



Folk Talk

A Newsletter for Columbia, Snake, and Yakima River Folk

Vol. 34 Issue 5

February 2023

Brad Keeler and Joelle Plummer Both Mix Old and New Music

Saturday, February 18, 7:30 pm
All Saints' Episcopal Church, Richland

We are in for a special treat and a merger of old-time roots and new styles of music when Spokane's eclectic folk musician and interpreter of vintage music [Brad Keeler](#) will offer a mix of "covers from the past 100+ years and originals from the past 30+ years." on Saturday, February 18, 7:30 pm at All Saints' Episcopal Church, 1322 Kimball Avenue in Richland.

Joelle Plummer, a 17 year old old-time fiddler, who also plays mandolin, banjo, ukelele, and guitar, will be opening the show with a short eclectic set mixing old-time tunes and covers of new acoustic music. She has been playing violin and fiddle since she was 10. She has gravitated to a variety of musical styles and genres. Joelle plays in Southridge High School's orchestra, jams with fiddlers at local and regional Washington Old-time Fiddler events, and attends Fiddle Camp every summer. She has played during Tumbleweed's Friday night concerts and has performed with her grandma Micki and the Banjo Grannies.

Brad Keeler is a multi-instrumentalist singer-songwriter and an interpreter of vintage music. He got his start as a folk musician in the late 70's and early 80's, playing pop music covers and the occasional folk song in East South Florida.

In the mid 80's he became more involved in the Florida folk scene. In the 90's he was a regular at a number of Florida festivals and competitions, where he picked up prizes for flat pick, fingerstyle, and slide guitar categories, as well as mandolin.

In 2000 he relocated to the Northwest and has been performing either solo or in various groups throughout the Pacific Northwest ever since. He has played for many years at Tumbleweed, and has been a headliner as a solo act and with the Keeler, Melvin, and Morse Trio.

Brad Keeler's music covers a wide variety of roots music: blues, bluegrass, Americana, swing/jazz/standards, folk, country and originals. He is always coming up with new songs that sound old, and old songs that sound new because of the original spin he puts on them.

Tickets for this concert can be purchased in advance through [our web site](#) 3RFS.org or at the door. \$20 general admission \$15 for members of 3RFS. Park in the back of the church and enter through the basement. The concert will be upstairs in the sanctuary. Bring extra money to buy Brad's wares and goodies at intermission.

President's Pen - by [Gene Carbaugh](#)

Among the things I've grown to appreciate more and more about 3RFS are the opportunities to develop as a musician through participation. Having the chance to play or sing in a jam session or sing-along is a big step in a developing musician. Maybe you start by just going for the fun of it, not expecting to lead or do anything other than quietly participate on the sideline. But then somebody gently challenges you to step out and lead a song or play a break or maybe even perform a solo. At first you are terrified. "Not me. I'm not good enough, I don't know it" or any of a dozen other excuses. But as time goes on, you observe others and realize that nobody gets it perfect. And eventually you realize you, too, can make errors just like the musicians you have been admiring for years and nobody seems to mind. That missed chord, errant note, or forgotten lyric wasn't the end of the world, and you've grown in your confidence. And then, you find you're now encouraging others to participate in the same way that you came to enjoy rather than fear the spotlight. At least, that's been my experience in the time I've been involved with 3RFS. I still remember how scared I was at my first attempts at leading a song or singing for a special event. Yes, I still get nervous at open mics and sing-alongs, but I am so thankful for the opportunity to stretch and the

welcoming support that others have given me in the process. The opportunities to join in at [Coffeehouse](#) open mics, [First Friday Free-for-Alls](#), and [Second Saturday Sea Song Sing-Alongs](#) are among the things I truly look forward to in 3RFS. If you have never been to one, check the calendar and plan to do so soon.

Tumbleweed News

- by [Katrina Knight](#)

Preparations for the 27th annual Tumbleweed Music Festival are well underway. Performer applications are coming in, along with entries for the Jane Titland Memorial Song Contest. We are excited to have received applications from several performers new to the festival and hope to continue that trend. New blood is important to keeping our festival relevant and fresh. Please help spread the word that we are accepting applications for both in-person and virtual performances.

Are you an artist or do you know any artists who'd be interested in our logo contest? The deadline for entries is fast approaching - February 15. The winner receives a \$150 prize and gets to see their artwork on our promotional materials and merchandise.

