



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

People gather to play ukulele and watch a documentary about the instrument at the Dallas Civic Center on Friday.

Friends of the Mighty Uke gather

Ukulele fans start monthly meetings at library to strum, sing on Wednesdays

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Doneille Chomiak calls it “the magic of the ukulele.”

She says the instrument has a positive influence on people when they start playing. Shy people begin leading songs. Those overhearing the music are drawn to find the source, she said.

“When you get a group of people playing and singing, all differences fall away,” said Chomiak, one of the leaders of Ukulele Fans of Oregon. “It truly is magical.”

The group, UFO for short, wants to bring that magic to Dallas by launching a lending program to check out ukuleles and monthly jam session through Dallas Public Library.

UFO made its official introduction at Summerfest’s “Hawaiian Luau” celebration on Friday.

Chomiak and Laurie Linn, the group’s musical director, said UFO often encounters



The magical Uke

What: Ukulele Fans of Dallas “strum and sing.”
When: First Wednesday of the month, starting Wednesday (today) at 5:30 p.m.
Where: Dallas Public Library, 950 Main St., Dallas.
Of note: other instruments are welcome.
For more information, 503-623-2633.

such timing coincidences that they attribute that to the instrument’s mysterious allure.

Something else might be at play, too.

“It’s the easiest to play, but the hardest to master,” Chomiak said.

Linn said that means people can pick it up without getting frustrated, but they won’t get bored either because there always remains room for improvement.

Whatever the draw, ukuleles and groups meeting to play them are growing in popularity. Chomiak said UFO, which started in

Salem, quickly outgrew its first meeting place at Life-source Natural Foods in South Salem. The Salem Library’s lending program can’t keep ukuleles in stock.

Thirty-two other libraries in Oregon have contacted the group to help start similar programs.

Friday night’s event brought in more than 20 people to play and watch a documentary about the instrument. UFO announced that it would meet at the Dallas Library for the first time Wednesday (today). Chomiak said the group — Ukulele Fan of Dallas — will

begin with monthly meetings and grow from there if necessary.

The library has three ukulele kits available for checkout for those wanting to explore the instrument before joining the group.

“Anytime you can get people smiling and singing, it makes the world a little better place,” Chomiak said.

‘Marketplace’ to go to sheriff’s auction

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — The Family Treasure’s Marketplace, 240 Monmouth St., Independence, is scheduled to be sold in a Polk County Sheriff’s Office sale at 10 a.m. on Sept. 2.

The sale comes after the city of Independence won a case against property owner Jewels Cresser.

Cresser maintains that the city overcharged her for what used to serve as the Independence City Hall, and is working to strike a deal with the city for a mortgage of \$255,000, rather than the original agreed upon price of \$385,000 in December 2013.

Based on the selling prices of other commercial buildings in downtown Independence, Cresser said \$255,000 is a reasonable offer.

City Manager David Clyne said Cresser has not made any serious offer to get current with payments on the building.

“The bill now is 400 and some odd thousand at this point,” he said. “If she still wants to buy the building, she still can, the foreclosure is not complete until the sale’s complete.”

Cresser started a petition on change.org in hopes to gather public support for what she sees as a future community center at the Family Treasure’s Marketplace.

“I want to have a true community center where anyone who wants to learn art, or participate in a performance art or share what they know would have a place to go,” Cresser said.

She said she is prepared to sue the city for “fraud in the inducement” if a deal cannot be reached.

Clyne said the public and it’s money deserves to be treated better.

“I think she’s tried everything that she could have done,” Clyne said. “She’s tried bankruptcy; she’s tried to prevail in the circuit court, and has not succeeded. She has not paid her bill in over a year.”

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