



IdaGrass

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November-December 2014

UPCOMING BLUEGRASS EVENTS

Blythe Bluegrass Festival

January 16-18, 2015
 Colorado River Fairgrounds, Blythe, CA
www.blythebluegrass.com

SPBGMA 41th Annual Bluegrass Music Awards

February 5-8, 2015
 Nashville, TN
www.spbgma.com

Wintergrass

February 26-March 1, 2015
 Bellevue, WA
www.wintergrass.com

ONGOING BLUEGRASS JAMS— IDAHO BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION

Beginners Jam every Wednesday--Boise

A beginner bluegrass jam is held on Wednesdays from 6:30 to 9pm in the Pioneer Building (106 N 6th St), right next to Wise Guys Pizza (Main and 6th)

Open Jam at Boise/Meridian KOA RV Park

Meridian, Idaho
 Every Tuesday 7 – 9:30 pm

ONGOING ISBA SPONSORED BLUEGRASS JAMS

Middle Zone Jam:

The Middle Zone Jam is held on Thursdays at Stan and Trudee Stickland's home, 5714 Centerbrook Drive, Boise. Call for details: 208-377-5326

Northern Zone Jams:

One the third Sunday of the month at the Lenore Store on Highway 12, from 1-4 PM.

The Saturday jam at the Jack in the Box is on hiatus until further notice.

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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 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.

ISBA—Changes in the BOD

Just like the changing of the seasons, one can always depend upon changes and shifts in BOD member responsibilities, and this fall is no exception. Scott Lombard has left the BOD to focus his energies on other pressing matters, and Carolyn Johnson has stepped down as Chairman of the Board, although she will continue to serve actively on the BOD in other capacities. Stan Strickland has accepted the role of Chairman.

Carolyn served tirelessly for a number of years, seeing the Association through more than one upheaval, and always rising to the challenge. For that, all of us owe her a vote of thanks, and we will always be grateful for her commitment to, and concern for, the best outcome for the ISBA and all of its members.

BOD Meeting Minutes

ISBA Board of Directors Meeting
Date: October 25, 2014

Those present: Carolyn Johnson, Rich Johnson, Steve Gleason, Bill Estes, Doug Jenkins, Keith Freedman, Stan Strickland, John Boyer, Trudee Strickland
Absent: Scott Lombard
Meeting was called to order: 6:30PM
Carolyn Johnson resigned as Board Chairman. The board elected Stan Strickland to serve as new chairman.
Trudee Strickland volunteered to perform ISBA secretary duties.

Steve Gleason will be added as a third authorized signer on the ISBA bank account.

Bill Estes gave a treasurer report:
Bank balance before Weiser ...\$2,935.50
Expenses.....\$1,073.19
Income.....\$1,025.00
Current balance.....\$2,887.31

Bill Estes volunteered to be liaison between Sandra Cooper and the Committee for the Weiser Fall Festival.

Steve Gleason will contact the Kamiah Chamber of Commerce in response to their query regarding the ISBA Spring Jam.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:30

ISBA’s Newest Member...

Congratulations to **Renee** and **Jason Homey**, who welcomed budding bluegrass player **Trevven Nicholas** on October 8. Trevven has not announced his stringed instrument of choice, but has chosen instead to focus on vocal skills for the next couple of years.

Banjo Camp at Weiser May, 2015

Speaking of stringed instruments, there’s a banjo camp in Weiser the last week of May, 2015. This camp is a great opportunity to meet and jam with other banjo players and to learn from highly acclaimed banjo instructors. This year, internationally renowned banjoist and educator Janet Beazley will join last year’s instructors Bill Evans and Jason Homey, and banjoist and camp director Gary Eller will be available for one on one assistance to students as needed.
Camp opens Thursday afternoon May 28, with classes all day Friday, Saturday and half of Sunday, with jamming all the time!
Student enrollment is limited to sixty on a first come, first served basis. Tuition is \$250, which

includes snacks during the day and an Idaho potato dinner on Friday night and Idaho barbecue on Saturday night. Fifty dollars will hold your space. If you have questions or want to register, please contact Jason Homey (banjomaster1@yahoo.com 208-585-1637) or Gary Eller (pgaryeller@aol.com 208-442-8844).

