



## Candidates for the 2026 Board of Directors Election

*listed alphabetically by last name*

**Zach Bess** - A lifelong student of Bluegrass, Country, Rock, Blues, Folk, Pop, and Reggae music. Much to the disappointment of my neighbors, I can play guitar, mandolin, and banjo. No matter how I try, they've yet to move away. I first started attending NNBA's jams when I moved to Reno a few years ago. I have learned a lot from NNBA's events. I hope to serve on the board to help keep these events going. Let's jam!

**Jeff Falke** - I am running for an additional year on the board of the NNBA. A passionate bluegrass fan and flatpicker for over two decades, I moved to Reno from Alaska about two and a half years ago. My family and I immediately joined the NNBA. Through participating in jams, volunteering at the Bower's Mansion Music Festival, and generally plugging in to the local bluegrass community I have found the NNBA to be a warm and welcoming place. I rely on my background as an educator to help the Association further their mission to increase appreciation of the music that I love. I'm also a hard worker, patient individual, and get along well with others – great characteristics for getting volunteer work done. My past year on the board has been a pleasure and I look forward to the opportunity to serve another year on the board of the NNBA at the discretion of the membership.

**Cindy Gray** – I've been involved in Bluegrass music for over 25 years, as a jammer, performer, instructor, and organizer. I served on the NNBA Board in 2003-2005, and returned to it in 2023, once I retired from school teaching. I was the Director a 501c3 organization that produced over 20 Bluegrass festivals and dozens of classes and workshops for 13 years. I taught at the Steve Kaufman Acoustic Camp in Maryville, TN. for 6 years. I currently teach Bluegrass Guitar and Beginning Banjo and Bass at the Mountain Music Parlor. I really enjoy being a part of our "Bluegrass Community" and doing what I can to see it grow and prosper.

**Neil Linden** – I am running to retain my position on the board of the NNBA. I have lived in Reno for over 11 years having taught public-school in CA for 15 years prior to moving and retiring in Reno where I have been a member of the NNBA ever since. I play banjo and guitar, primarily bluegrass, and have played at bluegrass festivals and other events for over 60 years. I toured with Frank Wakefield and The Greenbriar Boys in the late 60's, and performed with Peter Rowan, Maria Muldaur and a young Bela Fleck. Previously I have been a member of Unionville, Center Street, Suspect Terrane bands and currently play with High West Bluegrass, Sage Creek and Coyote Crossing, performing at events and shows in Reno, Carson City, Virginia City and Genoa, including four Bowers festivals. I currently coordinate an invitational advanced bluegrass jam in Reno. I hope to continue my involvement with the NNBA, helping to increase its membership and visibility in the area.

**Tim Miller** – I have always enjoyed playing the guitar since I was a kid.

I moved back home to Reno/Sparks about 9 years ago and my dad invited me to join him in watching the Monday Night Volunteers play at his senior living place. I thoroughly enjoyed the music and researched NNBA where they all are members. I saw it as a great opportunity for me to be able to jam with folks and improve my pickin' skills. I joined NNBA 8 years ago and have appreciated the open/welcome arms of the group and its Wednesday night jams. I want to give back and it would be a pleasure to be voted as a board member for NNBA. Without the NNBA I don't think I would have been able to take the Mandolin my wife got me for Christmas several years ago and be playing as well as I do today.

**Raymond Ritch** –Photographer, Public relations, Technology, Websites, Newsletters. Lifelong musician, long-time participant in the Bowers festival. Banjo player, Member of NNBA Board and current year's President.

### Write In Candidates

- Our By-Laws permit write-in candidates, provided they have given their consent to be listed on the ballot.
- Nominations remain open until 1pm on Feb. 7, 2026, the day of the election
- Any write-in candidates must be submitted by that time.
- Write in candidates may be submitted (with written consent) via email to [secretary@nnba.org](mailto:secretary@nnba.org) or on paper at the Annual Meeting.

More information about the Annual Meeting may be found [here](#).