



Idaho Sawtooth Bluegrass Association

IdaGrass

Volume 2 Issue 6

November –December 2006

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Some of our favorite Websites

Montana Rockies Bluegrass Assoc.
www.mrba.com

University of Idaho Bluegrass Club
<http://stuorgs.uidaho.edu/~bluegrass/>

Bluegrass Events Calendar

Southern Zone Monthly Jam, 3rd Thursday at Gerties' Brick Oven Cookery in Twin Falls – 7 pm.
September 21 & October 19.

Middle Zone Monthly Jam – SAT, Nov 11th. 7pm. For more information contact Bob Greer or Dennis Stokes.

Northern Zone Monthly Jam – First SAT of the month at the Orchards Methodist Church, 1213 Burrell Ave, Lewiston 12 Noon to 5:00pm.. For more information contact:
Steve Gleason (208) 798-8280 or Pete Northcutt (208) 983- 2277.

IT'S COMING, IT'S COMING –

The ISBA is working on getting a website up and going. Stay tuned for more information

If you have calendar events, jams or festivals you would like included in the next issue of Ida-Grass, please email them to trueblue@wildblue.net

The purpose of the Idaho Sawtooth Bluegrass Association:

- To preserve and perpetuate Bluegrass music as a heritage of our country,
- To promote the education and the enjoyment of Bluegrass music,
- To promote fellowship among all musicians and supporters who have a love for Bluegrass music, regardless of race, creed, color, ethnicity, or ability to play music.

Message from the Chairman

Hello again from Will,

There is frost on the pumpkin this morning. Hunting season is going on, ski areas are getting some snow, looks like winter activates will be going strong very soon. Winter is a good time for indoor jam sessions with some friends, or just keeping warm by the fire. All of our zone jam sessions should be getting started, some are already under way. These dates and times are listed in the news letter.

What a wonderful time for all that attended the first annual Payette Bluegrass Festival, in Payette Idaho. Things went very well even though we will be changing a few things for next year. I think everyone had a good time pickin' and listening to the bands play at the high school. I would like to thank everyone that worked on the committee. You all did a bang up job and thanks to all of the volunteers that work for those three days.

I had a wonderful time at the IBMA in Nashville Tennessee, the last week of September. I saw some old friends and met many new ones. If you get a chance, you need to go at least once in your life. It's a full week of bluegrass; everything you can think of is going on. I don't know of any place you can see all of the top bluegrass bands for one price all week long. It was a big boom for me and my banjo business:

www.williamscustombanjos.com. I met with a lot of pro banjo pickers and orders have picked up. I will now be building a Kenny Ingram model banjo.



Jim Burlile, Will Williams, Dick Brown, Kenny Ingram and . Photo by Gail Williams

Kenny is the banjo player for Rhonda Vincent and the Rage. I will be delivering his banjo at the River City Bluegrass Festival in Portland Oregon, the first weekend in Jan.

You might be saying about now, what has this got to do with the ISBA? My life is at a crossroads with even more demands on my time and more traveling. Thus being the case, I have decided to resign from the Board of Directors and acting President of the ISBA. This decision has not come easy for me, but I know it is time. I let the Board of Directors know about a couple of weeks ago so this may not be a surprise to some of you. I love the ISBA and its members. What a great thing we have all done in a short time. I want you to all know that I will still be active in this great association. Just like all of you, I will be willing to do what ever needs to be done at our activities: parking RVs, selling CDs, etc.

Thanks to each and every member, for all of your support and dedication for the cause and moving Bluegrass music forward in the state of Idaho. There is lots of work to be done and are just getting started. There's someone in the association that will move the ISBA to greater and bigger things. I might just be you!!
As Al Jackson said "I want the people in Kentucky to know we can play Bluegrass in Idaho, too." I agree.

