



Bluegrassin'

Volume 22 Issue 2

March—April, 2020

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

- March 10: Bluegrass Jam, VFW Hall, Whitefish, 6:00-9:00 pm
- March 13: Acousticals Duo, Philipsburg Brewery, 5:00-8:00 pm
- March 28: Lochwood, Highlander Brewery, Missoula, 6:00-8:00 pm
- March 14: MRBA Winter Jam Series (Masonic Hall in Missoula at 126 East Broadway Street). Pickin' and grinnin' starts at 2:00 pm. Potluck at 6:00 pm, followed by more pickin' and grinnin'
- April 3: Lochwood, Glacier Fiddle Festival, Smith Valley Grange, Kalispell, 6:30-7:30 pm
- April 7: Bluegrass Jam, VFW Hall, Whitefish, 6:00-9:00 pm
- April 9-12: Big Sky Bluegrass Festival, Big Sky, MT
<https://bigskyresort.com/events/biggrass>
- April, 16: Lochwood, Bitterroot Brewery, Hamilton, 6:00-8:00 pm
- April 18: MRBA Spring Festival, Lone Rock School, Stevensville (see pg. 4)
- April 18: Lochwood, Highlander Brewery, Missoula, 6:00-8:00 pm
- April 26: Leftover Biscuits, Taste of Bigfork, 2:00-5:00 pm

Notes:

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

Recurring Shows and Jams

- ◆ **Missoula:** Pickin' Circle, Montana Distillery (631 Woody Street), Tuesdays, 6:00 pm
- **Helena:** Bluegrass Jam, Staggering Ox, Tuesdays, 6:00 pm
- **Great Falls:** Celtic Cowboy Open Bluegrass Jam, Sundays, 5:00 pm on

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Howdy. We been having lots of fun at the MRBA jams at the Masonic Lodge in Missoula. Everyone seems to love the new location, and we have just one left on March 14. Come join in the fun and fellowship and see the historic Lodge.

April 18 is our annual MRBA Old-Time Bluegrass Festival and Fundraiser. See Susan's article below if you would like to volunteer to help at the Festival. We have 18 bands, plus Kids in Bluegrass, signed up to perform (see poster on Pg. 5). We will have the new MRBA Festival posters at the March Masonic jam. Be sure to grab some to put up so the Lone Rock Festival will be jam-packed to help keep the Association going. Your fearless leader (kind of) -- Mike



P.S. Mark Vosburgh has again offered to host a free harmony workshop at the last seasonal jam at the Masonic Lodge in Missoula on March 14. Harmony workshop from 3:00-4:00 pm, and a slow jam for folks learning to jam from 4:30-5:30 pm.

Volunteers & Desserts Wanted—2020 Spring Festival

Hi! The kitchen is gearing up for another successful year at our Lone Rock Festival. You can help by stopping by and checking in throughout the day. We often need more hands for various tasks. If working in the kitchen that day is not your thing, maybe you would be willing to bake. Right now we have plenty of rolls promised. We can always use cakes, pies, cookies, or any other homemade desserts you may want to create.

Thanks for all your help and for your support of this annual fundraiser. See you there! Any questions call Susan [360 489-7114](tel:3604897114).

Susan McCauley

Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association

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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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*Full Page – \$25.00,
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Contact:
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Get MRBA Newsletter by E-Mail

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

happypasture9@gmail.com

Electronic version has color photos & hyperlinks to websites.

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



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**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

* * * **MRBA Spring Festival** * * *
Stevensville, MT - April 18, 2020

Well, we're getting geared up again for a wonderful festival with great bands and a whole lot of fun! **If you would like to volunteer to help with the ticket tables, in the kitchen, or staffing merchandise sales, please call Mike or Tari at 821-3777.** You can also just check in that day with the organizers, and they'll find a spot for you to help. Sunday morning we will have a free biscuit & gravy breakfast for folks camping at the school.

