



# Bluegrassin'

Volume 26 Issue 3

May—June, 2024

*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 18:** Release the Squirrels, Draught Works Brewery, Missoula, 7:00 pm

**May 22:** The Wildwoods, Longstaff House, Missoula, 7:00 pm

**May 24-27:** Conroy Memorial Weekend Campout (see pg. 6)

**May 30 –June 2:** Valley Bluegrass Festival, Idaho (see pg. 7)

**May 30:** Nick Damas, Chris Luquette & Andrew Knapp, Longstaff House, Missoula, 7:00 pm

**June 2-7 & 9-14:** Montana Fiddle Camp  
<https://www.montanafiddlecamp.org/>

**June 8:** Bruce Molsky Fiddle Camp & Show, Longstaff House, Missoula, 7:00 pm

**June 27-30:** Deer Lodge Campout & Jam (see pg. 6)

**Save the Date:** MRBA Campout will be August 16,17,18

### Regular Jams & Events :

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

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

**Montana Oldtime Fiddlers:** Third Sunday of the month at the Buffalo Hill Terrace, Kalispell, 2:30-4:30 pm

**Missoula:** Bluegrass Night at the Old Post Pub, Mondays, 6-8:30 pm

### Notes:

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

## President's Message

The MRBA Spring festival was a big success. Lots of folks came to listen to the 17 great bands. Many folks jumped in to help Anne with the ticket taking, to help Susan in the kitchen, and to help me with the sound system. We raised just over \$2,000, which was about \$500 more than last year.

Tari and I will again host our Memorial Weekend Bluegrass Campout. This will be our 28th year -- wow! As always, it will be up the West Fork of the Bitterroot, and 4 miles up Nez Perce Road (where the pavement ends). Free camping, heated wall tents, campfires, Forest Service outhouse, potlucks at 6 pm, and lots of friendly folks. ALL BLUEGRASS LOVERS WELCOME. Come join in the FUN.

We have kicked around the idea of having a steak dinner at our MRBA Campout on August 16,17,18. We would need someone to pick up the rented grill in Missoula and return it after the campout, plus a volunteer to help with cooking the steaks. Let me know if you can help.

Mike

## Wheel of Bluegrass

*(Name that band that played in this year's MRBA Spring Festival)*

\_\_ A R \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ R \_\_ \_\_ N \_\_

## Bluegrass Question of the Month

If you could jam with any four bluegrass musicians from bygone days,  
who would they be?

## Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association

PO Box 1306, Missoula, MT 59806

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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**

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 hyperlinks to websites.

*(P.S.—It will help keep down printing  
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 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



## Spring Festival Photos







## Conroy's Memorial Weekend Bluegrass Campout

May 24—25—26—27

Conroy's Memorial Weekend Bluegrass Campout will be May 24-25-26-27 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. 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, then turn right onto 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'.



## Deer Lodge Bluegrass Campout

June 27,28,29,30

1975 Dempsey Lake Road, Deer Lodge, MT 59722

Dry camping and portable toilets

Pot lucks on Friday and Saturday evening and Sunday morning

Big fire pit and an easy set-up for jamming

**Saturday Band Performance:** Well Beaten Path

For information:

Bill Anderson: 406-498-6621 or Charlene Anderson: 406-491-1843.





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### **Name that Lyric**

*(Name the bluegrass song that has this lyric.)*

They've all moved away, said the voice of a stranger  
To a beautiful home by the bight crystal sea  
Some beautiful day, I'll meet them in heaven  
Where no one will be a stranger to me

### **Bluegrass Trivia**

**True or False?**

*Bill Monroe did not play on the first Nitty Gritty Dirt Band "Will The Circle be Unbroken" Album.*

## The Unbroken Circle of a Favorite Gospel Song

By Rebecca Day

Reprinted with Permission from "The Epoch Times"  
(Thanks to Dallas Olson for Sending me the article)

In 1972, the country group Nitty Gritty Dirt Band released their historic album, "Will the Circle be Unbroken". The band's sound exuded plenty of traditional style, from bluegrass rhythms to their use of homemade instruments such as the jug, which acted as a makeshift horn section. These creative, roots-style elements were the core of their sound.

Throughout the '60s, they were appropriately referred to as a "jug band". But in the following decade, they went electric with some of their instruments. Those who had been key figures in the early days of the country genre wondered, how do we keep the roots of country music alive?

A momentous collaboration between country music's inaugural figures and the modern country group helped accomplish this important ambition.

### **An Uplifting Christian Hymn**

One of the United States' beloved Christian hymns dates back to 1907, when gospel writer Ada Habershon wrote lyrics to her song "Will the Circle Be Unbroken?" Her words focused on mortality and pondered a "better home awaiting in the sky." The reflective hymn was intended to act as a message of comfort for those who had lost loved ones.

Some of Habershon's lyrics are posed as questions, inviting listeners into the song and gently nudging them to contemplate the strength of their faith by asking, "When you close your earthly story, will you join them in their bliss?" Her moving words were put to melody by critically acclaimed composer Charles H. Gabriel.

