



Bluegrassin'

Volume 21 Issue 1

Jan.—Feb. 2019

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

Jan. 6 — Open Jam, Tap House, Whitefish, MT, 6:30 to 9:00

Jan: 11— Lochwood, Ten Spoon Winery, Missoula, 6:00

Jan. 12— MRBA Winter Jam Series, Missoula, Ruby's Inn - Pickin' and grinnin' starts at 2:00 pm. Potluck at 6:00 pm followed by more pickin' and grinnin'

Jan. 25—Good Ole Fashioned Bluegrass, Symes Hotel, Hot Springs, MT

Feb: 4— The Acousticals, The Redbird, Missoula, 7:00 to 10:00

Feb. 8 — The Acousticals, Top Hat, Missoula, 6:00 to 8:00

Feb. 9— MRBA Winter Jam Series, Missoula, Ruby's Inn - Pickin' and grinnin' starts at 2:00 pm. Potluck at 6:00 pm followed by more pickin' and grinnin'

Feb. 21-24— Wintergrass, Bellevue, WA <http://www.wintergrass.com/>

March 9 — MRBA Winter Jam Series, Missoula, Ruby's Inn - Pickin' and grinnin' starts at 2:00 pm. Potluck at 6:00 pm followed by more pickin' and grinnin'

Note: Please check with venues to confirm dates & times

SAVE THE DATE

- April 14—MRBA Spring Festival, Lone Rock School, Stevensville

Notes:

1. *Please check websites or call the venues for show times.*
2. *If you play in a band, (or know of a local bluegrass band) please e-mail the band's web page or Facebook page link to the editor to list events in newsletter. Thanks.*

Recurring Shows and Jams

- ◆ **Missoula**—Pickin' Circle, Montana Distillery (631 Woody St.)
Tuesdays, 6:00 pm
- **Helena** - Bluegrass Jam, Staggering Ox, Tuesdays, 6:00 pm

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Howdy. It's the start of a new exciting year for me...I am busy building my first banjo. I thought long and hard about what model I would like to build. I decided to build a 1929 Gibson Style 5 copy banjo, considered the "Holy Grail" of Ralph Stanley-style pickin'. On the downside, it is the fanciest, hardest-to-build banjo I could have imagined. I contacted my engraver buddy, John Boyer from Idaho Falls, and he sent me a little hand-push engraver, like he thought Gibson used on their Style 5 in 1929. I have been practicing for months and finally got the parts to build the banjo (it took 13 months). As of today, the engraving is done, and I'm ready to send off the metal parts to be gold plated.... exciting stuff that helps get me through the long boring winter.



On to MRBA business: Election of officers ended up with the same officers as last year (listed below). Thanks to these folks who volunteer their time and talents to help keep this fine Association running.

Tari contacted the Clinton Town to see if they would like to display Forrest Clark's banjo in their Community Hall, they said they would love it. Guitar pickin' Steve Chapman has offered to build a display box, and we will take a drive to Clinton to measure the display area.

Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association

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

President - Mike Conroy, mikeconroy@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, Isaac Callender, Verna Molenda

Merchandise Manager - Dallas Olson

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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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If you would like to get your newsletter delivered electronically via e-mail send a message to:

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Electronic version has color photos & hyperlinks to websites.

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

**MONTANA ROCKIES BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION
Membership Application**

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

Do you want the newsletter delivered electronically? _____ YES _____ NO

Renewal _____ New Member _____

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

Annual Meeting Minutes
 MONTANA ROCKIES BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION
 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES
 December 8, 2018, 3:00 p.m., Ruby's Inn, Missoula, MT

Board Members Present: Mike Conroy, Dallas Olson, Anne Merrifield

Officers Present: Tari Conroy, Kate McMahon, Verna Molenda

Officers Absent: Isaac Callender

The meeting was called to order by President Mike Conroy. The following items were discussed:

1. Update on the Association (Mike). Mike provided the 2019 Ruby's jam dates (January 12, February 9, March 9). He encouraged members to stay overnight at Ruby's to support the hotel – they're very good to MRBA. The date of the 2019 Lone Rock Festival will be April 13. The 2019 picnic/campout at Hughes Creek will be June 21-23.

