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INSIDE THIS ISSUE!
Steeplegrass Memories, What is
Bluegrass Anyway, Steve Waller
Scholarship and more...



Oregon Bluegrass Association
www.oregonbluegrass.org

Bluegrass Express

Steeplegrass: A Treasured Musical Community

By Rich Powell

The concept of a “reunion-picnic” started as an idea to get some members of past Steeplegrass classes together to play music. I hadn’t seen many members of the O Street, Vancouver, Washington crowd in a while and I missed them! We used to learn to play bluegrass music and jam together most Wednesday nights; it just didn’t seem fair to not be enjoying the fun of all that social music and the friendships formed! Kids, young adults and older folks included.

Someone said “Let’s have a picnic!” Not a bad idea, but where to look for a place that we could play music out of the rain (May was our target month and it does rain occasionally in that month). Other requirements included space for lots of people, cooking/barbeque facilities, and, of course, inexpensive enough so that our budget could afford it. What budget? Several long car trips to check out possible locations led two of us musicians to the Central Picnic Shelter at Lewisville Park in Battle Ground, Washington. It

has a huge log cabin-style roof and fireplace structure with simple sink and electrical accommodations; fifteen picnic tables were inside. The County’s park rangers even supplied the firewood in those days!



An email committee was formed to send invitations for our big pre-Memorial Day weekend event. We would have felt lucky

to have gotten 20 folks that first year. Food, welcome table, set-up, and other volunteer tasks were assigned.

My ‘78 VW camper van looked like an old-west peddler’s wagon crammed with folding chairs, card tables, and kitchen supplies on the morning of the picnic.

And of course, we had a rain shower or two that first year. And about three times the number of expected bluegrass pickers showed up! Many 10’ x 10’ pop-up shelters sprang up like mushrooms on the lawn around the building, with a small jam taking place in each! People brought so much food to add to our barbeque burgers and hot dogs that we had to assign two picnic tables for the overflow. Salads, desserts, pies—all kinds of food appeared.

The next year a band scramble was added. Also, as Greg Stone’s Taborgrass (bluegrass) class in Portland grew in attendees, we have seen their participation in our picnic grow. The students from this class add

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15th annual Steeplegrass Reunion Picnic at Lewisville Park

(Battle Ground, Washington).

Sunday, May 21, 2017, 12 noon until dark. Rain or Shine—no kidding! We have a huge covered picnic area and a big fireplace. Come pick, picnic, reminisce, and enjoy the company of Steeplegrass alumni from those Vancouver, Washington days of yore! Non-Steeple bluegrass pickers also welcome! \$6.00 donation accepted at the welcome table. Contact for map and info: Rich Powell, powellR5923@q.com



OBA Membership & Ad Information

Membership Information

The OBA Board of Directors invites you to join the OBA and to participate in its many activities. Our membership benefits include a subscription to the quarterly Bluegrass Express, frequent mailings about events, and ticket discounts to northwest bluegrass events. Annual membership dues are \$25 for a General Member, \$50 for Supporting Performers, and \$125 for Contributing Business Sponsors, as well as other options. To join, complete the application on the back cover and mail with your check to:

Oregon Bluegrass Association
P.O. Box 1115
Portland, OR 97207

Website

Features include an interactive calendar that allows you to post your own events, excerpts from past issues of the Bluegrass Express, and links for local bands. Come visit us online! Visit the OBA web page today!

www.oregonbluegrass.org

Article and Editorial Submissions

The OBA Board invites you to submit letters, stories, photos and articles to The Bluegrass Express. Published files remain in our archives and art is returned upon request.

Please send submissions to:

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Expressnews@oregonbluegrass.org

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When submitting an advertisement to the OBA, please be sure the file is black and white, 300 dpi and in either PDF, TIFF, or JPEG format. If you have questions about your file please email John Nice-Snowdy at nicetunz@gmail.com.

Founded in 1982, the Oregon Bluegrass Association (OBA) is a volunteer-run, 501(c) (3), non-profit arts organization consisting of individual and band memberships. Based in Portland, Oregon, the OBA has chapters in Salem and Roseburg, and is the umbrella organization for the Chick Rose School of Bluegrass.

The OBA is led by an elected Board of Directors who volunteer for two-year terms. Monthly meetings are open to all members and an Annual Meeting is held for the state-wide and regional members. Financial support for the OBA comes from membership dues, fundraising events, tax-deductible donations, merchandise sales and advertising revenue from the Bluegrass Express, the award-winning member newsletter.



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Greg Stone-Steeplegrass Picnic



Annie & John-OBA Gospel Show



Vol. 37 No. 2

Oregon Bluegrass Association
www.oregonbluegrass.org

Bluegrass Express

Bluegrass Express is a quarterly newsletter dedicated to informing members of the Oregon Bluegrass Association about local, regional and national bluegrass issues, events and opportunities.

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President's Message

Happy spring to all our members!

I suspect we're all going to see more of each other in the coming months. This has been a particularly hard winter and everyone is looking forward to spring.

One of the coolest things the OBA has done lately is the launch of oregonbluegrassradio.org. In addition to listening to your favorite national artists, our format includes regional bands. It's a nice mix, you can easily get it on any device that connects to the web, it runs 24/7 and it's free. It will become advertiser-supported as more listen in. So please do that. Once you've spent an hour or so listening to the OBA station, you'll be addicted. So once again, that's www.oregonbluegrassradio.org. You can also connect by going to the OBA website where you'll see a button that launches the player.

The Bluegrass Special Series: This is a new series of national or regional artists who happen to be coming through Portland. The upcoming shows are listed in the ad in this issue. We have one more to announce as soon as we firm up the details. Other than the Greg Blake Trio, which is \$10, there is an OBA discount for every concert. All of these concerts will be held at the Fremont Theater.

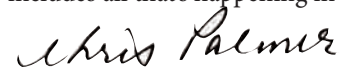
The regular OBA Series at the Freedom Foursquare Church, which showcases regional artists, is also offering an OBA member discount (\$13 members, \$15 general). Darrell Gulstrom, who spearheads this series, has been able to fill all of the slots for the next six months with our best regional bands.

OBA will be at several festivals this summer, offering our usual booths with t-shirts, hats, koozies and fun meters. Please stop by, say howdy and ask any questions that you might have for the OBA.

The 10th Annual Picker's Fest will take place on August 25-27. Tickets are available at Brown Paper Tickets. If you'd like to rent a yurt, we'll have a few available. They are shareable, so if you and your three best friends want to split the cost, there are beds for up to four in most of them. If you haven't been to the ZigZag Mountain Farm, you'll love it. It's peaceful, the food is great, the scenery is amazing and the mountain air is invigorating. If you're interested in a yurt, please contact me at 503-310-3311. I can provide details and take payment over the phone.

We are still searching for an ad sales director for the Express. Pat Connell has done an excellent job for several years and is ready to hand it off. Since the Express comes out four times a year and most of our advertisers are repeaters, it's not a position that requires tons of time. If you're interested, please contact Pat Connell at obaexpressads@comcast.net with any questions.

Thank you for being a member of the Oregon Bluegrass Association. If you see that your membership has expired (check your address label), please fill out and return the form on the back page or go to the website and renew there. We're offering more events every year and each offers reduced prices for members. We also send out an email every month which includes all that's happening in the local bluegrass world. We hope to see you soon.


Chris Palmer, President



What's Playing On The Radio

Local Radio Bluegrass and Country Listings

Albany/Corvallis - KBOO

Broadcast from Portland, can be heard at 100.7 FM. See under Portland, below

Astoria - KMUN 91.9 FM

Some syndicated programming
503-325-0010
"Cafe Vaquera"

Tuesdays 9-11pm, Bluegrass/Old Timey
Western/Folk with Calamity Jane
CafeVaquera@hotmail.com

"Shady Grove" Saturdays 7-9pm

Regular folk program
Monday thru Friday 10am - noon
with bluegrass included

Columbia Gorge - KBOO

Broadcast from Portland. Can be heard at 92.7 FM. See under Portland below

Corvallis - KOAC 550 AM

Syndicated public radio with some
bluegrass included in regular
programming
541-737-4311

Eugene - KLCC 89.7 FM

Local broadcast 541-726-2224
Mixed format "Saturday Cafe"
Saturdays 11am - noon
"The Backporch"
9 - 10pm Saturdays

Eugene - KRVM 91.9 FM

"Routes & Branches" 3 - 5pm Saturdays
"Acoustic Junction" 5 - 7pm Saturdays
"Miles of Bluegrass" 7 - 9pm Mondays
www.krvm.org 541-687-3370

Pendleton - KWHT 104.5 FM

"Bushels of Bluegrass" 9 - 11pm Sundays
contact Phil Hodgen 541-276-2476

Portland - KBOO 90.7 FM

"Music from the True Vine"
9am - noon Saturdays

Santiam Canyon - KYAC 94.9 FM

"Ken 'til 10" 6-10am M-F
Additional Bluegrass Programming
Streaming and Schedule: www.kyacfm.org



Steeplegrass: A Treasured Musical Community *Cont. from pg. 1*

to the original Steeplegrass idea that “the music you make with your own hands and share with others” is still the best kind! Our picnic date at the beginning of the festival season also seems to be perfect. It lets these students network with others who have played this music for years and they probably will meet at other music events during the summer.

The event just seems to grow. This probably is helped by the fact that so many volunteers show up every year in May and “do” the event. “Picnic Angels” also front the seed money to cover our site registration fee. And I feel lucky to know these folks and thank every one of them for their help. You know who you are! Heck, I’ve even seen Greg Stone and friend Linda Leavitt grab cook’s aprons and make some mighty fine gourmet burgers for the crowd.

And more folks seem to come back, year after year.

So, if you like good food, love a warm fireplace to stand next to while playing (or listening to) a favorite bluegrass tune, come see us on May 21 at Lewisville park this year. Noon until dark. Rain or shine. I’ll save you a folding chair!

Rich Powell

I attended Steeplegrass with my daughter Ellie from 1998 until Chick Rose stopped holding the class in 2000. I had known Chick for about fifteen years at that point, both of us having earlier attended a weekly bluegrass class at Clackamas Community College that might have inspired Chick to start Steeplegrass.

Ellie was nine years old when we started at Steeplegrass and had played violin for a little over three years. She was starting to get interested in old-time fiddling, and I wanted to introduce her to bluegrass jamming. After a year or so, I also started bringing my five-year-old daughter, Amy.

Chick had already encouraged a contingent of kids at Steeplegrass when Ellie and I started, and they had their own special room to meet and jam. Martin Stevens was there, Buddy Elliot, and the Truax brothers, Jack and Alex. They were all close to Ellie’s age, and she had a great time each week jamming with them.

I have two especially great memories from Steeplegrass. One evening, after Ellie and I had attended for several months, Ellie came out of the “kid’s room” with several of the other kids, and they played “Cherokee Shuffle” at a good tempo for the adults in class. Ellie played well, and my friend Carol Harley from Misty River was very proud of Ellie, exclaiming, “She keeps up with the boys!”

The other great memory from that time was the drive home from Vancouver with Ellie each week. She would be excited about the class that had just happened, and she and I used the long car rides to work on vocal harmony. I taught Ellie how to sing bluegrass harmony during those rides home. The first song that we really worked on was “Darling Cory,” which Ellie probably knew from listening to Flatt and Scruggs.

My kids are all adults now, and we still play music together.

Rob Hakanson



Terry & Gary Gertsen and Chick Rose

George Chudacoff told my husband Tony about Steeplegrass, and after he went the first time, he encouraged me to come along and learn the songs so I could sing when he played them. After the second time I came to Steeplegrass, Chick Rose told me, “You can’t just sing bluegrass; you have to play an instrument—at least a guitar...”. I couldn’t play anything but we had an electric bass at home, so the next week I brought it and a little amp. I would sit in the back with the volume barely on. After a few months, Tony bought me my first acoustic bass for Christmas. That was about 1997.

Our son, Michael, was about 5 when we started bringing him along to Steeplegrass. We bought him a Baby Taylor guitar and he started learning. During the summer, when we saw Chick Rose at a festival, he asked Michael if he had been practicing on his guitar. When Michael answered “yes,” Chick said, “Well, what have you been practicing?” Michael didn’t miss a beat. He replied, “What you taught me!”