Two Great Websites to Investigate

We've recently been made aware of a couple of great sites for your daily dose of bluegrass, and for working on your own playing. First: check out Bluegrass on the Tube. Here's what their home page says: "Before the advent of the Internet and online video the only reliable way to SEE bluegrass was to go to a live show. This is still the best way to see the music, but if you want to see the many great musicians who are no longer with us (and the living ones who aren't playing tonight in your town), we've created Bluegrass On The Tube as the Internet's search engine for bluegrass videos." Subscriptions are free, and you'll get a daily email with an attached video. You can also search the site for that video you MUST see of Ralph Stanley performing that new song you want to add to your repertoire. www.bluegrassonthetube.com

Second: Once you've decided on a song, go to Free Bluegrass Backing Tracks, where you'll find an extensive collection of background tracks recorded and presented for free. You can download them for later use, and work on your breaks, your chords, or just practice playing in tempo (!). You can choose from several options, including basic tracks, slow jam songs, and chords and progressions. www.fbts.com

These two sites ought to provide enough to keep you happy through the next few months until you can appear at the Spring Jam and make a huge impression with your new prowess! Remember that, although these sites are offered at no charge, donations are welcome and appreciated.

Many thanks to Keith Freedman and Helen Smith for these suggestions. If anyone has any other sites you'd like to share, please do so.

IBMA 2014—A Personal Report

Raleigh, North Carolina bound for the 2014 IBMA, and my mind is racing from tune to tune, singing them in my mind, mandolin breaks I'd take and waiting for Sunday, my departure day.

This was my life the week before I got to fly out for this year's IBMA.

Last year this huge International Bluegrass conference, the granddaddy of them all, was moved from Nashville to Raleigh, NC. I'd missed getting to go last year, so I was really excited and ready to go this year. Finally Sunday arrived!

I decided to only take my mandolin due to the airlines and how horrible they can be trying to fly with your instruments. I took the redeye flight so that I could arrive there early Monday morning rather than late Monday night. I wasn't going to miss a single minute of jamming.

Upon landing at the airport I had to figure out a way to get myself to the conference site which was located at the Marriott Convention Center in downtown Raleigh. Within 20 minutes I had arrived, so here I was ready to hit the pavement running, or I should say rolling my suitcase along. As I started walking, directions gotten, I met a fellow mandolin

player who had been on my same bus, so we walked to the convention together. He was from Australia and his band, The Davidson Brothers, was picked to showcase there during the week. We visited and walked along and within moments there I was, the convention site in all its glory was right in front of me. A huge statue of Sir Walter Raleigh standing there with Deering banjo necks all around him, encasing the statue like a frame to welcome us all.

I found fellow acquaintances from California having lunch on the open sidewalk. They recognized me with my trademark Open Road Stetson, and I joined them for lunch. This is how my IBMA experience began. The sun was shining and it was a perfect temperature for what promised to be a super week.

Shortly thereafter the booth was open for us to pick up our name tag lanyards so after doing some scouting in the big convention center finding where that was, I had my ticket around my neck.

All day long more and more people were arriving and I was finding more and more of my friends from all over the United States trickling in. It was a glorious reunion for all of us.

Evening came and the jamming began. It was so amazing and awesome; jamming everywhere and the fun spirit of our week ahead of us was just bringing out the best music imaginable everywhere you turned. I totally lost track of the time and played until 5 AM. There were still plenty of people playing when I decided to turn in.

After a short 4 hours of sleep, Tuesday morning classes began and the conference was off in full swing.

They had workshops for each instrument, and several times throughout the week different people would teach them so you could take mandolin lessons from Mike Compton, and

later in the week from someone else if you wanted different styles. They had all kinds of classes a person could take from the business side of the music to learning all kinds of things that would help you in your music. I took a vocal harmony workshop, and went to panel discussions on all sorts of different things. Each two hour time slot they offered about eight or ten choices that a person could choose from. It was hard to decide which class you wanted to attend.

Then in the afternoon they had the keynote speaker, Bela Fleck, and were fed a nice luncheon. Throughout the week we got treated to three different luncheons or snack buffets.

Wednesday evening I had been jamming in the California Bluegrass Associations Suite and when I left there at 2:30 AM here in front of the elevators at a lobby was Chris Henry jamming with some of his band. I'm acquainted with Chris and so he asked me to join them in the jam. We had Chris, me, Kayla Hotte from Canada and his bass player. It was amazing to be jamming with the pros and I actually felt like I was keeping up too.

The following day they had a real fun exhibition hall to walk through and see all the products, and try out instruments, get free candy...hmmm, it was great fun taste testing and browsing. Along with this there were more classes, as well as bluegrass films a person could view.

Thursday evening was the awards show, when you dress up a little nicer and get to go to a fancy auditorium, an easy half block walk, to see all the bluegrass greats nominated for awards, and see if who you voted for wins. They do it just like the CMA awards you see on TV so it's pretty fun to get attend something like this for our genre of music. All week long a person rubs shoulders with the stars. The night of the awards show you see them all dressed up. Before the show starts

they ask us all to clap and carry on for them to record our clapping to use as a track throughout the evening as nominees are announced. This is just to add to the clapping we already do to make it a fuller sound. (There's a little known tidbit of what happens the behind the scenes!)

