



# Bluegrassin'

Volume 25 Issue 3

Ma7—June 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
Presidents Message	2
Spring Festival Report	4- 5
Rhonda Vincent	6
Tips for Playing with Others	9
Bluegrass A-Z	11

## Notes:

1) For ticket info & to confirm times, see venue web-sites

2) Send information about upcoming jams & band dates to newsletter editor

## Upcoming Bluegrass

**May 5**— Lochwood, Celtic Cowboy in Great Falls 6-9,

**May 6**— Timber Rattlers Band, Free Cycles, Missoula, 7:00 pm

**May 7**— Jam & Potluck, 1st Presbyterian Church, Kalispell (540 S. Main) Starts at 4pm. Potluck at 6pm & Jam to about 8 pm.

**May 18**—Strange Times String Band, Bitterroot Brewing, Hamilton 6pm

**May 19**—Ronan Jam, 1 Eisenhower St SW, Ronan (at the Western Montana Musicians Co-Op inside the Red Poppy) 7-9pm

**May 20**— Eliza Mary Doyle's concert (Singer/songwriter/banjo player) \$10 cover. It's also at the WMMC in the Red Poppy in Ronana. 7PM

**May 26**— Lochwood, Highlander Brewery in Missoula 6-9

**May 26—29**, Conroy Memorial Day Campout (See pg. 8)

**June 1—4**, Valley Bluegrass Festival, Orofino, ID (See pg. 8 for ad)

**June 4-9 & 11-16**, Montana Fiddle Camp, Monarch, MT  
<https://www.facebook.com/montanafiddlecamp/>

**June 10**— Greg Blake, Longstaff House, Missoula 7 pm  
<https://www.longstaffhouse.com/>

**June 16**—Joe Newberry and Mike Compton, Longstaff House, Missoula, 7pm

**June 28—July 2**, Twin Bridges Festival, Twin Bridges, MT (See pg. 7)

**July 7**— Steep Canyon Rangers, Wachholz College Center, Kalispell  
[www.wachholzcollegecenter.org/](http://www.wachholzcollegecenter.org/)

## Regular Jams:

**Whitefish—Tuesday Jams**, North Valley Music School (432 Spokane Ave.) 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm (Call to RSVP—[\(406\) 862-8074](tel:4068628074))

**Billings—Weekly jams on Friday nights**, 7-9 pm? Yellowstone Bluegrass Association. Blue Creek Baptist Church in Billings.

1) **SAVE THE DATE:** July 21—23, HardTimes Festival, Darby, MT <http://hardtimesbluegrass.com/>

## President's Message

The April MRBA Festival was a HOOT. Lots of bands, lots of folks, and lots of help. It was great to see everyone and kick off the summer season of bluegrass music and fun get-togethers.

Next on the schedule is Conroy's 27th Memorial Weekend Bluegrass Campout. Many folks say this is their favorite camp-out for the whole year.. Campfires, jamming, lots of friendly folks, heated wall tents, incredible pot-lucks each night at 6pm, and free camping in a beautiful location. (what's not to like?) Sunday morning at 10 am we also have a breakfast pot-luck and Tari makes her world famous (ok- now I'm just bragging) biscuits and gravy. See separate write-up for directions. ALL BLUEGRASS LOVERS WELCOME..

The brand new Twin Bridges Bluegrass Festival will be June 28th- July 2nd at Twin Bridges Montana.. Gene and Cynthia Bach are working hard to make this a great new festival for everyone to enjoy. The band line-up features many great bands. (see write-up in this newsletter)

The Hardtimes Bluegrass Festival will be July 21, 22, 23. It promises to be another great year with lots of great bands, friendly folks, in a great location (see ad in newsletter).

The annual MRBA Campout will be August 18th, 19th, and 20th. Up the West Fork of the Bitterroot River.

Lots of pickin' and grinnin' coming up. Better get that camper loaded up and ready for action..

Mike (head pot-luck sampler guy.)

## Mother's Day Ideas

***HAPPY  
MOTHER'S DAY!***

- Put on a Mother's Day talent show. Play bluegrass songs, tell banjo jokes, air guitar contest ....
- Clean out the RV/Camper so Mom is ready for bluegrass festival season.
- Song of the Month—"Mama Don't Allow"

## 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.

**Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association**

**Got Something to sell?  
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**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

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

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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  
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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 Report

THE RESULTS ARE IN... MRBA secretary Anne Merrifield did her totaling and we grossed \$2287. We had a member donate \$1000 to the MRBA last winter, so we decided to have free admission for all MRBA members and half price --\$5, for non-members.. The front gate folks thought that overall---we had about the same number of folks as last year. We would like to issue a great big THANK-YOU to all the great musicians that donated their time and talents to this event.. Without you, it couldn't happen.

Special thanks to Anne Merrifield, Ron and Bobbi Meadeville, and Barry and Kris Prime for taking tickets and signing memberships. Scott Moore, Petesi Akkerman, and Mark Vosburgh for helping with the sound system and Roger Bartels for garbage removal.

