



IdaGrass

Volume 12 Issue 3

May-June 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

Bluegrass Camp for Kids
July 12-14, 2016
MOSS, McCall, ID
www.TheSummerMusicFestival.com (camps and workshops)

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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

I'll make this short and sweet. It's pouring outside my window, but in my mind, I'm sitting outside by a campfire on a warm summer evening, tuning up my instrument, and humming a promising break in my head.

Must be the start of festival season!

The Kamiah Super Jam is just a couple of weeks away, and then....well, that's up to you.

Me, I'm putting on new strings, and practicing that pesky chop so I'm ready. I think you should do the same.

Now—let's go play some music!

PT Limehouse
Co-Editor, IdaGrass

ONGOING BLUEGRASS JAMS— IDAHO BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION

Beginners Jam every Thursday

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)

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, held on Thursdays at Stan and Trudee Strickland's home, is on hiatus until September 1, 2016.

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

FROM THE BOD CHAIRMAN, STAN STRICKLAND

Greetings, Everyone!

The Middle zone board members met on Saturday, May 23, 2016.

Two new board members were added to represent the Northern zone.

John Lazzarini and Bodie Dominguez are welcomed as new board members.

The addition of John and Bodie, along with Randy Berg, provides a better balance of representation between the Northern and Middle zones.

Trudee Strickland has vacated her seat as a board member and Gary Woods of Boise has agreed to take her place on the board. Welcome Gary!

Many of the people in attendance at Kamiah have expressed their appreciation and enjoyment of the beginners' jam. So, we hope to schedule a 1 hour jam for beginners on Friday and Saturday nights. A list of typical beginner songs is provided below for those who would like to practice a song in advance and then call it at the jam. The purpose of the list is only to provide a few suggestions. Many other songs are certainly appropriate and likely to be called at the jam.

The Fall Festival at Weiser will be September 16-18 this year. Planning and preparations are underway to make the Weiser festival a better and more successful event each year. Member suggestions and feedback regarding the event is helpful to the event planners. Please contact a board member to present your ideas, suggestions, or complaints, or to volunteer to help out during the festival.

See you at Kamiah!

Stan Strickland
ISBA Board Chairman

BEGINNERS' JAM PLAYLIST

Here's the playlist for the Kamiah Beginners' Jam mentioned above:

1. Gold Watch and Chain
2. Cripple Creek
3. Boil the Cabbage Down
4. Long Journey Home (2 Dollar Bill)
5. Keep on the Sunny Side
6. Sittin' on Top of the World
7. Don't This Road Look Rough & Rocky
8. Life's Railway to Heaven
9. Will the Circle be Unbroken
10. Bury Me Beneath the Willow
11. Foggy Mountain Top
12. I Am Weary Let Me Rest
13. All The Good Times Are Past and Gone
14. Blue Ridge Cabin Home

15. I Saw The Light
16. John Hardy
17. Red River Valley
18. Old Joe Clark
19. I'll Fly Away
20. Lonesome Road Blues

SPRING SUPER JAM JUST DAYS AWAY

Well, our Super Jam committee has done it again, and put together an impressive schedule for the upcoming kickoff to the 2016 Festival season. How about these offerings...a Thursday evening get-acquainted potluck, followed by workshops on Friday evening and Saturday morning, and 5 great bands to entertain you on Saturday afternoon.

But wait...there's more...don't forget about open mic on Friday evening and our closing Gospel Sing on Sunday. There will be a Beginners' Jam available both Friday and Saturday, as well as a youth program Saturday morning.

Camping is available on-site at the Kamiah KOA, which offers motel rooms and cabins as well as RV sites.

For contact info and phone numbers, please review the flyer located at the end of this newsletter-- then print out extra copies, and hand them out to your friends. Hope to see you there!

KIDS MUSIC WORKSHOPS AT MOSS

ISBA member Glenn Gemelli has volunteered to help with this event in July. It will be conducted in a music day-camp format at the U of I Payette Lake campus, adjacent to Ponderosa Park. Open to youth ages 8-15, experienced instructors will mentor on traditional string instruments and singing, at various levels of ability.

The McCall Folklore Society is sponsoring the Kids Music Workshops again this year.

The dates are July 12, 13, 14 and the classes will be at McCall Outdoor Science School. Cost is \$250 for three days of classes, 10 AM- 3:30 PM.

Scholarships will be available, but applying early gives you the best chance of getting one.

Please let us know if you plan to attend, and pass the word to your friends!! For more information, contact Pam Wehr, McCall Folklore Society: 208-315-5528, or Glen Gemelli: 208-630-3985

SAM BUSH AIMS TO KEEP SPIRIT OF DOC AND MERLE WATSON ALIVE

By Jonathan Henley - News Herald Correspondent

On Saturday night at this year's MerleFest, when the Sam Bush Band takes the stage, it will mark the 28th year Bush has performed at the event at Wilkes Community College. He is one of a handful of performers who have made the four-day music festival an annual destination in every year of the festival's existence.

