

Curtis Cleland makes, plays 3-string fiddle

Curtis Cleland likes to fiddle around and he has a string missing.

Nothing wrong with that. The Germania Road, Holbrook, resident, 64, has been playing a fiddle since age 12. He still owns his first violin.

His newest violin, which he made himself, only has three strings.

He read an article in a magazine devoted to stringed instruments about the "Scottish pocket fiddle" and decided to build one.

The article mentioned the instrument had only three strings, but didn't say why. There was no illustration, so Cleland had to guess at what it looked like.

"I didn't know what I was doing, just using up my scrap," he said.

The result of a couple of weeks of off and on effort was a small violin, with the top and bottom made from plywood.

The Scottish pocket violin got its name because it was small enough to be easily carried by a traveler in Scotland riding a horse. Cleland's is too big to fit in one's pocket, and presumably so were the originals, but it could be carried in a saddlebag.

The three-stringer is played just like any normal four-string violin, its maker explained, but obviously doesn't have the range. "You just don't have as much to work with."

The pocket violin is the second instrument Cleland has built from scratch.

He likes to attend old time fiddlers' jamborees, though only to listen.

At one of them, he and daughter Judy Doerr, spotted a hammer dulcimer, a 26-string instrument played with wood hammers, used to hit the strings in much the same way one would drive nails.

They decided they would like one, so Cleland ordered a kit and assembled it.

The instrument proved to be too flimsy and would easily get out of tune, so he built another one from scratch, much heavier, which stays in tune.

The hammer dulcimer is not the easiest instrument to play, as it's easy to hit the wrong string while flaying away at it.

Instructors are as hard to come by as sheet music - in other words, non-existent - so Mrs. Doerr had to learn to play the instrument, according to her father, by "just hammering away at it."

The instrument apparently dates back to ancient Persia, he explained, and is mentioned in the Bible, although it was apparently played with the fingers, instead of with hammers.

The Appalachian mountain dulcimer is a much simplified version, usually with four strings, which is plucked or strummed. "I've been threatening to make one of them," he said.

Cleland describes himself as semi-retired. He and his wife, Velma, do reupholstering work in a shop behind their home, (for which their services are booked several months in advance). He also on occasion repairs a stringed instrument for a friend.

"I'm not a musician, by no means," he said modestly, but he knows what he likes to listen to. "I always liked a violin."



FIDDLER - Curtis Cleland plays the three - string Scottish pocket fiddle he constructed. In the foreground is the 26-string hammer dulcimer he made.

Three plans already

Proposals many on ways to shift, reduce taxes

More state legislators are scrambling to offer a solution to staggering increases in property taxes, with the hopes of getting something acceptable approved before the voters take the matter into their own hands at the

November general election. Already two tax shift plans are pending before the Legislature. A new third one recently unveiled would practically eliminate taxes on residential property for financing education.

The other plans would shift the source of about \$700 million in revenues needed to provide basic services from property taxes to state income, sales and use taxes.

LEGISLATORS ARE hustling in light of the proposed constitutional amendment which will cut property taxes by 50 percent and prohibit the lost revenues from being made up elsewhere by increasing other tax rates unless specific approval is given by the voters.

Petitions are currently being circulated to get the question on the November general election ballot.

A similar plan, the so-called Tisch amendment, was only narrowly defeated two years ago as voters opted for the less radical tax limitation (Headlee) amendment, which to date has had little effect on voters' tax bills.

THE LATEST PROPOSAL, which would also appear on the ballot as a constitutional amendment upon approval by the Legislature, would eliminate from property taxes local monies used to finance education. The \$700 million would be made up with an income tax increase and property taxes levied statewide against business and industrial property.

The measure would also exempt the first \$25,000 assessed valuation on property

owned by senior citizens to aid them in keeping their homesteads despite fixed incomes and an inflationary economy.

The proponents of the proposal, Representatives Perry Bullard (D-Ann Arbor) and Roy Smith (R-Ypsilanti), both members of the House Taxation Committee, say one of the most important features of the plan provides equitable school financing throughout the state.

"We will be sharing the wealth for all students equally," Smith said.

The representatives said no definite increase had been set for the income tax to make up the lost revenues, but estimated the increase would be over 32 percent, making the personal income tax rate 6.1 percent.

The current rate is 4.6 percent.

INCLUDED IN STATE financing will be property taxes of up to 35 mills spread on businesses and industry throughout the state. Smith said that could mean up to a 10 percent tax increase for business.

He noted, however, that because of assessing procedures, taxes will likely go down.

Both the income tax and business property tax will be specifically earmarked for school financing. Districts wishing greater income than provided by the state could

levy either a 1 percent income tax or a 7 mill property tax.

Renters would be insured current tax credits although the plan does not specifically mention renters' credits. Legislation would have to be enacted to guarantee the continuation of the credit.

The proposal would be phased in over a five-year period. During 1986, the revenue limits imposed by the Headlee tax limitation amendment would be relaxed to allow for taxes for education.

Smith said the proposal will guarantee local control of education and high quality schooling. Further, he said, it would also prevent the disruption of school administrative functions because school administrators would no longer have to campaign for millage increases.

