



The Island Fiddler

The Newsletter of the Prince Edward Island Fiddlers Society



Vol. 4, Issue 1

Cornelius Patrick Bolger

March 2006

Life Member, P.E.I. Fiddlers Society

By Patricia Brooke

My dad, *Cornelius Patrick Bolger*, better known as Lenie, was born in 1908. Music was a big part of life in those days. His dad John and his older brother Gabriel played the fiddle, and every Saturday night after supper everyone would gather at their home in Foxley River for music and dancing until midnight. At age 7, Lenie built his own fiddle from a wooden cigar box, hand-carving the stock and the fittings and it actually played. He was on his way. He practiced in the barn. At age 9 his father gave him a real fiddle and he played his first gig, a wedding for a couple in Freeland. His fiddling friends included Bill Harvey and Jim Tuplin, and they performed at many functions.

In the early 1930's dad became part of CHGS Radio Entertainment radio show in Summerside, a station owned by the Holmans. One night the radio station put on a show at 4:00 A.M. and asked the public to write in as they wanted to know how far away the station was being heard. In one of the letters a man from Bangor, Maine wrote about the violin player, quote: "music by the hand of man couldn't be excelled." The letter made the paper. The station later evolved into CJRW. In Summerside, Lenie often played with Anthony Bernard, a left-handed fiddle player and also Ervan Sonier.

In 1933 Lenie met and married Marie Estelle Soloman from Georgetown, P.E.I. He had been sent to meet her at the bus station and bring her to her new job as a barber, one of the first in Canada as ladies didn't do that in those days. Her dad was a barber in Georgetown and she adored him and followed him everywhere. For mom and dad it was love at first sight. They will be married 73 years this June. Five years after their wedding I was born and almost two years later my sister Arlene.

Music filled our home. Mom read music and played piano, and dad also played the guitar, mandolin and the church organ every Sunday for the services in the Lot 11 Catholic Church. He did that for many years. He also has a "Bing Crosby" type of crooner voice which lulled us to sleep many times in the car coming home from the house parties. We loved those parties too, lots of kids to play with outside, chewing spruce gum and sometimes watching the hens get tipsy when an older kid fed them the leftover drips of some drink. At the time it was nothing but fun.

There were many hilarious events as we travelled



back and forth that were due to what came out of a bottle. Dad was often offered a drink to play a tune or just to thank him. Mom kept a close eye on that as he didn't hold it very well. He would fall asleep. One exuberant night mom missed the count and we looked up to see dad falling slowly to the side, a big grin on his face, fiddling all the way to the floor as he fell fast asleep. We got him in the car and mom decided to drive for the first time. She got a few mumbled directions from him and we headed down the deserted road in second gear. It took a long time to get home and when we did mom was worried about parking the car so she turned off the motor and kept her foot on the brakes as my sister and I piled rocks all around the wheels to make sure the car wouldn't move. Those were quite the memories.

Over the years, dad worked at various skills. He became a shoemaker and later a carpenter, and during the 2nd World War he joined the Navy and became a C.P.O. He worked as a shipwright at the docks in Halifax which at times became dangerous when German submarines were seen in the area. We remember the blackouts on P.E.I. when mom would sing to us in the dark and we'd wait for dad to make visits home. During one of those leaves he played in Souris with the Chaisson family and from 8:00 P.M. to 4:00 A.M. of steady fiddling never played the same tune twice. In the 1960's at the Fiddling Championships held off Island dad also competed but he lost points because he holds his fiddle against his upper arm instead of under his chin. However, he was the fiddler chosen to play solo on television at the end of the event which was seen across Canada, quite an experience for a shy and non-effusive man.

After that he performed at the large Fiddling Jamboree in Cape Breton which went on for 2 weeks. It was a time of recognition for him and for the wonderful music he loved to play. In 1965, I married a Texan and started to travel. Dad and mom got to visit us in London, England and then later in Texas and Denver, Colorado. On a trip to Texas in 1973, he was stopped at the airport in Houston and his fiddle case examined to see if it contained a bomb, and it ended up with him playing a number of tunes for the enjoyment of all. He also played at some real Texas barbeques where a whole cow is cooked in a pit. His style



The Island Fiddler



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<http://www3.pei.sympatico.ca/~paul.cheverie/tif.htm>
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PEI Fiddlers Society Bylaws Committee Meeting

Upon recommendation to the 19 October General Meeting of the PEIFS, a Bylaws Committee was established, co-chaired by Paul Cheverie and Peggy Arsenault.

The committee met on 14 January 2006 to discuss and draft an updated Bylaws and Constitution, for presentation to an Annual General Meeting of the PEIFS. Those in attendance included: Paul Cheverie, Peggy Arsenault, Brent Chaisson, Tim Chaisson, Barry Thompson, Anne M. McPhee, Elmer Deagle, Karine Gallant.

