

BLUEGRASS

SPECIAL EDITION
JANUARY 2024

BREAKDOWN

ANNUAL REPORT

BUILDING COMMUNITY
THROUGH MUSIC
IN 2023

CALIFORNIA BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION

WELCOME TO THE ANNUAL REPORT

By Theresa Gooding, CBA President



Greetings California Bluegrass Association community!

As we usher in 2024, I am delighted to welcome you to the pages of this annual report — a testament to a year of fulfillment, progress, and passionate support for the

California Bluegrass Association and its vision. In our 49th year as an organization, we've witnessed the continued realization of the CBA mission, resonating not only across California but also forging connections that extend beyond our state borders.

From the **Great 48** in January, to the **South State 48** in November, and the myriad events in between, 2023 has been a year of flourishing for our bluegrass and old-time music family. Within these pages, you'll discover the stories of our community gatherings—concerts, campouts, instructional music camps, and jamming events. You'll read about programs that nurture the next generation of musicians and leaders; outreach initiatives providing support and promoting growth; the talents and passions of our awesome volunteers; and of course, all the fun that was had at our flagship event, the Father's Day festival in Grass Valley.

The CBA is an organization rich in history that increasingly ties us more strongly to our mission. Amid a year of great accomplishments, we faced two giant losses in 2023 that underscore the depth of our gratitude for the legacy gifted to us in this CBA community. In January, we lost CBA Member #1 and founder of the CBA, **Carl Pagter**; and we lost

founder of the **Kids on Bluegrass** program and inspiration to youth musicians and programs in California and beyond, **Frank Solivan Sr.** in August. Both leave an indelible mark on our hearts and have fueled a lasting future — we are forever grateful.

As we look toward 2024, there is great momentum in opportunities to support our mission. We continue to grow established programs and events like our **Youth Program** and the Father's Day Festival, as well as developing new ways to support our community like **Bluegrass Bridge**, **Global Connections**, and the **BEAR fund**. Our biggest challenge next year as an organization will be sustaining our momentum while navigating the rising costs in every aspect of our operations. Inflation is a formidable foe, but with your continued support, we will meet these challenges and emerge stronger.

As you peruse the pages of this annual report, I encourage you to visit our photo gallery on the website. It's a visual journey capturing the spirit of our events and the camaraderie that defines our community. And make sure to visit the website regularly to keep up on all the goings on!

In this season of reflection and gratitude, I extend my heartfelt thanks to each one of you for supporting the California Bluegrass Association. Your support, participation and dedication ensure the continued prosperity of our beloved organization.

Wishing you a harmonious and joyful 2024!

Take a photo tour of
California bluegrass
in 2023! →



CBA's photography team at Father's Day Festival 2023. Names L-R, below. Photo by Patrick Campbell.

THE FINEST IN BLUEGRASS PHOTOGRAPHY

OUR VOLUNTEER PHOTOGRAPHERS MAKE US LOOK GOOD

THANKS TO

ALAN BOND ★ ROBIN FRENETTE ★ BOB FREE
PATRICK CAMPBELL ★ JOHN WOODWORTH

(NOT PICTURED)

BOB CALKINS ★ DAVID CUPP

BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN

January 2024 – Annual Report

The Bluegrass Breakdown is the monthly publication of the California Bluegrass Association, keeping CBA members and the world of bluegrass up-to-date with coverage of CBA events, musicians, promotions, and volunteer opportunities since April 1975. Each issue is published as both a printed and a digital newsletter and distributed to more than 7,500 readers around the world.

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Student concert performers at 2023 Summer Camp. Photo by Alan Bond.

CBA BUILDING BLUEGRASS COMMUNITY

By Pete Ludé, CBA Executive Director

Willie Nelson summed it up well when he said “Music seems to be the common denomination that brings us all together. Music cuts through all boundaries and goes right to the soul.”

I think this captures the spirit of CBA as our team strives to connect more people through music with our many activities. But how are we “bringing us all together?” To try and answer this question, we pause at the end of each year to review our accomplishments and challenges, and report to you – our members, supporters and larger music community – on what we’ve been up to at the California Bluegrass Association. This January issue of the *Bluegrass Breakdown* is primarily dedicated to this annual report, covering our fiscal year ending September 30, 2023.

This year’s report was particularly exciting to assemble as the organization enters our 49th year. After successfully recovering from the pandemic slow-down, 2023 has been dedicated to stepping up to the demand for more jams, camps, concerts and events. Just as importantly, we’re continuing to build our other projects, all intended to preserve and promote bluegrass and old-time music.

This past year, our renowned **Youth Program** has been more active than ever. We’ve also grown our **Bluegrass Bridge** project that reaches

incarcerated people in state prisons. We’ve conducted worldwide outreach through the **Global Connections** project and launched our new **BEAR** (for Bluegrass Entertainer and Artist Relief) **Fund** to provide emergency assistance for musicians recovering from catastrophic hardship. CBA is now running two instructional music camps: our long-lived **Summer Music Camp** at Grass Valley and the **Julian Family Fiddle Camp** near San Diego. Both the **Great 48** jam in Bakersfield and the **South State 48** in Carlsbad are going strong, despite the confusing name – since both events now extend much longer than just the 48 hours that were initially envisioned. We are proud to support community jams and regional concerts around the state, and host **three fun campouts** during the year – two in Lodi and one on the Russian River. And of course, we can’t forget our biggest shindig of the year, our **Father’s Day Bluegrass Festival** in Grass Valley. You’ll learn all about these activities in this month’s report.

Behind the scenes, we’ve been busy growing our infrastructure and IT systems to support these activities by upgrading our accounting systems, expanding our membership database, and extending our archival program. CBA’s long-time treasurer **Val Cornejo** retired, and we took the opportunity to transition to a highly-regarded nonprofit accounting firm to manage our

extensive day-to-day finances. We’re continuing to grow the *Bluegrass Breakdown* newsletter, our website, and social media outreach.

But despite the routine distractions of managing these events while keeping the organizational wheels turning, our CBA team works to remain focused on what’s really important: keeping traditional music alive and thriving, introducing new people to the music we love, and supporting musicians and instructors in every way possible.

I think that bluegrass and old-time music is a particularly powerful force to bond our community, and as we enter 2024, we will benefit more than ever from picking, singing, and listening to traditional American music, if for no other reason than to avoid being dragged down by the increasing complicated world of financial woes, global conflicts, politics, and natural disasters. A big thanks to all of you who share our passion, and provide support, encouragement and participation in CBA events. We couldn’t do it without you.



Pete Ludé



Peter Rowan. Photo by Amanda Rowan.

PETER ROWAN SONGS AND STORIES

Great 48 Weekend - 12:00 p.m. Saturday, January 6, 2024 - Bakersfield Marriott Hotel

We’re very excited to have a special Master’s Workshop at **Great 48** this year! **Peter Rowan** will be joining us for an informal “Songs and Stories” session at noon on Saturday, Jan. 6, at the Bakersfield Marriott hotel. Peter Rowan began his career in bluegrass sixty years ago – in 1964 – as a songwriter, rhythm guitarist and lead vocalist of **Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys**. Since then, he’s gone on to be a pioneer in bands such as **Earth Opera**, **Muleskinner**, **Old and In the Way** – and blazed trails in folk, country, rock and Tex-Mex music.

He has a lot of stories about this long path, and CBA has arranged for Rowan to stop by the Great 48 on Saturday afternoon. This will be an

informal and intimate chance to meet with Peter as he shares his experiences and wisdom from his six decades as a bluegrass visionary and pioneer, play a few songs, and answer questions.

Rowan is a master storyteller. When he takes part in music camps, he often regales participants with music, life, or cosmic lessons wrapped in stories with characters that have played roles in his own life – and there are many of them. We are especially excited to be able to feature Peter in this special format to go accompany our Great 48 weekend.

[Purchase Tickets Here →](#)





FATHER'S DAY FESTIVAL TRADITION CONTINUES



2023 EVENT FEATURED MOLLY TUTTLE CAPTURING HEARTS WITH HER SONG "GRASS VALLEY" – AND 30 OTHER BANDS

By Pete Ludé, CBA Executive Director

This past June, 4,000 passionate bluegrass fans made their annual pilgrimage to Grass Valley for **CBA's Father's Day Bluegrass Festival**. Since 1976, this weekend every June has been the centerpiece of summer planning for many families, guiding their work and vacation schedules so they can avoid missing out on California's premier celebration of traditional and contemporary bluegrass and old-time music. Tucked in a pine forest in the heart of the Sierra Nevada Foothills, the Father's Day Bluegrass Festival provides a welcome break from daily life. Each year, CBA hosts three stages of music featuring over 30 bands performing over four days – plus camping, free instructional workshops, curated jams, free square-dance events, an extensive set of youth programs and an unmatched spirit of community and connection. This annual festival is known by many musicians as the best place to meet up with friends from around California and around the country to get out your instruments and jam all night. Some of the most amazing playing and harmony singing can be heard strolling through campsites long after midnight!

Our 2023 festival lineup was particularly memorable. Notably, Grammy-winner **Molly Tuttle** and **Golden Highway** closed out the main-stage performances on both Friday and Saturday nights to a packed crowd in the pines with jaw-dropping performances.

Molly grew up attending this festival with her family every year as a young girl and attended CBA's renowned **Kids on Bluegrass** program. She later taught at the **CBA Summer Music Camp** and performed some of her first shows to a highly appreciative audience in Grass Valley. Since then, Molly Tuttle has gone on to be one of the most respected and influential bluegrass musicians in the industry. After a staggeringly impressive main stage performance with her band on Friday night, there was barely a dry eye in the house when Molly was joined by her dad, **Jack Tuttle**, on stage for an encore to perform "Grass Valley." This is a touching song which tells the story of Molly's growing up at this very festival since she was 10 years old. Many CBA members were proudly thinking: how many other bluegrass festivals have a song about their event recorded by a bluegrass legend on a Grammy-winning album? Well – the Father's Day Festival in Grass Valley!

