The Newsletter of the Saline Fiddlers

Fiddlin' Around

Volume 13, Number 4 **www.salinefiddlers.com** **Summer 2007**



Summer Tour



By Will Warner

"But it's a dry heat, so…" We heard that a lot from our hosts in southern California and Nevada on tour this summer. It seems we were there during a heat wave that followed us around like a groupie. Record highs in Nevada and Death Valley. A record high temperature in Death Valley is memorable. But that was the last day…

The tour began with an airplane flight, the first in their lives for some of our members. The flight was fun but otherwise uneventful, which is pretty much what you want in air travel. Arriving in Las Vegas, we placed ourselves in the capable hands of Robert, our bus driver for the next 12 days of deserts, mountains, seashore, cities and shows.

After a short night, we were off to San Diego for the first gig on tour. That evening the Fiddlers performed for an enthusiastic crowd at the San Diego Bluegrass Society's Kids Night. We met some other talented young pickers and bowers, including a family band called Fiddle in a Haystack.

After a short night, we booked it up to LA for an afternoon performance on the Santa Monica Pier. The Californians seemed to like it, judging by their reaction and the guestbook entries they left. After the show, there was time for swimming and lying on the beautiful Santa Monica beach.

We devoted the next day to sightseeing in Hollywood, a visit to the Getty Museum, and dinner with a flamenco show.

After a short night, it was up the Ventura Highway to Oxnard, CA. The Fiddlers were the evening's entertainment in Oxnard's summer concert series. What a beautiful evening, wonderful setting, and great crowd. Afterward, the town held a reception to honor the Saline Fiddlers; city council members and the mayor spoke. They were very kind.

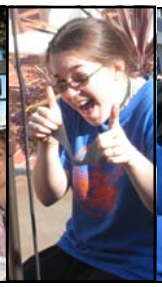
The next day Robert took us up the coast to the aquarium in Monterey on the way to San Francisco the following day.

The City was the scene of many adventures: trolley rides, a walk across the Golden Gate bridge, shopping in Chinatown and on Fisherman's Wharf, a tour of Alcatraz. The group played a memorable gig to a large crowd on Pier 39, then dined at Bubba Gump's.

After a short night, we left the coast and crossed the mountains into Nevada's Carson Valley. In the afternoon, maestro Culver and the Fiddlers conducted a workshop for young fiddle players in the region, sponsored by the Sierra Philharmonic League. The attendees learned three songs that they would play the next day in concert with the Saline Fiddlers.

We enjoyed two nights of host housing in Nevada arranged, like the workshop, by John O'Neil, a

(Please see **Tour**, *page #4)*





A sad farewell

Hats off to Kate!



By Jen Lahnala

She whisked in and out of the Fiddlers' lives like a spring breeze.

Eighth grader Kate shone as she auditioned for the Fiddlers in February this year. Even then she knew it was not to be for too long. The daughter of a Pfizer family, they had recently received the news that Pfizer was closing its Ann Arbor facility, and its employees were to move with the company or find different jobs. Her family was going to move to Connecticut. But Kate had worked for years to become a Fiddler. She had to audition.

The audition results were posted and Kate's name was on the list. She immediately immersed herself in the group and was at every practice, and then every gig. She was able to tour Michigan's Upper Peninsula in June, and attend Fiddle Camp in August. She went to all of the events she could.
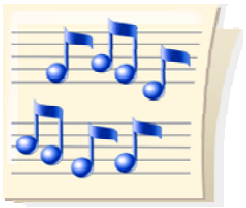


"I wasn't going to let another move spoil my fun! Being a Fiddler for the summer is something I will never forget, and it has shown me that you can have fun anywhere as long as you are with a great group of people," Kate says.

Less than a week after

(Please see **Kate***, page #3)*

Fiddlin' Around is the official newsletter of the **Saline Fiddlers.**
We publish four times yearly, or as needed.
Beth Bartley, Editor.
Photos courtesy of loving Fiddler families.
Will Warner, Executive Director
www.salinefiddlers.com

New music from camp



By Ian



Following a successful summer camp (once again at the home of the gracious Professor Culver) the Saline Fiddlers' repertoire has increased in size and style. Fiddler alumni assisted. Here is a guide to the new music, so if you want to be totally surprised when you come to our next Hometown Concert, DON'T READ THIS!

