



Folk Talk

A Newsletter for Columbia, Snake, and Yakima River Folk

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We Need Help NOW! This means YOU! - by Katrina Knight

Preparations for this year's Tumbleweed Music Festival are continuing and we're excited about our plans. We're trying out some new things to publicize the festival and attract new people to join our audience. One of those things will hopefully be a couple of teaser concerts, each featuring sets by several festival performers. The concerts are tentatively scheduled at the new West Richland location of Tumbleweeds Mexican Flair, on July 26 and August 2.

All that being said, we can't have a festival unless we have people to make it happen. We've lost several active members of our planning committee due to health concerns and other things going on in their personal lives. We need more help and we need it now! Everyone says that Tumbleweed is wonderful. No one seems to want to do the things necessary to make it happen though. If people don't step forward, it isn't going to be wonderful because it isn't going happen. Maybe not this year, and definitely not in future years. Those of us who are hard at work only have so much time and so much energy and none of us can be in more than one place at a time when the festival happens. So please, if you are willing to help, let me, or any other board member, know. We can then find a job that suits your abilities. Planning committee meetings happen via Zoom on the first Monday and third Wednesday of each month. Everyone who is interested is welcome to attend. Let me know if you'd like an invitation - tumbleweedchair@gmail.com or 509-587-3060.

The need for people to make things happen applies to the entire organization as well. Most of the people serving on the 3RFS board, particularly the officers, have been doing it for years. New blood and new ideas are vital to keep an organization strong. Having the same small number of people doing everything leads to burn out and the loss of good people.

President's Pen - by Gene Carbaugh

It's May and for 3RFS that means it's time for our Annual Business meeting. This meeting is required by our bylaws and is scheduled for Saturday, May 18, 7:00 pm in the basement of All Saints Episcopal Church. Following a brief overview of the past year's activities and a financial report, we will have a report from the Nomination Committee and the floor will be open for any additional nominations. Members present will then elect the officers and members-at-large for the coming 2024-2025 year. An official notice of the meeting with a list of candidates will be sent by US Postal Service to our members of record, as of May 1. But any memberships received up to the time of the meeting will be eligible to vote. A long-time feature of our annual meeting continues to be a free concert for our members. Non-members are subject to the usual admission fee, but by joining at the meeting, the admission fee would be waived. This year, we are very pleased to have our very own Matt Hammer as our concert performer. Matt has been a professional folk singer and songwriter, who spent a number of years in Alaska. Upon retirement he returned to the Tri-Cities where he has continued to perform at Tumbleweed, Riverfest, and occasionally other

venues. Matt's music echoes life experiences and notable heroes and adventures. Not to be missed! Set the date and we'll see you there.

Annual Meeting and Elections featuring Matt Hammer

Saturday, May 18, 7:00 pm
All Saints' Episcopal Church

[Matt Hammer](#) is the concert performer for our Annual 3RFS Business Meeting. Matt is a semi-retired professional folk singer and songwriter (there's no such thing as a truly retired one). Matt found music to be his lifetime passion. Originally from Idaho Falls, he started entertaining and hitchhiking across America when only 18 years old. His travels took him from Chicago to San Francisco and even the Tri-Cities. Eventually he arrived in Alaska where he fell in love with her rugged intrinsic beauty and spent over 40 years of his life there. He opened for many acts playing the Alaska circuit, including Emmy Lou Harris, Bonnie Raitt, Hoyt Axton, Jerry Jeff Walker, Steve Goodman, and Air Supply. While in Alaska, he played the Alaska Sate Fair, and numerous festivals.

In the late 80's Matt combined talents with Doc Schultz to entertain many Alaskans until Doc left the state in 1986. In 1990 Matt established The Great Alaskan Opry, creating an expressive forum for some of Alaska's finest musical talent. He performed for many years at fund-raising events in support of Colonel Norman Vaughn's Iditarod efforts. In 2005, the Matt Hammer Band toured throughout South-central Alaska. Matt performed with his wife, Lona, in Alaska and on trips to Seattle, Nashville, and New Orleans from 2009 to 2013. After 40 years in Alaska, Matt and Lona moved to Kennewick to be closer to family, and Lona was director of the Kennewick Housing Authority until her very recent retirement. Matt and Lona have been regular performers at Tumbleweed and other local events since 2015.

