

Vol. II, No. Nine, October 31, 2012

*Northern Rockies Area Singin', Pickin' & Fiddlin'*

*From Billings, Montana*

*Roger's*

# BLUEGRASS

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## “E” LETTER

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Please feel free to forward these e-letters to anyone else who may be interested in regional bluegrass or music in general.



### PROGRESSIVE BLUEGRASS: “JAM GRASS IN MONTANA”

A strong following has developed around this region for a number of bands which might be categorized as playing a form of progressive bluegrass which has come to be called. “jam grass.”

They play a strong dance beat and have been filling the dance floors in venues like Bones, Manny's, or the Garage Pub in Billings, the Emerson in Bozeman and the Top Hat in Missoula. They tend to play typical bluegrass instruments often with a full drum trap set. Some of them are acoustic while others may be electric and have keyboards or additional percussion. Groups include the Infamous Stringband, Leftover Salmon, Fruition, Greensky Bluegrass, the 23 Stringband, and Hot Buttered Rum. While this movement began back in the 1970s with the Grateful Dead, Newgrass Revival, Yonder Mountain Stringband, the String Cheese Incident and Rare Earth, it has continued to evolve into the jam grass bands of today. Others include Elephant Revival, Watertown Bucket Boys, the Quick and Easy Boys, and Dead Winter Carpenters. If any bluegrass traditionalists think these sound more like rock than bluegrass names it is no accident. There is plenty of rocking going on in these jam grass groups. The good aspect of their music for all of us has to do with developing their own fans and exposing more young people to bluegrass influenced music. That definitely ain't all bad!

As a recent example of their Montana performances on October 30<sup>th</sup> Fruition opened for the Infamous Stringband at the Emerson Cultural Center in Bozeman. Also recently the Clumsy Lovers have played Missoula and Billings. This group originated in Canada and now operates from the West Coast. They are a five piece band consisting of flat top guitar, fiddle, electric bass, drums, and a hybrid solid body electric banjo gizmo. They include Jason Homey – banjo, mandolin, Jeff Leonard –bass guitar, vocals, Trevor Rogers – vocals, guitar, Devin Rice – drums, vocals and Robyn Jesson – fiddle, vocals. This band plays a combination of rock, bluegrass, Celtic, and whatever else they wish to stick into the set. That is likely true of most of these other jam grass bands as well. On YouTube they do a tune they call "Single Girl" which may serve as an example of the jam grass style. It largely consists of several old fiddle tunes played with variations on the banjo including some really rocking interludes. These are interspersed with short verses and choruses from an old Appalachian ballad usually entitled, "Married Girl, Single Girl" (see Hazel Dickens great traditional version) in which the married girl laments the hard life she endures and wishes she could be a carefree single girl again. The YouTube video works perfectly as Robyn Jesson is about eight months pregnant when this was recorded. The guys get into the act as well by taking up the chorus with "Oh, WE wish she was a single girl again." The Lovers are plain and simply a live band to whoop it up with, drink and dance to. While the Clumsy Lovers has made recordings, much like the old Mission Mountain Wood Band did, no recording can capture the active live performances of the Lovers. In fact any band which makes folks want to dance IS simply a LIVE band not a studio recording band. The fiddle tunes I heard on "Single Girl" being picked on the weird banjo include "Sally Goodin," "Old Joe Clark," "Cripple Creek" and "Salt Creek." Suddenly after that they jump back to their Canadian-Celtic roots and crank up the "Mason's Apron," first on banjo and then very well done by the PG singer/on her fiddle. (I confess to loving Celtic fiddle music and there is no better example than the Mason's Apron in my opinion.) And all this is on their take of "Single Girl." Local girl band Maxie Ford, featuring the vocals of Katie Kemmick, opened for the Lover's Oct. 28<sup>th</sup> gig in Billings. The Billings Gazette website has a photo gallery from this concert.

Some of these jam grass pickers switch around among several bands and a specific band may show up with different musicians from time to time. This really isn't different from old country or bluegrass bands where many pickers had day jobs. If their regular mandolin or bass player couldn't make a gig they got another picker to take his place.