This year's audience was captivated by the many other talented performers taking to the Grass Valley stage with something for everyone. **Rhonda Vincent & The Rage** lived up to her title, "Queen of Bluegrass." Several familiar acts energized the crowd, including **Seth Mulder & Midnight Run**, the **Kody Norris Show**, **Blue Highway**, and **Allison de Groot & Tatiana Hargreaves**. Some bands were discovered by the crowd for the first time, and earned some of the most

enthusiastic responses – and a new loyal following – including **East Nash Grass**, **Jake Blount**, and **Never Come Down**. CBA always features several upcoming bands in our **California Showcase**, which were major draws for this year's festival. These included **Water Tower**, **Matt and George & Their Pleasant Valley Boys**, **West 45**, **Hot October** and the **Clinton Davis String Band**.

Vern's Stage is dedicated to featuring up-and-coming local bands who deserve a slot at a major festival. Seventeen premier bands were selected to perform this year, from over 30 applicants. Many attendees say hearing passionate and talented semi-professionals in an intimate environment featuring picnic tables, benches, beer, and California wine is one of the best parts of the weekend! This is where Molly Tuttle and **AJ Lee** were performing just a few years ago – and we can only imagine where some of these talented 2023 performers will be in a few years.

The 2023 festival set new records for attendance, and some say – for fun. The CBA team is working hard on making the 2024 festival even better!



Photos, Top-Bottom: Water Tower on Main Stage, by Robin Frenette; Molly and Jack Tuttle play a duet at FDF, by Patrick Campbell; Rhonda Vincent and Laurie Lewis share the stage, by John Woodworth; Delicious refreshments on a hot day, by Patrick Campbell.

CBA'S VOLUNTEERS

MAKE GREAT THINGS POSSIBLE

By Phoebe Leigh-Suelflow, CBA Vice President, Volunteers

Thanks to CBA's 400+ volunteers for a great year! We've done some amazing things and, of course, there's more to come! Here are some highlights of what we did and what is ahead:

We're keeping in touch. We have so much fun volunteering at campouts and festivals, and working with great people, so why wait a year to meet with old friends? So we've created the **CBA VOLUNTEERS Facebook group**. If you haven't joined yet, it's a good way to find out what volunteer opportunities are out there, and how to get connected. We also feature stories about volunteers who are making things happen. Plus we've started a monthly CBA Volunteers newsletter with similar information, in case you eschew social media.

Can you believe how great Father's Day 2023 was? We had a great time, heard some outstanding music, and we helped to make the festival happen. What we can do together is pretty amazing! Our **323 volunteers** did everything from checking in festival-goers and passing out wristbands and car stickers, to making sure the bands got on and off the stage at the right time (that is no mean feat!). We drove the Bluegrass Taxi around camp; set up the electric grid for RV camping; took thousands of pictures; and sold beer, wine, ice, light-up headbands, and loads of t-shirts. We are a talented bunch! We even had special volunteer wristbands. But best of all, we had very cool volunteer t-shirts. I still see our volunteers wearing them around at other events.

Our Volunteers Get Around! Volunteers have also generously assisted at every CBA event, from the campouts, to the **Carl Pagter Memorial**, to the **Great 48** and **South State 48**. Plus we've helped to put on jams and staffed tables at many other non-CBA festivals and concerts, including **Lake Havasu's "Bluegrass on the Beach" Bluegrass Festival**, **SummerGrass**, **Huck Finn Jubilee**, and many more in Northern California as part of the larger bluegrass community.

New and Improved for 2024 ... We're going to see some great improvements in 2024. We're working on a new online platform that lets volunteers log in, find out what shifts are open, and sign up for them online. Imagine! Saturday morning, lazing around in your pajamas and drinking your first cup of coffee. You wonder about what you want to be doing in October. You open up our app and decide to sign up to work a shift at the Fall Campout! How cool is that? When the time comes, you'll be able to sign in and out of your shift online. You can also sign on and see how many hours you've worked – which just might go toward some really cool CBA swag. Or you can see that Jersey Drake is going to be working the merchandise booth at the Father's Day Festival, so you sign up to work that shift, too. Fun!

A Bigger and Better Presence at Father's Day Festival. After the 2023 Father's Day, volunteers completed a survey to let us know what they liked about volunteering, and what they would change. Overall, we got high marks for our team coordinators and for making volunteers

feel happy. You also gave us some great ideas for things that we can do better next year – including a volunteer hospitality tent! We're working on them and we're going to make those a reality. We'll have more details closer to the festival, so keep those good ideas coming!

If You're Not a Volunteer Yet, we would love to have you join us! You don't have to have any specific skills – just a desire to help make the event a success, meet new people, and become a part of the bluegrass community. Don't miss out! We're starting to take applications for Father's Day Festival volunteers now, and spaces are limited! And we still have spots at the Great 48 and the Spring Campout. Whether you're an old-timer or a newbie, welcome aboard!



Phoebe shared this photo of CBA volunteer John Drake with his service dog Jersey, the Dog Park Jam mascot.

CBA in 2023

**OVER 10,000
VOLUNTEER
HOURS
FROM 400+
VOLUNTEERS!**



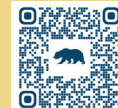
Volunteer Central at Father's Day Festival. Photo by Robin Frenette.

CALIFORNIA BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION



JOIN US IN JULIAN! MAY 1-5, 2024

The Julian Family Fiddle Camp is a five-day acoustic music camp for people of all ages and musical abilities. Featuring instruction on fiddle, banjo, guitar, mandolin, vocals, and bass. JFFC is held annually at a rural family retreat center near the historic mining town of Julian, and features some of the best internationally renowned instructors and performers on the roots music scene. All meals, instruction and evening concerts are provided for a single fee.



CAMP INSTRUCTORS

Vickie Vaughn - Bass
Nina Weisman - Mandolin
Luke Price - Artist at Large
Rachel Price - Vocals
Nat Copland - Fiddle
Mike Compton - Mandolin
Joe Newberry - Guitar/Songwriting
Catherine "BB" Bowness - Banjo
Joseph Decosimo - Clawhammer Banjo
Karen Heil - Old-Time Fiddle
Grant Gordy - Guitar Soloing

CBA YOUTH PROGRAM GROWS BLUEGRASS TALENT



CBA Youth Academy sign leads the way. Photo by Robin Frenette.



Kids on Bluegrass perform on the main stage. Photo by Bob Calkins.



Snack break at Youth Academy. Photo by Patrick Campbell.

By Darby Brandli, CBA Vice President, Youth Program

The return of live festivals and concerts after two years of the pandemic made 2023 feel like things were more or less back to “normal,” and that included the array of activities that comprise the **CBA Youth Program**. And this year more than any, the mentorship of our young participants over the last decade – in the hopes they would become the next generation of leaders – is really paying off! This was particularly evident in the constellation of youth programming that surrounds the CBA’s annual **Father’s Day Bluegrass Festival**.

Fiddle champion, renowned instructor, and band leader **Kimber Ludiker** produced another very successful – and sold-out – **CBA Youth Academy** with 55 participants during the festival, with faculty made up mostly of musicians who graduated from the program themselves. **Helen Foley Garrett** continues to produce a wonderful **Kids on Bluegrass** event with help from KOB graduates – and the KOB graduate performance on the main stage at the Father’s Day Festival on Friday night delighted the

audience. We were able to provide scholarships to a half dozen young attendees to the **Summer Music Camp**.

Young California bluegrass community powerhouse (and amazing fiddler) **Tessa Schwartz** again led the team of young musicians who run our formal **Youth Jams** during the festival.

Long-time CBA members and volunteers **Doc and Ruth Duterte** stepped in for **Kathleen Rushing** and produced excellent youth events – with support from roughly a dozen volunteers from PG&E – including **FunGrass**, a program during the CBA Summer Music Camp immediately prior to the festival for children or siblings of campers who are not yet ready for camp classes but are interested in music, arts and crafts; and **KidFest**, a festival-in-a-festival for kids featuring music, crafts, and games during the Father’s Day Festival. We hope they all return in 2024!

And speaking of Summer Music Camp, we provided scholarships to a half-dozen young pickers to join in the fun.

One important aspect of our programming that was sidelined during the pandemic was the annual check-in of instruments on loan from the **Darrell Johnston Kids Instrument Lending Library**. The lending library, stewarded by **Sharon Khadder**, makes sure that its 70-some instruments are inspected annually for any needed repairs or maintenance. We were able to provide that service to our young pickers after the long hiatus.

Our support of young musicians extended beyond Father’s Day Festival, including the youth bands we hired to perform at both the **Spring** and **Fall Campouts**. **Fish in a Bag** and **Salty Sally** played the Fall Campout concert. We also provided stipends to six young musicians chosen to participate in the **IBMA’s Kids on Bluegrass** program in Raleigh, N.C., in September – many of whom performed during the **IBMA awards ceremony** – and we provided financial support to the California youth band **Crying Uncle Bluegrass Band**, who won the **IBMA Momentum Band of the Year**. CBA also sponsored a **Youth Room** and provided space for



2023 Youth Academy. Photo by Alan Bond.



Frank Solivan at 2023 Spring Campout. Photo by Alan Bond.

jamming and for three days hired musicians to lead workshops for kids.

A big loss in 2023 for the bluegrass community at-large and the CBA Youth Program in particular came with the passing in August of CBA Ambassador, CBA Lifetime Member, and Kids on Bluegrass founder **Frank Solivan Sr.** We created the **Frank's Fund** to support our youth programming as part of his legacy. One hundred percent of all tax deductible dollars donated will go to our budgeted programs for KOB in his name.

