

NORFOLK *Countryside*



Lynn Post (left to right), Jenny Gedy and Kay MacPherson play the ukulele in the Tuesday night jam session at The Hobo/Robot Café on Main Street in Port Dover.

Ukelele enthusiasts jamming in Port Dover

By DONNA McMILLAN

UKELELE enthusiasts are meeting every Tuesday evening in Port Dover to jam at The Robot Café and Hobo Store on Main Street. The small guitar-like instrument, originating in 19th century Hawaii, is undergoing a resurgence in popularity. And, there are 15 to 25 area residents proving that to be true, as they either learn to play or practice playing, within a social environment. All newcomers are welcome to join in.

Peter Shebib of Fisher's Glen has been playing the Ukelele for the past 16 years. He has been a regular at the Corktown Ukelele Jam sessions in Toronto on Wednesday nights and attended Ukefests in Nova Scotia, Virginia and other parts of the continent. Dennis Mur-

phy of Simcoe has been playing the "happy instrument" since 1961. For many years, he lead Ukelele groups as an extra curricular activity in schools. Together, the two men decided to start a jam session locally.

Peter told The Maple Leaf he knew people would come out if they offered the opportunity. "The ukelele is a friendly instrument to learn," he said. "It is non-threatening, with no ego or attitude. It brings a smile to your face."

The group started gathering at the Hobo shop six weeks ago and attendees range from absolute beginners to people who know how to play. "We had our first open mic after six weeks," Peter said. "Many said they can't sing and wouldn't do it. Last week we had a simple one on kids' songs and most got up and did one. They amazed me. There was so much excitement to

see where they were at after six weeks."

Everyone learns their own songs. There is no charge for the sessions and people can purchase a ukelele at The Hobo for as little as \$40.

Kay MacPherson of Simcoe saw an ad for the jam session and thought she would be interested. A singer, she is starting to play the ukelele from scratch in order to be able to accompany herself. She started off with an old ukulele that she had at home, but has now purchased a new colourful one from the music store.

Jenny Gedy of Fisher's Glen used to hear her neighbor Peter play on the hill for years. She taught kindergarten for years and thought it would be great to be able to play when she supply teaches or for her grand kids. There is always a lot of music in her house.

Lynn Post of Simcoe watched her children play piano and violin as they grew. She's always wanted to play an instrument herself. When she heard Jenny, her friend, was coming out she decided to join in. She is hoping to surprise her daughter at Easter.

Dan Pearson of Simcoe has been playing at parties off and on for the past 50 years. But, he has been playing without words. When he heard about these jam sessions starting up, he decided he should learn how to do it properly. And, he's really enjoying it.

Peter said the ukelele is good for everything from children's songs to jazz to country to Hawaiian. He wanted to emphasize the evening is open to anyone to come out at anytime. It is just a fun evening and the café is a great spot to jam in.



Peter Shebib and Dan Pearson jamming.

Jeff Andrew, Jess Hill in concert at Robot Cafe April 30

On Saturday, April 30 The Robot Café will present a special double CD release party for independent touring artists Jeff Andrew and Jess Hill with Crows at Midnight at the café located at 243 Main Street, Port Dover. Doors will open at 7 p.m. and music will begin at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$10 available at The Robot Cafe or at the door.

Vancouver's Folk Noir singer-songwriters Jess Hill and Jeff Andrew are teaming up for a full-band, cross-Canada tour to promote the release of two new albums: Jeff Andrew's 'Hobo Postcards' and Jess Hill's 'Orchard'.

This pair of longtime friends and veteran solo performers, both well-loved staples in the western

Canadian music scene, will be playing separate sets with the same backing band and collaborating on stage to bring an exciting, dramatic concert experience.

Upright bassist/drummer Kenan Sungur and poet/mandolinist Radar will be doing double duty as they switch instruments and roles onstage.

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