



Bluegrassin'

Volume 27 Issue 3

May—June, 2025

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
Memorial Day Campout	6
Idaho Festival Ad	6
Deer Lodge Jam	7
Blue Point Blue Grass	8
MRBA Scholarship Update	9
MRBA Membership Update	9
Bluegrass Recipes	10
Bluegrass Tidbits	11

Upcoming Bluegrass

May 2, Blue Point Bluegrass, Freecycles, Missoula 6pm—8pm

May 6, Blue Point Bluegrass, Longstaff House, Missoula, 7-9:30 pm

May 22, Montana Standard, Longstaff House, Missoula, 7-9:30 pm

May 23-26, Conroy Memorial Day Campout & Jam, Darby, MT (see pg. 6)

May 23-26, Bluegrass on the Bluff, Spokane, WA

<https://ddaviswixsite.com/bluegrassonthebluff>

May 29—June 1, Valley Bluegrass Festival, Orofino, ID (see pg. 6)

May 30, Tim O'Brien and Jan Fabricus, Longstaff House, Missoula, 7-9:30 pm

June 1-6 & 8-13, Montana Fiddle Camp, Monarch, MT (evening jams)

<https://www.montanafiddlecamp.org/>

June 12—Blue Point Bluegrass, Missoula Downtown Night, 5-8pm

June 27-29, Bluegrass Concert & Campout, Deer Lodge, MT (see pg. 7)

June 19 & 16, Bluegrass Jam Workshops 5:00 pm—7:00 pm (registration required) Whitefish, MT <https://northvalleymusicschool.org/camps/>

June 28, Blue Point Bluegrass, Hamilton Downtown Music Fest, 6-7pm

Regular Jams & Events :

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

Montana Oldtime Fiddlers —3rd Sunday of the month at the Buffalo Hill Terrace in Kalispell. 2:30-4:30

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

Salmon, ID—Monday regular jam at Ron's Church of Music. Every Monday from 3-5:30pm, 209 11th Street, Salmon, Idaho.

Notes: For ticket info & to confirm times, see venue websites

President's Message

The 25th MRBA Victor festival was a "hoot".. Lots of great music, lots of people, and lots of help gettin' everything done. We grossed \$2431, which will help us continue with the MRBA fun. Don't forget Conroy's Memorial weekend campout on May 23,24,25,26. This will be our 29th year for the campout. ...Holy- Smoly

EXCITING NEWS-- Very soon-- our new MRBA website will be up and running. It will be chocked full of pictures, videos, and all kinds of fun things. - --- Mike



MRBA Newsletter is Getting a New Look

The MRBA Newsletter will also be going through a redesign. Although the newsletter format designed by Ben Essary has served us well, Microsoft Publisher will no longer be available after this year. This will require us to use a different software to create the newsletter. We will be rolling out the new design this summer or fall.

Bluegrass Song Trivia *(answer on pg. 11)*

In the bluegrass song, "Glendale Train", who robbed the train at half past nine.
(Hint: Based on real train robbery in Missouri in 1879)

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, Steve Chapman, Jeff Campfield

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.

Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association

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

MRBA Spring Festival Fashion Photos



Swinegrass Fashion



Bluegrass on the Beach Fashion



Guitar Fashion



Frog-Grass Fashion



Jolley Family Band Fashion



Kitchen Crew Fashion

MRBA Spring Festival 2025

(by Kate McMahon)

Another glorious spring day in Montana and another glorious bluegrass festival in Victor. Bluegrass fans came far and wide to listen to some mighty fine music. There were local bluegrass bands along with musicians from Idaho, Utah, and South Dakota. There was even a bluegrass banjo picker, Rod Aquayo, from Patagonia in South America who join the Horizon Bluegrass Band for a set. *(See photo of Rod with his Kermit the Frog shirt on previous page.)* I don't know it for a fact, but I'm pretty sure Rod should get the award for "Traveled the Farthest" to attend a Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association event.

A highlight of the festival was when MRBA President, Mike Conroy awarded a plaque to Lois and John Malikie to show appreciation for their long time involvement with the organization. Lois was a former treasurer for MRBA and both Lois & John are bluegrass lovers and faithful attendees at the MRBA festivals, bluegrass jams and bluegrass campouts. They have taken their motorhome down forest service gravel roads for MRBA jams and headed up north to enjoy bluegrass at Pasture Pickin in Libby, MT. They never missed Mary Jane Cunningham's Trumble Creek bluegrass get togethers in Columbia Falls. John and Lois are friends to all bluegrassers!