As we watch the meteoric rise of musicians who participated in our

programs in the past we know we are doing something right. We are so proud of these “kids” who all continue to maintain a relationship with the CBA and who all “give back” when asked.

Your generous donations will continue to be used to support our young generation of musicians and fans. We are thankful to be part of such a giving community.

LEARN MORE
ABOUT OUR YOUTH
PROGRAM HERE →



Getting ready for Youth Academy show. Photo by Alan Bond.

CBA in 2023

**455 PARTICIPANTS
IN OUR YOUTH
PROGRAMS!**

**The CBA Kids Instrument Lending Library
can kickstart a kid's musical journey!**



DONATE

Donate
instruments, or cash
for instruments
All donations are
tax deductible

BORROW

CBA member families
are eligible
Check-in with us once a year
Try different instruments!



Kids on Bluegrass take the stage at Father's Day Festival. Photo by Robin Frenette.



Kids crafts at Fungrass during Father's Day Fest; photo by Robin Frenette.

**Learn more about the CBA Kids
Instrument Lending Library!**





CBA FOSTERS NEW GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

2023 SEES NEW GROWTH IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF BLUEGRASS MUSIC

By Maggie Sokolik, CBA Global Connections Director

The California Bluegrass Association's **Global Connections** program continues to foster global collaborations and cross-cultural exchanges within the bluegrass music community. While in its early stages, we plan to grow this program into a hub for international bluegrass musicians, enthusiasts, and worldwide organizations who share a passion for traditional music. It aims to facilitate connections, share resources, and promote the rich tradition of bluegrass on a global scale. The program has been instrumental in bringing together diverse talents and promoting cultural exchange through music.

One exciting development within the Global Connections program is the addition of **Bluegrass Bangkok**. This expansion represents a growing international network within the program, as Bluegrass Bangkok becomes a partner in promoting bluegrass music in the vibrant and growing bluegrass scene in Thailand. Their inclusion not only broadens the geographical reach of CBA's Global Connections program, but

also introduces a new cultural perspective to the world of bluegrass. We hope this new collaboration opens up opportunities for musicians and fans alike to explore the unique fusion of bluegrass with Thai musical influences.

In 2023 we helped the Italian bluegrass band **Red Wine** publicize their U.S. tour through the *Bluegrass Breakdown* and our social and online presence, spreading the word about one of our favorite bands.

As the Global Connections program continues to grow, our team is actively seeking new friends and partners to enhance its global reach and impact further. The program is hoping to connect like-minded organizations, festivals, and producers or promoters who are passionate about fostering international connections through bluegrass music. By welcoming new partners, the program aims to create a more interconnected and supportive global bluegrass community where musicians and enthusiasts from different corners of the world can

come together, collaborate, and celebrate the rich tapestry of bluegrass music. For example, this year, we were delighted to see tours by California bands **Water Tower** and **Crying Uncle** across Europe – an inspiration to the Global Connection team on how we can get more California bands overseas.

The program is also exploring new ways in which we might foster international collaboration at the **Father's Day Festival** as well as worldwide through visiting musician programs or shared media campaigns.

You can read about our international partners, including several festivals across Europe, here →



Photo, top: Westport Folk and Bluegrass Festival's main old-time session. Photo by Michael Reynolds.



Bluegrass Jam in Thailand. Courtesy of Bluegrass Bangkok.



Spontaneous jam on the streets on Trafaria, Portugal. Photo courtesy of Trafaria Bluegrass.



PENINSULA BLUEGRASS

Presents in Concert



The Kathy Kallick Band
(Album Release Celebration!)

The Gryphon Trio
(Jack Tuttle
Carol McComb
Ed Johnson)



Saturday, February 3, 2024 - 7:00 pm

(Doors open for jamming at 5:30 pm, concert seating at 6:30 pm)

Unitarian Universalist Church Of Palo Alto

505 East Charleston Rd., Palo Alto

Tickets & Information: www.RBA.org

\$25 - general admission

\$22 - music students, under-21, CBA & NCBS members

Sponsored by the Northern California Bluegrass Society



CBA'S REGIONAL ACTIVITIES ROUNDUP

By Ted Kuster, CBA Vice President, Regional Activities

What sets the bluegrass audience apart from the audiences for other kinds of music is that we're more than just an audience – we're part of the show! For bluegrass fans, playing with other bluegrass fans is the core of the experience. The bluegrass public is a uniquely participatory public. Have you ever gone to the ballet and had to dodge avid dance fans doing pirouettes in the parking lot? Taylor Swift fans do know all the words, for sure, but you don't see them picking guitars and trading licks outside the stadium.

If you could somehow count up all the notes that have been played in the bluegrass language since Mr. Monroe's time, we'd bet fewer than 10 percent of them were played on a stage. It's probably even more true for old-time music,

if you think about it. Maybe under 5 percent. The rest of those notes saw the light in someone's kitchen, or at the VFW post, or under some trees at the county park, or in that weekly jam at that dive bar down by the tracks.

What you don't see, if you're not looking for it, is that all that spontaneous picking doesn't happen by accident. There's almost always somebody in the background who invited everyone down to the county park, or talked the bar owner about how CBA can help work with performance rights organizations – or talked them into throwing in a free beer for the jammers – or got the band director to let folks use the school music room for an afternoon. Those are the instigators, the organizers, the manure spreaders. Some of them are so good at it we

ask them to come and volunteer for the CBA. We call them our Regional Directors.

California is a big state, so we split it into 30 regions, each with its own regional director. Region 30 is a special one that supports CBA members who live outside of California, and it's our biggest region! Use the map to figure out who your regional director is, and drop them an email! They know where all the good jams are and which bands are coming through town. Most importantly, they can help you get in touch with other pickers near you.

All in all, these directors help facilitate close to three dozen jams at last count. As CBA Executive Director **Pete Ludé** noted back in our June issue, "CBA exists because of many passionate volunteer

organizers and the institutions they create, like monthly jams, house concerts, retirement home visits and fundraisers, that bring this music – and opportunities to connect and create with it – to their neighborhoods."

Donna Hargis – Region 6 (Los Angeles South). She also supports Regions 10 (Central Los Angeles) and 20 (Orange County).

It's a good time to be a picker-and-grinner in Southern California, Donna says, as a surge of new jams, bands, and venues are springing up all over the region. Numerous long-standing jams continued to ignite the passion of bluegrass enthusiasts in the last year, while new ones popped up as the need for more bluegrass became more obvious!



Project Barley Open Mic. Photo by Robin Frenette.

Every Saturday at 10 a.m. a park in Long Beach becomes a haven for bluegrass aficionados at the renowned **Dog Park Jam**, held at Recreation Park. This gathering is a magnet for both seasoned veterans and eager newcomers – a true celebration of the genre's infectious energy and camaraderie. Meanwhile, in Fountain Valley, a time-honored tradition unfolds at **Mile Square Park** with another Saturday jam at 10 in the morning, offering a warm and inviting atmosphere that embraces first-time attendees with open arms.

But the excitement doesn't stop there. On the first Sunday of every month, **El Camino College** becomes the home of another well-attended jam that has spun off another jam on additional Sundays. And if that's not enough, brace yourself for the first Tuesday of each month, when **Project Barley Brewing** sets the stage ablaze with their dynamic combination of jamming and open mic performances, creating an awesome experience where new folks can get exposed to our genre.

Mark Shutts and Jeff Fleck, visionary hosts who have become synonymous with bluegrass excellence in Southern California, continue to make Southern California a desirable destination for professional bands to perform. Mark hosted several jams at **Shutts Fabricators** in Huntington Beach during 2023, and Jeff has hosted many at **Crazy J Ranch** in Topanga. Both have exciting lineups already for 2024. I've already marked my calendar for shows from January to July, with more in the works. With so many events to choose from, pickers and gridders are now faced with the challenge of selecting which extraordinary events to attend.

As new jams and shows pop up, it's hard to keep track of all the opportunities, so be sure to use the CBA calendar and social media to be kept informed of all this excitement!

We asked other regional directors

what they liked most about doing this important work in 2023, and here's what they said.

Jonathan Bluemel – Region 1 (Sierra), the historic home of the **Father's Day Bluegrass Festival**. He's a veteran jam organizer who currently hosts the **Open Mic & Jam** night at the **Wild Eye Pub** in Grass Valley.

"The best part of being a regional director is that when you meet new people, letting them know you are a regional director is a great way to break the ice. You can walk right up to them and introduce yourself as the "area rep" and they instantly want to talk to you about something. It also gives you the opportunity to do something for them and that will make you instant friends. And you can get your foot in the door at venues that may not want to talk to just anybody. It gives you instant street cred!"

Dave Boggs – Region 24 (Sacramento). He's an example of how you don't have to be a picker yourself to do a great job connecting pickers and fans.

"The best part of being a regional director is talking to people about the California Bluegrass Association, the Father's Day Bluegrass Festival, **Summer Music Camp**, and the other ways that the CBA supports bluegrass, old-time, and gospel music. Whether I'm staffing an information table at an event or just talking music, I really enjoy letting people know that the CBA is there for them."

Aaron Zorndorf – Region 21 (the San Mateo peninsula). He organizes a regular invitational jam at a local disability center and picks actively all over the San Francisco Bay Area.

"I've enjoyed the many opportunities to meet and jam with local musicians at a variety of venues. I am a regular at the **Lucky Horseshoe** jam every Sunday afternoon, and at local San Francisco jams at the **Hotel Utah** and



Aaron Zorndorf and Danny "Hootenanny" Clark have a tune. Photo by Robin Frenette.

Amado's. We are fortunate to live in an area with so many options for playing and listening to bluegrass and acoustic music in general, not to mention the high level of musicians residing in the Bay Area."