The current Bylaws, dated December 1982, were reviewed in detail, section by section, and changes were proposed. Proposed changes include: minor changes to the wording of the aims and objectives and duties of the executive; each chapter will maintain its own bylaws and constitution in accordance with the PEIFS Bylaws; the executive of the Society will also include a representative of each chapter or region; the first vice-president will continue to chair a music committee for the purpose of maintaining sets of common tunes to be played by all Chapters; the second vice-president will continue to chair a membership committee in which individual, group and chapter memberships (per diem) will be accepted; other means of obtaining funds for the operation of the Society; honorary life membership and The Island Fiddler Newsletter to be incorporated into the Bylaws.

A draft proposal is in the process of being typed for presentation, to be discussed at the General Meeting (in March 2006) and put forward for approval at the next Annual General Meeting of the Society. Suggestions are invited.



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Lenie ... From Page 1

was new to them and they enjoyed it a lot.

Not to be outdone, at age 74, mom took up fiddling and step-dancing under the encouragement of Libbe Hubley later to be Senator Hubley and she joined the Island Fiddlers. Then dad joined her which was quite a turn about. In the early 1990's dad was one of the Island Fiddlers who entertained Prince Charles and Lady Diana during their visit to Summerside.

Another highlight in the 1990's was an invitation for Dad to play at the Evangeline Summer Festival on P.E.I. Dad was about 82 years old. There were visiting fiddlers from New Brunswick who played fast and furiously, and when they finished, time was short. It was decided to pair dad on stage with a then 12 year old Richard Wood. There they were, playing note for note, it was the hit of the evening and a joy to see Richard and other young people carrying on the tradition.

Dad has written a number of tunes, and every year, up to 2003, has played at the Lot 11 picnic to everyone's pleasure. It is his home and he is not forgotten. I never learned to play the fiddle but I do play piano, banjo and classical guitar and joined him many times since the age of 13 playing and singing. My sister became the dancer in the family and her grandchildren carry on singing, and playing numerous instruments. Dad, now aged 98 this March, gets to see his legacy as does mom. He dozes a lot now and when he sits in his rocker he constantly hums his fiddle tunes and smiles, remembering the past, just as we do.

Happy fiddling, dad. Love, your family.

(The Island Fiddler thanks Patricia Brooke, now retired, who lives in Summerside and was the past president of the P.E.I. Songwriters Association, Prince County Rep of the Association of Island Musicians, the music industry rep for the Malpak Arts Council, and has performed on a volunteer level for many years.)

Two women walkin through the woods happen upon a frog in the middle of the path. The frog says to the women "I once was a great fiddler, but a witch put a spell on me and turned me into a frog. If you kiss me I will return to my former self!" One of the women then snatched up the frog and put it in her pocket. The other woman asked her "aren't you gonna kiss it?" She responded "No Way! He's worth far more as a talking frog!"

Queens County Fiddlers

Carolyn Drake

The Queens County Fiddlers capped off 2005 in fine style with a wonderful Christmas party at the home of Linda and Mike Moran in North Rustico on Dec. 17. Everybody enjoyed good food, good company and, of course, good music with not only fiddles and the keyboard but a few guitars and some dancing thrown in as well. The Morans have a lovely home, which was beautifully decorated for Christmas, and everyone was thrilled that they volunteered to host the party.

In addition to celebrating the holiday season, the party was a chance to celebrate the group's win at the P.E.I. Music Awards in November. It was also an opportunity for the new executive to present members of the CD committee with beautiful plaques in recognition of their work on the group's CD, Forty Fiddles Flat Out. Ward MacDonald, Marlene MacDonald, Kathleen Vent and Carolyn Drake all received their plaques at the party. Plaques were also sent to Vince Keoughan, who had to leave the party early because of another engagement, and to Sheila MacKenzie, who was unable to attend. All of the members of the committee were surprised and honoured by the presentation.

In other December news, the Queens County Fiddlers once again played for a Saturday concert at the Confederation Court Mall in Charlottetown on Dec. 3. A good crowd enjoyed group and individual sets of traditional tunes, as well as some step-dancing and Christmas carols. At the end of the concert, everyone piled into a wooden sleigh with Santa for a special holiday picture. Maybe it showed up in some of your Christmas cards.

It's hard to believe that we are through the worst of the winter and are now looking forward to our spring schedule of concerts. Music director Ward MacDonald has recently set our practice schedule for the next several months, and the group is in the process of confirming performance plans, which already include our annual concert on June 10 (watch the local media for more information), as well as appearances at the Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival and the annual concert put on by the Prince County Fiddlers. The group is also planning to hold at least one practice - maybe more - at a local nursing home.



