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Bands' fan base contingent on youth

By **Adam Rodewald**

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He's silent, leaning back in his chair near the front windows of the Daily Grind, and a smile indicating a loss for words draws across his face.

"Uh..... I don't know," says acoustic musician Elijah Blair about the easiest part of building a fan base.

"If you want to be serious about music, it's not going to be easy. It's pretty much what your parents tell you growing up. Life isn't handed to you on a silver platter," he says.

For most local bands, bringing a crowd of eager listeners to the foot of their stage means having a lot of friends, says Blair, and hopefully the music is good enough that friendship isn't the only reason they stay.

Gaining additional fans, however, can be laborious.

"A lot of people in Marshfield whine that they want more music here, but then when a group comes around, they don't go out and support them," says Wayne Jellish of the BackTrax Band.

One of the harshest realities is that people will only watch their friends play and skip the other bands, says Blair.


Drawing a crowd "is contingent on getting younger people into it just because that's really where it is at," he says. "You're not seeing bands coming out that are doing classic rock and getting famous off it. You have to be doing something new and get a younger generation into it."

The BackTrax Band and other variety bands have a different dilemma. On one hand, they have been around for so long that people recognize their name. On the other, they don't have an image of their own to attract new fans.

"People don't say lets go hear BackTrax," said guitar player Don Kerper. "How do we attract people? In that sense, it's not necessarily that the brand draws people. It's the function that we provide."

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More information on the web

 [Link to live recordings of Elijah Blair and BackTrax band](#)

Coming tomorrow

Elijah Blair hopes to take his show on the road while the BackTrax Band plans to remain in town.