2018 Events Results: The Stevensville Playhouse Hootenanny was a success, although attendance was down a bit. The Lone Rock Festival was also a big success. The June picnic (formerly Forest Flats) drew a good crowd and had a fantastic pot luck – people seem to like the new location. The October Corvallis Hootenanny was very well attended and had great music.

Mike expressed his thanks to Mark Vosburgh for holding the vocal workshop prior to this meeting; many members attended, and Mark's efforts were appreciated by all.

2. Financial Report (Anne). Anne read the 2017 Minutes. She presented the 2018 financial report (through November 30, 2018), which is in the MRBA files for reference. Income was \$7,879.77, expenses \$7,279.45, for a profit of \$600.32. The check-book balance is \$6,671.65. The cost of the Forrest Flats Picnic was \$697.40. Much of the cost for this event was to purchase gifts (travel mugs) for attending members. All were not distributed, so we will be getting future income from them as merchandise items. MRBA made a profit of \$1,974.02 from Lone Rock, a \$75 profit from the Sula Hootenanny, and a \$383.75 profit from the Stevensville Hootenanny.

Memberships are up slightly to 187, and members were encouraged to recruit others to join, and to remember to renew every year. Re the newsletters, we mail hard copies to 77 people, and we e-mail 111 copies. Also, Greg Boyd requested some membership forms and newsletters to keep in his store, as he sees many local band members who might have an interest in membership. Anne provided these items, and we thank Greg for this generous offer.

3. Merchandise (Dallas). Dallas began her presentation by indicating that she had been doing this job for many years and would appreciate some volunteer help for handling merchandise at future events, especially when she is not able to attend.

As part of a research project, Kate McMahon made some beautiful posters that relate to bluegrass jamming. She posted a copy online and got a tremendous response. She provided 20 to Dallas so that they can be sold to members (her cost is \$4, and if they are sold for \$6, she will donate the remaining \$2 to MRBA).

4. Old Business (Mike). With regard to Forrest Clark's banjo, Tari contacted the Clinton Community Center, and they are delighted at MRBA's suggestion that it be displayed there, along with some pictures and other artifacts. Mike and Tari spoke with Steve Chapman, who has volunteered to build a display case, and he will be in contact with the Center to discuss specific details for presentation. Tari also proposed that MRBA have an event at the Center when the banjo goes on display. Note: MRBA would still own the banjo, per Forrest's wishes, and could borrow it if necessary.

5. New Business (Mike). Organizers of a festival in Orofino, Idaho, have asked Mike if there are bands that would like to participate in the music. The event is the last weekend in May.

Kate McMahon stated that, last year, someone (Mike?) suggested doing member profiles in the newsletter. She has created a form for members to fill out, and she will put them into future newsletters.

Sick Bay: MaryJane Cunningham is in the hospital but out of intensive care after a recent kidney failure. She is now facing rehab. Isaac Callender is also hospitalized at this time. Cards are available for members to sign to wish them well. Isaac has indicated to Mike that he would still like to remain on the Board if no one else volunteered.

Steve Chapman suggested that, at future Annual Meetings, MRBA members might wish to donate non-perishable food items to a local charity. Kate indicated she could post the suggestion, and Steve volunteered to deliver whatever food was collected.

Kate reminded members who are in bands to contact her if they have gigs to be listed in the newsletter.

Phyllis Erck reported that the “Breakout Bluegrass Festival” is being revived. She is working on details, but the plan is to hold it at the Fairgrounds in Deer Lodge on June 28-30, 2019. Preliminary plans are for 4 hours of shows and a gospel set. The ticket price would include bluegrass events, the Big Sky Draft Horse Expo, and a museum visit. Phyllis will keep us apprised of the details.

