



IdaGrass

Volume 7 Issue 3

May – June 2011

2011 Bluegrass Calendar

June 11 – Higher Ground - 7 pm, Trinity Baptist Church Fund Raiser, 816 Sycamore, Clarkston Washington. Bring your own lawn chairs.

June 11 – Bluegrass in the Barn - 7 pm. The TRIPLE L BAND and TRADITION. Suggested donation, \$10. 1822 West Orchard, Nampa. Contact: Bob, (208)466-1719. www.TripleLBand.com

June 11, – Mike Compton in back in Idaho – Eagle ID. 2 Hour Mandolin Workshop, 10am. \$50. **Dinner Concert**, opened by Chicken Dinner Road, 5pm. Both events at Season's Bistro. For tickets/concert info contact Rachel at the Seasons Bistro, 939-6680.

June 11 – Higher Ground - 6:30 pm, Mountain Shadows Baptist Church, North C Street, Grangeville Idaho.

June 18 – Bluegrass in the Barn - 7 pm. The RED DESERT RAMBLERS and TRADITION. Suggested donation, \$10. 1822 West Orchard, Nampa. Contact: Bob, (208)466-1719

June 18 – Bluegrass on the Greenbelt – Featuring Hotwire, New South Fork, Teton Shadow Boys, Bluestem, Wild Coyote & The Acousticals. Noon to 10 pm, South Capital Park, Idaho Falls, ID. Free event. www.bluegrassonthegreenbelt.com

June 25 – Hotwire – Bluegrass Battle of the Bands, Bluegrass Village, Weiser ID.

July 14 – Hotwire – 6 pm at Grangeville Arts Summer Concerts Series, City Park, Grangeville ID. Bring your blanket or lawn chair. Free concert.

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ISBA Sponsored Jams

Boise – 1st & 3rd TH, 7 pm - 5714 Centerbrook Dr. Intermediate jam, (208) 377-5326 for more info

Lewiston –

1st Saturday @ Orchards United Methodist Church, 1213 Burrell Ave
3rd Saturday @ Highlander Community Room,
616 Warner, Steve Gleason
208-798-8280

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

Greeting from Grangeville,
There is still snow on the mountain south of town and so I know it isn't quite time to plant my tomatoes outside, but with the first outdoor bluegrass festival at Kamiah I know that summer is on its way. It great to see all those folks I haven't seen since last summer and make some new friends, too.

A couple of housekeeping things: The third installment of "To Know it Is to Love It" by Jim Sanders, about understanding the guitar fret board will be published in an upcoming issue. We had lots of things to cover in this issue, which is GREAT, so I choose to delay that installment.

Stan and Trudee Strickland, sent me the following and asked me to include it in this issue:

"Trudee recently received a membership renewal from George J. Allen of Caribou, Maine. Back in 2009 when George first joined the ISBA, he told us he had been looking for a way to re-connect with Idaho since attending U of I some years ago. A friend of his found our web site on the internet and provided ISBA contact information to him.

George is a sheep rancher/farmer and enjoys playing fiddle with friends in the Caribou area. George sent a nice contribution to the ISBA along with his membership renewal. George says that he really enjoys reading IdaGrass, so we owe our newsletter editor a big "Thank You" for all of her hard work."

I hope you will enjoy the interview I did with J.D. Webb and his band. Their personalities come shinning through their responses to my questions. They are terrific! Also, there are a couple of notices about new jams forming in both the Treasure Valley and the Lewis-Clark Valley. Part of the mission of this organization is to "promote fellowship among all musicians and supporters who have a love for Bluegrass music". It is exciting to me to see people connect and find other musicians with whom they can play music. As

I visit with folks around the state, I know this is happening.

