



# Bluegrassin'

*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

- Sept. 6-7-8: Gibbonsville Campout (see pg. 8 for details)
  - Sept. 6-7: River City Roots Festival, Caras Park, Missoula
  - Sept. 8: Greensky Bluegrass, The Wilma, Missoula
  - Sept. 13: Release the Squirrels, Longstaff House, Missoula, 7:00 pm
  - Sept. 18: North Fork Crossing, Longstaff House, Missoula, 7:00 pm
  - Sept. 26: International Bluegrass Music Association Awards Ceremony  
<https://worldofbluegrass.org/awards/>
  - Oct. 4: "Kids Music Day" (Here's a shout-out to "Kids in Bluegrass")  
<https://www.keepmusicalive.org/kids-music-day>
- Regular Jams & Events**
- Whitefish:** Tuesday Jams, North Valley Music school (432 Spokane Ave.) 6:00 to 7:30 pm (Call to RSVP—406-862-8074)
  - Billings:** Weekly Jams on Friday nights, Yellowstone Bluegrass Association, Blue Creek Baptist Church, Billings, 7:00 to 9:00 pm
  - Montana Old Time Fiddlers:** Third Sunday of the month, Buffalo Hill Terrace, Kalispell, 2:30 to 4:30 pm
  - Missoula:** Bluegrass Night at the Old Post Pub, Mondays, 6:00 to 8:30pm

- Notes:**
- 1) For ticket info & to confirm times, see venue websites
  - 2) Send information about upcoming jams & band dates to newsletter editor
  - 3) Send an articles about bluegrass & MRBA events to the newsletter.

## President's Message

The MRBA campout and potluck was August 16,17,18. A good time was had by all, with great jamming (see pics on page 7), relaxing, visiting, and a great potluck with lots of free hot dogs and pies (livin' large)!

The last major jam of the season is at Gibbonsville on Sept 6,7,8 (see page 8). It is always a fun time and a great way to ease into the fall.

Signing off for now, Mike



## Music Quote

*“I think one of the great things about being a musician is that you never stop learning.”*

Yo-Yo Ma

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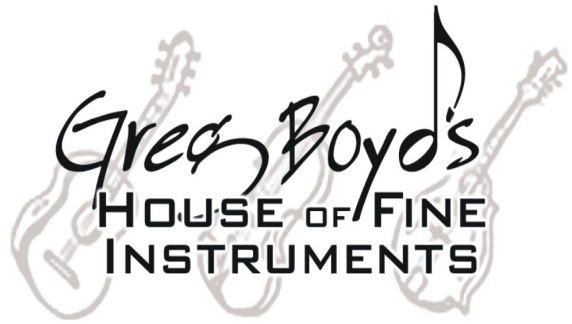
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If you would like to get your newsletter delivered electronically via e-mail send a message to:

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



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Do you want the newsletter delivered electronically? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

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Please mail your application to: MRBA, PO Box 1306, Missoula, MT 59806

## Hardtimes Festival—2024

By Kate McMahon

Attending the Hardtimes Festival will be sure to get you in a bluegrass state of mind. The festival kicked off on Friday, July 26, with a set by the landowner family (Ted Heiland, Ramona Potter, and Rachel Potter). With Rachel doing vocals and the band performing a rousing rendition of “Kentucky Borderline,” the group was a surefire crowd pleaser.



From vocals to instrumentals, from traditional to new songwriters, the music was top notch. The father of bluegrass also got his due. I tried writing down all of the Bill Monroe songs that were played but soon lost track. Among the classics I did note were “Southern Flavor,” “Toy Heart,” “Kentucky Waltz,” “Little Georgia Rose,” and “Blue Nights.” It wouldn’t be a bluegrass festival without some band banter and tall tales. One of the bands even told a story about Bill Monroe’s pants.

Although the weather gods spared the festival site from the big windstorm that hit Missoula earlier in the week, it likely deterred some people from attending. Overall admissions were down from previous years, but the number of overnight campers was up. With pleasant daytime temps in the mid-80’s and cool nights, weather was perfect for the festival. Kids and dogs enjoyed playing in the stream, and pickers enjoyed jamming late into the night.



According to Mike Conroy, many new folks from California, Oregon, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico were in attendance. Mike said the award for the farthest away was a great couple from Sweden. They said Hardtimes was what REAL America was all about, and the festival was the highlight of their trip.



