The Newsletter of the Saline Fiddlers

Fiddlin' Around

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Alison Brown: Bluegrass and Jazz

By Will Warner and Theresa Brosius



The Saline Fiddlers are thrilled to announce that we will host the **Alison Brown Quartet with special guest** mandolinist, violinist, and percussionist extrordinaire, **Joe Craven** (founding member of the acoustic fusion group "Psychograss" and member of the beloved Garcia/Grisman band) at our 14th Annual Fall Hometown Concert on October 20th. The acoustic quartet of banjo/acoustic guitar, piano, bass and drums will present beautiful instrumental music blending the rugged drive of bluegrass with the harmonic sophistication of jazz. Grammy winner Alison Brown achieved an international reputation as a banjo player by pushing the instrument out of its familiar Appalachian settings and into new musical territory. Her style has been called a "jazz/ bluegrass hybrid" or even "jazzgrass." The group has been winning over traditionalist and mainstream music fans for over 10 years.

Billboard Magazine puts it this way: "Like James Taylor's voice or B.B. Kings guitar, Alison Brown's banjo is an instrument possessed of a unique sonic signature and an inescapable beauty." And the *New Yorker*: "**Alison Brown** left a career in investment banking for a life as a banjo musician. Anyone who thinks this was a foolish move hasn't heard her play." The International Bluegrass Music Association named her Banjo Player of the Year. They have toured extensively throughout the US and abroad with stops at some of music's prestigious venues. The Quartet has shared the bill with a variety of legendary roots artists including Doc Watson, Sam Bush, Richard Thompson and Dave Grisman. Alison was introduced to the banjo as a teenager by fanatic Stuart Dunkin.

After earning a degree from Harvard, an MBA from UCLA and a stint as an investment banker, Alison returned to her High School passion of banjo playing and developed a distinct personal style influenced by the rhythm and techniques of legendary Earl Scruggs and melodic pioneers Tony Trischka and John Hartford. To date, Alison has recorded 7 critically-acclaimed solo albums including 2001's Fair Weather which reflects Alison's bluegrass roots and boasts the Grammy-winning (Best Country Instrumental) cut "Leaving Cottondale," featuring Alison in a duet with Bela Fleck

> "Alison Brown left a career in in investment banking for a life as a banjo musician. Anyone who thinks this was a foolish move hasn't heard her play." **New Yorker**

As usual, the **Saline Fiddlers** will open the show. The group recently returned from a two-week tour of California and Nevada. The new freshmen have undergone their baptism-by-fire at the annual summer Fiddle Camp. The group is perfecting a lively new show created by artistic director Ben Culver, with the assistance of dance choreographer Sheila Graziano and voice coach Dianne Newberry. The show includes compositions and arrangements by Fiddler alumni Jesse Mason and Brad Philips, both now professional musicians. For more information go to *www.salinefiddlers.com*.

Meet the new Fiddlers

We're proud to introduce here and at our concerts our talented bunch of new Fiddlers. This is only six of the new group. Four more new Fiddlers will be featured in the Winter 2008 edition of Fiddlin Around.

Dan



First Kim, then Kelsey and now Dan. "I learned about the fiddlers through my older sisters being in the group way back when. "Looked like fun," says Dan, though he has to admit that part of the reason he joined was as a result of , "pressure from my sisters." The qualities that make him unique from his siblings are; A. he's a guy and B. he plays the cello. Dan takes private Cello lessons from Fiddler Jacob. .He has played violin in the past, but, for the future, he wants to learn to play the bass guitar. He likes to "get the led out" with the music of Led Zepplin.

Dan was born in Michigan at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital. He moved with his family to Virginia, came back 5 years later, played t-ball for three years, one in Virginia. He played soccer from kindergarten to 6th grade. His family includes Mom, Jen (the former editor of Fiddlin' Around), dad Tom and sisters Kim, Kelsey and Allison.



Dan has other interests outside of music. He is involved with the Boy Scouts of America. He doesn't watch much T.V. , really, but his favorite movie is 'Forrest Gump. He also enjoyed 'The Terminal.' It is obvious from these facts that, Tom Hanks is one of his favorite actors. In school he plays La Cross and Cross Country. His favorite subject in school is History, though, his favorite teacher of all time was his 5th grade teacher, Ms Gordon.

Rachel B.

The Saline Fiddlers are proud to welcome Rachel to the group. Of the audition, she said it was "Really nerve racking, but when you meet all the (members), that was fun!"

Rachel first saw the Saline Fiddlers when she was 5 years old at the Saline Celtic Festival. "I really enjoyed the lively music and liked to watch the amazing cloggers dance." She has taken lessons from Fiddler Sara Menchak as part of her preparations for the big day.



, "I love to read, hang out with friends and surf the web," says Rachel of her other activities. "I like comedy movies and I love the show C.S.I." (Crime Scene Investigation). Her favorite actor is George Cloony because, she says, "H is the best looking old actor around and because he does a really good job in Oceans 11, 12 and 13."