Historically when the first settlers came to the Jamestown colony from England in the 1600s they loved dancing and among the first settlers was a fiddler player. For decades after that the fiddle was the only dance instrument in colonial America as it was light and easily transported on horseback. Over time other instruments were added and the old time mountain music developed. Eventually the Appalachian string band ceased to be used for dancing and by the evolution into bluegrass in the 1940's it had largely become music for listening only. It is quite interesting that after all the decades of rock and roll in between with this younger generation of pickers and fans, bluegrass music has come back to it's base purpose for dancing once again. What goes around really does come around, doesn't it? Life is just plain great if we live long enough to appreciate it.

**More Jam Band info is on the web. Both Australia and Canada have a big jam band movement.**

JamBands.com focuses on jam bands, including rock jam bands as well as jamgrass and other variations.

JamBands.ca focuses on jam bands in Canada

Sci Fidelity Records is a jam band record company started by String Cheese Incident, which is home to Umphrey's McGee, SCI and many other bands.

## Billings, Mt ~ The Blackberry Bushes ~ Ted Ness And The Rusty Nails

**Date:** Sunday, November 11, 2012

**Time:** 4:00 PM

**Venue:** The Yellowstone Valley Brewing Company, Billings, MT

## TRADITIONAL BLUEGRASS STRIKES BACK

Traditional bluegrass is far from gone though. A year ago there were many commemorative recordings made following the death of Bill Monroe. Recent recordings receiving acclaim at the IBMA World of Bluegrass include: "A Far Cry From Lester and Earl" by Junior Sisk and Ramblers Choice and "Monroe" by Greg Cahill and Special Consensus.

**WHO ARE THESE GUYS? AS BUTCH CASSIDY ONCE ASKED  
THE SUNDANCE KID – BEFORE THEY JUMPED OFF A CLIFF**



The schedule I copied from the Prairie Winds calendar said the Lone Time Lonesome Dogs were scheduled that Saturday. Then the Gazette said it would be the Maverick String Stretchers so I decided to drive out to see just who was playing in the String Stretchers. I had to ask Doug Haberman who told me Kevin Oliver couldn't be there with his D-35 so they had John & Ed Kemmick fill in effectively converting the Stretchers to the Dogs. Maybe they should be called the AKAs – Also Known As depending on who shows up at a gig. The Kemmicks do some duo stuff too as the Peach Pickers and there are probably other configurations I don't know about. These pickers are a lot like the shuffling musicians mentioned in the Jam Grass story above. Well no matter who is picking and vocalizing they always sound good. The mandolin picker is Uriah Price and is from the Bozeman. He is a nice addition to the String Stretchers.



## **IBMA AWARDS FOR 2012**

### 2012 Award Recipients

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**Congratulations to the Recipients of the 2012 International Bluegrass Music Awards!**

#### **Hall of Fame Inductees for 2012**

Doyle Lawson  
Ralph Rinzler

#### **Entertainer of the Year**

The Gibson Brothers

#### **Vocal Group of the Year**

Blue Highway

**Instrumental Group of the Year**

The Boxcars

**Male Vocalist of the Year**

Russell Moore

**Female Vocalist of the Year**

Dale Ann Bradley

**Emerging Artist of the Year**

Joe Mullins & the Radio Ramblers

**Album of the Year**

*Heart Of A Song*, Junior Sisk & Ramblers Choice

**Instrumental Recorded Performance of the Year**

"Angeline The Baker" by Lonesome River Band

**Gospel Recorded Performance of the Year**

"Singing As We Rise" by the Gibson Brothers with Ricky Skaggs

**Song of the Year**

"A Far Cry From Lester & Earl" by Junior Sisk & Ramblers Choice

**Recorded Event of the Year**

**"Life Goes On"** by Carl Jackson, Ronnie Bowman, Larry Cordle, Jerry Salley, Rickey Wasson, Randy Kohrs, D.A. Adkins, Garnet Bowman, Lynn Butler, Ashley Kohrs, Gary Payne, Dale Pyatt, Clay Hess, Alan Bibey, Jay Weaver, Ron Stewart & Jim VanCleve (artists); Jerry Salley, Carl Jackson, Larry Cordle, Jim Van Cleve & Randy Kohrs (producers); Rural Rhythm Records

