

# *Fall City* NEIGHBORS

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Members of the Tinkham Road Band, which features Cascade Mountain music and songs of old Seattle and the Snoqualmie Valley. For more information about the band and its founders, Bob and Laura Antone, see pages 12-14.

## BOB AND LAURA ANTONE, AND THE TINKHAM ROAD BAND

by Sharon Brown

Tinkham Road is not just the name of an alternative road that runs parallel to I-90. It takes on new meaning when you encounter Bob and Laura Antone, the creative forces behind the band Tinkham Road, representing Cascade Mountain music, songs of old Seattle, the Snoqualmie Valley, Bigfoot sightings, aliens, and interdimensional beings under Mt. Rainer.

The Antone family has been in the Valley for roughly 100 years. The Boyles (Bob's mother's family) came from Ireland in 1888 before the great Seattle fire of 1889. Plenty of work was available at that time because the city was being rebuilt. Bob's ancestors, who were brick masons, contributed largely to the building of Pioneer Square.

"I was very close to my grandparents on my father's side. My wife and I live in the same house and occupy the bedroom that my great grandmother and grandparents all passed away in. I grew up listening to oral histories that I came to love and cherish. Grandfather would tell me stories and sing silly songs. Some of the tunes came from work crews on the railroad; others from the logging camps. Grandpa lived in hobo camps (tent towns) on the Snoqualmie River. They entertained each other with musical poetry. From 1915 on, Grandpa John also played the musical saw, which he shared with me as well. It was this style of music that I transferred to my own material and where I also got the inspiration to collect additional Northwest historical songs," says Bob.

Bob remembers getting a cassette recorder with a handheld microphone in 1982. He began recording his grandpa's songs on tapes. His family came from a musical background, with classical training in piano and violin as well as years of experience singing in church, so he came by his musical interest honestly.

1989 marked the year of a cultural transition: the timber industry was coming to an end. The old community had to move out of the area; new families were filtering in with the emergence of Microsoft.

"It was at that time I remember someone saying to me that our area doesn't have a culture of its own!

That lit a fire under me to begin to collect Northwest music and stories," exclaimed Bob. "In the beginning, I wrote a lot of original tunes. In 1990, when I was 16 years old, I was inspired by local folklore and wrote a classical guitar duet based on the Snoqualmie Tribe. In 1997, I got involved directly with the Tribe. I learned over 100 local Salish songs, some claimed to be thousands of years old. I started playing hand drum and singing privately with tribal families. Doors continued to open as I looked for more logging and railroad songs.

Back then these tunes were not nearly as accessible as they are today with the Internet. So many archives and old recordings have been only recently uploaded onto the Web for everyone to study. A lot of the music is rough, a capella, some only containing one sentence, yet so pregnant with history."

Tinkham Road is a multigenerational band. They are made up of high school and college students, along with those in their forties on up, hosting 20 rotating members. Many participants are jazz trained and are from Central University, Seattle Pacific University, Mt. Si High School, and Two Rivers School. They have five upright-bass players. "The early years began with Parker and Hayden, my sons, who were 10 and 12 at the time. Later, we opened up our family group up to the community. We did occasional shows every year until my sons reached their early twenties. Then things started to explode in a good way. In 2015, we started to gain membership through word of mouth and the



band continued to grow. Now we are playing all over the Seattle area and Pacific Northwest. Our music is based in storytelling: some music with words, other compositions without. We bring in the traditional as well as old songs re-adapted. We include original music written by members of the band along with lots of improvisation! There is no censorship. (Unless we are playing for children.) We are not afraid to confront the darker side of our culture,” says Bob.

The band throws out many thanks to Danny Kolke, who has done our community a great service by the impeccable training of his jazz players, some of whom have joined Tinkham Road. According to Bob, they can do anything, and the band has truly benefited from Danny’s tutelage!

There are six core members of the band making up the LLC. Laura manages all the finances as well as the venue contacts. “We are a for-profit company. It is a privilege to employ many up-and-coming musicians. They can do what they love and make a living wage at the same time,” says Laura. “We are a real community that truly enjoys being together!”

Laura and Bob met at Eastside Catholic High School, where they not only dated, but also broke up! Laura ended up in Calgary, Canada, as an events coordinator at the zoo. When she returned to Seattle, she followed her heart to the Woodland Park Zoo and was there for a short time.

“In 2011 Bob and I found each other on Facebook!” Laura smiled. “She had been on my mind for a very long time,” interjected Bob. “She is very special and I was so glad to reunite with her. We were married in 2014.”

Laura’s dad was a civil engineer, and her mom did missionary work through the Catholic Church. Laura was adopted at 6 months old from Dene First Nations (Native American), Northwest Territories, Canada. As kids they traveled to and from Africa as well Europe, Canada, and the United States. “I went to 12 schools in 13 years,” says Laura. “When

I landed in Woodinville, I finally felt I found home. We have been blessed with a daughter, her Marine husband, and two grandchildren who live in West Seattle.”

Bob and Laura feel like they have a sensitivity and ability to bridge the gap between Caucasian and Native American cultures. Many seem to turn to them for their insight and experience because of their unique stories.

Their busy lives not only include Tinkham Road performances; Bob is a hand wood carver as well. Laura co-designs and sketches the projects. It is mostly folkloric art that connects to their music. In 2008–09, Bob worked on 19-ft-tall wooden cedar planks for the main street of Duvall. Scott’s Dairy Freeze in North Bend houses a recent carving by Bob of Bigfoot holding a milkshake inside of their establishment!

Bob’s talents don’t end there. He is a private music teacher of violin and guitar at Music & Arts in Issaquah. He also teaches at Two Rivers School in North Bend one day a week for an after-school music program.

Laura and Bob’s newest venture is the book they are collaborating on together. It is a collection of Northwest folklore and back stories, including recipes and visual art. Bob is compiling his 35 years of research and will release the book to the public by next fall. Directly connected to their book, an

interested Italian movie producer, Lorenzo Del Nero, who now lives in Paris, has come to the Antones with interest in the *Twin Peaks* series, to explore local folklore and history at a deeper level. During Lorenzo’s 5-day visit, Bob and Laura drove him through the back country, telling him one tale after another. The stories so captured his interest that he started making plans for a movie production next year after the book is launched. Eventually, a TV series will result from the movie, with



Tinkham Road doing the musical soundtrack for all.

“In our day there is a new wave of historians who are trying to include the broader points of view.

We are seeking to include the paranormal—that story, that visitation, the unexplainable—the thing that can’t be proven, yet was said to have happened.

We are asking the question, ‘Why would someone imagine these things?’ For example, there are many stories surrounding Bigfoot/Sasquatch. His benevolent name is ‘Sas’kets’; his malevolent name is ‘Tsi aht ko.’ Today, the community is more open to incorporating these unusual happenings in our cultural history,” says Bob.

If anyone in the community has old songs or stories that were passed down to them as part of our Northwest history, please contact Bob and Laura at [laurawilliams33@live.com](mailto:laurawilliams33@live.com). Also be on the lookout for the next Fall City and/or Carnation Haunted Tour. Both communities enjoyed this historical, strange, but true, folklore walk. Bob and Laura hope to continue to educate the Valley with the breadth and width of our unique and rich Northwest heritage through creativity, the arts, and the unknown.

Check out Tinkham Road at [www.tinkhamroad.com](http://www.tinkhamroad.com). To book a show, contact Laura Williams at 425-221-8747.