



Bluegrassin'

Volume 26 Issue 6

Nov.-Dec., 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

Nov. 8: Timber Rattlers, Rocky Mountain Grange #116, Hamilton, 6pm

Nov. 30: Release the Squirrels, Draughtworks Brewery, Missoula, 7-9pm

Dec. 11: Open Jam and Potluck, First Presbyterian Church, 540 South Main Street, Kalispell, 5-8pm

Dec. 21: MRBA Annual Christmas Jam and Annual Meeting, Stevensville (see Page 2 for details)

Dec. 29-30: Lil Smokies, Great Northern Bar, Whitefish, 7pm

Dec. 31: Lil Smokies, Great Northern Bar, Whitefish, 8pm

Regular Jams

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

Billings: Weekly jams on Friday nights, Yellowstone Bluegrass Association, Blue Creek Baptist Church, 7-9pm

Kalispell: Montana Old Time Fiddlers, third Sunday of the month, Buffalo Terrace, 2:30-4:30pm

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

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.

Editor's Pick

Dueling Jingle Bells
United States Navy Band

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfQAcu2b-OI>

President's Message

Come join us on Saturday, December 21, at our annual Christmas Party, Annual Meeting, and jam. It will be at the Stevensville United Methodist Church, 216 College Street, Stevensville. Doors will open at 2:00 pm, and the potluck will be at 6:00 pm. The MRBA will provide ham, and members are encouraged to bring their best dishes to share.

The MRBA Annual Meeting will be at 4:00 pm. We are hoping for a large crowd at the Annual Meeting, as we have important things to discuss about the future of the Association.

Mike

MRBA Christmas Party!

Date: December 21, 2024

LOCATION:

United Methodist Church
216 College Street., Stevensville MT

Doors open at 2:00 pm.

The business meeting and election of officers will start at 4:00 pm

Dinner will follow at 6:00 pm

We ask that everyone bring a dish to share for the pot luck.

Jams will be held before and after dinner.

We look forward to seeing you!



Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association

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Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association

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Do you want the newsletter delivered electronically? _____ YES _____ NO

Renewal _____ New Member _____

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

Gibbonsville —2024

By Arlene Wolf

It was another great GIBBONSVILLE Bluegrass Campout this past September at the Broken Arrow, at the base of Lost Trail pass in the beautiful Rocky Mountains of Idaho. If you missed it, you missed blue skies and minimal smoke, lots of laughter, an ice cream social, great tasting potlucks, campfire time, pickin' in the tents, picking outside, visiting with old and new friends, laughing during the Corn Shucking Contest and of course, playing all the wonderful tunes and songs that we all love so well.



Lots and lots of highlights, so be sure to look at the pics to see the stories and memories. Most of us took advantage of **Rosemarie Ramey's** and **Leffler's** cooking oh yum!! New campers included **Jerry Grusell** and **Jack Mauer**. **Debby Carlson** from Pullman, WA, came for the first time in a dozen years. This was the 8th year for bluegrass aficionado Bill from MT, and the first year his son flew in from northern CA for the gathering. They will all be at **Hardtimes Bluegrass Festival** next year! **Squeak Barsalou** came and played, even with a recently broken arm. It was great to know that Ben Essary was okay after being dumped in the river on a fishing trip Thursday. **Teri Llovet** and **Curtis Rathburn** were sorely missed, and we all hope that Teri is doing better every day. We missed **Roger Underwood**, too, as we often celebrate his birthday on this weekend. **Melora Neaves** and Phoebe went on a bike ride, but unfortunately Melora lost her phone.



Cliff Simpson was seen playing the banjo, and Amanda and the young Jolleys all came to pick and join in the fun. Dang, it all went by way too fast!!

Next year will be the THIRTIETH Gibbonsville campout Wow!! It will be a special year, with special fun. Better start planning and dig out and bring your old photos! See you then!!

Special thanks to RoseMarie and Leffler and the staff of the Broken Arrow..... and to all who traveled from near and far to join this wonderful bluegrass music family. THANK YOU! We are truly the lucky ones!! Much love to all!



Montana Bluegrass Bands

(Compiled from MRBA Newsletters & Facebook)

Montana's got bluegrass talent! MRBA members are fortunate to enjoy a healthy bluegrass band scene. Local bands are featured at the MRBA Spring Festival and the summer Hardtimes Festival, and many Montana bands also play gigs at local bars and events. While bands may come and go or band members reconfigure into new bands, paging through past newsletters reminds us of the many musicians who have graced us with their love of bluegrass music. Just for fun, below is a compilation of current Montana bands that have been performing in the state throughout the past few years.

