



Oregon Bluegrass Association  
[www.oregonbluegrass.org](http://www.oregonbluegrass.org)

# Bluegrass Express

## Introducing Mimi Dobler: OBA VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

**W**hen I asked Mimi why she joined the OBA, she said, "I don't like sitting on the sidelines."

As the OBA's newest Director and Volunteer Coordinator, her place at the center of the action is assured. There isn't much in a volunteer-driven organization that happens without people stepping up and getting in. Mimi is the kind of person who inspires people to do just that. "I get there early and stay late," she says.

Like an increasing number of new hires, Mimi came to the OBA through Bluegrass, but she has been around music her whole life. Her grandfather played the fiddle and mandolin, and she grew up in a family band, playing a mix of country, rock, and gospel music in and around Vancouver, Washington.

Along the way, she says, she "incidentally joined" a group of friends called the Chickadee String Brothers. "I loved the performance aspect of it, but the musical side was lacking" and she eventually moved on.

Later, she found a job in an office in portland music in Seattle, a place in which customers grew to prefer those for regional shows. The background music was Bluegrass and old time, and she learned and absorbed what she heard. "Some-

thing just stuck," as she describes it.

About five years ago, with her first paycheck from a new job, she bought a mandolin. She doesn't remember why she



chose the mandolin—perhaps something to do with her grandfather—but playing it, she said, "made music make sense." And it gave her a chance to make music with her dad.

"Playing with family is a special kind of music in its deeply important," Mimi said. For her, the family connection is treasured and inspired.

Since then, she began attending area Bluegrass festivals and joined the OBA. "I appreciate that it is a serious and growing," she would like to see the Association find new ways to support artists and festivals, to welcome new musicians into the community, to discover talented musicians, and to connect people.

Asked about her musical influences, she mentioned the Stanley Brothers, Flatt and Scruggs, Foghorn String Band (they were a favorite at the parent school), and... "Wood of" (Timothy). When you see Mimi at a festival (this is after the summer, you can ask her about that one), it fits, though, with the fiddle in her eye.

When she's not picking a mandolin, she's passionate about the outdoors. As well as Mimi, she has succeeded life, B. Wilson (American). And that fits, too.

She finished by welcoming the regular Mimi Dobler to our Board, and made her to come early and stay as long as she likes.