Thanks for everything. Will Williams



Classified Ad

FOR SALE: **DEERING SIERRA BANJO** W/ NICE CASE. SHELOR DETUNERS. LIKE NEW, USED VERY LITTLE. A GOOD PLAYER, GOOD SOUNDING BANJO. HAVE TO MANY BANJOS, NEED TO SELL. ASKING \$1300.
CALL STEVE (208) 798-8280

1st Fall Bluegrass Festival in Payette

Well, the first "Annual Fall Festival Bluegrass Festival in Payette" has come to a close and what a success it was. Starting with an idea, no money and a Big Dream we got together over a mighty fine lunch at Bob's house prepared by his lovely wife June.

We said a prayer and then embarked on a heavy discussion regarding the possibility of putting together a Fall Bluegrass Festival, sanctioned by the Idaho Sawtooth Bluegrass Association. We all agreed that we wanted to take the big leap and try it; the next step was to elect the committee members. Well the first thing they did was to establish a Kangaroo Court and elected me chairman. Bob nominated me and Ron Cole immediately closed all nominations. I firmly believe that we need to amend the By-Laws so that this can not happen again to anyone.

But seriously I want to extend a "Well Done" and a hearty "Thank you" to all the committee members and the multitude of fine people that worked so hard to make this Festival come alive. Not only was it a big success, but we were asked by so many fine people if we would do it again next year, [It kind of makes a lump in your throat]. We got together for a wrap up meeting to go over the event to discuss the pros and cons and all agreed that we would do it again, Gosh! What more can a man say???????

This year Bob Greer and Al Jackson will Co-chair the project and I ask you to give them your full support. Anyone wanting to volunteer to help, just give them a call. As Chairman of this wonderful project I will cherish the memories for a long time to come. And again, "Thank You All for a Job Well Done."

Jim McCue, "Jimbo"

(* All Payette Festival photos taken by Jim McCue)



Lots of listening and learning in this guitar workshop



Humm, I thought I might find the tuning problem in here ☺



Always there to lend a helping hand



Some serious commerce goin' down



Could it get any better than this...a banjo clinic on a sunny warm fall day?



Many joining in the Bluegrass gospel



Drum roll, please..... And the winner is...



Warming up, Chatting and Waiting



A fine band, Hotwire and a fine sponsor, 96.1



Another fine band, Public Radio and more fine sponsors

Disc Space by Mike McCarthy

ISBA Member, Mike McCarthy who thinks the banjo "is proof God loves us" is from Twin Falls. Mike has agreed to share review newly released and other CDs with our IdaGrass Readers.

"New Day" by Claire Lynch (Rounder)

Claire Lynch is one of the best lead singers in bluegrass and deserves a lot more recognition. Although her style is a little on the progressive/contemporary side, traditional lovers will enjoy this CD.



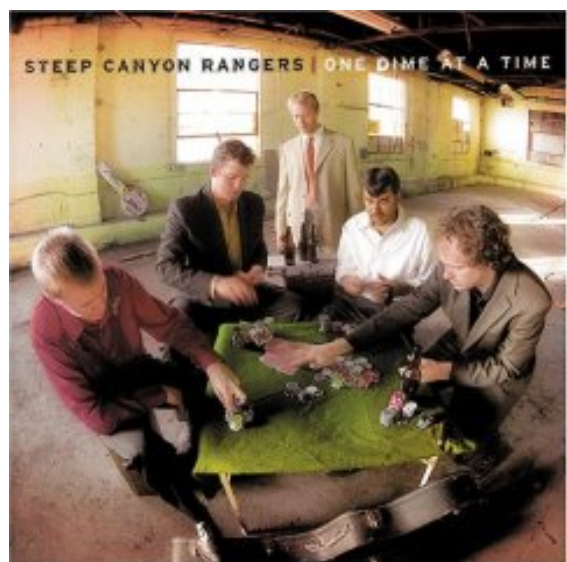
The obvious attraction is her fine lead singing. She has accomplished sidemen (David Harvey-mandolin, Jim Hurst-guitar, Rob Ickes-Dobro, Stuart Duncan-fiddle) and one truly great side woman (Missy Raines-bass) who know their role and focus on accentuating Claire's singing. There are several straight up bluegrass tunes, including "Leaving on that Evening Train" (currently #1 on the Bluegrass Unlimited charts), "Up this Hill and Down," and "I Believe In Forever" a fine gospel tune. I was really impressed with the lyrics on several of these songs (which says a lot as I am "lyrically challenged" and seldom notice them). For example, "After I'm Gone" is a wonderful song from a mother to a child in which she makes a reference to Neil Armstrong and Maybelle Carter, and it works! My only criticism is that except for the a couple tunes: "Leaving on that

Evening Train," "Train Long Gone", I wasn't too impressed with the harmonies. She has such a great lead voice, and great picking, that it's a good investment. Even hard core "Scruggs" (you know - people who think bluegrass has gone down hill ever since Flatt and Scruggs added a Dobro) out there will like this CD.

