



Bluegrassin'

Volume 25 Issue 1

Jan.—Feb. 2023

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

Jan. 5: Lochwood, Draughtworks in Missoula, 6-8pm

Jan. 8: Bluegrass Jam & Potluck, First Presbyterian Church, 540 S. Main Street, Kalispell. Start at 4pm, Potluck at 6pm, Jam to about 8pm

Jan. 21: MRBA Winter Jam, Masonic Lodge, 126 East Broadway, Missoula. Doors open at 2pm, Potluck at 6pm

Jan. 20 & 21: Kitchen Dwellers, Great Northern Bar, Whitefish. Doors open at 8:30pm and show starts at 9:30pm

Feb. 5: Bluegrass Jam & Potluck, First Presbyterian Church, 540 S. Main Street, Kalispell. Start at 4pm, Potluck at 6pm, Jam to about 8pm

Feb. 18: MRBA Winter Jam, Masonic Lodge, 126 East Broadway, Missoula. Doors open at 2pm, Potluck at 6pm

Feb. 23-26: Wintergrass, Bellevue, WA, <http://www.wintergrass.com/>

Regular Jams:

Tuesday jams in Whitefish, North Valley Music School (432 Spokane Ave.) 6pm to 7:30pm (Call to RSVP—[\(406\) 862-8074](tel:4068628074))

Billings: Weekly jams on Friday nights, Yellowstone Bluegrass Association. Blue Creek Baptist Church, Billings, 7-9pm

Save the Date:

March 18: MRBA Winter Jam, Masonic Lodge, 126 East Broadway, Missoula. Doors open at 2pm, Potluck at 6pm

April 15: MRBA Spring Festival, Neely Center, Victor

Notes:

- 1) For ticket info and to confirm times, see venue websites
- 2) Send information about upcoming jams & band dates to newsletter editor

President's Message

Howdy ALL and Happy New Year. The big news is that the April MRBA Festival and Fundraiser is OFFICIALLY scheduled for Saturday, April 15, at the Neely Center in Victor. I will be sending out an email shortly to sign up bands. Most years we sign up 18 bands the same week that I send out the email, so please respond as soon as you get it, or you can call me.

The MRBA Festival is special because it's not only full-time bands---we encourage lots of bluegrass pickers to gather folks together and form a band to perform a 25-minute set and help support the Association.

We had a great time at the December Christmas party, meeting, and potluck. Fun to see folks and do some jamming in this awesome location.

Our new board member is Randy Dollar. We would like to thank him for stepping up and volunteering to help.

On a separate note, new member Rick Fitzpatrick has volunteered to set up and run an MRBA booth at the new Twin Bridges Bluegrass Festival on June 28-July 2 (see ad on Page 7 for more info).

The next MRBA jams are the third Saturday of each month: January 21, February 18, and March 18.

Mike



WANTED: MRBA MERCHANDISE MANAGER

Volunteer position to set up merchandise table at MRB events.

(Other volunteers will help staff table during events)

Store merchandise, and coordinate with board to order new merchandise. (baseball hats & bumper stickers)

If interested send email to: mikevconroy@gmail.com

Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association

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

President - Mike Conroy, mikevconroy@gmail.com

Vice President - Dallas Olson

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

Board Members - Tari Conroy, Kate McMahon, Jeff Campfield, Randy Dollar

Merchandise Manager - TBA

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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.

Got Something to sell?
Advertise in *Bluegrassin'*

Full Page – \$25.00,
1/2 Page – \$15.00,
1/4 Page – \$10.00
Classified – \$5.00

Contact:
 Kate McMahon
 kate@appcom.net
 406-863-9255

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 and 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

MONTANA ROCKIES BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

December 17, 2022, 3:00 p.m., Masonic Lodge, Missoula, Montana

Board Members Present: Mike Conroy, Tari Conroy, Dallas Olson, Anne Merrifield, Jeff Campfield

Board Members Absent: Steve Chapman, Kate McMahon

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

1. Update on the Association (Mike). Mike provided the 2023 jam dates to be held at the Masonic facility in Missoula (January 21, February 18, March 18). The date of the 2023 fundraiser/festival hopefully will be in mid-April at the Neely Center in Victor, but it has not been finalized. Mike will advise later.

The 2023 picnic/campout was discussed and will be held at Hughes Creek again. Mike will advise when a date has been set - probably sometime in August.

2. Financial Report (Anne). Anne presented the 2022 financial report (through November 30, 2022), which is in the MRBA files for reference. Income was \$5,239.20 expenses \$4,481.78, for a profit of \$757.42. The checkbook balance is \$8,988.40. The cost of the Hughes Creek/Forrest Flats Picnic was \$400.39, and the Victor Fundraiser/Festival raised \$2,905.99.

