

**MOUNT AIRY, N.C.** — A new old-time music event will focus on women and their contributions to the genre. Women! Mount Airy Old-Time Retreat will include female-led classes, jams, dances, concerts, workshops and lectures, March 1-3.

The retreat coincides with the annual Tommy Jarrell Festival, which honors the musical legacy of the old-time fiddle virtuoso and native of Surry County's Round Peak community.

"Our efforts are ongoing to preserve and pass on the old-time music tradition," says Tanya Jones, executive director of the Surry Arts Council. "Hopefully attendees will be inspired by the females who are instructing, and it will encourage them to get more involved in old-time music and help promote the genre to both women and men across the generations."

Alice Gerrard will give the keynote address at 12 p.m. on Saturday, March 3. Gerrard, who lives in Durham, has played old-time and bluegrass music for more than 50 years. She founded the "Old-Time Herald," a magazine devoted to old-time music, and this past fall was inducted into the International Bluegrass Music Association Hall of Fame.

Before Gerrard's Saturday address, 18 to 20 instructors and students will perform on WPAQ's live radio show, "Merry-Go-Round," at the Historic Earle Theatre in Mount Airy.

The retreat begins with lunch on Thursday, March 1. Classes follow that day, concluding with a dinner and jam. Friday's slate of classes is capped by the Tommy Jarrell Dance at 7 p.m., while Saturday's classes are followed by a concert by The Becky Buller Band at 7:30 p.m.

Classes — including fiddle, banjo, guitar, bass, mandolin, flat foot dance/square dance calling and harmony singing — take place at the Andy Griffith Playhouse and Earle Theatre.

"Growing up here, you kind of take the music for granted," says Marsha Todd, a lifelong old-time and bluegrass musician and coordinator of the retreat. "It's amazing to see people come here from different states and countries because of what the music has meant to them."

Tuition is \$350, which includes classes, meals, event tickets and a T-shirt. Youth scholarships are available. The retreat is funded in part by the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Although the conference is geared toward women, it is open to both genders.

Meanwhile, a non-gender-specific Mount Airy Old-Time Retreat is planned for May 27-June 2, which is the week prior to the annual Mount Airy Fiddlers Convention.

For more information or to register, go to [www.MountAiryOldTime.com](http://www.MountAiryOldTime.com) or call (336) 786-7998.

###

CONTACT:

Craig Distl  
[CraigD411@gmail.com](mailto:CraigD411@gmail.com)  
704.466.3744

---

Additional assets available online:



[Photos \(1\)](#)

<https://media.visitnc.com/Women-Are-the-Focus-of-Old-Time-Music-Retreat>