



Bluegrassin'

Volume 22 Issue 5

Sept.—Oct. 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

- Sept 11-12-13: Gibbonsville Campout (See pg. 4)
- Sept. 26: MRBA Annual Festival—Lone Rock School - CANCELLED
- Sept. 28—Oct. 3: IBMA Virtual World of Bluegrass (See pg. 8)

Bummer. All us bluegrass dogs are missing the festivals this year. Stay safe and well, everyone.



How did “Bluegrass” Music Get Its Name?

“Oh, (Monroe) was the first. But it wasn't called bluegrass back then. It was just called old time mountain hillbilly music. When they started doing the bluegrass festivals in 1965, everybody got together and wanted to know what to call the show, y'know. It was decided that since Bill was the oldest man, and was from the bluegrass state of Kentucky and he had the Blue Grass Boys, it would be called 'bluegrass.’”

(Ralph Stanley)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

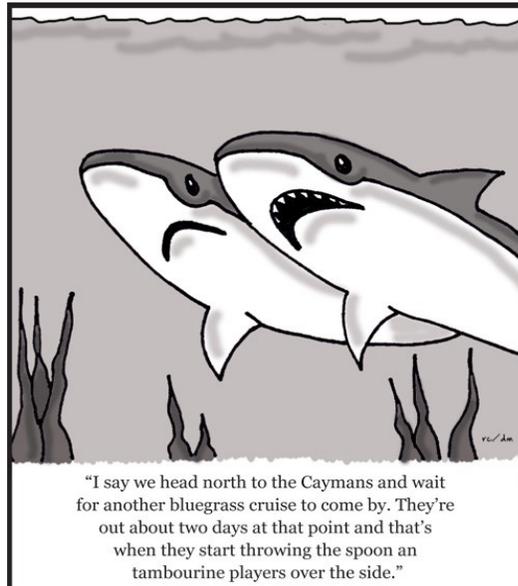
Hi all,

It's been pretty dismal for playing Bluegrass this summer - a few outside jams and not much else. The Gibbonsville jam is ON for Sept 11th, 12th and 13th. RoseMarie said anyone who wants can sit at the outside tables if they want more "social distancing" while enjoying the awesome Mexican food. (Broken Arrow is the first place I tasted salsa years ago, and it's still my favorite Mexican food.). This fun event usually signals the end of music campouts for the summer. Tari and I will be there bs'ing and pickin' and grinnin' while trying not to spit on one another (I think I do slobber a little when I play banjo - just sayin').

MRBA Lone Rock Festival that was rescheduled for September 26 is canceled.

Not much else to say except we'll have a December jam for elections, etc, and we'll see about jams through the winter.

Mike (I'm standing on one foot waiting for this covid thing to be over)



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Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association

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



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26TH GIBBONSVILLE CAMPOUT

September 11-12-13, 2010
The weekend after Labor Day

Welcome to 2020 - the year that has scrambled people and lives and events and gatherings! Gibbonsville is no exception.

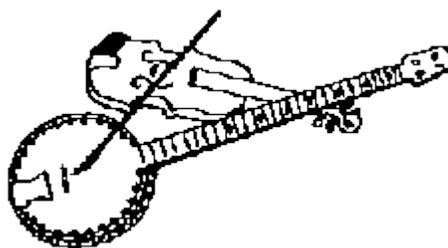
RoseMarie wants to keep it open for all who want to attend this year, the weekend after Labor Day (September 11-12-13). The Broken Arrow will have outdoor seating and will follow all public health guidelines. If you need more information, the phone number of the Broken Arrow is 208-865-2241. There will be no potlucks and no ice cream social (we will shoot for next year)!

Lemhi County is under Eastern Idaho Public Health and has mandated that our county observe social distancing and USE OF MASKS due to our recent upsurge of daily cases. Gibbonsville bluegrassers will need to follow the guidelines on social distancing and wearing of masks as set by the county. This is an ever-changing situation, and I will post necessary updates through MRBA.

The easiest way to view the recent mandates and to get updates on current mandates is to google: "Eastern Idaho Public Health FINAL: Order of Restrictions of Lemhi County" or call the Idaho COVID-19 hotline at 1-888-330-3010.

