

Bluegrass Clippings

All Things Bluegrass

May/June 2006

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“Strings & Things”: 20 Years of Acoustic Radio

Once upon a time, let’s say twenty years ago, in Billings, Montana, there was a institution of higher learning. It was Eastern Montana College. EMC! Man, in those days the place had a real funk about it. It had sports played by local kids. It had an outdoor shop where one could rent a canoe, a tent, or skis. In the Student Union Building students enjoyed the game room with pool tables, foosball, and a really loud juke box.

Who could have imagined that changing the name to MSU-B would kill all that traditional student culture and style? In any case, EMC is no more. Now, the only thing remaining from those wonderful days is the radio station, KEMC.

When this reporter first encountered the program, *Strings and Things* on KEMC, it was hosted by Stephen Hollander.

Stephen’s love of music,

especially oldtime string-band music, really shined through the radio show. He was very good player himself (concertina and clawhammer banjo). He was also a member of the **Ain’t Got A Clue String Band**. I say “was” in reference to Mr. Hollander, because he left Billings in 1986 in search of greener pastures. I haven’t been able to learn anymore about him after that.

It was at that time that band mate and Physician, Dr. Doug Ezell, took the reigns of the program. In 1989, Dr. Ezell took on his current partner, Fred Buckley. Together they have kept *Strings and Things* special and safe in our community for twenty + years.

At 8:00 pm every Saturday evening on 91.7 FM, KEMC, you can hear Fred and/or Dr. Doug filling the air waves with all things acoustic for the better part of two hours. They must

also be given credit for helping us, The Yellowstone Bluegrass Association, secure the use of Cessil Hall. From there, they broadcast the concerts live.

Dr. Ezell continues to play mandolin, fiddle, and keyboards in a number of local groups. He is a member of the **Midlife Chrystlers** (a popular group, playing popular music) and **Banish Misfortune** (a popular group, playing Celtic/Irish music).

Fred Buckley plays guitar, mandolin, and fiddle with **The Buckley’s** with his wife Jeanie and their children. He and his wife are also the organizers of the Montana Fiddle Camp every year.

Do yourself a favor and listen to *Strings and Things*.

Dr. Doug, do you have any recordings of the **Ain’t Got A Clue** gang?

Reischman and the Jaybirds: Northern Migration

Want to go on a cruise this summer? Want to pick? Want to visit Alaska?

Just hop on the giant Holland America ship in Seattle on July 9. See **John Reischman and the Jaybirds, Claire Lynch, and Lost Highway** as well as

glaciers and stuff.

Imagine nightly concerts, jams (slow jams for beginners) and, for a price, private lessons.

Stops for tired pickers, traveling buddies and/or spouses include but are not limited to Juneau and Victo-

ria.

The cheapest ride is \$1565. The lap of luxury costs \$2395.

A group, Cottage Music, has arranged the trip through Carson Wagonlit Travel. Call 1 800 848-3488 for more information.

Talking Wheat! What Does Wheat Say?

You all knew this was coming, didn't you? Now is time for to separate the wheat from the chaff. The wheat says, "Sure, I'll help park cars, take tickets, guide visitors or just do whatever I can. I like to volunteer!" The chaff says, "I'm really busy that weekend." The chaff usually has some group like family, church or employer to whom he or she is affiliated. That group is always more important. (Or it is always used as an excuse!) The chaff doesn't like to volunteer. And the chaff doesn't like to donate.

In order for the Yellowstone Bluegrass Festival at the Zoo to be a success on August 4,5, free labor is necessary. Opportunities abound for volunteers (the wheat).



\$11,000...in the plus column of YBA's account.

Many folks have already gone out of their way in the volunteering department. An unofficial estimation by a reliable source puts a total of \$11,000 in money, goods and services in the plus column of YBA's account. All of that sniffed out of corporate America by YBA volunteer blood hounds!

The wheat does what needs to be done. The wheat likes to volunteer. When the wheat has done all it can, it becomes delicious bread! But the chaff goes to the bottom of a rabbit hutch.

**A three day festival
of unheard of
proportion in this
area**

Big Horn Mountain Bluegrass Festival

If you have never been to Buffalo, Wyoming, July 7th might be a good time to go! A three day festival of unheard of proportion in this area begins there and then.