Be well & keep pickin'
Helen

Big Thanks to All

Hello everyone, our wonderful weekend for the ISBA Spring Jam is over and the good Lord held back the rain until the last note was played! We had a good turnout but our numbers were off for Saturday some from last year due I think to the threat of thunder storms. We would like to thank everyone who attended our event this year and for travling so far. Without your love for Bluegrass music we would not have a association like we have. A thank you to Raynae Redman and the Kid's in Bluegrass, Tradition, Hotwire, Higher Ground, JD Webb and the Downstate Ramblers and Will Williams and Gravel Road for giving of there time to Play for us. A very special thanks for all of you that helped in putting this event on and making it happen due to all of your hard work. It is because of you we had a graet weekend of Bluegrass music for Family and Friends.

ISBA Board of Directors

For Sale – 4/4 size Cremona SV-175, student violin with case, 2 books and DVD; \$150. For pix or more information, Drew (208) 871-2612

Preliminary Announcement & Sign-up for Flatpicking Workshop by Dan Miller, <http://www.flatpick.com> & Tim May This is a rare opportunity for any level flatpick guitarist to enhance his/her skills in the Treasure Valley area. Miller & May will provide hands-on instruction with sections on tone, technique, speed and improvisation. Semi-firm date: Saturday 10/1/11 6 Hour workshop \$80. Dependent upon enrollment there may be possibilities to take selected (only) sections. Limited enrollment; so if you have an interest, email Doug at pfccoach@cableone.net to get on the list.



Fraser Park



Bluegrass Camp & Jam



Acoustics and Strings

August 5, 6, 7

Come relax with friends,
breathe fresh clean air and
enjoy some bluegrass music.



Fraser Park Pavilion
5 mi west of Weippe, ID.
Cook Shack open Saturday
Free Dry Camping



Any questions, contact Steve Gleason
at 208-743-5715 or 208-553-1597

All dogs on a leash please!



Traditional Bluegrass Instrumentation – Acoustic Guitar

By Nora Killion

Many of us think of the acoustic guitar as an instrument that originated a few hundred years ago but did you know that when you pick up an acoustic guitar you're picking up an instrument with 5,000 years of history attached to it? Acoustic guitars are descendants of stringed instruments that were found in a variety of cultures thousands of years ago. As civilizations merged and the world became smaller, the guitar began taking on a common shape and style. Since then, there has been a linear evolution of several hundreds of years of instruments that can be directly compared to today's acoustic guitars.

During the Medieval Period, there were several different forms of guitars. These guitars had between three and five strings and were much smaller than the guitars of today. The popular guitars of this period were commonly separated into two groups. The first, the Guitarra Latina was developed from Spain, while the Guitarra Morisca was brought to Spain by the Moorish culture. If you go to the Middle Ages, the guitar instruments were not largely popular, being overshadowed by other contemporary instruments, but during the Renaissance period the guitar began to take on a life of its own. In 1779 the first six string guitar was created in Naples, Italy by Gaetano Vinaccia, who came from a family of luthiers and was accomplished at constructing mandolins.

Following that, the man known as the "Father of Modern Guitar" made his permanent mark on how the guitar would be played and designed. Antonio de Torres Jurado made many key changes that became, essentially, what we know today as the forerunner to the modern classical guitar.

The acoustic guitar is usually mistaken as being the same as the classical guitar. This is not true as there are many key differences in the design of these two separate guitars. The most

important of which is that the acoustic guitar has steel strings, while the classical guitar is strung with nylon strings. The body was also made larger and sturdier. The acoustic guitar was better to use in larger areas as it was louder than the classical guitar.

While most of the credit for the early development of the acoustic guitar goes to Europeans, today's steel-string acoustic guitars were developed in America. During the early 20th century, when European emigrants were coming to America in droves, there were a number of highly skilled instrument makers among them, including those who specialized in the steel-stringed acoustic guitar. Two types of construction evolved: the flat-top guitar and the arch-top guitar. Martin and Gibson were two of the earliest — and most influential — American acoustic guitar makers.

The Acoustic Guitar is now most commonly played with a flatpick, a style known as flatpicking. This is unlike the style of Lester Flatt who used a thumb and finger pick. Lead guitar was rare in early music recordings but Maybelle Carter played the lead melody with her thumb and rhythm with her index finger in the treble.

