FIDDLIN' AROUND

Saline Fiddlers Philharmonic

Vol. 8 No. 4 Mar-Apr, 2002

Mickey Mouse, Sun, Fun and Music

By Barb Radloff

The Fiddlers Philharmonic are packing their bags, boarding the bus and heading south to Florida over spring break. The trip, which will feature criss-cross, school-based performances in the sunshine state, will also be packed with leisure time and fun-in-the sun.

The Fiddlers will be leaving Saline on Friday, March 29, and will be heading south courtesy of long-time bus driver and Fiddler-fan Jack Martin. Many Fiddler families will be part of the south-bound caravan. After spending the first night in Chattanooga, the Fiddlers will be landing in Orlando to take on the land of Mickey Mouse and Nickelodeon. In December, when the Fiddlers performed at the Midwest Clinic, the Fine Arts Coordinator for Orange County Schools asked if Fiddlers could sometime play for them. Since the tour was on, Fiddlers were able to accomodate. String students from a variety of schools within Orlando Public Schools will be the first to be entertained on the Fiddlers' tour. The performance is scheduled for Monday, April 1.

The next stop will be Clearwater Beach where the group, including Director Bob Phillips and Assistant Director Ben Culver, are expected to set flight parasailing. An evening tropical party dinner cruise is scheduled for April 2 for the entire traveling Fiddler family. The St. Petersburg Perkins Elementary Arts Magnet School will be the sight of the second concert on Wednesday, April 3. Director Bob Phillips has a connection there. Perkins boasts a fiddle group which happens to include the sons of Bob's cousin who also teaches at Perkins. A visit to the Tampa Aquarium will finish off the visit to the west side of state.

Heading back east on I-4, the final stop on the tour will be Vero Beach. The Fiddlers are scheduled to perform at the Waxlax Center for the Performing Arts at 7:30 on April 5. A second performance may be added on April 4. For southbound Fiddler fans, tickets for these performances are available by calling 516-234-4614. Workshops and a concert are scheduled for the St. Edward's School District on April 4. A trip to the Kennedy Space Center may take place if the launch schedule permits.



Long bus trips often bring out the creative side of all the musicians in Fiddlers. From a previous trip, we ask "How many Fiddlers fit in a bus rest room?

The group will be starting the long journey north on April 6, and will return home just in time to be back in school on April 8.

The Basement Bash:
Jammin' with the Hot Club!

By Will Warner

The storm came during preparations for the February Hometown Concerts. Fiddlers tend to "press on regardless," but the site of the concert, Saline High School, was without power. At the last possible moment, "Plan B" went into effect.

Show time found the whole crew assembled in the high school parking lot, hunched and huddled in the February dark and windy cold. In groups of two or three, Fiddlers approached each car as it drew to a stop by the curb. First the bad news: No power. Have to cancel. Very sorry. Then the good news: Two shows tomorrow, and your ticket's good for the first one.



Long bus trips are fun, casual bonding experiences as Phil illustrates.

When the traffic finally stopped, it was time for Plan B, part 2. The after-concert cast party was still "on," and a surprise was waiting. Fiddlers and their parents scattered to their cars and convoyed out to Sue and John Birkos' place.

Question: How can you tell how many fiddlers are in the house? Answer: Estimate the number of shoes in the mountain of footwear in the front hall, and divide by two. The pile at the Birkos' indicated a large turnout.

The action was downstairs in their lovely, finished basement. In one corner, people sought the warmth of a potluck buffet. In another, helpful youngsters poured soft drinks and lemonade. The basement bristled with musical instruments; every cranny and nook, every out-of-the-way place held a violin, viola, cello, guitar, bass, banjo, or mandolin.

Presently, Fiddlers director Bob Phillips arrived, bringing with him the *Hot Club of Cowtown*. The professional Texas trio was in town to headline the Hometown Concerts. Rather than kill time in a motel, the band came to the party and brought their tools of the trade—Elana Fremerman, her fiddle; Whit Smith, his vintage guitar and amp; Jake Erwin, his beautiful blonde, upright bass.

After some schmoozing, the amazing part began. Musicians unlimbered their instruments and tuned. Then, for the next two hours, the Fiddlers and the Hot Club played off each other. The two groups took turns performing, climbing through their repertoires, impressing each other, Elana smiling, marveling, Whit shaking his head in disbelief.

In what amounted to a private concert, the Hot Club gave their best stuff, including lively renditions of "Ida Red," "Bonaparte's Retreat", "Sally Goodin" (with lyrics), and "China Town, My China Town." *Mirabile dictu*, the basement's acoustics were worthy of these polished professionals.

Continued on page 4. See COWTOWN

Fiddler Alumni Updates

By Pam Phillips

We know that the kids in Fiddlers become dear to our supporters. When they graduate it seems as if no one can ever fill their shoes but somehow the younger ones are up to the challenge. The number of alumni now outnumbers the number of current Fiddlers. We are very proud of each and every one of them as they move into adult life. Here are a few words about what some of the graduates are up to. Alumni – please keep us up to date on your news!

Cathy G. – teaching social studies and coaching basketball in Plano, TX

Tim H. – graduated from UM and is an engineer

Laura M. – graduated from Hope and is working as a writer

Becky P-B. – graduated from UM and is starting a new string program in Hudsonville, MI

Sarah P-L. – graduated from UM and teaches orchestra in Naperville, IL

Julie G-R. - expecting her first baby soon!

