



Bluegrassin'

Volume 9, Issue 2

March – April 2007

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

- ◆ **March 2 – Bitterroot Valley Bluegrass Festival Fundraiser –** The Kitchen in Hamilton. 5:30pm
- ◆ **March 9 & 10 – The John Lowell Trio –** Chet's Bar, Big Sky. With Tom Murphy & Kris Clone.
- ◆ **March 10 – MRBA Winter Jam –** Ruby's Inn, Missoula.
- ◆ **March 17 – Broken Valley Roadshow –** Union Club, Missoula.
- ◆ **March 18 – Growling Old Men –** Garden Café, Manhattan.
- ◆ **March 23 – Broken Valley Roadshow –** Choteau County Performing Arts Center, Fort Benton.
- ◆ **March 23 & 24 – John Lowell Trio –** Whiskey Jack's, Big Sky.
- ◆ **April 11 – Yonder Mountain String Band –** Wilma Theater, Missoula.
- ◆ **April 13 – Broken Valley Roadshow –** The Otherside, Missoula.
- ◆ **April 14 – Eighth Annual MRBA Festival –** Stevensville High School. Begins at noon. See article on page 7 for more info.
- ◆ **April 19 – Whitewater Ramble –** Top Hat, Missoula
- ◆ **April 27 – The Mighty Squirrel –** First English Lutheran Church, Great Falls.

Recurring Shows and Jams

- ◆ MISSOULA– Tuesdays, Top Hat(134 W. Front St) - Bluegrass jam. 7pm.
- ◆ MISSOULA– Tuesdays, Top Hat – Pinegrass plays around 10pm.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ KALISPELL – Red Lion Hotel, Kalispell Center Mall , every Friday 7 -10pm, contact Vicki Bodfish, 257-3935
- ◆ NORRIS HOT SPRINGS - Sunday evenings, 7-10pm, Thermalgrass, a bluegrass band including Tom Murphy, Quentin King and Ian Fleming(MRBA member)

President's Notes

When I was a kid, I got a cheap nylon string guitar one Christmas, and a book of chords. Little did I know, at the time, how much that would affect my life. 32 years later, I'm still pickin', still looking at instrument catalogues, still listening for licks I can steal, music has been very good to me, beyond anything I could have imagined, when I turned that first tuning key, at 12 years old.

And now, music brings me into a leadership position over some of the finest folks I have ever met. As I napped, at Arlene's Gibbonsville pick, I could tell who was taking the break, and it is so good to be in a group where people challenge themselves, and are so darn good to each other. I look forward to Ruby's on the 10th, and Mike & Tari's campout is only two months away, with the Stevensville bash in between.

My goal as president, is to keep a bluegrass centered group of people, to support our group through the merchandise sales, and to responsibly circulate the money back into the association, so we can enjoy it. I'm looking at a couple cost-cutting measures, but I won't tip the whole apple cart at once, either. I want folks to be able to approach me with ideas, I'll listen, even if there's no way I can implement it. This is your association, I'm just the guy who signs the checks.

Lastly, practice. Practice until the instrument leaves a welt on yer leg, and you have plastic fingertips, then, play some more.

Love your instruments, love our music, and love each other. I'll be seeing you.....

Curtis

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



Bitterroot Bluegrass Festival Spaghetti Dinner Fund Raiser

March 2, 5:30pm at the Kitchen in Hamilton

The Kitchen is located at 102 South 2nd Street , Hamilton . We will sell advance tickets but not on a reserved seating basis. However, we will only print and sell tickets up to the number of dinners to be prepared, What tickets are not sold in advance will be sold at the door and we will stop letting people in when we run out of tickets. Tickets can be purchased from any Festival Committee Member. Tickets available @ The Kitchen 363-0903 or Mountain Music 167 S. 2nd St. in Hamilton (363-3505) or from Perry Vose. For more info, call 363-7095.



Membership Application
MONTANA ROCKIES BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION
 PO Box 1220, Hamilton, MT 59840

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone No. _____

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

Greg Boyd's House of Fine Instruments

By Ben Essary

So lets say you just can't live without that fine vintage (fill in the blank here – guitar, banjo, mandolin, bass, Dobro). Or, maybe your tastes are different. You may be wanting a new (fill in the blank here – guitar, banjo, mandolin, bass, Dobro), but, you also want an instrument that meets the demands of quality good bluegrass music needs.

Where do you start? Montana bluegrass musicians are fortunate in that a source of both vintage and high quality new instruments is located right in Missoula. This same source is also available worldwide via a phone call or the internet.

