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## Building the Harbor Lights guitar fleet

GENEVA MILLER Bandon Western World Jan 22, 2015

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**BANDON** — Harbor Lights Middle School students are eager to start strumming a new tune.

Music teacher Holly Sylvester is building a class guitar fleet. With at least one guitar for every two students, vocal and general music classes can sing and accompany themselves.

"Guitar is the instrument of our time," Sylvester said. "Students are universally drawn to guitars."

The instrument favored by 20th century pop stars, Elvis, Cash, Lennon and McCartney, continues to delight 21st century listeners. For music educators, the guitar represents a triple threat: student appeal, affordability and musical flexibility.

Music teachers around the country have incorporated guitar in their curriculum, and students are learning to sing and play everything from classical to folk and pop repertoire. Sylvester has continued her

own music education with courses in class guitar. She assembled a class fleet at Lighthouse Elementary in the North Bend School District, where she taught from 2008 through 2013.

Now in her second year teaching in Bandon, she looks forward to introducing class guitar to local students. To complete a class-ready fleet, the HLMS collection will include 30 guitars with guitar hangers, straps and strings, plus a collection of picks and electronic tuners. Sylvester says the few guitars already in the starter fleet have captured students' attention.

Sylvester indulges her love of music in and out of the classroom, and she often performs with her husband, Jim, who teaches third graders at Ocean Crest Elementary.

Hear the Sylvesters with quartet Sly & Friends in their annual Valentine's Day gig at Brewed Awakenings. The ensemble includes Bryan Ibach on mandolin and Perry St. John on percussion.

## Help build the guitar fleet

Students and families are helping build the program. Students raised \$1,000 in the school's last jog-a-thon and several guitars have been donated.

Cash donations are welcome. New student guitars can be purchased for \$135.

"If you have a guitar languishing in your closet, consider donating it," Sylvester said.

Acoustic classical or folk guitars with accessories such as straps, tuners, capos and picks are welcome. Guitars must be in good condition, and three-quarter size is ideal.

Call to make an appointment with Sylvester to evaluate your guitar's condition and size.

## Guitar techs wanted

Experienced guitarists are invited to join Sylvester to clean and restring donated guitars. The work session is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 24, at the Harbor Lights music room, 390 Ninth St. SW. Pizza provided. Call Sylvester to RSVP.