Rachel's favorite teacher is Mr. Ernest from sixth grade. Her favorite subject is History. However, one of the most interesting things about this talented young lady is the profession she hopes to go into. She says she wants to, "go to the U. of M. and become a doctor or a brain surgeon." Now that's ambition. Go Rachel!

Brad



Brad was born in Texas and moved to Saline when he was 2. He first learned about the Saline Fiddlers at a performance after the Christmas parade two years ago. "Ever since I first saw them, I thought it would be cool to be in the group, but when I started taking lessons with Mr. Culver (his favorite teacher of all time) I realized that I really liked the music and wanted to join." Brad has played violin since 5th grade. He began Participating in Fiddle Club in 7th grade. When asked about the audition *(see Brad, pg.3)*



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Beth Bartley, Editor.
Photos courtesy of loving Fiddler families.
Will Warner, Executive Director

www.salinefiddlers.com

Brad - process, his answer was unusual, " It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. The talking part of the audition was actually really funny."

Besides his interest in Fiddling, Brad is also enjoying learning to play the Mandolin. He also likes to go to movies and hang out with friends and he is a member of the High School Soccor team.

Brad is a proud member of the Saline graduating class of 2011. After graduation, he hopes to get into a really good college like U. of M. Good luck, Brad! We look forward to following all your accomplishments.

Rachel M.



Rachel, like Dan, is the sibling of two other Saline Fiddlers, Sara and Jacob. An interesting twist is that a hidden musical talent seems has run in this family since neither of their parents plays an instrument.

Rachel first learned about the group when her sister joined. She decided she would work to become a member when she saw how much fun both her brother and sister were having. She tried out on Violin and passed with flying colors. She says of the audition process, "I thought it wasn't as bad as I expected it would be." Since she was auditioning before her favorite teacher (Artistic Director of the Saline Fiddlers) Ben Culver, this makes perfect sense.



While she enjoys playing Fiddle music, she also takes lessons in Classical as well. She also plays piano. Rachel's favorite musical artist is the Celtic group, Solas. She also enjoys spending time with friends and swimming. Rachel hopes to go to the University of Michigan.

Who is her biggest inspiration? Grab a tissue and prepare to dab your eyes...Rachel says, "My big sister, Sara, is my biggest inspiration because I have always looked up to her."

Devin



"I saw the fiddlers play a concert for all the 5th graders and I thought it would be fun to be a Fiddler," says Devin . He tried out for the Saline Fiddlers at this years audition playing the banjo. His performance was spot on and he was heartily welcomed into the group. His feelings about his try out? "The audition was easy," he said. Easy when you're as talented as Devin, perhaps.



Devin got his musical start playing banjo in another well respected Saline group "Fiddlers Restrung." He also plays Violin, Mandolin, Piano, and the Ukulele. His favorite musician is banjo player Bela Fleck. He has gone to banjo camp for the past three years. He has also played with Alan Munde, Bill Evans, Ned Luberecki, and Danny Barnes who are some of the best banjo players in the world.

As school sports go, Devin enjoys swimming and playing Water Polo. He is involved in local Boy Scout Troop 446. His favorite T.V shows are "The Office" and "Family Guy." The movies he enjoys most are Pirates of the Caribbean and The Lord of the Rings.

Devin is very focused on his long term goal. "My goal is a PhD in chemical engineering." Now that's ambition and drive!

Richard



Richard has taken private mandolin lessons from graduated Senior, David Rhine. This helped him prepare for the rigorous Saline Fiddlers audition. How did he feel about the actual process? "Very good," he said, "it helps get nerves out." Richard learned about the Saline Fiddlers at a Hometown Concert he went to once. He decided to become a Fiddler, he says, because, " (I) Enjoy playing mandolin and had spare time to do so." He is active as a Chordsman, teaching 5th grade fiddle club. Besides the Mandolin, Richard enjoys playing electric guitar, piano and violin.



His favorite teacher of all time is Ms. Dalton, his 8th grade science teacher which is why it is no surprise that his favorite subject is Science. In his spare time, he enjoys paintball, airsoft guns, hunting and working at Grandpa's garage.

Richard has a specific educational goal to graduate with a 4.0 and go the U of M for medicine. An honorable objective. He says his family is very supportive of him. His biggest inspiration in life... "Grandpa, because he worked hard and I want to make him proud." What a beautiful thought.



