



Bluegrassin'

Volume 25 Issue 2

March—April 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.

Inside this issue:

	Page
President's Message	2
Winter Jam Photos	4
Spring Festival	5
Montana Bluegrass News	6
Lydia Conway	8
Grammy Awards	10
Ashokan Farewell	11

Upcoming Bluegrass

March 5: Bluegrass Jam & Potluck, First Presbyterian Church, Kalispell, (540 S. Main). Starts at 4pm, Potluck at 6pm, Jam to about 8pm

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

April 1: Glacier Fiddle Fest, Cornerstone Community Church, Kalispell. Starts at 9am (all-day event)

April 15: MRBA Spring Festival, Neeley Center, Victor (see page 5)

April 22: Ronda Vincent and The Rage, Kalispell Flathead Valley Community College, 7:30pm <https://www.wachholzcollegecenter.org/Online/default.asp>

April 29: Valley Bluegrass Stage, Clarkston, WA
<https://lewisclarkbluegrass.com/stage>

June 1-4: Valley Bluegrass Festival, Orofino, ID (see page 10)

Regular Jams

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

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

Notes:

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

Bluegrass Humor

Question: How do you make a bandstand?

Answer: Take away their chairs.

President's Message

Howdy all...

We have been having tons of fun at the MRBA winter jams at the Masonic Lodge in Missoula. Special thanks to Matt Jolly for getting us a place to get together in the Winter. The last winter jam will be at the Masonic Lodge on Saturday, March 18. As always, doors open at 2pm and the potluck is at 6pm. As a special treat, Matt Jolly and Mark Vosburgh (and friends) will host a free harmony workshop from 3-4pm. If you want to learn about singing harmony, come join in this fun workshop.

The MRBA Bluegrass Festival and Fundraiser will again be at the Neely Center in Victor (150 South A Street) on Saturday, April 15. The 18 bands will start playing at 11am and play continuously until 7:30pm. Due to a generous donation from a MRBA member, the board has decided to let all MRBA members in for free. (Did he say FREE--WAHOO!) We'll charge a whopping \$5 for non-members, and those under age 12 are also free.

We don't have any crew to put up posters, so if you could print the poster (from this newsletter) and put some up, that would help us get a great crowd like we had last year.

At the April 15 Festival, we'll need volunteers to help in the kitchen, selling MRBA merchandise, taking tickets, and helping to clean up after the festival. If you would like to volunteer: call Tari or me at 406-821-3777; or Susan McCauley at 360-489-7114 for kitchen duties; or Anne Merrifield at 406-360-1877 for ticket taking or the merchandise table. Or just show up and say you want to help. Volunteers are greatly appreciated, and we couldn't do it without you.

The MRBA summer campout is scheduled to be back up Hughes Creek on August 18, 19 and 20. Mark your calendar. Bring on the Spring and Summer FUN.

(Head Computer Button Pusher -- Mike)

WANTED: Spring Festival Volunteers

Spring Festival is scheduled for April 15 in Victor

Check out these exciting volunteer opportunities!

Kitchen Volunteers: Call Susan @ 360-489-7114

Tickets/Merchandise Volunteers: Call Anne @ 406-360-1877

Setup/Cleanup/Other volunteers: Call Mike or Tari @ 406-821-3777

You can also just show up and volunteer where needed.

Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association

PO Box 1306, Missoula, MT 59806

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, Randy Dollar, Jeff Campfield

Merchandise Manager - Vacant

Newsletter Editor - Kate McMahon, kate@appcom.net

MRBA Webmaster - Phyllis Erck, mrba@mtbluegrass.com

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 & hyperlinks to websites.