Eileen Rocci



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Bluegrass & National Arts Program Funding

By Carl Walter

Oregon, along with the other 49 states, is faced with the real possibility of losing an important funding source for arts programs and other programs to preserve the state's cultural and historical heritage. According to a Jan. 19 report by The Hill news outlet, the Trump Administration's proposed 2017 budget calls for defunding the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

Federal officials say defunding of the NEA and NEH is necessary because the country can't afford to continue discretionary programs while racking up huge annual federal deficits. But the combined budgets of the NEA and NEH total about 1/21,000 of the federal budget. If the two institutions were defunded, it would save about \$296 million—enough to run the Pentagon for 11 hours, according to a Jan. 19 report in *Publisher's Weekly*.

Sen. Ron Wyden was one of twelve senators who wrote a letter dated Feb. 15 to President Trump urging continuing support for the NEA and NEH.

In part the letter said, "Since its creation in 1965, the NEH has funded groundbreaking scholarly research, preserved essential cultural and educational resources, catalogued more than 63 million pages of our nation's historic newspapers, and helped millions of young people grapple with the lessons of history." Eighteen Pulitzer Prizes and 18 Bancroft Prizes have been awarded in the fields of history, biography and journalism to authors who received support from the NEH.

Carrie Kikel, communications manager for the Oregon Arts Commission, says the impact of losing NEA funding for Oregon arts programs will be "significant." Arts program managers say Oregon's rural areas—with fewer local funding sources—will be especially hard-hit.

For instance, Bob Keefer of the Eugene Weekly reported in a Feb. 2 article that the Eugene Ballet stands to lose annual NEA grants used to take its dance performances to Oregon's small rural towns. The ballet has received NEA money every year for

the past 18 years. Last year's grant was \$20,000.

Between the years 2000 and 2017, the NEA provided Oregon with \$11 million in funding for art programs. In 2016, NEA funds totaling \$727,700, coupled with joint state and local funding, allowed the Oregon Arts Commission to award 267 grants totaling more than \$2.1 million for local arts programs. The NEA also awarded \$795,000 in direct grants throughout the state, according an Oregon Arts Commission fact sheet.

Broken down, the amount of individual program funding provided by the NEA for each program in Oregon since 2000 isn't enough to sustain most programs without other funding sources. But NEA money triggers value-added funding on the state and local levels. Kikel explained that the federal funds are a validation that encourages support from private and public sectors.

Throughout the states—including Oregon—that validation adds \$9 to arts programs for every dollar coming from the NEA. If the proposed dismantling of the NEA goes through, Oregon arts programs will lose those value-added dollars.

In 2011, Oregon's nonprofit performing arts sector generated \$119.3 million in revenue and \$48.9 million in income. It also provided Oregonians with 2,259 jobs. A 2012 study by ECONorthwest, an economic and financial planning firm, found that for every 10 jobs produced by "cultural nonprofits," which includes the performing arts, seven jobs are created "in other sectors of the Oregon economy."

The study was done for the Oregon Arts Advocacy Coalition, and found that every \$1 million in sales by those cultural nonprofits "generates another \$1.1 million in sales for other Oregon businesses." Similarly, every \$1 million in taxes and fees paid by the cultural nonprofits—which, again, includes the performing arts—"generates another \$1.9 million in taxes and fees" from other businesses.

So the loss of NEA funding in Oregon

**Once having marched
Over the margins of animal
necessity,
Over the grim line of sheer
subsistence
Then man came
To the deeper rituals of his bones,
To the lights lighter than any
bones,
To the time for thinking things
over,
To the dance, the song, the story,
Or the hours given over to
dreaming,
Once having so marched.**

Excerpt from The People, Yes by Carl Sandberg, © 1936 by Harcourt, Brace & Company, © renewed 1964 by Carl Sandberg. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company.

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will result in a loss of value-added dollars and jobs in the art programs, but losses also in sales, taxes, fees and jobs in supporting businesses.

"Private support cannot match" the added economic values "of government cultural funding," wrote Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D NY-Dist. 25) and Rep. Leonard Lance (R NJ-Dist. 7), co-chairs of the Congressional Arts Caucus, in a March 2015, letter to Rep. Ken Calvert (R CA-Dist. 42). They urged Calvert to support fully funding the NEA and NEH for the 2016 budget cycle. Calvert is chairman of the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies.

In his Feb. 2 article for the Eugene Weekly, Keefer cited the concern of Scott Freck, the Eugene Symphony's executive director, for Oregon arts programs if NEA funding is lost. "The NEA is an important pillar of funding for communities everywhere, and its loss would have a tremendously negative impact on the symphony's programs locally," Freck said.

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Bluegrass & National Arts Program Funding

Cont. from pg. 6

Keefer also wrote about the concerns of Josh Neckels, the Eugene Ballet's executive director, for the programs in rural areas if the NEA is defunded. "Should the NEA be defunded, the ability for those agencies to continue to provide granting opportunities throughout the region will be significantly reduced, with the greatest impact hitting the rural communities first," Neckels said.

Like the Eugene Ballet, music and dance programs across the U.S., ranging from bluegrass, folk and country music to opera and ballet will be affected by the funding loss. Nationwide, between 2000 to the present, NEA grants for bluegrass music programs totaled \$865,000. A few of those included other music forms, but most were traditional bluegrass.

The NEA provides annual recognition for the arts and the artists through the NEA National Heritage Fellowships and the National Medal of Arts awards.

Bluegrass artists are among the folk and

traditional artists nationwide who have been recognized for their excellence by the NEA fellowship awards. Twelve bluegrass artists have received the fellowships. They are Hazel Dickens, Bill Monroe, Earl Scruggs, Janette Carter, Jean Ritchie, Tommy Jarrell, Wade Mainer, Jim and Jesse McReynolds, Mary Jane Queen, Mac Wiseman and Delano Floyd "Del" McCoury.

The Smithsonian Folkways website call these recipients "...national living treasures' chosen to receive this one-time-only fellowship in recognition of lifetime achievement, artistic excellence, and contributions to the nation's cultural heritage."

National Medal of Arts awards are presented by the President of the United States. The NEA website says the medal "is the highest award given to artists and arts patrons by the United States government." Bluegrass artists who have received the medal include Dr. Ralph Stanley, Bill Monroe, Roy Acuff, George Jones, Doc

Watson, and Earl Scruggs.

If Congress approves defunding the NEA, those awards and the recognition they provide to the arts will disappear along with the funding for Oregon and the other 49 states.

In their Feb. 15 letter to President Trump, Ron Wyden and the other 11 senators wrote: "Federal support for the arts and humanities is essential to our education system, economy and who we are as a nation. We hope you will keep this in mind as you consider proposals that support these fundamental American institutions."

Carl Walter retired in 2010 from a 25-year career in forestry. Before then he was a newspaper reporter for five years. He holds bachelor's degrees in journalism ('68) and forestry ('76) and an MBA ('85). He and his wife live in Hillsboro, Oregon. They have two adult children and two adult grandchildren.

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RURAL DELIVERY



RUSTY HINGES



Steeplegrass: A Treasured Musical Community *Cont. from pg. 5*

I have very fond memories of Steeplegrass. I met many of my dearest bluegrass friends there. I remember jamming with Carol Harley, Dave Peterson, Gary and Terry Gertsen, just to name a few. My guitar teacher, George Chudacoff, encouraged me to try it out. I was hesitant at first, since I was a beginner when it came to bluegrass. I decided to try it and never regretted my decision to go. My wife and I attended for several years.

At Steeplegrass I learned jam etiquette, how to gauge what jams to enter based on my skill level, and I also learned several bluegrass standard tunes. I had great fun playing in downstairs jams. It was the highlight of my week and I was sad when it closed.

Tony Rocci

Chick Rose put up with an enthusiastic crowd of experienced, intermediate and beginner musicians each Wednesday night and never seemed to get perturbed with the noisy exuberance. He explained the circle of fifths, played his “group lesson songs” in at least two or three keys, and talked about whether a break should be on a verse or chorus.

Once a month it would be “jam-band” performance night in front of a supportive group, yet still nerve-racking for many of us! I remember thinking how talented the young kids were, like Martin Stevens and Elle Hakanson! Chick encouraged so many people and always had time for questions. He shared his music on cassette tapes for many standard bluegrass tunes.

Long-time Steeplegrass student Loren Wohlgenuth, band member of Columbia, would hold up fingers to let us “newbies” know the chord structure while a song was being played.

The owners of the Steeplegrass building were friendly, and always had a story to share. It was so sad after Nadine passed away.

Katherine Nitsch



I started going to Steeplegrass only two months before it closed down. But not before I realized what a special program this was that Chick Rose did for the bluegrass community every Wednesday

night at 7 pm. Chick would put these huge letters on stage, representing the chord progression for everyone to follow. Everyone would play songs together for the first part of the evening and then we’d break up into jams. During the jam section, you would search for Chick and find him in one of the side rooms tutoring kids and adults on their instruments.

Chick was great with kids. They loved him and learned a lot from him. There were also many good bands that came out of the Steeplegrass jam sessions. Misty River, and I think Great Northern Planes to name a couple.

Steeplegrass is where I met some folks



Greg Stone 2014

who encouraged me to continue playing and participating. Rich Powell, Gary Gertsen, Carol Harley, George Chudacoff, and Babette Jacobson all made me feel comfortable and welcome. There would not have been Taborgrass without Steeplegrass. Chick was also a good adviser when I started Taborgrass.

Greg Stone

Gary: In early 1989, after moving to southwest Washington the previous year, I noticed a flyer tacked onto a small community event bulletin board like you might see during a summertime camping trip outside the laundry room at a state campground. That flyer was announcing a once-a-month Saturday bluegrass jam at the Steeple Center Church in Vancouver. I did not get a chance to follow up on the notion to go to it. Not long after, during the time my wife Terry and I were playing



Linda Leavitt with Gary Gertsen at Steeplegrass picnic, 2016

and singing in a church worship group in Vancouver, our music director told us that she had seen an announcement in the *Columbian Newspaper* that a bluegrass music class was starting up through the community education. She knew that this was going to be a good fit for us, sensing that my mandolin styling addition to the praise music never quite resonated with what she had in mind for the Episcopal congregation. We were ready to go and signed up for the very first Steeplegrass class. The first version of the class was not yet called Steeplegrass; it was held in a classroom at the Bagley Community Center and had typical student desks that were lined up on the cold hard floors. We

continued on page 11



What Is Bluegrass Anyway?

We posed the question, “What IS bluegrass?” to folks in our community. Here are their responses. Many thanks to all of the generous writers who chimed in on this discussion!



I was once told that a band is not bluegrass unless they all dress alike and perform around one mic. I guess that leaves the Osborne Brothers out.

Music, bluegrass included of course, is alive. Let it breathe. “Rocky Top” (can’t find a much bigger bluegrass hit) had steel guitar, electric bass and drums. Bill Monroe had an accordion for a while. From ‘43-‘46, Howdy Forrester’s wife, Wilene, played accordion for Bill. He nicknamed her “Sally Ann.” But what would Bill Monroe know?

Steve Spurgin

My .02 worth is that it’s a big umbrella and there’s room for a lot of things under it.

Jim Faddis

Rhythm guitar and five-string banjo are the only non-negotiable ingredients, as far as I know. You can tell it’s bluegrass when the guy in the audience screams “Yeeeeeeeah!” at the end of the second phrase of the fiddle kick-off. Grown men screaming is a pretty good measuring stick.

Patrick Connell

Bluegrass is the new punk rock.

Jessica Furui

Bluegrass is the original punk rock.

Tim Donaghy

In the strictest sense, bluegrass is defined by the sound created by Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys but others contributed to what might be called “traditional bluegrass”: Flatt and Scruggs, The Stanley Brothers, Jimmy Martin, the Lonesome Pine Fiddlers, Red Allen and Frank Wakefield and others. Then along comes the Osborne Brothers who created a modern form of bluegrass. They started out playing in the style of the first-generation players but in the ‘60s they used some electric instruments and percussion. This spawned the likes of The Country Gentlemen, who certainly had a broad repertoire, including music that was dissimilar to what had come before. From

there, “newgrass” was spawned. Sam Bush, John Hartford, The Seldom Scene and many others have been put in the newgrass category.

I think defining bluegrass music depends on who you talk to. The quote, “That ain’t the way Bill wrote it” is a narrow view of what bluegrass really is.

Bluegrass is exactly what one thinks it is. I can’t define it but I know it when I hear it. That’s just my feeling. I couldn’t find fault in another person’s definition because the music that bluegrass has evolved into is too many different things to different people. Personally, I’m just glad it exists!