6. Election of Officers (Mike). There were no volunteers for Board members or Officers. Verna Molenda moved that the slate remain the same. The motion was seconded, and approved. Therefore, the current slate will remain as follows:

- President – Mike Conroy
- Vice President – Dallas Olson
- Secretary/Treasurer – Anne Merrifield

Officers and others will be as follows:

- Tari Conroy
- Isaac Callender
- Kate McMahon (Newsletter Editor)
- Verna Molenda

Phyllis Erck remains as Webmaster

7. Business completed, the meeting was adjourned by Mike Conroy – proceed to have supper and commence jamming.

Minutes compiled by Anne Merrifield, Secretary/Treasurer

Ellie Nuño

Musical styles on:

- ★ fiddle
- ★ violin
- ★ violectra



- ★ Studio Recording Artist Services
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MRBA Christmas Party— 2018



Mark Vosburgh's very popular harmony workshop



Kimberlee Carlson's Mom, Singing



The Pot Luck is Always Worth the Wait



Mando Heaven



Pick a Lot—Pick a Little More



There's No Jam Like a Hallway Jam

Bluegrass Profiles

By Kate McMahon

A while back, someone suggested to me that it would be fun to publish interviews or profiles of MRBA members. To follow up on that excellent idea, I created a bluegrass questionnaire and asked attendees at the annual Christmas Party to complete the form. In future newsletters, I will print a few of the profiles that I collected at the meeting.

Thanks to everyone who volunteered to share their info.

Verna Molinda

I play these instruments: Sorta play dobro and autoharp

Favorite Bluegrass Songs to Sing: Hard Times

Favorite Bluegrass Banjo Tunes: Little Red Rocking Chair

Favorite Bluegrass Fiddle Tunes: Orange Blossom Special

First Bluegrass Festival Attended: Hamilton, MT - The Olden Days

Favorite Bluegrass Festival: Hardtimes - Every Year!

Favorite Bluegrass Music Camp: Conroy Memorial Weekend

Favorite Bluegrass Band: Del McCoury

Name of Bluegrass Band: Darby Sireens: With Arlene Wolf, Tari Conroy, Charlene Anderson, Janet Griswold

Dallas Olson

I play these instruments: Play autoharp - Some

Favorite Bluegrass Songs to Sing: "Family Reunion" (Anything Ralph Stanley)

First Bluegrass Festival Attended: Victor Spring - The Very First One

Favorite Bluegrass Band: Clinch Mountain Boys

Name of Bluegrass Band: Foggy Mountain Girls: Raynae Redman, P.T. Limehouse, Gina Redman, Gail Williams

Mike Conroy

Favorite Bluegrass Songs to Sing: Pretty Polly

Favorite Banjo Tunes: Clinch Mountain Backstep

Favorite Fiddle Tunes: All

First Bluegrass Festival Attended: Hamilton, MT

Favorite Bluegrass Festival: Hardtimes

Favorite Bluegrass Music Camp: Went to Nashville, took mando lessons in 1994

Favorite Bluegrass Band: Stanley Brothers

Support MRBA

By Kate McMahon

Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association (MRBA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting, preserving and sharing our love of bluegrass music. MRBA organizes three winter pot luck/jams at Ruby's Hotel in Missoula, a spring festival in Stevensville, and a summer campout/picnic. MRBA also publishes a newsletter six times a year and is one of the sponsors for the Hardtimes Bluegrass Festival. As a non-profit, the organization relies on volunteers and revenues from membership dues, merchandise sales, and festival fees to help provide for all of these benefits. Please remember to renew your membership. Even if you read the newsletter online, your membership dues help support the organization.

New MRBA Fundraiser

MRBA is now selling the poster below as a fundraiser. The poster cost is \$6, and a portion of the sales go to support MRBA. Look for the poster at the merchandise table at future events.



Stevensville Playhouse—Variety Show

By Susan McCauley

The Stevensville Playhouse will present a Variety Show January 20, 2019, at 2:00 pm.