Every time he takes the stage, his energy, humor, humility and love of music transform an already enthusiastic gathering into something transcendent. A perennial favorite at MerleFest, Bush doesn't just perform with his band. It's hard to tell when he will turn up on stage with an up-and-coming artist or participate in a jam. Bush says that "coming back (to MerleFest) each year is its own reward. We get to see our pals and play together." His annual offering is full of the sincere joy and gratitude that define MerleFest.

Sam Bush has won Grammy Awards, International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) awards, and Americana Music Association Awards (AMA), according to his website, www.sambush.com. He is a three-time junior national fiddle champion and has taken the stage with the likes of Emmylou Harris, Lyle Lovett, Del McCoury, Garth Brooks, Bela Fleck, Jerry Douglas, John Cowan, and a who's who of other music icons. IBMA has even given him a much deserved lifetime achievement award. When he speaks about his career, though, it is evident that he is proudest not of the awards but the chance to play with his heroes.

"In the acoustic world, I've been pretty lucky to play with almost every one of my heroes," according to his website. "I've gotten to play with Bill Monroe, Doc Watson, Earl Scruggs, I've been to the mountain."

Like his heroes before him, Bush continues a deep tradition of making an audience feel what he feels with an instrument in his hands and a melody on his lips.

Born in Bowling Green, Kentucky, Bush was reared on country music and bluegrass. However, he was also inspired by all kinds of music, he said in a recent telephone interview. By the early 1970s, he'd been exposed to rock-blues-jazz influenced bluegrass and he and his band, New Grass Revival, played a style of bluegrass probably not envisioned by some of the originators of old time bluegrass. They allowed music from all over the musical spectrum to influence them.

Since the advent of radio, music, in general, has become a melting pot of styles and genres — someone who grew up hearing bluegrass and liked it has also likely been influenced by rock. New Grass Revival embodied the freedom to play across genres.

"If you grew up on rock n' roll and wanted bluegrass, too, then we were the obvious choice," Bush said.

Since New Grass Revival, Bush has gone on to achieve high acclaim with his band and as a studio and touring musician, but the acclaim he seeks appears to be less driven by accolades than by a desire to share the experience of music with his audiences, he said.

When New Grass Revival began a tour with Doc and Merle Watson in 1974, they began a relationship that became deeper than a merely collegial association. They became friends, making personal the grief over Merle's death in a tractor accident in 1985. "Those at the first MerleFest were friends and pals of Doc and Merle," Bush said. "We were missing Merle."

That loss continues to influence Bush's MerleFest performances.

"When my band are doing our set, I can feel Merle playing through me a little bit," he said. "I always comment about him on stage. I don't want people to ever forget about him."

Indeed, Bush shares more than just the memories and stories. He invites his audience into his experience. In 2015 at MerleFest, he introduced a song called, "Circles Around Me," by saying that the song reminds him of Doc and Merle, that it is "a song about gratitude." Despite how self-evident such themes might often seem, that is a heady order for a crowd that regularly surpasses 75,000 people. Yet, Bush invites them all to sit around while he and his band invite them into his experience and into his heart.

Bush says that Doc Watson taught him that the three things a good musician wants to do are to play "tastefully and with timing and to entertain an audience — it's good to let (the audience) in on the fact that you're having a good time." Doc told Bush, "Let (the audience) have fun with you." Bush says that kind of transparency and connection between the performers and the audience is "honest," and that it describes the kind of music at MerleFest — it doesn't really fit any categories except that it is

defined by honesty, where the music itself is the entertainment.

"The kind of music we play at MerleFest, it's not based upon trends," Bush said.

The music is diverse, representing a variety of styles, with each artist bringing their own personality and character and presenting them to the audience, like a demonstration, perhaps. But it's also an invitation to share the moment with the artist, with the song, and with the rest of the audience. It creates a moment centered on the music.

"We're sincere about what we do. Sure,"

Bush says about the music at MerleFest.

"But the music is the entertainment."

In a generation when people are inundated to the point of over-saturation with media, particularly avenues for hearing music, Bush's perspective might seem naive and arcane. Yet, year after year, tens of thousands flock to Wilkes Community College to zero in on music adorned only by the sounds of their instruments and their voices.

As evidence of the far-reaching influence of the festival, Bush indicates the massive success of The Zac Brown Band and the Avett Brothers, both MerleFest alumni. But he also points out that when Led Zeppelin bass player, John Paul Jones, attended the festival, he was excited about something that is so genuine and unpretentious.

"He was just thrilled to be there in that environment and around that music," Bush said.

This year, MerleFest will feature another member of the Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame, John Oates. Bush sees this broad interest in participation as an indication of just how far-reaching the influence of this kind of music really is. But just exactly what kind of music is it?

Some have tried to over-simplify the category of MerleFest music by calling it bluegrass. Bush immediately dispels that idea by pointing out that Doc Watson, who was something like the curator of the

festival's traditional diverse lineups, played more than bluegrass.

"Doc never called himself a bluegrass picker, though he played beautifully as a bluegrass picker" said Bush. "He just called it 'good ol' country pickin' and that's a reflection on MerleFest."