For over 25 years Greg Boyd, the owner of the House of Fine Instruments, has been striving to provide top quality instruments to the bluegrass



Greg Boyd with a selection of new and vintage instruments, including a 1941 Martin D-18

community. He started the House of Fine Instruments 10 years ago with a goal of being a readily available source of quality vintage and new instruments.

Whether vintage or new, Greg says he focuses on quality - quality not only in the workmanship of building an attractive instrument but also one that provides high quality sound over the full musical range of the instrument. He says he is committed to only selling those instruments that will meet the discerning desires of dedicated pickers.

To that end Greg is a dealer for a number of instrument makers. He says the common thread among all the makers is consistent quality. He observed that any luthier may be able to build one instrument that sounds and looks good. But, can that luthier consistently turn out top quality instruments.

Greg's list of new instrument dealers includes some well known makers but also some luthiers that turn out only a few instruments a year. They include such names as Roy Noble, Prucha, Collings, Bourgeois, Weber, Mowry, Will Williams, John Walker and Kevin Kopp.

Quality is the key on the vintage side also. Just because the instrument is a Martin or a Gibson doesn't necessarily mean it has "that" sound. Greg says he learned a lot about the vintage business when, as an 11 year old boy, he bought a guitar for \$14 and end up selling it for \$8!

Greg is assisted in the business by two very talented bluegrass musicians – Chad Fadely and Fred Kellner. Both Chad and Fred are multi-instrumentalists with years of musical experience under their belts. Greg said they are well qualified to evaluate the quality of an instrument whether it be vintage or new and he values their opinion.

In addition to instrument sales, Greg's business also includes an instrument and luthiery parts sales. This includes an array of parts and supplies such as bone for saddles and nuts,

picks, tuners, and strings to name just a few.



Greg, Vicki Bodfish and Chad Fadely at the House of Fine Instruments booth at the International Bluegrass Association World of Bluegrass in Nashville, Tennessee. Ken Orrick, Lost Highway Bluegrass Band, is playing a Roy Noble guitar

Greg's marketing strategy is a three pronged approach – his local showroom, vendor booths at bluegrass festivals and internet sales. His local showroom is filled with both vintage and new instruments and is open daily.

Greg and his staff travel near and far to 15 or so bluegrass festivals each year. A key purpose is to give bluegrass musicians a chance to hear and play quality instruments.

Greg has been on the leading edge of internet marketing of bluegrass instruments. His website is user friendly and Greg says his staff strives to keep it up-to-date.

Mainly because of the internet, the House of Fine Instruments is not only a national but also an international business. In any given week it is not unusual for instruments to be shipped to customers coast-to-coast and to foreign countries. In today's electronic market place the House of Fine Instruments is only a mouse click away.

The House of Fine Instruments is accessible by visiting or writing the showroom at 311 Knowles Street, Missoula, MT 59801, calling 406.327.9925 or on the web at www.gregboyd.com.

Festival Season is Right Around the Corner...

Start planning now!

June 9,10,11 Sacajawea Bluegrass Festival and Dutch Oven Cookoff Pasco, Washington

June 18-23 Weiser Fiddle Contest and Festival Weiser, Idaho

July 13 Bluegrass on the Bay Great Falls, Montana

July 13,14,15 Bitterroot Valley Bluegrass Festival Hamilton, Montana

July 28 BabbFest Babb, Montana

August 3,4,5 Sweet Pea Festival Bozeman, Montana

August 10,11,12 Bluewaters Bluegrass Festival Medical Lake, Washington

August 10, 11,12 Targhee Bluegrass Festival Alta, Wyoming

August 24,25,26 Bannock County Bluegrass Festival Pocatello, Idaho

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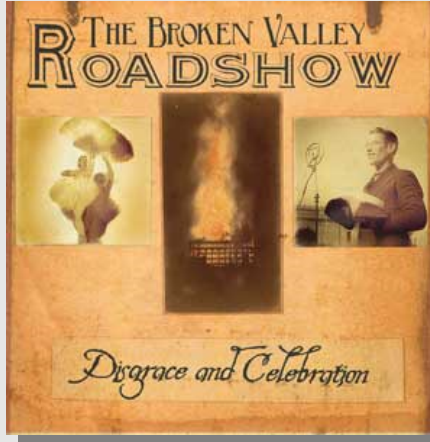
Montana Musicians Receive Reviews in National Magazine
 Both Reviews Appeared in the February 2007 Issue of **Bluegrass Unlimited**

THE BROKEN VALLEY ROADSHOW- DISGRACE AND CELEBRATION

By Les McIntyre

From Montana comes a unique collection of bluegrass music from the Broken Valley Roadshow. Stylistically, the group plays bluegrass with old-time and contemporary overtones. One minute they're performing a Carter Family standard like "Coal Miner's Blues," and another they're jumping into pieces such as Bill Monroe's "Tennessee Blues" or Loretta Lynn's "You Ain't Woman Enough To Take My Man."

