

Rock solid entertainment at Geomatic Attic

Written by Richard Amery

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You don't need to know a secret handshake to attend some of the fantabulous gigs going on at a novel new venue — the Geomatic Attic, located above Mike Spencer Geometrics (#70-491 W.T Blvd. South)— all you need to do is e-mail in advance. “We welcome anybody, it's just they have to e-mail because we have to limit the the number of people who can come,” said proprietor Mike Spencer adding the Geomatic Attic has been a popular underground sensation since March 2008 when he, with the help of photographer Dave Jacobson decided it would be fun to start bringing in live music at their own house concerts. A house concert is an event where touring musicians are invited to perform at a private residences, the host's friends all come and pay a nominal cover charge for the musician. Because the people come to specifically listen to the musician, the room becomes a “listening room” and the musician usually sells CDs to almost everyone there. The Geomatic Attic operates under the same general principle.

This week they have two big shows, New York born, Austin based folk/country/pop style fiddle virtuoso and mandolinist Carrie Rodriguez is playing Wednesday July 8, followed by the Olympic Athletes Musicfest, July 11 featuring Washboard Hank and numerous local artists including Shaela Miller, Karen Romanchuk, Dave McCann and the 10 Toed Frogs plus Steve Keenan and Fat Baby Jake, who are raising money to help send Olympic hammer-thrower Jim Steacy and world ranked skeleton athlete Carla Pavan to the Olympics.

“I'm also involved in the Lethbridge Sports Hall of Fame. So this is a nice little crossover for me. I get to help Jim Steacy and Carla Pavan go to the Olympics and have a fundraiser everybody will enjoy,” Spencer enthused, adding the Olympicfest will be set up in Mike Spencer Geomatics' parking lot including bleachers, a stage and artisans booths for CD sales and Josee's Handmade Imports.

Tickets cost \$35 each for the event from Runners Soul, Blueprint, University of Lethbridge Recreation Services, and Luck Star Vintage Guitars as well as by e-mailing geoattic@mikesgeo.ca or by calling 403-320-5320. the money raised will be split three ways, one third each for Steacy and Pavan and the other third will be put into a special endowment fund for other future Olympians.

While A carded athletes like Steacy are entitled to \$1,500 per month, Spencer said they also have to pay for special diets as well as pay their own way to many major meets. They are also training full time and as a result aren't able to hold down a full time job.

“I'm really looking forward to it,” he said.

Gates open at 5 p.m., with music beginning at 6 p.m. and ending around dusk. The stage will be covered and there is a contingency plan in place in case of rain.

The Geomatic Attic is a really cool intimate room with big windows, carpeted floor, approximately 90 seats, a pool table and a comfortable lounge and an excellent sound system. Even better, proprietor Mike Spencer is getting some big acts in to play.

Fred Eaglesmith played the third ever gig there last year and is playing another gig , Oct. 5, which is already sold out.

“We didn't even have our own sound system then. Getting that gig was a real coup for us,”

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Spencer said, adding the latest Fred Eaglesmith gig sold out pretty much as soon as people found out about it.

“We’re not competing with other venues like the Slice and Henotic,” Spencer said.

“Ticket prices are a little higher here, but we’re also offering something a little different. For example, our shows start at 8 p.m. and you’re home by 10 p.m.”

While alcohol is served, Spencer said people bring their teenage children to the shows to a venue considered to be a listening room.

Ray Bonneville has played there as has Romi Mayes.

Coming up this year, The Deep Dark Woods and Little Miss Higgins are scheduled for Oct. 4 and a cool new Canadian folk all star band called Lee Harvey Osmond featuring Blackie and the Rodeo Kings’ Colin Linden and Tom Wilson as well as numerous other Canadian luminaries who will play Oct. 18. Po Girl are returning Nov. 1 and bluesman Guy Davis has a double bill Nov. 24-25.