Directions (watch for signs): Lone Rock School is at 1112 Three Mile Road, Stevensville 59870

From the South:

Traveling north on Highway 93 from Hamilton, turn right at Stevensville exit, drive one mile, turn left when entering Stevensville onto East Side Highway. Continue 5-1/2 miles. Turn right onto Three Mile Road. Continue on Three Mile Road for 3 miles. School is on the left just past the fire station.

From the North: (Lolo):

Turn left at Florence (Conoco station) onto East Side Highway. Continue on East Side Highway 6-1/2 miles, turn left onto Three Mile Road. Continue on three Mile Road for 3 miles. School is on the left just past the fire station.

Lone Rock 2020 Festival Schedule

Saturday April 18, 2020

12:00—12:25	Kids in Bluegrass	
12:30—12:55	Montana Ramblers	Missoula, Mt
1:00—1:25	Bluegrass 101	Hamilton, Mt
1:30—1:55	Pinegrass	Missoula, Mt
2:00—2:25	Darby Sireens	Hither & yon, Mt & Id
2:30—2:55	Kentucky Sky	Idaho Falls, Id
3:00—3:25	Ridge Runners	Orofino, Id
3:30—3:55	Lochwood	Missoula, Mt
4:00—4:25	Mike & Tari Conroy	Conner, Mt
4:30—4:55	Bittergrass String Band	Stevensville, Mt
5:00—5:25	Skookumchuck Bear Claws	White Bird, Id
5:30—5:55	Almond Butters Band	Missoula, Mt
6:00—6:25	Bonnie & Clyde	Salmon, Id
6:30—6:55	Elk Ridge	Deer Lodge, Mt
7:00—7:25	Salmon Valley String Band	Salmon, Id
7:30—7:55	Rattlesnake Ramblers	Missoula, Mt
8:00—8:25	Silver Gravelys	Alberton, Mt
8:30—8:55	Shenanigans	Missoula, Mt
9:00—9:25	Smokestack String Band	Anaconda, Mt

MONTANA ROCKIES BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION

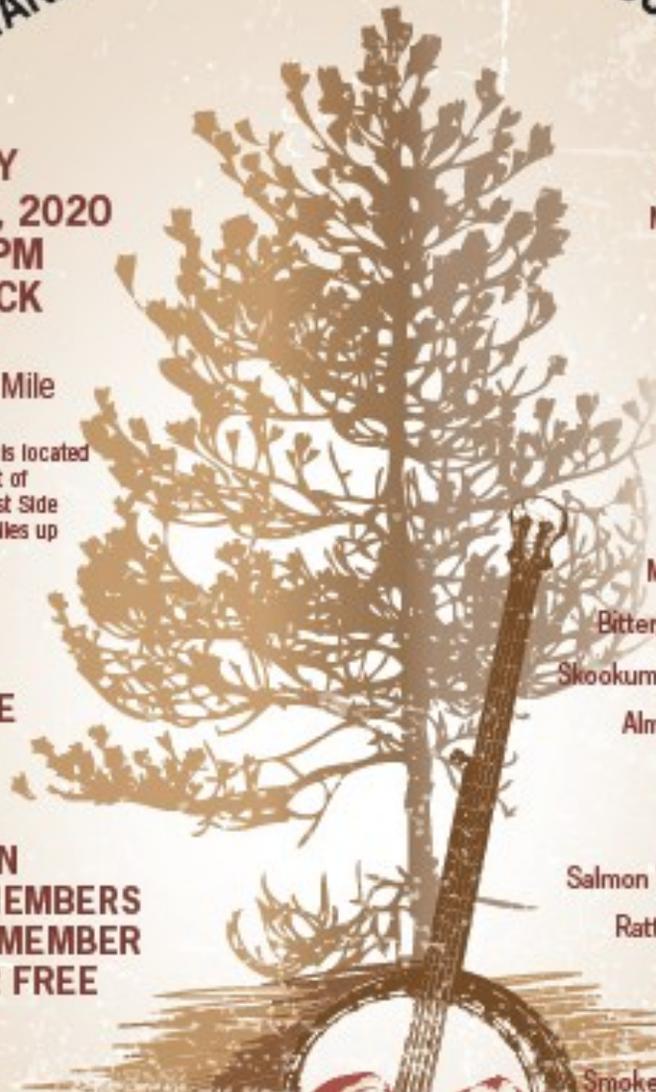
**SATURDAY
APRIL 18, 2020
NOON-9 PM
LONE ROCK
SCHOOL**

