



IdaGrass

Volume 7 Issue 4

July - August 2011

2011 Bluegrass Calendar

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.
www.washingtonbluegrassassociation.org/2011fest/index.php

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. Council ID. www.councilfestival.com

August 26 & 27 – Wild & Scenic Music Fest 2011 – Leavenworth, WA. www.icicle.org

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.

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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,
Well, we are at the height of bluegrass festival season and I hope that you have been able to attend at least one or two by now. I have enjoyed the several I've attended and have been thinking about the broad definition of a bluegrass festival.

Festivals come in a variety of shapes, sizes, settings and objectives. Some festivals boast tens of thousands of attendees, while others may host only a hundred people. There are various festival settings; they happen at fair grounds, city parks, wooded meadows, high schools and some are held at metro events centers. The festival setting has a direct impact on where the festival goer stays – in a tent or camper on site or in a local hotel. Some festivals feature nationally touring bands and the focus of the festival is watching bluegrass musicians perform on the main stage; while other festivals promote picking as their main function – encouraging musicians of all levels to come and play music with fellow musicians. Most often, festivals try to combine a mix of listening and picking. A festival may also offer workshops, open mic times and band scrambles. Vendors, selling their wares, are also a common fixture at festivals; selling food, instruments and handcrafted items.

Festivals are sometimes sponsored by an organization or non-profit group. However, some festivals are a venture for profit and organized by an individual or group of people, who hope to have a great festival and come out with a profit. Festival organizers work hard to maximize their strengths and provide those who come to the festival a wonderful weekend of music. They hope you have a great time, plan to come back next year, and bring a friend or two.

Part of the purpose of this letter is to lead you to reflect on the festivals you have attended. Which festival or event was your favorite?

Would you recommend it to a fellow ISBA member? In keeping with the ISBA mission statement, “to promote the enjoyment of bluegrass” and because a personal recommendation is one of the best ways to find a great festival; I would invite you to drop me an email or a postcard and answer these four questions:

1. Name and Location
2. Date
3. What did you like best?
4. Is there anything you would change about the festival?

I will publish your best festival picks in an upcoming issue. Until then, enjoy the rest of your summer and drop me a note.

Be well and keep pickin',
Helen

trueblue@wildblue.net or
1556 Stites Road, Grangeville ID 83530

For Your Information

I received a note from Scott Lombard saying that because of his new work schedule, the Monday night jam in the Lewiston-Clarkston area is canceled until further notice.

Evidence that Bluegrass is alive and well...



Photo submitted by Mike Conroy



Fraser Park

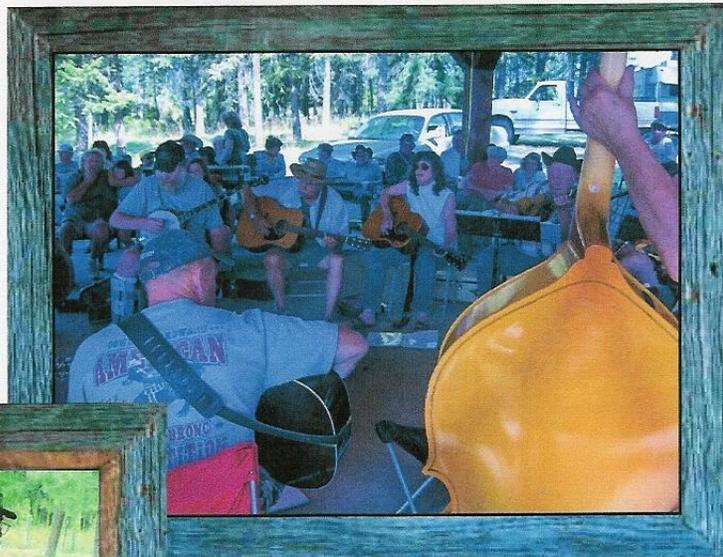
Bluegrass Camp & Jam



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



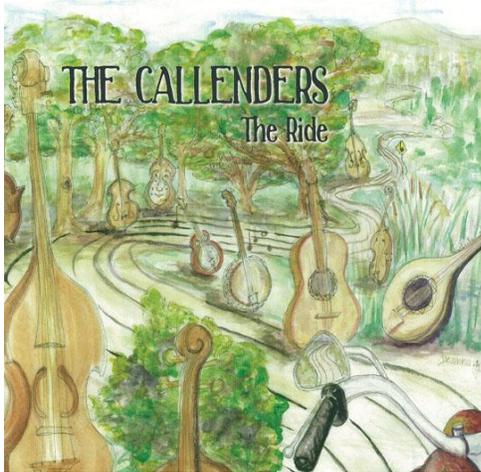
**Any questions, contact Steve Gleason
at 208-743-5715 or 208-553-1597**



All dogs on a leash please!

