



DESERT BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION

Newsletter



Grass Clippings

Volume 26 Issue 6

February — March 2021



What a Long, Strange Year It's Been

By Dave Polston, DBA President

I WISH I was writing the motivational article about our upcoming festival, but with the pandemic still upon us, we will have to wait another year. The committee will be meeting soon so that we can devote a full year to making 2022 a safe and wonderful festival for all. If anyone would like to be on the committee, please contact me. I will be talking with existing members and will start filling in areas that are needed. If anyone has experience in grant writing, we sure could use it. The more advanced funding we can receive through grants and sponsorships helps us provide the best festival we can afford.

It has been a year (one of the longest, strangest ever) and it is time for our annual meeting. It will be held on February 8th at 6:30 pm. Due to the pandemic and properly social distancing we will be holding this through Zoom. In the next couple of days, you should receive an email from the association with the link to the zoom meeting.

Speaking of long years, it has been a while since we, as an association, have been able to jam, attend weekly workshops, have specialty instrument workshops, and hold and go to concerts. So let's have a do over!!!! Make sure to read Mike Headrick's membership article about our bluegrass blues stimulus package on page 3!!

We were able to start up the Marana Tuesday night workshop back in September with a limited number of people (15) and 6-foot social distancing, but due to the rise of COVID during December, Marana discontinued all indoor activities until at least the end of February. However, we are still holding our Monday night zoom workshop, so drop in!!

Keep on pickin, everyone, and I'll see you on the 8th!!!

➡ **DBA Annual Meeting & Membership News**, p. 3. **DBA Financial Update & Workshop News**, p. 4. **Black History Month & Bluegrass in Tucson**, by Anni Beach, p. 5. **Fiddler's Corner**, our new featured column by Suzette Sommerer, p. 6. **Bluegrass Event Announcements**, p. 8. **Classifieds**, p. 12.

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1/4 PAGE:	\$25 PER ISSUE, \$100 ANNUAL	1/2 PAGE:	\$40 PER ISSUE, \$160 ANNUAL
FULL PAGE:	\$60 PER ISSUE \$240 ANNUAL	CLASSIFIED AD:	\$5 FOR 5 LINES OR LESS*

*DBA Members Free, Space Permitting

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Join Us on Zoom for the

DESERT BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

Monday, February 8 at 6:30 pm

Agenda

- ◆ The Year in Review
- ◆ Election of Officers
- ◆ Other Business

A zoom link will be sent to all members.

If you need assistance using zoom, please contact Dale Vickroy at 520-664-0340 or DesertBluegrassWebmaster@gmail.com

Interested in serving on the Festival Committee?

If so, contact Dave Polston at davepolston@yahoo.com. The more, the merrier!



Hear ye,
hear ye!

DBA Memberships Are Extended by One Year - FREE

FREE
FREE
FREE

Dear DBA Members,

Happy New Year! I hope that all of you are staying well.

This time of year, we normally start our membership drive to have you renew your memberships. But 2020 was a difficult year – especially for those who enjoy getting together and making music. Due to the pandemic, the DBA had to cancel jams, workshops and our festival for this year. Therefore the DBA Board of Directors has approved an unusual action: **All present DBA memberships are extended by one year - FREE.**

If your membership was due in February 2021, then it is extended to February 2022. Memberships due in 2022 are extended to 2023 and so on. You do not need to do anything. Think of it as a “do-over” for an awful year. Fortunately, the DBA is strong in many ways. Our financial reserves are sufficient to afford giving a free year to our membership without jeopardizing our ability to fulfill our mission to promote and preserve Bluegrass Music going forward.

Of course, the pandemic still rages and we cannot yet restart all our events. But with the vaccine becoming more widely available, there is hope for the future. I look forward to when we can again enjoy playing music together. Until then, stay safe and enjoy your free year of DBA membership.