Later that night the excitement was high as everyone was jamming at full speed ahead. I found my friend Greg Cahill, along with my Australian bus friend and his brother. They were jamming in a nook so I joined them. The TV news came and filmed us and later my friend found the clip of it on the Internet. It was great!

Friday the conference starts a new leg of activities for IBMA week and the business conference part is over with at that point. Since moving to Raleigh, IBMA re-named this weekend part to be called "Wide Open Bluegrass" instead of "Fanfest". IBMA and the city of Raleigh came up with the idea to do an outside street fair along with the main outdoor stage, where they bring in all the big acts to perform. So this was a really amazing thing that no one could believe unless you saw it. They had five blocks closed off to traffic and street vendors lined up on both sides of the street all the way down, plus a block on each of the intersecting streets with stages set up on them. A total of around ten stages and bands playing every hour at each one, and they gave us a schedule so that a person could see who they wanted to see. This Wide Open Bluegrass was open to the public to attend for free. However at the main stage, The Red Hat Amphitheater, a person had to have tickets or your conference pass to get in. They brought in the big named bands for playing there--Del McCoury, Ricky Skaggs, The Lonesome River Band, etc. It was really a festive way to close out the conference. Each night, when the outdoor activities closed down once again there was jamming galore

everywhere you looked, inside, and outside. I never went to bed before 4 AM the entire week.

My flight home was later in the afternoon on Sunday which was nice because I didn't have to hurry to the airport like usual. As I was in the hotel lobby and waiting to walk back to the bus station, here comes a friend of mine that I met this year at the Weiser banjo camp. She's from Canada, and I hadn't run into her all week long. Since the tally has come out that 180,000 people attended this year's IBMA it's not unusual that we hadn't seen each other till we were homeward bound.

Well, not to let a moment of jamming time go to waste, we got out our instruments and jammed in the Marriott lobby until time to head out. We found that our flights were leaving at the same time, however different airlines, so we left together and upon arriving at the airport we found out that our departing gates were only 5 numbers apart... more good news... you guessed it, we just had to jam one last time.

What a way to end a perfectly perfect IBMA week! Life is Good.... :)

Raynae Redman

A Note on Jamming—Steve Gleason

My views on jamming can be summed up in a word: awareness. There are different types of jam sessions. Some happen weekly, some are open jams, some closed, and some spontaneous. I believe it is the responsibility of the musician to determine if it's appropriate to enter any given jam, and to be aware of the nature of that session.

Steve Gleason ISBA President

Ear Training: Intervals

There are some people who upon hearing a note in isolation can identify that note. This ability – absolute pitch – is not necessary to have in order to learn music by ear. For this purpose, a more useful skill to develop is relative pitch: the ability to identify intervals, that is, the difference in pitch between two notes.

A person with good relative pitch can tell, for instance, that an A note when played after an D note sounds similar to a D note when played after a G note, for the difference in pitch between an A and a D is the same as that between a D and a G. Furthermore, if such a person finds out what one of the two notes played is, he will then be able to identify what the other note is, for he knows the unique sound of each interval. By contrast, if a person had absolute pitch, but no sense of relative pitch – this is at least hypothetically possible - he would correctly identify all the notes being played without first needing to find out what one of the notes is, for he is keenly aware of the unique sound of each note, but would not notice the similarity in sound between an A note when played after a D as compared with a D note when played after a G.

In most music, the ear is continually bombarded by many notes being played simultaneously and in succession with one another. All these combinations of notes reduce to pairs of notes, that is, intervals. Any song, melody, or chord progression can be played in many different keys. Changing the key in which a song is played in changes every note of the melody and every chord in the progression. Therefore, the identity of the song does not depend upon the specific notes used to play it, but upon the relations of the notes to each other, i.e., the intervals. When playing with others, one will always have, at the very least, the key in which the song is being played as a reference point against which to judge the pitches of the notes. For all these reasons, relative pitch not only suffices for learning by ear, but is of more practical use than absolute pitch considered by itself.

To start ear training, go to a website where you can hear a sustained G note (195.998 Hz). E.g., <http://www.gieson.com/Library/projects/utilities/tuner/> Or, you could record yourself playing this note and then play back the recording. Now, with your instrument in tune, play the same G note along with it. (open 3rd string of guitar, banjo or dobro, open 4th string of fiddle or mandolin) This interval is called a perfect unison. Because there is no difference in vibration frequency between the two notes, the interval sounds perfectly resolved and feels completely at rest. Now, along with the G note, play the note that is one half step higher (one fret higher on a fretted instrument) than the G note. Now you are hearing very different sound. When there is a difference of one half step between two notes, the interval is called a minor second. In contrast to the perfect unison, the minor second is unresolved, feels very tense, and, in isolation, jarring.