1112 Three Mile
Creek

Lone Rock School is located
5.5 mile north-east of
Stevensville on East Side
Highway, then 3 miles up
Three Mile Creek.

**FOOD
AVAILABLE**

**ADMISSION
\$5 NON MEMBERS
\$3 MRBA MEMBER
UNDER 12 FREE**



Kids in Bluegrass
—MT & ID

Montana Ramblers
—Missoula, MT

Bluegrass 101
—Hamilton, MT

Pinegrass
—Missoula, MT

Darby Sireens
—Hibber & you

Kentucky Sky
—John Paul, ID

Ridge Runners
—Oratio, ID

Lochwood
—Missoula, MT

Mike & Tari Conroy
—Coeur, MT

Bittergrass String Band
—Stevensville, MT

Skookumchuck Bear Claws
—Missoula, ID

Almond Butters Band
—Missoula, MT

Bonnie & Clyde
—Salmon, ID

Elk Ridge
—Coeur Lodge, MT

Salmon Valley String Band
—Salmon, ID

Rattlesnake Ramblers
—Missoula, MT

Silver Gravelys
—Alberton, MT

Shenanigans
—Missoula, MT

Smokestack String Band
—Missoula, MT

*Oldtime
Bluegrass*

FESTIVAL & FUNDRAISER

For information: 406-821-3777 • mtbluegrass.com

February Jam



Jammin' Workshop



Terry and John



Anne, Curtis, Teri, Roger



Dale and Amy



Carla's New Bass (with Paula & Britt)



Phyllis and Henry



Jack, Susan, and Jim



Jack, Ben, Dallas, and Clyde



Gary and Brendan



Jack and Bob



More Jammin' Workshop

Bannack Days

<http://bannack.org/bannack-days>

(Submitted by Walter Congdon)

Where: Bannack State Park (near Dillon, MT)

When: July 18-19, 2020

What: Celebrate pioneer life and Bannack's glory days. Those of you who have not had the opportunity to attend Bannack Days or may have not attended in the past few years, please come join us for this fun-filled weekend. Come watch the spinners spin wool into yarn, and the quilters craft a quilt. You can learn how wagon wheels and baskets are made. Up Hangman's Gulch you can learn about the Cavalry and experience an 1860's gold camp. You may want to try your luck at gold panning, and you won't want to miss hand-dipping your own souvenir candle or watching the blacksmith forge an incredible work of art from a flat piece of steel.



Schedule: From 9:00am to 5:00pm Saturday and from 9:00am to 4:30pm Sunday, folks will be demonstrating many of the pioneer skills.

Fees: For a nominal fee, breakfast is served in Hotel Meade beginning at 7:00am both days. Lunch will be available, as well as other delicious treats like ice cream, kettle corn, fry bread, corn on the cob, and fresh lemonade.