Please, everyone stay safe. The best way I have heard COVID described is that we are all in the same storm, but we are all in different boats. May your boat stay safe and sane and steady as we traverse these rough waters!

Love to all - Arlene Wolf



Ellie Nuño



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CANCELLED Lone Rock Festival

The MRBA Board regrets to inform everyone that the annual festival at Lone Rock School in Stevensville that was rescheduled for September 26 has been cancelled.

HARDTIMES

Even though the festival was cancelled, you can still purchase festival t-shirts. Hardtimes 2020 tee shirts are \$15 each plus \$6 shipping...available in green and yellow (pretty much out of the blue color). Send money and color preference to:
Tari Conroy, PO Box 144, Conner MT 59827



A small group camped at the festival site. Here is a picture of the Gospel jam on Sunday morning. The Kentucky Sky Bluegrass band is on stage.



A Bundle of Banjo Newsletters

By Kate McMahon

In July, my friend Rudy Urban, from Leftover Biscuits fame, gifted me his collection of almost 30 years of Banjo Newsletter magazines. What an unexpected treat. The newsletter has been published since 1973. The first years, the monthly editions were printed using a mimeograph machine. (*Who remembers those?*) It wasn't long before the publications were mass produced on a printing press, and in 2008 the newsletter entered the modern age and went online. (<https://banjonews.com/>)

I can't tell you the hours of banjo entertainment this treasure trove is going to bring. Just looking through the index for the year 1993. there are articles by Alan Munde, Murphy Henry, Ken Perlman, Pete Seeger, Janet Davis and more. There are interviews with banjo greats like Bill Keith, Tony Trischka, Don Reno, and Bela Fleck, along with other illustrious bluegrassers. Topics range from the early days of bluegrass history to pickin' technique, instrument setup, music theory, album reviews, and festival news.

Each issue has tablature for traditional bluegrass tunes, old time standards, newgrass songs and even classical music. Believe or not, I found the tab for Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" in one of the issues! From time to time, I will include the music for some tab in the MRBA issue (see next page for "Blue Moon of Kentucky").

The articles are really in-depth and can sometimes get into the weeds, but there are certainly many hidden gems. For example, in the February 1993 issue, I came across the following:

"Just like a friendship, marriage or business relationship, without constant maintenance and attention a banjo can deteriorate or be abused to the point of little or no value over a period of time. If you take the time to wipe down the metal parts (especially nickel plated) after each picking session and occasionally polish with Simichrome or some other specially formulated polish for nickel, the reward will be a new-looking banjo that will continually increase in value. Gold plated banjos should be wiped only with a dampened cotton cloth or rag as needed." (Geoff Stelling)

"Do you like to hear banjo players who are at the top of their game? Do you like to stroll down the path where Fleck and Trischka do their morning jogs? If you answered yes to both questions, then listen to Tony Furtado play the banjo. You can't nail the notes to the rafters any cleaner than he does in "President Garfield's Hornpipe" and "Sao Miguel." (Wynn Osborne Reviews)

Interview with Greg Cahill from Special Consensus about where the name of the band came from: "There are two answers to that. The first one is that playing music is a consensus of sorts and with this configuration of guys it was a "special consensus." The other answer is from Carlos Casteneda's books about Don Juan who defined the state of 'special consensus' as the point where the things in your physical world mesh with the things in your spiritual world." (*Who knew bluegrass could be so philosophical?*)

"It was in 19 and 72 when, to my parents' relief, I finally sold my motorcycle to finance what was, if not a quieter fascination, at least one that was not life threatening: a banjo. By then, of course, my life-long ambition to become a doctor had bitten the dust when, 3 years into the pre-med program at the University of Georgia, I discovered Bluegrass. It was by the skin of my banjo head that I escaped with my degree and left the world of academia forever, to enter the world of Pall Mall Reds, Jack Daniels (*if you please*), Bill Monroe, and Earl Scruggs." (*Murphy Henry*)

EARL'S WAY

Blue Moon of Kentucky

by Robert Piekiet

Nearly everyone with a keen interest in Earl Scrugg's playing wishes they could hear him play every tune known to man, so they could compare their way with Earl's way.