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Acadian Fiddlers

Marie Livingstone

An advantage to the long dark evenings of winter is that friends and neighbours get motivated to get together for an old fashioned kitchen party, where tunes are played with great abandon and dancers young and old spontaneously jump on the floor to do a few steps to the rousing beat. Most people agree that some of the best music is heard at these gatherings which makes everyone look forward to all the ceillidhs and festivals that will be coming up in a few months.

Although there have been fewer concerts lately in the Evangeline region, those that took place were well attended and appreciated. The most recent one was at the Evangeline School on February 5th for the Candlemas Celebrations which included fiddlers Eddy, Albert, Louise and Brandon Arsenault, and some super stepdancers too. The proceeds of this yearly event go to those in need.

In late fall, another benefit concert was presented at the Jubilee Theatre in Summerside for the Louisiana hurricane fund featuring fiddlers Eddy, his sons Peter and Albert, daughters Marie and H  l  ne on guitar and piano and Eddy's brother Amand also on guitar. Eddy, Amand, H  l  ne and Albert each stepdanced to the delight of the audience.

On December 11th, a Christmas concert was held at Mont Carmel Church with fiddlers Eddy, Peter, Albert, Louise and Brandon Arsenault. The group Clack'azing, also performed, whose members are Samantha Gallant (fiddle), Janelle Richard (guitar), Robyn Richard (piano), Stephanie Collicutt (bass) and Paige Gallant (mandolin). All five girls play the fiddle too.

In November, Clack'azing played at the P.E.I. Music Awards Concert held at the Jubilee Theatre, and on February 2nd, they won the West Prince Battle of the Bands contest which allowed them to take part in the next phase of the competitions for a showcase at the ECMA Awards. Seventeen year old Samantha is now composing great tunes. Other talented young composers from this area are Nicholas Arsenault, Karine Gallant, and Pastelle and Emmanuelle LeBlanc. Karine was also picked for an ECMA showcase at the Guild, and the group Vishten was chosen to perform in the ECMA concert series at the Confederation Centre. Pastelle and Emmanuelle are members of Vishten.

Musical cabarets are held occasionally on Friday evenings at the Carrefour Theatre in Charlottetown with fiddlers Anastasia DesRoches and Peter Arsenault who are both from Mont Carmel. Anastasia is a member of the group Chiqu  sa which was selected to entertain Saturday afternoon at the ECMA events. In 2005, Chiqu  sa gave a show at the MacKenzie Theatre and two shows at the Jubilee Theatre. Anastasia teaches fiddling in Summerside at   cole-sur-Mer, and in DeBlois in West Prince. Louise Arsenault also teaches fiddling in DeBlois and in Abrams Village at Evangeline School.

Great fiddling goes on regularly in Abrams Village at the Club 50 on Saturday evenings where Eddy Arsenault and Edward P. Arsenault play for square dances and stepdancing. Please note that anyone over age "40" may

attend Club "50" dances.

Most Sunday evenings from 7 - 8 pm, there's fiddling at the Chez-Nous seniors' home in Wellington. The Friday Night Jammers played there on February 12th. We continue to meet weekly at the Wellington Boys and Girls Club to learn new tunes and jam. Every winter we miss some of our younger members who go off to University or play hockey etc., and we're always glad when they return in the spring.

Anyone who wants information on our fiddle group may call Marie Livingstone at 436-5532 or Norman Arsenault at 854-2570.



Prince County Fiddlers

Barry Thompson

The Prince County Fiddlers continue to meet and practice on Monday evenings. Our membership regrettably has not increased.

We have accepted an invitation to play at Andrews Lodge a community care facility in Summerside in mid March.

Fiddlers Patsy Bulger, Jim MacDougall, Leith Thomson, accompanied by Darlene Harding on piano and Alan Crozier and Ronnie Albert on guitars entertained the residents of the Chesapeake Seniors Housing in Summerside February 8th.

Lottie Locke, Thelma Campbell, Edgar Millar, Nathan Condon and Barry Thompson participated in the Fiddle Doo held in Kensington February 4th.

Nathan Condon was pleased to accept and perform at a cruise convention held in Miami Florida February 01. Nathan has also accepted an on air position with C 102 FM Radio Summerside. Nathan will also be showcasing at the East Coast Music Awards.

Edgar Millar has been teaching violin basics at the Kensington Community School to about a dozen enthusiastic students.