CD Review by Murry & Jack

The Ride, by The Callenders



If you are looking for a CD that is rich in wonderful harmonies & loaded with musical talent, "The Ride" featuring the Callenders is for you. All members of The Callenders group share vocal leads and perform instrumentals that are amazing. The album includes three original numbers by Isaac Callender who plays mandolin, fiddle and frailing banjo on this album as well as singing lead and harmony. There are also three original works by Rudy Corbett who plays banjo and sings lead and harmony. Our favorite number hands down is "51 Miles"; it speaks to the heart of home and family. Jason Brandt on rhythm guitar is also a great lead vocalist as is Emily Callender who plays upright bass, fiddle, and does outstanding lead and harmony vocals.

There is variety in the types of numbers presented, but only two instrumentals. There could be one or two more for a more balanced effect. The one downside, we felt, was the number of dark and dismal songs. We realize, however, that it is the nature of the beast when doing bluegrass music. The instrumental breaks feature fiddle work that fairly sings. Marvelous!! And the harmonies throughout are tight and beautiful. On the scale of 1 – 10; we give this album 8.5 - 9.

On July 5th, James King and his band made a guest appearance at the Bluegrass Barn in Nampa, ID. June Greer made sure they didn't go hungry and Tradition band members were happy to join them for a couple of tunes.



James King and Bob Greer



With Pat Massie on the dobro, Bill Estes & James King;s mandolinist are goin' hard at it



Doug Jenkins joining James King and band

August 26 -27th, 2011



August 26th:

Friday Night Barn Dance at Canyon Wren Recital Hall

- ◆ Featuring Atlas String Band with Gabe Strand calling
- ◆ 7:30pm-10:00pm

August 27th:

Meadow Main Event on the outdoor Meadow Main Stage

- ◆ Gates open at 1:00pm for jamming, beer garden, great food, and kids activities, 2 stages!
- ◆ Acoustic Stage -
- ◆ 1:15pm Pickled Okra
- ◆ 2:00pm Hot Cider
- ◆ 4:00pm Atlas String Band
- ◆ Main Stage -
- ◆ 3:00pm Spare Rib & the Bluegrass Sauce
- ◆ 5:30pm Foghorn Trio
- ◆ 7:00pm Laurie Lewis & the Right Hands

The After Party at Canyon Wren

- ◆ Featuring Bruzz Brump, 9:30pm - 11:00pm

The Festival offers a beautiful escape into the mountains and meadows of the Icicle Creek region. Featuring a barn dance, jamming in the meadow, Icicle Brewing Co. beer garden, delicious food, kids activities and much more!

Camping:

Camping options available! Visit icicle.org for more info

Tickets:

- ◆ Friday Barn Dance - \$5
- ◆ Meadow Main Stage - \$30 (kids 12 and under free)
- ◆ Canyon Wren After Party - \$10
- ◆ Limited tickets available for Barn Dance and After Party
- ◆ To purchase tickets, visit www.icicle.org or call (509) 548-6347

Traditional Bluegrass Instrumentation – Banjo

By Nora Killion

To paraphrase Todd Callaway's History of the Banjo, "Tracing the history of the banjo as a musical instrument is a task that can make you pull your hair out." Hundreds of articles have been written on the subject of banjos, many of which are contradictory and filled with speculation. There is, however, one fact most agree on: America's favorite folk instrument was brought to this country from Africa and Jamaica by slaves in the eighteenth century. Eastern Virginia is known to have had slaves that played banjo. President Thomas Jefferson added as a footnote to his Notes on Virginia: 'The instrument proper to them [slaves] is the banjar, which they brought hither from Africa.' Reverend Jonathan Boucher, a loyalist who lived in America prior to the Revolutionary War, began a dictionary after immigrating to England. He described the banjo as 'A musical instrument ...in use, chiefly, if not entirely, among people of the lower classes...' He further states that the banjo in Maryland and Virginia was '...the favorite and almost only instrument in use among the slaves... The body was a large hollow gourd, with a long handle attached to it, strung with catgut, and played on with the fingers...'

