

THE ISLAND FIDDLER

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PHOTO SPECIAL FROM THE GUARDIAN

Ward Allan MacDonald and Richard Wood team up in the tuning room on July 21, at the annual Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival.

Sounds of the summer

There was no shortage of good music this summer as members of the P.E.I. Fiddlers Society Inc. kept on the move playing everywhere from dances and church picnics to concerts and ceilidhs on the water.

One of the highlights was the 25th annual Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival July 20-22 where an outstanding lineup of musicians from across the eastern seaboard drew thousands of fans.

Since its inception in 1976 by Joe Pete Chaisson, the profits of this traditional music festival have provided free fiddle les-

sons to hundreds of children in the area and helped revive Celtic music.

Peter, Kevin and Kenny Chaisson were thrilled with this year's turnout, especially the young people. Among the performers were Richard Wood, the Queens and Kings County Fiddlers, J.J. Chaisson, Sheila MacKenzie, Ward MacDonald, Francis MacDonald, Francis MacCormack and Cynthia MacLeod. Special guests were Cape Breton fiddler Carl MacKenzie and Andrea Beaton, also from Cape Breton, who plays with the

Queens County chapter in the winter months, and Kathryn Dau Schmidt's fiddle students.

With their main concert in May a great success, the members of the Queens County chapter concentrated on smaller concerts through the summer months. Besides appearing at Rollo Bay, the group performed in numerous fund-raising concerts, at the St. Pius X annual parish picnic, for a special concert at the Belcourt Centre in South Rustico and on board the Northumberland Ferries as part of the 2001 Mu-

sic on Board series.

The group was also part of the lineup for the annual Prince County Fiddlers summer concert which was held Saturday, Aug. 5, at the Community Gardens in Kensington.

The Prince County chapter had a comparatively "easy" summer primarily due to the unavailability of fiddlers on specific dates, making it necessary to refuse requests to stage several performances.

Aside from playing gratis for fund-raising events (whose demand exceeds the supply), a memorable event was playing for

the HOG Rally (Harley Owners Group) at the College of Piping. More than 2,500 members and spouses descended on Summerside from all over North America during the first week of July. These were wonderful people, many of whom we met. They vowed to return to the Island for a personal holiday.

Also memorable was the concert in Kensington, staged each year on the first weekend of August. Guests were the Queens County Fiddlers, stepdancer Faustina Myers-Gallant, the junior group of the Lady Slipper

Dancers and last, but not least, the enthusiastic, energetic performance on the floor in front of the stage of three and a-half-year-old Alice Cheverie (she didn't miss a step).

We were, as was the audience, disappointed that the Eastern Kings Fiddlers were unable to take part due to commitments. Their musical contribution to any event is much appreciated and enjoyed.

In all, the concert was a limited success, which members hope to improve on next year — God willing and the creeks don't rise!

Workshops successful

This year, for the first time, the Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival offered music lovers the chance to take part in hands-on workshops.

Classes were offered in fiddle, piano accompaniment and step dance as part of

the 25th annual festival.

For \$40 (Canadian) per student, participants received six hours of instruction, admission to a ceilidh Friday night and admission to two concerts and a dance on Saturday.

Gordon Stobbe holding workshop

Sobers Fiddle Workshops with Gordon Stobbe are being held Oct. 27, 1-3 p.m. for beginners, and 3-5 p.m. for intermediates.

The goals for the beginner's workshop are to review the basics of holding the instrument and bowing techniques; to understand the importance of a good knowledge of scales and arpeggios and to learn to play them in 3 basic fiddle keys; to begin to understand the concept of phrases in music; to begin to learn to play by ear (sheet music will also be available); to have fun playing together; to learn as many tunes as possible in the allotted time. Participants don't need to know how to read music. All participants should have an instrument and bow in good working order. Tuning should be done before the session begins. Par-

ents are most welcome to sit in. Bring your tape recorder.

The goals for the intermediate workshop are to understand the importance of a good knowledge of scales and arpeggios and to learn to play them in 3 basic fiddle keys; to work on bow technique and variety, accents, tone, fiddle styles; identify phrases in order to learn by ear; to have fun playing together. Participants don't need to know how to read music. The approach will be similar to that of the beginner's except that the tunes will be more advanced and will reflect a variety of styles. Learning will be by ear, but sheet music will be available.

Registration is \$7. Mail or phone registration to Sobers Music, 61 Trans Canada Highway, Charlottetown, C1E 1E8, or call (902) 368-3237.