Karana Hattersley-Drayton – Region 5 (Central San Joaquin). She runs jams and, during the nice weather months, manages the popular **Bluegrass in the Park** concert series in Clovis.

"I've especially enjoyed organizing the CBA-sponsored jams for the Central San Joaquin Valley on the 2nd Sunday of the month at the Clovis Police Headquarters. Although no music police are present (!) we encourage bluegrass and old-time tunes and songs, as we have numerous other jams for country, honky-tonk and Celtic music weekly or monthly in this area."

Bruce Sadowick – Region 17 (Marin) and is known for hosting the **Marin Bluegrass Sessions** jams, where you can pick with the support of an experienced backup band.

"As a regional director, I get to help expand the enjoyment and awareness of bluegrass music, both with membership and the public. Most rewarding for me has been creating 'performance jam' scenarios in public venues, where players wanting to gain experience can step up to the mic in a welcoming environment, with the support of more veteran players."

Danny "Hootenanny" Clark – Region 18 (Silicon Valley). A consummate showman, Danny helps organize pickers all over the South Bay, and he has a day job running events for a San Jose suburb.

"Being a CBA regional director is a great way to meet like minded pickers and gridders all while simultaneously helping a wonderful nonprofit. Everyone is so kind and happy to help. Be like me and help spread the good word and music of CBA. You'll be glad you did!"

Thanks to Donna Hargis for significant contributions to this report.



Mark Shutts hosts Becky Buller and Ned Luberecki. Photo by Robin Frenette.

Wernick Method Bluegrass Jamming Camp

TAUGHT BY Mike & Gail Thomas

Sat & Sun, Feb 3-4
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All levels welcome!



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"Mike and Gail were incredibly experienced and kind."
"It turned out to be a great learning experience and fun!"

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BEAR FUND

CBA LAUNCHES THE BEAR FUND TO SUPPORT MUSICIANS IN NEED

By The Bluegrass Breakdown

We all know someone in the professional bluegrass music world impacted by hardship brought on through injury or illness. In 2023, we launched the Bluegrass Entertainer Artist Relief Fund, thanks to a generous donation from a CBA member. The **BEAR Fund** provides short-term emergency financial assistance to qualified artists and music professionals – audio engineers, tour managers, publicists, etc. – whose immediate

needs are the result of an unforeseen, catastrophic illness or incident, and who lack the resources to meet that situation. After establishing the legal structure and recruiting a program committee, the BEAR Fund got fully up and running; and we soon found a friend in our community that could use some help.

Mike Barnett is one of the most esteemed fiddle players of his generation. A bluegrass boy since his teens, Mike is beloved by many around the country. He's worked with some of the best in our bluegrass world, including Ricky Skaggs, The Deadly Gentlemen, and Jesse McReynolds, and was nominated for a Grammy in 2018 for his solo project, *Portrait in Fiddles*. But in July 2020, Mike suffered a cerebral hemorrhage. Suddenly, he couldn't play the fiddle, or much else, other than focus on recovering his health. Mike's wife, Annalise Ohse, has offered her unwavering support, and approached the BEAR Fund to detail his progress: "We recently found two promising new therapists. Mike reported that after the first two months in this therapy, they've seen big improvement.

He is walking more smoothly, his ankle is starting to wake up, and bit by bit he is re-teaching his arm how to function. He sees his physical therapist twice a week and his occupational therapist three times a week," she explained.

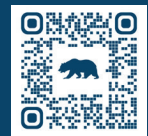
Of course, this sort of therapy is very expensive. The BEAR Fund committee reviewed the situation and issued our first grant to Mike Barnett in September. Annalise responded: "Just wanted to say THANK YOU!! Mike was in disbelief to receive such a generous sum. We are so grateful. He is working so hard and I truly believe we will see some miraculous progress in the coming years."

CBA is proud to be able to provide a helping hand to members of our bluegrass and old-time community that need this kind of support. You can help, too, by making a fully tax-deductible donation to the CBA BEAR Fund. And if you know a musician or other professional in the music industry in need of some support, please have them contact CBA at BEAR@CaliforniaBluegrass.net.



Helping support musicians through injury or illness

Give to the BEAR Fund



Visit californiabluegrass.org/bear-fund for details or scan code above.



Fiddler Mike Barnett is one of the BEAR Funds' first recipients. Photo courtesy Annalise Ohse.



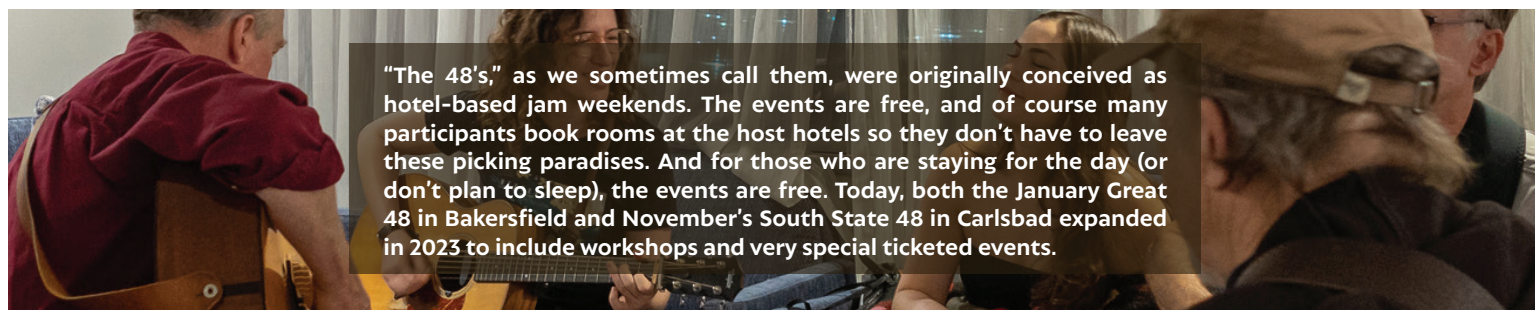
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"Volume Five has a strong contemporary bluegrass groove, and the vocals and instrumentals are top-notch." California Bluegrass Association



CBA'S JAMMING WEEKENDS BUILD STEAM

By Jeffrey Russinsky, Great 48 Director; and Donna Hargis, South State 48 Director



GREAT 48 IN BAKERSFIELD

Bakersfield's Great 48 is where CBA's year gets started. Jan. 5-8, 2023, marked the return of Great 48 as we have come to know it. Though we had Great 48 in 2022, headlines heralding a Christmas covid surge hurt attendance with over half the expected attendees canceling shortly before the event.

Not the case in '23. Although the "atmospheric rivers" raging through Northern and Central California did cause some last-minute cancellations because of the heavy rains that came with them, we still had a pretty full house.

2023 also marked the beginning of CBA's partnership with **Guitar Masters** – an allied arts organization dedicated to supporting performances from "the

best of the best guitarists from around the globe" – enabling us to bring major artists to Great 48. We had a full house of more than 400 attendees at the iconic **Buck Owens' Crystal Palace** for a special ticketed concert with the legendary **Jerry Douglas**. This partnership with Guitar Masters is continuing in 2024.

Other elements added to Great 48 in 2023 included more **beginner-friendly slow jams** and **dedicated gospel jams** with the hope that themed jams would be more welcoming to people who are new to jamming or who might not be comfortable jumping into an ongoing open jam. Our post-event survey showed these were a success; you'll see more of that at 2024 Great 48.

THE GREAT 58?

Our trivia master Bert Daniel pioneered the Great 58 by adding 10 hours of jamming to and from Great 48 on the Amtrak! Read all about it here →



The Honey Buckets at Great 48. Photo by David Cupp.

SOUTH STATE 48

At just three years old, **South State 48** is the newest event put on by the California Bluegrass Association. This hotel jamming event is held during the first weekend in November, and it has become so popular that the biggest complaint is the fact that rooms sell out so quickly. In 2023, the entire room block of 135 rooms sold out in a matter of hours!

Some have suggested locating the event at a bigger hotel, but those that have attended the event understand that the layout and location of the **Carlsbad-by-the-Sea** is what makes it so special. Guests can park their car on Thursday or Friday and not have to leave, due to all the close by amenities and food choices nearby. Those wishing to venture out can visit the beach, the **Museum of Music Making, Carlsbad Village**, or shop at the outlet stores across the street. But of course, many don't leave because they don't want to miss out on any of the jamming! It is the outdoor space that makes SS48 so unique and special. Being able to hang out in the grassy courtyard definitely sets this event apart from its role model, the Great 48 in January, where the time of year definitely makes indoor jamming a better option.

The intent of creating new bluegrass events is to provide a place for pickers to meet and jam, of course, but we also hope to expose people to bluegrass who haven't had the opportunity to discover our wonderful music. The **Windmill Foodhall** provides a great opportunity to do just that, as there are always curious locals coming to check out the music, or those that just happen to eat or drink at the venue, and serendipitously discover a love of bluegrass. The fact that this has been another great free CBA event has helped us expose our genre to new fans.

South State 48 operates on a very small budget, but in 2023 enjoyed the support of wonderful sponsors, including **Banjo Ben, Ear Trumpet, New Wine**

Sound Studio, Guitar Empire, and Shubb Capos. These sponsors helped us hire two amazing bands, **Honey Buckets** and **Rose Valley Thorns**, and to print a lovely program guide.

A grant from the **Mockingbird Foundation**, a nonprofit made up of Phish fans that aims to broaden access and educational opportunities for young people in music and the musical arts, was especially useful in achieving our goal of widening the demographic to include more diversity and youth. We were able to bring two bands of young musicians – **Fair Black Rose** and **Wild Blue Yonder** – who both put on fantastic shows and then picked all night in the courtyard.

