



Bluegrassin'

Volume 26 Issue 4

July-August, 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

July 6: Travelin' McCourys, Abeyance Bay, Rexford/Eureka, 6:00 pm

July 8: Nickle Creek, Big Sky Brewing Amphitheater, Missoula

July 11: Hogslop String Band, Remington Bar, Whitefish, 9:00 pm

July 12-13-14: Under the Big Sky Festival, Whitefish—Country & Bluegrass (Lil Smokies, Billy Strings, Hogslop String Band—see website for lineup)

July 12-13-14: Montana Folk Festival, Butte
<https://montanafolkfestival.com/>

July 14: Lil Smokies, Great Northern Bar, Whitefish, 9:00 pm

July 17: Timber Rattlers, Longstaff House, Missoula, 7:00 pm

July 20: Slim String Band, Kelly's Casino, Bigfork

July 20-28: Johnny Campbell Band Tour, various Montana locations (see Page 7 for details)

July 26-28: Hardtimes Festival, Darby (see Page 5 for details)

August 2: Timber Rattlers, The Old Post, Missoula, 8:00 pm

August 3: Infamous Stringdusters & Molly Tuttle, Abeyance Bay, Eureka/Rexford, 5:00 pm

August 7-9: Timber Rattlers, Missoula County Fair.

August 8: Release the Squirrels, Follow Yer Nose BBQ, Emigrant, MT, 6:00 pm

August 16-18: MRBA Campout, Hughes Creek (see Page 6 for details)

(Upcoming Bluegrass continued on Page 6)

Notes:

- 1) For ticket info & to confirm times, see venue websites
- 2) Send information about upcoming jams & band dates to newsletter editor
- 3) See Page 6 for info on regular jams and other festivals

President's Message

Here it is July already. It seems like the summer is flying by. Tari and I are getting geared up for the Hardtimes Bluegrass Festival on July 26,27,28. This will be our 15th year, and it will be a fun time with 13 bands performing. Hope you all can make it.



We have scheduled a cleanup day at the Hardtimes Festival site on Saturday, July 13th, at 10 am. We will be picking up pinecones and cow pies and mowing the site to get it ready for the festival. If you would like to give us a hand, we will furnish lunch and some dazzling conversation.

The MRBA campout is scheduled for August 16,17,18. As in years past, it will be up Hughes Creek, and the Association will furnish lots of hot dogs and desserts. Well, that's about all I know for now, and hopefully we'll see you at Hardtimes.

Mike

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

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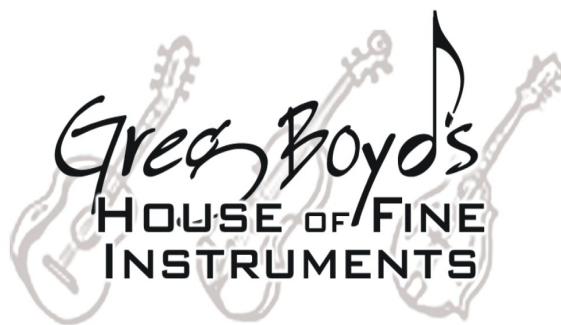
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If you would like to get your newsletter delivered electronically via e-mail send a message to:

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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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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

Conroy Campout Photos



Puppies and Children Enjoying the Campout



Time for Campfire Tales



Oh no! A Guitar-Playing Bear Invaded the Jam!



Bluegrass Philosophy Club



Cool Shades!



On the Outside Looking In

HARDTIMES BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

July 26-27-28, 2024



Featuring:

Johnny Campbell Band-TN Ladd Canyon Ramblers-OR
Kentucky Sky-ID Montana Standard-MT Dry Buck-ID
Lochwood-MT Song Dog Serenade-MT Pinegrass-MT
Darby Sireens-MT & ID Matt & Mark- MT 93 North - ID
Mike & Tari Conroy-MT The Jolley Family- MT

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

Admission: Adult weekend: \$40.00 Children weekend: \$20.00

Day passes: Friday or Saturday \$25.00 adults \$12.00 children

Sunday: \$15.00 adults \$7.00 children

Dry Camping: Arrive Thursday \$45.00 Arrive Friday \$30.00 Arrive Saturday \$15.00

For more information: www.hardtimesbluegrass.com or call 406-821-3777

ALL
DOGS
ON
LEASH

BLUEGRASS
GOSPEL
SUNDAY
MORNING

FOOD
VENDORS
ON
SITE

BRING
YOUR
LAWN
CHAIRS

Upcoming Bluegrass (Cont.)

