

Music is instrumental to Panning family of Zeeland Township

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ZEELAND TOWNSHIP -- Walk into the home of Roween and Dave Panning, and one immediately gets a sense of the role music plays in their family.

A grand piano is the focal point of the living room, with an upright bass nearby.

The room is where the Pannings and their children - Luke, 18; Eve, 16 and Josiah, 14 -- hone their music.

For seven years, the Pannings have performed traditional gospel and bluegrass music as [Fiddle Fire](#). They have recorded three albums, including their most recent, "Playin' With Fire."

"We do a lot of festivals, arts and crafts events, luncheons at churches," said Roween Panning, a self-taught musician who plays the hammered dulcimer.

The Panning teens all play several instruments associated with bluegrass, including the fiddle, mandolin and guitar.

Eve Panning also does clogging, a style of percussive dancing associated with the Appalachian regions.

While the children began formal musical training at an early age, Roween Panning said the interest in old-time music came while they lived in Paoli, Ind., where they got involved with a community of musicians.

"We'd get together with this big group of people, and the kids would play along," she said.

2 shows this week

What: The Panning Family, performing as Fiddle Fire, along with some classical music

When: Today, 3 p.m.

Where: Herrick District Library, Hazel Hayes Auditorium, 300 S. River Ave.

Admission: Free

What: Fiddle Fire at the Allegan Woods Folk Arts Cooperative monthly contra dance

When: 7:15-10 p.m. Friday

Where: Park Township Community Hall, Ottawa County Fairgrounds, 1286 Ottawa Beach Road, Holland

Admission: \$8 for adults, \$5 for students.

The Pannings performed their first concert in 2002 at a picnic for the Howard Miller Co., where Dave Panning is director of product development and engineering. Roween Panning is a registered nurse at Zeeland Community Hospital.

Their repertoire has grown from six songs to more than 200.

The teens have other musical outlets, with all three members of the Grand Rapids Youth Symphony and the Black River Public School orchestra.

Luke Panning, a senior, and Eve Panning, a sophomore, are violinists. Josiah plays the bass.

In addition, Luke Panning is on the Holland Youth Advisory Council and is a disc jockey for dances and weddings. He has enlisted in the Michigan Army National Guard, where he has been invited to join its band, led by Jon Montgomery, who director of bands at Black River. Luke Panning plans to enroll at either Hope College or Grand Valley State University, with plans to go into medicine.

At a talent show at Black River last fall, Luke Panning put a band of classmates together to perform the Charlie Daniels hit "The Devil Went Down to Georgia."

"I found some music and got some guys together to play all the parts," he said.

Eve Panning also enjoys horseback riding, and Josiah is into sports, including soccer and basketball.

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