

BLUEGRASS CLIPPINGS

September-October 2010



Newsletter of the Yellowstone Blue Grass Association

Annual Dues: \$15.00 per individual \$25.00 per Family

Officers

Wade Steinmetz President

Activities

Friday Night Jams 7-9 P.M. Lincoln Center

Trent Indreland V.P.

Band Showcases Fall and Spring

Terry Indreland Secy-Treas.

Board Members

Ed Pierson

Bluegrass Sponsored Concerts

Brad Sherseth

As Scheduled

David Nelson

Special Spring Activity

Chuck Bishop

Kaleva Park Picnic

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Dear members,

As the summer comes to a close, the YBA can proudly report that it sponsored two of its best-ever concerts. The Blue Canyon Boys out of Colorado "electrified" the audience with tight, hard-driving bluegrass. Their harmonies were spot on and several attendees commented that banjo player Jeff Scroggins was the best banjoist to have appeared in Billings. I felt fortunate that I got to spend personal time with him before and after the concert and received some great tips. They energized us all and we left feeling privileged to have hosted them. If you missed Steve Smith and Chris Sanders a couple of weeks ago, you forfeited an opportunity to hear one of the best mandolin players in the U.S. Ms. Sander's voice, reminiscent of EmmyLou Harris, blended perfectly with the whiskey-smooth opposite in Steve Smith.

On October 23, we are bringing in Evan Marshall who will be playing at the Babcock. In December, we host the return of Special Consensus. Roger and Terry will be sending out notifications with the specifics. I have wondered why our membership doesn't support these concerts. We are so lucky that Trent Indreland is able to snag these people at such reasonable rates. These are first-rate performers, who when hired for large events demand thousands of dollars, yet we get them for pennies on the dollar because we are a stop along the way, and Trent does a fantastic job getting them here and providing exceptional sound for each group at no cost to the YBA. At our board meeting last night, the option of dropping YBA-hosted concerts was discussed and almost adopted due to lack of participation by our YBA members. You cannot claim lack of notification of said events, or efforts on the part of the board, to excuse lack of interest.

Now on to other things. The spring pizza party was a lot of fun, with great jamming. A committee has been formed to explore the possibility of changing the format and location of the party. We understand that some people are uncomfortable with a pub atmosphere like Bones Brewery, so the committee's mission will be to elicit feedback from the membership as to what particulars might encourage participation. I feel

the same could be said about the Kaleva Park picnic. I thought the jamming was some of the best I have ever heard. Jeff Troxel graciously jammed with our members for several hours before conducting an eye-popping demonstration of guitar flat-picking. Even those of who don't play guitar were riveted by his extraordinary ability. You couldn't meet a nicer guy. He understood that this was a YBA jam and kept his workshop short because he knew we were there to play, which he then encouraged us to do along with him. The board would entertain any suggestions concerning this YBA-sponsored event, including change of venue, a different time of summer, and possible elimination of the workshop.

Our goal for this year is to revisit the reason for forming the YBA; to preserve and promote bluegrass music and to introduce and educate those new to our passion. To that end, we discussed reaching out to younger people, with a possibility of some appearances in local schools, and devoting part of the Friday night jam to welcoming and educating newcomers into our fold. A small portion of these jams will include a "bluegrass fundamentals" period, in which a set of songs will be lead by the old timers to instill confidence in new members and players. A set of songs has been chosen and will be played at each jam. We ask that more accomplished players attend the jams at Lincoln to share their knowledge and expertise. Don't worry...plenty of time will be left for serious, high-speed music! We encourage those who are giving music lessons to bring their students to the jams for everyone's benefit. My email address is wades@usadig.com. Have a great autumn season, and let's see more faces on Friday nights, and remember, pick it solid.

Wade

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:

The YBA Board is working hard to make the association as useful and meaningful as possible for the members. As the president has stated, they are reviewing various activities and can use feedback from all members. Your editor is especially pleased with the group work on 5 bluegrass/old time standards which will occur at the Friday jams. We need something to keep the novices coming back to play with us. Too many have felt intimidated by the jamming and only come once or twice and we never see them again.