Of course Earl certainly has not played every tune there is (who possibly could?) and recorded less. Naturally the bulk of the recorded material we have today comes from the great Flatt & Scruggs era, which was really the Golden

Age of Bluegrass, with bands like Lester & Earl, Bill Monroe, and a few others leading the way. Since this was some time ago, and Earl does not play full time on the road anymore, you really won't get any chance to see his rendition of, say a 90's instrumental written by a modern band.

Oddly enough one of the great classic bluegrass tunes, Blue Moon of Kentucky, was never recorded by Earl (with a banjo

break that is) til much later in his career. He and the Revue played it in F on this occasion, presumably to help with the vocals.

Pay close attention and notice that measure four contains a note too low to play in a down the neck G break (see my column of Aug '92). Same thing happens in the second Bb chord. Earl also adds the 7th for more excitement.

For those of you who like the simpler stuff, I also give you a chorus break which Earl did play down the neck in G. There is no pause on the D measure, and notice how the melody becomes ambiguous in in measures 11 & 12 for the reason I mentioned above - it is too low to play with this position!

Blue Moon of Kentucky

Tuning: aDGBD; Key of F
Recorded Source: The Earl Scruggs Revue; "Today & Forever"; PC-36084

Musical notation for the first version of 'Blue Moon of Kentucky' in F major. The piece consists of 12 measures. Chords are indicated above the staff: F, Bb, F, C, F, Bb, F, C, F. The notation includes fret numbers (7, 8, 9, 10, 12) and specific playing techniques like 's' (slide) and 'ch' (chord).

Blue Moon of Kentucky

Tuning: gDGBD; Key of G
Source: Reunion with Bill Monroe at Beanblossom

Musical notation for the second version of 'Blue Moon of Kentucky' in G major. The piece consists of 12 measures. Chords are indicated above the staff: C, G, C, G, D, G, C, G, D, G, C. The notation includes fret numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and specific playing techniques like 's' (slide), 'h' (hammer-on), and 'p' (pull-off).

IBMA World of Bluegrass

The bad news is that, due to the pandemic, you won't be able to travel to North Carolina for the annual World of Bluegrass event and awards show this year. The good news is that you can attend the event virtually! For those of use who haven't had the pleasure to attend the WOB, this year we can do it from the comfort of our own homes.

IBMA Bluegrass Ramble, IBMA Bluegrass Music Awards, IBMA Bluegrass Live! (Festival): All FREE!

Music performances will be available for free in one central online location via our event platform **Swappcard**, with a donation in the amount of your choosing requested to help support the IBMA and the IBMA Trust Fund during these challenging times. Additionally, those registering for access to music performances will be able to browse our virtual exhibit hall and special features not available outside the platform. Music content will also be available for free across multiple IBMA channels and from our media partners.[1](#)



<https://mailchi.mp/ibma.org/ibma-virtual-world-of-bluegrassregistration-on-sale-soon>

IBMA Foundation Announces Fund to Honor Arnold Shultz



The International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) Foundation has announced the establishment of an Arnold Shultz Fund to support activities increasing participation of people of color in bluegrass music. Arnold Shultz (1886–1931) was an African American musician from western Kentucky who had a profound influence on Bill Monroe’s music and the development of bluegrass.

The IBMA Foundation is in the process of appointing an advisory committee to make decisions about how funds donated to the Arnold Shultz Fund may best be used. Such uses might include scholarships, awards, or projects. Richard S. Brown, DMD, a nationally known mandolinist in the Bill Monroe style, a member of the IBMA Foundation’s board of directors, and an African American, will co-chair the advisory committee with noted bluegrass historian, author, banjoist, and Bluegrass Hall of Fame member, Neil V. Rosenberg.

“Of course I think the Arnold Shultz Fund is a great idea,” Dr. Brown said. “Arnold Shultz is long overdue for recognition because of his influence on bluegrass music. Arnold played with Bill Monroe’s fiddling uncle Pen Vandiver as a guitarist. Shultz was also a sought-after fiddler and later hired Bill to play guitar for him at dances. Bill Monroe told me about Arnold Shultz and their dance gigs more than 50 years ago, when I was in my twenties. The stories would always end with Bill saying, ‘Now, isn’t that something?’ Yes, it’s time to take Arnold Shultz, one of our hidden legends, out of obscurity and into the mainstream.”

