

[Close this window](#)[Print this page](#)

FAIRBANKS
Daily News - Miner

Fiddlehead Red adds acoustica to Pub's entertainment list

By [Erica Goff](#)

Originally published Friday, September 19, 2008 at 12:00 a.m.

Updated Friday, September 19, 2008 at 12:00 a.m.



Drea Hunnicutt

FAIRBANKS — School is in, which means yet another season of entertainment and events have commenced at the Wood Center Pub on the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus.

“The majority of our entertainment comes from the local pool. It is so exciting to have this vast amount of local musical talent,” Pub manager Heather Kraemer said of the lively entertainment schedule, which has already entered its third week and welcomed Alaska Blaskapelle at the Oktoberfest celebration last week and local open mic night host Tyler, who holds open mic night each Wednesday.

The next big gig on the Pub calendar is a Saturday performance from Far North Fiddlehead Red. While it may sound like a new name on the music scene, having hit the schedules just once so far with a performance at The Marlin Sept. 12, the members should be plenty familiar to dedicated Fairbanks music junkies. Singer and fiddler Rachel De Temple, guitar and banjo player Andrew Parkerson-Gray, singer Shiloh Parkerson-Gray and bass and mandolin player Amanda Booth were well known as members of the popular acoustic group Red Square until last spring and are making a comeback on local stages with a new name and the same spunk.

“For one thing, we really got tired of people asking if we were communists,” De Temple joked, adding the new name also “roots us geographically and hints at our acoustic focus.”

The group’s resurface comes after members took time to cope with the death of former mandolin player Dan Ison. The loss was difficult, De Temple said, and Andrew noted it was a loss felt both inside and outside the band.

“Tragedy struck us and the Fairbanks music community that very same weekend, leaving the band struggling on what direction to take and affecting each member differently,” he said, noting it wasn’t until this summer members decided to re-group.

Andrew shed some light on the group's Red Square name, one he said reflected luck — red — and the group's self-proclaimed nerdiness — square. De Temple said the red is something that also applies to their insistence they are not strictly a bluegrass band, although they do have a strong connection to the genre in background, style and instrument. Booth has strong bluegrass roots — both her parents are well-known bluegrass musicians in Anchorage, and she grew up playing the mandolin and other traditional bluegrass strings. Andrew taught himself how to play guitar and banjo, De Temple plays fiddle, and each musician enjoys acoustic tunes. But, De Temple said and Andrew agreed, they cannot be signified by a single genre or description.

“What kind of music is it? We're still looking for a way to classify it, but we can't find that magic word,” De Temple said.

“I don't know if I can describe our music. It's been very hard to pigeonhole us into one genre. We usually go with acoustic, or acoustica, an encompassing acoustic genre,” Andrew said.

While the group has some original material — they're currently working on a CD in addition to doing live shows — they also enjoy taking familiar songs and making them their own, De Temple said, noting their covers range from such jamming tunes as “Gin and Juice” to harder Rage Against the Machine covers, which are songs not generally thought of as acoustic numbers. De Temple said the group has a range of influences, which is evident in their approach and their personal music collections.

“If you looked at our iPods, you'd see just a little bit of everything,” she said, further emphasizing the group's distaste for limiting themselves. “We're not just bluegrass, we're not just folk. As long as it's fun we're going to play it.”

The group is happy to be a part of the fast-moving Fairbanks music scene, Shiloh said, calling the group lucky to be members of the community.

“We've met so many great musicians and feel they've taken us under their wings. There is so much love and support around, it's been a blessing to us all,” she said.

While the group's ultimate goal, Shiloh said, is to be able to afford traveling around and touring “wherever the road takes us, to many unexpected places and get the chance to share our music with people from near and far,” they are for now happy to share their music in area venues such as The UAF Pub.

“Wherever we play it's fun, it just feels good to do it,” De Temple said. “I like it when people get up and dance and have fun. We also strive to have a polished sound, so we try to offer the best of both worlds.”

While Fiddlehead Red would gladly play for an audience of five, De Temple said the energy and the fun increases with the number of people. They just hope to offer a good time, she said.

Kraemer, the Pub manager, said it is a pleasure to add the group to its list of events. Saturday's show will be preceded by a '70s Party tonight, featuring music from that not-so-long-lost decade along with themed clothes, a disco ball, "hot pants, bell bottoms and all those crazy patterns." The Pub's weekly schedule includes Monday Night Football and Pub Trivia on Mondays, Latin Dance night Tuesdays, open mic night on Wednesdays, and a variety of other scheduled events throughout the year.

"It's really a great place to come to chill out, meet up with friends, and have a good time. We're always featuring local music and other events, and keeping things lively," Kraemer said, noting the bar is non-smoking and does not serve liquor.

In addition to regular music events, The Pub frequently holds beer and wine tastings, offering "a little wine adventure" with information on local wineries, and food included in the \$15 ticket price. For more information on the Pub's calendar visit www.alaska.edu/woodcenter/services/pub.

What: FiddleheadREd, acoustica for the masses

When: 9 p.m. Saturday

Where: UAF Pub, in the Wood Center on UAF campus

Contact Features Editor Erica Goff at 459-7523.