A brief description of the featured bluegrass band at the Butte festival is included in this edition. The wet weather and your editor's pacemaker's inability to keep up with the hills of Butte resulted in a rainout for him. However, Trent Indreland and his family were there for the full three days. Hopefully, Trent, will provide us with a more complete picture of that unique folk festival in a later edition of Bluegrass Clippings. Your editor plans to attend the annual IBMA meetings and Fan Fest in Nashville at the end of the month. A report on those events should be forthcoming as well. During this and the next few newsletters some photos will be included from some of the other 2010 summer activities. If anyone wants to see more photos contact your editor at the above e-mail address and I will forward them to you.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Regarding When is Music Bluegrass" in the July-August Bluegrass Clippings:

"Maybe this article should have been listed as an editorial or opinion piece."
Anonymous

Sorry. It was entered beneath an editorial and the editor assumed most readers would understand it to be an op-ed piece. (Editor)

"Is the argument over what is or is not bluegrass really very important or is it a tempest in a teapot? There's been a lot of discussion (arguments) on this subject over the years and it probably never will be resolved. It is interesting that all hobbies/interests/whatever have the same arguments. I am an amateur radio operator and the subject of contention in this area was morse code/no code requirements for a "General" license. A decision was finally made and implemented but the discussion still rages on. "No code operators aren't 'real' operators".

Anyway, my views about "real" bluegrass is, does it have roots in the genre and more importantly, do I like the sound? After all, bluegrass is really an amalgamation of blues, mountain music, black spiritual, and other influences. Did Bill Monroe use "real" blues" or "real mountain music" when he developed his sound? It's good mental exercise anyway." Trent Indreland

Dr. Doug Weighs In:

"Interesting point of view which will stimulate discussion. My personal point of view is that anything that attracts people to acoustic/folk/roots music can eventually lead them to appreciate "true" bluegrass. For example, how many of us discovered the blues after listening to British rockers do their versions of the old blues masters' tunes? Just one guy's two cents worth. Thanks for the effort to put down your thoughts and prepare the newsletter. Still tryin' to figure it all out." Doug Ezell

Friday September 3rd: Back to the Lincoln for Friday night jams

School is in session on Friday, September 3rd, and the custodial staff has assured the editor that they would open the building for our jams at 7 PM. If for any reason the southeast door to the music room stairs is locked, we will move over to Hardee's. Jamming at Hardee's will continue after 9 PM on Fridays.

Fundamental Bluegrass Standards on Friday Nights

The YBA Board has decided to add just a little bit of structure to the Friday night jams. At the beginning of each jam five tunes which are old time/bluegrass standards will be practiced by all pickers. The objective is to help novice players learn some bluegrass tunes and many of us could also benefit by learning to play the chords, breaks, and words from memory. This could result in a performance by all at the Spring Showcase. This is scheduled to begin at the September 10th jam. More explanation will be made then. The tunes selected and their keys include an instrumental version of Wildwood Flower (C), then vocal numbers: Will The Circle Be Unbroken, (G), Rollin' In My Sweet Baby's Arms (G), In The Pines (D), and I'll Fly Away (A). This covers the four most basic keys in our bluegrass jams and you may want to begin practicing them prior to the jam on the 10th. If you do not know these tunes, do not be concerned. Suggestions and aids for practicing them will be presented at the jams. Following the practice of these tunes the Friday jams will continue much as they have been done for years.

Fall Showcase: October 15, 2010

Secretary Terry Indreland has reserved the Lincoln Auditorium for the Fall Showcase on Friday, October 15, 2010. Bands may want to begin selecting their play list soon.

YBA TO PRESENT LIBRARY PROGRAM

The YBA will present a program on the history of bluegrass and our association at the Parmly Billings Library on Wednesday, October 20th at 7 PM. The Ramblin' Laurels have volunteered their time and music for this educational program.

COUNTRY CURRENT - FREE CONCERT

Advertised as a country-bluegrass group this is a part of the U.S. Navy Band from Washington, D.C. They will be performing at the Shrine Auditorium at 7:30 PM on Saturday, September 18, 2010. It is a free concert, but you must have a TICKET to get in. These are available at the Shrine Box Office, 1125 Broadwater Avenue in Billings.

MILES CITY BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL - It looks like a good one!

September 17, 18, 19, 2010. \$15 per day or \$25 for a weekend pass. Open stage Friday at 7 PM. Workshop Saturday 9:30 AM. Saturday 11 AM - 9 PM. Sunday 10 AM - 5 PM. Eastern Montana Fairgrounds - Miles City, MT. It will feature CottonWood, High Plains Tradition, The Woodpicks, Monroe Crossing, the High 48's and local band Milestown. Google most of them to hear their music. Info at 406-234-2480 or 853-1678.