Kevin Johnson

If younger (and older) bands with cellos and other non-trad instruments get excluded from bluegrass fests, the audience will age out. Every generation has to make the music its own.

Katherine Nitsch

Actually, it depends on which side of the Mississippi River you’re from.

Stew Dodge

The music has to have drive, that push forward, especially on the banjo. Slightly ahead of the beat, but only when it is supposed to be there.

For me, it has a lot to do with rhythm. Must have a strong off-beat mando-chop, which is why if there is a full drum kit, it’s not bluegrass. Vocals, high and lonesome, unless it’s low and crowded, like Lester Flatt. Know what I mean?

Kathy Barwick

What is bluegrass? I’m not some authority on the subject, nor will I ever be. I wouldn’t consider myself a real bluegrass musician on my best of days and I’m okay with that. But I am a big fan of the music. I think it’s one of the greatest genres I’ve ever heard. Been a long time since I first heard it, but I’ll never forget how it made me feel the first time. Bill Monroe was allegedly quoted as saying, “That ain’t no part of nothing” when asked about the dobro’s original placement in the genre. I think from that day, the disputes about what defined the music really kicked off. I think it was a mixture of the music’s need for preservation,

juxtaposed to one man’s poisonous shadow of superiority. I’m a fan and I revere him in the genre, as all folks should. But he wasn’t exactly known for being the most friendly or open-minded guy either. Well, Flatt and Scruggs were more daring, it seems. They added the dobro, so does that mean they’re not bluegrass? They had a percussionist at some points too. How about now? Now is it not bluegrass? JD Crowe and The New South allegedly weren’t allowed to perform at the Bean Blossom festival (due to long hair and questionable after-hours habits). Guess they’re not bluegrass either? The Osborne Brothers got all electrified for a while. Weird—I guess they weren’t bluegrass either, huh? Bluegrass is an enigma; that’s the only claim I can make with certainty. I used these examples to drive home a point. No one has the authority to declare something is not bluegrass. Condemnation and harsh judgements should not be allowed to infect such a wonderful community of artists, new and old. New and creative sounds attract new fans. Eventually curiosity will take hold and they too will begin to explore the amazing traditional songs that hold the foundations for this new sound. Please understand that I think the traditionalists should continue to be traditionalists. Don’t ever stop playing those old tunes and always play them the “right” way. But be open to the younger generation’s interpretation of this music. Make them feel welcome and help them to learn the old ways so they can pay tribute just as you do. Why? Because that’s what bluegrass means to me.

Ben Jarrell

When I first started playing, people would get in a fist fight over whether The Seldom Scene or The Country Gentlemen were bluegrass. Years later, some folks called Alison Krauss a traitor to bluegrass. My favorite bands were/are Flatt & Scruggs and Bill Monroe, in that order. Some think if it’s not Bill it ain’t bluegrass, and they are probably right in the strictest sense of the word.

I don’t care. I like music more than labels. I just go by (paraphrasing what Justice Potter Stewart said in *Jacobellis v. Ohio*) “I’ll know it when I hear it.” In the end it’s art, and it’s hard to put art in a box. Many do and like the comfort of boxes.

Gerald Jones

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What Is Bluegrass Anyway?

Cont. from pg. 9

Bluegrass is old-time mountain music in overdrive.

George Rezendes

It is a form of old-time/country folk music that can only be described by the people who truly like it.

James Hancock

I've always thought of it as acoustic country music with generally quicker tempos. Bill Monroe's vision was to keep playing and singing the country mountain music he heard as a boy, and not electrify it or make the chord progressions and melody ideas too complicated. Earl Scruggs' 3-finger banjo style added the quick pulse and drive that the earlier music lacked, which brings me to an admittedly banjo-centric piece of the definition: To be considered "bluegrass," a band almost certainly has to have a 3-finger-style banjo. Without it, the same instruments and vocals lose the pulse and drive that is the earmark of the music. Still good music, just lacking that certain defining "piece." That said, I think that everything changes over time, including people's tastes, and we always should stay open to new sounds and ideas. That's how things stay fresh and growing.

Mike Stahlman

If you're gonna play in Brooklyn, you gotta have a cello in the band.

In an interview with Betty Dotson-Lewis in 2007, Everett Lilly said: "It is about something, isn't it? If you sing it, you are singing about something that really happened. Somebody wrote it. A lot of songs we sing have almost got tears in it because it is about something. That really happened and we are singing about that. Many of the old songs was wrote about a tragedy that really happened and even when you get in the love songs of the old songs, that was a true happening in love."

I like this because, like what Bill Monroe said about "true songs" and "ancient tones," it shifts the focus past what's on the surface—banjos and tempos and how the music sounds—to what's at the very heart of bluegrass.

And this is the fellow who sang tenor on Somehow Tonight, 'Tis Sweet To Be

Remembered, and Over The Hills To The Poorhouse (which he co-wrote with Lester Flatt). He would know.

Clayton Knight

I think it's strange that folks get so uptight about "traditional" bluegrass. For a tradition, it's mighty young (70 years, or so?), and one that was intentionally created, through experimentation. Those early bands tried lots of things, from walking bass to diminished chords (some of those great fiddlers were good jazz players) to—yes—Bingo Chords (what I call Chemistry Chords).

And lots of the songs that are considered "traditional" had their sources in other genres. For example, *Sitting on Top of The World* is older than bluegrass. And others that seem to have been accepted into the canon are newer but from other genres. 1952 Vincent Black Lightning comes to mind.

Topher Gayle

Bluegrass has been around long enough to have a tradition. Don't get bogged down comparing varieties of instrumentation, vocals, dress and interpretation against an established tradition. You'd kill yourself trying, and maybe alienate some friends. Instead, just judge the music by whether it's part of the tradition or a branch of it. Saying bluegrass is a just a style of music may sound like a big simplistic exaggeration. However, I'll keep trying to make the point with a stick of dynamite!

Joe Ross

I think if Bill Monroe were alive today he would be grabbing and incorporating all kinds of stuff like he did in the '40s. Bluegrass draws from many different sources and is most certainly not a dead language like Latin. Look what bands like Greensky Bluegrass are doing: They're playing Talking Heads covers and it's totally cool! Bill Monroe would be all over that like white on rice. Just sayin'...

Roger Lemstrom

Listen to Jimmie Rodgers' version of "Muleskinner." Then listen to Bill Monroe's version. Monroe's version is "bluegrass."

Dave Elliot

Not only did Earl play with Dylan, he AND bluegrass whistle-blower Lester Flatt played Dylan tunes!

Julian Root

Part of the difficulty with defining bluegrass music is how subjective it is, and attempting to do it by a set of rules has not always been positive for the music as a whole. We tend to think of bluegrass music this way: "I know it when I hear it," and it might be better to leave it at that than to define it by repertoire, vocal stylings, or by a specific set of instruments, because as soon as we do that, we find that rules are being broken right and left, yet we're still hearing what we instinctively feel to be "bluegrass music."

Take the instrument rules, for example (and different people define these differently). If we say "it must feature Scruggs-style banjo," we then have to consider Bill Monroe's or Flatt and Scruggs' banjo-less recordings to be some other kind of music. If we opt for the negative rules: "bluegrass music must not have drums, electric instruments, or wind instruments" we again face broken rules by Bill Monroe himself, the music's father and namesake, along with most of the first generation of bluegrass artists.

I've often thought it was ironic that there are more songs played with drums and electric instruments on the classic bluegrass show "Truegrass" that I host on SiriusXM, than there are on the progressive show, "Derailed." It certainly shows that what makes something "bluegrass" or even "traditional bluegrass" has less to do with what instruments are being played than with how they're being played.

Part of the reason for that discrepancy is that a lot of that earlier music was recorded before anyone was terribly concerned about rules or orthodoxy in the music. Reno and Smiley (who may have been the first, if not one of the first acts in any genre of music to use the electric bass) were more concerned with defining their own sound than they were with making sure they adhered to a standard defined by someone else, and associated with Bill Monroe, a direct competitor.

Though most of the first generation of bluegrass artists shunned the term, "bluegrass," it became a convenient way to categorize a string band sound that was influenced by the sound of Bill Monroe's band. This was particularly useful in getting

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Steeplegrass: A Treasured Musical Community *Cont. from pg. 8*

pushed those desks out to the perimeter of the big rectangular room and formed the pickers' circle. There was a portable blackboard positioned at an opening of the circle like where the crescent moon gap would be, and it was here that a banjo picker began to instruct by putting up words and chords using the black marker on a wide paper flipchart.

I was wondering how we were going to cover all the instruments in the student's hands with one banjo. The instructor raced through Earl's Breakdown as an introduction to what might be attainable for us. Wow! The classroom was full of sound bouncing off the hard surfaces. Eric Parrill then grabbed a guitar and began to lay out Flatt and Scruggs' Rolling in My Sweet Baby's Arms from the flipchart and went around the room helping each instrument holder get through the chords. There were a lot of differing abilities in the class by the sound of things.

We met Rich Powell that first night along with Nadine and Ron Swanson. I think that we might have held one more Wednesday night class in the Bagley Center and then the namesake Steeple Center was offered up by Ron and Nadine as a more comfortable

environment. We moved over to their home and its ample-sized church hall. Shortly, within another two months, another banjo instructor was added: John Sigmon, who was co-teaching with Eric.



Pickers at Steeplegrass 2014

Terry: At Nadine and Ron's, the vintage wood floors of the old church resonated comfort, reflecting the hospitality of our hosts. Once class began I forgot where I was and paid close attention to what our teacher was discussing and demonstrating. I was overwhelmed learning to play bluegrass, but that would improve in this class.

We started our evenings in a single group and we were called upon to play by instrument groups. As the evening progressed, we broke into small jam circles with a representative from each instrument. As

we became more experienced, we had regular class performances of polished tunes and songs.

Eventually we progressed to band scrambles on class nights. In time, I grew from fearing to even play one "wrong note" to enjoying taking breaks publicly in class and later at festivals. I'm thankful for the Steeple Center classes and the musical education,

but more importantly for the community it fostered, then and now.



Chick Rose and others at 2003 Steeplegrass reunion

Gary: My work during those days, as a ship's engineer, took me away from home for about four months at a time, and back for the same amount of time on vacation. When I returned more than six months from the first class, a fresh group of bluegrass faces was there. During this round of classes I made bluegrass pals of Yvonne McMillan, Terry Thomas, Hank Sowerwine, and Fred Holnagel. We formed into a fledgling bluegrass band. I was thrilled to meet and pick with Chuck Davidshofer, Dee Ann Arneson, Doug Sammons, Fiddling Dave Trainor, Jim Hancock, Charlie Williamson, and Tom Martin. The cassette tapes and loaned records were circulating among us. These bluegrassers have remained good friends ever since, and have been musical inspirations for me.

On the next rotation in from working at sea, I came to class with my wife Terry and the instructors had changed again; this time to just one Texan. That would be the venerable Chick Rose. Chick brought a gift for organizing the instruction to accommodate young kids and to integrate them into the class's band scramble. He was much more involved in how to sell a song vocally, and very positively coached the bands that were forming. Chick would also give a newly created band a safe first stage experience at a holiday ramble on the Steeple Center stage. Chick and Ron Swanson served as the sound crew to pull it off professionally.

After playing around town for a variety of paid and free benefit jobs we got a super opportunity when we were invited to play



Steeplegrass Kids

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Steeplegrass: A Treasured Musical Community *cont. from pg 11*

live on KBOO-FM Community Radio's bluegrass show, Music from the True Vine. We played during Ian Joel's show and that was way cool.

Terry: Yes, bands were formed at every level of musicianship. Our classes gave us instant friends to jam with at festivals and it led to a burgeoning community of musician friends. We admired and appreciated everyone who ever played in class. We took pride in the successes of others. Those years of class unified us.

Gary: Even back then we knew we were fortunate to be a part of this class. Chick emphasized jam etiquette from the start and fostered the talented young kids whose parents brought them to class: Ryan, Scott and Martin Stevens, Jason and Tracy Barlow, Tyson and Lully Wilder and others. Word got out that this class was an opportunity for young people to play and this eventually led to Chick's Kids that expanded to become part of Wintergrass and the Columbia Gorge Bluegrass Festival.