Bassist Nate Baker contributes the composition "All By My Lonesome," while mandolin player



Nate Biehl wrote "Prohibition Blues" and "Leavin' This Old World Behind," and guitarist Caroline Keys contributes "New River Gorge Bridge Blues."

Also featured is a pair of live recordings, "Fire On The Mountain" and "Nashville Blues," that demonstrates the group's prowess before a real audience.

"Disgrace And Celebration" is an exceptional collection of bluegrass music, establishing the

Broken Valley Roadshow as a band bearing close scrutiny on future endeavors.

(Broken Valley Roadshow, 2406 Duncan Dr., Missoula, MT 59802, www.brokenvalley.com.)

IVAN ROSENBERG AND MIKE CONROY THE OLD SPINNING WHEEL

By Bill Wagner

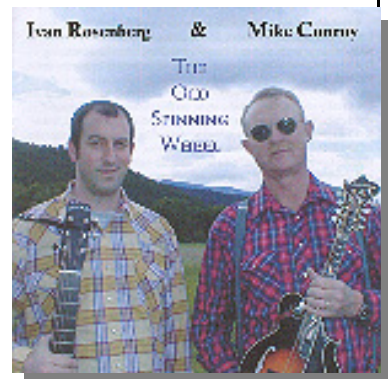
Resonator guitarist Ivan Rosenberg's latest project, a duo with mandolinist Mike Conroy, is markedly different from the debut I reviewed in 2001. That recording consisted of almost entirely Rosenberg original instrumentals done in a thick, full sound that ranged from oldtime to traditional to modern, fast to slow, rhythmic to impressionistic. This release features a spare sound that is half traditional instrumental standards such as "Kentucky Waltz," "Maiden's Prayer," "Down In The Willow Garden," and "Evening Prayer Blues," and half traditional based instrumental covers and originals such as Moody and Wise's "Shenandoah Waltz," Billy Hill's title tune, Rosenberg's "Dobro Waltz," and Conroy's "Strolling Along." All are performed in tempos mostly slow to medium.

Those slow to medium tempos and the backing of simple guitar and bass gives each player room for some expressive soloing that makes good use of the material's melodic richness. Compared to the approach taken on his debut, Rosenberg has simplified

his lines dramatically. His playing is still precise and clean but is cast much more in the less ornate, less frantic midrange style that characterized the age before Douglas and Ickes took the resonator guitar in new directions. Conroy, a player new to me, approaches his solos in much the same manner. Tone that is nicely-rounded is at the heart of his playing, and he weds that to a straightforward presentation.

This is a solid effort that breaks little ground stylistically or with its repertoire, but makes a case for direct, nonsensical playing. Be ready to waltz.

(Mike Conroy, P.O. Box 144, Conner, MT 59827, www.ivanrosenberg.com.)



Eighth Annual MRBA Annual Old Time Bluegrass Festival April 14 in Stevensville

Mark your calendars and call your neighbors, friends, family and everyone interested in a full day of bluegrass music! The MRBA's eighth annual spring bluegrass festival will be held Saturday, April 14th, at the Stevensville High School Multipurpose Room, 300 Park Street, Stevensville, Montana.

The music will kick off at noon with performances by Kids in Bluegrass and go non-stop until 10:30 p.m. Mike and Tari Conroy have once again put together performances by a number of bands throughout the area. A full schedule follows. Admission is \$5.00 for the general public and \$3.00 for MRBA and Missoula Folklore Society members. Children under 12 with a paying adult have free admission.

We need lots of volunteers to help out

with admissions and membership, selling merchandise and food. Just see one of the board members when you arrive and we will have volunteer schedules available. We will have a set menu of food so members who are interested may contribute a dessert item such as cakes, pies and cookies.

Free dry camping space is available along the street in front of the school for those wanting to camp. Hotel accommodations are available at the Stevensville Hotel just around the corner from the school. Rooms are \$65.00 per night. To get these rates identify yourself as coming for the bluegrass festival. Call 406-777-3087 to make reservations. More information about the hotel is available at www.stevensvillehotel.com.