We have 166 members (down from previous years but holding steady).

Also, we are pleased with our new bank (Opportunity Bank), which has fewer fees than our previous bank.

3. Merchandise (Mike). We have been unable to find a volunteer to handle merchandise, even though we have almost no inventory, making the job fairly easy. If we go forward with merchandise, it will be limited to baseball caps and bumper stickers. Mike attempted to recruit a volunteer again this year, but no one responded.

4. Old Business (Mike). Mike explained that the 2022 annual picnic Kate McMahon planned at the Elmo location had to be canceled due to the fire there, and the picnic was moved back to Hughes Creek.

5. New Business (Mike). Even though Mike said we don't have a definite date for the annual fundraiser/festival in April, he will be starting a list so he can get a start on signing up bands for the event.

Gene Bach asked Mike if MRBA wished to have a booth at his new Twin Bridges festival in late June. Rick Fitzpatrick volunteered to do this event.

6. Election of Officers (Mike). Mike indicated that we needed to replace Steve Chapman as a board member, as he has moved to California. Randy Dollar volunteered for this position, and we welcome him. Mike made a motion that all other Board members' terms be continued for the next year. Therefore, the current slate will be as follows:

Mike Conroy, Tari Conroy, Dallas Olson, Jeff Campfield, Kate McMahon, and Anne Merrifield, plus new member Randy Dollar. Phyllis Erck remains as Webmaster.

7. Business completed, the meeting was adjourned. Proceed to have supper and commence jamming.

MRBA Christmas Party Photos



Jeanne, Fred, and Mac



Someone is Having Too Much Fun



One Hot Jam Circle



Best Potluck in Montana



Tis the Season for Jammin'



Play that Tune, Arlene and Cliff!

MRBA Winter Jams Return

MRBA 2023 jams return to the Masonic facility in Missoula!!
(126 East Broadway, Suite A, Missoula, MT)

Pickin' and grinnin' start at 2:00 pm
Potluck at 6:00 pm, followed by more pickin' and grinnin'

Mark your calendars for the following dates:

January 21
February 18
March 18

MRBA CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

(by Kate McMahon)

You might have noticed in the header at the top of the page that this is the first issue of **Volume 25** of the MRBA newsletter. Believe it or not, MRBA is celebrating its Silver Anniversary! It all began when a small group wanted to organize some get-togethers and start a newsletter so bluegrass aficionados could find out about bluegrass happenings in the state. That small group has grown to over 200 people at times and now is holding steady at about 166 members. For a small non-profit run by all volunteers, it is an amazing feat to be around for a quarter of a century.

There are too many volunteers to name, but a shoutout for a few include the first president, Raynae Redman, who continues to be involved with the Kids in Bluegrass program. Current president Mike Conroy and board member Tari Conroy have been around since the beginning and are tireless organizers of campouts and festivals. Longtime webmaster Phyllis Erck and her family have supported MRBA throughout the years. The past jams at Ruby's Hotel are legendary. The newsletter design was created by Ben Essary, who has served in many capacities such as board member, newsletter editor, and merchandise manager.

For perspective on how times have changed since 1998 when MRBA came into existence, consider this:

- Google was an little known startup that was just being launched in 1998.
- In 1998 there were over 5,000 Blockbuster stores in the country. Today there are zero.
- Most people had never heard of the Kardashians. They would not have a tv show for another 9 years.
- Serena Williams was still winless as a pro tennis singles player. Tom Brady was still playing college ball.
- *Titantic* was the top grossing movie of the year. *The Big Lebowski* was released in 1998.

The MRBA mission is dedicated to promoting, preserving, and sharing our love of bluegrass music in a spirit of family and friendship. Each year (except for a break during the pandemic) MRBA has hosted spring bluegrass festivals, campouts, and winter jams. They have produced CDs and sold bluegrass merchandise. The organization continues to publish six newsletters a year and maintains a website and Facebook page. I've had the pleasure of being the newsletter editor for the last 12 years and have reported on these and many other activities by MRBA members. Thinking back on everything that MRBA has done, I would say "Mission Accomplished."

So Happy 25th Anniversary to the Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association! Here is to another 25 years of pickin' & grinnin'.