Terry: Our own kids grew up going to festivals, enjoying lots of freedom to roam in those environments. There was fun playing on rafts, swimming at the large inlet of Rock Creek at the Columbia Gorge Festival, hiking to the waterfall on the same creek, eating ice cream in hot weather, flying kites, and playing with the family dog. Grandpa joined us for the marathon weekends of jamming. Festival dances with live music, band scrambles, and listening to great professional bands rounded out the festival experience. We graduated from tent camping to used

trailers for added comfort (and a TV for VHS) as the years went on.

Our kids saw us having fun while pursuing what we enjoyed. They experienced music in our home every week when our new band members thoughtfully agreed to meet in our home so that we didn't



Band Scramble 2013



Steeplegrass Reunion, in the barbecue line, 2016

need a sitter and the kids could be exposed to the music.

Gary: Chick Rose remained as the final instructor during the long run of Steeple Center. Our first instructor, Eric Parrill, eventually joined our band on banjo. A later combination of a Steeple-grown band that Terry and I were part of was with Tony and Eileen Rocci in the Tip Top Band, named after our regular Tuesday night slot playing at the Tip Top Tavern in Vancouver's Uptown Village. We had no idea how much friendship and music would come out of attending a music jam class so many years ago. We are grateful to Ron and Nadine Swanson and our patient instructors: Eric Parrill, Chick Rose and John Sigmon.v

Gary and Terry Gertsen moved to the Northwest in 1988 from Northern California with their four children, ages 1, 3, 5, and 7, because of a job opportunity for Gary as a port engineer. They didn't know a soul when they moved to Ridgefield, Washington, but that would change immediately. Gary worked in Portland and Terry volunteered in the schools. Gary already played a half-dozen flat-picked fiddle tunes from Doc Watson and Clarence White records, and he was pursuing mandolin in the "dawg" style of David Grisman. This impressed Terry since he was self-taught. She was no stranger to fiddle music since she had briefly taken lessons in the swing style of Stéphane Grappelli before having children. Steeplegrass fused music with family life and friendship so much so that they turned down several relocation opportunities because of the wonderful music community they had developed here.



Steeplegrass Reunion, 2003 (Sharon, Babette, Greg)



What Is Bluegrass Anyway? *cont. from pg. 10*

the bluegrass festival movement going, but was never meant to imply a specific set of guidelines.

If pressed, I'd be happy with just saying that "bluegrass music" is music influenced directly or indirectly by the sound of Bill Monroe and The Blue Grass Boys. By that definition, some bluegrass music is "bluegrassier" than other kinds, and that's okay. And if it happens to include vibes and drums, that's okay too. That's Bill Monroe-influenced, too.

Chris Jones

The future of bluegrass music is in good hands (even if it sounds nothing like Bill Monroe).

Ever since "Big Mon" famously dismissed the Dobro's role in the genre he is credited for inventing with his now-famous quote, "That ain't no part of nothin'!" the debate has been raging about what constitutes "bluegrass music." Much of what is being created today strays far and wide from the traditional mold, and while there are fine examples of younger bands who are carrying the torch of a traditional sound (Flatt Lonesome and Molly Tuttle come to mind), the trend of genre mixing is accelerating at an ever faster pace throughout the musical world and shows no signs of slowing down. Should lovers of a traditional sound be worried that bluegrass music is dying out? Quite the opposite I'd argue.

Bluegrass is still far too young to be fixed in time like "Classical" but continues to thrive on innovation, change and influence from other musical styles. Indeed, it was born from a mix of country, Celtic folk instrumental tradition, gospel harmony and even blues influences. Throughout the history of the genre new influences and creative geniuses have contributed to the advancement of its sound. It is hard to imagine today's bluegrass without the contributions of Earl Scruggs' 3-fingered roll, the harmonies of the Louvin Brothers, the flatpicking wizardry of Tony Rice or the iconic sound of the Dobro for that matter. (For a great read on this check out Ted Lehman's excellent essay in the roots music journal NoDepression- The danger of genius: Bill Monroe and Tony Rice.) In Ted's words, "The only way that new additions to the

canon of any art form can gain a foothold and move the idea, the form, the sound forward is to pay attention to it, listen to it, consider it. Instant rejection, as in "That ain't bluegrass!" can only doom the new music and that which came before it to a lingering death."

Thanks to YouTube and "the Amazing Slowdowner", younger players are coming of age with access to an unlimited library of music and influences and technical skills that are truly mind boggling. Tomorrow's budding geniuses aren't prone to judging one style over another, and have no problem combining freely. What started a generation ago with newgrass folding in rock and folk has spread far and wide, with the current jamgrass scene now attracting far larger and younger audiences than most picking festivals and exposing a whole new generation of fans to the sound of bluegrass music, albeit a hepped-up dancier version replete with fog machines and laser lights. The recent debut of The Infamous Stringdusters' release "Laws of Gravity" at the top of the bluegrass charts is an indication of just how popular this genre blending style is to the growing younger audiences today.

Though the current crop of progressive newgrass and jamgrass bands are taking bluegrass in a direction that Bill Monroe might hardly recognize save for the instrumentation, there can be little doubt that the musical movement he started continues to draw from an ever more diverse set of influences and will remain strong in its appeal when given plenty of room to grow. Go ahead and give it a listen; you might just like what you hear.

Let's highlight some of the bands who are making a profound impact on a widening audience of young fans. Here is a partial list of some of the upcoming regional and national jamgrass acts which catch my ear. Do yourself a favor and take a free spin on YouTube or better yet, take a chance on a new sound and check out a live show, where the energy of the performance really shines for many of today's musical explorers. These bands are packing festivals, theaters and clubs and selling out iconic venues like Red Rocks in Colorado and the premier Oregon jamgrass festival "Northwest String Summit" each July, perennially headlined by the frenetic Yonder Mountain Stringband with Oregon's own Jake Joliff on mandolin.

Along with the aforementioned Infamous Stringdusters whose sound weaves seamlessly between traditionally styled songs and extended improvisational jams, another band whose star is rising fast is Greensky Bluegrass, who seem to have put their finger on the mercurial magic of the Grateful Dead. It's great to hear this band on occasion take it back to completely "old school" with tributes to Bill Monroe and Flatt and Scruggs. Another fantastic band that is great at paying homage to the roots of bluegrass while presenting their own take is Steep Canyon Rangers.

One of my favorite recent releases and a great live show is Hot Buttered Rum's triple EP "The Kite and the Key" which highlights three different producers and showcases a tried and true traditional sound in the middle five cuts produced by Sally Van Meter sandwiched between jammier and funkier production from Railroad Earth's Tim Carbone and The String Cheese Incident's Kyle Hollingsworth. It's a great example of how deep bluegrass roots allow the branches of the musical tree to spread ever farther.

Maybe it's no real surprise that Portland's upcoming acoustic bands are at least equal parts folk and bluegrass? Fruition—more rocking and folk than bluegrass, but so much fun! The Shook Twins—sibling harmonies and funk/soul arrangements are taking this band onto bigger and bigger stages. More traditional and definitely worth checking out include: The Wildwood, Cascade Crescendo, The Hollerbodies. Let's not forget our Southern Oregon friends, 8 Dollar Mountain.

Regionally there are a few acts which really are coming on strong including The Little Smokies, deserving winners of IBMA's Momentum Artist award, and not afraid to sing about feelings. Brothers Comatose, Poor Man's Whiskey—if you can't dance to these two Bay Area bands, you are probably wearing lead shoes. Steep Ravine—swinging, jazzy. Polecat—Mashing up just about every genre you can think of. Dead Winter Carpenters—another band which is more electric than traditional.

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What Is Bluegrass Anyway? *cont. from pg 13*

We can't talk about jamgrass without mentioning Colorado of course: Leftover Salmon, Troutsteak Revival, Head for the Hills, Elephant Revival, The Goodtime Travelers, Gypsy Moon.

Nashville-based bands which blur the lines to good effect: Frank Solivan and Dirty Kitchen, Chatham County Line, Mipso, The Steel Drivers, Billy Strings Band, Front Country, The Travelin' McCourys, Mandolin Orange among so many others.

I hope you will find a new sound you enjoy in these listings or even if not, at least an appreciation for how diverse the world of bluegrass is becoming, and know that it is definitely in good hands!

Jayson Bowerman

What is bluegrass? Ask Google.
Greg Stone

Bluegrass is a true American-made musical genre. While its roots are varied—fiddle tunes, ballads, and music hall songs from the British Isles; gospel and blues; the improvisational style of jazz—they were combined into a recognizable style and a repertoire created by the original “self-confessional singer/songwriter,” Bill Monroe.

Bluegrass is a conversation between instruments played by people with a common language and musical vocabulary. Bluegrass is acoustic stringband music similar to what was played live at square dances, but ramped up to be a performance vehicle, with searing instrumental solos, thrilling vocals, and gorgeous harmonies!

All of the elements—the singing, instrumentation, and virtuoso soloing and ensemble playing—are essential for good bluegrass. The lyrical content of the songs is generally accessible to a family audience, even though they often deal with death, infidelity, crimes of passion, and other scary things. These are story songs, love songs, gospel songs, cautionary tales, novelty songs, and the occasional borrowing from other musical sources.

One place bluegrass gets lost, and starts to lose its essence, is when the instrumental combination varies too far from the basic six choices: mandolin, guitar, fiddle, banjo, bass, and dobro. There is no bluegrass flute,

saxophone, bodhran, vibes, harmonica, etc. Whenever anybody joins in with these extraneous instruments, it stops being bluegrass. That's also true with songs from far outside the genre, rhythmic signatures that are other than 4/4 or 3/4, or singing that has wildly modern ornamentations. All of these things make it something other than bluegrass. But it can still be music!

Kathy Kallick

To many people bluegrass music hit its zenith in '47-'48 when Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs were members of Bill Monroe's Bluegrass Boys. The combination of Lester's lead and Bill's high tenor vocals and Earl's three-finger banjo playing set the standard. With Chubby Wise on fiddle and Howard Watts on bass, the template was set for what bluegrass bands “should” be.

However, to understand any musical form, one must understand the historical context in which it was formed. For Bill his music was informed by the music he heard around him including string band music, Scottish and Irish fiddle tunes, blues, gospel and country or mountain music (such as Jimmie Rodgers, ballads and brother duets). He distilled his musical vision from all of these influences and by the time he joined up with Lester and Earl, Bill had been playing professionally for over fifteen years, constantly tweaking and honing his sound, trying to play what he heard in his head.

Seventy years have passed since then. Bill's vision has been handed down through all of these decades by performers who hold close to his vision as best they can, using that as a base to work from, while also adding their own unique personalities and influences to it.

As people have been exposed to more and more music, first through radio, then records and now through all the new technologies of mp3s, YouTube videos, etc., the palette of musical colors today is much larger and more diverse than that which Bill was exposed to. Bluegrass music is still the music formed in Bill's imagination and set down by Bill, Lester and Earl, but it is also the music influenced by all of these other inescapable influences in the world today.

We all carry our musical experiences with us and have come to bluegrass music from different entrance points. Some from first

hearing country music and the first- and second-generation performers such as the Stanley Brothers, Larry Sparks or Jimmy Martin; others via folk and rock music and performers such as The Seldom Scene, Tony Rice or The Country Gentlemen. Still others from Old and In the Way, Peter Rowan and Sam Bush.

Today, whether it is a traditional band such as Danny Paisley and Southern Grass, a more contemporary band such as Blue Highway or Balsam Range, or a jam band such as Greensky Bluegrass, it is all bluegrass music through the lens of the performers' influences and personalities. In their own way, they are simply being true to what Bill tried to do: Follow their own muse and play the music they hear in their heads.

Our role as bluegrass fans is to simply listen and enjoy. Find the performers under the great umbrella of bluegrass music who resonate with us and enjoy their music. However, it is important to remember that for bluegrass music to stay strong and vital, it must be inclusive and not laser focused to one historical point in time. Stay true to the root but remember that the music in Bill's mind was his personal vision. Every performer worth his or her weight has to find their own voice. Your opinion of “what bluegrass music is” is just a personal opinion based on your own likes and influences.

Whether it is a bluegrass organization, a bluegrass radio show or a festival, we are only as strong as the base we work from. If your base is too small, you will inevitably fail to survive. If you are true to the root but strive to be inclusive, you have the opportunity to not only survive but to grow. The world is changing every day and music will always change along with it.

Gareth Jenkins



The Late Bloomer: *My Life as a Born-Again Banjo Player* by Lee Kamrass

The banjo makes me smile. When I see it, hear it, play it. Eons ago when I was in my teens, I decided to be different from my peers who were all learning guitar. It was the banjo for me. My first instrument was an open-back Vega I named Clyde. I carved the name inside the wooden rim.

