



IdaGrass

Volume 12 Issue 2

March-April 2016

UPCOMING BLUEGRASS EVENTS

ISBA Spring Super Jam
May 19-22, 2016
Kamiah KOA Campground
Kamiah, ID
www.idahosawtoothbluegrass.com

Sacajewea Bluegrass Festival
June 10-12, 2016
Pasco, WA
www.mctama.org/sacajewea-bluegrass-festival/

3rd Annual Weiser Banjo Contest
June 18-19, 2016
Weiser, ID
www.banjocontest.org

National Oldtime Fiddlers Contest & Festival
June 20-25, 2016
Weiser, ID
www.fiddlecontest.com

4th Annual Valley Bluegrass Festival
June 24-25, 2016
Lewiston, ID
www.lewisclarkbluegrass.org

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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.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Well, this newsletter is packed full, and there's not much room left for my musings—which is great! Everyone is busy with spring cleaning, plans for the summer, and getting that garden patch ready for another bumper crop.

So why am I going to ask you to add one more thing to your already loaded schedule? I'm going to ask you to be a contributing member of the ISBA.

"Contributing" goes far beyond staying current on your dues. It involves throwing your time, talent (and sometimes your back!) into the activities and programs that make this a functional organization. We've got the Kamiah jam coming up in May, and an election for a new ISBA President soon after. Here's a chance for you to become involved, and have a hand in making this organization become what you want it to be.

So, come on! Don't just watch this ongoing jam we call the ISBA. Bring your voice and join in!

PT Limehouse
Co-Editor, IdaGrass

FROM THE BOD CHAIRMAN, STAN STRICKLAND

Greetings, Everyone!

It was noted in the Nov/Dec 2015 issue of IdaGrass that Steve Gleason has stepped down as ISBA president and BOD (Board of Directors) member.

Steve continues to support the ISBA in other ways.

ISBA by-laws direct that our president be elected by the membership at large. Therefore the BOD is requesting nominations for the office of president from our members. A nominee should be contacted personally to verify their willingness to become a candidate prior to submission of that person's name to the BOD.

Nominations should be sent via email to stanrud@msn.com or via US mail to ISBA
c/o Stan Strickland
5714 Centerbrook Dr
Boise, ID 83705

Nominations must be received by April 30, 2016.

Candidates' names will be published in the May/June 2016 issue of IdaGrass. The election will be held as soon as possible after that.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

**ONGOING BLUEGRASS JAMS—
IDAHO BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION****Beginners Jam every Thursday--
Boise**

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

Intermediate Jam every Wednesday

from 6:30 to 9pm in the Pioneer Building

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:

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

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

Southern Zone Jam:

On the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month, 7-9 PM, downstairs at Gertie's Pizza in Twin Falls. Call for details: John Boyer at 208-733-4552

RENEW EARLY, RENEW OFTEN....

As you may remember, ISBA dues run from April-April, so for most of us, it's time to renew. You can help us keep more of Trudee's hair on her head by taking care of this before you arrive at the Super Jam by sending your check now to: ISBA, c/o Trudee Strickland, 5714 Centerbrook Drive, Boise, ID 83705. The more of us that do this, the more time she and other

volunteers can spend enjoying the music in Kamiah.

There's even a form at the end of this newsletter to make it easier. Please help us out, and renew early.

KAMIAH SPRING SUPER JAM 2016

While the rain keeps pouring down, the committee for this year's Kamiah Spring Super Jam is trudging forward with plans for our event. We are hoping for more instruments to be offered in a "Chance to Win" drawing this year, as that seemed to be popular last year, and helped to offset the cost of putting on the jam. Pepsi will also be sponsoring the event with a concession trailer with their products for sale again this year. The jam will take place at the same RV Park that as last year, but the park has a new name as well as new management this year. It is now called the **Kamiah KOA** and can be found on the KOA website (www.KOA.com) or by calling 208-935-2556 to make your reservations. The dates for this year's jam are the May 19-22, which is a week later than it has been in the past, but still between Mother's Day and Memorial Day weekends.