"One Dime At A Time" by Steep Canyon Rangers (Rebel)

From the powerful fiddle intro on the very first tune (Waiting to Hear you Call My Name), it's easy to see why there is so much buzz around the Steep Canyon Rangers. In fact they just won the IBMA Emerging Artist of the Year award. These guys reflect the best in the new traditionalists of bluegrass. Robust playing and singing. Excellent harmonies (mostly by Woody Platt and Mike Guggino), interesting material.

Three quarters of these tunes are originals, but you will feel like you have heard them before. Most of the songwriting is done by their banjo player (of course) Graham Sharp. Very interesting arrangements, such as the change from 2/4 to 3/4 time on The Ghost Of Norma Jean. There's a great acapella tune (written by Wade Mainer of Mainer's Mountaineers fame). This is one all the Scruggs should have in their library:



Chatting with the Board

This month's chat is with Pete Northcutt, who is currently serving as a Northern Zone Board Member

Question: Why do you like bluegrass music?
The energy. The openness and friendliness of musicians and fans.

Question: When did you first start to play bluegrass and what prompted the direction?
1974. I returned to Grangeville. My wife and I purchased a piece of property on the South Fork of the Clearwater River. Reading books and learning to play the banjo was my first form of evening entertainment.

Question: What bluegrass instruments do you play? Which did you learn first?
I continue to attempt improvement on the 5-string banjo, guitar, resonator guitar mandolin, and the dang fiddle. I did not have access to any individual locally to improve my learning curve. My first instrument lesson came at the age of 6 from my father on the guitar.

Question: You have played many kinds of music; tell me how this benefits or hinders you in the bluegrass setting.
I believe that if a song is good, it can be played in any form. Knowing chord patterns for other styles permits me to develop the style that I hear in my head.

Question: Describe what the ideal setting for playing music would look like?
For song development, I like to be uninterrupted and alone. Once I have the tune worked up, I would want to go knocking in on fellow musician's doors, at any time of the day, and show them my accomplishment. I have sold my 'act' as background music, I find that now it has become a performance and I am still uncomfortable with applause and the audience respectful silence.

Question: Tell us about an experience/festival/concert you really enjoyed.
Several years ago, at Hoot's, I hooked up with Ron Cole and several other Bluegrass Musicians. We played forever. The following week, someone

mention his surprise that the roof stayed on. Since that time I have considered Ron a close friend, and that evening one of my highlights.

Question: In what ways is your family involved in bluegrass?
My wife has been assisting with the sound for the Grangeville Bluegrass Company. We have three children and 3 grandchildren. They know bluegrass when they hear it and have traveled to several of the Grangeville Bluegrass Company's shows.

Question: What is your favorite place to find new songs to learn?
Jam sessions, internet radio

What is one of your favorite albums and why?
I beg forgiveness from the traditionalist. When Sam Bush play, Newgrass or Traditional, his skill and stage presence just amazes me. I will always consider Doc Watson and his "Memories" album a favorite. I do have a favorite book; it is titled "Zen of Guitar." For musicians, this book let you know other have the same philosophy.

Question: What is one of your future goals related to bluegrass?
Getting one more person enthused.



Pete Northcutt at the recording studio

In the Spotlight with Chicken Dinner Road

Interviews with Idaho's Bluegrass bands

Chicken Dinner Road is one of the newer Idaho bluegrass bands. My interview with Dennis Stokes will help us get to know them.