Mike Headrick

Secretary
Desert Bluegrass Association

Desert Bluegrass Association—Important Updates

Monday Workshop News

Due to the pandemic and difficulties with distancing, the Monday workshop has not met since March 2020, almost a year. During that time, there were major renovations in the Oasis building of Christ Community Church, as the COVID risk grew. We considered resuming when the Marana Tuesday workshop did, but decided it was unwise to do so. We hope to continue the regular workshop when everyone has had their chance to get the vaccine AND when the COVID risk is reduced.



In the meantime.... Monday workshop has continued via Zoom at **6:30 each Monday**. The system is far from perfect. We do like seeing each other, and we take turns leading one instrument at a time, while everyone else mutes to avoid overloading the system.

Due to delays in the zoom system, real breaks don't work, so we practice perfecting our breaks with muted mics, as we play along with the leader. We will continue the Zoom workshop as long as needed.

There is a link to enter the workshop. Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82262953430> (The link is also on the website calendar.) The most recent book is on the website workshop page at <http://desertbluegrass.org/> We begin at 6:30 each Monday. Log in if you want to join us.

NOTE: On February 8, at 6:30 pm, we will have the DBA annual meeting in place of the workshop on Zoom, same log in. If there is time and interest after the meeting, we might play a few songs.

If you have questions, you can send them to: DBAmondaysworkshop@gmail.com or call Dave Polston, Dale V., or Carole W.

Everyone stay well and keep on playing. ~ Carole

The DBA Directory: One of the advantages of being a member of the Desert Bluegrass Association is the annual DBA directory. Your copy of the 2021 DBA directory was emailed to you earlier this month as a PDF attachment. We hope that this helps you to find other DBA members. For example, if you need a bass player to anchor your jam session, there are 35 listed. If you find a mistake in your information, please send me an e-mail and I'll update our database. This directory is intended for the private use of members of the Desert Bluegrass Association. Please respect the privacy of our members and do not pass this information along for any commercial or public distribution. ~ Mike Headrick, Secretary, DBA



SPECTRUM

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Black History Month. What Does This Have to Do with Bluegrass?

By Anni Beach, Founder of Jam Pak Blues 'N' Grass Neighborhood Band

Bluegrass music binds us together because there is nothing quite like the joy and fun and friendships that come with jamming, trading tunes, going to festivals, and helping each other learn. However, the music has been notable for a lack of diversity with a few exceptions here and there.

The times are changing. Black people are being sought out, welcomed, and asked to please come and reclaim their roots in bluegrass and the old-time styles. Black musicians were early influences for The Carter Family and Bill Monroe, just to name the greats we've heard the most about.

IBMA (International Bluegrass Music Association) has become a prime mover in the quest for diversity and inclusiveness in the music we love. **The IBMA Foundation**, a sister organization of IBMA, has created **The Arnold Shultz Fund** in the last year with the mission to find and support projects for people of color that will encourage participation in Bluegrass.



Jam Pak, since 1994, has been the sweet face and sweet music of diversity here in Arizona. The community outreach to find and encourage people of color to rediscover the joy of bluegrass is finally going to be a reality for us. We are partnering with **BASE Arizona** (Black Alliance and Social Empowerment) and will provide banjo and bass lessons to Black youth and adults as a pilot project. We are submitting a proposal to **The Arnold Shultz Fund**, at their request, and keeping our fingers crossed! One way or another this will happen.

Jam Pak is forever grateful for the huge encouragement and love that has been shown to us by the Arizona Bluegrass community over these many years and it is our hope you will be happy with our outreach.

For More Information

Jampak.org

IBMA.org

Basearizona.org



FIDDLER'S CORNER

The First Bluegrass Festival

By Suzette Sommerer

We all love our bluegrass festivals, and though we'll sadly be missing Marana this year, we look forward eagerly to a time when we can gather once again to hear great live music and indulge in some serious jamming.

Modern, secular music festivals began with Rhode Island's Newport Jazz Festival in 1954. In 1959, the Newport Folk Festival was born, originally conceived as an afternoon program at the Jazz Festival. Early in the planning, it became clear that the rising popularity of folk music had led to high demand, and a separate weekend festival was staged instead. Notable performers at that first folk festival included Pete Seeger, Earl Scruggs, the Kingston Trio, the New Lost City Ramblers (who played a key role in reviving the fading popularity of old-time music), and 18-year-old Joan Baez in her debut performance, brought onstage as a guest of Bob Gibson.



