



Bluegrassin'

Volume 19, Issue 3

May—June 2017

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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Upcoming Bluegrass Events

- May 6**—Lori & Pam Bluegrass, Symes Hotel, Hot Springs, MT, 8:00 pm
- May 7**—Mason Town, Longstaff Brew House, Missoula, 7:00 pm
- May 12**—Leftover Biscuits, The Raven, Woods Bay, 8:00 pm
- May 20** - Lochwood Bluegrass Band, Blacksmith Brewery, Stevensville, 6:00 pm
- May 26**— Lochwood Bluegrass Band, Top Hat, Missoula, 6:00 pm
- May 26-29**—Conroy's Memorial Weekend Campout (see pg. 4 for details.)
- May 28**—Flatgrass, Symes Memorial Day BBQ, Hot Springs, 4:00—8:00 pm
- June 1** - Leftover Biscuits, Kalispell Brewery, Kalispell, 5:00 pm
- June 4—8 & June 11-16**,—Montana Fiddle Camp, Monarch, MT
<http://www.montanafiddlers.org/camp.html>
- June 9-10-11** — Broken Arrow Bluegrass Campout, Gibbonsville, ID (Call Dell Scott for details, 406-381-0822)
- June 16**—Bluegrass in the Park, Gibson Park, Great Falls, 6:00pm
- June 23-34-25** - MRBA Annual Campout, Forrest Flats (see pg. 4 for details)
- June 24**— Black Mountain Band, Symes Hotel, Hot Springs, MT 8:00 pm
- SAVE THE DATE:**
July 21-22-23 Hardtimes Festival, Hamilton (see pg. 5 for details)

Recurring Shows and Jams

- ◆ **Missoula**—Open Jam, Top Hat, Tuesdays, 6:00 pm
- **Helena** - Bluegrass Jam, Staggering Ox, Tuesdays, 6:00 pm

Please send information on open jams and shows to the newsletter editor.

President's Message

This year's Lone Rock festival was AWESOME. The Association grossed \$4300, which was \$800 up from last year.

I would like to take a paragraph and do a special thank you to the core members who go way above and beyond for this Association. First the cooks: Susan McCauley, Verna Molenda, Tari Conroy and Dallas Olson for cooking 100 pounds of turkey, and most everything else. Susan McCauley for running the kitchen. Next I would thank Jim McCauley; Bill Molenda for all the carrying, lifting, packing, of food etc.; and Anne Merrifield for hours at the admission gate and her meticulous bookkeeping. Scott and Paddy Moore from Billings, for helping me lift speakers, pack things, tear down and clean up. Ben Essary and Nancy Stobie for taking money in the kitchen for hours. Without these tireless people, this Association would die. Next time you see them, give them a thank you for all they do.

A special thank you to Donna Hook, Sue Pearson, Jeanne Burruss, and Hailey, Savanna, and Cierra, from Trapper Creek Job Corps, for coming and doing a five-hour shift to help us, and also to Patty Moore for bringing them.

The musicians from 18 bands, wow, I can't say enough about how much we appreciate them.

Finally, thank you to all the other folks who stepped in to help: Paula Jones, Ron and Bobbie Meadville, the merchandise sellers, kitchen helpers, and all the many folks I forgot to name... It takes a village----

Mike Conroy-- (humble bluegrass guy)



Thanks to the kitchen helpers!

PS- My biggest thank you goes to my wife Tari, who works side by side with me in everything we do. She's the best.

Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association

PO Box 1306, Missoula, MT 59806

Website: www.mtbluegrass.com email: mrba@mtbluegrass.com

President - Mike Conroy, mikevconroy@gmail.com or phone 406-821-3777

Vice President - Dallas Olson

Secretary/Treasurer - Anne Merrifield, happypasture9@gmail.com, 406-360-1877

Board Members - Tari Conroy, Kate McMahon, Ben Essary, Verna Molenda

Merchandise Manager - Dallas Olson

Newsletter Editor - Kate McMahon, kate@appcom.net, 406-863-9255

MRBA Webmaster - Phyllis Erck mrba@mtbluegrass.com

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

Information printed in **Bluegrassin'** is at the discretion of the editor.

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*Full Page – \$25.00,
1/2 Page – \$15.00,
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Contact:
Anne Merrifield
happypasture9@gmail.com

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Electronic version has color photos & hyperlinks to websites.

