

Have Dulcimer. Will Travel

Question- What do you get when you have a dulcimer maker who has taught dulcimer making at the local community college for the last 30 years. Answer- You get a lot of dulcimers standing in closets or hanging on walls collecting dust or so it seemed to Luke Day, the director of the Rebecca Caudill Public Library located at Cumberland, Ky. Luke ,who has enjoyed playing the dulcimer for the last 25 years , was convinced that there were some dulcimers out there that needed to be dusted off and played. So beginning in the fall of 2007, Luke began to advertise free dulcimer lessons at the library and several aspiring musicians began showing up on Thursday evenings.

“The dulcimer is not too difficult to learn to play, “ he says. “You need no music background at all, just a desire to learn. You can play traditionally or progressive, you can use your pick of several tunings, you can play with one string or up to six or more if you choose. The dulcimer is the most personal of instruments and what ever pleases the player is by definition what is pleasing.” The second group of learners will be finishing up soon and Luke will begin advertising a new class next fall at the library.

Luke has also taken his love for the instrument to the local elementary school and has giving instruction to entire classes. One of teachers wrote a grant and received enough funding to purchase 30 cardboard dulcimers. Luke learned about this from one of the teachers who frequents the library . He later met with the teacher who wrote the grant and offered his help for no charge but as a way to promote the use of the library. He has worked with sixth and fifth grade classes for two years now. “The cardboard instruments don’t sound too bad and the kids pick it up quick ,” he says, “even students who at first assured him that they could not play any instrument are playing *Boil That Cabbage Down* before the period is

over." There are tentative plans of having the classes play at school functions sometime in the future.