First Bluegrass Festival Poster
Courtesy Phil Zimmerman

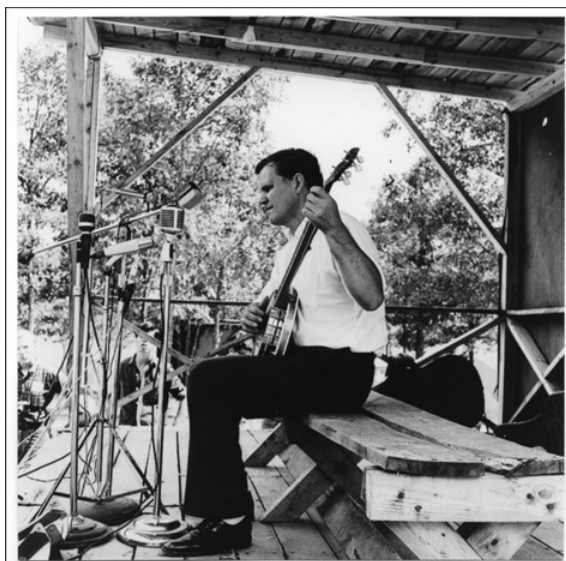
for the first time two pioneers of the Newgrass movement. Peter Wernick lugged around a huge tape recorder to interview his musical heroes. Tony Trischka, also in the audience of nearly a thousand, described them as “people from all walks of life. You’ve got lawyers from Boston, farmers from North Carolina, students... We were all different and coming from different cultures... more separated... The music just brought us all together and it was a beautiful thing.”

Bill Monroe, largely forgotten since his early success in the 30s and 40s, performed at Newport in 1963 at the urging of his new manager, folklorist Ralph Rinzler, and again in 1965. Later in 1965, Monroe's booking agent, Carlton Haney, and Rinzler organized their own festival at the Cantrell Horse Farm just north of Fincastle, Virginia, outside Roanoke. The very first bluegrass festival was held on a rustic stage in a horse pasture ringed by trees on Labor Day Weekend 1965. The three-day festival featured many familiar names, including Bill Monroe, Kenny Baker, Jimmy Martin, Don Reno, Benny Martin, the Stanley Brothers, the Clinch Mountain Boys, and Doc Watson. David Grisman, a 20-year-old prodigy, played with Red Smiley's band. At the festival, he met 13-year-old Sam Bush (who played in the fiddle contest), bringing together



Bill Monroe, Carter and Ralph Stanley at Fincastle '65
Courtesy Ron Petronko

FIDDLER'S CORNER, *continued*



*Doc Watson onstage at Fincastle '65
Courtesy Blue Ridge Institute & Museum,
Ferrum College, Joel Buckhart Collection*

These were tough times for many of the musicians; Red Smiley commented about a missing band member, "He's out trying to make a dollar today. He said he couldn't make enough out here pickin' with me, so he's gonna cut hair for a while." Conditions on the hastily built wooden stage were also a bit rough at times. During the Stanleys' set on Saturday night, the bare light bulbs and small floods were swarming with moths, and Carter inhaled one as stepped up to sing. He gagged, spluttered, coughed it out, and commented dryly, "Them chocolate bugs is alright, but them vanillers, I cain't hardly stand 'em!" Despite the issues, the performances were electrifying, with so many bluegrass greats in one place. And, of course, the jamming went on long into the night. I'm listening to a mandolin workshop that Bill Monroe gave at the festival as I write this – no instruction here, just lots and lots of Monroe fireworks on classic tunes.