We also added a few new features to our programming, such as an **instrument petting zoo**, a **professional emcee**, and an additional band, **Bluegrass Holiday**, who performed at a workshop entitled "What Makes It Bluegrass?" We hope to be able to continue this push towards educating the public about our beloved genre, in addition to providing a hot spot for jammers. And of course any effort to grow bluegrass requires a concerted effort to attract young people to our genre. We hope to see more faces next year, of all ages and skill levels, sharing in our beloved traditional music while pushing it to new levels.



Open Jam Tent. Photo by David Cupp.



Kamp Konfusion at the Spring Campout. Photo by Robin Frenette.



Young Fiddlers at the Spring Campout. Photo by Alan Bond.

CBA'S 2023 CAMPOUTS

By Deb Livermore, CBA Campouts Director

CBA's 2023 Spring and Fall Campouts returned to the historic **Lodi Grape Festival Grounds**, giving our community a wonderful venue to camp and enjoy playing music together – and pick up some hot new musical licks, trade songs, and sample a whole lot of good old fashioned campground cooking. Newcomers find all levels of picking in the camps, and folks who just want to come out for the daytime hours are welcome for free. Campers find RV and dry camping accommodations at very reasonable prices, and play music throughout the night. All proceeds from the event benefit the **CBA's Youth Program**, and in 2023 generated \$3,750 in profit from camping fees.

While both Campouts are held at the same festival grounds, each event has a slightly different flavor.

For the **Spring Campout**, we partner with the **California State Old-Time Fiddle Association**,

who conducts their **Annual Open Fiddle and Picking Contest** featuring more than a dozen contest categories. The oldest contestant in 2023 was 93-year-old fiddler **Willie Randel**; the youngest was 7-year-old fiddler **Rowan O'Neil**.

In 2023, our Youth Program proceeds got an extra \$172 bump in the spring from the sales of vintage CDs collected by the late **Dorothy and Frank Prozega**, donated by their family for the cause.

Our **Fall Campout** features a silent auction that this year raised an additional \$600, and a youth concert that this year featured two excellent youth bands. Tickets for the youth concert sold for \$15, and brought in another \$900 to support our young pickers.

The fall event also serves as an opportunity for CBA leadership to hold the association's annual

members' meeting, and we formally announce the results of our annual board elections.

In recent years we have also announced the winners of the **CBA Fundraiser Sweepstakes** at the Fall Campout, with great guitar, banjo, and fiddle prizes from generous sponsors. This year the fundraiser generated nearly \$10,000 to support CBA's portfolio of programming, and make for some very happy pickers winning prizes from **Santa Cruz Guitar Company**, **Deering Banjo**, **The Fiddle Mercantile**, **Ear Trumpet Labs**, **Peghead Nation**, and **D'Addario Strings**.

The CBA campout experience is full of great music, great food, and great community. If you haven't joined us for one yet, make plans for 2024 – April 16–21 and October 14–20 in Lodi!

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Debbie Wendt, CBA Vice President, Membership

While camping near Pescadero and playing a few tunes around the campfire with my husband, our neighbors included a 9-year-old girl who had participated in **Kids on Bluegrass**. I lent her my fiddle and we jumped right into "Bury Me Beneath the Willow." Another day, while in the waiting room of my doctor's office, I was wearing a CBA sweatshirt that caught the attention of a long standing CBA member and volunteer – and a lively conversation ensued. Last summer, while performing at a Livermore winery, an audience member turned out to be someone I had shared a picnic table with during a CBA Music Camp dinner hour. These are all great examples of the wonderful thread that has been woven by bluegrassers in California and beyond. Sharing our love of listening to and playing bluegrass music is such a joy, especially when you can share it through a chance encounter. Think of all the wonderful connections we as members have made and continue to make!



Debbie Wendt. Photo by Robin Frenette.

It does take a little work to keep this good thing going – maintaining your membership gives the CBA the support in funds and volunteer power to be able to keep growing.

SO WHAT'S NEW?

We've added more than 300 members this year to bring our total current membership to around 2,500 and climbing as we continue to build our ranks post-pandemic.

It's been 17 years since the CBA has raised its membership rates and, like everyone else, the CBA has experienced operational cost increases with the passage of time and inflation. CBA convened an ad hoc committee last summer and – after comparing CBA membership fees to similar organizations and carefully weighing many other considerations – we came up with a new fee structure effective in January 2024, shown in the chart, below:

MEMBERSHIP	2024 FEE	DISCOUNT
Individual		
1 year	\$30	
3 years	\$80	Save \$10
5 years	\$130	Save \$20
Family		
1 year	\$40	
3 years	\$105	Save \$15
5 years	\$175	Save \$25

NEW RATE CATEGORY: \$25 UNTIL 25!

An exciting new feature in the fee structure for 2024 is the **\$25 until age 25** category. We want to encourage our youth members to stay connected to our community, so the CBA is offering a special category for anyone between the ages of 18 and 24. Their membership cost will be a one-time fee of \$25 that will not expire until they reach the age of 25, at which point they will be reminded to renew at the regular rate. That amounts to an annual fee of less than \$4/year if you join at age 18, \$5/year if you join at age 20, and so on. What a deal!

Luckily for us, the CBA continues to add new benefits to the basic list that includes our award-winning newsletter, the **Kids Instrument Lending Library**, and significant event discounts. Check the CBA membership page on the web for the latest membership benefits. Be sure to reach out to me with any questions regarding your membership and thank you for your continued support!

membership@californiabluegrass.org

LEARN MORE AND BECOME
A CBA MEMBER HERE →



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Thanks to all our donors during our last fiscal year. Your contributions help keep CBA's Youth Program, BEAR Fund and other CBA initiatives alive. Every donation helps, small or large, and your tax-deductible contribution goes toward our important programs bringing bluegrass and old-time music to all. Please consider joining this list by making a donation today!

Jacob Adams	Kristina Dunne	Kathryn Jordan	Nancy Rimberg
Mervyn Adrian	Gary Dunny	Joel Keebler	Richard Rinehart
Cy Airo	Darin Durham	Reggie Kenner	Jan Rowan
Thalia Alvarez	Katherine Elliott	Kyla Kent	Edward Rudzinski
Jeane Avilla	George Ellis	Steve Kreidler	Paul Sato
Brian Ballard	Sally Esser	Mary Kus	Austin Scelzo
Robert Beggs	Michele Flannery	Ted Kuster	Paul Schiminger
Cort Benningfield	Judith Forrest	Bruce Lacey	Rodger Schmitt
Brian Bettini	Michele Fox	Gary Lampson	Michelle Seary
Judy Bittinger	Chandra Frieze	David Lange	Lesley Segedy
Philip Boerner	John Frizzell	Joanne Ledesma	Frank Silver
Mike Bosworth	Elizabeth Gala	Dan Littlefield	Selina Slagle
Darby Brandli	Dante Gil-Marin	Janet Lockard	Bethany Sorkey
Samuel Britton	Kate Morey Gladman	Robert Loewenthal	Jason Strid
David Brown	Clare O'Grady	James Lyons	Susan Thoen
Donald L. (Buzz) Brown	Stewart Graham	Bob Mannix	Peter Thompson
Mona Broyles	Laurie Greenberg	Lucy Martin	John Treacy
Betty Bugaj	Cheryl Gutierrez	John McElhiney	Ryan Triolo
Buck Busfield	Jee-Hee Haar Farris	Ed Merrell	Rob Turner
Dave Cannon	John D. Hall	Jeff Miner	Maureen Tuttle Roddy
Scott Chandler	Donna Hargis	Joe Morgan	Wendy Tyner
Bill Cherry	Sheila Harman	Jack Murphy	Frank Uhl
Kristi Cirtwill	Kim Hastings	Maria Nadauld	Kathryn Webb
Tim Condon	Richard Haworth	Thomas Nelson	Alissa Whelan
John Crowe	Lee Hayashida	Joe Osborn	Ken White
Melissa D'Lando	Gregory Horton	Bob Otten	Monika White
Larry Dahm	Robyn Hunt	Peter Overfield	Barbie Wong
Oriane Delfosse	Sam Ingham	Rodd Perry	Peggy Yost
Jason Diaz	Mike Irwin	Rita Quade	Rosemary Yull
Jeanne & Paul Doty	Levie Isaacks	William Rawson	Cara Zemanek
Shauna Douglas	Paul Johnson	Robert Reger	
	Shirmaine Jones	Emily Riddell	



CaliforniaBluegrass.org/support

OLD TIME ACTIVITIES

By Karen Celia Heil, CBA Old-Time Activities Director

The California old-time community boasted a marked increase in participation and positive presence within the CBA in 2023, and 2024 promises an even bigger Old Time presence! Yours truly started the year off with a January trip to the **Anchorage Folk Festival** with the band **The Bucking Mules**. No mules were harmed, but there was the occasional moose wandering the streets amidst the cold ice and snow – a chilly contrast to here in California, where it's coyotes and mountain lions amidst the roses, the poppies, the violets, the daisies ...

Meanwhile, through our thankfully rainy winter and spring, we had big plans afoot for our **CBA Summer Music Camp**, the subsequent **Father's Day Festival** itself, **square dances**, and the **Golden Old-Time Campout**. The old-time component was going to be exciting!

Stellar old-time musicians staffed our **Summer Music Camp** alongside our bluegrass stars, intermingling in the classes, jams, and on and off the stages. Changes to the Summer Music Camp scheduling allowed for more energized classes, better access to the excellent electives, and fiery old-time jams with a party atmosphere. At the Father's Day fest, our old-time main-stage performers gave magical and powerful performances, and took the lead in representing the diversity and youth in roots music today – including people of color and folks from the LGBTQ+ community. And might I add that our youth can be seen and heard at our festivals and events embracing and lending

their excitement to old-time as well as bluegrass music. It's no surprise with the amazing talent that the CBA is bringing in for inspiration, including bands lead by **Clinton Davis**, **Jake Blount** as well as the duo of **Tatiana Hargreaves** and **Allison de Groot**.