For the MRBA kitchen we want to thank Susan McCauley for the endless work ( literally days worth) that she did on the food. Also, a thank you to Jim McCauley for helping Susan. Special thanks to Tari Conroy and Anne Merrifield for the cornbread, and helping Susan prepare the chili. Kitchen helpers were Paddy Moore, Melora Neaves, Bobbi Meadeville, Kate McMahon, Tari Conroy and Anne Merrifield. and Kathy Lowe. You guys rock.

Many folks brought wonderful desserts for resale,, thanks to all of you. Last but not least- thanks to Raynae Redman and Cliff Simpson for doing the announcing, and thanks to all the folks I forgot to mention. Like the old saying--- "It takes a village, We appreciate everyone ----Mike and Tari Conroy...



Three months old and already been to four bluegrass festivals!



Ninety-three years old and still fiddling around at bluegrass festivals!



Crowd favorites—Abbie and Maggie Buckley,



## Spring Festival Photos



Love the matching hats! Love the music!



Bluegrass Fashion Show



Thanks to the kitchen crew for good eats!  
*(The apple pie was to die for.)*



The Jolley Family delights the crowd.



Festival regulars—The Darby Sireens  
*(That's another one for the books.)*

# Rhonda Vincent In Montana

(By Kate McMahon)

With almost 100 tour dates this year, from Grass Valley, CA to Yeehaw Junction in Florida, Rhonda Vincent & the Rage has to be one of the busiest bands in the business. The crowd in Kalispell, MT was sure glad she had time to add Montana to her travels.

Ms. Vincent, is a multi-award winner including a Grammy for “Best Bluegrass Album” (2017) and the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) Entertainer of the Year (2001), Song of the Year (2004) and Female Vocalist of the year (2000—2006 & 2015). In 2021 she officially became a member of the Grand Ole Opry. Rhonda described the thrill of following in the footsteps of the “Father of Bluegrass”, Bill Monroe by performing at the Grand Ole Opry stage at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, TN.

She kicked-off the performance in Kalispell with a cover of the Dolly Parton hit, “Jolene” followed by an Emmy Lou Harris standard, “Beneath Still Waters”. The band then kicked into high gear with a Celtic medley of “Saint Anne’s Reel” and “Whiskey Before Breakfast”. Band members awed the crowd with hot-licks from the fiddle, guitar, dobro and banjo.

Mickey Harris, the bass player, has been with The Rage for 20-years. He sang an original number, “Tractor for Sale”. Another original number from the set was, “Music is What I See”, the song that Vincent performed the night she was inducted into the Opry. Rhonda also wrote a parody of the Hank Snow/Johnny Cash classic “I’ve Been Everywhere”, titled “I Ain’t Been Nowhere”. This amusing, Covid inspired tune, had 329 different tongue-twisting words that not many singers could pull-off.

Rhonda Vincent has the vocal talent to cover multiple musical genres. In addition to bluegrass standards, she also performed bluegrass takes on hits such as “Unchained Melody”, Merle Haggard’s “Mama Tried” and the 1970’s pop classic, “Just When I Needed You Most”. For good measure, the fiddle player, Adam Hayes, threw in a Cajun number, “What’s a Guy Got to Do to Get a Girl In this Town.”

In addition to the music, she entertained the crowd with stories from a career that spans over 50-years when she began singing with her family’s band on TV and radio shows. They made their first recording when Rhonda was just five-years old. In 2000, the Wall Street Journal crowned her “The Queen of Bluegrass”. Working with up and coming musical talent is clearly one of her joys. The young banjo phenom just joined the band 3-days ago to fill in for the regular banjo player. Guitar player, Zack Arnold, first met Rhonda when he was four-months old and his Mom took him to a concert. He had his photo snapped with Vincent holding him and volunteered to recreate the photo.

Having traveled the world, she still holds on to her heartland roots from small-town Missouri. She stayed after the show for pictures and autographs and had a smile for everyone. Fans could buy CD’s or a USB drive in the shape of a Ms. Vincent’s mandolin.

If you are traveling around this year, check out the Rhonda Vincent website. With 100 shows from coast-to-coast, chances are you will be able to catch her act somewhere. And stay around the for the end. Her rendition of “Muleskinner Blues” is bluegrass at its best.





# 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](http://twinbridgesbluegrass.com)**



CLEARWATER COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

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*June 1st-4th, 2023*

Band Performances, Open mic,  
Workshops & Jam Sessions  
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*Headlining Band:*  
*The Moscow Mules*

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

## **Conroy's Memorial Weekend— Bluegrass Campout**

May 26—27—28—29

Conroy's Memorial Weekend Bluegrass Campout will be May 26-27-28-29, and will be held at the Little West Fork Campground south of Darby MT. It'll be just like past years, three or four heated wall tents for jammin, pot luck suppers at 6 pm in the evenings, 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 MT. 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.



## *Tips for Playing with Others*

(Compiled from Banjo Newsletter, Jack Hatfield, October 1992)

### **Overcoming Nerves**

"You may play great at home in your living room for your cat, but totally fall apart when you have to "perform" for a stranger". Just remember you are doing this for fun and you are going to make mistakes. Laugh them off instead of getting mad or upset with yourself."

