

Old Time Fiddlers jam on campus

By Charlene Jensen
Of The Print

Fiddlers, guitarists, smiles and classic fiddle music greeted the audience last week at the free concert performed by The Old Time Fiddlers in the Community Center at Clackamas Community College.

The Old Time Fiddlers is a group of musicians who play frequently at events. "The Old Time Fiddlers are a bunch of wholesome, fun loving, great people," Greg Baker, chairperson for the organization, said.

The popularity of the group has to do with the atmosphere their music creates. "It's the sit-back-relax, very low key kind of performance," Baker said, "The music lets people remember how things used to be years ago."

Although most of the performers have been playing music for many years, The Old Time Fiddlers also has novice fiddle players. Some of the performers who played at the Community Center concert have been playing for only a year. "To see them up on a stage already is pretty impressive," Baker said.

Other musicians performing at the concert were John Melnichik and his seven-year-old daughter Katie. Melnichik is this year's State Fiddle Champion.

The Men's National Fiddle Champion Joey McKenzie was also performing at the event. McKenzie, 19, also holds championships in guitar, mandolin and four-stringed banjo.

Just recently Baker started his own publishing company and hopes to publish his series of fiddle books by April. "These six books take people from rock bottom to being a good fiddle player in a year and a half if they stick with it and practice," Baker said.

"Part of the reason I got involved with the Old Time Fiddlers is I wanted to play the songs the way they play them and present them that way in my books, using the keys the Old Time Fiddlers play in so that the music would be useful and people could apply it," Baker said.

The fiddling books teach music with a method Baker has developed himself. Also, there are cassettes recorded in stereo with backup guitar so the student can turn off the fiddle and practice with the guitar or vice versa. "I'm going to make the series highly applicable. I'll have the student learn things they can apply immediately," Baker said. "I also will teach back-up and improvisation in each book step by step and cords, so that by the sixth book the student should have a fair idea how to sit in with a band and play a song without knowing what the song is. You can play songs you've never heard before if you have an idea of what the cords are," he said.

"I just want to have a really good time playing with the Old Time Fiddlers and train as many people to play as I can," Baker said.

More concerts are planned in December beginning Dec. 9 from 6-8 p.m. with the Cabin Fever Moonshine Band

performing country music. The program will take place in the Community Center of the College and is free.

A performance is also scheduled on Saturday, Dec. 10 by the Beaver Creek Fiddlers. Held in the Community Center, the concert is free and will present fiddle music and Christmas sing-a-longs.

Canned food donations are welcomed and a hat will be passed to help the needy in the community. Proceeds will go the Interagency Food Bank in Portland.

Playing "The Orange Blossom Special" was eleven-year-old Jason Ewing, the youngest boy at the concert. A fiddle student of Baker's, Ewing has also studied music at the College through Bob Misley's country, folk and bluegrass class.

Baker pointed out that most of the Old Time Fiddlers are retired. "Many of the fiddlers have been brought up with the older music. It's music that brings back a lot of memories," Baker said. "In fact, it kind of touches my heart when I'm performing somewhere and a person comes up and says, 'I'm from Missouri and my Dad used to play such-and-such a song. Will you play it for me?' I never turn anybody down on a request like that. I always play it and if I don't know the song I get one of the other fiddlers who does know it to play it."

In addition to the Old Time Fiddlers, Baker teaches music both at Clackamas Community College and privately. Baker also performs in the band "Gold Rush." The group is made up of



teachers from the local area. Other members of Gold Rush are Bob Misley, a biology and music teacher at Clackamas Community College, Loren Wolford who teaches psychology for Clackamas Community College and Monte Trautman of Sunset High School.

Gold Rush plays at many county fairs and have "We have (Gold Rush) made it enough so that we don't have to take just any old job that comes along. In fact we very rarely play in smoke-filled honky-tonks," Baker said.



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Clackamas Community College