Attendance surged yet again at the camp and festival square dances, and the music and calling were rocking. Saturday's (now, not-so) **Secret Midnight Square Dance** was truly a magical time. We are lucky to have fine dance callers hailing from the Bay including **Robin Fischer** and **Mike Lewinski**. The fun is so infectious that we are proud to announce a **square dance calling class track** at our 2024 Summer Music Camp. Let Summer Music Camp help you unleash your inner square dance caller self!

Jamming and playing in public spaces is back on the rise in the parks, venues, and cafes. Downtown San Francisco's **Salesforce Park**, in partnership with the CBA, held performances and an outdoor public square dance while summer lasted. The now-CBA-sponsored **Feral Friday San Francisco Square Dance** has hereby been revived. From its humble beginnings in the back room of a 24th Street bookstore, still held monthly, still in the Mission District, but now being held at the curiously compelling and accommodating **Polish Club** hall. It's bigger, it's better, and if you are coming to San Francisco, come!

On a sad but reverent note, the CBA and greater



Jamming at Golden OT Campout. Photo by Alan Bond.

old-time music community would like to honor one of its champions, **Carl Pagter**, who passed this year. Our music was near and dear to Carl's heart, and he did so much with and for us. We miss him!

This report would not be complete without relating to all the success of our **Golden Old-Time Campout**, an event founded by Carl Pagter. The campout, a jamming-focused event (nope ... no concerts, no workshops), has found a lovely home at **Camp Russian River** within easy walking distance of downtown Guerneville and all its amenities. Redwood trees, grassy meadows and brushy riverbanks made for a fun and relaxing setting where old-time musicians, friends old and newly-made, mingled and played long into the night. We cannot wait until next year's Campout, August 22-25, 2024!

That next year is sneakily upon us. Look for more fun and meaningful old-time music community participation with CBA in 2024.



Darby Brandli and Karen Celia Heil. Photo by Robin Frenette.



Square dance at Summer Camp. Photo by Robin Frenette.

Mama Said String Band

"It's rare these days to find a syndicate so musically bizarre yet dreamy and whimsical. All four members of MSSB are ingenious freaks and prodigies in their own right. Every alluring lyric and thought-filled melody came straight from inventiveness within the group."

Jonathan Goodwin (Producer)

New
Album



CBA'S MUSIC CAMPS

EVENT PORTFOLIO, AND COMMUNITY, EXPANDS IN '23: JULIAN FAMILY FIDDLE CAMP AND CBA SUMMER MUSIC CAMP ENJOY CONTINUED SUCCESS

By The Bluegrass Breakdown

CBA's **Summer Music Camp** returned to Grass Valley, and CBA took on the continued stewardship of the beloved **Julian Family Fiddle Camp** at the **Whispering Winds Camp and Conference Center** just outside the town of Julian – following in the footsteps of the inimitable **Avery Ellisman**, who founded the camp a decade ago.

Avery's leadership left big shoes for CBA to fill. Instructors and participants alike tell us the Julian camp has the best accommodations, food, and community. Luckily for us, we have **Adam Roszkiewicz** quite literally in our camp. Adam is a celebrated instructor and Grammy-nominated multi-instrumentalist and composer, and has been expertly directing the CBA's Summer Music Camp since 2022. He brings his wide-range of musical, social, and administrative skills to Julian, taking the reins from Avery as the JFFC director in 2023.

This was the camp's second year after the pandemic, and turnout was pleasantly strong. Class sizes averaged between 6-8 per instructor.

Local bluegrass fans turned out in numbers for concerts by ensembles of campers and instructors on both Friday and Saturday nights. "Saturday night's turnout was well over the top – the word is out about the caliber of the concerts, that's for sure," said Avery, whose welcomed continued involvement with the camp contributed to the consistency and community vibe of the camp.

With world-class instructors and facilities, and the incredible support of the camper community, as well as the continued support of the Julian community, we look forward to the Julian Family Fiddle Camp's long future with CBA!

The 2023 Summer Music Camp took place just before the **Father's Day Festival** welcomed 50 more campers from the previous year. This year's instructors offered 17 intensive classes, 42 workshops (10 more than 2023, thanks to camper feedback), and 2 hosted jams – and all were outstanding. "In addition to all being excellent teachers, the relaxed and safe environment they helped create was exactly in line with the camp's vision for a successful and enjoyable learning environment," Adam reported to the CBA board following the event.

Of course these camps rely on the contribution of so many wonderful volunteers in just about every aspect of camp – without them a production like the Summer Music Camp, with so many moving parts and unique challenges, would not be possible. This year's camper check-in went even smoother than last year's, and received positive feedback from campers. Camp setup was faster – and cooler, as it wasn't 90 degrees in the shade like last year! This year, volunteers with compatible skill sets served as unofficial leads on various teams – school administrators and teachers handled camper intake, and volunteers with experience working outdoors with experience in logistical decision-making handled set up – freeing up Adam to focus on other tasks. Additionally, we added two volunteer positions to help with food service during lunch and dinner, which helped move people through the lines faster.

Overall, the camper feedback from both camps was shining. Also of note, both camps operated well within budget, and yielded revenues for CBA to be used to support programming on behalf of the CBA community.



Mary Jane Cupp at JFFC. Photo by Robin Frenette.



Julian Flash Jam. Photo by Robin Frenette.

CBA in 2023

**PROVIDED 390 HOURS
OF INSTRUCTIONAL
CLASSES AND
WORKSHOPS!**



Jake Blount's fiddle class at CBA Summer Camp. Photo by Alan Bond.



Brandon Godman, Reeb Willms, and Caleb Klauder. Photo by John Woodworth.



Jake Blount Band, with Tatiana Hargreaves, puts inclusion center-stage.
Photo by Robin Frenette.



Bluegrass Pride table at Father's Day Festival. Photo by Robin Frenette.

BLUEGRASS INCLUDES EVERYONE

By Karen Celia Heil, CBA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Chair; and Jason Dilg, Bluegrass Breakdown Managing Editor

The CBA celebrates the diverse cultural origins of bluegrass and old-time music traditions and fosters a community that welcomes and encourages all forms of participation and involvement by people of all backgrounds. In our view, this isn't a political or policy issue – it's simply about music. Everyone should be able to enjoy bluegrass and old-time music as much as we do, and everyone should be warmly welcomed into our community to jam, listen and perform. We believe diversity and a welcoming environment are essential to the well-being and continued growth of these traditional forms of music in California and beyond – our collective task is for this to be our standard.

We actively work to further open the doors of our musical community and make everyone feel welcome, regardless of their age, hometown, cultural background, spiritual beliefs, or who they like to hang

out with. We educate ourselves and proactively work on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the short and long term.

This year, for the first time in our organization's history, CBA dedicated an entire issue of the *Bluegrass Breakdown* to Black musicians and instrument makers in celebration of **Black History Month**. We specifically highlighted the work of the **Black Opry**, the **Black Banjo Reclamation Project**, and the **Black Banjo and Fiddle Fellowship** in Oakland – as well as spotlighting the historic contribution of many Black musicians to our music. The contributions from Black and Native American cultures to bluegrass and old-time music and dance cannot be overstated. We acknowledge the forces that have historically denied these contributions and have worked to sever their living connections to this music. As we move forward, the CBA will continue to engage,

inform, and reach out, striving to overcome these forces and create the inclusive environment we need to thrive as an organization.

Our **"Women in Bluegrass"** March 2023 issue focused on women in bluegrass and their leadership in diversifying our genre. CBA also continued its support of the **Bluegrass Pride** program, sponsoring the June **Pre-Pride Parade Picking Party in the Park – An Urban Bluegrass and Roots Festival** that attracted a wide range of people to San Francisco's **Salesforce Park** who all shared one thing: They loved the bluegrass picking and tight vocal harmonies of some of San Francisco's best bands. We made many new fans that day. The **Father's Day Festival's** lineup also reflected our diverse community, with band members from various ethnic backgrounds and the LGBTQ+ community.

We also endeavor to involve more youth from diverse backgrounds. We had one such opportunity when CBA used our grant funding from the **Mockingbird Foundation** to bring **Fair Black Rose** to California for our **South State 48** weekend. This is a talented group of teenagers from Arizona nurtured by **Anni Beach's** amazing **Jam Pak** program.

Finally, at the end of 2023, we confirmed the sensational Korean bluegrass band **Country Gongbang** for the 2024 Father's Day Festival. While bluegrass may have started in America, it's now spread worldwide, and CBA is here to support bluegrass musicians from all cultural backgrounds.

We will continue to advance these initiatives under the leadership of our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee, reorganized in 2023 with **Karen Celia Heil** as chairperson.



Fair Black Rose jams at South State 48. Photo by David Cupp.

Learn how to sing stacked harmonies confidently,
explore the music theory of why harmony works!