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Congratulations to The Queens County Fiddlers - PEI Music Awards Group of the Year 2005

Fiddle Practices Open To The Public

Prince County Fiddlers	Mon. 7:30 pm
'Community Connections' S'side	836-3844
Queens County Fiddlers	Wed. 7:45-9:00 pm
St. Pius X Hall Parkdale	569-4592
Eastern Kings Fiddlers	Mon. 7:00-8:00 pm
Rollo Bay Consolidated School	687-2584
Acadian Fiddlers	Fri. 8:00 pm
Boys & Girls Club Wellington	854-2570

Web Sites

Barachois	http://www.barachois.com/
Cape Breton Live	http://www.capebretonlive.com/
Tim Chaisson	http://www.timothychaisson.com/
Nathan Condon	http://www.nathancondon.com/
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P.E.I. Music Awards	http://www.peiawards.com/
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Rollo Bay Fiddle Fest	http://www.rollobayfiddlefest.ca/
Sobers Music	http://www.sobersmusic.ca/
Victoria Playhouse	http://www.victoriaplayhouse.com/
Richard Wood	http://www.peisland.com/richardwood/

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The Long River Players, a group of six neighbours and friends enjoy making music together. About five years ago, Alvin Bernard, the oldest member of the group, taught Bonnie La France, Gayle Murphy and Cindy Blanding how to play the fiddle. The four fiddlers are now joined by Pete Blanding on guitar and Bruce Boutilier on trumpet and rhythm, and all members of the group enjoy doing vocals as well. The group meets at least once each week as they prepare for summer ceilidhs that they'll once again be hosting on Monday nights at the Murray Centre in Kensington. The group enjoys learning new tunes and songs and then sharing the music they love with others. They are all about playing good music and having a great time together.

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Eastern Kings Fiddlers

Anne M. McPhee

Outside of the fact that the nights have been longer and it's been a little on the cold side at times, a person would have a hard time knowing that we have been passing through the dead of winter these past few months. The great winter weather has had a positive impact on the fiddling activities in Eastern Kings.

The Goose River dances have just been hopping with no sign of letting up at all this winter. Big crowds, good times and of course great music. It has been especially nice having Lemmie Chaisson back with us after his heart surgery over in Halifax. As one listener remarked, he sounds better than ever since he got his pipes cleaned out.

Word is out that the Wednesday night Lorne Valley dances have been hopping too. Non-stop dancing from 8 - 11 pm with great crowds. The numbers are a little down at the Monticello ceilidh but the good times keep coming. With Tim and JJ and Brent Chaisson providing the bulk of the fiddle music, it can't help but be a good time. Gene has decided to try and get a jam session going at the Monticello Hall on Sunday nights from 6 - 7:45. Everyone will have a chance to play, sing, or share their talent in whatever way they choose. It isn't limited to those who play fiddle, piano or guitar. If someone plays harmonica, flute, pipe, banjo, lute, clarinet, ukelele, mandolin, jaw harp, bongo drums, handsaw, or anything else that can produce music, they are welcome to join in.

The seniors continue to get together every Wednesday night at the Silver Threads in Souris as well. Anyone who walks in just carrying a fiddle case is guaranteed to get a standing ovation and that's even before they take the fiddle out of the case. The folks there get that excited when a fiddler turns up. They love the fiddle music so much.

And who can blame them, what a great way to pass the winter or any time of year for that matter. One senior from Souris, 84 year old Lilian Carter, is out four, sometimes five nights a week to listen to the fiddle and to dance with anyone with the energy to keep up with her. 66 year old Bill Matthews picked up the fiddle for the first time this year in Kathryn Dau Schmidt's beginner's class. Everyone figured he was a natural since he's been playing the church organ for years. Still, he says he is finding it a challenge to adjust from playing 160 odd keys and 47 odd foot pedals down to just four strings but he is loving every minute of it and wonders why he didn't try it years ago. He is a true inspiration to anyone who always wanted to play the fiddle but was afraid to try it.

Back in the spotlight this year is the group Kindle. The members have been on a bit of a break while everyone was busy working or going to school but with the ECMA's happening in Charlottetown this year they decided to get working again. They were chosen to perform for a Roots Room showcase at the Delta Prince Edward during the ECMA's in Charlottetown this year. Comprised of the grandchildren of the Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival founder, Joe Pete Chaisson, the group includes brothers Kurt, Brent and Tim Chaisson and cousins JJ Chaisson and Elmer Deagle. Hopefully we'll hear more from this group over the summer.

Another performer with Eastern Kings roots is home from away for the ECMA's. Jen Grant, granddaughter of former Cabinet Minister Daniel 'Dan' MacDonald, was chosen to perform for the Sneak Peak showcase at the Delta Prince Edward.

Meanwhile, the Rollo Bay fiddle students are working hard for their Family Night concert scheduled to be held on the Monday following Mother's Day - May 15. Everyone is welcome to attend. New this year are plans to attend and participate in the Fiddlemania concert to be held in June. Fiddle students from across the Island are planning to meet and showcase their work. And of course, everyone is welcome to attend and play at the 30th Anniversary of the Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival July 14 - 16th, 2006. Mark your calendars. Peter Chaisson reports that plans are in the works for another great weekend.



