

Students have 'Fun Fridays' at Center Academy

Special to Clay Today

ORANGE PARK-The students of Center Academy on Kingsley Avenue have an incentive to get all of their work done each week. Those who complete their assignments from Monday through Friday morning enjoy what is aptly called "Fun

Friday", which is typically from noon to 2:30 p.m.

Fun Fridays are also dress down days, meaning the students can wear their casual clothes, leaving the school uniforms at home in their closets.

Sometimes the students go bowling or to a restaurant to eat. At other times it's

as simple as pizza and a movie. Once each month they take a field trip on a Friday. Recently the parents joined the excitement for a Fun Friday fall celebration.

The day was a perfect 80 degrees and Ron Davis of Front Porch Music entertained everyone outside on the patio. Parents brought a vast selection of food to accompany the hot dogs, hamburgers and kielbasa that Secretary Janice Wheaton cooked on the grill. The students played tetherball, volleyball and had a basketball tournament.

Thomas Davis, grandfather of student Caleb Perry, saw Ron Davis playing outside of a Crackerbarrel restaurant and invited him to play for Fun Friday. Ron Davis (no relation to Thomas) owns Front Porch Music, a "band" that consists only of him. He plays the harmonica and sings, has a bass pedal at his feet that simulates a bass guitar, plays the Hawaiian steel guitar, fiddle, mandolin, banjo and electric guitar. His talent is even more amazing when you learn that he taught himself how to play all of these instruments by listening to the

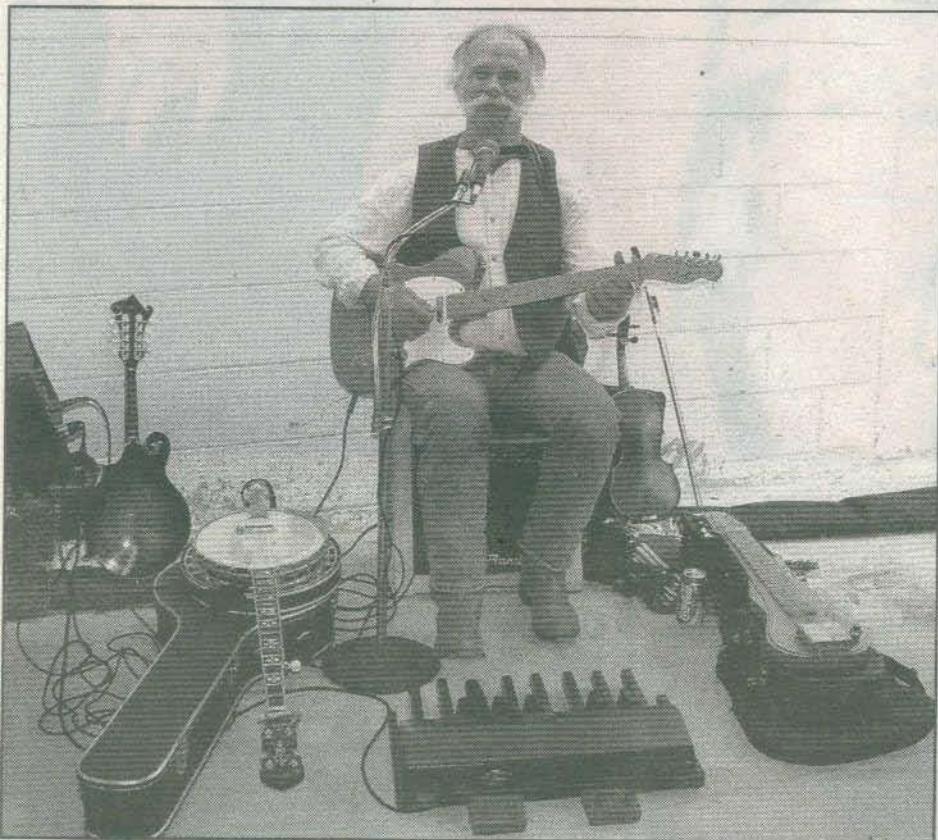
radio. "It gives me a good variety," he said.

In addition to playing at several Crackerbarrels, Davis plays for conventions, anniversaries, birthday parties, fairs, and has even done a couple of funerals. He plays country, gospel, folk and blue grass, and is thrilled to get paid for what he loves to do. "It's like never having to go to work," he said.

Parents, grandparents and even a few babies relaxed and ate at the picnic tables while delighting in the music and watching the students have fun.

"At Center Academy every student has their own prescribed program to be completed each week," said Director Jerry Stigliano. "Fun Fridays are a great way to reward them for reaching their goals."

Center Academy on Kingsley Ave. serves students in grades 6 through 12. Their mission is to provide students with an educational environment that aids in the development of self-confidence, motivation and academic skills, giving each student the opportunity to achieve success in life.



PHOTOS BY KELLY J. STIGLIANO, CORRESPONDENT

Ron Davis of Front Porch Music entertained at a recent Fun Friday at Center Academy on Kingsley Ave.