### **Choosing Songs for a Jam**

"Be sure to choose easy songs that everybody knows and play slowly at first. Ease into it"

"If you are going to play with others who are also inexperienced at jamming, it would be a good idea to name four or five songs and everybody practice them for a while before getting together."

"If you are going to join a jam group that is already established, ask for a song list and go through the list picking out songs you can practice and then request them during the jam."

### **Timing**

"Many pickers that have never played with others have poor timing or play with fluctuations in tempo. These kinds of problems are frustrating for everybody involved, and should be corrected before you enter into a jam session. The best remedy for timing problems is to practice with a metronome, a recorded rhythm track or recordings."

### **Playing Through Mistakes**

"Remember when you are practicing with a timekeeping aide that you are not only working on keeping a consistent tempo. You are also practicing the ability to keep going after a mistake. If you miss a note or a lick, concentrate on going on to the next note or lick without pausing."

"Do not end every song with an apology—it makes everybody uncomfortable. There are some things that only improve with experience, and being relaxed when jamming is one of them. Like the Nike company says—just do it."

### **Back-up**

"Learning to play back-up is essential when playing with others. If you are playing an instrumental with three or four other players who all play solos, you should be playing backup seventy to eighty percent of the time. You have to have viable techniques to use during the parts of the song when you are not the lead."

"Select your repertoire and familiarize yourself with the chord progressions. If you do not know the F formation chord form, work on it until your left hand can form it quickly and move from the G position, to the C position, to the D position - quickly. Once you can do this efficiently, you will be ready to play a simple vamping backup."

**SAVE THE DATE**

**HARDTIMES**  
**BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL**  
July 21-22-23, 2023

**Location:** 10 miles south of Hamilton, mile marker 37, 424 Forest Hill Road

**Admission:** Adult Weekend \$40 Children weekend: \$20  
Day pass Friday or Sunday \$25 (\$12 Children)  
Sunday only: \$15 (\$7 children)

**Dry Camping:** Arrive Thursday \$45.00 Arrive Friday: 30.00  
Arrive Saturday: \$15

For more information: [www.hardtimesbluegrass.com](http://www.hardtimesbluegrass.com)  
406-421-3777

- All dogs on leash
- Bluegrass Gospel on Sunday Morning
- Food Vendors on Site
- Bring your Lawn Chair

# Bluegrass A-Z

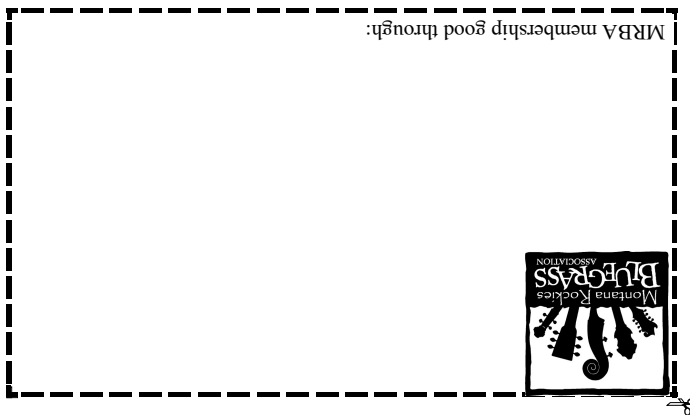
*By Kate McMahon*

- A** Acoustic (Because it really is the best.)
- B** Banjo (Five String and play it like Earl.)
- C** Chord (As in “Three chords and the truth.”)
- D** Dobro (Guitar + Resonator = Dobro)
- E** Ending (As in “Shave and a Haircut....”)
- F** Fiddle (“The older the fiddle, the sweeter the tune.” - Irish proverb)
- G** Guitar (Not electric—please!)
- H** Harmonies (Unlike your pants, you want your harmonies tight.)
- I** Instrumental (As opposed to singing a song)
- J** Jam (I jam therefore I pick.)
- K** Key (Nice to know before you kick-off a song in a jam.)
- L** Lick (As in “hot”, “fill-in” “intro” or “ending”.)
- M** Mandolin (Essential bluegrass instrument.)
- N** Notes (The ones that make that high-lonesome sound.)
- O** Owsboro, KY (Home of the International Bluegrass Museum)
- P** Pickin n Grinnin (Teeth optional)
- Q** Quarter Note (One two three four; one two three four; one two three four...)
- R** Riff (A solo with a bunch of hot licks strung together.)
- S** Song (Vocals or instrumental—it’s all good.)
- T** Tempo (Slow, moderate, fast, very fast, warp speed.)
- U** Up the Neck (Go up to take your playing to another level.)
- V** Virtuoso (What the best bluegrass musicians strive for.)
- W** Waltz (That 3/4 timing is a sure bet to get some dancers.)
- X** X-tra practice (What you need if you are going to be a Virtuoso.)
- Y** Yee-haw (An expression for foot-stomping fun bluegrass music!)
- Z** Zero (The number of times you will go to a festival and NOT hear a banjo joke.)



***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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