Theresa D-C. – busy raising her two little ones

Sarah L. – graduated from MSU and is working in psychology

Amy F. – soon to graduate from EMU in string education

Kelly J. – soon to graduate from Kalamazoo College and hopes to go on in forensic archeology

Jesse K. – attending school in Colorado and has his pilot license

Katy P. – attending Indiana University in math education

Donna E. – attending Albion College and planning for medical school

Kari L. – attending UM and studying in Sweden this semester

Christen M. – attending MSU and studying overseas in many places Including Nepal

Cori S. – studying music education at UM

Reid S. – studying music education at UM

Barney C. – graduated from UM in cello performance, headed for graduate school

Jeremy K. – attending UM in jazz violin and continuing to perform

Jesse M. – attending EMU and continuing to perform

Kelly M. – attending EMU

Ryan P. – working in Christian ministry, to be married this summer

Andrew C. – attending UM in engineering

Jared G. – attending Hope College

Kristen L. – attending UM in biology

Alice Y. – attending MSU



Homework plays a part in fighting the boredom of long bus trips as Stephanie works on a previous bus trip.



Fiddler Juniors - Class of 2003
Bottom L-R: Kristin, Claire, Laura.
Center L-R: Anna, Andrea, Nicole, Lauren.
Top L-R: Brad, Dan, Evan

Fiddlers on the Tube!

In December, the Fiddlers traveled to Hastings, MI to tape four half-hour sets of music for a cable TV show. The show is a labor of love of Bonnie and Deja Davenporte of Battle Creek, and is a product of the local access channel in Battle Creek, thus it's name "Access to Bluegrass". It regularly features two bands each week. The show is on 200 cable channels primarily in Western Michigan and Northern Indiana, so look for the Fiddlers on your cable station. If your local access channel doesn't carry the show and you would like to be a local contact, you can speak with your station and with Bonnie and Deja at deja@net-link.net or call 616-721-3183.

Cowtown

Continued from page 2

Jake Erwin's uncanny slap-pluck bass style provided a drum-like rhythm and a tonal bass line at the same time. For whatever reason, audiences seem to love bass solos and Jake's actually were impressive. When this audience applauded his solos, Whit and Elana winked at him and rolled their eyes in mock resentment. (Jake is clean-cut enough to be a Fiddler himself. Several fiddler moms offered to adopt him.)

Eventually, Bob Phillips and Ben Culver began to "play the big instrument." They worked out collaborations involving all the members of both groups. The joint effort on "Sweet Georgia Brown" would climax the next day's shows.

Elana remarked that what had occurred was not what she had expected when Bob invited them to the party to "maybe play some fiddle tunes with the kids." None of us had. What transpired was one of those unplanned, peak experiences that join to form the fabric of our memories.

Fall 2002 Hometown Concert

Next fall's Hometown Concert will be totally different from this one but awesome in a different way. The guest artists will be the legendary Norman Blake and Peter Ostroushko. These two master performers have released a "Duo" album just recently and will be regaling Saline with their skill and mastery of folk music. Norman is one of the wonderful artists on the soundtrack of the movie "O Brother, Where Art Thou?". Many of our audience will remember Peter as our guest artist some years ago with both his fiddle and mandolin music. Mark your calendar for Nov. 1 and 2, 2002. Tickets will go on sale Sept. 1.

Visit us on our website:
www.salinefiddlers.com

Future Performances

March 20 - Tecumseh High School, Open to the public, free, 7 pm

March 26 - The Washtenaw County/MSU Extension Dairy and Livestock Banquet. Private Event

Monday, April 1 - Orange County Schools, Florida

Wednesday, April 3 - Perkins Elementary School, St. Petersburg, Florida

Friday, April 12, 7:30 pm - Battle Creek Optimists Concert. Lakeview HS, 300 S. 28th Street, Battle Creek, MI. Tickets available at the door for $5 each or $20 for a family. For information call Gary at 616-962-1174, ext. 104

Friday, April 5, 7:30 pm - Waxlax Center for the Performing Arts, Vero Beach, Florida . Call 561-234-4614

Saturday, April 13, 7:30 pm. - Hudsonville High School. open to public, 7:30 PM - tickets available by calling 616-257-9599. Advance tickets recommended

April 17, early evening - Birmingham Schools . Open to students and families of Birmingham Schools String Day. For information call 248-559-2095

April 29, evening - Friends Indeed Annual Banquet at First United Methodist Church in Ypsilanti- call 734-485-7658 for information

May 3, 7 pm - Parcells MS, Grosse Pointe Woods, MI Location subject to change. Open to the public, 7 pm, tickets at the door, $10 adults, $5 students. Information call 313-640-7966

Sunday, June 16, 8 pm. – Ann Arbor Summer Festival, Power Center. Opening for Del McCoury Band.

June 20 - tentative date, Fenton, MI Gazebo Concert in the Park

June 22 - Saline Alumni Association Dinner, private event

July 4 - Tentative date - Birmingham Concert in the Park, Shain Park

July 13 - Saline Celtic Festival

July 16, evening - open to public, Cain Park Summer Series, Cleveland Heights, OH - tickets available at 216-291-5796. www.clvhts.com

August 22 - Saline Concert in the Park



Fiddler Sophomores - Class of 2004

Bottom L-R:
Christina
Phil
Eleanor

Center L-R:
Sally
Josh
Gus

Top L-R:
Brandon
Lee
Mike

Who Turned Out The Light?

The Fiddlers would like to thank our audiences for their patience and understanding during the ice storm on the Hometown Concert weekend! It certainly was not an easy weekend for anyone! When it finally became clear that we would not have electricity in time for the Friday night show, we rescheduled it for Saturday afternoon and did two shows in one day. We were thrilled that half or more of the audience was able to get the word and attend that day. The shows received an enthusiastic response from the audience and went very well.

Thank you so much for your support!

SALINE FIDDLERS PHILHARMONIC

Bob Phillips, Founder and Director
Ben Culver, Assistant Director
Pam Phillips, Business Manager

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