Twin Bridges Bluegrass Festival



**June 28th—July 2nd, 2023, Madison County Fairgrounds
Twin Bridges, Montana**

Come join us June 28th—July 2nd for the first annual Twin Bridges Bluegrass Festival! This brand new event will be held at the Madison County Fairground located in Twin Bridges, Montana. Twin Bridges is located right off of Hwy 41, just across the river from town. This event will feature 3 days of bluegrass music, a building for sewers and quilters to set up in for the entire festival if they want (with stage music piped in), and a horseshoe tournament with prize money. The stage shows will be held inside the 10,000 sq ft pavilion building which means you won't have to worry about things in case of rain, wind, sun or cold. The fairground features expansive areas for both RV and tent camping, a good number of electric hookups (available on a first come first served basis), easy access off a paved road, easy access to town, playgrounds for children, indoor night jamming areas, and a world class trout stream running the length of one side of the entire fairground. Both food and craft vendors will be available onsite. There will be bands coming from Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and Washington, and you'll get a chance to listen to some groups you may never had heard before, as well as some you are familiar with. Twin Bridges is very centrally located being 2 ½ hours from Idaho Falls, 3 hours from Missoula, 2 hours from Helena, 1 hour from Butte, 1 ½ hours from Bozeman, 45 minutes from the Madison Valley, and ½ hour from Dillon. The bottom line is it's going to be a LOT of fun, so put it on your calendar and help us make this bluegrass festival a roaring success.

Bands

Kentucky Sky (Idaho), Lochwood (Montana),
Montana Standard (Montana),
The DeGroots (Montana),
Low Water String Band (Wyoming),
Runaway Train (Washington),
Oly Mountain Boys (Washington),
93 North (Idaho),
Mountain Strings (Idaho), plus more.



twinbridgesbluegrass.com

MRBA WORD SEARCH

S	T	M	B	K	Q	M	R	B	A	C	X	E	D	C
S	B	C	R	D	E	R	G	B	N	H	M	T	Y	V
P	Y	H	O	N	M	O	N	T	A	N	A	H	Y	U
R	J	M	K	N	J	I	K	L	O	P	S	I	O	F
I	H	I	E	U	R	U	B	Y	S	Y	P	T	R	O
N	O	R	N	P	R	O	E	W	Q	A	A	S	D	R
G	O	F	A	O	G	H	Y	J	K	L	R	Z	X	R
F	T	C	R	T	V	B	N	C	M	Q	T	M	Z	E
E	E	X	R	L	W	C	E	B	A	T	Y	N	Y	S
S	N	U	O	U	Y	G	C	I	H	M	T	F	V	T
T	A	M	W	C	M	N	Y	T	V	F	P	R	D	F
I	N	M	U	K	D	P	I	C	K	I	N	O	C	L
V	N	N	F	R	T	P	J	Z	S	D	R	L	U	A
A	Y	G	H	A	R	D	T	I	M	E	S	K	F	T
L	F	V	G	H	Y	T	P	J	I	K	N	B	V	S
P	J	O	B	L	U	E	G	R	A	S	S	A	Z	E

Words

BLUEGRASS

FORREST FLATS

MRBA

POTLUCK

BROKEN ARROW

HARDTIMES

MONTANA

RUBYS

CONROY CAMPOUT

HOOTENANNY

PICKIN

XMAS PARTY

SPRING FESTIVAL

Old Home Place

(Source: Various Internet Websites)

The “Old Home Place” is a jam favorite and was first recorded by The Dillards on their 1963 album, “Back Porch Bluegrass.” The song was written by Dillard band members Mitch Jayne (Bass) and Dean Webb (Mandolin). The tune is known for its unusual chord progression. In the song, the narrator laments the girl he lost and the life he left behind. It has been recorded by numerous bluegrass artists including: J.D. Crowe and New South, Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder, Vassar Clements, and David Grisman. Even the rock band Phish has covered the song.

Old Home Place

G B7 C G
It's been ten long years since I left my home

D
In the hollow where I was born.

G B7 C G
Where the cool fall nights make the wood smoke rise,

D G
And a fox hunter blows his horn.

I fell in love with a girl from the town
I thought that she would be true.
I ran away to Charlottesville
and worked in a sawmill or two.

(Chorus)

D G
What have they done to the old home place,
A D
Why did they tear it down?
G B7 C G
And why did I leave the plow in the field,
D G
and look for a job in the town.

Well, the girl ran off with somebody else
the taverns took all my pay.
And here I stand where the old home stood
before they took it away.

Now the geese fly south and the cold wind moans
as I stand here and hang my head.
I've lost my love, I've lost my home
and now I wish that I was dead.

Repeat Chorus

TIPS FOR LEARNING NEW SONGS

(Compiled from Banjo Hangout Website)

Train your ear to pick up on chord changes and look for parts of the song that sound similar to other songs you already know. Then you can piece together a solo or two that will be your own rendition of the new song. I think some people begin to believe that if they can't get a tab for the song, they can't learn it. When you've put the song together yourself, it will be easier to remember. When you've developed this technique, it will also be easier to improvise on a song you've never played before, which comes in real handy in a jam situation.