The guitarist is an indispensable mainstay of the bluegrass band, and Lester Flatt, Charlie Monroe, Red Smiley, Carter Stanley, Charlie Waller, Jimmy Martin, and dozens of other guitar pickers and singers developed the role well. For the most part, early bluegrass guitarists kept pretty much in the background, punching out the rhythm and interspersing bass runs with a few licks. George Shuffler created and perfected the art of crosspicking with the Stanley Brothers and was the standard until a young mountain singer named Doc Watson came along in sixties. He was influential in bringing the guitar into its own as a lead instrument worthy of a solo in a bluegrass instrumental. Clarence White followed Doc Watson's style of crosspicking, creating his own techniques and trademark style.

The guitar remains integral to bluegrass music.

3RD ANNUAL

HARDTIMES BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

JULY 22-23-24, 2011

The Callenders
Pendleton, OR

Will Williams & Gravel Road
Grangeville, ID

Gravely Mtn.
Alberton, MT

New South Fork
Idaho Falls, ID

BRING
YOUR
LAWN
CHAIRS

**JD Webb & Downstate
Ramblers**
Baker, OR

Mike & Tari Conroy
Conner, MT

**Kids in Bluegrass
Around the Northwest**

Spring Thaw
Missoula, MT

Admission for entire weekend
Adults- \$10
Kids under 12- \$5
Camping for entire weekend
\$10 Nuff Said

Blue to the Bone
Hamilton, MT

Pinegrass
Missoula, MT

Darby Sireens
Darby, MT

Individual Pioneers
FIDDLIN' JIMMY WIDNER
MYRON WALTER &
ILA MATTHEWS
FORREST CLARK
FIRP REDMAN
IRENE ABBEY

SUNDAY MORNING GOSPEL

FOOD & VENDORS ON-SITE

ALL DOGS ON A LEASH

1-406-821-3777
163 Forest Hill Road

**10 Miles South of
HAMILTON, MONTANA**
hardtimesbluegrass.com

J.D. Webb and the Downstate Ramblers

J.D. Webb has played a lot of music in his life and currently is joined by three other fine musicians to make up J.D. Webb and the Downstate Ramblers. They were each kind enough to visit with me a bit to give you a glimpse into their thoughts and music.

IdaGrass: JD, the Downstate Ramblers have been around for 40 years, give or take, in what ways has promoting a band changed over those years?

J.D.: Helen, Actually, I think it was harder back in the 70's. Back then, we did not have the marketing tools that are available now. There was no internet, no Facebook, or MySpace. There were no such things as MP3's. Back then a band had to do it all in person or over the telephone. All publicity and promotional material had to be mailed. I can remember sitting at home almost every evening on the phone to promoters trying to get our foot in the door for shows. With all of electronic media now available, bands are able to get their promo material out to more promoters.

So, I feel that band promotion today is somewhat easier than back forty years ago. Now. With a click of a button, your promotional material can be seen by thousands almost instantly. Whether or not they hire you is something else.

IdaGrass: JD, you have recently embarked on another venture besides J.D. Webb and the Downstate Ramblers, tell us how this got its start?

J.D.: I recently finished recording a solo album of all country classics. I have always loved the old masters in country music. As many of you already know, I love all kinds of music and especially older country. I had several people ask if I would record an all country album. I took the project to Lost Armadillo and pitched the idea to them and got the go ahead to record the album. It is a fun project for me, and I truly enjoyed doing the album. The album is Country Classics.

IdaGrass: Your latest album, Moon Over Austin has multiple songs that you have written,

tell me a little about your experience writing lyrics and music.

