

BLUEGRASS CLIPPINGS

July-August 2010



Newsletter of the Yellowstone Blue Grass Association

Annual Dues: \$15.00 per individual \$25.00 per Family

Officers

Wade Steinmetz President
Trent Indreland V.P.
Terry Indreland Secy-Treas.

Board Members

Ed Pierson
Brad Sherseth
David Nelson
Chuck Bishop

Activities

Friday Night Jams 7-9 P.M. Lincoln Center

Band Showcases Fall and Spring

Bluegrass Sponsored Concerts
As Scheduled
Kaleva Park Pig Roast Bones Pizza Party

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK: Lack of participation by YBA members continues to be an issue, from the Spring Pizza Party to jams at Lincoln. It is especially true at the jams when taking breaks and only one or two lead players have shown up. Jamming at Hardee's is usually quite small. Limited numbers of YBA band members go to Columbus, Livingston, and the area BG festivals, too. We also need to provide better help to many newcomers who come to the Lincoln with instruments. We should think about organizing a slow jam for novice players at Lincoln this fall. The Gazette announcement tells them to bring their instruments to the YBA jams. Many players show up and find they do not have the skills to do much in the regular jams and fail to return. The YBA could do much better for these folks.

WHEN IS COUNTRY MUSIC OR ROCK, BLUEGRASS???

Too many people seem to think that whenever any type of country music is played unplugged it should be called bluegrass. The editor could not disagree more. The roots and methods of real bluegrass were formed when Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs joined Bill Monroe's Bluegrass Boys in the mid 1940s. They joined Chubby Wise on fiddle and Cedric Rainwater on bass to form the basic bluegrass instrumentation with guitar, Scruggs style banjo, and mandolin. Their music featured both the "high lonesome sound" and instrumental breaks, with bluesiness and improvisation. Their music always had a certain "old timey" feeling which had been typical of the "mountain music" of Appalachia. Ralph Stanley has never even embraced the bluegrass term, but persists in calling his stuff "mountain music." Much later some hot younger pickers including Bela Fleck and Sam Bush coined the term "Newgrass." That was OK, too, as it took the old timey sound to newer dimensions, but had kept the high lonesome sound and breaks, as well. There is a point, however, where the music goes too far off base to still be called "bluegrass," in the opinion of your editor. Two bands currently come to mind locally. The

Gourds, who may be very good, will play Billings soon, and White Water Ramble has already performed on July 4th. The term “progressive bluegrass,” is uncomfortable to this writer. Having drums and unusual instruments does not work for bluegrass. Also the music played makes a difference. Bluegrass instrumentation playing rock songs may sound great, but is it really fair to call it bluegrass? Whitewater Ramble is very capable of knocking off good traditional bluegrass licks, but was performing the songs of the “Grateful Dead” at this concert. Bluegrass? You decide. Your editor already has. Some of the elements from the original Bluegrass Boys just have to be there or it simply ain’t bluegrass. Feel free to express your opinions on this matter in e-mails and letters to the editor.

THE GOURDS - A “progressive bluegrass band” will be at the Babcock, Aug. 28. Tix are \$20 in advance and \$22 at the door. They have played the Yellowstone Garage Pub in the past. They are good, but are they really bluegrass? Besides commercial and traditional country, plus country rock, there is a category called “Alternative Country.” You editor’s son in Nashville wrote a number of articles for an Alt-Country pub, No Depression, while living in Austin, TX, some years ago. That term sounds more apt to your editor for many of these very good sounding groups, than “bluegrass.”

APPEARING AT THE PRAIRIE WINDS CAFÉ 9 AM-NOON MOLT, MT

(The entire 2010 Molt schedule is now available on the YBA website.)
Saturday, July 3--Willard and Carole Ferch Saturday, July 10--Spur of the Moment Saturday, July 17--Southbound Saturday, July 24--Cold Frosty Morning Saturday, July 31--Highway 302 Saturday, August 7--Spur of the Moment Saturday, August 14--Southbound Saturday, August 21--Ramblin' Laurels Saturday, August 28--Highway 302

MerleFest

By David Nelson

Raccoon faces everywhere!! The raccoon face is part of the logo for the "Merlefest" held every year since 1988, fourth week of April. Also common are billboards with a picture of Doc Watson saying "let me pick one, son".

