

Vol. 36, No. 1
Apr. - May, June
2016



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
Annual Meetings, Thanks to
Dorcas & Barbara, Annual Address,
and More...

Oregon Bluegrass Association
www.oregonbluegrass.org

Bluegrass Express

Amazing Annie: Nothing to Stop Her Now

By Claire Levine

Annie Swisher may be the most astounding musician performing today. She's usually mistaken for a teenager, and she is without ego or pretension. She is charming and enthusiastic, whether she's performing next to Peter Dinklage or jamming with a new fiddle student at Yallograss.

She doesn't let her youthful looks mislead you. She is a powerhouse.

In a full bluegrass setting, she seems to flow into her fiddle, getting so much intensity out of it as one can imagine is possible without breaking down.

Annie is a 28-year-old from the Bay Area of California. She plays fiddle and sings with the Kathy Kurlink band. She lives in Northwest Portland and has become known to many in the city's bluegrass scene.

If you're lucky, you can watch her play new fiddle with John Malachuk when



Photo by Anne Stewart

she sits in with the Shaggy-eyed Ladies at Portland's Moody Center. You can also hear her tremendous versatility on her new CD.

When she steps down with her principal music partner, John Kaul, she's likely to choose the old, simple songs: the three-quarter time hymns and Stanley Brothers classics. And she's on the radio more for one of the world's best fiddle-grip musicians. So how did she get where she is now?

The back story of amazingness

Annie's parents are long-time folk and bluegrass fans, and her father plays guitar. They started taking Annie to festivals, concerts and jams when she was a little girl, and early on she studied the Suzuki violin method.

Since Suzuki emphasizes learning by ear, Annie was soon picking up her father's acoustic fiddle tunes. She tried a few bluegrass and old-time teachers, but none of them fit for her in her that she needed to inspire her to work hard (she admits her dislike of practicing led to some family arguments).

When she was nine, she met Chad Manning, called Bay Area fiddle player (David Grisman bluegrass

(Continued on Page 6)

Photo by Anne Stewart