Parents can ease sibling rivalry

Parents can help minimize - or at least ease - sibling rivalry by doing their best to down play their new baby in front of their "old" one for a while, even several weeks. It's usually wise to keep a stock of toys on hand to give to the older child when people bring gifts to the new one.

Federal job funds plunge likely in '81

Federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) funds for the upper Thumb are intact for this year, despite strong talk in Washington about cutting back the program.

At the consortium administrative board meeting last Thursday, board Chairman Calvin Reibling, who was in Washington earlier this month, said the cutbacks will come in the 1980-81 fiscal year, which starts Oct. 1.

"I think the one that will take the beating is Title VI," he said. The program provides jobs for persons who would be presumably otherwise unemployed, usually working on short-term projects for governmental units (park maintenance, brush cutting, painting, etc.). Discussed at a Senate hearing

Reibling attended was eliminating 250,000 of the present 350,000 Title VI jobs nationwide.

If that happens, consortium Executive Director Frank Lenard said, it could have an especially severe impact on the upper Thumb due to various factors.

On-the-job training programs with private employers (CETA Title II-B) are presently at low ebb because private employers aren't hiring.

The on-the-job training program with government and non-profit agencies (Title II-D) is lagging because of the \$7,390 annual wage limitation and 18-month maximum length of the job.

The employing government agencies can't hire someone paid with CETA funds at \$7,390 annually if they have non-CETA employees doing the same job at higher pay. Few government employees these days are paid that amount or less.

Title VI has the fewest restrictions, being basically for "anybody willing to work," so a severe cutback in that program will mean a big decrease in total CETA funded jobs in this area.

The consortium will be receiving \$461,101 for the CETA Summer Youth Employment Program this year, in addition to the \$62,704 it has already received to begin planning. That should be enough to provide about 400 jobs for youths from low-income families, ages 14-21.

The consortium has also received \$134,383 to be used for other CETA programs, that similar agencies elsewhere in the state couldn't use.

The board accepted the resignation of program coordinator Alfred Berry, who has accepted a job as CETA planner in St. Clair county. The person hired as his replacement, for what is the No. 2 position in the agency, will start at \$17,500 annually.

New television system allows deaf to 'hear' shows

THEN: Since the early days of television, the nation's hearing-impaired population could see programs on the screen, but they couldn't understand what was being said. The picture improved somewhat in 1975 when the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) began offering a few "open captioned" programs. With this system, captions could be seen on all TV screens, but programming was limited due to objections from hearing viewers.

NOW: Beginning in early 1980, a "closed captioning" system will be initiated by PBS, ABC and NBC with the help of the nonprofit National Captioning Institute, which captions television programs. By attaching an adapter unit to a standard TV set or using a set with built-in decoding equipment, viewers will be able to see many major prime-time programs.

WILL BUY

- SILVER COINS
- SILVER DOLLARS
- GOLD COINS
- SCRAP GOLD
- STERLING SILVER

HIGHEST PRICES PAID

At
CASS CITY HOTEL
IN FORMER INSURANCE OFFICE

MARCH HOURS
FRIDAY..... 1 to 6
SATURDAY..... 9 to 12

A & A COINS
Cass City

Say ...

'Happy Easter'

the thoughtful way with a beautiful

Lily Plant

or choose from our many

FLOWERING PLANTS

Mums, Azaleas, Cineraria, Pocketbook Plant, Violets

Our Business Is BLOOMING

Stop In At Our New Location
6491 MAIN STREET
(Right next door to Gambles)

Buds & Blossoms Flower Shop
Cass City Ublly

DON'T BE AN APRIL FOOL

Too often, people find that their insurance coverage is inadequate ... too late! If it has been some time since you've purchased insurance, you might want to review your policies. Chances are you'll find your insurance coverage is out-of-date. Don't be foolish ... see us soon!

HARRIS-HAMPSHIRE AGENCY, INC.
6815 E. Cass City Road
Cass City
Phone 872-2688

YOUR Independent Insurance AGENT

SINI PHOTO BONUS

FREE 5 x 7 PRINT WITH EVERY DEVELOPED ROLL OF 4X PRINTS WE WILL INCLUDE A COUPON GOOD FOR ONE

FREE 5 x 7 ENLARGEMENT (With prints developed)

TAKE YOUR FILM TO:

Old Wood Drug

On The Corner

Conventional Photography is your Best Buy

IMPORTANT TAX NOTICE

Your IRA -- Individual Retirement Account -- will allow you to take money that you earn now, and without paying taxes on it, put it away for retirement.

The benefits to you are considerable.

It can help make your retirement more comfortable and provide substantial tax savings.

The amount you deposit is tax-deductible now, and the interest you earn is not subject to tax during the life of your plan -- which gives you a double-sheltered investment that will grow each year.

The only requirement is that you are not currently a participant in another retirement plan -- which makes it ideal for farmers and other self-employed earners.

Come in and talk to us before filing your 1979 income tax reports -- you can still save on last year's tax.

No obligation.

Member FDIC

Farmers & Merchants STATE BANK

Sebewaing · Owendale · Gagetown

Sebewaing Downtown 883-3000	Owendale 7253 Main 678-4216	Gagetown 4761 State 665-2461	Sebewaing (Southside) 883-2280
--	--	---	--