With Mike and Tari Conroy overseeing the operations for the festival, it was one smoothly run event. Just two weeks before the festival, the site was covered with knee-high grass and cow patties. Thanks to volunteers who mowed and cleaned up the site, it was festival-ready by the time campers showed up on Thursday morning. Volunteers helped park cars, sold tickets, and worked on decorations, flowers, and stage setup. Arlene Wolf and Cliff Simpson did a great job taking turns as the MCs for the event.

The “Throw Together Band Contest” returned for another year of toe-tapping fun. With names like “Sweaty Hat Band,” “The Over the Hill Gang,” and “Cow Pasture Opry,” it was guaranteed to be an entertaining time. “Thelma and the Pantaloonies” won the award for Best Character, while the “Grassoline Brothers” took the award for Overall Best Band.

Vendors and food trucks are always a big part of the festival—pizza, hot dogs, ice cream, and espresso! My favorite vendor this year was the Darby Girls’ Basketball team. They were selling shaved ice and snacks to support the team. The girls look like they would be a hard team to beat.

To keep a festival going for 15 years with an all-volunteer crew is an amazing accomplishment. The weather might be stormy or hot. The crowd size might go up or down. But year after year, you can count on hearing good music, seeing friends, swapping stories, “pickin and grinnin,” and fond memories. One has to agree—this is the “real” America.



## In Memoriam Curtis Rathburn & Dale Berg

The Montana bluegrass community lost two long-time members this summer. Both are fondly remembered for their music and the many friends they made through bluegrass music.

**Curtis Rathburn** was a president of MRBA and was a fixture at campouts and winter jams. He will be remembered for his musicianship on the guitar and for performing moving harmony gospel tunes at the spring festival.



**Dale Berg** and his wife hosted Pasture Pickin' in Libby, MT, for many years. Twice a year they welcomed pickers from far and wide to camp on their property and jam. Some pickers stayed for a week at a time to enjoy the bucolic setting and good company.



## Bluegrass Birthdays

This Friday the 13th is the 113th birthday of the “Father of Bluegrass” - Bill Monroe! Some other notable bluegrass birthdays this fall include:

Sept. 13, 1911—Bill Monroe

Sept. 25, 1947—Larry Sparks

Sept. 27, 1991—Sierra Hull

Sept. 28, 1950—Laurie Lewis

Oct. 29, 1937—Sonny Osborne

# MRBA Annual Campout—photos



Cliff, Teri, and Tom



Mike with Natalie Jolley



Lester and Earl



Waking up to Blue Skies



Breakfast with Tari & Mike



It's a Bird, it's a Plane, .....

## 29th Gibbonsville Campout

Sept 6 -7- 8

(The weekend after Labor Day)

Time to take a break from canning, wood gathering, and other seasonal chores! Time to celebrate another year of the music and all of the music pals that we love so much. Yep, it is the Gibbonsville Bluegrass Campout the weekend after Labor Day, September 6-7-8. What a great chance to relax, PICK, eat great food (including ice cream sundaes), tell tales, make memories, laugh loudly, and connect with music pals once again.

All campers **MUST** check in with Rosemarie when they arrive. Rates per night are tents \$15, campers without hookups \$20, and all hookups and extra-large RV's \$25. Showers are \$5 unless you rent a cabin. Call Rosemarie for the availability and cost of the cabins. Water at the site is limited, so fill your tanks before coming. Please keep your dogs on a leash. **NO** open fires.

The Broken Arrow will be open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday **AFTERNOON** and **EVENING**, Serving that delicious Mexican food we all love. They are not open for breakfast. There is a potluck Saturday night at 6pm, plus Sunday morning at 10am, followed by gospel music until noon on Sunday. Picking always continues until .....??? Wall tents and jam tents are always appreciated. Come hungry and well-rested..... and you will go home beat-tired but full of good food and great memories!!

And.....don't forget about the **ICE CREAM SOCIAL** on Saturday afternoon at 1pm. Everyone bring something to put on the ice cream (syrops, fruit, toppings...whatever sounds good), and we'll have another smashing round of ice cream treats!

Started by Louise Steinway, we will have the Third Annual Corn Shucking Contest. This great activity will take place Saturday about 3pm. Musicians will play "Shucking the Corn" to spur on the competitors. So hone your skills and sign up for this important event! Last year we had more competitors than ever: Jeff Trask, Teri Llovet, Kathy Palmer, John Parker, Anne Merrifield, Ben Essary, Charlene Anderson, Brin Grosfield, and Pam Jolly. Of all the brave competitors, the Shucking Queen was Charlene Anderson. She won a stunning piece of artwork, corny.....!! For a look at the first contest, find the **WAY FUN** video posted by Dennis Vick (thank you!) on YouTube – "Gibbonsville ID Bluegrass Corn Shucking." You will see Janet Griswold, Anne Merrifield, Teri Llovet, Phyllis Erck, Emily Frank, and Charlene Anderson giving their all to shuck that corn. There is a special glitch near the end that made the contest hysterical....check it out!!

