



Bluegrassin'

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

- May 12: John Jorgesen, B2B2 Bluegrass Band, O'Shaughnessy Center, Whitefish, 7 pm
- May 15: Kalispell Bluegrass Jam & Pot Luck, First Presbyterian Church, 540 South Main, Kalispell, 4-8 pm
- May 20: Open Bluegrass Jam, Western Montana Musicians Co-Op, Ronan, 7 pm
- May 27,28 29,30: Conroy's 26th Memorial Weekend Campout (see pg. 4)
- June 2–5: Lewis & Clark Bluegrass Organization, Valley Bluegrass Festival, Orofino, ID (see pg. 9)
- June 3: Big Sky Bluegrass Boys featuring Greg Blake and Greg Cahill, Longstaff House, Missoula, 7 pm
- June 4: Big Sky Bluegrass Boys featuring Greg Blake and Greg Cahill, Celtic Cowboy, Great Falls, 6-9 pm
- June 14, 21, 28: Bluegrass Jam with Christian Johnson, North Valley Music School, Whitefish, 6-7:30 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 link for your band's web page or Facebook page to the editor.*
 3. *Send the editor info about open bluegrass jams and other bluegrass events in your area.*

Bluegrass Quote

“I tell people I was in the U.S. Army for three and a half years in WWII -- but what did I mainly do to beat the fascists?
Play the banjo.”
— Pete Seeger

President's Message

Hi all. The MRBA Festival and Fundraiser in Victor was a huge success. Everyone seemed to love the Neely Center for its more intimate feel and many back rooms for jamming and warming up to play onstage. Folks volunteering were right in the middle of the music action. Throughout the day there were many times it was "standing room only" with a full crowd and 19 awesome bands taking the stage continuously for 9 hours. We were SWAMPED with folks offering to help put up the sound system, take tickets, sell merchandise, sell food, collect money, pack out garbage, clean up the place, and load stuff in our trucks and cars after the event. We grossed over \$3800.

I've got to say, after losing Ruby's Motel for winter jams, and then this dang Pandemic, Tari, Anne, and I were thinking the MRBA was about done—but lo and behold—we are still alive and kicking. We signed up 14 new members and had 30 renewals, bringing us back to 199 members. Bring on the Bluegrass!

Next whing-ding is Conroy's 26th Memorial Weekend Campout on May 27, 28 29,30 (see writeup on Page 4). Many folks say this is the best campout of the year. Free camping, fires, heated jam tents, unbelievable potluck dinners, and lots of BS'in. If you're a listener, a new picker, or a seasoned pro, come join in the fun. ALL BLUEGRASS LOVERS WELCOME.

Mike (Head Potluck Sampler Guy)

PS: Pic below is Linda McKnight, Ben Essary, Jack Winthers and Tim Ezzell kicking off the 2022 MRBA Festival and Fundraiser --- LET 'ER GO BOYS (and girl)!



Bluegrass Question of the Month

For Mothers' Day, can you name a bluegrass song that mentions Mother, Mom, Ma, or Mama?

Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association

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

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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 March Jams Photos



Last Jam of the Winter

Small Crowd

Great Pickin'

Lots of Grinning'



Thanks to Matt Jolly for finding us the Masonic Hall. Very cool place.

Conroy's Memorial Weekend— Bluegrass Campout

May 27—28—29—30

Conroy's Memorial Weekend Bluegrass Campout will be May 28-29-30-31 and will be held at the Little West Fork Campground south of Darby, Montana. It'll be just like past years: three or four heated wall tents for jammin', pot luck suppers at 6 pm, 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, Montana. 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.

Beautiful scenery, and the camping is free. This is a old-style campout with campfires, recreational activities, and a heck of a lot of jammin'.

Dallas Olson Interview

By Kate McMahon

Dallas Olson, current Vice President of the Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association (MRBA), has been a member since its beginning. She has rarely missed an event, and over the years she has played all sorts of roles in the organization. She is a former MRBA president, a regular Master of Ceremonies for the Spring Festival, and for 15 years she was in charge of ordering and selling merchandising for MRBA events.

Dallas says music has always been part of her life, starting when she was a young girl and her grandfather sang “You Are My Sunshine.” Although she likes all types of music, bluegrass is her favorite. She plays the autoharp and can often be counted on to contribute vocals for a band when needed. Sometimes she even adds her own original verses to the songs that are being played.