Born near Cromwell in Kentucky’s Ohio County, Shultz was the son of a former slave. He died at the age of 45 of a mitral lesion in his heart, although legend persists that he died as a result of poisoned whiskey given to him by a white musician who was jealous of his talent. Born into a family of musicians, Shultz first learned guitar from an uncle. He also worked as a laborer in coal mines and as a deck hand on riverboats, traveling from the Ohio River in Kentucky down the Mississippi to New Orleans. In the early 1920s Shultz performed in hillbilly and Dixieland bands with both black and white musicians, including a group headed by Forest “Boots” Faught. Rhiannon Giddens concluded her 2017 keynote address, “As Boots Faught said when he was confronted about Arnold Shultz being a colored fiddler in his band, ‘You don’t hear color. You hear music.’”

Bill Monroe said that his first paying gig as a musician came when Shultz hired him to play guitar for a square dance. Though Shultz never recorded, Bill Monroe credited him as a powerful influence on bluegrass music, saying that was where the lonesome, blues feeling in bluegrass came from.

Donations to The Arnold Shultz Fund may be made at the IBMA Foundation, <https://bluegrassfoundation.org/>.

Nine Movies with Banjo Music

(Or ten – but who’s counting?)

Banjo songs have been featured in many movie soundtracks. Even though some of the movie songs in this list are borderline bluegrass, they made the list. Just for fun, how many of these movies have you seen?

	Yes	No	Can't Remember	Who Wants to Know?
O Brother Where Art Thou				
Deliverance				
Zombieland				
Cool Hand Luke				
Muppet Movie				
Bonnie & Clyde				
Cat Ballou				
Cold Mountain				
Smokey and the Bandit				
Song Catcher				
Can you name other movie soundtracks that feature the banjo?				
FUN FACT				
In <u>Cool Hand Luke</u> , Paul Newman played “Plastic Jesus” on the banjo for a scene in the movie. He insisted on learning how to play the instrument for filming and delayed completion of the movie by several weeks in order to do so.				

Top Bluegrass Cat Names

For cat lovers, here are the top bluegrass names for cats.
(Note: Only cat names that start with the letter “M”.)

Melody – For cats that purr along with bluegrass music.

Mellifluous – For the pretentious cat. (They actually prefer classical music.)

Max – For the no nonsense bluegrass cat. (Just feed me and let me sleep in the sun.)

Maybelle – In honor of a great lady.

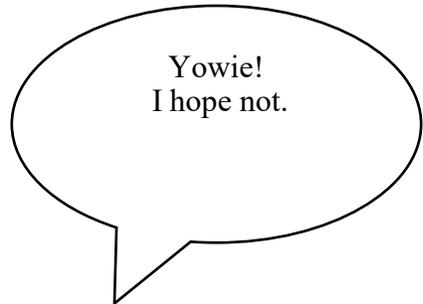
Mando – For bluegrass cats that like to tease bluegrass dogs named Banjo.

Mr. Fiddlehead – Actually, anything that you put after “Mr.” will work.

Miss Kitty – For the oh so cute bluegrass cat and Gunsmoke fan.

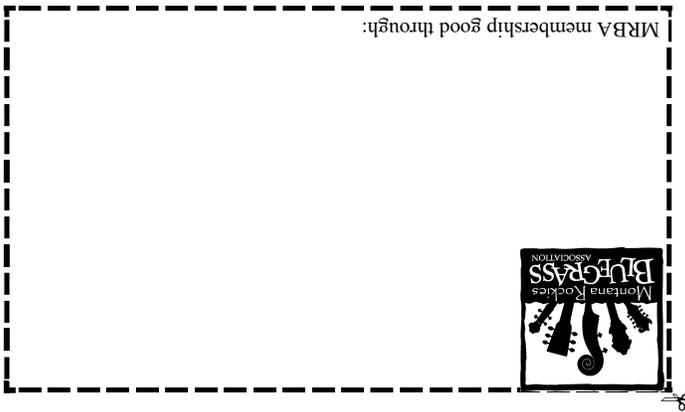
Mumu – For the Hawaiian cat. (Even though they prefer ukuleles, at least it’s still acoustic.)

Add your favorite bluegrass cat name: _____



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