Harmony Playground



Sebastopol Community
Cultural Center
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\$180 (\$30 per class)
michaelamaelelessons@gmail.com
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March 1,2,3 2024 Lake Havasu City AZ

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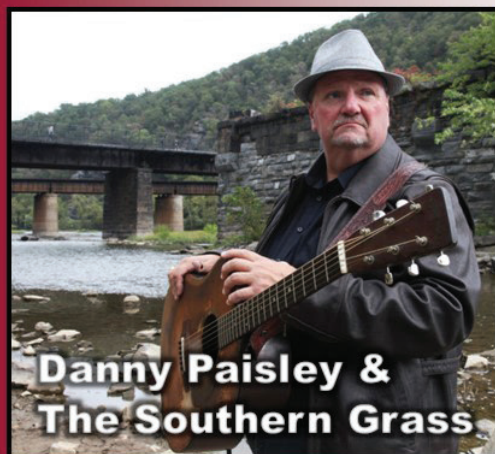
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**Danny Paisley &
The Southern Grass**



**Becky
Buller
Band**



**Kenny
Ray
Horton**



**EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY**

ETSU Bluegrass Band



Valerie Smith Band



**Kevin
Prater
Band**



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Little Roy and Lizzy Show

**Chair Policy* Set Up Anytime
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**Lorraine Jordan &
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Sound By Paul Knight

Early Camping Opens Monday Feb 26 * Set Up Your Own Chairs In Audience Area Beginning Tues 12noon * Food, Beverage, Craft Vendors
* Workshops * Thurs Night Movie * Jamming * Walking Trails * Music Daily 10am * **NO SMOKING IN CONCERT AREA** * **NO OUT-SIDE ALCOHOL/COOLERS ALLOWED IN AUDIENCE/VENDOR AREA, FRIENDLY PETS WELCOME in PET Concert Area**
Camping with Weekend Ticket Only, (No Camping with a Day Pass) WALK IN GATE WILL CLOSE AT MIDNIGHT
In Dry Camping Area, Quite Generators are welcome between 7am-10pm (For Safety Concerns **must** have a exhaust stack if attached to RV)
Note: RV GATE OPENS at 9am CLOSES at 8pm, everyday. (all campers must be park by then, or wait till next morning at gate lot)
Thursday Movie and Visiting is for weekend tickets holders only

Day Tickets are for Sale in Advance (credit card) or at the Gate (cash or check)
Fri \$25, Sat \$30, Sun \$25 (includes tax) Children 13-17 1/2 off. Under 12 Free
For more info or to buy tickets, PLEASE GO TO THE WEBSITE! (Below)
Contact Danny Stewart at mandolindan2005@yahoo.com 570-721-2760

Tickets On Sale at:
www.BluegrassOnTheBeach.com
www.LakeHavasuBluegrass.com

www.BluegrassOnTheBeach.com

PICKING IN PRISON: BLUEGRASS BRIDGE

By Nate Schwartz, Bluegrass Bridge Project Director

The California Bluegrass Association's **Bluegrass Bridge** initiative began in the summer of 2021 as a way to expand on the goal for CBA to reach more potential bluegrass fans. One such community is incarcerated individuals, and CBA was aware of other programs that brought various arts programs to prisons. So why not bluegrass?

To learn more, then Board Chairman **Pete Ludé** contacted nonprofit organizations that have successfully launched projects relating to music in prisons, including **Jail Guitar Doors**, a well-established group providing guitar instruction to incarcerated folks. They provided some good advice on how to get started, including targeting underserved institutions, such as **Avenal State Prison** in Central California.

Just a few weeks later, in July 2021, an amazing act of fate occurred. **Jordan Ross** at Jail Guitar Doors alerted CBA to some news – a Kentucky-based nonprofit passed a request from an inmate in residential block B of Avenal to Jail Guitar Doors, who in turn forwarded it to CBA on the heels of our contact just weeks before.

It was a perfect fit. The inmate was a mandolin player who wanted to share bluegrass music with his fellow inmates but needed help securing instrument donations and recruiting inspirational performers. Thus, CBA's Bluegrass Bridge program was formed. The name reflected the power of music to "bridge" inmates that came

from highly diverse cultural and social-economic backgrounds within their cell block, as well as the bridge of the music community from inside the prison to a world outside, when inmates are released.

Not long afterward, we learned that the same inmate had contacted the **IBMA Foundation**, who was enthusiastic and committed to helping, but needed someone to make it happen. Very quickly, CBA's nascent Bluegrass Bridge project was connected with IBMA, and was off and running.

Since this fateful launch, CBA's Bluegrass Bridge program has sent musicians to host two bluegrass workshops for the inmates of ASP's B yard and has donated three mandolins, two fiddles, a five-string banjo, and sets of two instructional books with each donated instrument – as well as a set of two instructional books for acoustic guitar, as ASP's B Yard has five acoustic guitars and one mandolin already. The funding provided by the IBMA Foundation grant funded the second of these two visits, in which six veteran bluegrass musicians based in Los Angeles – guitarist/vocalist **Matt Michienzie**, fiddler **Julian McClanahan**, banjoist **Mark Cassidy**, bassist/vocalist **Chris Rolontz**, guitarist/vocalist **Greg Cahill**, and mandolinist/vocalist **Nate Schwartz** – spent a couple of hours performing bluegrass songs and discussing key aspects of bluegrass music technique before handing out the six donated instruments.

The goal of this event was to

generate interest in and familiarity with the basics of bluegrass music among the B-yard residents, and to motivate the B-Yard residents to continue honing their bluegrass skills on their own time.

Specifically, the Bluegrass Bridge facilitators aimed to build on discussions of bluegrass history and the evolution of the bluegrass ensemble introduced in the first Bluegrass Bridge workshop in October 2022; demonstrate the roles of each typical bluegrass instrument and vocal parts in an ensemble setting by explaining solos, kickoffs, rhythm, instrumental backup, and harmony singing; exemplify the types of collaboration and teamwork inherent to any bluegrass performance context; and provide instruments for the incarcerated individuals so that they can play bluegrass music on their own with as complete an ensemble as possible.

The audience was deeply appreciative and – judging by their thoughtful and specific questions about the repertoire and techniques used in the performance – the workshop likely deepened the audience's interest in and engagement with bluegrass music.

Additionally, while leaving the instruments with inmates gives them more agency to participate, their ability to regularly access these instruments is a privilege afforded at the discretion of the on-site community resource managers responsible for programming for incarcerated populations. These managers have shown that they



are willing to work with CBA to the extent that Bluegrass Bridge workshop facilitators act professionally and diligently in their communications with facility staff. There is clearly an opportunity to form strong, long-lasting relationships and ideally make real differences in the lives of incarcerated individuals and their loved ones.

The Bluegrass Bridge program can serve as a blueprint for other similar programs, within and outside the bluegrass tradition; it is easy to imagine collaboration between bluegrass outreach initiatives and musical initiatives in rock, hip hop, jazz, folk, and so on.

As one of the only programs of its kind in the U.S., the Bluegrass Bridge initiative is collecting valuable data on how to teach bluegrass to underserved populations and how to navigate volunteer coordination in the prison system. The full scope of possibilities for Bluegrass Bridge and similar outreach programs is still unknown, but it is clear that initiatives like Bluegrass Bridge can facilitate deeply positive experiences for program participants, and that bluegrass music is an effective and potent medium for rehabilitative outreach.



CBA members give thanks for bluegrass-inspired art from Avenal inmate. Photo by Robin Frenette.



STEWARDED COMMUNITY RESOURCES

CBA'S 2023 FINANCIAL REPORT

By Phoebe Leigh-Suelflow, CBA Treasurer

It's been an exciting year for CBA finances. We pulled back during the pandemic, and came back in 2022. In 2023 we roared ahead. This year we tried some new things and we took some risks; and because of that, we're stronger than ever before. Here's what we've been doing:

Our past treasurer, **Val Cornejo**, retired this year, after over 10 years of being a key contributor to CBA's success. Val left very big shoes to fill, but we searched for and found an accounting firm that specializes in nonprofits. We hired **Shining Star Consultants**, and they now pay the bills and keep track of the finances, with our oversight. They have also helped us ensure that our books are compliant with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. These are the default standards and procedures that the tax authorities require us to follow to ensure we report consistent financial information. The Shining Star team has also initiated electronic payment systems and fine-tuned our payment processing platforms for optimal efficiency and security.

As part of this change, we reorganized our chart of accounts and updated our spending categories so that we can track our revenues and expenses more efficiently. It has been a big job, but we now have the tools to evaluate each of our programs, to determine whether

they are financially viable, and help ensure that we are on budget. Our team of CBA event directors will now get timely information on finances and good data to help forecast income and costs.

Our finance committee has been busy, too. Under the leadership of **Theresa Gooding**, the committee is looking at other financial best practices and setting up new internal financial procedures. First we created a new form for reimbursements, which we now use. Another big job was putting together the budget for the 2024 fiscal year, and aligning it with our new chart of accounts. It's in place today and we're now tracking revenues and expenses to help us budget.

Our financial numbers are stronger than ever. Following the pandemic shutdown, we saw a pent-up demand for events, jams, camps, concerts, and festivals – and the CBA was there to answer the call! We added ticketed concerts at the **Great 48** and the **South State 48**. There was also the **Carl Pagter Memorial** event; and **Otter Opry** has taken off. We acquired the **Julian Family Fiddle Camp** and oversaw its operations for the first time in 2023. We purchased a stage that can be moved and used for concerts. CBA's signs and booths have been appearing at festivals, jams, and concerts. This energy has increased the public's awareness of the CBA and of

how we are an important part of the bluegrass community. This has helped our bottom line in terms of new members and revenues.

This year our grants and contributions have been very strong. Our balance sheet now shows the restricted funds that we set up for various specific purposes, including the **Youth Fund**, the **BEAR Fund**, the **Heritage Fund** and the **Leong Family Fund**. These grants have allowed us to do more in the community – from helping musicians in need, to building children's programs, and conducting programming benefiting the incarcerated population at the **Avenal State Prison**.

We are an organization driven by volunteers, but as our events and outreach expanded and have grown more complex, we have started outsourcing some tasks to professionals with specific skills and the time to handle them, with CBA oversight. We have hired **Pete Ludé** as our executive director. He will continue to handle the day-to-day business of the organization, as well as plan our direction. In addition to outsourcing our accounting, we hired a firm to manage the **2023 Father's Day Festival**. They will continue this role in 2024. We've continued expanding the *Bluegrass Breakdown* with our professional editorial team and resumed selling advertising space after pausing for the pandemic. We have hired others who

are skilled at social media, website operations, and outside publicity. At the Father's Day Festival we made the decision to hire a firm to handle necessary first-aid services. Increased ticket sales at events and by grants have helped offset these added costs.