Some names will be familiar, and some may not be as well known. Some names are whimsical, while some are a salute to family and places. Many bands just come together to play at festivals, while others have regular play dates, and some have recorded CDs. Check Facebook pages or web pages to find out when and where your favorite band is playing. The MRBA newsletters also tries to post play dates on the calendar. *Friendly reminder: It is much appreciated if bands can send their schedule to the newsletter editor (Kate McMahon) so she can publish the dates.*

Thanks to all of the band members for sharing bluegrass music with us. Apologies to those bands I may have missed in the list, and a hearty welcome to all future bands that will continue the bluegrass tradition in the state!

Montana Bluegrass Bands

Bloué Point Bluegrass
 Bluegrass Hollers
 Creekside Serenade
 Darby Sireens
 Elk Ridge Band
 Frog Pond String Band
 Greg Boyd Band
 Growling Old Men
 Johnny Campbell Band
 Jolley Family
 Kentucky Sky
 Lil Smokies
 Lochwood
 Matt Jolly & Mark Vosburgh Band
 Mike & Tari Conroy Band
 Montana Standard
 North Fork Crossing
 Old Freight Road
 Pinegrass
 Release the Squirrels
 Song Dog Serenade
 Timber Rattlers

International Bluegrass Music Association Awards—2024

Entertainer of the Year

Del McCoury Band

Vocal Group of the Year

Authentic Unlimited

Instrumental Group of the Year

The Travelin' McCourys

Song of the Year

“Fall in Tennessee,” Authentic Unlimited

Album of the Year

City of Gold, Molly Tuttle & Golden Highway

Instrumental Recording of the Year

“Knee Deep in Bluegrass,” Ashby Frank

New Artist of the Year

East Nash Grass

Collaborative Recording of the Year

“Brown’s Ferry Blues,” Tony Trischka with Billy Strings

Male Vocalist of the Year

Danny Paisley

Female Vocalist of the Year

Jaelee Roberts

Hall of Fame

Jerry Douglas (Dobro)
Alan Munde (Banjo Maser & Educator)
Katy Daley (Broadcaster)

Meet the 2024 IBMA Hall of Fame Honorees

<https://ibma.org/press-releases/ibma-announces-35th-annual-bluegrass-music-awards-recipient-and-bluegrass-hall-of-fame-inductees/>

Alan Munde has been at the forefront of bluegrass music as a banjo player, bandleader, and educator for over five decades. Hailing from Norman, Oklahoma, he played in his first band, The Stone Mountain Boys, in 1965. A subsequent jam session with Byron Berline, Sam Bush, and Wayne Stewart led to the recording of the highly acclaimed instrumental album *Poor Richard's Almanac*. Starting in 1970, Munde began a two-year hitch with the King of Bluegrass, Jimmy Martin. From there, it was off to California and the country-rock group, the Flying Burrito Brothers. Munde scored a 20-year run with the progressive West Coast group *Country Gazette*. One of the *Gazette's* seminal early releases was *A Traitor in Our Midst*. Other career highlights include Munde's teaching bluegrass at South Plains College in Texas, serving as a columnist for *Banjo Newsletter*, and sitting as member of the IBMA board of directors. He was a 2008 recipient of an IBMA Distinguished Achievement award.

Jerry Douglas has reigned as bluegrass music's preeminent Dobro player ever since the middle 1970s when he started with the Country Gentlemen. His fascination with the instrument began at age six when he saw Dobro legend Josh Graves perform on a Flatt & Scruggs show. Throughout the 1970s and '80s, Douglas rotated through a series of bands including J. D. Crowe's *New South*, *Boone Creek*, and *The Whites*. This same period found Douglas becoming an in-demand session player, for both bluegrass and country music albums. In time, he amassed credits on literally thousands of recording sessions. In 1998, he was asked to join Alison Krauss's *Union Station* and in 2014 he launched the award-winning Flatt & Scruggs tribute band, the *Earls of Leister*. Douglas has earned numerous IBMA Awards, including ten for Dobro Player of the Year. He also won fourteen Grammy Awards, and was selected the CMA's Musician of the Year in 2002, 2005, and 2007. He is also a former vice president of IBMA's board of directors.