Fiddle Care

The Bridge



Peter Dawson


The bridge has been individually cut and fitted to your own instrument, so that the feet fit the top exactly and the strings are at the correct height above the fingerboard. The correct positioning of the bridge is very important to give the optimum sound of your individual instrument. Over time, the bridge will have a tendency

to pull towards the fingerboard as the strings are tuned. When this happens, the bridge may warp. Examine the bridge from the side. If the bridge has pulled forward, very gently pull it back with the thumb and forefinger at the top of either side of the bridge. When viewing the bridge from the side, the back (facing the tailpiece) should be perpendicular to the top. The front of the bridge will have a slight slope. If the bridge falls, loosen the strings and place a soft cloth under the tailpiece to protect the top from the tuners. The feet of the bridge should be equidistant between the inner notches of the f-holes. A well maintained bridge should last many years and it shouldn't be necessary to replace it as long as the fit is correct. If it is necessary to replace the bridge, it must be done by an expert.

(Peter Dawson is a well-known luthier, composer, and recording artist in Ottawa. Peter has a web site at <http://www.peterdawson.ca/>)

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Southern Kings Fiddlers

Amy Swenson

The fiddling scene has been active this winter, with good attendance at community school fiddle classes and numerous ceilidhs and benefits. Morell Community School, taught by Allan Macdonald, has enthusiastic beginners and intermediate students. Montague Community School violin class has been led by Ambrose Casey this year, and he has also been playing regularly at the Riverview Manor and the 50 Plus club. Murray Harbour Community School, taught by Amy Swenson, has four beginners and a good group of advanced students learning lots of new tunes. George Johnson has been busy teaching large guitar classes at Cardigan and Montague Community Schools. With any luck, perhaps some of the students will turn into back up players for us fiddlers...

Murray River recently held a successful benefit for their Community Hall. Guests were entertained by fiddler Francis McCormack with George MacDonald on keyboard. Fiddlers Jimmy O'Connor, Cecil Chapman, Kenny Chapman and Amy Swenson played at the Murray Harbour Valentine Ceilidh. Young sisters Lisa and Dawna Maclean played several of their favorite fiddle tunes at Christina's Country Cupboard restaurant on Feb 5th. (Christina's is again featuring local musicians on Sunday afternoons.) Veteran fiddler Attwood O'Connor was busy as usual entertaining at benefits in Murray Harbour and on Feb. 5th at Vernon River Hall for Charles MacDonald. Up and coming young fiddler Meghan Johnson, 13, was there as well and was very impressed with Attwood's fiddling - and no wonder, he has been playing for 74 years!! Meghan and her teacher Amy Swenson will be playing some Irish tunes at the St. Patrick's Day concert at Orwell Corner on March 12th.

Southern Kings fiddlers are looking forward to participating in the 2006 Fiddlemania concert, which this year will be a benefit for the food banks. We will be joining with fiddlers from Rollo Bay and Charlottetown fiddle classes and Donagh Regional School at this event in early June. And of course we will be working on a set for the student part of the Sunday concert at Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival in July.

I had an unexpected surprise this month when Harold Dockendorff came by with a fiddle he wanted me to get back into playing condition. Harold just happened to have a tape he recorded many years ago of Eastern PEI's fiddling legend Jack Webster Senior, playing with Georgie Webster on piano. It was a great pleasure to hear Jack's fine fiddling for the first time. I can now understand why he was such a favorite of many fiddle fans in this part of the island.

In closing, I am sad to report that one of our favorite fiddlers, Jimmy Hume, passed away in December at the age of 63. Carl Webster played Hector the Hero for the recession at the services in Dundas United Church December 10th. We also lost a great fan of fiddle music in the passing of well-known businesswoman Cheryl MacDonald of Woods Island, who lost her battle with cancer at the age of 52 on January 30th. Her fiddling son Rory, 16, played Cheryl's favorite hymn, How Deep the Father's Love, at the service at St. John's Presbyterian in Belfast on Feb. 3rd.



Fiddler's Shop Talk

Writing this column is a bit of a challenge because trying to illustrate aspects of playing the fiddle by trying to describe specific details without the reader being able to see and hear what is being described is hard to do. I would appreciate any feedback to let me know if any of this stuff is useful. Did any of you try the pentatonic scale last issue or use the ten minute focused practice interval? Send me an email and let me know what you want to learn about. (hello@royjohnstone.com)



Roy Johnstone

I thought I would take a more general approach in this issue and talk about developing your own unique style of playing. It's a good approach to start by mimicking other players but eventually you might want to consider evolving your own distinctive sound. The more you explore and understand how different sounds are produced the more mastery you have over the instrument and the greater repertoire of styles and interpretations you have at your finger tips. Listening to a lot of the best players is a good start; some of my favourite Irish style players are Kevin Burke, Tommy Peoples, Matt Cranitch and Martin Hayes. Each of these players has a distinctive sound characteristic of the area in Ireland where they grew up or they were influenced by specific teachers who taught them. On the Scottish side some of my favourites are Buddy MacMaster, Alister Fraser and Bonnie Rideout. I also have many other folk, jazz and blues fiddlers whom I much admire such as Stuff Smith, Joe Venuti, and Staphane Grappelli.