Tough Boots to Fill

By Theresa Brosius

Saline Fiddlers Say Good-Bye to Doug Rhine and Welcome Karen Bedigian and Randy Dakin



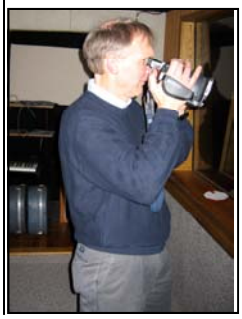
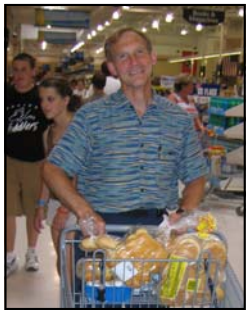
Every few years, the graduation of senior Fiddler players naturally leads to the transitioning of parent staff members. The class of 2007 saw nine valuable Fiddler players move on to collegiate life. Along with one of them, mandolin/ banjo/violin player, clogger, and vocalist, David Rhine, went his father two-year Events Manager Doug Rhine.

For nine year Fiddler veterans like myself, Doug's exodus seemed like a major challenge for the Fiddlers family. Doug's shoes were big ones to fill. As a stay-at-home dad, he took on the job with the utmost fervor and zest, and the kids loved him. From keeping the gig manager updated and tracking attendance to creating amusing names for the set-up and tear-down groups, Doug always performed his job like it was fun, not just work. At the yearly Fiddler Camps at Tau Beta, he could be counted on to collect and put out an assortment of mind-bending activities to keep the kids challenged and entertained in their spare time. He was always the initiator of the Fiddler Camp story that was posted on a wall for members to write their contribution to the tale. "The Swamp Monster" was a favorite that comes to mind. In 90 degree heat, he would help tie hundreds of water balloons for surprise cooling-off fun, and Capture the Flag became a camp tradition under his watch.



Doug's Fiddler kids, David and Kathrine

. At every Fiddler practice, gig and Hometown Concert Doug could be counted on to plan ahead, be there, and help things happen successfully. Never one to draw attention to himself, Doug had a quiet steady demeanor and his only agenda was what was best for the group. His diplomatic, selfless personality will be greatly missed. But, change is inevitable and now that David has graduated, the Events Manager position has had to be refilled with new Fiddler parent staff members. Members is intentionally plural, because to do the work of one stay-at-home dad Event Manager now requires two full-time employed parents. Welcome Karen Bedigian and Randy Dakin. The parents of violin player Drew Dakin have eagerly stepped up to the plate. As husband and wife, they work together as a team and divide the chores involved. With their transition into this new role, we expect that the job will evolve and change as it does when any new individuals assume new leadership positions. Judging from this past summer's Fiddlers' camp at Professor Culver's home, it would appear that they are falling right into step. "Agent Randy" as he became known by tech crew member Ian performed his job with a warm and light heart. We will miss Doug and all his wonderful qualities, but we thank Karen and Randy for volunteering to come in behind him, and we wish them great success







Fiddler Fun



Ever wonder what the kids do on their leisure time? Enjoy the following Fiddler Scrapbook. picture page.

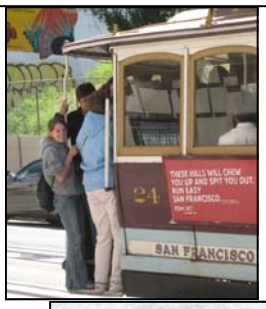
One thing the Fiddlers really like to do is eat



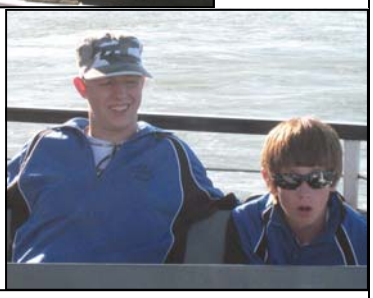




They recycle, under the direction and watchful eye of Casey



Fiddlers are sight - seers





They like to take hikes





And don't forget how much they like to eat

Sometimes they have to get homework done on the road...





...and eat. Better stand back they look hungry.



Fiddlers like to goof around.



But what they like most is...well, you know...



Farewell to Summer!

SALINE Fiddlers

Will Warner, Executive Director
Ben Culver, Artistic Director
Karen Bedigian Dakin, Randy Dakin & Doug Rhine, Event Managers
Lynda Shea, Administrative Manager
Ed Brosius, Technical Manager

Upcoming Public Events

- October 14, 3:00 PM, **Milwood United Methodist Church,** 3919 Portage Rd. Kalamazoo, MI
- October 20**, Hometown Show!** Our guest artist will be bluegrass/jazz banjo player **Alison Brown Quartet with Joe Craven** Alison's site: www.alisonbrown.net | Joe's site: www.joecraven.com.
- October 27, **Third Annual Cattle Baron's Ball,** (fundraiser for the American Cancer Society. Details at www.cbbcleveland.com) Wolstein Center, Cleveland, OH.
- April 19, **MCAC Dinner Theater,** Marlette Community Art Center, 351 Moore St., Marlette, MI, details to be announced. Visit: www.marlettecommunityartcenter.org
- Watch for new gigs to be added weekly.

For the latest info visit our website:
www.salinefiddlers.com

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