We've opened applications for food and craft vendors and those are starting to come in. We'd like to offer a good selection of food. If you know of food trucks or other traveling food vendors you'd like to see at Tumbleweed, please tell them about this opportunity. The same applies to craftspeople. The best way for us to get a good selection of vendors is for you to pass our information on to vendors you like. Word of mouth produces results.

We're also recruiting volunteers, particularly for the jobs that need doing before the festival.

More information, especially about our logo contest, along with all of our applications can be found at <http://www.tumbleweedfest.com>.

Huge cost increases, lack of volunteers, and decreasing attendance cause two regional music festivals to shut down, Arts organizations to struggle – are 3RFS and Tumbleweed also at risk?

- by [David Carson](#)

In late November, the Yakima Folklife Association made the following statement:

“After nearly 40 years, it is with sincere sadness that Yakima Folklife Association (YFA) / Yakima Folklife Festival has made the difficult decision to dissolve the organization, effective December 31, 2022.”

[On November 17th, the Yakima Herald-Republic](#) reported:

Yakima Folklife Association board President Nicol Sloon said the difficulty in finding volunteers to run the festival was one of the main reasons behind the decision.

“Most of the board and some committee members have been doing it since almost the inception 40, 30 years ago,” Sloon said. “They just want to enjoy retirement and their time. Continuing on, it’s hard without new people to step up and carry the torch.

Sound familiar?

Tumbleweed has always been run by volunteers - it literally could not happen without them (and by them, we mean

you). If you’ve been reading these newsletters for any length of time, you’ll have seen our plea, month after month, asking for more people to come out and volunteer to help make sure that Tumbleweed can continue.

And every month, there has been little if any response to our pleas, whether made in the newsletter, on social media, in news pieces, or word of mouth. Some people have stepped up to help but, in most cases, their lives happened, and they had to step away again.

Both the 3RFS Board and the Tumbleweed Planning Committee consist mainly of people who’ve been at this for many years - or many decades. And none of us is getting any younger. As we age out and are no longer available, will there be anyone to carry on? Are younger people even interested in what we as an organization offer?

And now, we come to another potentially existential threat to our festival and the work of 3RFS: increasing costs.

[On January 17th, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation](#) reported that

The Vancouver Folk Music Festival will not be returning to the city in 2023, as the changing event landscape and rising production costs leaves the long-term future of the event hanging in the balance.

A statement from the festival’s society on Tuesday said it would take an extra \$500,000 to produce a festival this summer, which would be “unfortunately not realistic or sustainable” with its current cash flow.

The three-day festival has been a fixture of the region’s arts and culture scene for nearly 45 years. Consistently one of the most popular celebrations, the festival found success in its heartfelt community atmosphere and commitment to bring concert-goers music from all over the world — from bluegrass to Celtic folk and indie rock.

Also stated was that members of the society would be voting on whether to dissolve the society completely on 1 February 2023.

Now to be sure, there are very definite differences between the Vancouver Folk Music Festival and Tumbleweed: the Vancouver festival presents (and pays) truly international, first-line performers (e.g., Allison Russell, Asleep at the Wheel, and Taj Mahal in 2022, just to name three) as well as local and regional performers. They have far greater costs than our free, all-volunteer festival as well.

However, even without big-time performer fees, Tumbleweed is NOT cheap to put on. We’re lucky enough to have good rapport with our vendors for the various things we need to rent or buy to help put the festival on, but it’s inevitable that if their costs go up, our costs go up, and there may come a point at which we’re faced with the same slide into insolvency that the Vancouver folks are now facing.

There are some things that we’re not at all prepared to do, such as charge admission, control access to the grounds, close the park to be only for our use during the Labor Day weekend - any or all of those changes would alter the heart and soul of Tumbleweed beyond repair, and we’re not going to do them unless absolutely forced to by circumstances beyond our control. Even then, it may be that we’ll fold our tent before altering our festival to that extent.

We’re also contending with a more general downturn in attendance at live entertainment events. A [commentary by David Fisher](#), executive director of “Tacoma Arts Live,” states:

Pre-pandemic, the economic impact of all arts and culture nationally measured at 4% of GDP (by the way, that’s a huge number, bigger than sports, automotive or aerospace.) Today, ticket sales are stuck at 20%-35% below pre-pandemic levels, except for major artists . . . Thus, the fiscal crisis affecting the performing arts is just beginning.