**Banjo Player of the Year**

Sammy Shelor

**Guitar Player of the Year**

Doc Watson

**Fiddle Player of the Year**

Stuart Duncan

**Bass Player of the Year**

Marshall Wilborn

**Mandolin Player of the Year**

Adam Steffey

**Dobro Player of the Year**

Rob Ickes

**Awards & Honors presented at the Special Awards Luncheon Thursday afternoon.**

**Distinguished Achievement Award Recipients**

Byron Berline

Joe & Lil Cornett

Orin Friesen

Kitsy Kuykendall

Darrell "Pee Wee" Lambert

**Broadcaster of the Year**

Kyle Cantrell

**Print Media Person of the Year**

Marty Godbey

**Bluegrass Event of the Year**

ROMP

**Bluegrass Songwriter of the Year**

Jon Weisberger

**Best Graphic Design**

Bedrock Manufacturing (designer) for *Nobody Knows You*, by the Steep Canyon Rangers (Rounder Records)

**Best Liner Notes**

Marian Leighton Levy (liner notes), for *Tony Rice: The Bill Monroe Collection*, by Tony Rice (Rounder Records)

## THE BEST OF BLUEGRASS INTENTIONS LOSE OUT - - -

### TO WAGNERIAN OPERA??

It was the middle of September and I had been planning to drive to Miles City for their bluegrass festival when I was waylaid by the Ring of the Nibelung. Yes, a series of four operas by Richard Wagner on successive nights on MT PBS. I know that many folks believe that opera is terrible, but I doubt they would say that if they ever really watched one. People would say they hate opera, but sure as heck made sure they watched TV to learn "WHO SHOT J.R.!" The plots for the "soap operas" came directly from Grand Opera, drama, intrigue, love triangles, murders, comedy you name it. Anyway the Ring cycle is based on Norse/Germanic mythology and the usual mix of the gods and humans messing up one another's lives. These operas tell a continuous story and ran right through the Friday and Saturday of the Miles City Festival. I couldn't stand missing the grand finale shown on Saturday. Not any more than I could have missed that episode of Dallas that revealed who shot J.R. Ewing. But I am already planning on getting over to Miles City next September.

### LIKE TEX LOGAN SANG: "CHRISTMAS TIMES A COMIN'"

#### It is not too early to shop for Bluegrass Christmas records

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New Christmas Songs by Marty Raybon,  
Dale Ann Bradley & Steve Gulley, and  
Cumberland River  
Now Available to Radio Stations  
Worldwide

Songs Appear on *CHRISTMAS THE MOUNTAIN WAY* CD / DVD  
Releasing November 13, 2012

#### WATCH A VIDEO PREVIEW OF *CHRISTMAS THE MOUNTAIN WAY*

Nashville, TN (October 30, 2012) Rural Rhythm Records is proud to announce three new Christmas songs are now out to radio. "*Christmas the Mountain Way*" by Dale Ann Bradley and Steve Gulley, "*There's A Way In The Manger*" by Marty Raybon," and "*Christmas In the Mountains*" by Cumberland River, along with the full album, *CHRISTMAS THE MOUNTAIN WAY*, are available now at AirplayDirect.com. This special CD / DVD is releasing worldwide on November 13, 2012. The concert will also air on BlueHighways TV in November and December.

Two of these beautiful new songs were written and performed especially for *CHRISTMAS THE MOUNTAIN WAY* including



"*Christmas The Mountain Way*" by Dale Ann Bradley and Steve Gulley and "*Christmas in the Mountains*" written and performed by Cumberland River. "*There's A Way In The Manger*," performed by Marty Raybon, was written by Marty Raybon, Michael A. Curtis, Mark Narmore.

