

around the county



Photo by Shannon Kelley

Boring's Barney Alexander has risen rapidly to the top of the fiddling world and he hopes to continue to pursue fiddling titles next year.

Honors piling up

Barney just keeps on fiddlin'

by SHANNON KELLEY
Post Correspondent

Barney Alexander fiddles around all over the country and he is one of the best at it.

In fact, the 68-year-old Boring man recently placed fifth in the national Old Timers fiddling competition in Weiser, Idaho.

"I was very careful this time," said Alexander, who competed in the event last year but lost 30 points for playing longer than the time limit. "In competition, the shorter you play, the better. There's less chance of mistake."

Alexander became interested in playing the fiddle professionally after watching a contest in Washington Park in 1978. When it was over, he got into a jam session and "that's how I got started."

Alexander began sharpening his skills and placed second that year in the North Douglas Fair Fiddle Contest in Canyonville — using a borrowed fiddle. He later bought his own fiddle and placed first the following year in the Northwest regional competition, the Old Time Fiddler competition in Forest Grove and was second again at Canyonville.

In 1980, Alexander regained first in

regionals and added to his trophies first in the state and first in a northern California competition.

This year, Alexander could manage just fourth place, but he notes that one of the men that beat him at state finished behind him at nationals.

Alexander's immediate success in the fiddling business may have had something to do with his involvement in the entertainment field. Alexander first picked up a guitar at the age of 15 while living in Missouri.

"I was always fascinated with instruments of any kind," he said. "I can't remember when I couldn't carry a tune."

Alexander moved to Oregon and began playing western swing music with the Tiny Dumants Band at a park of the same name. The park is now a church at 117th and Market. He continued there for 18 years.

Alexander also played for two years with Arkie and the Jolly Cowboys on KXL radio.

Alexander says that he has played all kinds of music in his career, including country western, gospel and classical, but his favorite is "old-time music" — familiar tunes such as the Claret Polka and the Wood Chopper.

His range of instruments has gone

from bass and steel to standard and classical guitar, mandolin and fiddle. He also sings occasional, but not too often since Alexander claims he sounds like a "freaked out road runner."

Alexander played the fiddle for several years, but stopped about 30 years ago to play the steel guitar, a rarity in that day and age.

Despite his long musical history, Alexander never really made a career out of music. He began barbering when he was 16 years old and for 26 years he owned the Powell Hurst Barber Shop on 123rd and Powell. He retired four years ago.

"It (fiddling) is strictly a hobby with me," Alexander said. "I just like to do it. I like to meet the people and I like to play."

Another long-term engagement has been his 43-year marriage to his wife Norma, who is "very proud of his trophies," which are becoming too numerous for his trophy case.

Alexander has been chosen as a judge in the Northwest Regional competition in Forest Grove and is eyeing the repeat of his titles next year.

As far as nationals and other competitions, he's just going to "play it by ear."

Boring sewage meeting slated Aug. 6

Owners of nine businesses and four private residences on or near Highway 212 and southeast 282nd will discuss their sewer disposal problems with the state Department of Environmental Quality officials on Aug. 6.

But the informal meeting, tentatively set for 8 a.m. in the Boring Fire Station, will only serve to inform property owners of their options in dealing with their inadequate septic systems, according to Chuck Clinton, an engineer for DEQ's northwest region.

The owners will themselves be responsible for enacting solutions, Clinton said.

The property owners have

been notified by a letter from DEQ that their septic tanks or drain fields constitute a hazard. Raw sewage that discharges from the properties into nearby Deep Creek endangers swimming areas and threatens drinking water, according to DEQ officials.

The letters were written at the request of Clackamas County, which has been watching the commercial Boring area's water drainage and sewage disposal problems for nearly a decade.

Attempts to build a sewer system by the year-old Boring Neighborhood Advisory Committee have repeatedly been foiled by some residents who object to its

potential connection costs. But the subject continues to surface at its monthly meetings.

"If we don't have a sewer system (to connect to), we'll have to have individual holding tanks," said Joyce Valberg, owner of both commercial and residential property in the area, during the committee's July meeting. The exorbitant cost of pump-

ing the tanks would probably force closure of area businesses, however, she noted.

During the committee's June meeting, a county soil scientist told members that, other than hooking up to a community sewer system, businesses may have only one option — to install holding tanks and have them pumped.

Miller named to group

Jeff Miller of Sandy has been appointed to the Clackamas County Traffic Safety Commission.

The term will expire Aug. 1, 1983.

The commission acts in an advisory capacity to the Clackamas County Commissioners on traffic safety matters, concentrating primarily on the promotion of safety through training and education of the public.

The commission meets the first Wednesday of each month in the Commissioners' Hearing Room, 906 Main Street, in Oregon City.

The next scheduled meeting will be Aug. 5 at 7 p.m.

All members of the commission are expected to attend the meetings.

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Boring woman hopes PTAs will expand

Newly elected Clackamas Parent Teacher Association Council President Linda Mann of Boring is hoping to bring PTA groups into local schools.

Mann's experience in the school system is extensive. In addition to serving as Boring's PTA president, she acted as vice president last year for the Clackamas council. She devoted many hours to the kindergarten class in Boring as a volunteer and she has also been room mother every year for her two children, Marcus, 5 and Christine, 10. Mann has also been a 4-H leader and bible study group teacher.

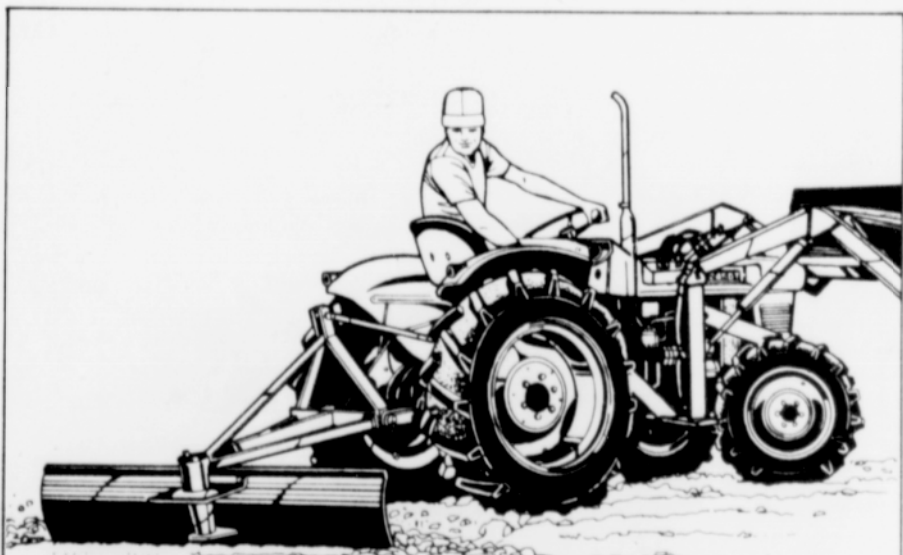
As Clackamas Council president, Mann will act as the "knowledge source" for local PTA presidents. She will be responsible for providing training to the presidents and will give direction to those who wish to organize a PTA group in their school.

Mann's goal as president is to build a "clothes closet" which is a collection of clothes that will go to needy families. Stores donate much of the clothing from their return and throwaway stock.

PTA participation is an area which Mann hopes to renew.

"I would like to bring in more participation of the local PTA's within the council," she said. Next on her agenda is to make contact with Polk and Marion counties.

Mann's driving force is clear when she explains why her involvement in the PTA is so important. "My kids are number one."



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