Matt's own music includes reflections such as "Foolin' Myself", the whimsical and evocative reminder "Write Your Mom", a tribute to the event commemorated annually by the Iditarod Dog Sled Race, and an epic of love and admiration to Colonel Norman Vaughn, "It's a Marvelous Adventure". Along the way he covers favorites such as "Mr. Bojangles" and Van Morrison's "Tupelo Honey". He even does imitations of classic pop artists which would go well on Saturday Night Live. His music is available on CDs.

Matt's performance will immediately follow the 7:00 pm 3RFS Annual Business Meeting. The concert is free to 3RFS members. Non-member admission is \$20, however for the cost of a membership (buy at the door or online) you can get the concert free and get reduced rates on 3RFS concerts and coffee houses. Enter All Saints Episcopal Church from the door by the back parking lot.

Seasonal Changes

April and May are transition months for 3RFS, with April marking the end of the coffee house season and May the end of the concert season. We need to take a moment to acknowledge the work of Alan Page and Micki Perry as the coffee house and concert series coordinators, respectively. They have worked hard all year to bring the community a variety of quality acoustical music performers and we can't thank them enough. We also need to acknowledge Frank Cuta for his selfless provision of sound for the concerts. Both series will resume in September with coffee houses on the second Friday of the month and concerts typically on the third Saturday. Both series will continue to be held at All Saints Episcopal Church, to whom we are very grateful for their warm and generous hospitality in allowing use of their fellowship hall and sanctuary.

With our concerts and coffee houses on summer break, don't forget that our

monthly First Friday Folkie Fee For Alls (FFFFFA) and Second Saturday Sea Song Singalongs (SSSSS) will continue throughout the summer. So you still have plenty of opportunities to join in the musical fun. The FFFFFAs are held at Micki Perry's home except for the May 3 gathering which was hosted by Bill Darke at his Richland home (210 Somerset St). The SSSSSs will continue at the Richland Round Table Pizza (on George Washington Way) with pizza at 6:00 and music beginning around 6:45 and going until exhaustion or closing hour hits.

Of course, the other big summer event is Tumbleweed Music Festival, about which you will find much discussion elsewhere in this newsletter. And there is talk about possibly having one or more Tumbleweed Teaser concerts leading up to the Festival, but it's too soon to discuss details.

Rhiannon Giddens Brings History, Heart, Humor, and Consummate Musicianship to UW - by Dave Carson

Friday, April 19th, Rhiannon Giddens brought her incredible musicianship, wealth of knowledge, love of history, sly humor, and boundless love for music to the Katharyn Alvord Gerlich Theater in Meany Hall, on the University of Washington campus in Seattle.

For those who may not be familiar with her, Rhiannon Giddens burst upon the music scene in 2005 when she, with her bandmates Dom Flemons and Justin Robinson, founded the Carolina Chocolate Drops, a band dedicated to recovering and spreading early Black string band music of North Carolina. Rhiannon and the band were mentored by Joe Thompson, a surviving string performer from the early 20th century. The band won the last official Folk Music Grammy in 2010 for their Nonesuch release *Genuine Negro Jig*. She has also played with the Silk Road Ensemble, led for many years by Yo Yo Ma. In 2019, she founded, with Amythyst Kiah, Allison Russell, and Leyla McCalla, four other Black female banjo players and fantastic talents in their own right, the group "Our Native Daughters." From <http://rhiannongiddens.com/our-native-daughters>, their album *Songs of Our Native Daughters* was named one of the best albums of that year by NPR, and the group was nominated for duo / group of the year at the 2020 Americana Awards. The documentary film, *Songs of Our Native Daughters*, aired in February 2020 on Smithsonian Channel.