I've mostly used tabs to learn tunes but get away from them as soon as I get the tune to memory. I'm a three finger Scruggs player. If it's a bluegrass break, I often approach it like the above members suggest. I try to figure it out by ear first and then refer to a tab if available for specific problem areas or licks I like. I might adapt or alter sections, but I will keep the tab for future reference in case I forget it. The goal on all of it is to get it in muscle memory so you can play it whenever without tab or much thought. I'm 75 and still learning.

I keep playlists of all the tunes I know, or wanna know....by key. So I have a key of A playlist with maybe 40 tunes all in A. I just let it play and play along with it. Next day switch to the D playlist, etc. Amazing Slow Downer is a good app too that lets you build playlists and then loop tunes, or parts of tunes, that you want to work on. I don't use tabs much anymore, and would much rather watch a video of someone else playing the tune. Seems like after a while you can kinda hear what's going on.

Any way that keeps you interested is what works for you.

When I practice, I start out with warmup exercises to get the old fingers moving. Then, if I have a new song to learn, I listen to the melody, figure out the key and chord sequence, and then figure out a break. After that, I usually practice on some of the old songs that I know, working on any problem areas or changing them where they are easier to do. I used to tell my students to break it down in to sections such as:

1. warm up with techniques, rolls, licks you need to work on
2. work on new song(s)
3. play through songs you know
4. Noodle, try to work out a tune or figure out a new lick or do whatever you want

Fiddle Fact

The fiddle is tuned to the notes G D A E with the lowest open string pitch being G and the highest pitch being E.

The intervals G to D, D to A and A to E on a correctly tuned violin are all Perfect Fifth intervals.



Bluegrass Question of the Month

Name a song that you like to play, but nobody ever calls it out in a jam?

Bluegrass Humor

What do get when you cross a groundhog with a banjo picker?

6 weeks of Foggy Mountain Breakdown



HAPPY GROUNDHOG DAY!

Did You Know ?

There is an old-time fiddle tune by the name of "Groundhog." It is sometimes called Old Groundhog and has Appalachian/Celtic roots. It is a simple tune usually played in the key of A and has just one part.

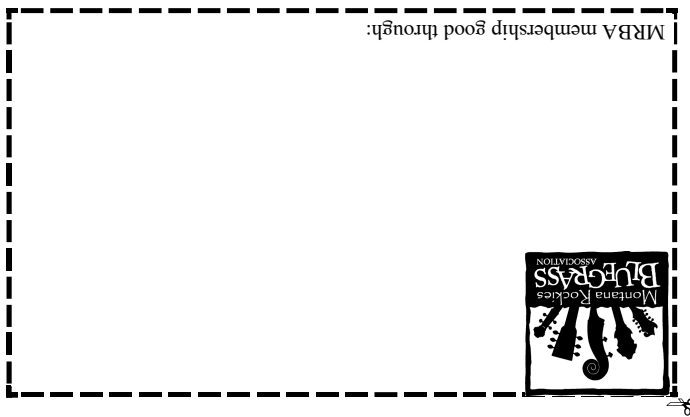
It was first recorded by the Walker Mountain String Band in 1928. Doc Watson performed the song, and there are several versions on YouTube.

Word Search Solution

S	T	M	B	K	Q	M	R	B	A	C	X	E	D	C
S	B	C	R	D	E	R	G	B	N	H	M	T	Y	V
P	Y	H	O	N	M	O	N	T	A	N	A	H	Y	U
R	J	M	K	N	J	I	K	L	O	P	S	I	O	F
I	H	I	E	U	R	U	B	Y	S	Y	P	T	R	O
N	O	R	N	P	R	O	E	W	Q	A	A	S	D	R
G	O	F	A	O	G	H	Y	J	K	L	R	Z	X	R
F	T	C	R	T	V	B	N	C	M	Q	T	M	Z	E
E	E	X	R	L	W	C	E	B	A	T	Y	N	Y	S
S	N	U	O	U	Y	G	C	I	H	M	T	F	V	T
T	A	M	W	C	M	N	Y	T	V	F	P	R	D	F
I	N	M	U	K	D	P	I	C	K	I	N	O	C	L
V	N	N	F	R	T	P	J	Z	S	D	R	L	U	A
A	Y	G	H	A	R	D	T	I	M	E	S	K	F	T
L	F	V	G	H	Y	T	P	J	I	K	N	B	V	S
P	J	O	B	L	U	E	G	R	A	S	S	A	Z	E

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
Missoula, MT 59806