2007 MRBA Festival Lineup

12:00 - 12:30 Kids in Bluegrass
 12:35 - 1:05 Darby Sirens
 1:10 - 1:40 Wise River Mercantile
 1:45 - 2:15 Susanne Knauer and Trouble in Mind
 2:20 - 2:50 Three Rivers Bluegrass
 2:55 - 3:25 The Cuzin' Ray Bluegrass Band
 3:30 - 4:00 Bill & Verna Molenda Band
 4:05 - 4:35 Brenda Hanson Band
 4:40 - 5:10 Bill Anderson Band
 5:15 - 5:45 New South Fork
 5:50 - 6:20 Salmon Valley String Band
 6:25 - 6:55 The Accousticals
 7:00 - 7:30 Grangeville Bluegrass Co.
 7:35 - 8:05 Mike & Tari Conroy Band
 8:10 - 8:40 Gravely Mtn. Boys
 8:45 - 9:15 Pinegrass
 9:20 - 9:50 Ramblin' Rose
 9:55 - 10:25 Wheelwrights
 10:30 - 11:00 Too Hot to Handle

Bluegrass Jamming

By Curtis Rathburn

One of the things that set bluegrass music apart from most other forms of music is the key role of jamming. Bluegrass is not primarily a “listening” music; there has been from the beginning a great importance on people other than professional players performing the music. Jamming is simply an event of bluegrass musicians getting together to perform the music. We see jams at informal get-to-gathers, festivals, and after bluegrass shows. The MRBA for the last three years has sponsored regular jams where members can get together for a day of pickin’ and singin’.

At our jams, as with most, a wide variety of musical enthusiasts show up. Some have years of bluegrass experience and some are just new to bluegrass and to music in general. No matter what our skill level, most bluegrass musicians are striving to improve our abilities. Our task as the leaders of the association is to organize our jams in such a way that eve-

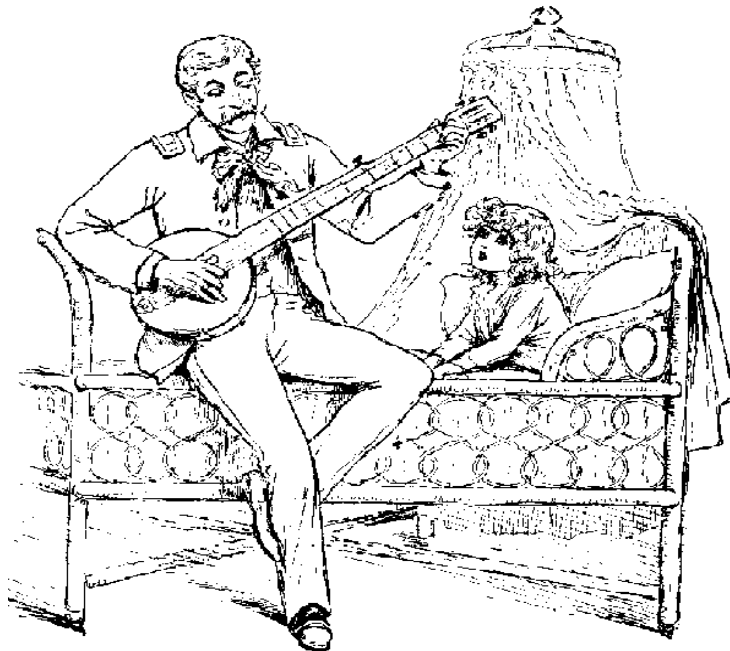
ryone has a good musical experience. We want to give our experienced players a chance to play to the level of their skills and we want to help folks who are not so experienced to develop their skills.

To that end we have decided to organize three separate jams – one for our experienced players, one for folks who have some experience in the music, and one for people who are just beginning in bluegrass or in music in general. We will leave it up to people to decide where they belong but if you join a jam circle it will be helpful if you can keep up with the level of the music being played. All of the jams will be held at the same time and on the same day – in fact, our next jam will be on Saturday, March 10th at Ruby’s Inn. It begins at 2:00p.m. with a potluck supper at 6:00p.m.

Probably most of us benefit from occasionally reviewing bluegrass jam etiquette – notice I didn’t say rules. Bluegrass etiquette is simply some guidelines which help move jams along. There is an excellent discussion of bluegrass jamming available on the web at <http://users.ece.gatech.edu/~tom/roles.html>. I have included below the “Ten Jammandments” which will help us create a good “jamming” environment.