Born in 1856, Gabriel began working tirelessly composing thousands of the Christian faith's most popular gospel songs and hymns from the time he turned 18 to his death in 1932. His work with Habershon for "Will the Circle be Unbroken?" is one of his many accomplishments that led to his induction in the Gospel Hall of Fame in 1982.

After the hymn was published in 1907, the song was incorporated into many church services and songbooks during the early 1900's. By the late 1930's, the ballad could be found in 20 percent of the United States' distributed hymnals.

### **From Gospel Song to Country Classic**

Gospel standards were a huge influence on country music. Perhaps no other standard has been as influential on the country genre as Habershon and Gabriel's composition.

This lasting influence began in 1935 with the hard-working family band the Carter Family and their songwriting patriarch, A.P. Carter. Carter loved gospel music. In the 1930's, he sought to incorporate the sound into his family's country music recordings. One of his favorite gospel song was Habershon and Gabriel's stirring hymn.



While songwriting one day, he reworked “Will the Circle be Unbroken?” Though he kept much of the original chorus, he changed the lyrics of the verses and told the story of a narrator reflecting on his mother’s passing away.

Renamed “Can the Circle be Unbroken (By and By), the original gospel-tinged hymn transformed into a country-gospel composition that would go on to become one of the genre’s most popular songs of all time.

### **A Bridge for Generations**

After the Carter Family’s single release, the song became more than a hit. It also became a symbol. Though the country genre would change over generations, newcomers and veterans alike would continue to honor tradition by releasing their own rendition of the classic song.

Perhaps no other rendition represents symbolic message more than the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band’s spirited recording. The title track to the ‘72 album, the song became a historic collaboration among country music’s finest.

It all started with the legendary bluegrass players Earl Scruggs and Doc Watson, who were persuaded by the band to sit in while they were recording in the studio. Soon, the song’s recording credits read like a who’s who of country music. Celebrated fiddler and singer Roy Acuff offered his skills to the project. Other traditional country music stars followed suit. Even the Carter Family matriarch herself who helped start it all, Maybelle Carter, made an appearance.

The monumental collaborative effort proved to be a stable, connecting bridge between those pioneering musicians known as the “Grand Ole Opry stars” and a new generation who loved reimagining traditional works just as A.P. Carter had done all those years ago with Habershon and Gabriel’s hymn.

### **A Symbolic Family Heirloom**

John Carter Cash, the son of country music icon Johnny Cash and a singer songwriter himself, once told audiences that the “circle” in the mighty song now considered to be country standard is more symbolic than literal. To him, it represents the unbreakable bond between contemporary artists and those who made the country genre possible. The song acts as a family heirloom of sorts among country artists who continue to honor the genre’s roots and reimagine traditional works.

One of the song’s inspirational contemporary performances comes from the Wisconsin State Honors Treble Choir. Presented in 2012 by the Wisconsin School Music Association, the women’s choir performed a heartwarming rendition of “Will the Circle be Unbroken.” This time, an elegant Appalachian styling was applied to the harmonies. The beautiful interpretation was arranged by composer and conductor J. David Moore.

Generation after generation, this familial heirloom of country music endures and expands its reach.

*Rebecca Day is an independent musician, freelance writer, and frontwoman of country group, The Crazy Daysies.*

# HARDTIMES BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

July 26, 27 & 28, 2024



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This six week summer camp is an introduction to the bluegrass pickin' party. Learn the history of bluegrass music, jam etiquette, some traditional jam songs, and experience a beginner pickin' circle. This camp will prepare you for the typical bluegrass jam from backyard pickin' parties to late night festival jams.

**Dates/Time:** Mondays 6/10 -7/15 from 6:00pm – 7:30pm

**Jam Host:** Kate McMahon

**Register on-line:** <https://northvalleymusicschool.org/camps/>

or

**Phone:** 406-862-8074



### Answers:

**Wheel of Bluegrass**  
*Darby Sireens*

**Name that Lyric**  
*Rank Stranger to Me*

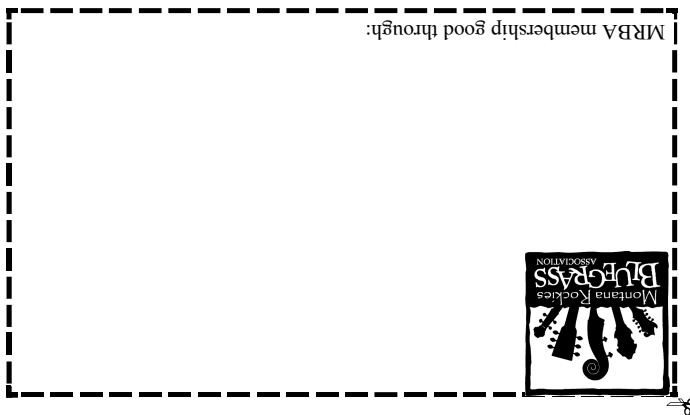
### Trivia

*True: It was reported that Monroe did not want to play with a bunch of long-hairs in the band.*



***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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