J.D.: The Moon Over Austin Album was my first experience at writing the entire album. It actually did not start out to be that way. In fact, the studio still has a couple of cuts that were not originals that were scheduled to be on that record. We had just signed with Lost Armadillo Records prior to starting production of the album. A couple of weeks into it they called me in and told me that they would like the album to be all original works. This was a little bit of a shock to me. I ended up having to write five totally new songs for that album. I have been writing for many years, but it has just been in the past eight years that I have gotten serious about writing. I have people ask, which do you do first the music or the lyrics. My answer is always Yeah. Sometimes a tune gets stuck in your head, and you write lyrics to that tune. Sometimes a lyric gets stuck there and you write music to the lyrics. There are no set rules about writing. I try to tell a story that others can relate to in some way. Some of the stories are true personal experiences, other are purely fictional. It really doesn't matter as long as they come from the heart and soul of the writer.

IdaGrass: Describe for me one strength that each band member brings to the musical experience.

J.D.: Describing just one strength is rather tough. Each of our members has multiple strengths but I will try.

Judy Webb: "The Rock", the most rock solid bassist I have ever worked with, and I don't say that because she is my wife. If one is going to get off time with her on the bass, you really have to be trying to get there.

David Gerthung: "The Sponge", David has the remarkable ability to be able to hear a tune once and come up with a great break on the spot. Let David hear a tune once and he usually has got it.

Caleb Dostal: "The Wizard", Caleb is a phenomenal young man. His greatest asset to the band in my opinion is his ability to hear complex melodies and be able to reproduce what he hears in his head through his banjo.

IdaGrass: Caleb, first off, how old are you? How long have you been playing banjo?



JD Webb & the Downstate Ramblers
(Photo by Jim McCue)

Caleb: I am 17 years old and June 2nd of this year will make 5 years.

IdaGrass: Name for us your three top banjo idols.

Caleb: My number one "banjo hero" would certainly be Noam Pikelny. He changed everything for me. When I heard him play everything was turned upside down and I had to start from scratch. This is a man who knows NO BOUNDARY. The level of technical capability that he yields is astounding. And I'm still in just the VERY BEGINNING stages of understanding and interpreting his style. Its sure to be an interesting journey. My second banjo hero would be Wes Corbett. I met him when the band he plays with (Joy Kills Sorrow) came through Missoula. He asked me if i would just play him something....I still don't know why...haha. But I tinkered around on his banjo a bit and then I met him again at Wintergrass this year and ended up getting a lesson from him. He really just made me think different about music in general. I felt like it was more a lesson in musical maturity than anything else. It was great. I dont know if I really have a third banjo hero... But rather music hero. And that would be Chris Thile. If I were to go on about everything that he has done for me musically....this answer would NEVER end. He is always Transcending musical boundary's. Somebody who goes and writes a 40 minute suite for bluegrass instrumentation on the mandolin is really something spectacular. There are few that have what it takes to go the lengths that he has. I've never seen anybody so dedicated. Somebody

who LITERALLY plays their instrument in order to sustain life. He is my biggest influence and certainly my biggest hero.

IdaGrass: Caleb, for you, what is the most challenging part of bluegrass?

Caleb: Bluegrass is such a sensitive music and the banjo EVEN MORE SO. And what i mean by that is; There are those who like it a certain way. It has such a rich history. And people feel like maybe that that history is in jeopardy of being forgotten. Being able to embrace that fact that I do enjoy bluegrass but also just love MUSIC IN GENERAL is tough. I'm just trying to play music the way I hear it, and if I don't hear it the way Earl Scruggs herd it some people get upset. I've come to not worry about it so much because it comes down to me playing this instrument because I love it. And I'm gonna do with this instrument what I please. And if there are those who like it....It makes it all the better.

IdaGrass: Caleb, tell me about how you came to write Skookumchuck, recorded on the Ramblers most recent album.

Caleb: I was probably practicing one day and came up with an interesting little riff and then expanded upon it. It's quite a bit different than the kind of stuff I write now but it's just a fun little "scruggsy" tune. I feel like your current musical inspirations and influences will come through very clearly when you write stuff, so it was likely a combination of the things I was listening to back then.

IdaGrass: David, how long have you been playing mandolin and who is your favorite mandolinist?