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



New Collings Guitars
New Roy Noble Guitars
New Bourgeois Guitars
Vintage Martin Guitars

**Complete line of Picks, Strings
 & other accessories**

Best prices you'll find anywhere!

www.gregboyd.com

406/327-9925

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

Winter Jam Photos

Big Fun at the MRBA January Bluegrass Jam at the Masonic Hall in Missoula (other than that the outside door got somehow locked for a while—we're sorry about that). Met some fun new pickers and saw some pickers we haven't seen in a while. Mark Vosburgh, Matt Jolly, and Paula Jones hosted a "slow jam" for folks getting into the jamming thing. It was well attended, and everyone loved it. We had three different jam circles going, and a great potluck. Too much FUN.



New Guy Nathan. Powerful Picker and Singer



Kate Rocking the Retro MRBA Fleece



Old-Timers and Newcomers Jamming Together



Dennis Came and Flat-Picked His Old Martin

Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association Bluegrass Festival and Fundraiser Saturday April 15, 2023

Neely Center @ 150 S A Street, Victor, Mt



Star Chilson Group, Stevensville, Mt

The Jolley Family, Corvallis, Mt

Macdonald Pass, Deerlodge, Mt

Bittergrass String Band, Stevensville, Mt

93 North, Salmon, Id

Soggy Bottom Girls, Victor, Mt & Utah

Elk Ridge, Deerlodge, Mt

Montana Standard, Bozeman, Mt

Darby Sirens, Hither and Yon

Kentucky Sky, Idaho Falls, Id

Mike & Tari Conroy, Conner, Mt

Lochwood, Missoula, Mt

Cornbread Honey, Missoula, Mt

Matt Jolly & Mark Vosburgh, Missoula, Mt

The Buckleys, Missoula, Mt

Pinegrass, Missoula, Mt

Salty Dog String Band, Missoula, Mt

Smokestack String Band, Anaconda, Mt

Festival starts at 11:00 a.m. — continuous bands until 7:30

Admission: non members \$5.00 MRBA members: Free – children under 12 - free

More info: 406-821-3777 mtbluegrass.com

Montana Bluegrass Musicians In the News

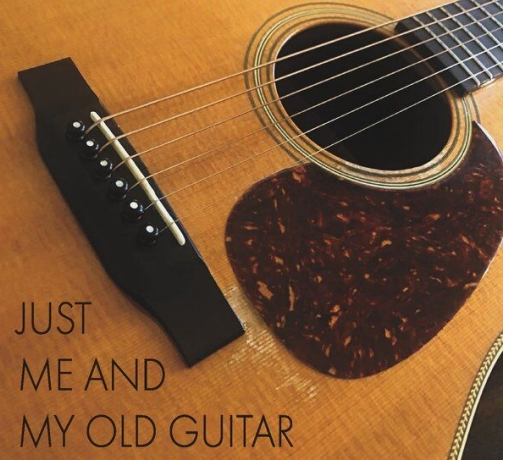
Kentucky Sky Bluegrass CD Release

A Montana favorite, the Kentucky Sky Bluegrass band, has released a new CD titled "Just me and My Old Guitar"

Band Members include: Randy Hackworth, Guitar/vocals;
Emily Frank, bass/vocals;
Fred Frank, banjo; Chad Fadely, mandolin

<https://www.facebook.com/kentuckyskybluegrassband>

KENTUCKY SKY BLUEGRASS



Lil Smokies on PBS Bluegrass Underground

On March 24, 2023, the Missoula based band Lil Smokies will be playing at The Caverns in Tennessee.

The show will be taped for a future airing of the PBS 12th season of the musical series, Bluegrass Underground. Other performances for the weekend taping session include Kitchen Dwellers, Della Mae, and Darin & Brooke Aldridge.

<https://www.thecaverns.com/event/the-lil-smokies-kitchen-dwellers-della-mae-darin-and-brooke-aldrige>

Taped deep within the subterranean amphitheater of The Caverns in Tennessee's Cumberland Mountains, this musical series is entering its 12th season on PBS. It showcases a variety of genres from bluegrass, roots-rock, jam band, R&B, country, soul, folk, and Americana. Bluegrass acts such as Molly Tuttle, Del McCoury, Billy Strings, Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Allison Krauss, and Rick Skaggs have all performed at the venue. To check out past and future shows go to the website:

<https://www.pbs.org/show/bluegrass-underground/>

Britt Arneson CD Release

Britt Arneson is a member of the local bluegrass band Pinegrass, and a regular at Hardtimes and other bluegrass events. Britt also plays with a folk band, the Strummingbird Vegabond. The band just released a new CD last month.