Question: Tell us how long have you been together and how the formation of the band came about.
We have been together since May of 2006. Brian Haken (guitar and vocals) met 3 years ago through a mutual friend. In conversation, we found we both had a passion for playing and singing old-time country music and an interest in bluegrass music. On our own, we each bought a bluegrass CD. A week or so later, I bought a mandolin and it wasn't long before Brian started taking banjo lessons from Bill Cates (now our banjo player). Over the next several months, Brian and I learned a few bluegrass tunes together. At the time Bob Greer had just started having "Bluegrass in the Barn" again and happened to have "open mic" at the end of each show. Brian and I decided to try our luck one Saturday at "The Barn". We did the only three songs we knew with Brian on guitar and me on the mandolin. It went over pretty well. Next thing you know, Bill wants to start helping us get something together so he called Harry Strang to play bass with us. I knew a fiddle player in Carma Phillips, but she hadn't played in several years. After lots of arm-twisting, Carma decided to join us, and the band was formed.

Question: You have kind of an interesting name, tell us about that.
Well, it's simple actually. We were trying to come up with something a little different. Bill and Harry were coming back from Marsing (ID) one day, came upon Chicken Dinner Road, and Bill said, "That would be a great name for a band." So, that was it.

Question: Tell us a little about each band member and the assets they bring to Chicken Dinner Road

Bill Cates plays banjo in true Scruggs-style, which is my personal favorite. He can play about anything on the banjo and has lots of band and on stage experience. He also sings on some of our songs, and always keeps us laughing with non-stop jokes.

Brian Haken plays guitar and sings some lead and harmony vocals. Brian plays very good rhythm guitar and has a great ear for music. He also is an amazing singer.

Harry Strang is our bass player. He has a great sense for timing and tone. Harry also sings harmony vocals ranging from tenor to bass.

Carma Phillips is our fiddle player. Not only is she wonderful on the fiddle, but she livens up the group with her attitude and on stage presence.

Everybody loves Carma.

I play the mandolin and do a lot of the singing. I do most of the talking on stage, and I think it is because I talk the funniest being from the South (no, not Texas). I guess my contribution to the group is the thick southern drawl.



Chicken Dinner Road - L to R: Dennis, Bill, Carma, Harry and Brian

Question: Listening to you speak, one can tell that you didn't grow up in Idaho. What brought you to Idaho?
I am a dairy nutritionist by day, and I had to come to an area with plenty of dairy cows. This is home now.

Question: How do you, personally, find bluegrass in the west?

Spreading like wildfire. Coming from the Southeast, bluegrass is everywhere. Here in Idaho, groups like the ISBA and certain Idaho bluegrass bands are spreading the good word to

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the public that may not be familiar with our kind of music. It's great to be a part of it.

Question: What is the band's biggest challenge?
Getting together to practice would probably be the biggest challenge.

Question: How do you choose new material?
We all have our different tastes and ideas. So, everybody randomly brings songs to the table to try. We try to keep it mostly traditional usually putting our own spin on some aspect of the songs.

Question: What goals do you have for the future?
We are in the middle of recording our first CD. A couple of us are writing some songs to add to our repertoire. Play more venues next year to help introduce more people to bluegrass. The main goal is to continue to have fun and put smiles on people's faces.

Question: What one thing can Idaho bands do to promote bluegrass in Idaho?
Keep it bluegrass in a traditional sense. I believe it is okay for bands to branch out and explore different realms of bluegrass within a show, but they need to have a strong base in traditional bluegrass in order to truly promote bluegrass. Play lots of Bill Monroe, Jimmy Martin, Flatt and Scruggs, Stanley Brothers, and the list goes on.

Bluegrass Music on the Internet

Are you aware that there are bluegrass radio stations accessible via the Internet. If you don't have a local station that plays bluegrass, you aren't out of luck. Some stations require you to join/pay, but there are many that are free.

Here are a couple to I like:

<http://www.bluegrasscountry.org/>
<http://bluegrassradio.org/new/index.php>
<http://www.worldwidebluegrass.com/>

If there is a station that you've found and like, send me the web address and a note telling why you like this station and I will include them in the next issue.

