

[Idaho Sawtooth Bluegrass Association Newsletter – April 2021](#)

A big spring time ‘howdy’ to all of our members, bluegrass pickers and singers! I hope you haven’t sold your guitars, fiddles, banjos, dobros, mandolins, or basses and taken up crocheting – nothing wrong with crocheting, just want to hear you vocalizing those high lonesome mountain melodies and picking those exciting bluegrass instrumentals again when we are free to do campouts and jams.

Some of your board members have put together a few random items for this newsletter, and if any of you have articles or ideas for future newsletters, please email me (Keith Freedman, roundtuit3@yahoo.com) or Rich Johnson, johnson46@hotmail.com.

Learning new tunes:

Here is an email I received recently that is an advertisement to subscribe to on-line lessons. I thought he had a few good things to say about how we learn. I don’t know that it ever gets ‘automatic’ – I find I have to think all of the time I am playing, but it does get more natural to use a lick or play notes out of a position.

Jonathan Boyd (Breakthrough Guitar) <jonathan@breakthroughguitar.com>

There are 6 phases you’ll go through when learning anything on guitar – whether a song, riff, lick, concept, etc.

And when you get through all 6 phases, that’s when you’re "playing without thinking". That’s when that *thing* you wanted to learn becomes "automatic".

So what are the 6 phases? They are:

1. At first, that "new thing" is "impossible". You can’t do it. (That’s why you’re trying to learn it.)
2. After a few attempts, it becomes "possible". And you start to see how you can do it.

3. After you practice it a few more times, you start to "get it" a little more. That's when it shifts from "possible" to "challenging". You like a challenge so you keep practicing, and you see the progress you're making.

4. At that point, it becomes "annoying" because you almost have it down, but not quite. You still need to smooth out a few small "wrinkles" here and there.

5. Then -- the phase you've been looking for -- it gets FUN and EASY. This is the best part. You love playing it, and it feels great every time.

6. That is, until the next phase. It starts to become a "habit", and when you play it, it feels a little "stale". But because it's now a habit, you keep playing it whenever there's a guitar in your hands. And that's when - even before you start playing, you know what's going to happen.

At this point, you've truly mastered it...

It's time to move on to the next thing. And that means you have the opportunity to go back to phase 1 -- working your way towards your NEXT mastered skill.

Oh yeah, one more thing to mention: Staying at phase 6 -- where you know something and it feels too "comfortable" - is actually one of the worst things you can do if you wanna constantly get better. That's because you're never challenging yourself. Meaning you're never "growing". So make sure to *take on* the next thing when you reach phase 6.

Thank you to Jonathan Boyd for this article. You might check out his website, but it seems to be more of a sales pitch for subscriptions and the reviews are not very positive. To be fair though, I (Keith) have not gone through the course.

I have found Bryan Sutton's guitar course on Artist Works to be great instruction and he offers an interactive option if you so choose. Good material, great ideas, and some fine picking.

Joke corner: Have you heard of the new on-line social platform? It is like a combination of you-tube, twitter, and face book. It is called – you twit face . . .

Adding interest by changing chords and/or a major key to a minor key:

This is usually a bad idea but once in a while it works. I sat in on a jam at Weiser a couple of years ago where a couple from out of state did a minor version of the bluegrass standard, Columbus Stockade Blues. Instead of playing it in the key of A major (A, D, E), they played and sang it in Am (Am, Dm, E). It has a nice sound and the minor flavor really seems to fit the words. So, give it a try and see what you think. You will need to modify the melody in places to correspond with the minor chords. Here are the chords for the first verse, chorus, and the second verse. It is probably best to slow the song down – don't want an up-beat happy tempo with the new minor feel of the tune.

[Columbus Stockade Blues – Am]

Am E Am

Way down in Columbus, Georgia, Want to be back in Tennessee

Am **E** **Am**

Way down in Columbus Stockade, friends have turned their backs on me

Dm Am Dm E

Go and leave me if you wish to, never let me cross your mind

Am E Am

In your heart you love another, Leave me darlin' I don't mind

Am E Am

Last night, as I lay sleeping, I dreamed that you were in my arms

Then I found I was mistaken, I was peeping through the bars

Similarly, there is a simple way to warm up a slow song: add a 6m chord sparingly but where appropriate. Some of our bluegrass songs add a 6m in places and it sounds very good. For instance, in the song, Will The Circle Be Unbroken, an Em adds a lot of color when played in the chorus on the last syllable of “waitin’”. Also in the instrumental Gold Rush, when played in A, some folks add the 6m, F#m, on part B instead of just staying on the A chord.