*CHRISTMAS THE MOUNTAIN WAY* was hosted by Mike Scott and filmed earlier this year at the Bell Theater in Pineville, Kentucky showcasing *Christmas* and its traditions in the Appalachian Mountains. This special CD/DVD includes performances by 2012 IBMA Female Vocalist of the Year Dale Ann Bradley, Steve Gulley; Marty Raybon; 2012 IBMA Male Vocalist of the Year Nominee, Audie Blaylock; Cumberland River; Common Strings; Students of the Cumberland River Academy; Mike and Brenda Scott; Brad Gulley; Debbie Gulley; Don Gulley and more.

This 15 song CD plus the 60+ minute DVD with extra features including bonus performances, artist's interviews and photo gallery will be available for purchase at Amazon, iTunes, Rural Rhythm Records, and the artists' websites.

For more information on Rural Rhythm Records, please visit [RuralRhythm.com](http://RuralRhythm.com).

For more information on BlueHighways TV, please visit [BlueHighwaysTV.com](http://BlueHighwaysTV.com).

## LETTER FROM GLORIA TUCKER IN MILES CITY

Just wanted to let you know that Special Consensus will be in concert in Miles City on [December 2, 2012](#) at 2:00 p.m. in the Custer County District High School Auditorium.

Price of the tickets is \$ 12.00 in advance and \$ 15.00 at the door. For more information they can call 406-234-2480 or 406-853-1678. This concert is presented by the Miles City Bluegrass Festival. Please put this in your news letter. We appreciate all you do to help us.

Gloria Tucker

## WILL YELLOWSTONE BLUEGRASS ASS'N BE AFFECTED?

The new superintendent of the Billings Public Schools discussed some extra sources of funding this fall. He said they don't expect to bring in large sums from advertising on school properties although they do

get several thousands from that source. He said they do appreciate any dollars they get, but they would be working to find more ways to cut back on expenditures. He also said the district pulls in small amounts of cash from renting out facilities and field space to for-profit and nonprofit organizations. He said that is about \$35,000 per year. The Yellowstone Bluegrass Association lost the free use of the Lincoln Auditorium for two shows each year due to enforcing that rule. So far there doesn't seem to be a problem with free use of the Lincoln band room for the Friday night jams which is very good. It is still a bit shaky as the district could require rental fees for that too. We will hope that doesn't occur.

## IBMA ENCOURAGES NEW BLUEGRASS TALENT WITH AWARDS

### Recipients of First IBMA Momentum Awards Announced

*Appalachian Uprising, Emily Bankester, Mike Bub, Samson Grisman, Alex Hargreaves, Monroeville, Christian Ward, Emilee Warner Honored*

**Nashville, Tenn.:** The International Bluegrass Music Association's new **Momentum Awards**, designed to recognize promising new talent, will be presented during World of Bluegrass next week at the Nashville Convention Center.

The Momentum Awards focus on artists and business people who are in the early years of their careers in bluegrass music. Five artists will receive performance awards, while three industry awards will go to key contributors in the bluegrass industry.

Momentum Awards for Industry Achievement (**Emilee Warner**); Instrumentalists of the Year (**Alex Hargreaves, Samson Grisman** and **Christian Ward**); and Mentor of the Year (**Mike Bub**) will be presented [Tuesday](#), Sept. 25 at 5:45 p.m. on the showcase stage on Level 1 at the Nashville Convention Center.

Event/Venue of the Year (**Appalachian Uprising**, produced by **Steve Cielic**); Band of the Year (**Monroeville**); and Vocalist of the Year (**Emily Bankester**) will be presented on [Wednesday](#), Sept. 26 at 5:45 p.m. before evening artist showcases.

The three instrumentalists recognized this year include fiddler Alex Hargreaves from Oregon, who performs with Sarah Jarosz; bassist Samson Grisman with The Deadly Gentlemen; and Christian Ward, who plays fiddle with Sierra Hull. Grisman (the son of legendary mandolinist David "Dawg" Grisman) and Ward are both from California.

The first Momentum Award for Industry Achievement goes to Crash-Avenue publicist Emilee Warner in New York City. Warner is active on IBMA committees and serves on the Americana Music Association board of directors.