My brother, Daniel, sneakily built a cabin just 12 miles from Wilkesboro, NC and has been inviting me to come to the Merlefest for some years. He also offered beautiful lodging and hospitality as well as a mutual interest in the music. This year I took him up on his offer.

MerleFest was founded in 1988 in Memory of Eddy Merle Watson as a fundraiser for Wilkes Community College and to celebrate “traditional plus” music. It certainly has raised funds and the college would be the envy of many 4 year colleges/universities for its grounds and buildings.

The Music of Merlefest is “traditional-plus” and Doc Watson himself describes it best: “When Merle and I started out we called our music ‘traditional-plus,’ meaning the traditional music of the Appalachian region plus whatever other styles we were in the mood to play. Since the beginning, the people of the college and I have agreed that the

music of MerleFest is 'traditional-plus'."

Lots of hype and hoopla. but little can prepare one for coming around a corner and hearing the unmistakable voice of Doc Watson sounding just as you first heard him 50 yrs ago. At age 87 his picking is still fluid and clean. He certainly is the star of the show and much loved by all the musicians as well as all North Carolinians who are proud of their musical history. Given an honorary doctorate by Berklee College of music Saturday eve he said "I got 5-6 of these here things and I don't hardly know what to do with a single one of 'em".

Steve Martin and the Steep Canyon Rangers were the Saturday evening headliners (for some). They generated a huge crowd while Tony Rice and his "Unit" played in the heat of the day to a comparative handful of people.

Hardest part of Merle was to decide: do I want to watch Doc (again) and Sam Bush in air-conditioned indoor comfort or do I want to watch Tony Rice out-doors. Many, many choices like those needing to be made every day as there are 14 stages with great music on each all day long. I quickly had to accept I would not be able to see everyone no matter how hard I tried.

Huge arrays of speakers flank the major stages. A giant screen, perhaps 20'x30', is mounted alongside the largest of the outdoor stages so those sitting 2 1/2 football fields away can watch sweat bead up on Peter Rowan's brow in 92 deg heat with 90+% humidity. Putting this event on obviously takes the effort of hundreds, if not thousands, of volunteers and staff.

If a person brought an instrument and had enough chutzpah he could sit down and play with Wayne Henderson, Tut Taylor, or many other excellent players in the small jamming tents. For variety and creativity they were hard to beat for good listening, up close in the shade.

The intriguing true story of Tom Dula (aka Dooley), of love + murder & the hanging of a man many believed innocent also occurred in Wilkes County and I got to see the small jail with handwrought iron bars where he was held in N. Wilkesboro. Musicians appealed to the last governor of NC for a pardon for Tom Dula which was not given.

(Ed. Note: MT PBS has recently shown a 30 minute program featuring master luthier, Wayne Henderson, both building and playing his guitars. He does it the old fashioned way, even using his original pocket knife, and makes beautiful appearing and sounding instruments. Guitar pickers could learn a lot about their instruments by watching this program. It will be aired again 7-11 at 3 AM, worth setting the alarm for. It will likely be on again in the future.)

SUMMER EVENTS - GENERAL SCHEDULE

National Folk Festival, Butte, MT, July 9, 10, 11 Free (Last time in Montana) 224 mi.

Big Horn Mountain Festival Buffalo, WY, July 9, 10, 11 \$40 to \$85 1 or 3 day, advanced or at the gate 166 mi.

Kootenai River Bluegrass Festival July 16, 17 & 18 Troy, MT \$10-15 1 day, \$25 3 day or \$45 family pass 518 mi.

Fiddler's Picnic (Doc Allison/Payne) , Livingston, MT, plenty of bluegrass as well as fiddle jamming happens there. July 30, 31, Aug 1 Free 116 mi.

Musician's Rendevous, Itchkepe Park, Columbus, MT, Aug 6, 7, 9, free.