The schedule of events will start off with a potluck and hopefully lots of jamming on the afternoon of the 19th, then an open mic contest on Friday evening and possibly a vocal workshop. Saturday morning we will offer various instrument workshops. Our show will start roughly at noon on Saturday. We have four bands picked so far: **Flatgrass** from the Missoula MT area, **Higher Ground** from the Lewiston Valley, **Montana Ramblers** from the Missoula MT area, and **Ozark Mountain Music** from the Boise ID area. Sunday morning we will wrap up the event with a gospel jam

and open mic. As always there will be jamming happening around the park all weekend so bring your instruments and fine voices and join in.

See you there! Randy Berg, chairman

ATTENTON SOCIAL NETWORK JUNKIES:

Check out our new FaceBook page. Search for "Idaho Sawtooth Bluegrass Association" and then join the group! Mike Millward promises to keep us all up to date and in tune (so to speak).

HERE IT COMES...WORKSHOP SEASON!

Spring marks the start of not just festival season, but a myriad of opportunities for workshops. Some are focused on a single instrument, but others cover a broad spectrum of interests, including vocal training. Here's a sample of choices within reasonable travel distance for most of us:

Walker Creek Music Camp
Petaluma, CA: April 8-11
www.walkercreekmusiccamp.org

Clawhammer Banjo Camp
Weiser, ID: April 21-24
www.banjocontest.org

Bluegrass Banjo Camp
Weiser, ID: May 19-22
www.banjocontest.org

Rivers of the West Mandolin Camp
Corbett, OR: June 9-12
www.mandoberlin.com

CBA Music Camp
Grass Valley, CA: June 12-15
www.cbaweb.org

AND FOR THOSE OF US STAYING HOME...

Here's a great option for online learning.

PegheadNation.com, launched in September 2014 is the home of roots music instruction, gear, and news for players of guitar, mandolin, banjo, dobro, fiddle, bass, and ukulele.

With their online e-learning format, you can learn to play your favorite instruments with some of the best teachers in the roots music community. These teachers include names you already know well, such as Bill Evans, Mike Compton, Sharon Gilchrist, Mike Witcher, Chad Manning, and Scott Nygaard.

You'll also stay up-to-date with the latest happenings and news from the roots music world with video demonstrations of new instruments and gear, reviews of great new albums and videos, backstage conversations with touring musicians, thought-provoking and humorous columnists, and much more.

Peghead Nation, Inc. was founded in February 2014 by Dan Gabel (Executive Producer), Scott Nygaard (Editor), and Teja Gerken (Producer), and is based in Fairfax, CA. They are each passionate musicians who have deep experience in the world of acoustic music instruction, journalism, and business. They are committed to helping you learn to play roots music, learn about your favorite instruments, and stay inspired and entertained so you can play and share the music you love.

For more information, go to: www.PegheadNation.com or call them at 415-448-7718.

NEW CAPO ENDS RE-TUNING

Al Ferguson, known in the banjo world as the developer of the Perfect Pitch capo, has a new product to introduce to the fretted stringed instrument world.

The Fret Paw capo goes against most of the tradition in the capo world, which insists that the device should be as small and unwieldy as possible. In fact, its design involves an apparatus that is longer than the average fret space, though it fits quite low and close to the fingerboard.

And that is exactly what Al had in mind, a capo that would clamp the strings down effectively without posing any sort of obstacle to the left hand or the fretting fingers while installed. Its shape and design also allow it to be used beyond the 5th fret where the banjo neck widens since it clamps from the right and doesn't encircle the entire neck.

The individual stainless steel "fingers" on the capo allow for the pressure to be adjusted for each individual string, and made to easily adapt to any radius on the fingerboard.