The CD, titled "Summer Triangle," is available on Spotify.

See Facebook Page for more info:

<https://www.facebook.com/strummingbirdvegabond>



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

Lydia Conway Teaches the Art of Jamming

(Interview by Kate McMahon)

If it's up to Lydia Conway, there'll be a whole lot of jamming going on in Ronan, Montana, this summer. One of the first things Lydia did when she, her husband, and two young children moved to Montana was to organize a Bluegrass Jam Camp. As a certified bluegrass jam instructor in the Wernick Method, and with a Master of Music Degree from Colorado State University, Lydia has the chops. She plays fiddle, guitar, and mandolin.

The first jam camp last July was a 3-day affair with both Lydia and a fiddle instructor. It attracted people from Montana, Idaho, Canada, and California. This spring, she is offering a 6-week series of weekly 3-hour classes at the Western Montana Musicians Cooperative in Ronan. Attendees are mostly from the area. "There are a lot of closet pickers out there," says Lydia.

Lydia started her musical career as a classical violinist and previously worked at a music conservatory in Omaha, Nebraska. With a banjo-playing dad, however, bluegrass was in her blood from at a young age. Growing up in Lyons, Colorado (the home of Planet Bluegrass) reinforced her bluegrass roots. In 2013 she started going to jams, and after college she defected to bluegrass. She has played with Jeff Scroggins in California and with the Colorado band "Blue Grama." (*Gramma is a native prairie grass. Learn something new every day!*)

In Colorado she also got to know Pete Wernick and quickly became one of his disciples. Lydia explained, "Jamming is a great way to learn, especially for adults. You only need to know the basic chords, and you can get jammin' in the first session." The class is limited to 8 participants per instructor, and with the Wernick method there is an online article library, access to videos, and a forum. Instructors get one-on-one training to get certified and have a one-year provisional certification. Certified instructors conduct Wernick jam classes worldwide. (*Go to LetsPick.org for a schedule of classes.*)

According to Pete's (aka Dr. Banjo) website, "Pete Wernick is renowned worldwide for his accomplishments and contributions to bluegrass music: the hot-picking force in several trend-setting bands including Hot Rize, innovative teacher and author, songwriter, and long-term President of the International Bluegrass Music Association."

Lydia emphasizes that learners from all levels can take the class. They will learn the basic chords, bluegrass standards, how to fake a solo, jam etiquette, and more. "The encouragement and motivation this class has provided has been nothing short of remarkable," notes one participant. The key to the Wernick camps is encouraging new pickers. So if you see some Wernick camp grads or other new pickers at a MRBA jam, be sure to give them a big welcome, and thanks to Lydia for promoting bluegrass music.



BLUEGRASS JAMMING CLASS

Calling
all closet
pickers!

TAUGHT BY
LYDIA CONWAY

USING THE WERNICK METHOD*

Wernick
Method

TUITION \$225
\$200 THRU MAR 1

Sundays, March 12 - April 23
Ronan, MT Western Montana Musicians Co-Op
\$25 off for WMMC Members • 1-4pm • No class 4/9



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.

LYDIA'S STUDENTS SAY:

"Her sunny disposition makes learning from her a pleasure"

"Lydia's pool of musical knowledge is deep"

"She has been an incredible teacher over the years"

- All bluegrass instruments
- No jamming experience necessary
- You will be jamming the first session!



DO YOU QUALIFY? It's easier than you may think! If you play guitar, mandolin, banjo, fiddle, bass, or dobro... you can be part of a bluegrass jam.

Only requirements: You must be able to tune your instrument (electronic tuning devices welcome) and change smoothly between G, C, D, and A. (Fiddles and basses need to know which notes work with which chords) Fast playing is not expected, nor is the ability to solo required.