I recently heard the Church Sisters sing the following hymn, an Easter song. They do simple yet very nice music. The song is in the key of D so the 6m is Bm. If you know the hymn, you may want to play through it humming the tune or singing the words and see if you like the Bm added to the chord progression, taking the place of the D chord in certain places.

Hymn - Near The Cross

D G D Bm A

1. Jesus, keep me near the cross, there a precious fountain
D G D Bm A D
Free to all, a healing stream, flows from Cal-v’ry’s mountain

D G D Bm A

- o *Refrain:* In the cross, in the cross, be my glory ever
 - o D G D Bm A D
Till my raptured soul shall find, rest beyond the river.

o

2. Near the cross, a trembling soul, love and Mercy found me;
There the bright and morning star, sheds its beams around me
3. Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes before me;
Help me walk from day to day, with its shadows o'er me
4. Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hoping, trusting ever,
Till I reach the golden strand, just beyond the river.

Announcements of upcoming events: I wish we had more good news here, but most everything is still on hold. Our best bet for an ISBA event is a campout in late summer or early fall. The board will make an announcement as soon as we can definitely schedule a weekend jam. The same is true for the Treasure Valley Bluegrass Night concerts at the Nampa Senior Center. This facility has not opened yet though the rest of the Nampa Recreation facility is open and masks are not required.

The jam at Ambassador RV Resort in Caldwell will probably resume in May.

And the Weiser Fiddle Contest is on! ALL CAMPGROUNDS WILL BE OPEN:
Fiddletown opens Saturday June 19. Slocum and SRHC Campgrounds will open Wednesday June 16. Stickerville opens June 11th for camping.

New instrumental to enjoy picking:

Although originally a vocal, the John Hartford song, Steam Powered Aeroplane, makes a warm, happy, and easy to learn instrumental. It has an interesting chord structure and melody. The range is quite wide so it is difficult to sing, but that is not a problem for our instruments. This is kind of folksy but John thought of his music as bluegrass and this tune makes a good alternative to some of our hard driving breakdowns.

Each chord represents a 4 beat measure, and there is a 3 beat intro leading up to a G note to get started. You can substitute a Bm for the Gmaj7, just try to work in a G note in that section. There is an 'a' part (verse) and a 'b' part (chorus). The tune works through the 'a' part and 'b' part and then concludes with the 'a' part normally, but for jamming it works well to just play the 'a' part and the 'b' part and then hand it off to the next picker. The last picker can resolve it by strumming a G chord after the 2 four beat D measures.

a) G G Am Am Am Am G G

 G G Am Am Am Am G G

b)	Am	Am	Gmaj7	Gmaj7	Am	Am	G	G
	Am	Am	Gmaj7	Gmaj7	Am	Am	D	D

** For Sale **

2 Shure SM57 microphones, \$50.00 each

1 Peavey PV6 six input stereo mixer \$60.00

2 Peavey microphone stands, \$10.00 each

All are like new and lightly used. Contact Rich Johnson 208-859-5145

Johnson46@hotmail.com

** For Sale **

1977 Martin guitar, model D-35, Indian rosewood back and sides, 3 piece back, good condition, asking \$2,000.00, Contact Bill Estes, 208-615-1074 or

georgeestes@digis.net

Idaho Sawtooth Bluegrass Association board members

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The following mandolin tab was submitted by Bill Estes. He suggests the key to being able to get this tune down is to start slow and learn one measure at a time, practicing that measure, then moving on to the next. Thanks Bill for submitting this tab.

Happy picking Everyone!

WHISKEY BEFORE BREAKFAST

A-PART

D	D	G	D	A
0	020	2	0	
0245 4	54024	5	544	202420
				42
D	D	G	D	A D
0	020	2	0	.
0245 4	54024	5	544	20240 .

B-PART

D	D	Em	Em	A
s	s	0020 02	320	
4555555	455520 0			54024
D	A	G	D	A D
20 0				
5 54 5	425420	20 0		.