Chose your favourites and listen closely to the sound they produce and try to recreate it. A great tool for listening to and learning tunes by ear is Tascam's guitar trainer. It will slow down a phrase and maintain the pitch. It's a great addition to any serious player's gig bag.

After having listened to a lot of players and trying to mimic their sound you can begin to refine your own sound. As you listen closely you will realize that the way your finger hits the finger board influences the sound you make. What part of your finger you press down, the amount of pressure you use and whether you slide into the note will all affect the quality of the sound you produce.

The movement of the bow probably influences the sound as much or more than how you place your fingers. The tension, pressure and speed of the bow on the strings is a major factor in the sound produced. How much rosin you use and whether you play close to the bridge or down over the end of the finger board all affect the sound. Try exploring these different elements in your daily practice and I think you will be pleasantly surprised at the improvement and you will be well on your way to creating your own distinctive fiddle sound..

Till next time keep the bow rosined and the fiddle in tune!!!

(ECMA multi-nominee, performer and recording artist,
Roy Johnstone, has a website at <http://www.royjohnstone.com/>)

PEI Fiddlers Society General Meeting

Wednesday 15 March 2006 6:30 PM

St. Pius X Hall Charlottetown

**The 30th Anniversary Committee and Bylaws
Committee updates will be discussed.**

Mark your calendar now!

Some more nostalgia

MINUTES OF MEETING TO ESTABLISH THE P. E. I. FIDDLERS SOCIETY

MAY 22, 1977, at ST. PIUS X HALL, PARKDALE.

1. Opening:

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman of the day, Neil McCannell. Mr. McCannell indicated Fr. Faber MacDonald was willing to act as Secretary for the day if there was no objection. There was none so.....

2. Sharing from Groups:

- A. Queens: Mr. Bill MacDonald reported that the Queen's Co. group began in the fall meeting in Parkdale Fire Hall. The group meets each Thursday at 8:p.m. There is a canteen of coffee, tea and cookies provided each week. A weekly collection of \$1.00 is taken to cover this and also the rent. Each week the program consists in playing together, learning new tunes and some times an individual playing for ten minutes or so. Fellowship and friendship have grown and fiddlers have been experiencing a spirit of unity. Some have taken lessons during the winter to read music. Presently the group is practicing tunes for the Glendale Festival in Cape Breton July 8, 9 and 10. The group is grateful to Neil McCannell for his assistance.
- B. Summerside: John Gauthier reporting.
This group came together as a result of being brought together in Bloomfield. It is now formed and the aims are to foster and propagate old time fiddling. The first phase has consisted in learning to read music. This has gone well as all fiddlers have taken it seriously. The next phase which will begin soon will consist in learning to play together.
- C. Souris: Mr. Joseph Chaisson reporting.
The group met once a week for the winter. The group put on several concerts in different places. For this the Queens Co. group joined in. The concerts were most successful. Kenny Chaisson learned to read music during the winter, and so will now probably have to be "pushed out." (not taken seriously.)

D. Motion of acceptance of guidelines and Declaration of Society formed:

It was moved by J. Gauthier and seconded by George Weatherbie and passed unanimously that the proposed guidelines with the above additions, amendments and deletions be accepted.

Chairman Neil McCannell then declared the P. E. I. Fiddlers Society officially formed. He then called for a coffee break and payment of fees.

4. Election of Officers:

The following were nominated and chosen as Officers of the P. E. I. Fiddlers Society:

President: Neil McCannell

First Vice President: Joseph Chaisson

Second Vice President: John Dan MacPherson

Secretary: John Gauthier

Treasurer: Keith LeLacheur



Here and There . . .



The Touch Of The Masters Hand

'Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer

*Thought it scarcely worth his while
To waste his time on the old violin,
But he held it up with a smile.*

*"What am I bid, good friends?" he cried.
"Who'll start the bidding for me?
One dollar! Only one? And who'll make it two?
Two dollars, once. And three!*

*Three dollars, once. And three dollars, twice.
And going, and going, " but no...
From the back of the room a gray-haired man
Came forward and picked up the bow.*

*And wiping the dust from the old violin,
And tightening the loose strings,
He played a melody pure and sweet
As caroling angels sing.*

*The music ceased, and the auctioneer
With a voice that was quiet and low,
Said, "What am I bid for the old violin?"
As he held it up with the bow.*

*"One thousand dollars, and who'll make it two?
Two thousand, dollars, and three !
Three thousand, once. And three thousand, twice.
And going, and going, and gone!" said he.*

*The people cheered, but some of them cried,
"We don't quite understand
What changed it's worth." Swift came the reply,
" 'Twas the touch of the Master's hand."*

*And many a man with life out of tune
And battered and scarred with sin,
Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd
Much like this old violin.*

*A mess of pottage, a glass of wine.
A game, and he travels on.
He's going once, and going twice.
And going, and almost gone.*

*But the Master comes, and the thoughtless crowd
Never can quite understand
The worth of a soul, and the change that is wrought,
By the touch of the Master's hand.*

- - Myra Brooks Welch

Your comments are important to us.

