



BLUEGRASS Clippings



Yellowstone Bluegrass Association

YBA Officers:

President—David Nelson

Vice President—Trent Indreland

Sec.-Treas.—Terry Indreland

YBA Board Members:

Ed Pierson

Brad Sherseth

Wade Steinmetz

Eric Prescott

Newsletter Editors:

Pat Gum

Laura Steinmetz

ACTIVITIES

Friday Night Jams

7:00-9:00 P.M.

Lincoln Center

Basement

Band Room

415 N. 30th

Billings

(Use SE Entrance)

MEMBERSHIP DUES

\$15/Person or \$25/Family

Full time Students are due

exempt

CONTACT US:

YBA	yellowstonebluegrass.com
David Nelson	idnelson@q.com 259-9272
Terry Indreland	indreland@mac.com 652-4677
Laura Steinmetz Pat Gum	cattledady1@gmail.com gumb@bresnan.net

BE MY VALENTINE

February 2012

DID YOU KNOW by Laura

How to Learn to PLAY Bluegrass

There have been some long discussions about how to progress from fiddle tunes to playing actual bluegrass. Today I stumbled on a great discussion of this issue by Pete Wernick on the Dr. Banjo website. It's called "A New Direction for Teaching and Learning Bluegrass Music." So here we go again

<http://www.drbanjo.com/instructional...grassmusic.php>

Some excerpts:

When people dream of playing a bluegrass instrument, it involves a vision of playing bluegrass music, a group activity.for most, the reward is participation, such as parking lot jamming, a kid and a parent or uncle picking at home, a small music session after dinner with friends, any informal situation, on up to playing on stage. **Teaching the skills of ensemble playing could be in the forefront....Then why is it so rarely addressed in bluegrass teaching, especially for novices?**

Learning solos to easy instrumentals is almost always the focus of novices' lessons and instruction materials. Yet even

"easy" solos can be quite challenging to many novices, and take a lot of time to learn to do smoothly. Many months of lessons and practice might yield only a handful or two of semi-smooth solos, a total of a few minutes of music. Useful in the long run, but a pretty limited reward for all that effort. The student might be encouraged to go to a jam, but **the most typical result is actually frustration, because he or she isn't properly**

prepared. Those relentlessly practiced solos don't figure in too much in an evening of playing; and even if the other jammers are encouraging, they might find it hard to slow down enough for a novice. A student's initial enthusiasm can be seriously weakened and even shut down. I consider this a true tragedy, and it happens far too much.

The New Direction Is teaching according to the student's desire to play music in a social context. **Novices should be taught ensemble playing at an appropriate level (slow and easy).** ...Even as beginners, students should be taught these skills, practicing them regularly by playing with others. So here's how Wernick proposes students learn bluegrass:

1. First learn the chords to favorite easy songs, and a simple way of accompanying. Playing songs smoothly in real time while using a songbook (or a fellow picker) for the words, is easy, fun, and builds a rhythmic/ chordal foundation and repertoire. Easy jamming is highly recommended and should be part of the learning program.
2. Good sounding rhythm techniques (bass runs, banjo rolls, fiddle licks, etc.) can be added easily as they are learned. Technique is expanded and the music sounds more interesting.
3. [Then] different types of soloing can be added. The easiest method is to "fake it" by just playing simple licks and rhythm techniques while following the chord changes.
4. The next step up might be to play an exact tabbed basic solo, or (better) a self-composed one featuring melody....This phase is exciting to enter, and of course it creates motivation to really improve and master those solos.

I wish I'd found this article earlier....this is exactly how I'm approaching learning mandolin. We started with step 1 from the get-go: strumming the chords and singing along to recordings of favorite songs. Now what I need is guidance on adding those "good sounding rhythm techniques." Anyhow, hope the other novices here will find food for thought. Thanks for reading!



Message From Our **NEW** President

The YBA Board held their election of officer meeting on Friday January 24. Wade, as out-going president, Trent, and Terry deserve a huge thank you for serving as officers of YBA for at least 2 terms. Trent continues as vice-president as well as event coordinator and sound person extraordinaire, and Terry has agreed to continue as Secretary/Treas. Thanks also to Brad, Ed, and Eric for serving on the Board and agreeing to represent our membership in the coming year. With the help of officers and board I have agreed to serve as president. (*Way to Go David!*)

Please make plans to attend the **Mike Rolison Mid-winter Jam** scheduled for **Saturday Feb. 25** at the Unitarian Fellowship, 2032 Central Ave. 10 a.m. until we can't play any longer! We have used this venue before and it works great for our group. Food and beverages will be provided. As most of you know, our good friend, Mike is not doing well and since this association has long depended on him for leadership, we thought it would be

fitting to name our winter get-together in his honor.

We also discussed our summer association gathering in July and will get more information out as the plans come together. It was decided to do a Fall Showcase at Lincoln perhaps in Oct. We need to investigate insurance issues and auditorium fees further and Wade is setting up a meeting with building administration to discuss this issue further so we know where we stand.

Officers and board present voted to extend FREE YBA single membership to young musicians K-12 and full-time college students. Part of our charter includes education and we wish to encourage bluegrass music among young people.

I'm looking forward to a good "pickin" year. Please contact me if you have questions, ideas, or concerns.