* Wernick Method Classes teach real bluegrass jamming!

• in your area • with other pickers like you •

- * Hands-on learning in large and small groups
- * Learn many bluegrass standards
- * Gentle tempos! Mistakes expected
- * Full ground rules and etiquette of typical jams
- * How to lead songs and how to follow new songs
- * How to find melodies, fake solos, sing harmony
- * Ear skills taught and emphasized as in real bluegrass
- * Tab/note reading skills not needed or used
- * Group and individualized instruction on backup skills
- * Intermediates welcome, and given added challenges
- * Understanding, low-pressure, time-tested teaching!

Pete Wernick ("Dr. Banjo", originator of Banjo Camps and Bluegrass Jam Camps)

has created a method that has taught thousands nationwide how to enjoy bluegrass jams at their own level.

Wernick Method teachers are certified by Pete based on knowledge of bluegrass, teaching ability, and proper use of the Wernick Method.



**REGISTER
NOW!**

+ lots of free help
for jammers at ...

LETPICK.ORG

Wernick
Method



*Valley
Bluegrass
Festival*



CLEARWATER COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

OROFINO, IDAHO

June 1st-4th, 2023

Band Performances, Open mic,
Workshops & Jam Sessions
BRING LAWN CHAIRS

*Headlining Band:
The Moscow Mules*

LewisClarkBluegrass.com  Lewis Clark Bluegrass Organization
LCBO PO Box 566 Clarkston WA 99403

Grammy Awards—Best Bluegrass Album



WINNER

Crooked Tree

Molly Tuttle & Golden Highway



Other Nominees:

Toward The Fray, The Infamous Stringdusters

Almost Proud, The Del McCoury Band

Calling You From My Mountain, Peter Rowan

Get Yourself Outside, Yonder Mountain String Band

Ashokan Farewell

(Compiled by Kate McMahon from various Internet Sources)

Although the tune is associated with the Ken Burns documentary on the Civil War, it was composed in 1982 by Jay Ungar. It is named after the Ashokan Reservoir in New York's Catskill Mountain and is also the name of Jay Ungar's nearby music camp. As reported in the Banjo Newsletter, he picked up his fiddle at the end of camp and played a sad lament as a way of saying goodbye to that summer.

Ashokan Farewell

The sun is sinking low in the sky above Ashokan
The pines and the willows know soon we will part
There's a whisper in the wind of promises unspoken
And a love that will always remain in my heart

My thoughts will return to the sound of your laughter
The magic of moving as one
And a time we'll remember long ever after
The moonlight and music and dancing are done

Will we climb the hills once more?
Will we walk the woods together?
Will I feel you holding me close once again?
Will every song we've sung stay with us forever?
Will you dance in my dreams or my arms until then?

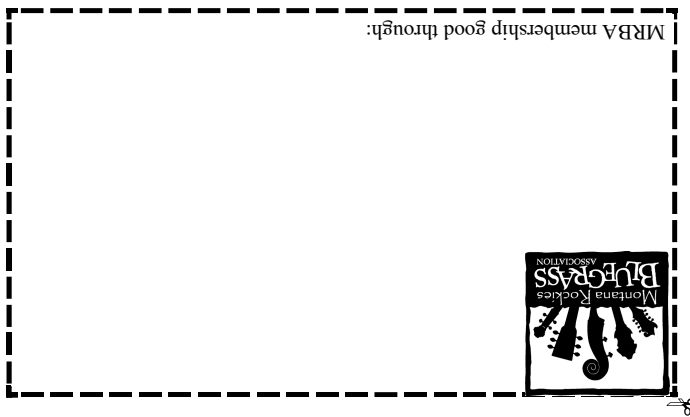
Under the moon the mountains lie sleeping
Over the lake the stars shine
They wonder if you and I will be keeping
The magic and music, or leave them behind



Cool cover art from an old edition of the Bluegrass Newsletter (1994)

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