The Fret Paw capo is offered for banjo in both flat and radiused models, and for guitar both radiused and flat in two nut widths. The selling price for all the Fret Paws is \$39.95 and they can be ordered online at www.fretpaw.com.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADING A SONG FROM MEMORY AT A JAM

How many times have you seen it

happen at a jam that someone calls a song they intend on leading the singing on, but then, instead of singing and playing towards the jam group as a whole, they reach for their music stand, set a great big binder on it consisting of hole-punched lyric sheets printed off from internet websites, flip through the pages to find the song, and then stare at the lyrics the whole time they are singing? If you have encountered this at jams, you may have noticed that songs that are led in this manner tend not to be played as well by the jam group as a whole as songs that are led from memory. Why is this?

When a person leading a song at a jam reads the lyrics off a page on a music stand while singing, there are many things that happen that seriously compromise the person's ability to effectively lead the song.

The music stand functions as a physical barrier between the leader of the song and his fellow jammers; it obstructs their view of the leader of the song, making it more difficult to follow him and stay in sync with him.

When leading a song at a jam, one's hands should always be clearly visible to the group as a whole. Especially if you are a guitar player, your fellow jammers will tend to play better with you and with more confidence when they can see your chord changes. But, no matter what instrument you play, you will have more control of the timing if your picking (or, on fiddle, bowing) hand is clearly visible to everyone, for when your fellow jammers can watch the motion of your hand, it makes it much

easier for them to stay in time with you.

Likewise, one's lips should always be clearly visible to the group when you are leading the singing. For, when you are singing the lead part, it is your vocals that determine more than anything else the timing of the song. And especially when people join in to sing harmony with you, they need to watch your lips closely in order to ensure that their syllables begin and end at the same time as yours.

When reading lyrics off a page, one is directing one's singing and playing towards a piece of paper rather than one's fellow jammers. The more one focuses on the page, the less one is focusing on the people who are making music with you. In order to lead a song effectively, one cannot ignore the people playing with you, expecting them to play along with you just as if they were playing along with a record. While the leader of the song is responsible for the rhythm and feel of the song, he needs to be flexible in order to lead effectively. To whatever extent he is not able to influence his fellow jammers to play with the same feel and sense of timing that he has, he must adjust his singing and playing in order for the song to hold together at the jam. But, in order to this, the leader must, as much as possible, keep himself aware of and sensitive to how the jam group as a whole is playing the song.

Jammers rely on the leader of the song for important visual cues to know what is happening next: e.g., who takes the next break in the song, whether a break will be followed by verse, a chorus, or

another break, when and how the song is going to end. In most cases, subtle cues are all that are needed, and when this is the case, subtle cues work best at a jam. Sometimes, however, a less subtle cue might be needed to keep the song on track. Either way, these cues need to be timed right in order to be effective. The more one is paying direct attention to and focusing one's energies toward the jam group, the better a position one is in to make the choice as to what kind of cue is needed (this often involves making a split-second decision), and to find the right time to offer the cue.

When a person is intensely focused on a lyric sheet while leading a song at a jam, this can convey to one's fellow jammers a lack of confidence in one's ability to sing and play the song from memory. Alternately, it may give the impression that one has not practiced the song enough before bringing it to the jam in order to be able to lead it effectively, or worse, a fear or unwillingness to fully engage with one's fellow jammers. (Some people do use music stands as physical barrier to hide behind at a jam, creating their own bubble of private space away from the jam group.)

Leading a song at a jam is not the time to practice songs that you only sort of know. How can you expect people to follow your lead with confidence, when you yourself feel a bit shaky on the song you are leading?

Exuding confidence is important when leading a song, for the more confident the leader of the song appears to his fellow jammers, the more they will tend to play with confidence. When they lack

confidence in the leader, their playing will tend to become more hesitant and timid. If enough people become too uncertain in their playing because they feel they cannot rely on the leader to guide them through the song, the song will start falling apart, and that is no fun for anyone.