David: I've Been Playing Mandolin For 26 Years. My Favorite mandolin player is Bobby Osborne.

IdaGrass: David, how did you come to be part of J.D. Webb and the Downstate Ramblers?

David: I met JD at The Barn In Nampa. JD Told Me that he was putting a band together He would contact me in the near future

IdaGrass: Judy, what things or people have influenced your personal bass style?

Judy: My dad taught me to play bass so I would have to say he was the biggest influence to my style. I played country music with my family for years before I got entrenched in the bluegrass world and that country flavor has stuck with me
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It was a weekend full of.....



Jamming, (Photo by Raynae Redman)



Kids in Bluegrass, (Photo by Gail Williams)



Gospel Music, (Photo by Raynae Redman)



Folks and fowl alike, enjoying the bluegrass bands on Saturday

(Photo by Brandi Brown)



Volunteers, (Photo by Raynae Redman)

Round Valley StageFund Raising

At the Spring Super Jam, we raised \$209.00 from food sales, \$460.00 from private donations \$100.00 from Kids in Bluegrass, \$200.00 from Williams Custom Banjos; totaling \$969.00. We are close to having enough to build the floor.

Will Williams, ISBA Board Chairman

Forming ongoing structured advanced intermediate – beginning advanced traditional bluegrass jam in Boise

Many bluegrass jams tend to be free-form and generally shaped by being very macho, speed-driven, slow-paced *and/or often giving little attention to harmony singing.*

By using a structured approach, this proposed group will strive to provide an opportunity to develop and improve *both* group playing and singing skills of traditional bluegrass. Here is some of the basic structure.

- ◆ Have an interest in gaining greater facility in singing, playing rhythm and soloing on your instrument.
- ◆ Ease at playing most songs and fiddle tunes at moderate 175 – 230 bpm tempo.
- ◆ Focus on learning and perfecting songs and fiddle tunes, harmony, rhythm and timing. This means using a revolving list of songs/tunes, repeating, listening, critiquing, recording, etc.
- ◆ Emphasis on playing/singing without printed music (words or tabs). Should already have 15+ each fiddle tunes and bluegrass songs memorized
- ◆ Willing to commit to regular attendance, put in time to improve and to take critical direction. You are most likely already practicing daily.
- ◆ Group size will generally be limited to 2 of each instrument
- ◆ Meet 2-4 times a month. Location: TBD
- ◆ By invitation only
- ◆ Who this is not for: newbies, beginning intermediate or pros Singer/chorders , folk, country, rock, jazz, newgrassers, etc. & those who are “plugged” in

If you have an interest, send an email to Doug at pfccoach@cableone.net including your preferred instrument(s), experience and phone number.

Monday Night Bluegrass Jam in Lewiston/Clarkston Valley

I would like to try something out and see how it works. Starting on Monday June 6th,

I would like to host a jam session at my house every Monday night from 7 to 9:30 PM. My address is 1046 11th St., Clarkston WA. For more information, call 509-780-3730. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about it let me know.

Scott Lombard

Bluegrass Calendar (Continued)

July 15 & 16th – Will Williams Custom Banjos – hosting Kenny Ingram and Kristin Scott Benson at the Darrington Bluegrass Festival, Darrington WA.

July 22 – 24th – Hardtimes Bluegrass Festival – Hamilton MT. Featuring: NW Bluegrass Pioneers, The Callenders, , New South Fork, Will Williams and Gravel Road, JD Webb and the Downstate Ramblers, Gravely Mountain, Mike and Tari Conroy, and many others . Visit: www.hardtimesbluegrass.com

August 5th – Hotwire – 4:30 pm, Art on the Green, North Stage, North Idaho College, Coeur d' Alene ID.

August 5 – 7th – Fraser Park Camp & Jam – Orofino ID. Contact: sgbanjo@hotmail.com

August 12 & 13th – Hotwire – Mount St. Helens Bluegrass Festival, Toledo WA. FRI/6pm, SAT/Noon & 5 pm.