Every arts organization in the world is asking the same question right now: “What is it going to take to get people off the couch?” Too many patrons are choosing to stream their entertainment. Our relationships with our audience have changed. In the pre-pandemic landscape, our largest audience segment, the baby boomers, could be consistently counted on to attend two to four events a month. Today, we are lucky to see them once every 60 days.

. . . performing arts organizations are stunned by the accelerated behavior change between baby boomers and subsequent generations. Past program choices are not adequately energizing younger audiences. They want the experience to be new and different, on their feet, immersed in the experience and socially connected. Sitting in a seat, staring in one direction doesn’t cut it.

The pandemic demands transformation and signals an opportunity to innovate and shatter stagnant assumptions. Edgy and challenging work may rankle traditionalists, so we must find ways to be “both/and,” retaining current relationships while urgently cultivating new ones.

Folk Talk is published monthly August through May by the Three Rivers Folklife Society.

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Send memberships to:
3RFS Membership
PO Box 1098, Richland, WA 99352

3RFS 2022-2023 Board of Directors

Gene Carbaugh, President	509-946-0504
Micki Perry, Vice President	509-947-6735
Frank Cuta, Secretary	509-967-2658
Steve Ghan, Treasurer	509-308-9023

Tumbleweed Coordinator - Katrina Knight	509-587-3060
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Members at Large:	
Jim Honeyman	509-438-1856
Bob Lewis	509-374-7520
David Carson	509-539-8090
Katrina Knight	509-587-3060

3RFS Info: www.3rfs.org 509-947-6735
(Micki Perry)

Again, differences: 3RFS concerts are not livestreamed, nor is the main, live section of Tumbleweed (though we are proud of and will retain our virtual segment as a way to present people from far away to our audiences). As noted above, attracting younger audiences and volunteers is a great pressure on both 3RFS and Tumbleweed - and as this commentary shows, we're far from alone.

So, please give a thought to donating to 3RFS when you can, whether money or time; each donation we receive keeps us able to put on the 3RFS events we love, AND to bring the Tumbleweed family together again each year for the "reunion" we love so much.

The festival and Folklife Society you save may be your own!

Gwen and Her Girls return for a Coffeehouse appearance

Friday, February 10, 7:00 PM
All Saints' Episcopal Church

"Gwen and her Girls" is Gwen Good (guitar, vocals), Kaylie Dawes (lead guitar, vocals), Kira Maughan (bass), and Cali Harrington (drums). These high-school girls are already making themselves known as talented musicians despite the relatively short amount of time they've been playing and writing songs. Those who attended the November concert got a chance to see them do a short set. Here's your opportunity to see more of what they can do!

Memories of Vivian Williams

- by [Micki Perry](#)

I woke up Saturday January 7th to a phone call from my daughter telling me that my friend Vivian Williams had died in the night. I got several calls that day about the news and made a few too. I hardly had time to grieve. Vivian had been struggling with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) since just before the pandemic hit, and I knew she was going downhill, but I didn't know she was near death. Vivian and her husband Phil were dear friends of ours for over 35 years, and they were also our mentors. We had stayed in their home for more than 30 years when we went to Folklife in Seattle, and they had stayed at ours as well. Phil died in 2017, but Vivian carried on as best she could without him. She continued playing fiddle, teaching classes, hosting jams at her Craftsman home in the

Local Folk Events

February

1	Tumbleweed Planning Meeting	7:00 pm Wed	Zoom
3	FFFFFA	7:00 pm Fri	Micki Perry's, Kennewick
10	3RFS Coffeehouse w/ Gwen & Her Girls	7:30 pm Fri	All Saints', Richland
11	SSSSS	6:00 pm Sat	Round Table Pizza, Richland
13	3RFS Board meeting	7:00 pm Mon	Gene Carbaugh's, Richland
15	Tumbleweed Planning Meeting	7:00 pm Wed	Zoom
18	Concert - Brad Keeler w/ Joelle Plummer opening	7:30 pm Sat	All Saints', Richland

March

1	Tumbleweed Planning Meeting	7:00 pm Wed	Zoom
3	FFFFFA	7:00 pm Fri	Micki Perry's, Kennewick
10	3RFS Coffeehouse w/ Hank Cramer & Michelle Cameron	7:30 pm Fri	All Saints', Richland
11	SSSSS	6:00 pm Sat	Round Table Pizza, Richland
13	3RFS Board meeting	7:00 pm Mon	Gene Carbaugh's, Richland
15	Tumbleweed Planning Meeting	7:00 pm Wed	Zoom
18	Concert - Harmony Ridge	7:30 pm Sat	All Saints', Richland