Although I don't want to blame the teacher for not inspiring me to greatness, looking back I honestly think he didn't know how to play banjo. After about a year of dull plucking I put Clyde down in favor of a guitar, this time with no teacher. I never excelled in guitar either, but I lugged Clyde and my (unnamed) guitar around for

years, both keeping me company in New York City during college, followed by a theater tour around the country, through a song-writing phase, and into my hippie drop-out period. Then one fateful day Clyde was stolen from my French Quarter apartment in New Orleans. A search of local pawn shops was fruitless. Clyde was gone.

After that, I didn't have a banjo for more than 40 years. However, about 2½ years ago I was ready to try playing it again. A friend of a friend had an old banjo that she agreed to sell me cheap since it had been hanging on her wall for years. At the time neither of us knew that it was a vintage Morrison banjo, built sometime between 1892 and 1912 (that information came later, courtesy of Ron Hudiberg). This time I really wanted to learn how to play this

instrument even though I knew it wasn't going to be quick or easy. But what the heck? I had the time!

I looked online to find Portland bluegrass resources and came across the Taborgrass website. I decided to check it out, but

me, and continues to be a resource that I depend upon. The common catalog of tunes, the classes, the discipline of daily practicing, the jams, the friends, the social aspect of making music—all happened far beyond what I originally envisioned.

Through Taborgrass I found an inspiring mentor in Mike Stahlman, a saint of patience and a master teacher. By the end of my first year I felt confident enough to attend a couple of festivals. During my second year of playing, I started jamming and cramming.

At every opportunity I would play with others, and worked at adding new tunes to my repertoire (something I am continually attempting to do). The 2016 summer festival



maybe not take my banjo with me. Like most new musicians, I felt insecure about trying to play in front of anyone other than my cat and dog. And my cat wasn't very reassuring since she would run out of the room the instant I picked up the instrument. Then I bargained with myself that I'd take the banjo but leave it in the car. When I got to St. David of Wales Church (where Taborgrass meets), I figured I would take the banjo inside with me, but leave it in the case. The instant I walked into the room, Greg Stone warmly welcomed me with a smile and the ambiguous statement, "Oh, another banjo player." I mumbled that I was there just to watch. At that point Greg almost opened the case for me, led me to an empty seat and introduced me to the other members of the banjo contingency. Taborgrass was a jumping-off point for

season was a revelation to witness the multitude of talented bluegrass players. The festivals I attended were particularly welcoming to new players because of Donna and Joe Schaal, who set up and hosted comfortable spaces for a slow jam they dubbed "Turtlegrass," in addition to organizing group potlucks, soup contests and "sing for your supper" performances.

Like the lyrics in "Poor Wayfaring Stranger," I know my way is rough and steep. Learning banjo will be an ongoing effort. But playing this instrument has joyously transformed my life. Banjo has always made me happy, and I think it always will.

One final note: If you come across an old Vega banjo that has "Clyde" scrawled inside the rim, please let me know!



OBA Steve Waller Memorial Fund

History

In honor of his significant contributions to music and the Oregon Bluegrass Association (OBA), the Steve Waller Memorial Fund (the Fund) was established after Steve's passing in June 2015. The purpose of the Fund is to honor Steve through awarding financial grants to deserving individuals, to further their education, professional growth, or the advancement, preservation or support of bluegrass music.

Resources supporting the Waller Fund include: OBA general account funds, donations from the Oregon bluegrass community, and, potentially, grants received from various other organizations. OBA's goal is to receive enough support to endow the Waller fund, so that the principal balance remains intact in perpetuity, and regular earnings support annual grant awards. Until that point is achieved, OBA will strive to maintain financial resources to award funds deemed sufficient for recipients.

OBA administers the Waller Fund. Grant awards may vary in amount, and may be awarded to one or more recipients. OBA's Waller Fund Committee will review applications and recommend award recipient(s) and amount(s) to the OBA Board of Directors for final approval. The OBA aims to present the award annually at the Annual Meeting in April.

Scope

Steve Waller Memorial Fund grants will be awarded annually to individuals or groups with involvement in the Oregon Bluegrass community. The OBA Waller Fund Committee will consider all requests received through completion of the Waller Grant Application Form by the due date.

Criteria

1. Applicant(s) must be an Oregon Bluegrass Association member (individual or band) and the primary award recipient must be an Oregon resident.
2. Applicants must have a stated financial need.
3. Applicants may request funds for musical tuition or lessons, professional development, or the advancement of the bluegrass genre.
4. Applicants must complete and submit the Waller Grant Application Form by the due date.
5. Applications may not be submitted by a current OBA Board Member or relative.
6. Grant award payments will be made by OBA to the entity designated on the Waller Grant Application Form.
7. OBA may revise the criteria and Waller Fund application process from time to time, as needed.



Steve Waller and Bill Monroe

Use Of Funds

1. Awards are intended to be used within the OBA's mission statement to "promote, encourage, foster, and cultivate the preservation, appreciation, understanding, enjoyment, support, and performance of bluegrass and other closely related music."
2. Awards are to be used within the one-year grant cycle and the Grant Use Summary Form to be completed by June of the year following the award.
3. Submit the form by January 1 to wallerapplication@oregonbluegrass.org or mail by mail to the OBA.
4. Recipients of the award may be asked to present their use of the award at the OBA general membership meeting held annually in April. If awardees are unable to present in person, a statement may be prepared.



OBA Steve Waller Memorial Fund

Grant Award Information and Application

Applications Due January 1, 2018

Submit to: OBA

P.O. Box 1115

Portland, OR 97207

Or:

wallerapplication@oregonbluegrass.org

Date: _____

Applicant Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Best Time to Contact _____

Are you an OBA Board Member or Relative? _____

(Use a separate page to complete the following section, if necessary.)

Describe your involvement in the Oregon Bluegrass Community.

Describe the Use of Waller Grant Funds _____

For What Time Period Will Funds Be Used _____

How Will the Grant Funds Further Your Musical or Career Aspirations?

Provide information on who would receive Waller Funds from OBA, should you be awarded a Grant (name, address, phone number, email address)

For questions about this application, contact:
wallerapplication@oregonbluegrass.org

Thank You and Good Luck!



Southern Oregon Voices *History of Bluegrass Music Pt. 1*

by Bill Kline

Hayward was not an unusual horse, but he did play a banjo and found solace in clawhammer.

“Woe be unto Snuffy Jenkins, if he had to pick with these old hoofs. Just call me an old-time Stallion and I’ll play you an old-time tune. Flopped-eared Mule has always been one of my favorites.”

Elsie was who Elsie had always been. One sweet cow with a smile that charmed a whole nation. Perched up on those old haunches, she was a perfect match for that oversized doghouse bass that she played so well.

“Hayward, you old glue factory, slow down on that banjo. Steady goes it. I am just one slap-happy bovine that is ready to do some serious jammin’.”

Gary, that most unkempt goat, had a horn for the fiddle. He could get both horns going and play mean twin fiddles too. Sometimes his close friends would call him Billy, but never Billy Goat.

“I ain’t no Billy Club and I ain’t no Billy Jack. I am a goat I know, but you just call me Billy.”

Now having a pig as a singer in any band would be difficult, but two were a topper. Moreen and Peggy, the Pig sisters, sang hard-core, toe-tapping, harmonific bluegrass like no beasts had ever sung before. Those cloven hooves worked wonders on that double-headed dobro as well. Regular swine that knew how to preserve that down-home sound.

“So, Moreen, do you think the audience knows when I am taking a break, or do you suppose they think I am you?”

“I reckon they think you are me when you are not taking a break. Must be that cute little snout.”

And let’s not forget that crazy guitar dog, Larry. Definitely the biggest hound I had ever seen. Paws stretched two fretboards. Wild eyes, ears cropped back and a smell that set any barnyard on fire. Definitely the star of the group. And, you guessed it, lead singer as well.

“You common barnyard critters can sure jam up a storm. Stay with me and I will take you all the way to stardom. Straight out of the pasture and into respectability.”

Farmer Bob was one of the nicest men you would ever want to meet. Kind to the critters, and he loved bluegrass music. He even built a

stage in the barn. However, the saddest thing was that Bob wanted so much to play with all his friends. With Hayward the Horse on banjo, Elsie the Cow on bass, Gary the Goat on fiddle, Moreen and Peggy the Pig sisters on harmony and dobro, and crazy Larry the Dog on guitar and lead vocals, Bob knew he could have the best bluegrass band ever. But they gave Bob no respect.

“Maybe if you put strings on that harmonica, we can let you stand behind us on stage.”

“You just don’t like me because I am human.”

“Just don’t like that inhumane sound that comes out of that French harp. Have you ever thought of playing the blues?”

“You think people only play the blues. Well, I can play bluegrass as well and I have this harmonica to prove it.”

They were not very smart, as they had let Bob lead them all into the corral. There were four gates on that corral and Bob, with harmonica in mouth, closed one gate behind him. His brother Scott stepped into the corral at the opposite end, bagpipes strapped to his body, the endless drone commencing. He too closed the gate behind him. The small band of bluegrass animals was uneasy and their ears began to suffer greatly.

Two gates remained open, but through one of these Bob’s wife Anna appeared, clutching her most voluminous accordion. She squeezed hard. The horde of critters cringed, and the gate closed behind her. All the animals were unnerved, and all at once they turned and charged toward the last remaining gate. But it was too late. Through that last gate entered a mass of Bob’s kin, each holding an obscure Celtic instrument. Picking them, bowing them, blowing them, banging upon them and moving towards this critter-based bluegrass band.

Was bluegrass music being put out to pasture that day? Not hardly. Using his banjo as a shield, Hayward raced past the bagpipes, ran right between the tin whistles and the mountain dulcimer, leaped clear past the accordion and over the corral fence. All those horrid instruments were in disarray while the remaining critters quickly tuned and began to play a breakdown to end all breakdowns. They were fighting with great passion to save the very music we love. But Farmer Bob and his clan were regrouping. He was determined to capture our musical heritage and twist it into his own creation. Hope began to fade again for our small band of critter pickers. Farmer Bob

stepped forward and declared a new day. “Unless there is some critter out there man enough to stop me, I will declare a new day for bluegrass music and I will be its victor.”

All stood in resignation and silence filled the air. But not for long.

You could hear a gallop in the distance, and then finally over the hill and into view came Hayward. But he was not alone. Riding him through the breeze was the proudest man, and a man who loved those critters’ music. It was Mr. Bill Monroe and he carried a secret weapon. He clutched an old mandolin, an F5 if you must know, and he raised it over his head as Hayward leaped high over the corral fence. As they raced towards the other critters, Hayward let that banjo ring out as Bill let chops and licks rip through that gang of inappropriate instruments. The rest of the critter band raced to Bill’s side, as Farmer Bob and all his kin dropped their instruments and ran off, never to be seen, and even better, never to be heard again.

I don’t think you can say Bill Monroe invented bluegrass music that day with the magic of his F5. But I think we can safely say that he changed the music forever, never to be outdone again. Hayward, Elsie, and the rest of the critters got together and made a decision that changed our world. They owed such a great debt that, with tears in their eyes, they handed over bluegrass music—lock, stock, and barrel—to Bill Monroe. Among us human folk Bill became the father of bluegrass music, but let us never forget those critters and the wonderful music they played as they stood for all of us in that corral, battling the bagpipes, harmonica, accordion, and all those obscure Celtic instruments. Our music is safe and still alive thanks to a horse, a cow, a goat, a dog, a couple of pigs, and one proud man racing through the breeze playing his most magical of mandolins. Yes, folks, that was Bluegrass music, the way it was meant to be played. It just doesn’t get any better.

Joe Ross says:

This month’s “Southern Oregon Voice” is from our devoted jamming friend and transplant from Texas, Bill Kline. He’s made a big impact on our local musical scene after relocating to Glide, Oregon, about a year ago. He plays solo shows, as well as with Twisted Pick, Mountain Creek String Band, and the Oregon Oldtime Fiddlers’ Association. We also see him regularly at our OBA-Roseburg Chapter jams on the Third Sunday each month in Sutherlin.