Acts Include:

The Timber Rattlers: A guitar and fiddle duo from the Bitterroot Valley, their music ranges from old-time bluegrass to new-times blues. They have performed all over the United States and Europe and are excited to perform close to home. You may know fiddle player Jesse Brown from “The Lil’ Smokies.” Jamie Drysdale has performed with “The Random Canyon Growlers” out of Jackson, WY. The Timber Rattlers are a classic bluegrass duo with a bit of flavor. Jamie and Jesse both bring their touring history and seasoned musicianship to the table to provide that sought-after bluegrass sound. Many standard songs appear in their repertoire, as well as a number of originals and fast paced instrumentals. A great musical backdrop for your evening.



VIDEO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCsj4KjK46w>

Ballet Bitterroot Dance Academy: Offering a variety of dance opportunities. For this show, they will share both classical and contemporary ballet pieces. Featuring all handmade costumes!

Instrument Library

Do you have an instrument that is not being used? Would you like to see it being used? Since part of our purpose is to encourage folks to learn and to play bluegrass music, why not donate your unused instruments to the lending library at “The Bitterroot School of Music” at Rooted Music in Hamilton? Jenn Adams has been lending instruments to students of all ages for a few years now. In this way folks can try out an instrument for a while to determine if it is right for them before purchasing one. Jenn has a contract in place that ensures the safety of the instrument while it is on loan. She expressed a need for a banjo and a mandolin in particular. Other instruments are welcome as well. If you have any questions or are interested in donating, you can call Susan at (360) 489-7114 or Jenn at (406) 363-5491



In the News
Hardtimes Bluegrass Festival
Reprinted from Alaska Air Magazine—July 2018
By Megan Campbell

Pack a folding chair and your best toe-tapping footwear for the Hardtimes Bluegrass Festival, where northwest and national performers strum guitars, pluck mandolins, and play fiddles on the wood-paneled front porch of a cabin. “No Spittin’ on the Porch” suggest a handmade sign.

Celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2018, the festival takes place on Hamilton-area ranchland, about 40 miles south of Missoula, amid lodgepole pines and near the Bitterroot mountain range, along the Montana-Idaho border.

Musicians included the family group Trinity River Band from Florida, and Kentucky-based mandolin-strumming Kenny Stinson and Perfect Tym’n. Bluegrass bands from Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon also performed on the rustic stage+.

In 2000, the film *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* reignited popular interest in bluegrass, which is a casual American roots music borne of Scottish, Irish, and Appalachian origins.

Festival attendees can sit back and listen, or participate in impromptu jams that fill the night air. Anyone who wishes to perform can also offer two songs for the Sunday morning gospel show.

The “Kids in Bluegrass” concert on Saturday features young artists - the upcoming generation of musicians.

Many Hardtimes attendees return every year to camp and to renew festival-created friendships, although newcomers are always welcome.

Or, in the words of festival hosts (Tari and Mike Conroy) and ranchland owners (Janice Heiland, and Pat and Mary Thomas): “Y’all come!” For more information, visit hardtimesbluegrass.com





Ruby's Inn
&
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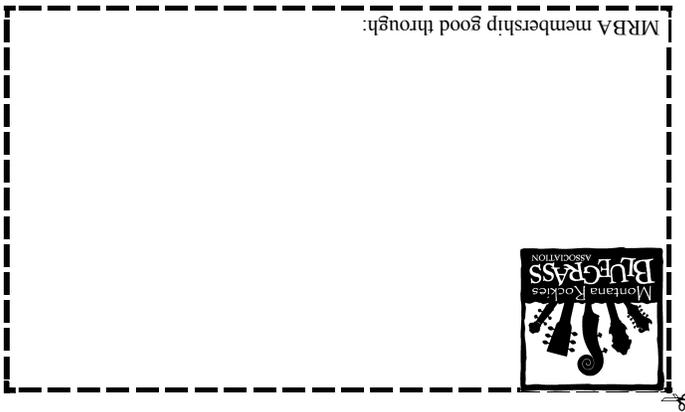
6 meeting rooms

Free local calls

Located off I-90 exit 96, 1/4 mile on right

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.



PO Box 1306
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