Dallas was born in Hamilton, Montana, up Blodgett Canyon on the West Fork, and she attended high school in Darby. She moved away and lived in Seattle for 9 years and then Idaho for 22 years. It was in Idaho that she played in her first band, “The Soggy Mountain Girls” (an all girl band!). She worked in home health care and came back to the Bitterroot Valley about 30 years ago.

Upon her return she attended her first bluegrass festival right in her back yard in Victor, Montana. It was there that she met Raynae Redman, the first MRBA president, and they became good friends. Being part of the Montana bluegrass family has brought many close friendships and many fond memories.

Among her favorite recollections were the weekly performances at Wheat Montana in Missoula every Tuesday night. The Christmas parties and winter jams at Ruby’s and the hospitality of the Erck family are such good memories they will never be forgotten. Also, Dallas shared with me that the Ruby Jewel Jamborees organized by Phyllis Erck brought nationally known bluegrass bands to Missoula, and she was excited to meet these famous musicians.

Dallas especially enjoys seeing young people come to the jams and develop into exceptional bluegrass musicians. She remembers Caleb and Jesse of the Timber Rattlers Band in Missoula attending MRBA jams and how great it was to play and sing with them. The Spring Festival, she noted, is a great venue to showcase new talent.

Dallas has a smile for everyone and makes everyone feel welcome to the bluegrass family. She is Montana bluegrass through-and-through.



Spring Festival *(by Mike Conroy)*

The results are in. What a bluegrass festival it was in Victor. People said they loved the new location, with many jamming rooms and a more intimate feel. We had tons of musicians performing great music onstage. We signed up 14 new members, 30 renewals, and grossed over \$3800. The Neely Center was packed with bluegrass lovers most of the day, often with standing room only. This year we were FLOODED with folks offering to help set up the sound system, sell food, take tickets, and anything else that needed done. Folks brought great desserts, and many helped with the tear-down, clean-up, and loading stuff in our cars. Susan McCauley ran the kitchen, and Anne Merrifield ran the tickets and merchandise sales. What a wonderful Association this is. We can't thank you enough. Mike and Tari, Susan, and Anne



The Darby Sireens remember Verna.



Love those festival organizers.



Love those first time festival performers!



Love those harmonies!



Love those volunteers!



Love the young banjo players!



Love those volunteer kitchen dwellers.



Love the blue skies and snow capped mountains.



As a retired police officer, notice the head of the banjo And Todd's service number. (How cool is that?)



Hot picker Cliff Simpson.



Bob and Janet Griswold rockin' it.



Grammy Awards—2022



WINNER

"My Bluegrass Heart" - Bela Fleck

NOMINEES

"Renewal" - Billy Strings

"Music is What I See" - Rhonda Vincent

"Cuttin' Grass – Vol. 1 (Butcher Shoppe Sessions) – Sturgill Simpson

"A Tribute to Bill Monroe" – The Infamous Stringdusters

GLACIER FIDDLE CONTEST

By Kate McMahon

If this picture of contestants in the Pee Wee Division at the Glacier Fiddle Contest doesn't bring a smile to your face, I don't know what will. The 12th Annual Glacier Fiddle Festival took place in Kalispell the second weekend in April. Ages ranged from the 8 and under "Pee Wee" Division to the 60+ "Senior Division." Fiddlers came from all across Montana, as well as Washington, Idaho, and Oregon.



The Glacier Fiddle Contest is held by Division 1 of the Montana Old Time Fiddlers and is a good warm-up for the State contest in Dillon, Montana, the weekend of August 27-28. In case you have never been to a fiddle contest, each contestant must play three songs as follows.

- Hoedown— A hoedown is a tune in fast 2/4 time—Think square dance or clogging.
- Waltz— Song in 3/4 time.
- Tune of Choice— In some contests, the third song cannot be a hoedown or waltz, but can be a jig.