Grand Targhee Bluegrass FESTIVAL, Alta, WY, Aug 13-15, Check website for pricing

Miles City Bluegrass Festival, Sep 17, 18,19 Eastern MT Fairgrounds, Miles City, MT, \$15 day or \$25 weekend pass. Info: (406) 234-2480 or 853-1678. 146 mi.

(Mileages from Billings. All dates and costs subject to correction.)

MUSIC CAMPS

Bluegrass CAMP, Alta, WY, Aug 10-13 Tuition \$425, Lodging \$350, \$175 shared at the Lodge or camp and provide your own food. Ben Winship (Growling Old Men) director

Wind River Guitar, Mike Dowling, DuBois, WY special and personalized instruction

FIDDLE CONTESTS

Montana State Fiddle Contest, July 23-24, Red Lodge, MT

(There is also a fiddle contest at the Big Horn Festival, as well as guitar, banjo, and mandolin contests.)

KALEVA PARK SUMMER BARBECUE

This summer the Kaleva Park summer event will be held the weekend of August 21st. This is a members only event. There will be a pot luck on Saturday with BBQ meat provided. Kaleva Park is marked with a sign. It is 4 miles south of Roberts on Hwy 212. Turn left opposite the Pollard Hotel Sign. Dry camping sites are available. Come jam all day and night. Camping with bluegrass jamming is fun. More information later.

OLD TIME FIDDLER'S PICNIC

The annual Old Time Fiddler's Picnic will be held in Livingston on July 30th , 31st, and August 1st, 2010. It features bluegrass, country/western, and old time music. Many of the best pickers and fiddlers in the region show up every year. There are jams going on all over the place. Many years ago it began as a function of the Old Time Fiddlers, but today there are more pickers than fiddlers in attendance. From Billings take the city center exit and go South on US Hwy 89 to Strong Lane and follow the signs. It is not far off the Interstate. There will be a potluck on Saturday at 2:00 P.M. There is plenty of room for campers & tents. It is a working farm, but Dave and Candi Payne do a great job of mowing the place and having plenty of port-a-potties and night lighting available. This is a tradition that has gone on for some 35 years or so. It began at Doc Allison's place and Doc always shows up. Dave Fischer and Tom

Finnicum can always be counted on to for setting up and later tearing down. Those guys work like Trojans getting it done. That kind of help and dedication is priceless and I am sure Dave and Candi really appreciate their efforts. If you have never been to the Fiddler's Picnic you have really missed out on one of the greatest experiences a picker can have in Montana.



BLUEGRASS CLIPPINGS IS NOW ONLINE!

If members wish to continue to receive a copy via the postal service, they are requested to contact Terry Indreland, secretary-treasurer, as soon as possible at (406) 652-4677 or e-mail to: indreland@mac.com. (For downloading photo speed, dial-up users consider this.) **IF YOU CHANGE YOUR INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER YOU MUST CONTACT TERRY OR HE CANNOT SEND OUR NEWSLETTER TO YOU!** Also, he periodically sends out e-mail notices regarding any scheduled concerts, changes in schedules, reminders of Friday closings at Lincoln, etc. Please keep your internet address up to date with Terry.

YBA SPONSORED LOCAL CONCERTS

The Blue Canyon Boys (a press release from Trent and Terry Indreland to local media)

The Yellowstone Bluegrass Association is sponsoring a concert by The Blue Canyon Boys at 8 PM on Saturday July 17th, 2010 at Venture Theatre located at 2317 Montana Ave in Billings, Montana.

