

# Fruitcakes have fun, give back

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Finally — for the first time in history, a fruitcake you're going to like! On April 11 at Neighbors Pub and Grill in Cedar Falls, history was made with the inaugural meeting of the Cedar Valley Fruitcakes, an organization steeped in mystery due to its unconventional name.

Brian and Sara Wegmann were more than willing to divulge a few of the secrets behind an organization whose main purpose is to have fun.

"Our intention is to make a little money for charity and give a little time back to the community at the same time," said Brian, who along with his wife are on the very serious and official board of directors of the slightly silly new club.

The Cedar Valley Fruitcakes are a local offshoot of the nationally known Parrothead organization that started years ago at a Jimmy Buffett concert in Akron, Ohio.

Buffett noticed his audience wearing a sea of bright island clothing and recognized them as a brighter version of the Deadheads, known for following The Grateful Dead.

At that moment, the Parrotheads

were born. They soon became known as a band of Jimmy Buffett fans who found a need to turn their fun into something charitable.

Environmental causes, cancer research, Alzheimer's and March of Dimes have all received large donations from Parrothead organizations across the country.

"We plan to have social outings once a month, and for now our home is Neighbors Pub and Grill. There is potential that we will move around the Cedar Valley. When we meet at a local club, it will create a partnership — good for them and good for the community," added Wegmann, who explained why the board of directors chose the Fruitcake moniker.

"Fruitcake is one of Jimmy Buffett's songs, so we decided to use it for our name."

Parrotheads and Fruitcakes, when not having fun doing fundraisers, move in large groups to Jimmy Buffett concerts whenever and wherever they occur.

The Cedar Valley Fruitcakes hope their new name will help them stand out in the crowds of Buffett fans famous for tailgating.

"I became a Buffett fan after watching Iowa Public Television. They were doing a piece about a



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The Cedar Valley Fruitcakes Board of Directors gets together at Neighbors Pub and Grill.

Jimmy Buffett concert in Florida that was staged on a barge out in the water. The fans sat in inner tubes and enjoyed open seating around the barge. Everyone had a good time in a good seat and nobody got out of hand," said Dave Graham, a Fruitcake board member.

He described "Buffettology" a Parrothead's loyalty to a group of individuals from unrelated walks of life that have an indescribable connection to a vague common interest.

When filling out a membership form, members have an opportunity to share their favorite charity, favorite Buffett song and their Buffettology.

Forming a club and associating with the parent Jimmy Buffett Parrothead group requires a little thought and commitment. Among other requirements, a local club must:

- Set up a Web site.
- Establish a board of directors who meet once per quarter.
- Acquire nonprofit status with

the IRS.

- Do at least one "green" activity per year.

- Collect dues from members.

- Be at least 50 miles from the closest Parrothead club.

A large group of Jimmy Buffett fans from Dike came to the Cedar Valley Fruitcake meeting at Neighbors on Saturday, hoping to check them out and possibly join forces with the local club. The next closest group is in Cedar Rapids, so they were happy to find a group closer to home.

"Most of us have joined or will join the Fruitcakes tonight," said Dike enthusiast Kevin Hemmen.

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“Most of us have attended three or four Buffett concerts in Chicago or Janesville, Wisconsin,” added Kurt Juel, another Dike groupie.

The Dike group joined newcomers and old fans from around the Cedar Valley, had some fun and raised a little money for Magical Mix Kids, a charity started by Mix 96 Radio. The charity was chosen by the Fruitcake board as the recipient for the first funds raised by their group.

Wearing bright pink Parrot-head shirts, members Sara Wegmann and Jaymie Feldmann set up a “Cheeseburgers in Paradise” (another Buffett song) game where attendees could make donations to pick favorite numbers from a colorful cheeseburger board. The winning number drawn would receive a little of the money with proceeds going to Mix 96 Magical Mix Kids.

With happy Jimmy Buffett music as a background, other games and prize drawings were just for fun. One member won a pie, and another won the opportunity to have the pie in his face, which he refused. Another member won fine fragrances from Dillard’s, and

others won a variety of gifts ranging from Papa John’s Pizza and Parrothead T-shirts to Famous Dave’s Barbeque Sauce and Zip-py’s Barbeque meals. Prizes were donated by local businesses.

At one point, everyone stopped what they were doing, raised their arms above their heads with fingertips together and leaned left and right. Apparently, another Buffett song, “Fins to the Left, Fins to the Right,” was playing and Parrotheads across the planet know the proper motions.

All of the activities added to a spirit of fun created by the founding group of Brian and Sara Wegmann, Chad and Jaymie Feldmann, Dave and Sue Graham, Kevin and Brenda Krapfl and Tim Frisch. The group bonded over golf, friendship, family relationships and love of Jimmy Buffett music.

The Fruitcake Web site, [www.cedarvalleyfruitcakes.com](http://www.cedarvalleyfruitcakes.com), describes membership connections: “My interpretation is that they are basically pretty normal people with a slight strain of insanity in their makeup.” They aim to celebrate, let loose, listen to some good music with a Caribbean flair and give back to the community.