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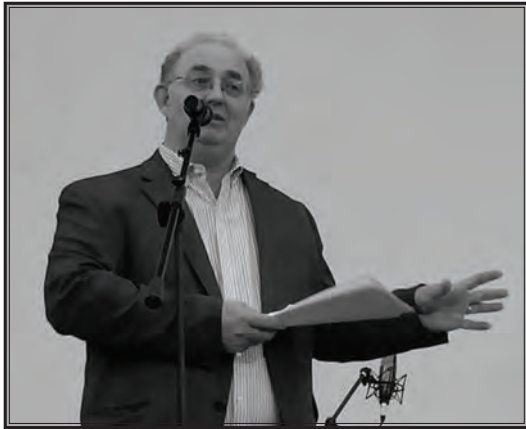
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Sunny South Photos and Albums



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John & Annie



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Show Finale



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The Loafers



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Bethel Mountain Band



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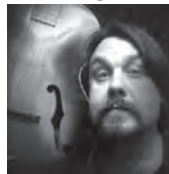
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Ask Aunt Pearl

By Linda Leavitt

Dear Aunt Pearl,

I heard that you tumbled down the stairs while you were playing your mandolin, searching for that lost chord! Did your mandolin survive? Did you mess up your beautiful hair? I hope you heal right up, so you can keep on playin' that purty music! I've noticed that there's this elderly gentleman that makes it out to a lot of bluegrass festivals. He sets up a pretty nice camp—always warm, comfortable, and inviting. He has these tapestry things hanging up to make walls; he always has hot herbal tea brewing. The camp looks like a hippie camp or an opium den—I can't tell which. I have noticed that he has a propensity to stay up until daylight and play the bluegrass music. He surrounds himself with youthful musicians; he plays the banjo and drinks moonshine.

I was just wondering: Is he robbing the youngsters of their youth? Is that how he manages to stay up all night? Is he a cult member or something dark like that? If I start drinking moonshine, will I be able to banjo all night like he does?

Jes Wanderyn

Dear Jes Wanderyn,

Thanks so much for your kind concern about my back, which is now about as crooked as a cow path. My hair is back to normal, after a month of looking like a cat's been sucking on it. Honey, during the month of January, I was just a sight. I'm happy to say my prognosis is good. My doctor says I will recover enough to keep calling 'em like I see 'em.

Now...let's get back to your question about that elderly gentleman. I know that feller well. You are correct to feel cautious about spending time at his camp. I always have a big old time when I find myself over in his compound, but what you need to know is that his camp is a vortex, where time has no purchase.

If you go over there, remember: If your momma finds out, not even Jesus will be able to help you.

If you have a strict schedule, you should probably avoid wandering over there. If you do find yourself there, remember that you will not be able to leave before the sun rises.

As you mumble your goodbyes and stumble out of there on Sunday morning, the sunrise may look more beautiful than usual. I'll tell you what: That man can charm birds out of trees, and his wife is a beautiful saint.

See you there!

Love,
Aunt Pearl

Dear Aunt Pearl,

Why do you talk so much between songs at jams?

Don't you know any better?

You're just a ratchet jaw!

Sincerely,

John Wayne

Dear Mr. Wayne,

First off, let me say that I love your movie, "The Quiet Man," except for that part where you drag



Maureen O'Hara over a mile through the moors. I recognize you are a man of few words, and you just want to pick.

Well, let me tell you this much: There surely is a balance between sharing a joke between numbers during a jam, and hogging the floor. I promise I will try to do better. Still, I need to get in 10,000 words a day, just to stay healthy. Maybe you could share a joke or a story yourself. If you can talk as fast as me, I might let you get a word in, but you gotta be quick!

Love,
Aunt Pearl

Do you have a question for Aunt Pearl?

Email her at lleavitt@comcast.net.



Linda Leavitt plays guitar, mandolin and sings with Mountain Honey. She is the vocal instructor at Taborgrass and loves to teach folks to sing.

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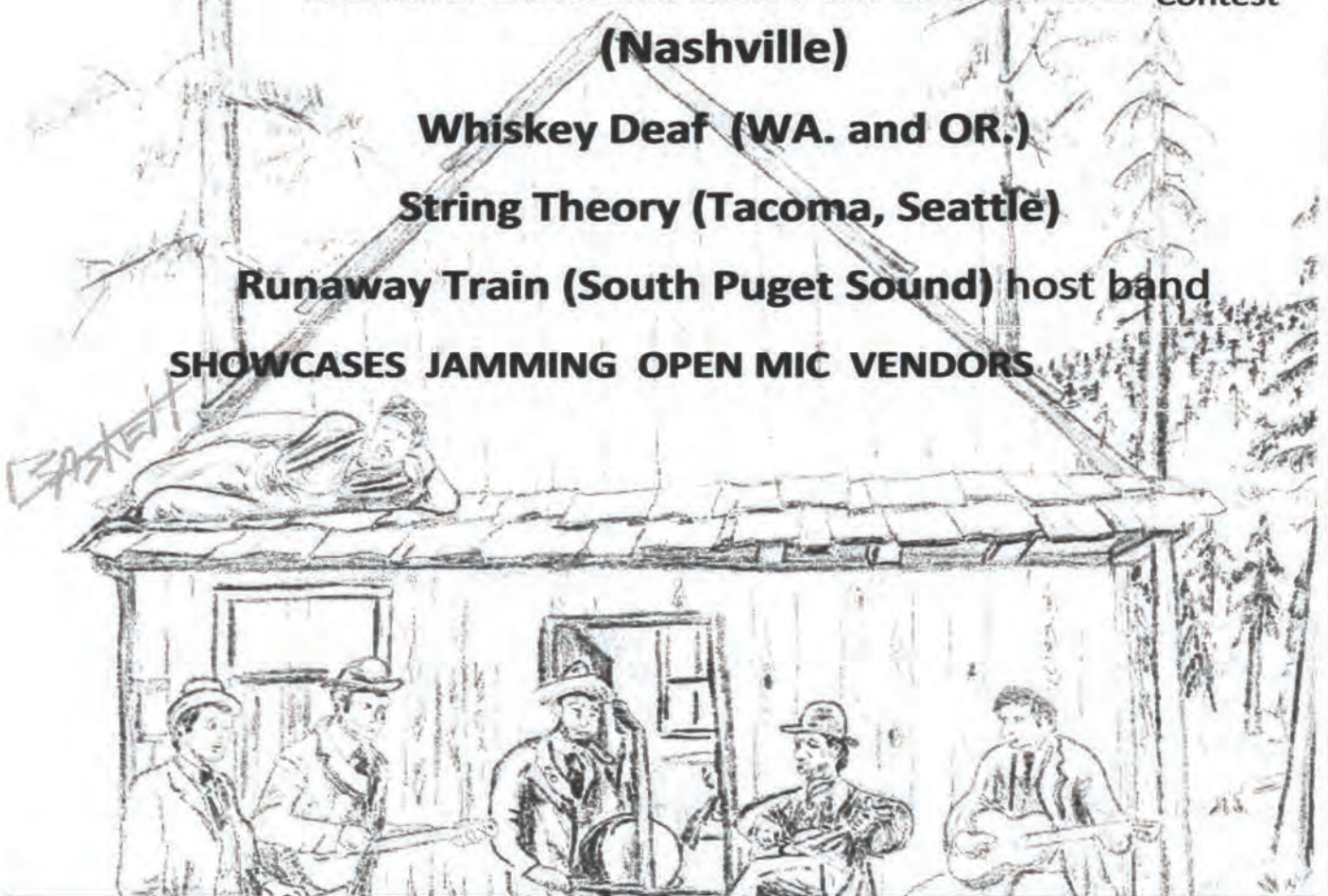
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(along the scenic Umpqua River 12 miles west of Sutherlin, Oregon – Gate opens 1 pm Saturday)

**Ten Bands, Potlucks, Jamming, Gospel Show,
Workshops, Hiking, Swimming, Fishing.
Donations Appreciated for Campground Rental**

Facebook "UmpquaValleyBluegrass" for details

Info: Joe Ross Tel. 541-673-9759

E-mail rossjoe@hotmail.com



17TH ANNUAL

**WHEELER COUNTY
BLUEGRASS
FESTIVAL**



**June 30 - July 2, 2017
Fossil, Oregon**

Join us for this *Free Event* Featuring:

**True North
Grass Station
Honey Don't
Buffalo Kin
Grand Young Opry
Misty River
Wheeler County Ramblers ... and more!**

Parade *Workshops *Fossil Song Contest *Jamming

www.wheelercountybluegrass.org





2017 FESTIVAL CALENDAR



May 13-14
Park Blocks Bluegrass Festival
Portland, OR
 1126 SE Park, First Congregational Church.
www.parkblocksbluegrass.com

May 19-20
13th Annual Bluegrass From The Forest
Shelton, WA
 Featuring Michael Cleveland and Flamekeeper, Rob Ickes and Trey Hensley, Green Mountain Bluegrass Band, North Country, The Blackberry Bushes, and host band Runaway Train
www.bluegrassfromtheforest.com

May 21
15th Annual Steeplegrass Reunion
Lewisville Park
Battle Ground, WA
 From Noon 'til Dark.
 Annual picnic and jam. Steeplegrass alumni, fans and friendly jammers welcome.
 Donations appreciated.
 Contact Rich Powell
Powellr5923@q.com

June 2-4
The Goldendale Pickers Festival
Ekone Park
Goldendale, WA
 "\$10 gets you 10 million stars, and all the old-time, bluegrass, and country you can carry!" Covers all shows and camping.
westcoates@juno.com
Clairell2002@yahoo.com

June 9-11
Sacajawea Bluegrass Festival and Dutch Oven Rendezvous
Sacajawea State Park
Pasco, WA
www.MCTAMA.org (509) 492-1555

June 14-24
Weiser, ID
National Old-Time Fiddle Contest
www.fiddlecontest.com
 Weiser Friends of the Fiddle
 June 14th -24th
www.stickerville.org

June 15-18
42nd Annual Father's Day Bluegrass Festival
Grass Valley, CA
www.fathersdayfestival.com

June 16-18
Wenatchee River Bluegrass Festival
Chelan County Expo Center (Fairgrounds) Cashmere, WA
 Marie Vecchio (509) 548-1230
 Chuck Egner (509) 548-8663
www.cashmerecoffeehouse.com/wrbfest.html

June 30- July 2
Wheeler County Bluegrass Festival
Wheeler County Courthouse
Fossil, OR
 (541) 763-2400
info@wheelercountybluegrass.org
www.wheelercountybluegrass.org

July 13-16
16th Annual Northwest String Summit
North Plains, OR
 Join us at gorgeous Horning's Hideout for our 16th year!
www.stringsummit.com.

July 15
Lake Charles Gospel Bluegrass Music Festival
 Jefferson, OR. Free

July 21-23
41st Annual Darrington Bluegrass Festival
Darrington, WA

The Northwest's oldest running bluegrass festival celebrates our 40th year!
 Diana Morgan (360) 436-1179
www.darringtonbluegrass.com

July 27-30
Gorgegrass (formerly known as Columbia Gorge Bluegrass Festival)
Skamania County Fairgrounds
Stevenson, WA
www.new.columbiagorgebluegrass.net

August 4-6
17th Annual Winlock Picker's Fest
Winolequa Park
Winlock, WA
 Marv Sobolesky
Info@wamamusic.com
www.winlockpickersfest.com

August 11-13
Blue Waters Bluegrass Festival
Medical Lake, WA
www.bluewatersbluegrass.org

August 11-13
Mt. St. Helens Bluegrass Festival
Toledo, WA
 Mark Phillips & IIIrd Generation, and some of your favorite PNW bands!
 Workshops, band scramble, free Sunday bluegrass gospel concert.
 General (360) 785-3478
generalandbetty7@msn.com
washingtonbluegrassassociation.org

August 13-20
The Centralia Campout
Centralia, WA
 An Old Time Campout with square dances in the evening, meteor showers and lots of Jamming. No stage shows, performers, or scrambles. Lots of friends, stories, tunes and songs. Potlucks and river picking.
www.centraliacampout.com

Continued on page 38





2017 FESTIVAL CALENDAR

Cont. on page 37



August 18-20

**Kettle Falls Camp and Jam
(Formerly Newport Music Festival)**

Happy Dell City Park

Kettle Falls, WA

Free dry camping on festival grounds with festival pass, full hook-ups adjacent at Panorama RV park.