Katy Daley (Patricia Cole Meloon Brown) made her mark as a bluegrass broadcaster in the Washington, D.C., metro area, starting in the early 1970s. Her entry to bluegrass radio came in a circuitous way. She jokingly told WAMU-FM broadcaster Gary Henderson that listening to his program was part of her work assignment at the CIA! A short time later, she signed on at WAMU, preparing and announcing a weekly "Who's Playing Where" segment. This was followed by a weeknight disc jockey spot from 10:00 to midnight. In November 1978, Daley collaborated on a 13-part series which traced the development of the music: *Bluegrass Anthology*. In 1980, Daley joined WMZQ, a 24-hour country station in Washington, where her broadcast work included hosting a bluegrass program for three years. Eventually, Daley returned to WAMU's offshoot, *bluegrasscountry.org*, and served as a morning air personality. She received two IBMA awards for Bluegrass Broadcaster of the Year and one for Distinguished Achievement. As part of her giving back to the community, she established the Katy Daley Broadcast Media/Sound Engineering Scholarship which is presented each year by the IBMA Foundation.

Music Life in Salmon, ID

Arlene Wolf

Living miles and miles from other towns of any size, the number of artisans and musicians living in the Salmon area is phenomenal. When I first moved here in 1992 from Rocky Boy, MT, it seemed that every home entered had musical instruments and a large array of artistic talents displayed. Next time you are in Salmon, check out the Purple Easel on Main Street to see the huge variety of local work for sale. Our very own Gary Moore has his beautiful rock-ware there.

Maybe it is because we are far away from other large towns that we have to make our own fun. Salmon is 92 miles from Hamilton, 120 miles from Dillon, 160 miles from ID Falls, and 140 miles from Missoula. There are no towns west as we butt up against the Frank Church Wilderness. We are considered a "frontier town" because of these distances. Maybe this is why we have so much fun making our very own fun..... and a most amazing aspect of the Salmon area is the music.

There has always been an active fiddler group. There are blues/jazz folks, soft music from Eddy Up, western, cowboy, rock, and eclectic tunes. Music pal Bev Hagen has her own blues band, the Bev Ridge Band. Local businesses the Night Owl and Sweetwater support local and other music often. Salmon Arts Council brings in wonderful musicians. The junior/senior high school has a dynamite music teacher in John Anderson, who gives his students a love of music and creates incredible music programs. Creative people accept jobs here, and the music grows. Some folks retire here and finally have time to work on their instrument. If you want to pick, you can find someone to pick with and places to play in Lemhi County.

About 30 years ago, the Salmon Valley String Band was formed for the love of bluegrass and fiddle music. It has evolved into 93 North, and 93 North and Friends. We are so lucky to be in this community. We play every Wednesday at Bertram's Brewery starting at 5:30pm. We have played there for about 15 years. We also play as their house band for other functions like Oktoberfest and Salmon River Days.



93 North = Cliff Simpson, Squeak Barsalou, Arlene Wolf, Keith Bielby, Bob Griswold, Janet Griswold

We get asked to play frequently for Salmon activities, like this year's prelude for Shakespeare-in-the-Park, and for the Lemhi County Fair. This past year we also donated our time to play for the Lost Trail Ski Patrol fundraiser, the North Fork Fire District fundraiser, and the Meals-on-Wheels fundraiser. We've played for the local Land Trust celebration and for an end of summer celebration in Darby. We play the Farmer's Market, and Cliff and I as "No Time Flatt" played the Farmer's Market several times. Some fun folks got married at Lost Trail Ski Area in April and we got asked to play, so much fun!

It is important for us to play for the old folks, so we play at the three places in Salmon with seniors. We play one lunch a month for the Senior Center. This past winter we had 11 musicians show up to play.....at noon on a Wednesday!! We also play for the Meadows Care Center at lunch once a month for a great home-made lunch, and at the Discovery Care Center one evening a month. We feel this is so important to bring a smile to these special people. We've been doing this since I met Gary Moore 30 years ago, and he is the mover and shaker on this. The only years we missed were during Covid-19.

Another special thing about the Salmon music scene is a man named Ron Austin. He and his wife bought a church, and the main room is now a big music room. There is an acoustic jam on Mondays from 3-6pm, an open invitation for pickers. He hosts the fiddlers on Thursday. We did a benefit there for the two helicopter pilots killed in the 2022 fires. Ron hosts Cowboy Poetry and many other fundraising gatherings. He is also the bass player/drummer in two bands. What a special person! We are so very lucky!

The Gibbonsville Bluegrass Campout started with Nancy Ady, Bill Roper, RoseMarie Ramey and I not wanting the summer picks to end. So with RoseMarie's Broken Arrow Restaurant and Campground, she thought the best time would be the weekend after Labor Day. And so it began! We've had a ton of fun over the years, and there are so many tales to tell! This next September 5-6-7th will be the 30th anniversary of Gibbonsville. You don't want to miss this one!!