July 12 & 13th – Will Williams and Gravel Road – Elk City Days, Elk City ID.

August 19 – 21 – Council Mountain Music Festival – Council ID. Featuring: Will Williams and Gravel Road, SAT/5:30pm and Hotwire, SAT/8:30pm along with other great musicians. www.councilfestival.com

September 3-5th – 6th Annual ISBA Fall Festival - Round Valley ID. Featuring: Buckhorn Mountain Boys: Reunion, Tradition, Kids in Bluegrass, Panhandle Polecats, Mike and Tari Conroy Band, Will Williams and Gravel Road, JD Webb and the Down State Ramblers. www.idahosawtoothbluegrass.org

September 9 – 11th – Will Williams and Gravel Road – Newport Music Festival, Newport WA.

through the years. Also just playing music with people from different areas of the country tends to have an influence on what sounds good to your ear.

IdaGrass: Judy, what is the best thing and the worst thing about being married to the band boss.

Judy: *That may be dangerous ground to cover but I will try to tread trepidatious like! I suppose the best thing is that I don't have to worry too much about getting fired :-) The other best thing is the ability to have input into the arrangement of some of our material. I don't have much creativity in me but I can hear if something sounds good this way or that. I can't really think of any drawbacks right now, but if you ask me a little later in the season I may have come up with one or two!*

IdaGrass: Judy, tell me about one comical experience you have had touring or playing music.

Judy: *By and far the funniest experience I have ever had on stage was last year at the ISBA Festival in Cambridge, Idaho. We are good friends with all of the Chicken Dinner Road guys and we had been kind of heckling them all weekend with threats of doing something to them while they were on stage. We were just not sure*

what it was going to be. Then J.D. saw my grandson had one of their band bumper stickers and an idea was born! He plastered the sticker to his bare belly behind stage and then walked out to the front of the stage modestly flashing the whole band in between songs! They were got! But of course it didn't end there. We were on stage right after them and now we were the paranoid ones watching for what may now come our way! I had my eye on all of them most of our show. Then all of a sudden they all disappeared behind stage and I became truly nervous. Cause you know, those are some sneaky dudes! Shortly all five members of Chicken Dinner Road calmly walked around in front of the stage and stood in a line with their backs to us. They each one reached up and began to unfasten their belts and proceeded to "mock" moon us all! We had now become the ones that were got! We all just burst out laughing and had a really hard time finding enough composure to finish out our set! I do have proof of J.D.'s part. Someone (very likely Jim McCue!!) sent a photo in and had a set of playing cards made with the evidence right there on the back of each and every card!!! I will keep them in the motor home if anyone wants to see them!

IF, you haven't renewed your membership for 2011, now's the time!

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 the format with which you are comfortable.

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

I am joining as: New Member Renewal Date: _____

Yearly membership/April to April: \$15.00 (for an individual or family)

Please mail to:

**Idaho Sawtooth Bluegrass Association
c/o Trudy Strickland
5714 Centerbrook Dr.
Boise, ID 83705**

Idaho Sawtooth Bluegrass Asso.

6th Annual Bluegrass Festival

Labor Day weekend Sept. 2nd, 3rd, & 4th

Kling Ranch, (Round Valley)

9899 So. Spoor Rd. Cascade, ID 83611

Mr. Al Jackson Festival MC

Bands

Tradition

Kids in Bluegrass

Panhandle Polecats

Mike and Tari Conroy Band

Will Williams and Gravel Road

Buckhorn Mtn. Boys (reunion)

JD Webb & the Downstate Ramblers

Dry Camping on Site	Bring Your Lawn Chairs	Food & Vendors on-site	All Dogs on Leash	Instrument work shops	A Family Event
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Festival Directions From Boise ID: North on Hyw 55 past milepost #101 to valley edge. Go south on Round Valley Road 8/10 mile, turn left on Gray Lane 1 mile

Turn right (South) on Spoor Road to end of Valley.

Info; 208-839-2814 / 208-484-8678 www.idahosawtoothbluegrass.org