(P.S.—It will help keep down printing & mailing costs for the Association)



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Membership Application

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Mailing Address _____ City _____
State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone # _____
E-mail _____ Individual (\$10.00) ___ Family (\$15.00) ___

Do you want the newsletter delivered electronically? _____ YES _____ NO
New Member _____ Renewal _____

Please mail your application to: MRBA, PO Box 1306, Missoula, MT 59806

Conroy's Memorial Weekend— Bluegrass Campout

May 26-27-28-29

Conroy's Memorial Weekend Bluegrass Campout will be May 26-27-28-29, and will be held at the Little West Fork Campground south of Darby MT. It'll be just like past years, three or four heated wall tents for jammin', pot luck suppers at 6 pm in the evenings, and a biscuits and gravy breakfast Monday morning at 10 am, before everyone has to leave.

The campground is approximately 23 miles south of Darby MT. Heading south from Darby, turn right on the West Fork Highway about 4 miles from town, continue on the West Fork to just past the 14 mile marker and turn right on the Nez Perce Road. Stay on the road for 4 miles. The pavement will end, and the campground will be on the right. Watch for signs.

MRBA ANNUAL CAMPOUT

June 23-24-25

The annual MRBA camp out will be held at Forrest Flats, Highway 10 East between Turah and Clinton, about three miles East of Turah and three miles west of Clinton. There will be signs. There will be dry camping Friday, Saturday, and Sunday (June 23—25). Come a day earlier - there will probably be some pickers already there, and you can choose a good spot. Breakfast pot luck on Saturday and Sunday. Saturday night the Association will provide the steak and dessert. We ask members to bring pot luck dishes to finish the meal.

There will be a \$10.00 charge for non-members or unpaid members for Saturday night, This should be a no-brainer when dues are \$10.00 for Single memberships or \$15.00 for Family. Family = two adults and minor children. You need to sign up in advance for the Saturday meal.

Hard Times Festival

July 21-22-23

Hard to believe this year is our 9th Hardtimes Bluegrass Festival. This festival has been so special to Tari and me, and when we are too dang old to do it, I'm thinking we will have very fond memories of the little festival on the hill (that could be a song title).

Anyway-- that's enough touchy-feely stuff. This year's festival is July 21-22-23 with camping opening at 10 am on July 20. We have ten great bands this year, with long-time favorites Pinegrass, Spring Thaw, Darby Sireens, and festival hosts Mike and Tari Conroy.

Back by popular demand are the Ladd Canyon Ramblers from Oregon, as well as the Panhandle Polecats and Portneuf Gap from Idaho. The cool brother duet, Brothers Parker, will be there, as well as hard-driving Lochwood, and Fred and Emily's new band called Blue Rail.

Featured pioneers this year are banjo pickin' Dale Berg and guitar pickin' Rod Snyder from Libby. We are also proud to feature old-style bluegrassers Gary and Linda McKnight and our Mr Pioneer - Forrest Clark.

Come join in the fun at the Hardtimes Bluegrass Festival just south of Hamilton MT. More info at:

1-406-821- 3777 or www.hardtimesbluegrass.com..

HARDTIMES BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL



Food
Vendors
On Site

Sunday
Morning
Gospel

JULY 21, 22 & 23, 2017

FEATURING:
KIDS IN BLUEGRASS

LOCHWOOD-MT
PANHANDLE POLECATS-ID
BROTHERS PARKER-MT,AZ
PINEGRASS-MT
LADD CANYON RAMBLERS-OR

PORTNEUF GAP-ID
SPRING THAW-MT
BLUE RAIL-ID
MIKE & TARI CONROY-MT
DARBY SIREENS-ID,MT

SPECIAL FEATURED PIONEERS IN BLUEGRASS

Rod Snyder-Libby, MT Gary & Linda McKnight-Darby, MT
Forrest Clark-Clinton, MT Dale Berg- Libby, MT

All
Dogs
On Leash

Bring
Your
Lawn Chairs

LOCATION: 10 miles south of Hamilton, mile marker 37, 163 Forest Hill Rd
ADMISSION: Adults \$15.00 for weekend, Children under 12-\$7.00 for weekend
SUNDAY ONLY: \$10.00 DRY CAMPING-\$15.00 for weekend
FOR MORE INFORMATION: www.hardtimesbluegrass.com

or call 406-821-3777

Spring Festival—Band Profiles

Kate McMahan

With all of the great bands that volunteer to play at the Festival, I thought it would be fun to feature a few of

Band Name: **TINCUP**

Band Members:

- Pam Small—Bass
- Jacqueline Brazil—Guitar/Vocals
- Timothy Ezzell—Mandolin/Harmonies
- John Mann—Lead Guitar/Vocals

Members of the band all live in the Bitterroot around the Darby/Hamilton area. They have been making music together since 2013, but this was their first time playing at the spring festival. The band first met at a jam at the Grange Hall in Hamilton and then started playing together. All band members are pretty much self taught, and they play other genres as well as bluegrass. They mostly find inspiration for their playlist by searching for recordings of the early version of songs they like, and then they try to develop arrangements that stick to the original. They play their sweet harmonies at various venues around the Bitterroot. To find out about their next performance, contact: Jaqueline_brazil@hotmail.com



Band Name: **SALMON VALLEY STRING BAND**

Band Members:

- Squeak —Bass
- Bob—Dobro
- Janet—Banjo
- Arlene —Guitar
- Gary Moore—Mando (big guy with the little thing)
- (Not in picture—Lloyd)

The members of the Salmon Valley String Band have been playing in different iterations over the last 23 years. The band is a regular at MRBA’s spring festivals and has missed performing only once in the history of the event! All of the band members hail from the Salmon River Drainage & Tower Creek area in Idaho. They say the scenery is just as pretty down there as it is in Montana. In the winter, the band plays its brand of toe tappin’ music every Wednesday at Bertram’s Brewery in Salmon, ID. They also play at weddings and various other festivals, plus, once a month they also are the featured entertainment at the senior center and at the care center in Salmon. They have recorded a CD, but you won’t find it on Amazon. If you come to the Lone Rock spring festival next year or the Apple Festival in Salmon this summer, however, you can buy it direct from the band.



Spring Festival Photos



Outdoor Jammin'



Couldn't Do It Without Our Volunteers



Full House Listening to Music



Kids in Bluegrass



Ruby Jewel Band



Best Band Costume—Heartbreak Pass Express



Grand Finale

MRBA Spring Festival—History

By Raynae Redman

Many people have expressed interest in some of the history of our MRBA. Here's a little bit of the story behind our annual Spring Old Time Festival that we currently hold at Lone Rock School.

MRBA was first started in January of 1999. Originally, my thoughts were to just organize a few jams and activities then send out newsletters to members so we'd all be informed and be able to play more. My first Vice-President was Mike Conroy, and as winter was fading he approached me with the idea of doing a fundraiser festival where he'd be in charge of lining up bands and the sound system, and I'd be in charge of selling food, memberships, and rental of a venue.

I was able to get the Victor High School for \$25 and so we were off and running. Mike committed to recording each band and giving them a CD as a token of thanks for donating their time. His original and continued concept would be that we as members could sign up as a band or we could put together a band just to play this festival. The only stipulation was that you give Mike a band name for your group and that you gear your band to play bluegrass. We both agreed that our Association is a bluegrass association, we weren't apologizing for it, and we were committed to have people know that they'd hear bluegrass at our activities and for sure at this festival.

My husband John took charge of food, and we sold hot dogs, nachos, candy, soup and desserts. Mike knew so many musicians that he had no trouble getting bands. He came up with the idea to have each band choose a tune for a master CD to earn extra money for the Association.

The second year we had the festival at Victor again, and this is where I met Dallas Olson. She came and brought pickled eggs that she'd done herself in a Mason jar, and she donated them for the food booth. After three years at the Victor School the festival was moved to a grade school in Stevensville for a few years, and then we had to move it to Lone Rock when that school was going through renovations. It's been held at Lone Rock every year since.

Raynae Redman.



Fred and Emily have been regular players at the festival.

"The ability to play banjo soon places one in position to pick and choose among scores of social invitations. Everywhere the banjoist is assured of a hearty welcome." 1927 Gibson catalogue.

"When you want genuine music...music that will come right home to you like a bad quarter, suffuse your system like strychnine whiskey, go right through you like Brandreth's pills, ramify your whole constitution like the measles, and break out on your hide like the pin-feather pimples on a picked goose...when you want all this, just smash your piano and invoke the glory-beaming banjo!" Mark Twain.

BYOB With Forrest

By Kate McMahon

When you talk to a jack-of-all-trades like Forrest Clark, BYOB takes on a different meaning. In this case it means “Build Your Own Banjo.” I remember at one of the first winter jams I attended at Ruby’s, I was in a jam with Forrest, and he offered to let me play his banjo. I was still learning my way around the fretboard, but when I played his banjo, it even made me sound good. I didn’t want to give it back, but after awhile Forrest said he’d like to rejoin the jam, so I reluctantly handed it over to him. Then he told me the backstory of the instrument.