Looking ahead, we plan to increase our fundraising and grant writing, and we are looking at planned giving. We're currently evaluating our operations to determine new ways to expand in the future. There will also be more of an emphasis on finding advertisers and sponsors for events to help defray costs. We will continue to provide greater value to our members and communities by adding concerts, workshops, outreach and other things to our programs – to continue our charter "to promote and preserve bluegrass, old-time and gospel music."



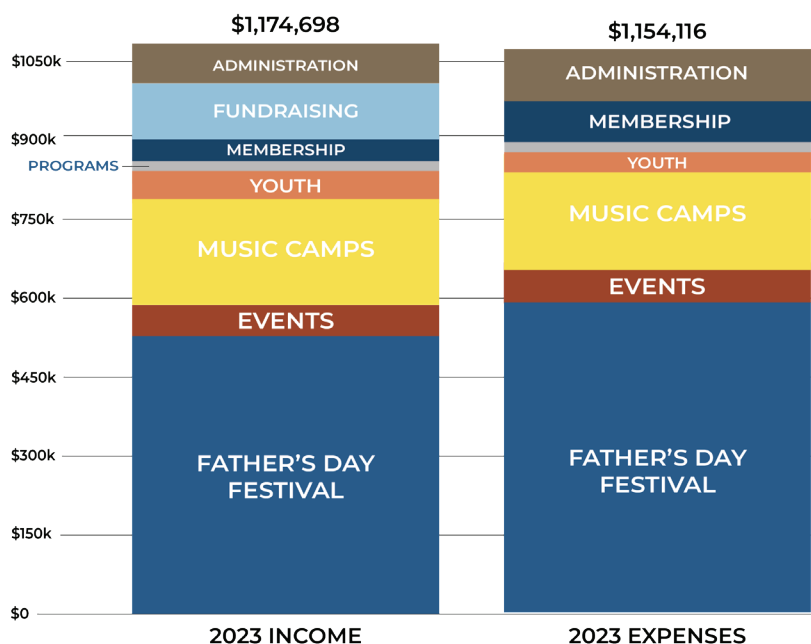
Phoebe Leigh-Suelflow

CBA 2023 FINANCE BY THE NUMBERS

Cash position as of September 30, 2023

	RESTRICTED FUNDS	UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	TOTAL
Wells Fargo Accounts	\$26,519	\$119,096	\$145,616
Youth Fund	\$43,248	\$0	\$43,248
Investment Accounts	\$70,760	\$420,724	\$491,484
Paypal	\$0	\$440	\$440
TOTAL	\$140,527	\$540,261	\$680,788

The chart on the right shows the relative income and expenditures for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2023. The table above shows our cash holdings as of September 30, including restricted and non-restricted funds.



FATHER'S DAY FESTIVAL 2024

By Pete Ludé, CBA Executive Director

The CBA festival team has organized yet another amazing lineup for the **2024 Father's Day Festival**, June 13–16. There will be more than 30 bands on three stages over the four-day event, along with many workshops, square dances, kid's programs, and lots of jamming. The first bands have been announced, with many more coming!

Tickets are now available on pre-sale only to CBA members. But the pre-sale deadline is January 21, after which the Early Bird tickets go on sale to the general public, at an increased price. If you are not a CBA member, now is a perfect time to join!

As in the past, tent camping – or camper

van or tent-trailer – is included at no extra cost with your Full Festival Pass. This pass allows you entrance to the festival site starting the day before the event opens at noon on Wednesday, June 12.

Many folks can't wait for the festival, and arrive early to camp, pick, and convene with friends! **The Pre-Festival Jamboree** gates open at noon on Saturday, June 8, and adult passes for those 18 and older cost \$80, and also include tent, camper-van, or tent-trailer camping. Youth under 18 are free when accompanied by a ticketed adult.

We have four options, with additional fees, for those with large RVs: Dry parking with

no hook-ups; electric only; electric, water, and sewer – “full hook-ups.” The full hook-ups are in very limited supply, and so we're holding a lottery to determine who gets these slots. Lottery entries must be received by February 1. All the directions can be found in the Camping & Lodging portion of the website at www.FathersDayFestival.com. All festival RV tickets allow entry Wednesday, June 12, until 10 a.m. on Monday, June 17. Pre-festival RV access starts Saturday, June 8, with an additional RV pre-festival pass.

If you have any questions, just give us a call at **(844) BLU-GRASS** (844-258-4727) and we'll help you out.



Saturday night at the Main Stage. Photo by Robin Frenette.



Laurie Lewis joins Molly Tuttle on stage. Photo by Patrick Campbell.

MONTHLY TRIVIA CHALLENGE!

By Bert Daniel, Breakdown Contributor

We hope everyone enjoyed our bluegrass food-focused holiday stories and recipes – and trivia question! In November, we delivered this tasty morsel: “He learned how to cook from his mom, flipping hotcakes at age 5. He graduated to ice-cream maker for his family's elaborate holiday feasts and spent many years sharing recipes and bluegrass memories. Name him.”

Several CBA members (and we suspect long-time *Bluegrass Breakdown* readers), including **Roy Barush**, **Richard Brooks**, **David Brown**, **Stan Oberg**, and **Frank Uhl**, knew the answer was a writer who shared his recipes – and trivia, as Richard Brooks recalled – on these very pages: **J.D. Rhynes**.

David Brown shared: “I had to search the house a bit to find that book/CD that was published a few years to check his bio for references to hotcakes and ice-cream maker – I didn't recall seeing it since I first got it, and it wasn't with my music books, but it was in the kitchen with the cookbooks ... makes sense.”

We asked the *Breakdown's* art director to pick a number between one and five with no reason offered, and thanks to the wildly-exotic lottery technique of matching a number to a list organized alphabetically by last name, **Frank Uhl** was determined the winner of a beautiful CBA t-shirt!



JD's Bluegrass Kitchen. CBA File Photo.

JANUARY TRIVIA QUESTION

For January, we want to know: “who appeared on *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson* as a 12-year-old harmonica player and went on to play bass for a European bluegrass duo?”

Send your answer to:
trivia@californiabluegrass.net
no later than January 31.

This month's prize is a **Shubb capo** for banjo or guitar – winner's choice. Only CBA members are eligible to win; if there is more than one correct response, the prize winner will be selected by a random method of our choosing.

The winner will be announced in the March '24 issue of the *Bluegrass Breakdown*.

49TH ANNUAL

CALIFORNIA BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION

FATHER'S DAY

JUNE 13-16 2024

BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL



ALISON BROWN - SISTER SADIE
DANNY PAISLEY & THE SOUTHERN GRASS
LONESOME RIVER BAND - RICK FARIS BAND
THE HORSENECKS - COUNTRY GONGBANG
TRAY WELLINGTON BAND
MORE BANDS TO BE ANNOUNCED!

NEVADA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS, GRASS VALLEY, CA - FATHERSDAYFESTIVAL.COM

MEMBER PRE-SALE
PRICING
AVAILABLE
THROUGH JAN. 21!



The Kody Norris Show approves of the 2024 FDF Lineup. Photo by Alan Bond.

FATHER'S DAY FESTIVAL • CBA MEMBER PRE-SALE TICKET ORDER FORM

PRE-SALE ORDERS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY JANUARY 21, 2024

NAME: ADDRESS:
PHONE: E-MAIL:

TICKET TYPE	ADULT	QTY.	SENIOR (65+)	QTY.	TEEN (13-17)	QTY.	TOTAL
FULL FESTIVAL PASS Jun 13-16, dry tent or Class B RV camping is included.	\$195		\$180		\$60		
SINGLE DAY	THU. 6/15	\$45		\$45		\$20	
	FRI. 6/16	\$70		\$70		\$30	
	SAT. 6/17	\$80		\$80		\$35	
	SUN. 6/18	\$50		\$50		\$20	
PICKER'S SPECIAL Camping June 12-16. Festival admission not included.	TENT - \$125		Class B RV - \$150				
PER-NITE CAMPING June 12-16. Festival admission not included.	TENT - \$30/day		Class B RV - \$40/day				
PRE-FESTIVAL JAMBOREE PASS June 8-12, dry tent or Class B RV camping is included.	ADULT	QTY.	UNDER 18				
	\$80		FREE				
RV CAMPING (Class A or C)	DRY RV FESTIVAL CAMPING June 12-16	\$75	PRE-FESTIVAL RV June 8-12		\$50		
	FESTIVAL - ELECTRIC	\$200	PRE-FESTIVAL ELECTRIC		\$125		
	FESTIVAL - WATER & ELECTRIC	\$300	PRE-FESTIVAL WATER & ELEC.		\$225		

Full Hookups (\$350) are assigned by lottery, with a deadline of February 1 to apply. Email fullhookup@californiabluegrass.net, or submit your info to CBA RV Lottery at the address below.

ADD CBA MEMBERSHIP? Become a member or renew membership to purchase festival tickets at pre-sale rate!
(circle one) INDIVIDUAL - 1 year: \$30 • 3 year: \$80 • 5 year: \$130 FAMILY - 1 year: \$40 • 3 year: \$105 • 5 year: \$175

Make check payable to California Bluegrass Association, and mail form and payment to: CBA Festival
3739 Balboa St. #5090
San Francisco, CA 94121-2605

QUESTIONS? CALL CBA AT 844-BLU-GRASS (844-258-4727)

TOTAL

OUR MISSION

The purpose of the California Bluegrass Association is to encourage, foster, and cultivate the preservation, appreciation, understanding, enjoyment, support, and performance of bluegrass, old-time, gospel, and traditional instrumental and vocal music of the United States.

BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN
CALIFORNIA BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION
3739 BALBOA STREET, #5090
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94121-2605

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