Of course, it is also a reflection on Sam Bush, as well. Both Bush and Watson are recognizable for music that defies easy categorization.

Bush hesitantly said that "some" have used the name, "Americana," which has been used to describe anything from bluegrass, to folk, blues, cajun, country, rock, jazz, soul. Again Bush highlighted Watson's music.

"If Doc did it, it was American music for me," he said.

Most musicians say that playing with other musicians is the best way to learn and hone musical craft. Bush says that Doc Watson used to talk about the importance of "playing for the song," and that in doing so, he led by example. Watson was a guitar virtuoso, but deeply understood how his runs and licks fit within his songs, Bush said.

"Doc could always play more than he was playing if he wanted to," he said. "But he played to fit the song."

But Bush went on to point out that when he was on stage with Doc and he played too much, he knew it immediately.

"Doc used to say that 'it's good to have hot licks, but you gotta know where to put them,'" Bush recalled. Those hot licks have to "honor the song."

That's the attitude that Bush now passes on through his own music. After eight solo albums, 11 with New Grass Revival, numerous other duet and group projects, and an expansive career that has afforded him the chance to make music, he is

regarded as one of the most outstanding figures in contemporary bluegrass — or new grass, or whatever one chooses to call it. He would likely be satisfied to know that many consider him to be one of the best musicians of our generation, from any genre.

He says that with a new solo project due out this year, he's been thinking of the importance of lyrics in songs, so for the first time in his career, he's at least co-written every song. When asked what makes a good song, he responded by asking, "Did you feel something when you heard it?" He says there is even one song, co-written with Jon Randall Stewart, called, "I Just Want to Feel Something," about the electricity of everyone in the band getting "into the groove" playing at the same time.

That is the same spirit Bush hopes defines his music and what he believes defines MerleFest.

"We want people to feel togetherness and love," he said. "It's a celebration of positive energy."

That kind of experience, as Doc Watson knew all too well, is timeless. The styles, forms and stories might change, but good, honest music "comes from the heart," according to Bush. In making his annual offering to the MerleFest crowd, Sam Bush represents a kind of music that "ages gracefully. And we get to age with it."

Jonathan Henley is the host of Road Signs radio show, which airs Sunday nights from 10 p.m. to midnight on 1065 The End.

Contact Henley via email

at roadsigns@1065.com or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/roadsignsradio. Read past columns and join his blog

at www.1065.com/onair/road-signs-51152/.

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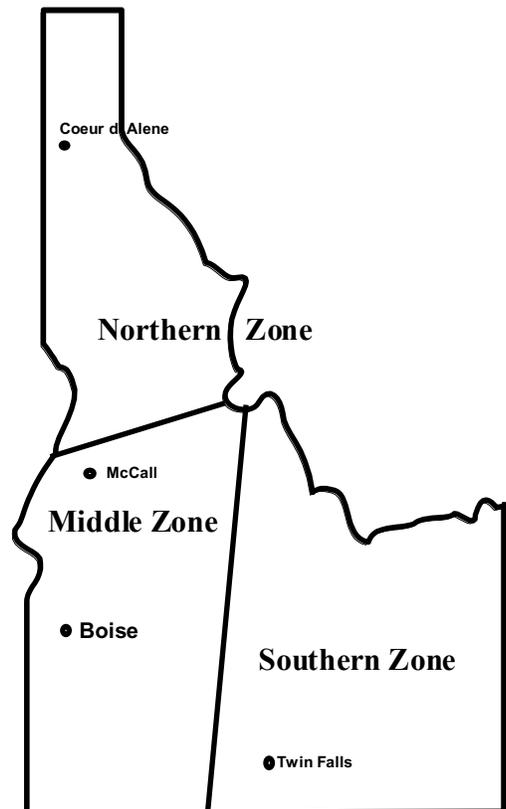
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Check us out on the web: www.idahosawtoothbluegrass.org



11th Annual Kamiah Spring Super Jam

Thursday, May 19th – Sunday, May 22nd

*The most bluegrass fun you can have between Mother's Day and
Memorial Day!*

Higher Ground



Last Ride



Montana Ramblers



Flatgrass



Betty Adams & Ozark Mountain Music



FREE ADMISSION FOR DAY ACTIVITIES Super Jam Schedule

Thursday:	Potluck Dinner	6p.m.
Friday:	General Membership Meeting	1:30 p.m.
	Vocal Harmony Workshop	5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
	Open Mic	7 to 9 p.m.
Saturday:	Instrument Woorkshops	10 to 11 a.m.
	Youth Auditions and Practice	10 to 11 a.m.
	Outdoor Bluegrass Concert	Noon to 6 p.m.
Sunday:	Gospel Sing	9 to 11 a.m.

Kamiah KOA

Call for Reservastions: 208-935-2556
Motel Rooms, Cabins, RV Campsites
4243 Highway 12, Kamiah ID 83836
email: lcresort@lewisclarkresort.com

For more information:
www.idahosawtoothbluegrass.org
www.facebook.com/isba.superjam



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