

The sound that brings us together

By Bill McKee Daily News staff writer | Posted: Tuesday, December 16, 2014 12:00 am

Tonight's Musical Sleighride won't just be a holiday treat, it will also mark 40 years of performances by the Community Band of the Palouse.

And as the band came together to rehearse for the event in the week prior to the show, they gathered together in the same place where it all began - the former Pullman High School Band Room in the Gladish Community and Cultural Center.

The band first met there in 1974 under the guidance of Dana Cleveland, then-musical director at the high school, and one current member of the band was there.

Dave Seamons, 87, of Pullman has been a member ever since that day - and helped found their German community band offshoot, Auf Gehts - and says he hopes it will still be around 40 years in the future. He said the reason it's been around so long is that it allows members the chance to play music, provides music and entertainment for local events and helps hold the community together.

"It's fun being with all these good friends, and we get to play interesting music together," he said.

His feelings were echoed around the room - between the sounds of instruments being tuned and adjusted - that it provides a great way to enjoy the company of friends, to experience the camaraderie that comes with playing with a group, while getting the chance to do something they all love.

Genny Houser fell in love with music when she began playing in sixth grade, and said it's been a big part of her life ever since. She said music is an "international language" that transcends individual cultures, and that it's worth the time she and others put into it to see the joy on the faces of the people who come to the performances.

"Music is something that really brings meaning to my life, especially at this point in my life," she said. "I've done other things along the way. Everything I do now, volunteer-wise, is music related."

The band includes about 40 members ranging from high school students to retirees. And it's more than just a great place to play music and spend time with friends, said Megan Welling, it's also a great way for parents to share their love of music with their children.

Welling said she grew up playing music, that it's always been a part of her life, and it will be for her



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Community Band of the Palouse prepares for their holiday concert in the former Pullman High School Band Room on Dec. 9 at the Gladish Community and Cultural Center in Pullman.

children as well - all seven play instruments and four are in the community band with her.

"Everyone (in our family) always just played instruments, so when that's the life you know, that's what you get your kids involved in," Welling said. "It's really fun to sit down and do something together. Instead of something where on Tuesday nights I'm away, on Tuesday nights we're all away."

Along with occasional performances at different senior living facilities and other local events, the Community Band of the Palouse plays seven concerts annually - 17 with the Auf Gehts German Band - including the 4th of July celebration at Sunnyside Park, the Moscow Farmers Market and the Reaney Park Concert. This is only the second year of the Holiday Concert, but they hope to make it a regular event, said music director Denise Snider.

Snider, who comes up with the song list as well as conducting the performances, said the Holiday Concert will include a variety music instead of just traditional Christmas music, since holiday music tends to get a little overplayed on the radio this time of year.

"I'm trying to mix up the music. I'm hoping to make it a little more interesting - for about the last six weeks people have been inundated with Christmas music," she said.

"A Musical Sleighride" begins tonight at 7 o'clock at the Gladish Community and Cultural Center in Pullman.

Know anyone in the Moscow-Pullman community doing something interesting? We'd love to hear about it. Contact Bill McKee at 208-883-4627, or by email to wmckee@dnews.com.