THE PUNCH BROTHERS WITH CHRIS THILE September 27th

The Punch Brothers with Chris Thile are playing at the Alberta Bair Theater on Sept. 27th. They play amazing bluegrass and the theater would like to offer members of the Yellowstone Bluegrass Association a 10% discount on tickets. All members need to do when ordering, is mention your organization. You can listen to the group at the theater website: <http://albertabairtheater.org/event-detail.php?id=9>

EVAN MARSHALL CONCERT on Sat., Oct. 23rd

Concert at the Babcock Theater. It will begin at 8 P.M. The following is from Marshall's website:

Evan J. Marshall, mandolinist for all seasons, is a versatile virtuoso. Besides being the master of solo mandolin playing in duo-style, he is known throughout the Southwest as Relaxin' Jackson, fiddler in **Cody Bryant's Riders of the Purple Sage**, and in the Pacific Northwest as Billy Mandolin of **Billy and the Hillbillies**. Evan has been a Featured Guest Artist with numerous Symphony Orchestras; he gives solo concerts and recitals, performs for private and corporate events, and is a much sought after instructor.

Evan is an enthusiastic teacher who much enjoys the serious mandolin, violin and fiddle student. Though he specializes in classical and bluegrass music, Evan is a teacher of most acoustic styles of music.

Read more and listen to his music at:

<http://www.solomandolin.com/news.php>

THERMOPOLIS, WY

The Cantrell's will have a school music residency Oct. 13-15. A public performance will be on Oct. 13 at 7 PM. Hot Springs County School Auditorium .

Special Consensus concert Dec. 2, 2010. Same location at 7 PM.

Bluegrass Jams: Shell Station, Hwy. 120 South of Thermopolis. 6-8 PM. Sep 17-Oct 22. Nov 19-Dec 17.

IN MEMORIAM: Gilbert Carrington.

Gil Carrington was a modest school principal who occasionally attended our jams with his guitar. He was the tall slender blonde-gray man, for those who do not recall him. He was also active in local accordion groups. Gil died at home unexpectedly. We offer our condolences to his widow.

CONGRATULATIONS

Almeda Terry and Merritt Bradshaw were married on June 24th. A reception was held at their place in Huntley and Hwy. 302 performed. Almeda says it was a really nice evening of good folks and music. She will be going by Bradshaw. She is also starting up private music lessons again in August and accepting new students for violin/fiddle, cello, guitar, mandolin, ukelele, piano and voice. Anyone interested can call her at 348-3282. (Editor's note: Almeda moved to Huntley from Big Sandy, MT, and she played a killer version of Big Sandy River at a recent Old Time Fiddler's event. That is not an easy tune, either.)

NATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL - BUTTE, MT - JULY 10-12, 2010



Michael Cleveland plays during "Fiddle Traditions" in Butte, MT.

The 3rd and final National Folk Festival for MT was held in Butte this summer. It featured many cultural activities and lots of different types of music. —

MICHAEL CLEVELAND AND FLAMEKEEPER was the featured Bluegrass Band.

Michael is a unique and very talented fiddler having been blind since birth. His achievements include:

[IBMA](#) Fiddle Player of the Year - 2001

IBMA Entertainer of the Year with Rhonda Vincent and the Rage - 2001

IBMA Fiddle Player of the Year - 2002

IBMA Instrumental Album of the Year "Flame Keeper" - 2002

IBMA Fiddle Player of the Year - 2004

IBMA Instrumental Album of the Year with Tom Adams for "Tom Adams and Michael Cleveland Live at the Ragged Edge" - 2004

IBMA Fiddle Player of the Year - 2006

IBMA Instrumental Album of the Year "Let 'Er Go, Boys!" - 2006

IBMA Fiddle Player of the Year - 2007

IBMA Fiddle Player of the Year - 2008

IBMA Instrumental Group of the Year - 2008

Michael was surrounded by a group of stellar pickers with teenage Jesse Baker on banjo and vocals the least experienced, but nevertheless a very good picker. They included Jesse Brock on mandolin, 2009 IBMA mandolin player of the year, Tom Adams, once claimed to be the heir to Earl Scruggs banjo king crown, now on guitar, and Marshall Wilborn on bass. These last three have played for many years in many of the most well known bluegrass bands in America and are very good vocalists as well.



Hansen Music is a supporter of Yellowstone Bluegrass Association

SUMMER PHOTOS

Annual Fiddler's Picnic, Livingston, MT



Ed Pierson, mandolin, Candy Payne, bass, Dave Payne guitar, and friends in Livingston.

Two more photos from Livingston



Jim "Doc" Allison on fiddle with Gladys Burns, Archie Bott, and Friends in the Pickin' Barn.



Bruce Lee, pickin' with Rob and John. Who is the guy with the hat in the background? Oh, it's Jim!