

CABIN FEVER

MCGRATH'S PUB

SEPTEMBER 11, 2002



We've been hanging close to home lately, so Saturday night saw us dropping in to the "local" for a pint and a few tunes. Man were we astonished by the talent. We lucked onto a real jewel in the backyard in the form of McGrath's Irish Pub, which you may recall us mentioning during a makeover about 18 months ago. Seems new owner Peter Barnato, out of good old "Southie" has converted the old workingman's waterhole into a musical Mecca of prime entertainment. Saturday brought in the highly acclaimed Cabin Fever, featuring Megan Lynch, six-time National Fiddle Champion, on fiddle, and including Dr. Yvonne Walbroehl on vocals and lead guitar. This group includes quite an enjoyable approach to traditional American music, keeping a lighthearted approach where others fail with affected or stilted performance. Walbroehl's Virginia-bred voice contributed a genuine warm contralto while John Relph's

mandolin virtuosity preserved the needed complexity in this kind of music which is often overwhelmed by too many "guitar gods".

You have to wonder where lead maestro Larry Chung derived his soul, for his clear mastery of vocal harmony, guitar lead and guitar rhythm, banjo, mandolin and god knows what else indicate a depth of feeling and soul not seen since I spent my salad days wandering the Wyse County Appalachian mountains.

At the end of four sets, one audience member called out for "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" and the little band obliged with a rousing short-form version. At the end of the piece, the man exclaimed loudly, "Oh man that tune *rocks!*" Sure enough, in the right hands it does. And it did.

Peter promises that the next time Cabin Fever plays, there will be fish and chips on the House. Now ain't that something?! McGrath's also hosts a popular open mike and an acoustic jam session that features some of the Bay Area's most talented musicians during the week. And on Sunday afternoons, there is a famous BBQ held that draws the locals with good eats. Peter, also a sometime performer when he isn't minding the bar and the books, has a long-time love of music and "such love is a rare brooch in this all-hating world." We suggest you stop on in anytime to check out the scene. We suggest you will be pleasantly surprised, as we were, by this delightful discovery by the Bay.

We like our music live and exciting, for that's the way it is on the Island.