Wanted—Music

Throughout both days there will be music in the air – bluegrass, gospel and old-time fiddlers, to mention a few. It is a good venue and small groups do well. Applications for bands are **due on April 1** and can be downloaded at the following website:

<http://bannack.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/3.-ENTERTAINMENT-CHURCH-DANCE-DRAMA-REENACTMENT-MUSIC-POET-OR-TALKS-OTHER-ENTERTAINMENT-1.pdf>

Earl Scruggs and Foggy Mountain Breakdown The Making of an American Classic

Thomas Goldsmith

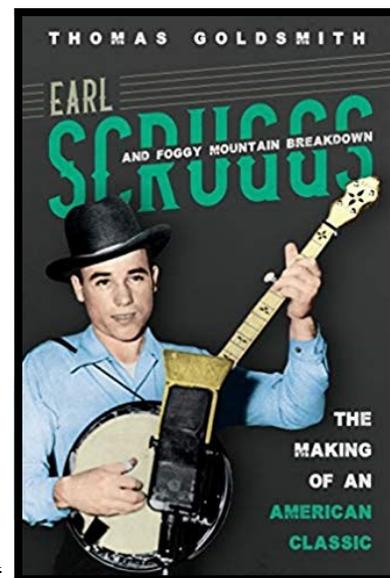
(Article by Kate McMahon)

This book is an autobiography, not of a person, but of a song. According to the book jacket:

“Recorded in 1949, ‘Foggy Mountain Breakdown’ changed the face of American music. Earl Scruggs’ instrumental essentially transformed the folk culture that came before it while helping to energize bluegrass’s entry into the mainstream in the 1960’s. The song has become a gateway to bluegrass for musicians and fans alike as well as a happily inescapable track in film and television.

“Thomas Goldsmith explores the origins and influence of ‘Foggy Mountain Breakdown’ against the backdrop of Scruggs’ legendary career. Interviews with Scruggs, his wife Louise, disciple Bela Fleck and sidemen Curly Seckler, Mac Wiseman, and Jerry Douglas shed light on topics like Scruggs’ musical evolution and his working relationship with Bill Monroe. As Goldsmith shows, the captivating sound of ‘Foggy Mountain Breakdown’ helped bring back the banjo from obscurity and distinguished the low-key Scruggs as a principal figure in American acoustic music.

“Passionate and long overdue, Earl Scruggs and Foggy Mountain Breakdown takes readers on an ear-opening journey into two minutes and forty-three seconds of heaven.”



Here are some reviews from Amazon:

“The book as a whole, is very good summary of Earl’s background, his development, his professional history, and best of all, his recording of the signature tune of Earl Scruggs, ‘Foggy Mountain Breakdown’ as to how it was laid down for bluegrass legend forever in 1949, and the aftermath, stopping by on significant milestones like the tune FMB being used for the movie ‘Bonnie and Clyde.’ The book also describes the terrific impact of Earl’s precise musical timing, and the sound of his 1930 5-string Granada Mastertone on the bluegrass world, and how many many people were drawn to that sound and got started learning to play banjo just because they loved the sounds coming out of Earl’s banjo.”

“No banjoist before him had played with the clarity, inventiveness and authority of the young North Carolinian. Listening to his early recordings, notably the Mercury sessions of 1948-1949 with Flatt, Earl’s banjo notes crackle kaleidoscopically from the speaker; his playing is in an astonishingly different league from the mostly ensemble playing of the first country music recordings in the 1920s. In 1949 Earl wrote and recorded what became his signature piece, ‘Foggy Mountain Breakdown,’ around which this book is organized.”

“This book is a great resource for any 5-string banjo player who wants to understand the origins of Earl’s iconic playing style, which forever redefined how the 5-string banjo was played. But even after poring over exact transcriptions of his playing, and with thousands of hours of practice, no one will ever play the 5-string banjo with more power, precision and imagination than did Earl Scruggs in his prime.”

Jammin'

We'd all like to thank Mark Vosburgh for stepping up and doing his amazing harmony workshops and slow jams at this year's Missoula MRBA jams. Thanks also go to Jim McCauley, Jeff Campfield, Bequia Martel, Phyllis Erck, and Helen Lude for helping Mark with these events.

We have a lot of new members, which is great, so, following up on Mark's slow jam guidelines, we thought it might be helpful to print a short listing of how a bluegrass jam circle works.