David

UPCOMING EVENTS

Events

- Celtic Duo Men of Worth www.menofworth.com will be in Thermopolis **March 1st through 3rd**. They will be working in the schools for 2 days and doing a public concert, a house concert and an instrument workshop. The instrument workshop will be held on Saturday March 3rd from 9am to Noon at Common Ground, 124 North 5th Street. Come prepared to learn some of their songs, including some in Gaelic. They will share musical techniques and also their instruments, some of which are quite unusual. And if time permits, they will join us on songs we enjoy. It doesn't matter how experienced you are, there will be something for everyone. Cost of the workshop is \$30 and space is limited. If you are interested, please contact Jacky to register 864 4070 at work, 864 2662. Concert tickets cost \$10 each if purchased in advance, \$12 at the door at the auditorium at 7pm on Friday.

- The Big Horn Mountain Festival, Buffalo, Wy., is **July 6,7,8** featuring: Houston Jones, Sons And Brothers, Northern Departure, Travers Chandler & Avery County, Spring Creek, The Jalan Crossland Band, Troxel & Krieger, and Too Wet To Plow www.Bighornmountainfestival.com.
- "Growling Old Men" will play Venture Theater **July 7th**

More things

- **Prairie Winds Cafe** Enjoy local Bluegrass Bands on Saturday mornings from 9am-12 noon in Molt
- **Tunes for Tuesday Open Mic Night**- Yellowstone Valley Brewing Co. Garage
- Jam in Thermopolis, WY. **Feb. 24** at the Front Porch Deli 536 Arapahoe St. 6 to 8.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Time once again for the Yearly membership dues. They are the same as last year

\$15.00/person or \$25.00/family.

However, all full time students (High School or College) are exempt from paying dues but have all the privileges of full membership.

Bulletin Board

- *music equipment for sale or to buy*
- *announcements (weddings, grandbaby etc.)*

David Nelson



Contact us with newsletter ideas, photos, articles, classified, or comments.

Laura:

cattledady1@gmail.com

656-9783

Or

Pat: gumb@bresnan.net

256-9182

Bulletin Board



- 1) I know it's a ways off, but the NILE Cowboy Code Gathering is October 17-20. Bluegrass groups will be featured Wednesday through Saturday 5:00-6:00 PM. Sign up is on a first come first served basis. Also, any group or individual who wants to play Western Music on the day stage between the hours of 12:00 - 5:00 PM can also sign up. Please contact Almeda Bradshaw 348-3282
- 2) Skip Gorman will be a featured entertainer/educator at the 2012 NILE Cowboy Code Gathering. Skip Gorman is known for his Bill Monroe-style mandolin playing and will be conducting a MANDOLIN WORKSHOP for YBA members Wednesday October 17, 7:00-9:00 PM with location TBA. The workshop fee will include admission to the Cowboy Code Night Show Friday October 19. Learn more about this fine musician/historian at www.skipgorman.com
- 3) Have you heard? Folks are murmuring about a newly formed acoustic group in Billings, which happens to be known as THE

Info From Almeda

bluegrass/western/old-time/country/gospel/what-have-you repertoire. Players are Fearless Leader, Doug "Where are you?" Haberman on guitar and mandolin, the Charmingly Charismatic Kevin Oliver on guitar, the Lovely Murmur Maid Almeda Bradshaw on cello and fiddle, your choice of bass players between the Darkly Darling David Manuel or the Wonderfully Winsome Wes Horton and sometimes the band will include the Mighty "I'm not going to join a band" Mike Bloom on banjo. Watch for this fun bunch of string pickers somewhere out there in Billingsville.

4) For those bluegrass members who sometimes play Cowboy/Western.....this is FOR YOU! A newly formed chapter of the Western Music Association is seeking members. The

MON-DAKS Chapter of the WMA covers Montana and North & South Dakota and is being spear headed by Almeda Bradshaw of Billings, President; GT Hurley of Big Timber, Vice President; Laurie Wood of Garryowen, Secretary; and board members, Ric Steinke and Linda Hausler of Livingston

Clippings' Feature Member

When I was very young I was exploring my great-uncle Martin's closet and came across a strange assemblage of wood and strings which I was told was a fiddle. He told me he would play it for me after supper. Martin was an extremely quiet and elderly man and when he put horse-hair to strings and launched into a raucous Norwegian folk tune, using no music, I was shocked! and amazed wondering where THAT came from. I'm sure he had not played in yrs. and never knew him to play again --- that was in the days before TV and people used to visit or sing around a piano for entertainment in the evening.

I am no less excited today to go to bluegrass jams/festivals. I think of it as a somewhat old-fashioned activity --- people with enough imagination and creativity coming together to entertain themselves with stringed instruments.

I come to bluegrass music quite late in life and am thankful to have more time in which to pursue it. It is only in the last 3-4 yrs, belonging to the YBA, that I have become more intentional about learning to play guitar. I enjoy the social aspect of bluegrass and value my bluegrass friendships. I

have seen Doc, Tony, Kenny, et al, but the highlights of my year are the local festivals/jams which I get on my calendar early and plan the rest of my life around them.

I have done ranch work, stoneware pottery gift business and, at times, various construction-related jobs. I continue to be active with Habitat for Humanity and Riverstone Health Hospice.

Our YBA goal will continue to be as responsive as possible to our membership and promote bluegrass music. Wade Steinmetz, as out-going president, Trent Indreland, and Terry Indreland deserve a huge thank you for serving as officers of YBA for at least 2 terms. Trent continues as vice-president as well as events co-coordinator and sound person extraordinaire, and Terry has agreed to continue as Secretary/Treas.. Wade and Laura both contribute a lot to our group. I will rely on their continuing support and that of our officers and board as I was elected president. Thank you, Brad Sherseth, Ed Pierson, Eric Prescott, for agreeing to represent our membership again. A big thank you as well to Laura Steinmetz and Pat Gum in getting out our newsletter and keeping us all honest.

Address Label

Yellowstone Bluegrass Assoc.