Both Carlton Haney and Ralph Rinzler very much saw Bill Monroe as the father of bluegrass, and they pushed that message hard at the festival. The grand finale, "The Story of Blue Grass Music," was an extravaganza of the greats, with Haney narrating, Rinzler stage managing behind the scenes, and Monroe onstage the entire time. It began with Haney's thick North Carolina drawl imploring the crowd for silence, "We don't want to hear a sound, just the wind in the trees." Then Bill Monroe kicked off Muleskinner Blues, followed by a parade of former Blue Grass Boys taking their places at the mic with Monroe, telling their stories and showcasing their signature styles. Finally, after a reprise of Muleskinner Blues and John Henry, Haney thanked the crowd and concluded with, "There wasn't no fights, no trouble, or nothin'."

The first bluegrass festival was not a financial success, nor was a second festival the following year at the same spot, but Haney went on to stage many more festivals, and his success was imitated in many places across the country. The legacy of Fincastle lives on in the many festivals we will soon enjoy again. A quick web search turns up a wealth of information, including many vintage recordings, photos, and personal recollections from the festival.**



The Hot Ticket in 1965 - Courtesy New Deal String Band

* Though advertised, Howdy Forrester and the Osborne Brothers did not participate in Fincastle 1965.

** <http://frobbo.org/audio/fincastle65/> is a particularly rich source, including rare items such as Monroe's contract for the festival.

Acknowledgement - thanks to Dave Lanham for piquing my interest in early bluegrass festivals.



2021 NEW MEXICO BANJO CAMP

~ Announcement from Bill Evans ~

*Featuring Tony Trischka, Alan Munde,
Riley Baugus, Bill Evans, and Kristin Scott Benson*

April 24,
2021



April 25,
2021

What a year it's been! We hope that each of you along with your loved ones, have managed to stay well through these many months and are finding ways to stay connected with friends, family and music.

Like many events scheduled for the first half of this upcoming year, we are going online and this year's camp will run for 1 1/2 days of instruction all day Saturday, April 24th and a half-day on Sunday, April 25th.

We'll have multiple workshop sessions from Tony Trischka, Alan Munde, Riley Baugus and myself. And there's even more good news: Kristin Scott Benson will be joining us as well.

So please reserve April 24 and 25 to be with us for the New Mexico Banjo Camp online!

<https://www.nmbanjocamp.com/>

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 reighlej@cox.net

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 mojograssaz@gmail.com
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www.facebook.com/The-Titan-Valley-Warheads-161939573828277/

Way Out West

Emmy Creigh 520-323-0704
www.bluebhikku.com/WayOutWest.htm



The perfect band is a group of imperfect musicians who refuse to ever give up on each other and the music they create together.

they create together

DBA Calendar

FEBRUARY 2021						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Valentine's Day	15 President's Day	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

Where's the calendar??

[Click here to look online!!](#)

That nasty virus is still going around!! Owing to public health concerns regarding the coronavirus outbreak, all DBA-sponsored jams are still cancelled. The workshop situation continues to be fluid, so check the DBA website [calendar](#) for the latest info.

And in the mean time, wash your hands, stay at home, but mostly—keep pickin'!

MARCH 2021						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Daylight Savings	15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20 Spring Begins
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Download & Print Free Calendars From [Wiki-Calendar.com](#)



Keep 'Em Comin'

A bluegrass band is at practice when the fiddle and banjo players get into a huge fight. When the guitar player finally separates them, she asks what all of that was about. "He broke my bow!" shouted the fiddle player. "Well, he started it" the banjo player countered, then continued, "He un-tuned two of my strings, and he won't tell me which ones!"

Q: What's the difference between a mandolin and a banjo? **A:** A banjo burns longer.

And finally: You know what they say about bluegrass music . . . It's not as bad as it sounds!!

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www.desertbluegrass.org

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www.arizonabluegrass.com

Bluegrass Arizona Blog

www.bluegrassarizona.blogspot.com

Bluegrass Backing Tracks (Free)