We are always asked if we are going south for the winter. Arizona is full of great sunsets, and the picker friends down there are so very fun, but I find I miss the fun music scene here in Lemhi County, and I really miss hearing Keith Bielby's fiddle. This past August, Cliff and I had 21 play dates, and 93 North had nearly that many. That is hard to beat no matter where you live!

To all pickers – you are always welcome in Lemhi County; there is always something going on!
So.....PICK ON!!

Bertram's Salmon Valley Brewery



Bluegrass Question of the Month

What is your favorite bluegrass jam spot of all time?

Good Pickins

(by Kate McMahon, Compiled from various sources)

The three-finger picking style of banjo playing is a hallmark of bluegrass music. In order to pick the banjo, however, you need a thumb pick and two finger picks. Believe it or not, there are all sorts of opinions and suggestions for selecting and using the right picks for the banjo. Who would have thought that banjo players were so cerebral on this topic! Below is a compilation of “things you probably never thought of” when it comes to banjo picks.

- According to famed banjo player Bill Keith, when he started playing the banjo in the 50’s, buying banjo picks was “one size (and one brand) fits all.” The kind of metal fingerpicks were Nationals. By the 1990’s, Keith wrote an article for the Banjo Newsletter reviewing nine different brands of finger picks, including the following tips.
- Finger picks take some time to break in, and you generally do not want to lend them to anyone.
- Banjo players tend to favor finger picks that are metal and thumb picks that are plastic. National used to make metal thumb picks, but most banjo players prefer the sound of the plastic picks.
- The old National picks have the brand name and patent number stamped on the outside of the blade. Some are stamped with U.S.A. The real old ones are highly prized.
- Dunlop entered the banjo pick market when the National picks became hard to find. The plastic thumb picks are available in three sizes. Dunlop has also offered plastic finger picks.
- Other picks that were reviewed in the Banjo Newsletter from 1996 included “Kyser,” “Ellington,” “Roy’s Own,” “Showcase,” “Acric,” and “ProPik.”
- According to “Banjo for Dummies,” the best kind of finger picks are the ones that fit most comfortably for your fingers and that give you the best tone. Experiment with different finger picks to see which ones fit the most comfortably and — most importantly — sound the best to you.
- “Banjo for Dummies” also notes that finger picks range in price from \$3 a pair to \$35 for a pair of handcrafted, stainless-steel picks. Look for metal finger picks from ProPik, National, Dunlop, Showcase 41, and Sammy Shelor, among others, for the tone preferred by bluegrass players.
- According to a post on Banjo Hangout, “banjo picks were actually designed for the guitar (Hawaiian) and not the 5 string banjo. During that early Hawaiian Guitar fad, the banjo was still mostly gut string and played with bare fingertips.”
- Banjo Hangout also notes that some guitar players prefer to play with banjo picks. A number of notable bluegrass rhythm guitarists have used a thumb pick instead of a flat pick, among them Lester Flatt, Del McCoury, and Danny Paisley.
- Metal finger picks can be made of brass, nickel-copper alloy, stainless steel, or a silver alloy.
- Deering Banjo recommends that the best way to wear thumb picks is, “... to push the pick down onto your thumb so it sits comfortably somewhere between your thumb knuckle and the top of your thumb.”
- Deering Banjo recommendation for wearing finger picks: “How far down you put the pick onto your finger varies and is personal preference, but I try to push it down so just a little bit of the pick sticks out beyond my finger. It sticks out maybe about 1/8 of an inch. I then bend the part that is sticking out just a bit to curve up a little bit more.”



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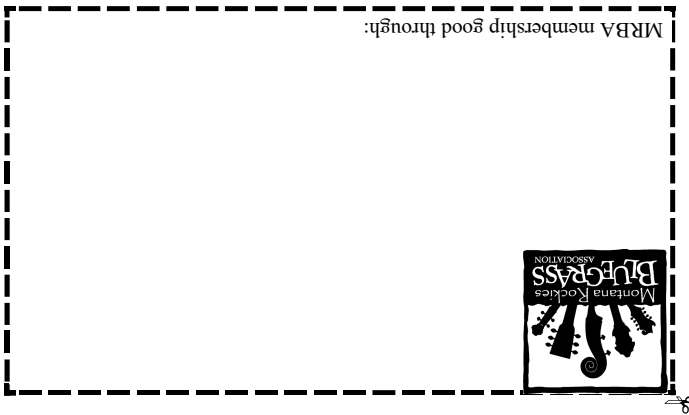
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MUSIC SCHOOL

May Visions of Candy Canes and Bluegrass Visit Your Dreams Happy Holidays!



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