The Blue Canyon Boys are one of the premier bluegrass bands of the Rocky Mountain region. Blending incredible brother-duet-style vocals & award winning instrumental proficiency, this energetic band drives audiences to their feet & leaves them with a smile. Gary Dark plays the mandolin & writes a lot of the band's original songs. His amazing tenor singing puts the "high" in the band's high lonesome sound. Guitarist Jason Hicks also writes songs, & his interest in pioneering guitarists such as Don Reno & Norman Blake has helped him to develop a style that draws from the raw emotional energy of the past. Drew Garrett slaps a mean bass & his credits include the innovative 80s band "Danger in the Air", whose members went on to play with bands such as The Dixie Chicks & The John Jorgenson Quintet, & 2 albums with The Domestic Science Club on Discovery/Elektra Records. Banjoist Jeff Scroggins' fiery hard-driving style & breathtaking high-speed licks have won him many disbelieving fans & have also helped him to win dozens of banjo contests, including the prestigious National Bluegrass Banjo Championship. With three well-received recordings (Just an Old Dirt Road 2005, Hello City Limits 2008, & House Full of Sorrow 2009), and their win of the prestigious Telluride Bluegrass Festival Band competition in 2008, the Blue Canyon Boys have been steadily working their way into the hearts of bluegrass music lovers across the West. From the first sound of the hard driving banjo to the final rumble of the doghouse bass, the Blue Canyon Boys are sure to entertain and energize. More information is available at www.thebluecanyonboys.com. A photo is available at bluecanyonboys.com/promo/bluecanyonboys2009.jpg.

The doors will open at 7:30 pm and tickets are \$12.00 at the door. Editors Note: I believe YBA members admission will be \$10.

The Yellowstone Bluegrass Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to the education and enjoyment of bluegrass music and old time music. We take no income from this concert with all ticket revenue paid to the band. For more information, see our website at www.yellowstonebluegrass.com.

STEVE SMITH AND CHRIS SANDERS CONCERT

On Wednesday, August 18, the Steve Smith and Chris Sanders duo will be at Venture Theater. Admission is \$12 with YBA members at \$10. Age 12 and under free.

INTERNATIONAL BLUEGRASS MUSIC ASSOCIATION

The IBMA World of Bluegrass will be held in Nashville, TN, from Sept 27th to Oct 3rd.

IBMA Fanfest

IBMA Fanfest, hosted in Nashville, TN, features the top acts in bluegrass music from around the world.

Held in the beginning of the first week of October.

Begins with a 4 day business conference offering bluegrass artist showcases, an exhibit hall, seminars, meetings, networking, and more.

Next comes the awards show, held Thursday night at the Grand Ole Opry House. Awards include Entertainer, Vocal Group, Male and Female Vocalist, Song and Album, Banjo, Bass, Fiddle, Mandolin, Guitar, and Dobro.

Finally, Friday and Saturday cap off the event with by the top bluegrass bands and performers from around the world. Held in downtown Nashville at the Convention Center, finish this extraordinary week with a bang. For more information go to info@imba.org.

YELLOWSTONE BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION WEBSITE: A good source of info regarding YBA and interesting links to bands and other music as well as past newsletters. It now has the entire 2010 band schedule for the Prairie Winds Café in Molt. Check it out at yellowstonebluegrass.com. Trent Indreland is the web master.

BLUERASS RECIPES

The following recipes are from the "Bluegrass Music Cookbook," by Penny Parsons, Ken Beck, and Jim Clark, John F. Blair, publisher, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, copyright 1977.

Two southern recipes from Jimmy Martin:

WIDOW MAKER FRIED RABBIT AND GRAVY

Ingredients: One rabbit, skinned, dressed, and cut up or quartered. Flour, bacon grease or lard, salt and pepper, milk.

Directions: Boil the rabbit for about 30 minutes. Take it out, dredge it in flour and put in a skillet with hot grease. Add pepper and salt and fry it. After the rabbit is done (30-40 minutes) take it out of the pan and set aside. Add some flour to the grease and cook it for 5 to 10 minutes then pour milk on top. Stir and let it come to a boil. Now you have good country fried rabbit and gravy. Makes four servings.

HOLD WHATCHA GOT GROUNDHOG

Ingredients: One skinned and dressed groundhog, 2 onions quartered, 4-5 carrots cut in 3 inch sections, 3-4 medium potatoes quartered.

Directions: Take your groundhog and boil it for about 10 minutes. Pour the water off and put the groundhog into clean water and boil for 10 more minutes. Pour the water off and put it in a big skillet like you fix a roast. Put onions, potatoes, and carrots around it and bake like a roast until it is done. Then you have the best eatin' you ever popped your teeth in. (Editors Note: you could actually cook a rock chuck (marmot) this way. They are close relatives to groundhogs. Avoid prairie dogs as they can carry Bubonic Plague.