It turns out that Forrest built the banjo from scratch. Using the book, Earl Scruggs and 5-String Banjo, as his guide, he built his first banjo 30 years ago and the current version back in 2001. At the recent spring festival in Stevensville, I sat down with Forrest, and he reviewed the banjo making process.



1. His first banjo was made of birch, and the second banjo was rosewood that was taken off an old pallet.
2. With the pallet, he first had to take out all of the nails. There were hundreds of them so this was extra work, but it was worth it to reuse the rosewood.
3. Saw out the wood. There is not a lot of wood you can get from an old pallet, but there was just enough to make a banjo.
4. He built the tension hoop, flange, hooks, tailpiece, bridge, and fingerboard himself. The only pre-built store-bought part of the banjo is the tone ring.
5. Once you have all of the parts, assemble the instrument. He put it together when he had the time and has been tinkering and redesigning it over the last 10 years to get the sound he wants.
6. Forrest didn’t tell me this final step, but I figured it out myself. “Enjoy playing the finished product and making music with friends.” I think Forrest has this last step down to perfection.

Ellie Nuño

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What is Practicing?

by Andrew Pouska

<https://www.studybass.com/lessons/practicing/what-practicing-is/>

First, you need a concept of what practicing is. This is how I define it:

Practicing is the absorption, mastery and maintenance of skills.

Let's examine that more closely. Skills are things we use to create music. Skills can be bass techniques, concepts, rhythms, basslines, etc.

You can divide skills up into new, unlearned skills, and old, learned skills. Many people learn a few skills and continue practicing those same skills over and over. In order to advance, it is important to keep a balance of new and old skills in your practice routine. Only working on things you can already do will take you nowhere. The trap is you play old skills well and it is gratifying. Practicing new skills can be frustrating. People often keep playing the same stuff to make themselves feel better about their playing. Don't tread water only reviewing things you can already do. Work on old and new skills.

Absorption is a process. *Absorption* means learning how to play and apply those new bass-playing skills. Absorption is the art of practicing; it is how to learn. There are a number of ways to learn skills. In this practicing lesson category and throughout studybass I will explain learning strategies you can apply to all your bass studies.

Often times I ask my students, "Do you know [something they were supposed to learn]?" And they reply, "Oh, yes. I learned it." But when they play it back they fumble through it, get stuck, or need to look at something for a reference. They are *familiar with it*, but they have not yet *mastered* it.

Mastery is a result. *Mastery* means absorbing a new skill so well you have access to it whenever you need it. Some skills can be mastered in an hour; other skills take decades to master. If someone were to shake you awake you at 3 a.m. and asked you to play something and you could, you probably have it mastered. If you need to play through something once or twice before you can make it through it, you haven't mastered it yet. **Mastery means being able to execute at will.** You will know when you really have something mastered. It will feel effortless. Keep in mind it is possible to play bass fairly well without having hardly anything mastered at all.

Maintenance means to review those skills you have mastered. Many learned skills need to be used consistently if you want them ready at will. It's very easy to forget skills like reading, fingerings, basslines, and the like if you don't use them.

To practice is to absorb, master and maintain skills.

Movie Night Recommendation

Looking for a good flick for pizza and a movie night? Try [The Winding Stream](http://thewindingstream.com/), a documentary about the Carter family and the history of country music. You can order from Net Flix or buy it from Amazon. For more info on the film:

<http://thewindingstream.com/>



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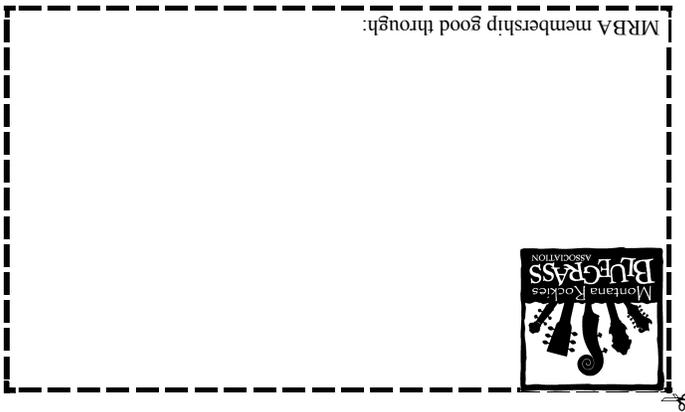
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