"Big Mama Brown" is a fun swingy tune arranged by Jesse Mason. It was written and performed by Daisy May, a folk singer out of good ol' Michigan. It features senior cellist Sarah on vocals and is a story about a family of fish that manages to escape from the grasps of fishermen.

Recent graduate Andrew arranged "Catherine Kelly's/ Lake Effect", a Liz Carroll song, for the Fiddlers. It is a Celtic tune that challenges the group with rhythm and accents throughout.

"Fantasia for the City" is a song composed and arranged by Jesse Mason that is like no other song in the Fiddler repertoire. As you listen it feels like you are floating through outer space. It incorporates whistling and a lot of plucking which makes a very unique song.

Jesse also arranged "Mick O'Connor's", a song that he learned from listening to a CD by Seamus Eagan, a founding member of the band Solas. It was originally written by Mick O'Connor and features a pentatonic improvisation section along with an interesting melody.

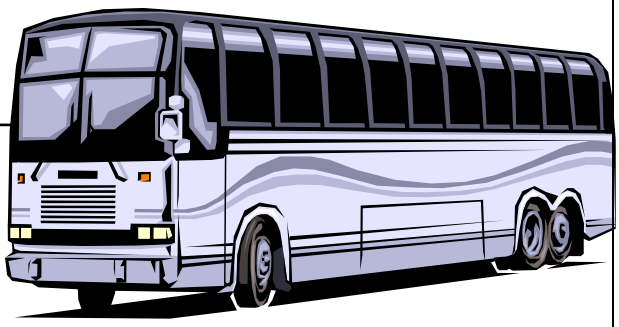
Brad Phillips composed and arranged "On My Way Home", an epic fiddle tune. It begins with a great intro and bursts into a rocking violin melody. It contains many challenges for the rhythm section and three very tough violin solos in the middle.

"Minor Swing" is a traditional swing tune arranged by Jesse Mason. It features the violins, banjo, and violas on some amazing solos and the bass on a cool fill.

Brad also arranged the Dixie Chicks song "Travelin' Soldier" which was originally written by Bruce Robison. Senior Emily does a great job on the vocals of this song about young love and loss.

It's time you met

By Jen Lahnala



Jim Oliver first drove for the Fiddlers in 2003 as a substitute for our usual bus driver, Jack. He soon became one of the group's biggest fans In 2004 he became our regular driver.

"There are so many places we've gone that buses aren't supposed to go," Jim laughs. His biggest adventure would have to be the tight spot in the woods he pulled into in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, so the group could enjoy a dinner there. As soon as he pulled in, he wondered if he would be able to get back out. While the kids were eating and relaxing, Jim spent a harried 45 minutes trying to get the bus turned around with two chefs assisting him as he worked within inches of a small tree.

Trying to negotiate New Orleans to get some Cajun food in the French Quarter, the bus ended up in line for the ferry to cross the Mississippi river following the directions of backseat driver Will Warner. It took some time to maneuver it out of the line of waiting cars.

In Alpena, Michigan, the bus got stuck in a parking lot full of sand. In Cadillac, Michigan, snowplows removed snow to reveal a layer of ice that caused it to slide off the side of a parking lot. With the help of several Fiddler parents rocking it, they were able to get the bus out of the icy wheel ruts.



Jim with a few of his biggest fans on West Coast Tour

"Don't call me 'Mr. Oliver.' That's my dad," Jim says to the kids. His easy-going manner is a delight to all. He keeps a bowl of treats at the front of the bus, and it is easy to strike up a conversation with him as he drives on trips. His pleasant demeanor never changes, even during bus 'dance parties,' award ceremonies, movies, games, and tight driving situations.

On overnight trips, Jim gets his own room and plenty of time to rest, away from any late-night Fiddler noise when possible. When it comes to helping out at gigs, Jim is one of the 'parents' and one of the best promoters.