Five-time IBMA Bass Player of the Year and producer Mike Bub will be recognized for his work as a Mentor to young musicians.

Appalachian Uprising, a new festival in Scottown, Ohio held every summer in June, presents artists ranging from Melvin Goins and Junior Sisk to the Infamous Stringdusters, David Mayfield Parade, and the Vespers.

Monroeville, a new band with young but veteran members, released a self-titled EP on its own label in 2011, hosted the first Hard Rock Cafe AcoustiCana Series show during last year's World of Bluegrass, and is as likely to perform at schools across the country as at festivals and clubs.

Emily Bankester, from Illinois, sings and plays fiddle with The Bankesters. The family band's new album, *Looking Forward*, includes the song "Don't Try to Be Anyone Else," for which a new video was released this month.

"The talents of emerging artists and industry professionals are essential to keeping bluegrass alive and growing, and the IBMA board feels these individuals deserve special recognition for the hard work and the contributions they are making to the industry as a whole," says IBMA Executive Director Nancy Cardwell. "The Momentum Awards are a supplement to the current IBMA Awards structure, created to encourage growth and a wider sense of ownership and pride in the organization."

IBMA Momentum Awards are intended to encourage professionalism in bluegrass music among every generation. For more info, please contact the IBMA office at 888-GET-IBMA or [info@ibma.org](mailto:info@ibma.org).

International Bluegrass Music Association  
2 Music Circle South • Suite 100 • Nashville, TN 37203  
615.256.3222 p • [info@ibma.org](mailto:info@ibma.org) • [www.ibma.org](http://www.ibma.org)

## NORTH DAKOTA BLUEGRASS NEWS

Brand New Strings has been described as playing bluegrass the way it is supposed to be played. Probably little progressive or jam grass will be heard in Bismarck, just a lot of good traditional bluegrass. That will be true of our friends Cotton Wood from Washburn as well. It may be cold in North Dakota in January, but the picking will be hot. This should be a great show.



**COTTON WOOD & BSC PRESENTS**



## THE 8TH ANNUAL BLUEGRASS BLIZZARDWEEKEND

SIDNEY J. LEE AUDITORIUM - BISMARCK STATE COLLEGE



**Friday & Saturday, Jan. 11 & 12, 2013**  
**Concerts at 7:30 p.m.**

OPENING BAND  
 BOTH NIGHTS WILL BE:



### BLUEGRASS WORKSHOPS WITH THE BRAND NEW STRINGS

Bring your instruments!!!  
 Hands on demonstrations will  
 be held Saturday, Jan. 12, at BSC

Come learn a bluegrass song with  
 the "Brand New Strings" - bring your  
 guitar, fiddle, mandolin, upright bass,  
 or banjo and your voice!

**2 TO 4 P.M. - \$5**  
 No pre-registration required

### TICKETS - \$15

are available at Eckroth Music, String Bean,  
 Jacobsen Music, Night Life Music in Bismarck,  
 Cappuccino on Collins in Mandan, Chase Drug &  
 Java Rose in Washburn, the Corner Express in  
 Center and at the door if available.

### CONCERT TICKETS:

(tickets are non-refundable)  
 For more information call Jill  
 Wiese at 315-0017

**Free Community Concert by the Brand New Strings,  
 open to the general public  
 at Mandan High School, Friday, Jan 11 at 9:45 a.m.**

In case of inclement weather go to [www.cottonwoodbluegrass.com](http://www.cottonwoodbluegrass.com) for any concert changes

## **WYOMING BLUEGRASS NEWS**

Bluegrass jams are becoming well established in Worland. They seem to be held monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday from 6-8 PM at the First Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall (basement). They say it is front porch style traditional bluegrass. Contact Red Fowler at 431-8980 or [nfowler@rtconnect.net](mailto:nfowler@rtconnect.net).

Our friend, Ed Capen, keeps us updated on bluegrass happenings in Thermopolis and around the Big Horn Basin. More jams appear to be developing as time goes by. Good job, Ed.