Dr. Daniel Drake's letters to his children, published in Pioneer Life in Kentucky, describes in detail his boyhood near Maysville, Kentucky, in the years 1788 to 1800. Dr. Drake's father had come to Kentucky from New Jersey with several of his neighbors. Dr. Drake considered the settlers from New Jersey to be a better class of people than slave owning neighbors from Maryland and Virginia. Dr. Drake said of slaves in his 1851 Letters on Slavery: '...they sometimes assemble for public worship; but, in general, they deliver themselves up to visits, gossip, games, laughter, singing, 'banjoing,' fiddling, and dancing...' Dr. Drake was the best-known physician, teacher, and writer in the mid-west during the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

Quoting from the Boston Daily Evening Voice, dated October 29, 1866, In 1844 there were not a half dozen banjos in this city, and they were only to be met with in grog-shops or bagnios; to-day there are over 10,000 instruments here in use, and the right melody of its five-strings reaches from

the marble fronts of Fifth Avenue down to the slums of Baxter Street. The instrument has become a universal favorite, and a banjo fever seems to possess the minds of even the most aristocratic and pretentious of the Metropolitans."

An article printed in 1888 says "With rapid strides it improved in form. First a wooden hoop, and then a metal one; first a rough skin for the drum, then the best parchment; first nails to hold it on, then neatly made tension screws. At one time the strings were made of anything that came handy; now they are formed from the 'intestines of the agile cat.'"

The stock market collapse of 1929 and the world wide depression that followed wiped out the banjo. To quote Robert Webb, "Demand for its bright happy sound disappeared almost overnight. Professional orchestras made a quick transition to the "arch-top" guitar, developed in the 1920s by Gibson and others which provided a mellow and integral rhythm more in keeping with the subdued nature of the times."

A short timeline on the relation of the banjo to bluegrass:

1930-1945 - 5 string Banjo almost disappears. No strings available.

1939 -Bill Monroe & Bluegrass Boys on Grand Ole Opry without banjo

1940s- Earl Scruggs develops his 3 finger style based on classical style

1941-Bill Monroe adds banjo to band-"Stringbean" Ackeman. 2 finger style

1945- Scruggs joins Monroe band with 3 finger style

By the 1960s, Gibson and Vega were only companies to still have banjos in their catalogues as compared to 200 makers in 1900, and only Vega still had banjos in production.

This unique and incredible instrument is vital to traditional bluegrass and there is so much more information available on this rich instrument. Within the ISBA there are certainly people with more knowledge than I on the banjo but love of the music that emanates from the banjo is a great equalizer. My opinion is that bluegrass simply wouldn't be the same without the bright clear ring of the banjo in the hands of a dedicated musician. No matter the technique of playing; frailing, clawhammer or Earl Scruggs three finger style, applied by many accomplished musicians, has been essential in the development of traditional bluegrass music.

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

Adults \$10.00

for the weekend

Children under 12, \$5.00

Dry camping \$10.00 per unit.

No Alcohol or Drugs

**Dry
Camping
on
Site**

**Bring
Your
Lawn
Chairs**

**Food
&
Vendors
on-site**

**All
Dogs
on
Leash**

**Instrument
work shops**

**A
Family
Event**

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

Flatpicking Workshop &

House Concert:

Dan Miller (<http://www.flatpick.com/>) & Tim May are coming to Boise on Saturday, 10/1/11 to put on a full day of hands-on workshops, followed by an evening concert. Note that this rare opportunity is now **open to both mandolin and guitar players.**

The 3 hour morning session will focus on techniques for developing speed, accuracy, tone, fluidity, note clarity, etc. After the techniques presentation, Miller and May will work with each person individually and give direct feedback. This workshop is for all skill levels from rank beginners through very advanced players. .

The 3 hour afternoon workshop is all about improvisation and is also for players at all levels. Miller and May think that even beginners should be learning how to improvise and that their method works well. Usually people who attend this workshop are improvising on songs that they have never played before within 30 minutes.

New pricing:

Both sessions \$65 Single session \$65

Evening concert: \$10 for workshop attendees and \$15 for others .

Limited enrollment; so if you would like to participate in any of these events, email Doug at pfcoach@cableone.net (208-371-2282) or Mike (208-863-5430) to get on the list.

Ongoing *structured* advanced-intermediate and beginning-advanced traditional bluegrass jam in Boise

Many bluegrass jams tend to be free-form

and generally shaped by being speed-driven, slow-paced *and/or giving little attention to harmony singing*. By using a structured approach, this 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
- ◆ 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 pfcoach@cableone.net (or 208-371-2282) including your preferred instrument(s), experience and phone number.

To Know It Is to Love It

- Part 3

By Jim Sanders
(reprinted with permission)

Hi, Me again,
Before we get into minor chords, I'd like to do a little review of the last time. You should know that G, B, & D are the notes that make the G chord. Every major scale has seven notes and there are always twelve major scales. We give the notes of the scale numbers, one through seven. The numbers never change; the notes do, as you go from scale to scale. For example; this is the G scale.

