

Bluegrass Festival this weekend in Stevenson

By Charlie Plante
DeVault Publishing

The Columbia Gorge Bluegrass Festival is once again ready to fill the air with musical notes at the Skamania County Fair Grounds Thursday through Sunday.

At the festival, there will be bands performing, instrument workshops that professional musicians will lead, square dancing, a chance for children to learn an instrument and get on stage, “Jammers Jamboree” and a gospel show.

“It’s a community event in which we think it’s really good for people just to get together and realize that we can play together again,” Fred Coates, the master of ceremonies for the festival, said. “It’s a bluegrass collection of people coming to play bluegrass music.”

Coates described bluegrass music as “They sing mountain music and tell stories with the songs,” Coates said. “And most of the stories are sad or heart-broken, but they’re at a tempo that makes you feel good about them.”

The festival has continued over the last 34 to 35 years, Coates said.

On Sundays, musicians will teach children how to play music and facts about the instrument they’re playing and at the end, they will be allowed to go on stage to perform what they learned.

This is called Chicks Kids, a tradition that has been happening for at least the past 20 years, according to Coates. Children can play mandolins, guitars and ukuleles, as those are easier to learn than a fiddle or banjo, Coates said.

“Oftentimes women’s groups are overlooked because there aren’t that many women in the genre, but if you find them, they’re very exceptional musicians,” Coates, the man who finds and hires bands for the festival, said.

The bands that are attending include: Bronwyn Keith-Hynes, Never Come Down, Oly Mountain Boys, Westbound Sky, Skillethead, Whiskey Deaf, BonBon & JBell, Bill Jol-



Photo courtesy of Skamania County Fairground

Crowds enjoy annual Bluegrass festival!



The Rosa Lees’ Rachel Buklad picks the banjo in 2025.

liff, Sweet Fern and more. Many include women and one is a women-only group.

When Coates started attending the festival, he was a musician. He then found his way to become the master of ceremonies, where he has been for the last 10 years.

He then spoke about the culture that surrounds bluegrass music.

“If seven people get together, they will all know

at least 100 songs in this genre where they can just play them together,” Coates said. “At the end of it, you’ve had three minutes of real joy being together and you may not know anything else about each other, except through music, through those three minutes.”

Schedule

Thursday, 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Jammers Jamboree (free



The Whiskey Deaf bluegrass band of Portland performs Friday, July 25, at the Columbia Gorge Bluegrass Festival in Stevenson. The band includes Jamie Blair, banjo, left, Annie Staninec, violin, Ethan Lawton, mandolin, John Kael, guitar, and vocals, and Dodo Johnson, bass (not pictured).

Friday, 4 p.m. - 9 p.m.	Festival Admission
Concert series	\$40 - Friday Admission
Old Time Square Dancing at 10 p.m. (free admission)	\$40 - Saturday Admission
Saturday, 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.	\$75 - Weekend Admission
Free workshops from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.	Festival details:
Live bands from 2 p.m. - 10 p.m.	Tickets will be available at the door.
Sunday, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.	Free admission on Thursday and Sunday.
Gospel show (free admission)	Children 12 years and younger are admitted free when accompanied by an adult.
Chicks Kids 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.	

Local community college manufacturing program named Center of the Year by Department of Energy

National Industrial Training and Assessment Centers network honors CGCC with the Manufacturing Outcomes Award for outstanding real-world support and engagement with small and mid-sized manufacturers

Columbia Gorge Community College’s Advanced Manufacturing and Fabrication program has been named the U.S. Department of Energy’s Industrial Training and Assessment Center (ITAC) Center of the Year for Manufacturing Outcomes at the annual ITAC Directors Meeting in Park City, Utah. The award recognizes CGCC’s leadership in delivering direct, measurable support to manufacturers through technical as-



Courtesy photo

Pictured left to right: Clifton Yin, U.S. Department of Energy, Lindsey Hege-mann and Robert Wells-Clark, Columbia Gorge Community College; Ruth Georges, U.S. Department of Energy

sistance, engagement, and applied problem-solving.

The Manufacturing Outcomes Award is a national ITAC “Center of the

Year” honor from the U.S. Department of Energy, recognizing the center with the most impactful, measurable results for small

and mid-sized manufacturers.

Funded through a \$1.97 million DOE grant, CGCC’s ITAC serves as a

regional hub for advanced manufacturing training and technical assistance at the college’s campus in The Dalles. The center helps small- and medium-sized manufacturers improve productivity, reduce material waste, and lower energy use while giving students hands-on experience with advanced manufacturing technology.

“Our manufacturers are the backbone of the Gorge economy, and this national recognition shows that CGCC is helping them compete at a high level,” said Dr. Kenneth Lawson, CGCC’s president. “By pairing industry-scale tools with student talent and faculty expertise, we’re solving real problems for local

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News Briefs

BOTG Kite Festival set

The Bridge of the Gods (BOTG) Youth Kite & Wing Festival is back and you’re invited to come watch the next generation of wind sport legends take flight this Friday through Sunday.

Since 2000, BOTG has been spring boarding youth kiteboarders and wingfoilers into the pro scene, and this year’s action will be bigger and better than ever.

Competition: Kite and Wing athletes (ages 20 & under) throwing down big air and technical tricks. Natural stadium seating right on the waterfront at the iconic East Point Kite Beach – the perfect place to catch all the action vendors and merchants along the beach to explore between heats

Then on Sunday, stick around for the legendary Gorge Blowout – a 17-mile downwind race from Stevenson to Hood River open to all watercraft. The Gorge Blowout has been taking place in the Gorge since 1980! This is a race for experienced watermen and women only.

The weekend schedule: Friday, July 24: Youth Kite & Wing Competition Saturday, July 25: Backup Wind Day Sunday, July 26: The Gorge Blowout Downwind Race (Start: Stevenson, Finish: Hood River Marina)

Bring a chair, bring a friend, and come cheer on these incredible athletes as they push the limits of wind sports all weekend long. Have questions, want to sponsor or volunteer? Contact Rachel at: rach-elcallahanbotg@gmail.com

Spain comes to Stevenson

Alexis House is hosting a special class Saturday to bring the flavors of Spain to Stevens.

On Saturday, July 25, from 2 – 4 p.m., a Spanish cooking class with Chef José Gómez Elegido is scheduled. There is a \$40 fee to attend.

Alexis House is located at 25 Russell Ave. in Stevenson.

Free Summer Concert Series

Enjoy free outdoor live music at Skamania Lodge’s Summer Concert Series, featuring Pacific Northwest artists and a variety of genres including pop, country, blues, folk, and soul.

Concerts take place at The Backyard Grill 1131 SW Skamania Lodge Way, in Stevenson on Sunday afternoons, 5– 7 pm.



Columbia Gorge
Bluegrass Festival
July 23 – 26
Skamania County
Fairgrounds

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This day in history

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| 1894 | First-ever automobile race runs from Paris to Rouen. |
| 1934 | Bank robber John Dillinger gunned down in Chicago. |
| 1991 | Cannibal and serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer is caught. |
| 2003 | Jessica Lynch, a soldier rescued from Iraqi, returns home to a hero’s welcome. |