Acts to perform are: **Tim O'Brien, John Cowan Band, Steep Canyon Rangers, the Wilders,**

Anne and Pete Sibley, Jalan Crossland, Anne Tolstedt, Sweet Sunny South, Hit and Run, and the Arkamo Rangers. Tickets to the festival are \$50 for all three days. Saturday exclusively is \$30. Friday or Sundays shows are \$15 each exclusively. Camping is \$10 a day, or

\$20 a day for electricity.

Promoters of the event are so confident of a good turnout that they indicate a first-come/ first serve system of crowd control. Not my favorite system!

Get your tickets at Hansen Music.

To Members and Friends of YBA

A "Get Well Soon" to YBA friend, **Robert Whitmer** who suffered complications after knee surgery last winter. YBA hopes to see Bob again soon at jams and performances.

A "Happy Birthday" to YBA member, **Larry Larson.** Larry's wife, Layloni, marked the occasion with a new "look" for herself and

cupcakes for everyone else.

"Congratulations" to YBA member, **Annie Moser** on graduation from MSU-B. The guitarist and lead vocalist for the **Elkriver Ramblers** nailed top honors in her class after enduring the rigors an education curriculum and Student Teaching.

"Ain't That Somethin'" to YBA member, **Archie Bott** and wife, **Anne** who celebrated 50 years of marriage on April 1st. The Botts are blessed with 4 children and 8 grandkids some of whom pick and sing as a result of Archie's influence.

"Thanks" to YBA member, **Robert Grovesner** for hosting a super jam.

Sibleys to Appear at Cisel Hall May 20

The Yellowstone Bluegrass Association in conjunction with KEMC Public Radio would like to invite YBA members, their friends and families, and members of the Billings community who enjoy hand-made acoustic music to:

Anne & Pete Sibley

Saturday May 20, 2006

Cisel Hall @ MSU-B Billings

8:00 PM \$12 at the door

\$10 for YBA members

What's In Your Case?

Spring cleaning? Tidying – up just isn't my thing. With that in mind, some may raise an eyebrow to what I'm about to suggest. Friends, let's clean out our cases!

What sort of trash do you have rattling around in your instrument case? If you store common dirt,

leaves, or lint there, be advised that the finish of your instrument will suffer.

Maybe you are the organized type who uses the instrument case to store papers, song lists, and pages of lyrics. Paper is abrasive and can also damage an instrument's finish. Those few pages can also put the

squeeze on your instrument and cause pressure on the bridge or top.

Picks and straps need to be managed also.

Only the instrument should be stored in the main compartment of a case. PB&Js should be stored in a paper bag elsewhere.

The CD Addict

Tribute to the Past by **The New Ballards' Branch Bogtrotters**

The liner notes of this CD state that this group won first place in the Old Time Band division at the Galax Old Fiddlers' Convention in '93, '94, '95 and 1999. Don't doubt it. This band has the "old sound" with the power of young rock

stars. One won't hear a more old timey version of "Paddy on the Turnpike" anywhere. "Ebenezer" is one of my favorite tunes, but these guys have a different take on it. Good luck learning that one.

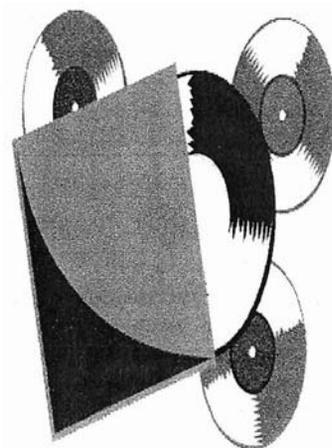
J.D. Crowe & The New South Live in Japan by **JD Crowe and the New South**

Keith Whitley sings lead

with JD's band on this album. A great singer and songwriter, Whitley later would become a country star, husband to Lori Morgan, and victim of alcoholism.

Track 10 begins a spoof of the old Martha White radio show. Judging from the response, the Japanese liked it as much as I did.

PB&Js should be stored in a paper bag elsewhere



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Jam in Laurel Every Tuesday

River of Life Church ...7pm

Last Tuesday of the Month

Laurel Pizza Hut

Lincoln Center Jams End for the Summer

It is that time of year again when the Lincoln Center Music Room closes for the summer. The last scheduled jam there will be May 26, 2006. Pizzahut will be the site of jams in Billings until further notice. If you are interested in hosting a jam, have an idea of another meeting spot, or would like information regarding jams in Laurel; please make note of VIPs and Contacts above. These people can be of help.

Two High String Band

Watch for a possible appearance by this dynamic group on July 15, 2006 at Cisel Hall on MSU-B campus. As nothing is of yet confirmed this message is

unofficial!!!