Once again, thanks to Susan McCauley and the kitchen crew for excellent bluegrass cuisine. Susan informed me that a cadre of cooks gather a few days before the festival to make the chili and cornbread that are festival favorites. Tari Conroy and Anne Merrifield make the cornbread, Dallas Olson contributes vegetable soup and MRBA members donate absolutely delectable desserts. Believe it or not, the chili recipe is from a cookbook that was produced by Marlboro cigarettes. I recommend the chili—but skip the smokes. *(See pg. 10 for some not-so-secret recipes from the festival)*

All in all, the spring MRBA Bluegrass Festival was a resounding success. Overall, it grossed \$2431.00. Thanks to Bitterroot Valley Church of the Nazarene for once again allowing us to use their fabulous facilities. Thanks to all the great musicians from all the 16 bands and thanks to the many volunteers that helped with the event. There was a whole herd of listeners that came to listen and support the bluegrass association. As noted by MRBA president Mike Conroy, "It was AWESOME!"



Conroy's Memorial Weekend— Bluegrass Campout

May 23—24—25—26

Conroy's Memorial Weekend Bluegrass Campout will be May 23-24-25-26, 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.



CLEARWATER COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS OROFINO, IDAHO

May 29th -June 1st, 2025

Headlining Band:
KENTUCKY SKY

Give a listen to Kentucky Sky on YouTube!

also featuring:

Wanigan, Monroe Bridge, Higher Ground, Roosevelt Road, Family Circle Band, and the Mountain Dew Boys!"

BRING LAWN CHAIRS

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

Bluegrass Campout and Concert

Bring your lawn chairs, camper and instruments for jamming
Saturday music concert with four great bands

June 27th through June 29th, 2025

Concert starts at 4pm Saturday and ends around 8 pm

JAMING ALL WEEKEND!

Three covered jamming areas

Food vendors on sight

GREAT BANDS ON SATURDAY!

- Elk Ridge Bluegrass Band-Deer Lodge, MT
- Flatt Broke-Salmon, ID
- Song Dog Serenade-Billings, MT
- Kentucky Sky-Idaho Falls, ID

Admission only \$20

All 3 days!

Kids under 12 free!

Bluegrass Jam!

Live Music!

Camping!

1975 Dempsey Lake Road, Deer Lodge Mt 59722

Any questions call or text 406-498-6621

Blue Point Bluegrass Band

(by Kate McMahon)

A favorite part of every festival is discovering a new and upcoming band that plays first-rate bluegrass music. At the spring festival in Victor, that band was the Blue Point Bluegrass Band from Missoula. Blue-Point Bluegrass is an energetic band including members Sean Lodmell (guitar), Mack Moore (mandolin), Kaya Juda-Nelson (fiddle & vocals), Mike Hanich (bass), and Erik Nielson (banjo).

Blue Point Bluegrass Band specializes in traditional bluegrass and old time music with a sprinkle of folk and Americana. At the spring festival, the crowd was treated to stellar renditions of Bill Monroe songs, train songs and soulful ballads. Along with well-known favorites, Blue Point's repertoire includes original numbers that, according to their web site, "...stem from those deep places within the human condition that we all know and feel."

Several band members started their bluegrass journey by coming to MRBA events and jamming along with us older folks. Kaya grew up playing the fiddle and connected with the Montana bluegrass scene at college in Missoula. Mack noted that he studied jazz before he got into bluegrass. The band blends all of this experience into a lively performance that engages the crowd to take notice of a new generation that is embracing bluegrass music.

The band commented that more young people are getting into bluegrass. There are vibrant jams taking place in Missoula. Their advice for new bluegrass musicians is to listen to lots of bluegrass music, slow your playing down to practice and play music to have fun.

Blue Point Bluegrass is landing gigs around the state and will be making their debut at the Blue Waters Bluegrass Festival in Medicine Lake, WA in August. They are recording their first album and you can already listen to some of the recordings on their web site. (<https://bluepointbluegrass.com/>) The band is also on Facebook and Instagram.

Thanks to the band for sharing their talent and energy at the spring festival. Listening to them in Victor was my first time hearing the music of Blue Point Bluegrass Band—but I'm sure it won't be my last.



MRBA Scholarship

(A Letter from MRBA President Mike Conroy to Scholarship Recipients)

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association, I wanted to extend my warmest congratulations to you on being chosen as one of our scholarship winners.

As you know, this is our first year of offering the program and we hope to be able to continue it in the future so that we can offer young musicians some funds to further their interest in bluegrass music.

Have fun at the your bluegrass camp and let us know what you learned. Also, we'd love to see you attend one of our events so that we can meet you in person.

Warm regards, Mike Conroy-President

2025 Scholarship Recipients

Sam Smart, Aspen Gibson, Evan Krza, Bela Friedman

Donate to Scholarship Fund

Due to the popularity of the scholarship program, there were more applicants than the budgeted scholarship funds. Scholarships were awarded to qualified applicants on a first come basis and once we exceeded our budget we placed the other applicants on a wait list.