All Saints' = All Saints' Episcopal Church, 1322 Kimball Ave., Richland

Gene Carbaugh's = 803 Birch Ave., Richland

Micki Perry's = 1011 S. Dawes St., Kennewick

Round Table Pizza = Corner of George Washington Way and Torbett St., Richland

For more calendar info from across the Northwest go to <https://www.3rfs.org/info-nw.htm>. Information for the current month is available in a pdf file, or information extending through the year can be downloaded in spreadsheet form.

Madrona district of Seattle, and running Voyager Records - until she couldn't. Voyager Records and most of the Williams' vast record collection has gone to the Smithsonian along with manuscripts and valuable artifacts of Northwest musical history. Her basket collection went to the Burke Museum, and quilts and instruments went to family and friends.

Vivian and Phil's legacy will live on in the Northwest's musical history. Vivian was born in Tacoma in 1938, and met Phil on the first day of school at Reed College. They married in 1959 and moved to Seattle where they became active in the folk and old-time and bluegrass scene. They discovered an enclave of bluegrass musicians from North Carolina in Darrington, WA, and brought some of them to Seattle, and also some national bluegrassers like Bill Monroe in 1962. They were instrumental in organizing Washington Old-Time Fiddlers, founded the Seattle Folklore Society in 1966 and the Northwest Folklife Festival in 1972. Vivian got her Masters in Anthropology in 1962, and in 1967 they founded Voyager Records. Vivian won eight National Fiddle Contest Awards and numerous

other awards, and authored about a dozen books. They played concerts and other gigs with their bands Tall Timber and Friends of Sally Johnson, contra dances with their band Small Pleasures, square dances, barn dances, and socials dances. They were the dance band at our first and tenth Tumbleweed Music Festivals and performed several times at Heritage Days at Sacagewea Park. I remember a fun jam with them and local fiddlers and other old-time musicians in our current house before we had even moved in.

I remember lots of late night jams with Phil and Vivian over the years, and sharing around the kitchen table about politics, organizational struggles, gossip, and lots of laughter and love. Vivian and I shared a love of quilting, and my favorite was one she made of ribbons she had won for quilts and veggies at the state and county fairs as well as lots of ribbons from fiddle contests. It was a joy to celebrate her birthday every year, as it always seemed to fall during Folklife. The last one together was in 2019, and I am sure her 85th and her memory and legacy will be celebrated with fanfare this year.

RIP Vivian! Thanks for touching our lives!

Yes!

I want to help 3RFS and the Tumbleweed Music Festival Roll on!

I would like to contribute at this level:

- _____ \$1000.00
- _____ \$250.00
- _____ \$100.00
- _____ \$50.00
- \$_____ Other

Please keep my gift anonymous (Donor names will be listed in next year's program unless you indicate you wish to remain anonymous.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____

E-mail -- _____

Send to: 3RFS TMF, PO Box 1098, Richland, WA 99352



Membership Application

Your membership gives you voting rights in Folklife elections, discounts on events, and is tax deductible! Plus it gives you the satisfaction of supporting 3RFS activities.

____ Individual (\$20) or ____ Family (\$25) Renewal? Y N

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____ E-mail _____

Please send Folk Talk (choose one) US Mail Email Both

I can help 3RFS with:

- Refreshments at concerts
- Taking admission at events
- Serve on Board of Directors
- Demonstrating folk arts
- Tumbleweed Music Festival
- Song Circles
- Setting up chairs
- Folding newsletters
- Publicity
- Membership
- Fund raising
- Coffeehouses
- Other

Scandinavian Folk Dance class

Thursdays Feb. 2,9,16,23 4-5 PM
Kennewick First Lutheran Church
418 N. Yelm Street Kennewick

Come and learn some beginner folk dances from Norway, Sweden and Denmark! This class is free and open to adults and children. No prior dance experience needed. Each class will be a stand alone lesson and no registration is required. We will meet in the fellowship

room of the Kennewick First Lutheran Church. Please park in the first parking lot off N. Yelm St. The instructor will be Gretchen Makinson and the class is sponsored by the Sons of Norway. For more info: 509-554-7239 or glmakinson@aol.com.

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