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Oregon Bluegrass Association
www.oregonbluegrass.org

Bluegrass Express

by Glenn Lewis

Where Have All the Young Folks Gone?

There are tons of talented youngsters -- but why don't we see/hear them?

So friends spent a weekend together to play music, eat, walk, play more music, eat more food, and chat about the state of the world. (We know how these weekends go.)

• About the lively, tight and talented bluegrass style bands of young people performing in Oregon -- but that have no connection to the Oregon Bluegrass Association or most of the festivals in the Northwest.

in the Portland area. We interviewed Aaron Carter, Jonathan Throck, Liz Chalkins and Rex Chapple, all gigging musicians who have their own take on what it means to be a member of a musical community.



By Andrew Ross. Photo by Jeff Cook Photography.

What's missing from that first paragraph is the fact that all of us are all eligible for at least some type of music discount.

One of us asked, "Where are all the younger musicians? Why don't we see them at festivals, either performing or attending?"

This prompted a conversation that brought together a number of thoughts and anecdotes:

• About the Oregon jam party somebody was invited to, with a lot of about 100 players -- none of whom he had ever heard of.

• Whether the nature of the OBA and current festivals push young people away, whether young people simply don't know or care about the conventional bluegrass community, or both, and

- Is this anything to care about? and if so...
- What to be done?

To learn more, we started by talking to some of the younger musicians

Meet the musicians

Aaron was just five-fifths content at age four. In addition to her five state championships from Colorado, she received the 2011 National Young Adult



Photo credit: Jeffery Bergquist