Intervals that feel at rest are called consonances, while tense intervals are called dissonances. All intervals fall into one of these two categories. When encountered in isolation from any other musical context, consonances may be described as intervals that sound pleasing, and dissonances as intervals that sound displeasing. However, in music, frequent use is made of both consonant and dissonant intervals; for, without dissonances, instead of a song feeling satisfying, it quickly becomes

boring. Dissonances are necessary to keep a piece interesting; when skillfully used, far from being displeasing, they contribute many desirable qualities to music (e.g., intensity, excitement).

Go up yet another half step to an A note and play this together with the G note. This interval is called a major second (M2). Like the minor 2nd, this is a dissonant interval, but it is not quite as tense as what the minor second is. A major second occurs whenever there are two notes that differ from each other by a whole step. Yet one more fret higher (3 half steps, or one and a half whole steps) and you will be hearing a minor third (m3) - in this case, created by playing a G note and a Bb note together. While this is a consonant interval, it is not nearly as much at rest as the perfect unison we started with.

No two intervals have exactly the same degree of resolution or tension as each other. The perfect unison is the only interval that has no degree of tension. All other consonant intervals contain a degree of dissonance, just not enough to be classified as dissonant intervals; though not absolutely at rest, they are relatively at rest. More so than any other factor, it is these differing degrees of tension between intervals that make it possible to learn to readily distinguish one interval from another.

Carry on ascending in half steps, observing which intervals are more or less at rest than others, until you reach the G note an octave higher than the G you started with. Next, try the same procedure with a different starting note, and listen for the exact same order of relative consonances and dissonances that was observed when G was the starting note.

Interval	Abbreviation	Width (in half-steps)	Examples
Perfect Unison	P1	0	G-G; D-D
Minor 2 nd	m2	1	G-Ab; D-Eb
Major 2 nd	M2	2	G-A; D-E
Minor 3 rd	m3	3	G-Bb; D-F
Major 3 rd	M3	4	G-B; D-F#
Perfect 4 th	P4	5	G-C; D-G
Augmented 4th / Diminished 5 th	A4 / d5	6	G-C#/D D-G#/Ab
Perfect 5 th	P5	7	G-D; D-A
Minor 6 th	m6	8	G-Eb; D-Bb
Major 6 th	M6	9	G-E; D-B
Minor 7 th	m7	10	G-F; D-C
Major 7 th	M7	11	G-F#; D-C#
Perfect Octave	P8	12	G-G; D-D

Perfects (P1, P4, P5, P8), 3rds and 6ths (m3, M3, m6, M6) are consonances.

Augmenteds, Diminisheds (A4, d5), 2nds and 7ths (m2 M2, m7, M7) are dissonances.

Happy Pickin',
Jason Homey (banjomaster1@yahoo.com)

DUES INFORMATION AND MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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. We want you to receive the newsletter in whichever format you prefer. To offset production and mailing costs, membership dues for those electing USPS hard copy of the newsletter are \$20.00. For those members choosing email delivery, annual dues are \$15.00 for an individual or family.

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

I am joining as: New Member Renewal

Date:_____

Yearly membership runs April-April.

Please mail to: **Idaho Sawtooth Bluegrass Association**
 c/o Trudee Strickland
 5714 Centerbrook Dr.
 Boise, ID 83705

**Have ideas, comments, questions, or concerns?
Want to get involved? Here's your Board of Directors:**

Northern Zone

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Sgbanjo1@hotmail.com

Southern Zone

John Boyer, Twin Falls
boyerj1@mindspring.com

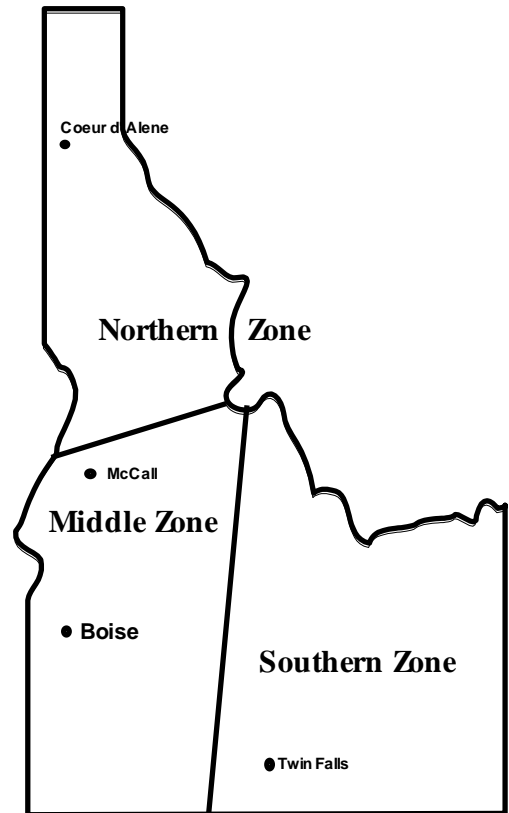
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