We're Back!

This is the first newsletter for the P.E.I. Fiddlers' Society Inc. in quite a few years. The goal is to eventually publish three to four times annually. Any assistance and suggestions are needed and appreciated. Thanks this time around to John Gauthier and Gerry Cheverie for the information they provided. The next issue should be out sometime in the new year. For information, contact Carolyn Drake, 629-6036, or gdnlifestyles@chg.southam.ca

Island fiddler competes in Grand Masters event

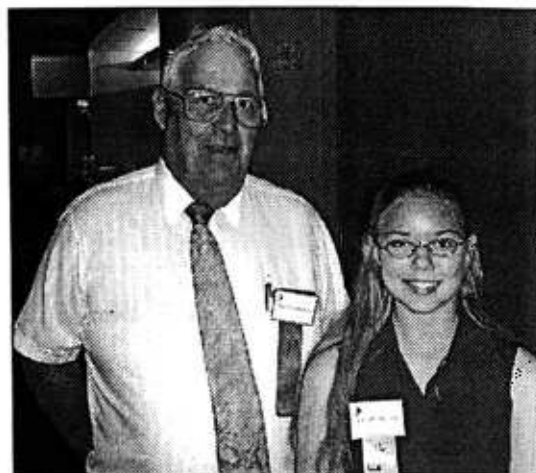
By Gerry Cheverie

Cynthia MacLeod, a member of the Queens County Fiddlers, represented Prince Edward Island at The Canadian Grand Masters Fiddling Championship in Ottawa this past August 2001.

She was among 30 contestants from across Canada who are selected to compete by invitation only.

In the afternoon's Play-downs, each contestant plays a waltz, a jig, and a reel within an allotted time. From the 30 contestants, the judged top 11 return in the evening to compete in the Finals where they must play a different waltz, jig and reel plus a tune of choice.

This year's winner of the top prize of \$3500 was Mark Sullivan, Bowmanville, Ontario. The Judges were Jockeyne Bourque (New Brunswick - Eastern Canada), Bruce Wilson (Ontario - Central Canada) and Patti Kusturok-Lamoureux



Cynthia MacLeod is shown with Bruce Cummings, president of the Canadian Grand Masters Fiddling Championship.

(Manitoba - Western Canada).

The Canadian Grand Masters has been held annually since 1990 at the Nepean Centrepointe Theatre in Ottawa.

As part of The Grand Masters week, a Variety Show is held the day following the

competition. Before departing for home, Cynthia paid a visit to the Variety Show and highlighted the packed house with some Island style fiddling.

Cynthia is the daughter of Barry and Sharon MacLeod of Winsloe.

WHAT'S NEW?

Andrea Beaton has just completed work on her first CD. The recording should be available in time for Christmas.

The **Queens County Fiddlers** recently performed on the mainstage of Confederation Centre of the Arts in the annual benefit concert to raise funds for Anderson House. The group also has a benefit concert appearance on Oct. 27 at the Carrefour Theatre.

Ward MacDonald of the Queens County Fiddlers is now living in Antigonish, N.S., where he is enrolled in the first year of the bachelor of education program at St. Francis Xavier University.

The **Queens County Fiddlers** recently held their end-of-the-summer barbecue prior to practice at St. Pius X Hall. Everyone enjoyed a great meal of steak, stuffed baked potatoes, cole slaw, rolls and sweets. The group also celebrated the birthday of Father Charlie Cheverie by presenting him with two birthday cakes.

(Sorry this is top heavy on Queens County news. Send in more for the next issue.)

Concerts planned for Nova Scotia

Any of our members who are planning to be in Nova Scotia on Oct. 27 or Nov. 3 will be in for a great evening of music put on by the Caledonian Scottish Fiddle Orchestra of Nova Scotia.

The two fall concerts are being held at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College Alumni Theatre in Truro on Saturday, Oct. 27, 7:30 p.m., and at Trinity United Church, Temperance Street, New Glasgow, Saturday, Nov. 3, 7:30 p.m.

Virginia Kinsmen, who is a member of the Nova Scotia group and the Queens County Fiddlers, reports that the lineup for both concerts will include traditional Scottish and Irish sets, Down East music, Cape Breton sets and Quebecois sets. A number of special pieces will also perform.

Admission is \$10.

Anyone who would like more information is asked to call director Peter Dunn at 902-453-2076.