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My Trip to the IBMA World of Bluegrass By Helen Smith

I am taking a little license as the newsletter editor and going to include a short article about my recent trip to the IBMA Business Convention and World of Bluegrass Festival in Nashville (International Bluegrass Music Association). What can THEY do, dock my pay? ☺

When people ask me how my trip to IBMA was, it's like asking a six year old to tell you about Disneyland. It was wonderful and I had such a great time. So, the nutshell answer is: I met lots of really wonderful people, learned a lot, and picked until I couldn't pick anymore - for those of you who know me, know that's a nearly impossible.

One of the things I have most enjoyed about attended festivals and jams. Well, it is no different in the international arena. At IBMA I met pickers from Switzerland, Canada, Japan and I think nearly every state in the Union. When you joined a picking circle or began a conversation, it was customary to say, "Hi, I'm Helen from Idaho." The location of your origin did not exclude people; rather it enlarged your bluegrass world.



L to R - Bill(OH) Beverly & Emmett (IL)
Raynae (MT) Howard (IL)

I met a lovely family from Canada. In our conversations, we visited about the concerns and challenges they have with festivals in their area. With my Swiss friends we discussed the challenge of getting pickers connected. With my new found Japanese friend, well, we didn't verbalize too

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much, because he didn't speak much English and I don't speak Japanese. However, the common language of bluegrass made us fast friends. We were delighted to see each other throughout the week and enjoyed some great jamming. It didn't matter if you were a beginning mandolinist or a hot fiddler Regardless of one's ability or space in the bluegrass world; the people I met were friendly, inviting and wonderful.

One of the core values of IBMA is education. In formal educational settings I attended IBMA sponsored classes and interactive workshops covered a broad range of topics, i.e.: instrument care and set-up, how to organize a festival, hiring an agent vs. booking your own band and bluegrass in the schools. In very informal personal conversations I connected with other people who either are now, or have in the past been responsible for the things I do now, both in our band and in this organization. I visited historic places where bluegrass got its beginnings. Both in the formal and informal settings, I learned a lot.



Historic Ryman Auditorium

Now, for the pickin' part - There is a joke at IBMA that the name acronym IBMA really stands for "I've Been Mostly Awake". I cannot begin to describe or explain all the music that took place that week in Nashville - both professionally on the stage, by pickers in the halls and in venues all around the city. There were multiple stages every day simultaneously presenting great bands. The conference center and hotel were filled with music all hours of the day and night. Just like festivals here, the music continued into the early morning hours by those whose motto is: "there are 51

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weeks of the year to sleep, IBMA is for pickin'." Lobbies and jamming floors were full of groups of people jamming and enjoying that wondrous music we call bluegrass.

My week at IBMA really gave me a sense at how the love of bluegrass music really has no geographical boundaries – it's worldwide.

So, if you asked me how my trip to Nashville was, I would stand thinking where to begin, and then I would say: I met lots of terrific people, learned a ton and had a great time pickin'.



Alan Munde Gazette - during a band showcase

News from the Zones

Middle Zone

Hey ya'll,

It's time (long overdue) for another ISBA bluegrass jam at "The Barn". It will be next Saturday, November 11, at 7pm. I will provide pizza and Bob will have soda waters and coffee. Come at 6pm to eat and fellowship and we will start the jam at 7pm. So, if you play or like traditional bluegrass music, come on out and join us. We're gonna' have great time. Also, don't forget about the following Saturday's "Bluegrass in the Barn" (Nov. 18). See you at "The Barn".

Keep a pickin',
Dennis Stokes

Is it time for you to renew your ISBA Membership?

Take just a minute to fill it out and send it off.

Application for ISBA Membership

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email Address _____

IdaGrass, the ISBA newsletter is offered either in email or printed letter format. Using email saves the association the cost of postage and printing, HOWEVER, because we want you to enjoy and look forward to the newsletter, we want you to receive the newsletter in a format with which you are comfortable.

I would like to receive the newsletter Email _____ US Postal Service _____

**Yearly membership - \$10/individual \$15/family
Please mail to: Idaho Sawtooth Bluegrass Association
PO Box 123 White Bird, ID**