Regular Jams & Events :

Tuesday Jams in Whitefish: North Valley Music School (432 Spokane Ave.), 6:00 to 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, Buffalo Hill Terrace, Kalispell, 2:30-4:30 pm

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

In addition to the MRBA Jams and Festivals, check out these websites for other regional bluegrass events:

Idaho:

<http://www.idahosawtoothbluegrass.org/>

<http://www.idahobluegrassassociation.org/>

Washington

<http://www.spokanebluegrass.org/festivals.html>

<http://washingtonbluegrassassociation.org/>

Wyoming:

<https://www.grandtarghee.com/bluegrass>

MRBA ANNUAL CAMPOUT

Hughes Creek

(Friday, Saturday, and Sunday)

AUGUST 16, 17, and 18

Directions to the MRBA campout:

Drive 4 miles south of Darby and turn right on the West Fork Highway. Continue up the highway for 29 miles. Hughes Creek is on the left after you go around Painted Rocks Lake. Turn up Hughes Creek and go 1 mile, then turn right at the fork (Thunder Mountain). We are on the left. Watch for signs.

Other Info: As always, plan on pot lucks.

MRBA will furnish a bunch of hot dogs and desserts (yum) ...

A promotional poster for the Johnny Campbell Band's Montana Tour in 2024. The background is a scenic photograph of a grassy field with mountains in the distance. In the foreground, the five band members are shown playing their instruments: a double bass, mandolin, fiddle, banjo, and guitar. The text is overlaid on the image. On the left, 'JULY 2024' is written vertically in large white letters with a red outline, and 'Montana Tour' is written vertically in red letters. On the right, 'Johnny Campbell Band' is written in large red letters. In the center, the tour dates and locations are listed in white text.

JULY 2024 **Montana Tour**

Johnny Campbell Band

18 Wise River Club
Wise River

19 Covellite Theater
Butte, Montana

20 Railroad Days Festival
Alberton, Montana

20 Fillin' Station
Seeley Lake, Montana

24 Yellowstone Boys & Girls Ranch
Billings, Montana

26 Potomac Bar & Grill
Potomac, Montana

27-28 Hard Times Bluegrass Festival
Darby, Montana

28 Years of Montana Fiddle Camp

By Kate McMahon

Every June, since the year 2000, the town of Monarch, MT (population 38) quadruples in size to welcome over 120 old-time fiddlers and pickers, plus instructors and staff from all over the country. Monarch is located in central Montana along the Scenic Byway of Highway 89 in the Little Belt Mountains. The camp is sponsored by the Montana State Old-Time Fiddlers' Association and is run by camp director Fred Buckley.



The idea for a fiddle camp in Montana sprouted about 30 years ago when Fred and his wife Jeannie Buckley went to a fiddle camp in Canada. They thought that it would be great to have a similar camp in Montana, and when the Old-Time Fiddlers' Association agreed to sponsor the event, they decided to do it. In 1996, the inaugural camp was a one-week affair in Ellison, MT. After 4 years, the camp outgrew the space and moved to the Saint Thomas Church Camp in Monarch.

To accommodate all the campers, the event expanded from a one-week affair to two separate weeks. In 2023, a third week was added in May to focus on "Western Swing." Registration for the camp opens in January. This past year, the first week of fiddle camp was sold out in a record 24 minutes. That may be faster than selling tickets for a Taylor Swift concert!

The camp not only has instructors and workshops for fiddlers, but also includes other bluegrass instruments—guitar, mandolin and banjo. For banjo players, Week 1 is bluegrass-oriented, while Week 2 is clawhammer style. The camp starts on Sunday with a final student concert on Thursday night.



Fred Buckley is the "Camp Director," but running the camp is a family affair. Fred and Jeannie's son, Reid Buckley, is the webmaster. Jeannie was the head cook for many years but recently handed off that title to her daughter. The camp cooks provide 3 meals a day for around 130 people. They must be good food planners because the nearest supermarket is 50 miles away in Great Falls. That would make a long drive if you run out of coffee.



28 Years of Montana Fiddle Camp (continued)

People come from all over the United States to attend. The camp has even attracted international guests from Canada and Scotland, as well as Swedish missionaries who were living in China. Planning for the next year's camp starts almost as soon as the most recent camp ends. Instructors are usually confirmed by December and also come from all around the country. The camp includes workshops, concerts, jams, and dances. It is a full week of music and friends that attracts people year after year. People who attended the fiddle camp 28 years ago as children are now instructors. The Buckley's granddaughters are now third generation campers!



As everyone knows, June in Montana brings all kinds of weather, from sun to rain to wind and snow. One year there were 12 inches of snow during camp. In 2011, Belt Creek flooded, and most of the camp, except for the lodge, was underwater. Some campers were able to relocate to Bob's Motel in nearby Neihart, while Fred shuttled other campers back and forth through flood waters. When you come to the Montana Fiddle Camp, be prepared for anything.

