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.

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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.

Folk Talk
A Newsletter for Columbia, Snake, and Yakima River Folk

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.
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 Sloan 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,” Sloan 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.
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). This 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

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 folk and old-time and bluegrass scene.

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.

RIP Vivian! Thanks for touching our lives!
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 ☐

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

I can help 3RFS with:

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