So change your strings, gather your potluck and ice cream supplies, pack the truck, pack the camper, and travel safely to 29th Gibbonsville Bluegrass Campout. Expect laughter, friends, great meals, and of course the sweet sounds of the music we all love. See you there!! Also.... bring ideas for celebrating next year's 30th Gibbonsville!!

For more information and/or questions, contact Rosemarie Ramey at the Broken Arrow 208-865-2241 or Arlene Wolf at 208-303-7080.



## *In the Spooky Pines*

(by Kate McMahon)



*Looking for a spooky song to play on Halloween? These lyrics are set to the "In the Pines" melody and will send a tingle down your spine when sitting around a campfire telling ghost stories.*



A graveyard tale, a foggy night  
A dog howls at the moon  
A boney hand goes down your spine  
The dish runs away with the spoon

Ooh ooh, ooh ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh

Little girl, Little girl, don't leave your home  
The devil is searching for souls  
In the pines, in the pines, where the sun never shines  
And you shiver when the cold wind blows

Ooh ooh, ooh ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh

Elmer Jones left home that night  
Never to return home  
They said he likely died of fright  
While running away in the snow

Ooh ooh, ooh ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh

The bats flew around old Lucy Brown  
As she hurried along  
She heard the scream that Halloween  
And the fiddler's lonesome sound

Ooh ooh, ooh ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh

Children heed this graveyard tale  
Don't play those parlor games  
With Ouija boards at the witching hour  
It'll only bring your pain

Ooh ooh, ooh ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh

## The Last Hat

By Kate McMahon

There was a time when MRBA had a robust inventory of merchandise. The items were for sale at festivals, campouts, and the winter jams. Proceeds from the sales went to support MRBA, a non-profit organization. If MRBA members look through their closets, they are likely to find MRBA hats, hoodies, t-shirts, fleeces, and denim shirts adorned with the trademark MRBA logo. There were also coffee cups and assorted other items through the years.



Alas, those days are no longer with us. Due to a lack of volunteers to take over the merchandise sales, the organization has not ordered any new apparel items for the last several years. What has been available at recent MRBA events is the leftover inventory from previous years. Sadly, the “Last Hat” was sold at the Hardtimes event in August.

If anyone is interested in re-establishing the merchandise sales, it would be a great way to support the organization. Purchasing and wearing MRBA merchandise is a way that new members can connect and identify with the bluegrass music family in Montana. The logo on the hats and t-shirts also help promote the organization.

For anyone who wants to continue the tradition, contact MRBA president Mike Conroy ([mikevconroy@gmail.com](mailto:mikevconroy@gmail.com)). Responsibilities include ordering and storing the merchandise. MRBA can help recruit additional volunteers to help with setting up a sales table at events.

It is a great way to get involved and support bluegrass in Montana!



## Bill Monroe & His High Lonesome Sound

*George D. Hay, founder of the Grand Ole Opry describes Bill Monroe's singing style.*

“There is that authentic wail in his high-pitched voice that one hears in the evening in the country when Mother Nature sighs and retires for the night”



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# Happy Bluegrass Halloween

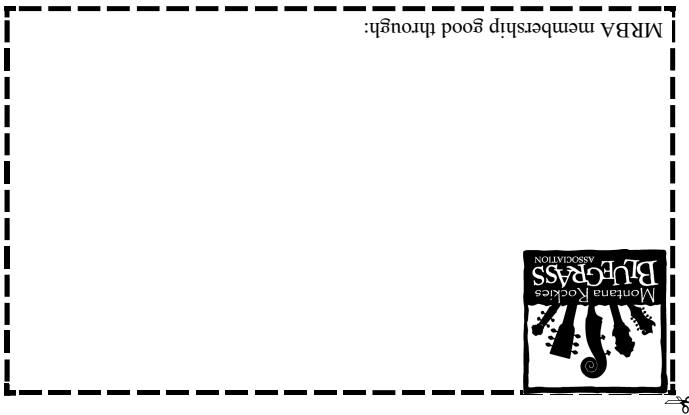
from the  
Pumpkin Head String Band



*(Image generated by Kate McMahon using Canva Magic Media image Generator)*

**ATTENTION:**

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