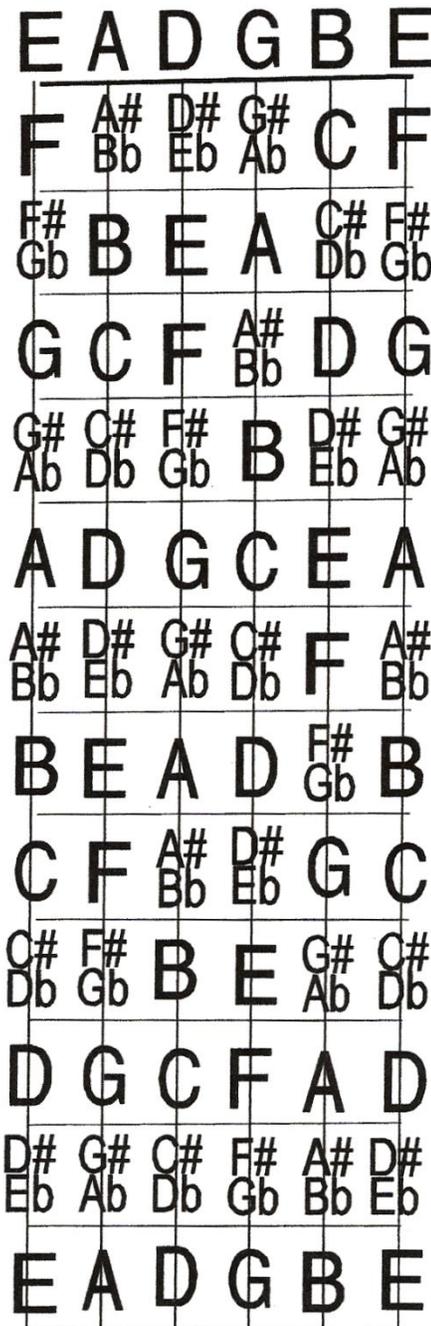
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
G A B C D E F# G

So, if you look at the G String, the B string and the D String you can call them 1-3-5. This is also the same for every major scale. OK, the difference between major chords and minor chords is this: If you got to the second fret and make an A chord – to make it an A minor, you have to flatten the third, ie, move it down in pitch by one fret. So, if you take any major chord and flatten the third note by one fret you can make it a minor chord.

Now, here's the trick. If you go to the G string and straight over to the E string (bottom E), this is what we call the relative minor. So, if you think of them as the names of the chords instead of the names of the notes, ie, the G note as the G chord, this is how it works. Look at the finger board. Find the C note on the G string. Now look across to the bottom E string. The note is an A, so the relative minor in the key of C is A minor. This is true in every key because the notes on the E string are always the sixth note

and the sixth note is always the relative minor in the same way that the notes on the G string will always be the first note of the key.

The Guitar Fingerboard



Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ EmailAddress _____

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

If you have **Ideas, Comments, Questions,** or *Concerns*

Northern Zone

Steve Gleason, Lewiston
(208)798-8280
Will Williams
(208)839-2814

Southern Zone

John Boyer, Twin Falls
(208)733-4552
boyerj1@mindspring.com

Middle Zone

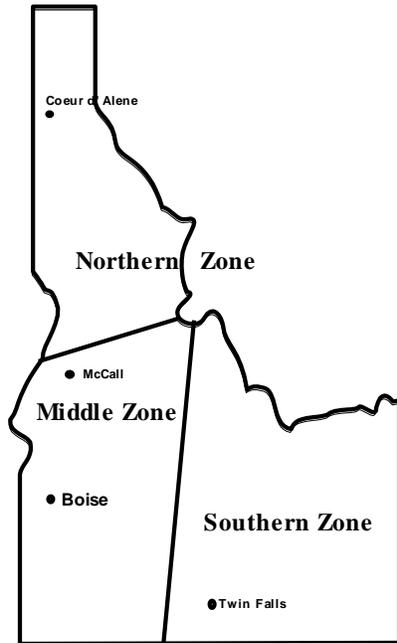
Bill Elmer, Nampa
(208)466-1349
mandobil@mail2Musician.com
Bob Greer, Nampa
bobgreer@msn.com
(208)466-1719
Stan Strickland, Boise
(208)377-5326

Webmaster - Carolyn Johnson, Boise
cthorse@gmail.com

Membership: Trudee Strickland
stantrud@msn.com

Association Photographer - Jim McCue, Payette

IdaGrass Editor: Helen Smith, Grangeville
trueblue@wildblue.net



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