Mark@tricountymusic.org

590-675-6590

www.tricountymusic.org

August 24-28

Rainier Pickin' Party

Wilkowski Park

Rainier, WA

davidwuller@gmx.com

360-832-8320

August 25-27

Oregon Bluegrass Associations 10th Annual Bluegrass and Old Time

Picker's Retreat

ZigZag Mountain Farm

ZigZag, OR

Band showcases, square dancing, and three days of non-stop jamming with your OBA friends!

www.oregonbluegrass.org

September 1-3

Tumbleweed Music Festival

Howard Amon Park

Richland, WA

18th annual festival

Three Rivers Folklife Society

Music, dance, workshops, open mic, storytelling.

(509) 528-2215

mail@3rfs.org

www.3rfs.org/tmf

September 4

Timberline Mountain Music Festival

Timberline Lodge, OR

Eric Kallio, Jackstraw, Caitlin Canty,

Sam Baker, Marley's Ghost

Back porch pickin' with the Taborgrass Players!

www.timberlinelodge.com/mountain-music-festival

(503) 272-3134

September 8-10

Sisters Folk Festival

Sisters, OR

Three day celebration of American

Roots music – from blues to Bluegrass.

www.sistersfolkfestival.com

September 9-10

Eagleview Bluegrass and Folk Festival

Eagleview Campground (on the Main Umpqua River)

Sutherlin, OR

Gate opens 2pm Saturday \$20-30 sliding scale donation

Evening shows, potluck, campfire jam.

On the beautiful Umpqua River. Fishing and hiking, plenty of camping.

Joe Ross (541) 673-9759

rossjoe@hotmail.com

September 22-24

Tygh Valley Bluegrass Jamboree

Tygh Valley, OR

Held annually on the grounds of the Wasco County Fairgrounds

Debra Holbrook

541-489-3434

Tons of camping... Only need a reservation for hook-ups.



Scheduled Jams: Oregon and SW Washington

Though we try to stay up to date, times and locations change - always call first!

Sunday

CLACKAMAS/HAPPY VALLEY: String Along Jam - 2nd and 4th Sundays 2:15 - 5 pm

Bluegrass and more. Happy Valley Library Community Room, 13793 SE Sieben Park Way, Happy Valley, OR 97015. Located on the circle beyond the shopping center, off Sunnyside Rd. at SE 147th. Look for the sidewalk signboard near the Library.

For information: Charlie, mels677@aol.com or LeaAnne, ldenb@juno.com

CORVALLIS: EZ Jam - Every 1st and 3rd Sunday 2 - 4 pm.

A friendly jam for beginning and intermediate players. Meet at a private residence.

For information and directions: Call Christine Robins (541) 738-2610

KLAMATH FALLS: Bluegrass Jam - First Sunday of every month 1 - 5 pm.

Mia's and Pia's Pizzeria and Brewhouse, 3545 Summers Lane, Klamath Falls, OR 97603

For information: Ben Coker (541) 783-3478, benfcoker@gmail.com

PORTLAND: OBA Jam - First Sunday of every month, October - April, 12 noon - 4:30 pm.

Portland Audubon Center, 5151 NW Cornell Road, Portland. All levels of bluegrass players are welcome. Bring an instrument, your voice, a song, and a friend. Come make music among the birds. Small donation of \$5.00 requested to help cover room rental.

For information: Rich Powell powellR5923@q.com

PORTLAND: Turn Key Bluegrass Jam - Every Sunday 2 - 5 pm.

The O'Neill Public House, 6000 N.E. Glisan St. (60th and Glisan)

Ready to go and everyone gets a turn. The Turn Key Jam (formerly Off Key) is a welcoming jam that is attended by an established group of intermediate players. All levels of players are encouraged, including beginners and advanced players. It's a comfortable, safe place for all to play music together.

For information: Jeff, msglimbaugh@comcast.net or (360) 256-8123

ROSEBURG: OBA Roseburg Jam - 3rd Sunday, 1 - 5 pm, year round.

Sutherland Senior Center, 202 E. Central Ave., Sutherlin, OR 97479

Bluegrass Jam - all levels encouraged.
For information: (541) 679-0553, lizcraun42@gmail.com

SISTERS: Strings in Sisters - Third Sunday of the month 1:30 - 3:30 pm.

The Pines Clubhouse, 612 Brooks Camp Rd. All welcome. No charge.

For information: Phil Minor, (541) 719-0497 or Bruce Barnes, (541) 728-3190

Monday

BEAVERTON: Rambling Bluegrass Jam - Every Monday night all year (except Christmas Day if that falls on a Monday) 6 - 9 pm

Open jam in semi-private banquet room with lively tempos and jammers eager to try new material. Papa's Pizza Parlor, 15700 Blueridge Dr., Beaverton, OR 97006

For information: rambling@ramblingbluegrass.org or website http://ramblingbluegrass.org Phone: Pizza Parlor (503) 531-7220

Tuesday

Jon Cooper DUNDEE Bluegrass Jam: 1st and 3rd Tuesday Each Month, 7 - 9 pm

Held at La Sierra Mexican Grill, 1179 Hwy 99W, Dundee, OR 97115. Features bluegrass/old country music. All skill levels welcome.

For information: Steve Edward, stephene47@frontier.com, (503) 985-1945, Tracy Hankins, hankinstracy@gmail.com, (503) 720-6629, Ron Taylor, ron@taylorpaintingofportland.com, (503) 625-7254

EUGENE: Bluegrass Jam Every Tuesday 9 pm - 1 am

Sam Bond's Garage, 407 Blair Blvd, Eugene. This year 'round jam offers good food and micro brews. Jam Hosts: Sunday Sam and Sean Shanahan.

For information: (541) 431-6603

HILLSBORO: Rock Creek Bluegrass Jam: Every Tuesday all year, 7 - 9 pm

McMenamin's Rock Creek Tavern, 10000 N.W. Old Cornelius Pass Rd., Hillsboro, OR 97124. Established, open intermediate and advanced bluegrass music jam. It is requested that only bluegrass instruments are used and no songbooks/tab.

For information: Tim, timhowell74@gmail.com

LINCOLN CITY: Bluegrass and Old Time Music Jam Every Tuesday 6 - 9 pm

North Lincoln Eagles Lodge, SW 32nd at Hwy 101. All levels and ages welcome.

For information: Carla, (541) 418-1779

Wednesday

BEAVERTON: Bluegrass Jam - Every Wednesday 6:30 - 9:30 pm

Round Table Pizza, 10150 SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy, Beaverton, OR (east of Hwy 217) *For information: Jane, janeromfo5@gmail.com*

EUGENE: Jam - Each Wednesday 7 - 9 pm

Music Masters Studios in South Eugene, at the shopping center at 40th & Donald. All skill levels are encouraged. Good players stop in frequently and sit right in with newbies. Some old time and old country tunes filter in with the bluegrass.

For information: Sean McGowan, (541) 510-1241, http://www.musicmastersstudio.com/

Thursday

BEND: Bluegrass Jam - 2nd and 4th Thursdays, year round, 7 - 9 pm

Board room of the Bend-LaPine School District, downtown Bend, between Wall and Bond Streets, across from the Public Library.

For information: Becky Brown and Verda Hinkle (541) 318-7341, hinklebrown@bend-broadband.com Call or email to confirm before you head out.

GRANTS PASS: Acoustic Bluegrass Jam - 3rd Thursday, 6 - 8:30 pm

Wild River Pub meeting room, N.E. F Street. *For information: Gary or Debbie Antonucci, hugoants@msn.com*

VANCOUVER, WA: Bluegrass Slow Jam - Every Thursday 6:30 - 9:30 pm

Barberton Grange, 9400 NE 72nd Ave, Vancouver WA 98665 Please note this is a slow jam, with the belief that bluegrass is a non-competitive participation sport. All talent levels are invited to participate. No amplified instruments. Listeners welcome. No charge, but there is a donation jar for those who would like to support the Grange for allowing use of their facility.

For information: Chuck Rudkin, pbr@comcast.net

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Scheduled Jams: Oregon and SW Washington

Friday

CENTRALIA, WA: Acoustic Bluegrass Jam – 3rd Friday, 6 – 9 pm, October through April

Sponsored by WAMA (Washington Acoustic Music Association). Informal event with a few small jams taking place at the same time. Oakview Grange, 2715 North Pearl Street, Centralia, WA. Donations for facility costs are encouraged.

For information: Cheryl (360) 870-8447, cheryl.terry68@gmail.com

DALLAS: Open Acoustic Jam - Every Friday, 7 – 10 pm

Guthrie Park in Dallas.

For information: Sally Clark, (503) 623-0874 or email Jim, dusterjim@hotmail.com

SCIO: Old Country, Folk, Bluegrass and Gospel Jam – Fourth Friday, 7 pm to 12 midnight

ZCJB Hall, 38704 N. Main St., Scio, OR, www.zhall.org. Free event, but donations accepted to support the historic hall. Beginners welcome.

Please bring goodies to share.

For information: Starla (541) 223-2343, Starla91262@yahoo.com

Saturday

PORTLAND: Taborgrass Bluegrass Class & Jam - Every Saturday Through May. 10 am – 1 pm for beginning class and jam; 1 pm – 4 pm for intermediate class and jam. "The Sessions" offers two small jams guided by professional musicians, 1 – 2:30 pm every Saturday during Taborgrass. St. David of Wales Episcopal Church, 2800 SE Harrison Street, Portland, OR 97214. For all instruments. No registration required. Drop-ins welcome. Cost is \$10 per class or session. Knowledge of basic chords and the ability to execute chord changes is required.

DALLAS: Acoustic Gospel Jam - Every 3rd Saturday 7 – 10 pm

All levels welcome. Guthrie Park in Dallas.

For information: Sally Clark (503) 623-0874 or email Jim, dusterjim@hotmail.com

WINLOCK, WA: Slow Jam - Second Saturday of the month beginning at 1 pm, October through May.

Hosted by WAMA (Washington Acoustic Music Association). Hope Grange in Winlock, Washington. Great for all levels and especially good for total beginners.

For Information: see website – wamamusic.com or email info@wamamusic.com

VANCOUVER, WA - Old Time Country Jam - Every 2nd and 4th Saturday 6:30 – 10 pm

2500 N.E. 78th Ave., Vancouver, WA. 98665, at the Vancouver Masonic Center. All are welcome to join the fun as a musician, singer, or to just listen and or dance.

Contact info: Dean Roettger (360) 892-0769 or (360) 627-1228, or vip1x1@yahoo.com

If you have jam updates or additions, you may update your Jam listing via the public calendar at oregonbluegrass.org or email calendar@oregonbluegrass.org.



OBA Supporting Performer Directory

OBA supporting memberships are \$50 per year. This includes a listing and link on the OBA website and a brief (approx 35 word) band listing in the supporting performer directory.

3 Play Ricochet

3PR features musicians from the four corners of the United States who met in the Northwest and discovered a shared interest in traditional bluegrass, old-time, ragtime, jazz, and country blues music.

www.3playricochet.com
booking@3PlayRicochet.com

A Sudden Tradition

A Sudden Tradition is a five-member Portland-area Americana band, performing bluegrass, folk, old time, country, standards, contemporary, and original songs.

www.ASuddenTradition.com Dennis Zelmer
503-893-4569 info@ASuddenTradition.com

Ash Creek

Ash Creek plays classic bluegrass, recent vintage & original songs that just sound old. A good song is a good song, and it's better with a banjo or a fiddle. Tim Howell (guitar, vocals), Gene Alger (banjo, vocals), Pam Beaty (bass, vocals) & Clayton Knight (mandolin, fiddle & vocals).

<http://www.ashcreekbluegrass.com>
<https://www.facebook.com/ashcreekbluegrass>
Booking@eclecticacoustica.com

Back Porch Revival

Gene Greer – guitar/harmonica, Tony McCormick – banjo, Dan Anolik – mandolin/harmonica, Aron Racho – guitar and more, Bruce Peterson – bass and guitar. Blues inspired folk, country, blues, honky-tonk and original songs. Back porch music that hits the ball out of the park!

www.backporchrevival.com
Gene Greer 503-641-4946
info@backporchrevival.com

Back Up and Push

Dan Kopecky —mandolin/vocals, Robert Brownscombe —bass, Susie Anderson – fiddle/vocals, Tom Gall —guitar/vocals, Patrick McLaughlin – banjo. 5-piece bluegrass band from Welches, OR.

backupandpush.tripod.com Patrick
McLaughlin.patrickmw@aol.com

Bethel Mountain Band

Gene Stutzman, Jerry Stutzman, Larry Knox, Tyce Pedersen, Jerry Schrock, Will Barnhart, Craig Ulrich. Hello, bluegrass lovers of the

Willamette Valley! Please visit our website to learn more about us, our music, our schedule, and the annual “Bluegrass in the Orchard Grass” event.

bethelmountainband.com
Jerry Stutzman
info@bethelmountainband.com

Steve Blanchard

Steve Blanchard is well known as an acoustic flatpicker guitarist, singer and songwriter with a career spanning over four decades. His musical style includes bluegrass, cowboy/western, folk, and Americana. No matter what the style or venue, you're sure to feel Steve's love and passion for his music.

www.SteveBlanchardMusic.com 503-730-0005
Steve@SteveBlanchardMusic.com

Corral Creek

The programs presented by Corral Creek are family shows and include toe-tapping fiddle, banjo, mandolin, standup bass and guitar in the old style before instruments were plugged in.