A bluegrass jam is a great opportunity for folks to get together and play music. It can be a lot of fun, but every successful jam has a basic set of guidelines that make it work. It starts with a circle of pickers. The person who starts chooses a song, then the lead goes around the circle (usually clockwise), and anyone wanting to take a break (play a solo) does so in turn. The person who starts the song finishes the circle.

If you are leading the song, make eye contact with each picker going around the circle. If the picker doesn't want to take a break, that person should shake their head no. If the picker does want to take a break, he or she nods their head. The leader of the song is responsible for going around the WHOLE circle in this way until it is complete, then the next person gets a turn to do a song. This is the way the group communicates.

Here are a few guidelines:

- Make sure your instrument is tuned before the playing starts. If you have to stop and tune during the jam, it shows good manners to step out of the circle.
- Have a few songs and tunes in your mind ready to play so you don't make others wait.
- When it is your turn, tell the group what song you are playing, and in what key.
- Listen to and pay attention to other pickers. If a picker is taking a break, play quiet rhythm backup. If a picker is singing, it's OK to sing along on the chorus. Also, remember that your instrument should blend in with the others.
- Keep the beat - timing is everything.
- Pick songs that everyone can enjoy, and save the fancy stuff for times when you are with folks who also know the songs. Complex songs that can't be picked up "on the fly" by others are known as "jam busters."

Everyone is at the jam to have fun. Please be kind, helpful, and friendly to your fellow pickers!

MIKE'S BOOK REVIEW

There's a great new paperback book out called "JAM Songbook" created by Pete Wernick and Liam Purcell that I highly recommend. It contains classic favorites in old-time string band or bluegrass style. The chords are given in the "number system," which lets you choose the key. The book shows chords for banjo, guitar, mandolin, fiddle, and bass, and there is another section on how to lead a song.

To quote Peter Wernick, "With the help of this songbook, you can start playing and singing favorite traditional songs about as soon as you learn your first two chords. Once you know a song well enough to sing and play it, changing chords with basic rhythm, you can lead it in a bluegrass or old-time jam session."

The main point—I think this is a great book for folks new to bluegrass to learn lots of the old standards for jamming'. The book is \$10, and his website is drbanjo.com

Mike

Grammy Awards - 2020



Winner—Best Bluegrass Album

Tall Fiddler
Michael Cleveland



OTHER NOMINEES

Live In Prague, Czech Republic
Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver

Toil, Tears & Trouble
The Po' Ramblin' Boys

Royal Traveller
Missy Raines

If You Can't Stand The Heat
Frank Solivan & Dirty Kitchen

*Ellie
Nuño*

Musical styles on:

- ★ fiddle
- ★ violin
- ★ violectra



- ★ Studio Recording Artist Services
- ★ Private and Family Style Lessons
- ★ Girls with Guitars Workshops

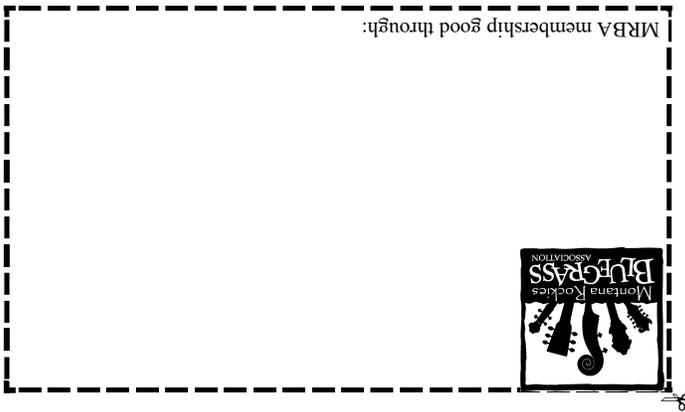
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home/studio (406)721-3908



<http://thefiddleschool.com/>

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.



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