If you would like to make a donation to the scholarship fund, send a check made out to MRBA with a note directing the donation to scholarships. Send to the following address:

MRBA
PO Box 1306, Missoula, MT 59806

Membership Update

A goal of the annual meeting of the Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association (MRBA), was to grow our membership. Below is an update of that effort.

- There were lots membership sign-ups and renewals at the Spring Festival. Thanks to Treasurer Anne Merrifield for keeping our membership rolls up-to-date!
- The new website will have an on-line membership application. This should make it easier for people to sign-up and renew their memberships.
- MRBA approved a membership promotion that if an existing member recruits a new member to MRBA, the existing member will get a one-year membership free.
- MRBA membership cost \$10 for an individual and \$15 for a family. Membership fees have remained the same since MRBA was founded over 25 years ago!
- Members receive six newsletters a year and membership fees help fund MRBA events and youth bluegrass music scholarships.
- While the majority of MRBA members are from Montana, membership rolls show that MRBA also has members from Texas, California, Washington, Idaho, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, South Dakota, Utah and Illinois.

Festival Recipes

Headquarters Chili

Cook (until beef is lightly browned)

3lb ground beef
2 small green peppers (chopped)
2 medium onions 9thinly sliced)
2 cloves garlic (crushed)

Add

3 can tomatoes (or 5to 6 cups)
3-4 Tablespoons Chili Powder
2 teaspoons cumin
3-4 oz green chilies
1 cup water

Cover and simmer for 45 minutes

Stir-in 3 15 oz cans beans (6-7 cups)

Simmer another 25 minutes.

Best Cornbread Ever (6-8 servings)

1/2 cup butter
2/3 cup sugar
2 eggs, lightly mixed

1 cup buttermilk
1/2 tsp. baking soda

1 cup yellow cornmeal
1 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. salt

In large skillet, melt butter. Remove from heat and stir in sugar.

When cooled down a bit, add eggs and mix until blended.

Combine buttermilk and soda, stir into butter mix. Add cornmeal, flour, salt mix. Stir until just blended.

Pour into greased 8" baking pan. About 25 minutes at 375 degrees.



**LISTEN.
LEARN.
INSPIRE.
SUPPORT.**

Montana's Only Nonprofit Community Music School offers:
Private Lessons and Group Classes for All Ages, Children's Choir, Weekly Acoustic Jam, Performing Ensembles, Workshops, and Summer Camps. Now Online. Scholarships Available.
Please call or visit us online. northvalleymusicschool.org | 406.862.8074

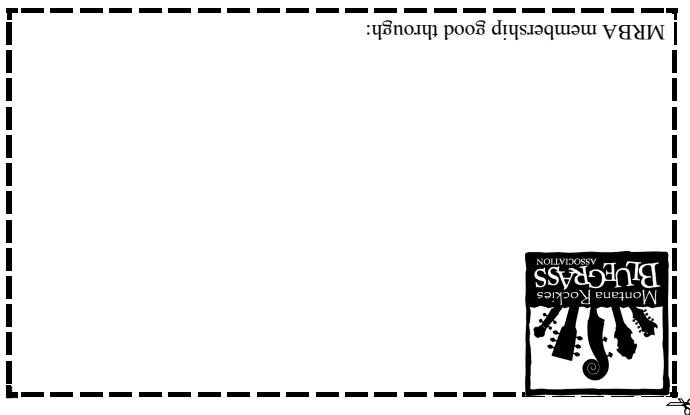
**NORTH VALLEY
MUSIC SCHOOL**

Bluegrass Tidbits

- New release by the Timber Rattlers Band! The Timber Rattlers Band of Missoula will be releasing their new album in May. The Timber Rattlers is a bluegrass band of talented musicians. Growing up, banjo player Caleb Dostal, was a regular at MRBA jams. According to their Facebook post, "We are so excited to share the new tunes with ye all. Get it now! ...Did you know that Bandcamp provides by far the most equitable compensation for musicians? One download on bandcamp=200 streams on Spotify." To download the album: <https://thetimberrattlers.bandcamp.com/>
- "Top of the Swan" camp-out and jamboree is a new bluegrass/jam event this fall in Ferndale, MT (south of Bigfork). Mark your calendars for Sept. 12, 13 & 14. MRBA is a sponsor of the event. Watch the next newsletter for details or check out the website. (<https://topoftheswan.com/home>)
- Yellowstone Bluegrass Association in Billings has a new location for their jams. Beginning February, 2025 there will be jamming every other Thursday night in the Lincoln Center Music Room, located in downtown Billings at 415 N. 30th Street. Jams start at 7:00 pm and are held in the Band Room in the basement. You must arrive by 7:15 pm to gain entrance into the building. See website for details. <https://yellowstonebluegrass.com/announcements>
- *Trivia Answer: Frank and Jesse James*

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