Ron@taylorpaintingofportland.com
or find us on Facebook.

Eight Dollar Mountain

Darrin Campbell, Stuart Green, Phil Johnson, Peter Koelsch, Mark Lackey. Eight Dollar Mountain rises from the Cascade-Siskiyou Mountain region of Southern Oregon and brings you fine string music from the long-standing traditions of excellent bluegrass.

www.eightdollarmountain.net
Mark Lackey

Fadin' By 9

With hot pickin', tight harmonies, and a mix of “bluegrassified” rock, folk, bluegrass covers, originals and originals, Fadin' by 9 creates a unique, uplifting, high-energy sound.

www.fadinby9.com
Dave Irwin
dave-irwin@comcast.net
360-903-0131

Free Range

Free Range is two voices (Matt Snook and Claire Levine) with a great harmony blend, accompanied by guitar, banjo and dobro. Drawing from bluegrass, country and folk traditions, they sing and play simple music that makes for great listening.

freerangepickin.net
Claire Levine
clairell2002@yahoo.com

The Hillwilliams

Brought together initially by admiration for bluegrass masters like Bill Monroe and The Stanley Brothers as well as 1970's bluegrass supergroup Old and in the Way, The Hillwilliams blend three strong vocalists, smoking fiddle, mandolin, guitar, banjo and doghouse bass into a fun high-energy mix that harkens back to classic bluegrass.

Rich Landar
landarmusic@comcast.net
www.facebook.com/TheHillwilliams
503-869-8210

Hardshell Harmony

Based in the beautiful Columbia River Gorge, this high-energy group is full of spirit and comedy. Members include Candie Robarge (bass), Mike Robarge (guitar), Chuck Haynie (banjo), and Clint Miller (freestyle fiddle).

www.HardshellHarmony.com, Yaya Berry,
rainbowfiddler@yahoo.com

Home Grown

Home Grown has presented their music in a variety of settings ranging from bluegrass festivals to concert halls. Their music ranges from intense jug band dance tunes to foot-tapping porch tunes to sweet melodic waltzes.

www.homegrownoldtime.com

Bill Nix
billnix1@msn.com

Hudson Ridge

Mary Luther—lead vocal and bass, Jerene Shaffar—vocal, mandolin and bass, Shelley Freeman—bass and vocal, Kevin Freeman, lead guitar and vocal, Bob Shaffar—fiddle and dobro, Fred Grove—rhythm guitar. Love of harmony and the desire and ability to “Ridgetize” their own blend of Americana, bluegrass, and traditional country music give this band a truly unique sound.

www.hudsonridgeband.com Mary Luther
mluther56@gmail.com
541-404-9281

Kathy Boyd & Phoenix Rising

Phoenix Rising appears fresh and new as the result of its members performing together in various combinations over the past 30 years. KB&PR brings together the best of bluegrass, cowboy, folk, country, Americana and some incredibly talented songwriting to bring you a sound that is clean, hard driving and uniquely their own.

www.phoenixrisingband.org/
kathyboyd@phoenixrisingband.org
503-691-1177



The Loafers

Mike Stahlman, Dave Elliot, Aaron Stocck, Dee Johnson. The Loafers are an acoustic quartet based in the Portland Metro area, playing traditional bluegrass, specializing in exciting instrumentals and familiar vocals of bluegrass standards.

Dave Elliot
503-663-3548

Long Mountain Revival

Long Mountain Revival's emphasis in is sharing the gospel through song. Long Mountain Revival is available for church functions, outreaches, community events, and any other venue where bluegrass gospel music is desired.

www.myspace.com/lmrevival
Jon Clement
jonmando@embarqmail.com
541-292-6907

Lost Creek Bluegrass Band

From Portland, Oregon, Lost Creek delivers a driving blend of bluegrass and old-time standards with terrific vocal harmonies and tasteful instrumentation. For years they've delighted audiences at festivals, pubs, parks, dances, markets, and weddings throughout Oregon and Washington.

www.lostcreekmusic.com
Band@lostcreekmusic.com

Mischief

Based in the Pacific Northwest, Mischief is father/daughter duo Matt and Anna Snook with Jim Brockkill. We've 70+ years of experience playing bluegrass and acoustic music. Be amazed: trio harmonies and instrumentals with banjo, Dobro, guitar, mandolin, octave mandolin, and fiddle.

Matt@greenbeard.us
541-805-5133

Misty Mamas

MISTY MAMAS serve up home-style bluegrass filled with powerful harmonies, traditional and original songs as well as tasty instrumentals combining the American genres of bluegrass, old time, gospel, folk and country music. Family friendly, the band can include interactive songs that engage the younger set.

Carol Harley
Carol@mistymamas.com
www.mistymamas.com

Money Creek Mining Co.

LuAnn Price, Michael Johnson, Steve Leming, Dave Toler and Steve Bickle. Money Creek plays stirring mountain ballads and burning banjo tunes. Known for their precise harmonies, rarely do you find a group of singers with their unique blend.

www.moneycreekbluegrass.com
LuAnn Price
moneycreekbluegrass@hotmail.com
425-346-6136

Mountain Honey

Sweet and golden acoustic music inspired by traditional bluegrass, with driving banjo and high lonesome harmonies. Mountain Honey features Linda Leavitt (vocals, guitar, mandolin), Dee Johnson (vocals, bass), Greg Stone (vocals, guitar) and Mike Stahlman (vocals, banjo).

www.mountainhoneyportland.com
www.facebook.com/mountainhoneymusic
Contact Linda at lleavittmusic@icloud.com

Mud Springs Gospel Band

We play all gospel music with about a third of our songs being originals, since 1985. We have recorded five albums, including a Christmas album. We love to share songs and stories about the amazing love our Lord has for all of us perplexing people.

www.mudspringsgospel.com
Don Mobley - donmobley@mac.com
541-815-5079
George Klos - klos@crestviewcable.com
541-475-6377

The Pitchfork Revolution

High Desert Hobo Blackgrass from East of the Cascades. The Pitchfork Revolution mixes politically humorous originals, traditional bluegrass and dark driving instrumentals to bring a smile to your face and your feet to the dance floor.

www.thepitchforkrevolution.com

Puddletown Ramblers

Puddletown Ramblers is a regional bluegrass band that performs original songs, good old-time traditional bluegrass, acoustic, old country and Americana music. Our blend of harmonious voices will shake that tender chord in your heart and leave you wanting to hear more. Dave Peterson, Tom Martin, Joe Martin, Walter Jacobson, Fred Schultz.

Dave Peterson
puddletownramblers.com
david@puddletownramblers.com

Roundhouse

Donn Whitten, Kim Jones, Ron Leavitt and Joe Denhof. Roundhouse was formed with the goal of providing a variety of musical genres to diverse audiences: something for everyone. Toward this end Roundhouse performs bluegrass, southern rock, doo-wop, gospel, country, blazing instrumentals and original compositions. Roundhouse instrumentation includes guitar, mandolin, banjo and bass.

www.roundhouse-band.com
Kim Jones
roundhouseband@qwestoffice.net
503-838-2838

Shasta Ray Band

The band's founder and leader is Shasta Ray, born in New England. The band is referred to as a truly community band, a "bring a town together" band. The music played is a real slice of Americana including bluegrass, folk, country, sing-along gospel, and old-time favorites.

Liz Crain
downhomeband@yahoo.com
541-537-1031

Slipshod

Matt Snook (dobro and banjo) and Steve Blanchard (guitar and mandolin) offer listeners a broad and diverse range of music, including originals, familiar melodies and dynamic instrumentals. Check out this dynamic duo on their web site, Facebook and YouTube.

Steve Blanchard, 503-730-0005
[Steve@SteveBlanchardMusic.com](http://SteveBlanchardMusic.com)
Matt Snook, 541-805-5133
BohemianBanjo@gmail.com

Sleepy Eyed Johns

Ian Joel—banjo; Mark Klassen- guitar; John Melnichuk — fiddle; Chuck Davidshofer — bass; Billy Wyatt—mandolin. Sleepy Eyed Johns: Stump-pulling bluegrass, from the roots.

Ian Joel
se6bq5@teleport.com
503-281-7666

Steer Crazy

Rick King —Guitar, Glenn Denison — Mandolin, Tim Dawdy—Steel Guitar & Dobro. A new brand of western and American music. Musical fun and close harmonies that require no complicated explanation. Nice guys singing and playing great music.

<http://www.facebook.com/Steercrazyband>
Tim Dawdy
beardvc@pacifier.com
360-904-0347



OBA Supporting Performer Directory

The Wild Wood

The Wild Wood resonates with that part of us which is rooted in a simpler way of life while delighting us with dynamic arrangements, emotional vocal harmonies and virtuosic solos by two national champions. Josiah Payne – Mandolin, Belinda Underwood – Bass, Michael Money – Guitar, Kian Dye – Fiddle
<http://www.thewildwoodmusic.com/>

Whiskey Puppy

Rachel Gold (guitar), Justin Auld (banjo and fiddle) and Gabe Adoff (Bass). Whiskey Puppy plays boot-stomping, mule-slapping traditional bluegrass and old time music. The Portland, OR trio brings energy, humor, and skillful musicianship to little-known songs and tunes from the repertoires of the early Southern string bands.

Rachel Gold
rachelgold145@gmail.com
503-227-0647
www.whiskeypuppy.com

Whistlin' Rufus

Pat Connell, Ritchie Wernick, Nat O'Neal, Patrick Connell, Zach Banks. Three- and four-part vocal harmonies, exciting instrumentation and contagious fun are part of the Rufusarian bluegrass experience. A Whistlin' Rufus show guarantees a varied and wonderful mix of blazing bluegrass, original homemade tunes and an Irish fiddle tune or two.

www.whistlinrufus.com
Pat Connell
whistlinrufus@comcast.net
971-207-5933

Betsy and Theron Yochelson

Stand-up bass / mandolin —Lead / harmony vocals. We head up two bluegrass / acoustic-country "all-event" bands in the mid-Willamette Valley.

541-409-8248
Betsybyo@gmail.com
Red Diesel:
www.facebook.com/reddieseloregon
Prairie Dog Backfire:
www.reverbnation.com/prairiedogbackfire

How do I get my band's information listed here?

1. Sign up for a band membership! Go to oregonbluegrass.org, fill out the form on the back page of this issue, or find us at a festival or event! A band membership includes one print subscription per membership.

2. Email your band's listing to webmaster@oregonbluegrass.org. Don't forget to include contact information and a photo (and a link or two if you have it). Once we have verified that your membership is current, your listing will be posted to the website. The Express is updated quarterly from the website. We may have to shorten your listing from the website to fit available print space.



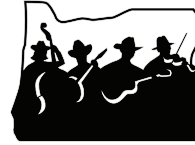
Oregon Bluegrass Association

P.O. Box 1115, Portland, OR 97207



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Oregon Bluegrass Association



A subscribing member of the OBA according to expiration date.

Cut along dotted line for a handy OBA Membership ID card.

Oregon Bluegrass Association

P.O. Box 1115

Portland, Oregon 97207

www.oregonbluegrass.org

Oregon Bluegrass Association Membership

Membership

Check all that apply

- New Member
- General Member\$25 (1yr.)/\$65 (3yrs.)
- Supporting Performer\$50 (1yr.)
- Angel Sponsor\$60 (1yr.)
- Golden Sponsor\$100 (yr.)
- Contributing Business Sponsor....\$125 (1 yr.)/\$350 (3 yrs.)

Volunteering

Yes! I am interested in helping as a volunteer at OBA sanctioned events. Please add me to your list of volunteers.

Name

Address

City State Zip Code

Home Phone Work Phone

E-Mail Address