Finally, I want to say that the MRBA is a bluegrass music association. Our charter defines our goals as an organization and our emphasis is bluegrass music. We are not a general music appreciation group. Instruments are limited to stringed acoustic instruments. We welcome anyone who is interested in bluegrass music. At our jams most of the songs will be bluegrass or ones that can be “bluegrassified” up. You will also hear fiddle tunes and old-time tunes which have been a part of bluegrass from the beginning. Our organization has nothing against other musical genres but our emphasis is bluegrass. When people participate in our jams we expect them to play bluegrass music.

I’m looking forward to our get-together at Ruby’s and trying this out. We have rooms & areas we can use that we haven’t, and with the people we have in the organization, pickers of all playing levels can be challenged, and learn.



The Ten Jammandments

by Robert Rosenberg, Jamming Juris Doctor and Moral Arbiter
edited by Charlie Hall, user of the English language

1. Thou Shalt Tune Thy Instrument

There are too many good, cheap tuners around not to do this.

2. Thou Shalt Listen

If you can't hear the lead instrument or vocalist, then consider yourself too loud.

3. Thou Shalt Pass

When handing off an instrumental solo, try to follow a pattern either clockwise or counter-clockwise. If you want to skip the next solo or pass it off to the next picker, be sure that the next person is aware of the handoff. No one wants to start their solo in the middle of the song.

4. Thou Shalt Welcome Others

Open up the circle if others want to join. The jam can not be too big if people are polite.

5. Thou Shalt Share in the Selection

Open the choice of songs to the pickers around the circle. Take turns. Don't monopolize the jam.

6. Thou Shalt Try New Stuff

Once in a while a participant may suggest original material or one that is out of character with the jam. This is OK (refer to Jammandments 2 and 4.)

7. Thou Shalt Let Others Know When You Are Not Jamming

Bands may sometimes be rehearsing and may need to exclude non-band members from jamming. If so, an explanation would be nice.

8. Thou Shalt Not Raid

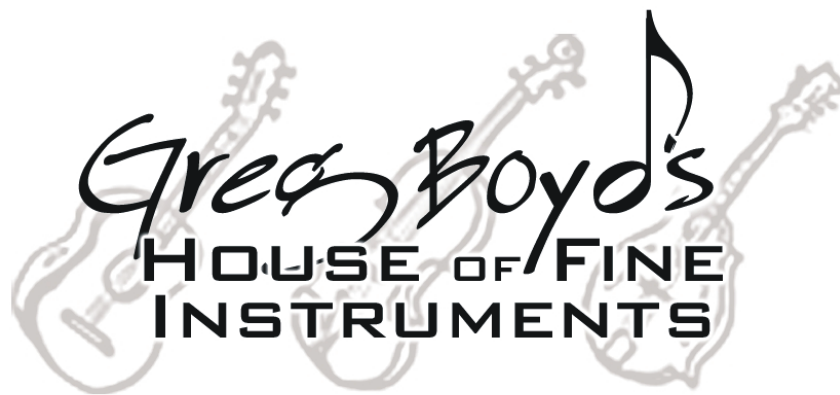
Don't interrupt an active jam by calling musicians away to begin another jam.

9. Thou Shalt Keepith Thy Rhythm Steadyith

Errors in rhythm are most difficult to overcome. Avoid adding or dropping beats. Play quietly if you can't keep up and pay attention. (refer to Jammandment 2)

10. Thou Shalt Not Speed

Do not start a song too fast for the others to play. Once everyone has had a turn at the lead, the one may announce that the tempo is about to increase.



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Greg Boyd, Jaroslav Prucha, & Frank Peretti
at Wintergrass

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

MONTANA ROCKIES BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION MEMBERS
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PER MONTH

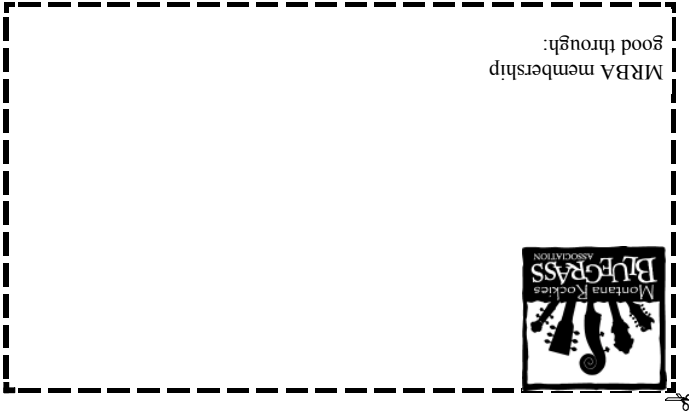
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