Rhiannon is at once a musician, musicologist, author, playwright, composer, Pulitzer prize winner (for her 2023 Opera *Omar*), historian, a MacAthur Foundation Fellow (and, incidentally, a relentless practitioner of crochet). She has delved deeply into the history of the banjo, tracing its branching roots to its African origins, and has deeply researched, revived, and shared the music that came with it, which led to the origins of Folk and Country among the Black populations of the American South from the 17th and 18th centuries forward to today.

It is this deep background of love, appreciation, and desire to teach and share that Ms. Giddens brought to Meany hall on that Friday night. Her band, as you'd expect, are all genius-level performers (including her husband, Francesco Turrisi, on keyboards). Her primary instrument is a recreated 1858, fretless, gut-strung "Minstrel Style" banjo; she also plays fiddle and many, many other instruments.

Opening the evening was Charly Lowry, a Native American singer and activist. Her first song was sung in Lumbee, the tribe of which she's a member. Accompanied only by a small drum, her clear voice easily conveyed the emotion of the song to everyone. She continued with some originals ("Brown Skin") and some covers (Willie Nelson's "Crazy"), and had the house rocking right along with her.

Rhiannon opened with three originals, then began working in traditional space, with some French language Louisiana music; the band really went to town, giving it the real "Chanky-chank" feeling and bringing the energy right up. The rest of the set had a mix of originals and traditional numbers, given time to breathe through Rhiannon's commentary and teaching between numbers. It never felt forced or preachy, was often humorous, and gave a natural space to let each musical number shine on its own, rather than the set feeling rushed.

Of her originals, "You Louisiana Man" and "Too Little, Too Late, Too Bad" (from her most recent album, *You're The One*) were definite highlights, with her tribute (from the same album) to early Dolly Parton "If You Don't Know How Sweet It Is" definitely connecting with all of us. She commented that she wrote it in the style of Dolly's early songs, when she was "a lot saltier" because they're so fun.

Rhiannon was joined for some songs by Charly Lowry, whose voice blended excellently with Rhiannon's; one of these was Charly's song "Backbone," which she wrote about her revolutionary Lumbee/Tuscarora ancestor, Henry Barry Lowry (search out his history - it's worth the time).

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

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 (Micki Perry)

Rhiannon was joined on her serious number "Another Wasted Life," (about individuals [predominantly Black] incarcerated for years without trial because they can't afford bail) by young musician Niwel Tsumbu, who delivered a scorching rap commentary during the song's break. Later in the set, the band performed one of Niwel's own songs.

The band wrapped up the set by pulling out all the stops and really going to town on some real old-time music - a long group of songs played in a semicircle around one microphone. An extended take on "Cluck Old Hen" segued naturally into another song from *You're The One*, "Hen in the Foxhouse."

The evening ended with the encore, a rousing cover of Sister Rosetta Tharpe's "Up Above My Head." There was, naturally, extended standing applause in gratitude for the excellent evening's entertainment.

In closing, I'll note that her tour will be at McCurdy Pavilion in Port Townsend on August 12th; see <https://rhiannongiddens.com/tour> for information. In my own opinion, it would be well worth the drive to be able to experience this fantastic show!

Sacajawea Bluegrass Festival
by Reade Obern

Thursday - Sunday, June 6-9
Sacajawea State Park

Camping and jamming is a big part of the festival. The camping experience with the jamming is so much fun, we encourage you to try and camp at the event. Campers arrive as early as 10am on Thursday June 6, and can leave as late as 10 am on Monday June 10. Camping fees are \$13 per vehicle per night, plus a one time \$15 registration per person fee to cover costs. Showers are available on site. Camping is "dry camping", no electrical, water, or sewer. If you need electricity for medical needs, there are a limited number of plugs to use, talk to the gate volunteers when you arrive.

