

## BUILDERS: Program teaches variety of skills

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students through the guitar class more than anything.” He often mentions to his students that while building a guitar is a “pile of problems,” it is beneficial for them to solve problems relating to something they’re extremely passionate about and receive something tangible as a result, like a guitar or ukulele.

The creative director of Sisters Folk Festival, Brad Tisdel, has similar sentiments...

“The opportunity to be challenged for the whole school year to complete an instrument is a great achievement,” said Tisdel.

He believes that Cosby creates a great learning environment for students to do so. While Tisdel himself has not yet built an instrument with Cosby, he actively participates in the Americana Luthier Program and taught the guitar students to play Bob Marley’s “Don’t Worry About a Thing” for their Luthier Showcase July 17.

Leah Chapman, a student who built a ukulele her junior year and a guitar her senior year, says she learned a lot of



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Students and instructors gathered last week to celebrate another year of guitar and ukulele building.

life skills from both classes, particularly that it takes “a lot of planning to succeed.” Chapman says her favorite part of building her guitar was being able to make it her own with a daisy drawn by her friend True Durden, among other details.

Abi Manley, another student in the guitar class, felt she wasn’t very artistic prior

to taking the class, as she was what she called “more of a math person,” but she really wanted to make something in high school that she could hold on to. Building her guitar helped Manley to be more creative and showed her why it’s important to be meticulous in the things she does.

The ukulele portion of the evening, which featured a

slideshow and musical performance, was dedicated to Bill MacDonald, an instructor in the ukulele-building class. Marcy Edwards, another instructor of the class, told the audience, “MacDonald started teaching students how to build ukuleles after a middle school student asked why there was no ukulele-building class at the high school.”

Edwards told the audience of parents and peers that evening that in total the instructors have helped to make approximately 150 ukuleles since the beginning of the class.

David Perkins, who is also an instructor in the class, led the students in a performance of “This Land is Your Land.”

While having an opportunity to build a guitar or ukulele is an experience unique to Sisters High School and a few other high schools in the nation, educators and students agree it is an extremely valuable one. Students will endure numerous trials and tribulations while building their instruments, be it a misinstalled fingerboard or a piece that snaps off at a crucial time in the building process, but in the words of Brad Tisdel Monday evening, “It’s not a matter of the mistakes you make, but how you fix them.”

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