

Volunteer Spotlight: Mary McSorley

How long have you been a volunteer with MBOTMA?

I am not sure of the year I started, possibly 2003, but it was the first time my husband and I attended the August Festival at El Rancho Manana.

What current volunteer role(s) do you have with MBOTMA?

I currently volunteer with Membership by manning the membership table at festivals throughout the year. I run the Gathering Place at the August Festival. I started providing a Volunteer Appreciation tent where I provide refreshments and give out the volunteer t-shirts at the August Festival in 2019.

What MBOTMA volunteer role(s) have you held in the past?

I always sign up for several shifts at the festivals that we attend. I help with the membership tables, set-up, wristband check points, take-down, the front gate, and anywhere help is needed at the Festivals. My husband, Bob, and I spent at least 12 hours volunteering each August in addition to manning the Gathering Place.

How long have you been part of MBOTMA and what brought you into the organization?

My husband and I attended one of the last festivals in Zimmerman at the invitation of our good friends, Garry and Linda Elfstrand. They even provided the pop-up for us to sleep in! It was a magic experience. I have always loved Bluegrass. I lived close to Dulono's Pizza on Lake Street in Minneapolis from 1970 until 1980 and listened to the Middle Spunk Creek Boys regularly. We continued to go to Dulono's until it closed. I saw Bill Monroe at the Guthrie in the mid-1970s. During the years

raising children and working it was not possible for me to attend the August Festival again until the late-1990s. We bought a tent and started rough camping and fell in love with MBOTMA. We now have a trailer. I joined the association and observed the dedication of the volunteers at the festival. They worked hard and enjoyed it. I wanted to be part of that experience!



Why are you a MBOTMA volunteer?

It's a great organization, and I'm just trying to do my part to help out!

How has being a volunteer impacted you?

It is great working with the diverse group of volunteers. I have met many new friends while doing volunteer jobs in MBOTMA. Being part of this Association has taught me the value of participation. I have learned to speak up and give my view.

Do you have a favorite festival or activity at a festival?

The August festival is my favorite festival. There are several reasons for me to love it. First, it is outdoors in Minnesota in the summer. The entertainment lineup is always awesome, and the multiple venues provide wonderful options. I have met so many great bluegrass fans while camping.

What occupation did you have or do you have now?

Bob and I both retired from working for the Department of Veterans Affairs. We each had

32 years in service. I am still working as a PCA for Lifeworks.

What are some of your hobbies and interests?

Currently, I enjoy gardening, visiting with friends and family and working on home projects. I enjoy participating in my church community. Bob and I love live music! We usually take in shows weekly during non-Corvid times. We have now joined another Association, the AmericanaFest, and we travel to Nashville each September for a week of great music, and we volunteer!!

What's a fun fact about you?

I hate hooking up the trailer to our truck!!

What would you tell a new MBOTMA member/volunteer?

Relax, take it all in, ask questions of the staff, enjoy the ride, and start volunteering!