We are having a Friday night Contra Dance, 7 pm to 9 pm. The dance is free, but vehicles that park must either display a Washington State Park Discover Pass or pay the state park \$10 daily fee on site. Car pooling is encouraged.

On Saturday June 8, we are having a youth workshop and stage presentation. Kids will have instructors and activities on Saturday June 8, 2pm to 5pm, with a stage presentation at 5:30 pm. If you know

Local Folk Events

May

3	First Friday Folkie Free For All	7:00 pm Fri	Bill Darke's, Richland
6	Tumbleweed Planning Committee	7:00 pm Mon	Zoom
11	2nd Saturday Seasoning Singalong	6:00 pm Sat	Round Table Pizza, Richland
13	3RFS Board Meeting	7:00 pm Mon	Gene Carbaugh's, Richland
15	Tumbleweed Planning Committee	7:00 pm Wed	Zoom
18	Annual Membership Meeting and Concert with Matt Hammer	7:30 pm Sat	All Saints', Richland
24-27	Northwest Folklife Festival	Fri - Mon	Seattle Center, Seattle

June

3	Tumbleweed Planning Meeting	7:00 pm Mon	Zoom
6-9	Sacajawea Bluegrass Festival	Thur-Sun	Sacajawea State Park, Pasco
7	FFFFFA	7:00 pm Fri	Micki Perry's
8	SSSSS	6:00 pm Sat	Round Table Pizza, Richland
10	3RFS Board Meeting	7:00pm Mon	Gene Carbaugh's, Richland
19	Tumbleweed Planning Meeting	7:00 pm Wed	Zoom

July

1	Tumbleweed Planning Meeting	7:00 pm Mon	Zoom
5	FFFFFA	7:00 pm Fri	Micki Perry's
8	3RFS Board Meeting	7:00 pm Mon	Gene Carbaugh's, Richland
13	SSSSS	6:00 pm Sat	Round Table Pizza, Richland
17	Tumbleweed Planning Meeting	7:00 pm Wed	Zoom
26-27	Art in The Park	Fri - Sat	Howard Amon Park, Richland

All Saints' = All Saints' Episcopal Church, 1322 Kimball Ave., Richland
 Bill Darke's - 210 Somerset St, 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

any young folks (between the ages of 4 and 17) who would like to experience an introduction to bluegrass music, be sure to call 509-492-1555 to make arrangements. By prior arrangement, a limited number of instruments can be lent to the youth. No experience is needed.

The free Saturday concert bands start at 5:30 pm. No Discover pass or day parking fee needed on Saturday.

The first band for Saturday is Spokane-based Monroe Bridge, with a finely honed blend of traditional, contemporary, and original bluegrass, country and gospel music. We love their tight vocal harmony and dynamic instrumentals.

At 7 pm come the Horsenecks. The Horsenecks are Gabriell Macrae and Barry Southern. Based in Astoria, Oregon, they are two multi-instrumentalists who have come together from traditional music

backgrounds and found a sound that weaves through layers of influences that include early Appalachian fiddle and banjo music, country, classic bluegrass and original folk.

At 8 pm we present Rock Ridge Bluegrass Band. This exceptional Oregon band is comprised of Josie Grant (guitar, vocals), Dale Atkins (guitar, banjo, vocals), Josh Atkins (mandolin, vocals), and Suzanne Atkins (bass, vocals). This band has received rave reviews, with very deep talent coupled with hard work, ending up as one of the tightest bluegrass bands in the northwest. Not to be missed!

<https://www.mctama.org/sacajawea-bluegrass-festival/>

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!

_____ 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

Spring Cleaning and 3RFS

With the first days of Spring, we often joke about the need for Spring cleaning. Here's your chance to support Tumbleweed and eliminate some of those old folkie mementos and extra music items. Tumbleweed will again feature a silent auction, and we need those surplus musical instruments you've outgrown or no longer need (but not worn out). Contact Gene Carbaugh 509-946-0504 or president@3rfs.net to arrange pickup or drop-off of your donation.

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