**Send your email to dardave@eastlink.ca or
send your snail mail to**

**The Island Fiddler, C/O Paul Cheverie
474 Bedford Rd. Mt. Stewart RR1 PE C0A 1T0**

The Fiddle Doo in Kensington



There was an excellent turnout at the Murray Christian Centre in Kensington for the Fiddle Doo and Potluck Supper held on Saturday, February 4, 2006. Organizer of the event, Mary Smith was very pleased to see so many there from New Brunswick as well as PEI. A large group of fiddlers, accompanists and their followers came over in two buses from New Brunswick including well known fiddlers Ivan Hicks and Ernie Depreau, as well as keyboardist Glen MacEachern. 10 year old Alexander Landry and his 8 year old sister Allison, the great grandchildren of New Brunswick's 85 year old Grand Master Fiddler Ned Landry, were also there and shared their astounding fiddling and step dancing talents. Also in attendance were some Island fiddlers including Barry Thompson, Lottie Locke, Edgar Millar, Alvin Bernard, Cindy Blanding, Nathan Condon & Mary Smith. Altogether there was well over 40 fiddlers.

The music was played mainly in the Down East style but many of the tunes would be familiar to most Islanders. The format for the afternoon was a little different from what we are accustomed to. One of the fiddlers would be asked to lead and would call out the name of a tune and everyone would join in and play along. Tunes were played one at a time rather than in a string of tunes or sets like we are used to hearing. Judging by the enthusiastic response of the audience, there was no problem adjusting to this new format.

There was also an opportunity for some of the fiddlers to spotlight their various talents. Nathan Condon, just back from an appearance in Florida, shared a sample of his dynamic fiddling style which was greatly appreciated by everyone there. There was also some step dancing and even a yodeler from New Brunswick got up and shared her amazing vocal talents.

All this was followed by a tremendous Potluck Supper with plenty to eat for everyone. Mary Smith, was pleased to announce that the Fiddlers & Followers Weekend traditionally held at Rainbow Valley will go on at the North Rustico Arena on the first weekend of August.



Don't see what you're looking for? - - Tell us!

The Dirty Nellies add new dimension to their band



The *Dirty Nellies* formed 8 years ago, grew from jamming in a garage, to the recording of their debut CD. Known for their energetic style, the Dirty Nellies play a blend of Irish, maritime, contemporary and original songs, which is driven by lots of passion for their love of music. Recently, the Dirty Nellies added a new member to their band. **Louise Arsenault, a well known Acadian fiddler**, brings a new dimension to the band with her dance, harmonica, guitar and foot percussion. Louise, a full time professional musician has toured world wide with the renowned Acadian group *Barachois*. She now resides in the Evangeline region, where she continues to perform and to teach her distinctive style of Acadian fiddling.

Band member spokesperson, Brian Arsenault, indicated that "the Dirty Nellies are very honored to have this great fiddler join the band. Louise's joie de vivre and her multi musical talents will definitely bring the band to a new dimension."

Louise's premiere performances with the Dirty Nellies which will be held on Saturday, March 11th, at the Knights of Columbus Hall, Palmer Road at 9 p.m., Friday, March 17th at the Wave (UPEI), Charlottetown at 10:30 p.m. and on Saturday, March 18th at the Tignish Legion, Tignish at 9 p.m.

For a complete schedule of the Dirty Nellies performances please visit our website at www.thedirtynellies.com. or contact: Brian Arsenault 902-854-2273 Rob@thedirtynellies.com

We are most appreciative that our advertisers are instrumental in helping us to get The Island Fiddler to you - - they deserve your consideration.

In God's Hands

TRAINOR, Blair F. "Bun"

09 Feb 2006, formerly of Sherwood, in his 40th year, son of Cecil and Marion (nee Gormley) Trainor of Sherwood. (*Cecil is a past-president of the PEI Fiddlers Society*)

Urban Carmichael

13 Feb 2006, Stratford, age 54. One of PEI's best known entertainers, Urban was the recipient of the 2005 PEI Music Awards *Lifetime Achievement Award*

"Roots of Music"

Seann Allen Battams

Queen's University - Kingston, Ontario 22 Sep 2005

When I was seven years old I began playing the fiddle at my grandmother's request. At first I despised the fiddle due to the fact that every tune sounded similar, and every tune was made of eight-bar repeated patterns, but after about a year or so of constant immersion into this traditional style of music, I began to enjoy the fast paced reels, the bouncy, vibrant jigs, and the choppy Scottish strathspeys. This interest grew into my eventual love of fiddle and my pursuit of a more comprehensive study of music. Though it is easy to point out many significant events in my life as a musician, one event stands out more than the rest.

