 824.95	\$ 897.10
TOTAL	\$ 2,156.03	\$ 2,877.95	\$ 3,351.10
<u>EXPENSES</u>			
School Rental	\$ 75.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
Food	\$ 257.12	\$ 225.18	\$ 265.10
Recording Services	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00
Sound Operator	\$ 70.00	\$ 70.00	\$ 100.00
Printing		\$ 8.85	\$ 26.00
TOTAL	\$ 602.12	\$ 554.03	\$ 641.10
<u>PROFIT</u>			
Income	\$ 2,156.03	\$ 2,877.95	\$ 3,351.10
<Expenses>	\$ 602.12	\$ 554.95	\$ 641.00
TOTAL	\$ 1,553.91	\$ 2,323.00	\$ 2,710.10

Festival Proves to be as Much Fun as a Barrel of Monkeys... and Financially Successful Too

If you've never been to the annual MRBA Old Time Bluegrass Festival, be sure to place it high on your list of priorities for next spring. The 2006 Festival featured some familiar faces and many talented pickers who were new to the stage in the Stevensville School multi-purpose room as well.

This year's festival included some added bonuses, including Kids in Bluegrass as the opening act for the festival. Bluegrass music couldn't survive if it weren't passed down for the next generation to fall in love with. The youngsters who performed proved that this passion that we share for music will certainly be carried on!

Another new feature, that may or may not have been planned, was a closing jam at the end of the night. Mike Conroy, Fred Frank, Raynae Redmond, and many others took the stage after the final band's set and had a huge jam, playing some favorites including "I'll Fly Away" to close the festival.

As far as the numbers go, our Association managed to raise the most funds we've ever pulled in at this event. It is exciting to watch our numbers and the excitement grow as time goes by. None of this happens without the hard work of our members and volunteers. Not that the festival was all work and no play! So many folks traveled long distances to attend the festival and there was as much joy in the air as there was music. Some pickers were able to jam outside the school in the sunshine. Both pickers and grinners left with bellies full of great food, including some of the best brownies Ravalli County has to offer.

Mike Conroy has mailed each band's recorded set and waits patiently for the bands' track donation selections for the MRBA Festival CD which should be ready for purchase by the end of May. These CDs are such treasures, keeping record of the incredible talent we have tucked away in our Montana Rockies. They make great Mothers Day or Fathers Day gifts. As for the Festival itself, the fellowship, food, performances, and great picking got most everyone in attendance geared up for the summer picking and festival season that's to come.

The only down-side of the festival is that we must wait a whole year before doing it again!

Hitting the High and Lonesome Notes in Stevensville

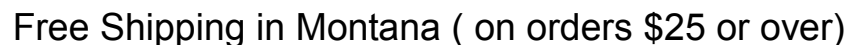




**LOOK FOR CDS OF THIS
YEAR'S FESTIVAL AT FUTURE
MRBA FUNCTIONS AND AT
THE BITTERROOT VALLEY
BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL.**

**CAN'T WAIT FOR NEXT
YEAR!!**







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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

Hello, Chad Fadely here. Just thought I would give the Bluegrass community first shot at this. Vicki Bodfish and myself are selling our Motor home. We're not going to be advertising it officially until the end of June but I thought I would let the blue-grasers know about it first... 1996 Class C Motor home. 21' Ford Chassis. 51,000 miles. \$15,000 OBO. Everything works great, comes with extras. Never had any major problems. Tired of sleeping in tents at your favorite festival? This is the perfect festival rig! Sleeps 4 pretty comfortably or 6 uncomfortably. We'll be at the Conroy's Memorial Day campout down at the Westfork. Come see us if your interested or Contact me to arrange a showing in Missoula. 406/261-1649. Thank you.

ATTENTION:

We have set up the address label on your newsletter to be your membership card, please clip it out and use if for proof of your membership to the MRBA.

MONTANA ROCKIES BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION MEMBERS
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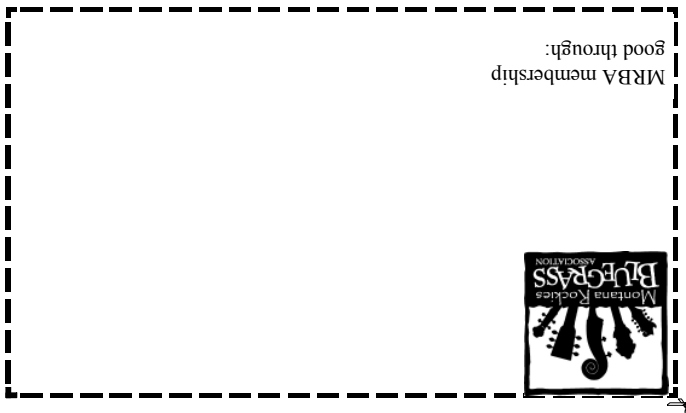
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