Other fiddle contests rules include:

- Contestants must play different tunes in each round. No tunes may be repeated.
- Limit of four (4) accompanists, but may not have more than three (3) guitar players.
(*Woo Hoo —no limit on banjo players!!!*)

The event is free, and members of the community are welcome to listen and have a foot-stomping good time. Jamming and workshops are also part of the weekend. While many tunes at the fiddle contests overlap with bluegrass standards, fiddle jams differ somewhat from bluegrass jam circles. Other instruments can join in as accompanists, but make no mistake—the fiddle reigns supreme at these events. If you decide to join a fiddle jam, be prepared to learn some new songs and be prepared to play a lot of backup.

Former MRBA Board Member, Isaac Callender, took second place in the Glacier Fiddle contest this year. Having heard Isaac play and knowing what a great fiddler he is, I can only imagine how good the winner had to be. With this level of musicianship, fiddle contests are great places to showcase up and coming new talent. Back in the 1980's, I remember reading my local newspaper about a hometown teenager who won the national fiddle contest. Her name was — Alison Krauss.

In addition to the Glacier Fiddle contest, the Montana Old Time Fiddlers hosts an annual Montana Fiddle Camp every summer in different Montana towns. For more information on the organization and fiddle contests:

<https://www.montanastateoldtimefiddlers.org/>
<http://glacierfiddlefestival.blogspot.com/>



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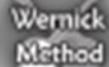
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Lydia Conway plays fiddle, guitar and mandolin. Studying classical violin early on led to a Master of Music degree from Colorado State University. Lydia left the classical world for the CO bluegrass scene, playing with Jeff Scroggins & Colorado and other groups. She has taught at bluegrass festivals and recently served as Educational Programming Director at the Omaha Conservatory of Music.

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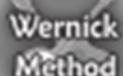
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Banks of the Ohio

With its beautiful melody and gruesome lyrics, the bluegrass standard "Banks of the Ohio" is a jam favorite. But is the song fact or fiction? Apparently, someone, somewhere, may have committed such a crime. According to Wikipedia:

"Banks of the Ohio" is a 19th-century murder ballad, written by unknown authors. The song is similar to other murder ballads in the idiom of songs such as "The Lexington Murder" and "The Knoxville Girl." These ballads may be traced back to British songs dating to the 18th century and may have been based on real events. In these songs, the murderer posing as the narrator asked a girl to walk with him to talk about marriage; he then attacked and killed her, throwing her body into the river, a crime for which he would be hanged.

Here are some other very, very interesting facts about the song. (*Note: Search YouTube to listen to these versions.*)

- In the 1920's, the Carter family made one of the earliest recordings of the song. Years later, Maybelle Carter's son-in-law Johnny Cash covered the song.
- Doc Watson has recorded the song multiple times with different artists including Bill Monroe, Merle Watson, Ricky Skaggs and Alison Krauss.
- Olivia Newton John's version was a number one hit in Australia. It only reached 66th on the US Charts.
- Artists Joan Baez, Pete Seger, Tony Rice, Dolly Parton, Charly Pride, and Porter Wagoner have all recorded the song.
- There is a Swedish version (titled "NáThkladák") and a Slovenian version (titled "Dravski most").
- Arlo Guthrie (singing as "Arloff Boguslavaki") has a version on the 1972 Earl Scruggs album *I Saw the Light*
- A recording of the song is part of an exhibit in the [Smithsonian Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden](#) in Washington DC.
- The song is theme song for the radio broadcast of bluegrass music on WAMU-PBS. The show is produced for the International Bluegrass Music Museum, located in Owensboro, KY, near—the banks of the Ohio.

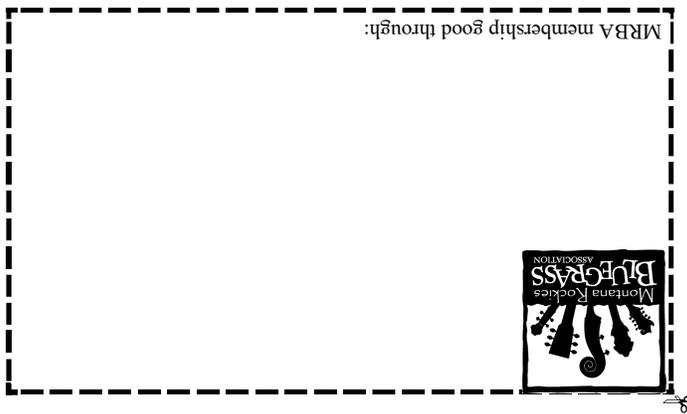
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