In Goose River, Prince Edward Island, there is a ceilidh every Saturday evening in the local hall. This location is used for almost every type of event, from weddings to birthday parties, but on these special evenings, people from all around the Island make their way for an evening of musical entertainment. Saturday evenings in Goose River seem to have some sort of special significance to the audience. I suppose it's due to the fact that almost every individual in attendance has a relative who plays fiddle, guitar, piano or some other instrument. As a young aspiring fiddle player, this particular soundscape would shape me as musician and as a person.

One Saturday evening in late July, when I was eight years old, I received much more than an evening of music and dancing. Though Goose River had many fine musicians in attendance every week, there was a fiddle player named Angus McPhee who had been attending the ceilidhs for as long as anyone could remember.

During one of his sets, I found myself watching his right foot and its relentless stomping. I did not find this activity awkward, as I had seen it countless times before, but for some reason, during this particular performance, it intrigued me. After a tune or two, I felt compelled to try to imitate him. After imitating Angus for maybe a minute or two, something inside my head clicked, as if someone had flipped on a light switch. I found myself tapping on what I now understood to be the "beat." As I looked around the room at the rest of the audience, I noticed many of them were tapping their feet like me. It was during this evening that I suddenly felt a part of the community. I was no longer just an audience member. I now felt as if my one tapping foot somehow contributed to the music.

What I discovered some time later, after performing on the stage, was that I actually had been contributing to the music. Though there was always a fiddle player pouring forth rich and intricate melodies, a guitarist strumming energetic rhythms, and a pianist filling up any missing sounds with beautiful, reinforcing chords, the heart of the music in Goose River was not on the stage, but in the audience.

Seann made his first public appearance at Goose River when he was a few days short of eight years old. Since leaving PEI he and his sisters have played and entertained all over Southern Ontario and have been well received. Seann (19) fiddle, Samantha (16) guitar and vocals, Sarah Jay (13) banjo, Margy - fiddle and step dancing.



Family Ties

Teresa Wilson

Teresa Wilson comes from a long line of fiddlers and has been playing the fiddle since she was a child growing up in Goose River along with her seven brothers and five sisters. When her brother George wrote a fiddle tune a number of years ago, Teresa decided that if he could do it, so could she. Following a visit from her children and grandchildren when the house somehow felt too quiet, too empty, she composed a tune and called it **Family Ties** and has been playing it herself over the years. **Family Ties** is written and played as a march but Teresa also plays it as a reel.



Events Forecast

03 Mar	Cinq a Huit - Roy Johnstone & Robert Arsenault	Charlottetown - Carrefour Theatre	675-2541
15 May	Family Night Fiddle Concert	Rollo Bay School	672-2711
10 Jun 2006	Queens County Fiddlers Annual Concert	Charlottetown - Carrefour Theatre	629-9463
14-16 Jul	Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival	Rollo Bay Fiddle Field	687-2584
04-06 Aug	Atlantic Fiddlers Jamboree	Abram Village	854-3300
4-6 Aug	Fiddlers & Followers Weekend	North Rustico Arena	963-2221
13 Aug	PEI Fiddlers in Concert	Kensington - Community Arena	436-9811
11 Sep - 07 Oct	Celtic Blaze - Stephanie Cadman	Charlottetown - Confederation Centre	566-1267
Daily 2006	Island Shindig (30 Jun-01 Sep 2006)	Cavendish - Avonlea Village	963-3050
Tuesdays	Kitchen Party	Goose River	961.2301
Wednesdays	Ceilidh	Souris - Seniors Silver Threads	687-2396
Wednesdays	Square Dance	Lorne Valley Hall	687-2584
Wednesdays	Ceilidh (21 Jun - 06 Sep)	Malpeque Hall	836-4310
Thursdays	Ceilidh (22 Jun - 28 Sep)	Stanley Bridge Hall	836-4310
Thursdays	Ceilidh (Jun - Sep)	Rollo Bay Fiddle Field Barn	687-2584
Fridays	Ceilidh at The Irish Hall (May thru Sep)	Charlottetown - B.I.S. Hall	892-2367
Fridays	Ceilidh on the Water (Jul & Aug 2006)	Montague	838-3444
Sundays	Ceilidh & Dance	Monticello Log Hall	687-2547
Su/Mo/We/Th	Scottish Music Concert (14 May-12 Oct 06)	Richmond - MacKinnon Homestead	854-2245