‘Strings & Things’ Exhibit Opens August 2 at the Museum

Four talented stringed instrument makers will take part in a new exhibit beginning Aug. 2 at the Gallery of the Georgia Museum of Agriculture operated by Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. The exhibit, “Strings & Things”, is presented in partnership with the Tifton Farmers’ Market.

The exhibit will open at 6 p.m. on Aug. 2 at the Museum Gallery with a “Good Food, Good Folk, Good Music” reception sponsored by the Tifton Farmers’ Market, which will feature samples of locally grown foods prepared by local farmers and performances by some of the featured musicians.

“Strings & Things” will remain open through Oct. 1. Exhibit hours for the month of August will coincide with the Museum’s hours which are Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. During the months of September and October, the exhibit hours will be 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Tuesday - Saturday.

OMA Gallery Curator from the ABAC Arts Connection Polly Huff said “Strings & Things” will be open for group tours or other special events. For questions or to schedule your special event or class visit to the Gallery, contact Huff at (229) 391-5222 or via e-mail at phuff@abac.edu.

The exhibit will showcase the exquisite work of luthiers or stringed instrument-makers Mike VanDeVelde, Davy Davis, Mike Daugherty, and Michael Walker. Each luthier specializes in uniquely designed and hand-built musical instruments which will be on display including fiddles, mandolins, and guitars. An antique ocarina, a few Appalachian dulcimers, and a harp and a double-bass made by retired ABAC professor Leon Benefield will also be displayed.

An interactive, hands-on corner will be set up as a part of this exhibit. It will allow patrons an opportunity to play one of the featured instruments. Several of the exhibited instruments will be available for purchase.

“This exhibit will give our guests a taste of authentic Georgia folk art, which is often created by self-taught artists and craftsmen,” said Huff. “American art was indeed rooted in folk art or primitive art, and these works often reflect the values of the artists and their communities. We are honored to host this exhibit and pay homage to the talent of some of Georgia’s best craftsmen.”

Mike VanDeVelde was not always interested in building fiddles and bluegrass music. He was bitten by the bluegrass bug when he heard Tony Rice playing guitar and Bobby Hicks playing the fiddle. Mainly self-taught, VanDeVelde was introduced to building fiddles by a mentor. He set a 10-year goal to become an established luthier and produce outstanding instruments, but within three years one of his fiddles was played onstage by Becky Buller. Since then, he has worked with countless musicians to find out what professionals want and need in their instruments. He now has endorsements from Marty Raybon and Full Circle and Hannah Harper from the Harper Family bluegrass gospel group from Missouri.

Davy Davis of Cousin Dave’s Home-Made Instruments and Davis Music combines his talent for building instruments with his irresistible sense of humor. He became interested in music at the age of four when he heard a new group called “The Beatles”. Twelve years later he was asked to play in a band, and then opened his own music store.

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Reorganized and Focused

ABAC recently went through several changes to improve its ability to deliver an improved level of customer focus to our students, faculty, and all stakeholders across campus. As a result of these changes, there are four new areas, each focusing on specific areas of service.

The four new areas created by the reorganization are displayed in the organizational charts found on this page. Please contact the respective areas if you have any questions.

Managed by John Clemens, Vice President for Planning and Operations

Student Financial Services

Who: Prospective & current students
What: Financial aid, payments, and tuition assistance programs
Staff:
Director: Shawn Thomas
Assistant Directors: Traci Bryan & Stefane Whiddon
Customer Service Reps: Brenda Corbin & Kelly Drake
Where: 2nd floor J. Lamar Branch Students Center
SFS@abac.edu
391-4870

Admissions

Who: Prospective Students
What: Recruiting & admissions
Staff:
Director: Donna Webb
Customer Service Rep: Caren Gladin
Recruiters: Carlos Howard, Brooke Jernigan, Amanda Wulle, and Kaitlin Stannard
Where: 2nd floor J. Lamar Branch Students Center
abacinfo@abac.edu
391-5004 Option 1

Managed by Dr. Niles Reddick, Vice President for Academic Affairs

Registrar

Who: Current students & faculty
What: assist current students and faculty with student records (e.g. initiating transcript requests and evaluating transcripts)
Staff:
Registrar: Carrah Mirus
Assistant Registrar: Emily Cheek
Where: 2nd floor J. Lamar Branch Students Center
registrar@abac.edu
391-5003

Academic Support Center

Who: Current students
What: provide services and guidance to current students in all areas of the academic process, tutoring center (e.g. drop/adds, schedule adjustments, withdrawals, registration issues, and transient permission, GPA calculations, degree options, academic progress, change of major, scholarships, standards of academic progress, etc.)
Staff:
Academic Support Counselors: Nicholas Urquhart (lead), Rebecca Cofer, Charla Sutton, Melissa Willis
Tutoring: Kim Talley
Learning Support: Cathy Rogers
Where: 1st floor Carlton Center
asc@abac.edu
391-4995
Handmade lap steel guitars, cigar box guitars, basses, fiddles, and mandolins are among the instruments built by Davis. He accumulated many spare parts and started putting instruments together for his own amusement. His love of humor dictated that he would make funny instruments that would actually play, claiming Dr. Seuss as one of his biggest influences. The instruments he builds are made out of repurposed frying pans, waffle irons, and hubcaps. Today personalized instruments made by Davis have reached Australia and Germany and are scattered all over the U.S.

Mike Daugherty is an involved and dedicated member of the Atlanta Country Music Hall of Fame. He began teaching fiddle, mandolin and violin in 1988. In 2002, Daugherty participated in the "Hands over Georgia" program sponsored by the University of Georgia. He lectured on music, the making of violins, and how to play the fiddle. This project resulted in a television program dedicated to playing the fiddle. He repairs, restores, and builds guitars, mandolins, and violins (fiddles), and spends his spare time studying his craft. Some of Daugherty’s accomplishments include nominations for the 2010 Atlanta Country Music Hall of Fame’s Education Award and the 2011 Ray Melton Music Man Award.

Michael Walker spent the last several years farming organically in California. A man of many talents, he makes some of the most beautiful guitars. Boasting extraordinary sound qualities and gorgeous finishes, his creations speak for his passion which shines through in all the details. Mirror-like and sleek to the touch, a Walker guitar is an exceptional instrument prized by many guitar enthusiasts. He recently moved back to Georgia and currently resides in Savannah.