As the Facebook page states, the camp motto is "Keeping the Fiddle Spirit Alive - Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow." Looking at all the happy campers in the group photo, the fiddle spirit seems alive and well.



What Flavor is Your Jam?

(Kate McMahon)

One rule of jam etiquette is to get a feel for the type of jam you are joining so you can select appropriate songs and determine if the jam is a good fit for your playing style. While jams generally follow the same rules, they will each have their own “flavor” based on song selection, playing experience, and who is hosting the jam. Below is a guide to jams styles.

Slow Jam – Songs are played at a slow tempo with most tunes being basic three-chord songs. These are great jams for novices to get the hang of bluegrass jam circles. It is not uncommon for players to have song books or music sheets. Feel free to ask questions.

Fast Jam – Wider song selection and songs played at faster tempos. Pickers in these jams generally know most of the bluegrass standards and can improvise and play by ear the songs that are unfamiliar to them.

Sing-Along Jams – Most of the song selection have vocal parts and often others join in on the chorus or harmonies.

Traditional Bluegrass Jam – Song selection is primarily traditional bluegrass songs. Selection of songs from other musical genres may not be welcomed.

Old-Time Fiddle Jams - Fiddlers take the lead and other instruments generally play backup. Song selection is mostly traditional fiddle tunes.

Bluegrass-Americana Mix – Mostly bluegrass song selections but it is acceptable to select songs from the Americana or root music genre (country, western, folk, newgrass ...)

Gospel Jams – At some festivals, Sunday mornings are reserved for bluegrass gospel songs. It is a good idea to have a few gospel tunes to call out. Be prepared to sing.

Open Jam - All levels are welcome to drop in or out of the jam at anytime. Often these jams are posted in newsletters or websites as open jams that encourage newcomers to attend.

Parking Lot Jams – Walk around a bluegrass festival, and you will notice what appear to be impromptu groups of pickers jamming together. Some of these jams are open jams, while some may be more for a select group of friends who like to play together. Some gatherings of pickers may actually be a band practicing before they get on stage. Observe the jam for awhile to determine if it ok to just jump in.

Bar Jams - Pickers meet up to jam a bar or restaurant. The jam is mostly attended by regulars who drop in and know each other and are used to playing with each other. Other pickers might sit in if invited. There is no set song list, but since customers come to listen, the level of playing is usually tighter than an open jam. Sometimes there is a microphone to amplify the sound.



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Memory Lane

By Kate McMahon

After perusing old MRBA newsletters, I thought it would be fun to reminisce about some of the jams, shows, and places from times past. Below is just a random list of events from newsletters through the years. How many of these places and events do you remember?

June 23-24, 2000: Breakout Bluegrass Campout and Pick, Riverfront Park, Garrison, MT

2001: Every Thursday evening, live bluegrass with Mountain Groan at the Golden Corral, Missoula

October 4-6, 2002: Trumble Creek Bluegrass Campout, Columbia Falls

July 17, 2004; Ralph Stanley Concert, Big Sky, MT

July 5, 2005: Whiskeypuppy, Paddle & Ax, Whitefish, MT

July 8-10, 2005: Bitterroot Valley Bluegrass Festival, Ravalli County Fairgrounds, Hamilton

Oct. 13, 2006: Broken Valley Roadshow, Union Club, Missoula

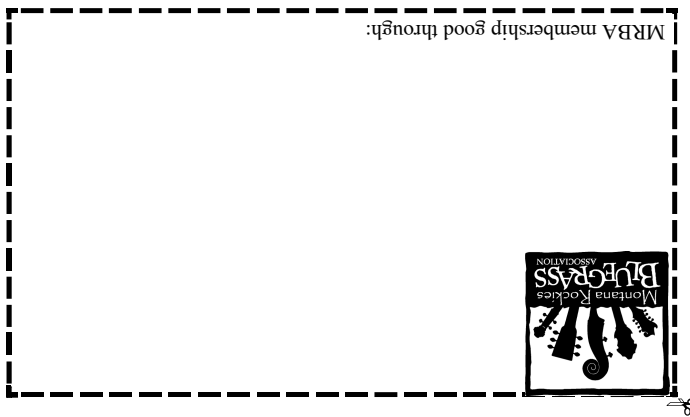
2007: First and Third Thursdays, Bluegrass Jam, Bert & Ernie's, Great Falls

May 24-31, 2009: Pasture Picking, Libby, MT

That's all for now, folks!

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