www.fbbts.com/

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Bluegrass Tablature

www.alltabs.com/bluegrass_tabs.php

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www.bluegrassonthetube.com

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www.banjohangout.org

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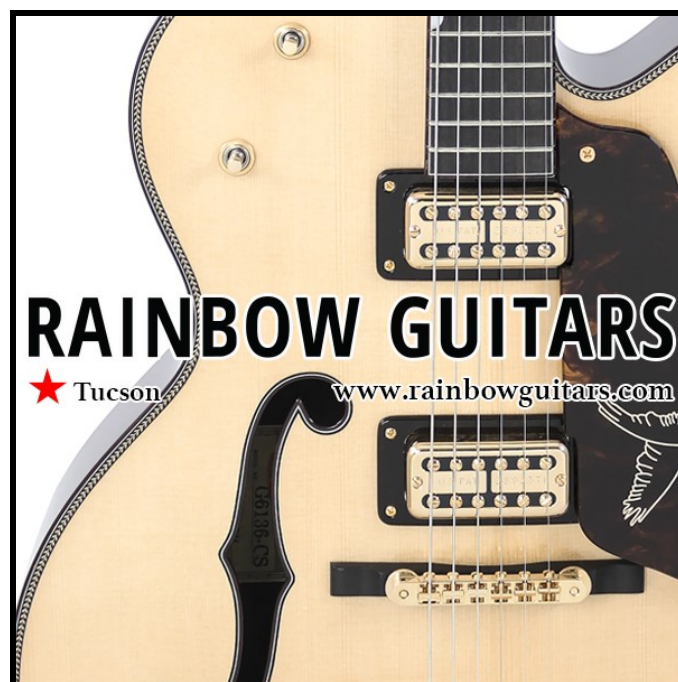
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JAMS & OPEN MICS

All DBA-sponsored jams are temporarily cancelled due to public health warnings relating to the coronavirus. Once resumed, they will be listed on the calendar at www.desertbluegrass.org.

Below is the previous list of other, related jams.

Check local contacts for current and future scheduling.

Southern AZ Old Time Fiddlers Association

Unitarian Universalist Church
4831 E 22nd St, Tucson
Tuesday 6:30—8:30pm
Info: Wilbur 520-743-7086

ORCA Bluegrass Jam

700 E Kingston St, Tucson
\$2.00/per person
First Wed. of the month
September through April
(except Holidays), 7-9pm
Info: Shay Cardell 520-357-6432
sierra1@desertsky.us

Casa Grande Airport Jam

1st & 3rd Saturday, 12:00 pm.
Casa Grande Municipal Airport, 3225 N Lear Ave. Casa Grande Az. Acoustic stringed instruments only, NO Amps, Bluegrass songs preferred.
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steve@arizonabluegrass.com



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www.arizonabluegrass.com

International Bluegrass Music Association

4206 Gallatin Pk.
 Nashville, TN 37216
 Phone 615-256-3222 | Toll Free 1-888-438-4262
 Email info@ibma.org | www.ibma.org

Hall of Fame Bluegrass Music & Museum

311 West Second St.
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 270-926-7891
 888-MY BANJO (toll-free)

Arizona Old Time Fiddlers Association

www.arizonaoldtimefiddlers.org/index.html

Arizona Old Time Fiddlers Association, Southern Arizona Chapter

3020 W. Avenida Cresta
 Tucson, AZ 85745
 Info: Wilbur 520-743-7086

Southwest Old Time String Band Association

wotgathering.com/

Tucson Friends of Traditional Music

www.facebook.com/Tucson-Friends-of-Traditional-Music-91279619523/
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www.facebook.com/TucsonFolkFest/

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MEMBER OF THE DESERT BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Membership dues for the Desert Bluegrass Association are \$20 annually per family, due March 1st, and includes bulk mailing of the bi-monthly newsletter to each member, or email delivery in color. Members joining after November of any year will have their membership extended through the next year. Those joining before November must renew the following March 1st.

First name: _____ Last name: _____

Street Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Email address: _____

Do you wish to be included in the Membership Directory? (check one) Yes No

What instruments do you play? Banjo Bass Fiddle Guitar
 Mandolin Resonator Guitar Other _____

Check here if you wish to receive the DBA Grass Clippings Newsletter by mail

Complete this form then mail it, along with your personal check or money order payable to Desert Bluegrass Association, to:

Mike Headrick (DBA Membership Secretary)
13308 Placita el Algodon
Tucson, AZ 85749