Happy Pickin',

Jason Homey

(banjomaster1@yahoo.com)

J.D. CROWE RETIRES – FOR REAL THIS TIME

*John Lawless, Bluegrass Express,
August, 2015*

When banjo legend J.D. Crowe retired from active touring with The New South at the end of 2012, he continued to offer occasional performances, primarily with his old friends Doyle Lawson and Paul Williams. He also toured loosely this summer with a reunion of the New South from the 1990s billed as The Flashback Band, named for the album they produced in '94.

Crowe hadn't wanted to leave the music he loved, nor all the friends he had made in the business since first recording with Jimmy Martin in 1956 at 19 years of age. But now the word has come down from his physician that continuing to travel and perform runs an unacceptable risk owing to J.D.'s chronic

obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), a common respiratory ailment that afflicts millions in the US alone.

COPD typically results from either emphysema or bronchitis, or lung irritation from smoking or other environmental conditions, and can make it difficult for the sufferer to breathe. At 77 years of age, after a lengthy career providing bluegrass banjo at the very highest level of excellence, Crowe has nothing left to prove, and no justification for risking his health on stage.

Promoters that have booked Crowe with either the Old Friends (Crowe, Lawson, Williams) or Flashback bands have been notified that they will be unable to make their remaining engagements. He's not feeble or confined, the doctors have simply advised him that the rigors of traveling and doing stage work may hasten the progression of his COPD, a disease that can be crippling in its later stages.

Let us all celebrate the richness of the music we have enjoyed from J.D. Crowe, the most heralded living proponent of the Earl Scruggs style of banjo, a style that is forever enhanced and refined by his contributions. We'll miss you, Crowe, but you've earned your rest.

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

Randy Berg, Orofino
rlberg@live.com

Southern Zone

John Boyer, Twin Falls
boyerj1@mindspring.com

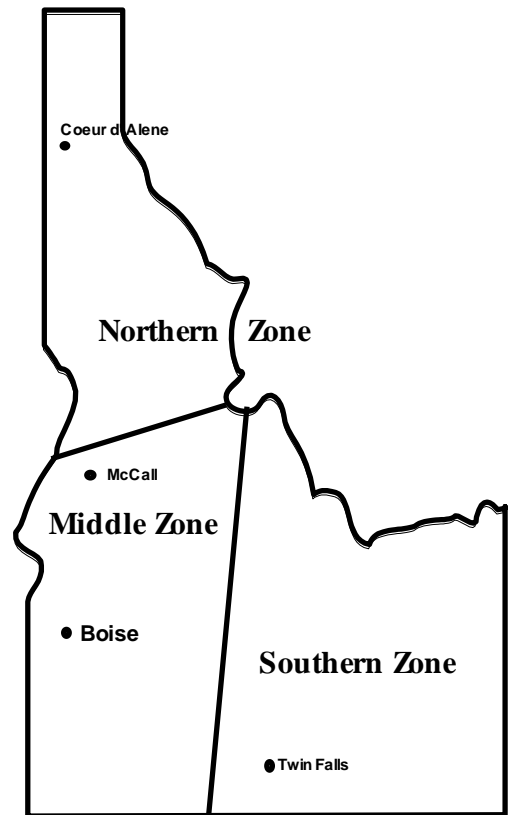
Middle Zone

Bill Estes, Star
georgeestes@digis.net
Keith Freedman, Nampa
Roundtuit3@yahoo.com
Doug Jenkins, Nampa
kandkjenkins@yahoo.com
Carolyn Johnson, Boise
cthorse@gmail.com
Rich Johnson, Boise
Johnsonr46@hotmail.com
Stan & Trudee Strickland, Boise
stantrud@msn.com

Webmaster: Carolyn Johnson, Boise
cthorse@gmail.com

Membership: Trudee Strickland, Boise
stantrud@msn.com
(208) 377-5326

Newsletter: PT & John Limehouse, White Bird
pt@drslimehouse.com
john@drslimehouse.com
(208) 839-2300



Check us out on the web: www.idahosawtoothbluegrass.org



PO Box 106
White Bird, ID 83554