He and his wife Helen have become some of our most enthusiastic supporters, attending every Hometown Show and graduation party they are able. They are also financial supporters. Last summer, he donated his bus driving time for the nine-day Katrina Relief Tour.

Jim doesn't like attention or praise. He's just happy to be going along. So make sure you say hello to him when you see the bus (he's the man wearing the tie), but don't tell him you read all about him in Fiddlin' Around.

Kate

(Continued from page 2)

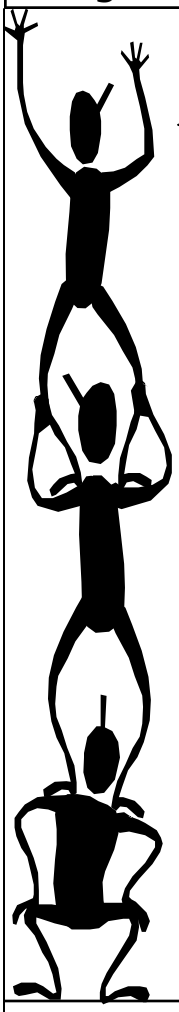
Fiddle Camp, the moving van pulled up to the house and her belongings were loaded. And she played one last gig. Her father drove a car full of Fiddlers to Owosso, Michigan to play for the Performing Arts Association there. The next morning they quietly left. Another Michigan company leaves the state and another wonderful young Fiddler goes with it. Kate's parting words: "You should never waste a second on stage not trying to be the best you can and always SMILE, even if you're having a bad day. I am missing everyone and I really hope I will be able to come back for Hometown."



Kate's final gig with the Saline Fiddlers

We're sorry to see you go, Kate; we just got started! Your time with us was short but sweet. Maybe the Fiddlers will tour Connecticut and we'll share the stage with you again one day.

Meanwhile, in Connecticut, a spring breeze is surely blowing as a young lady tunes her fiddle.



Team Building



By Beth Bartley

From Freshmen to Seniors, guys to gals, beginners to old hands…..it is clear that each of the Saline Fiddlers is an individual. They all have their own likes and dislikes, tastes, sense of style and customs. From meat eater to vegetarian this group is able to bring it all together for one fantastic, high energy show. But how does such a diverse group of young people get along so well? The answer can be found in Team Building activities.

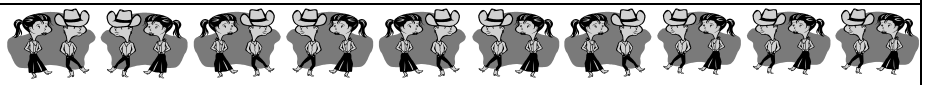
The group practices once a week for three hours as a whole group or in sectionals. When they arrive at their various gigs, they are expected to set up and tear down as a whole group. On stage, they are taught to interact with each other through choreography. They learn to encourage one another on stage and off. One of the techniques Mr. Culver uses is the strength profile. The group members sit in a circle. Each has a profile sheet with his or her name on it that they pass around the circle so other Fiddlers let them know the strengths they see in that person.

They play at other things besides instruments. It is a Fiddle Camp tradition to participate in a hearty game of Capture the Flag. They are also encouraged to bring Frisbees, volleyballs and nets, board games and the like to use together during free time.



On their own, the Fiddlers have been known to have group movie nights at a member's home. They throw spontaneous pool parties and such. It doesn't take long for a new member to become an old friend. In the final analysis, it is all about togetherness that makes this such a cohesive, successful and well functioning group.

Tour *(Continued from page 1)*





composer and retired music teacher in Minden. Nell O'Neill, John's wife, crafted the violin that Jake Knickerbocker plays, and it was around this connection that the tour was constructed.

July 4th saw the group taking part in the Carson Valley's celebration of Independence Day, performing to a large audience in Mormon State Park, just ahead of a patriotic program by the Reno Philharmonic.

With the tour's last show successfully completed, we spent a couple of days getting home. Entering Yosemite Park through dramatic Tioga pass, we picnicked and hiked to the top of Lembert Dome (9500 feet). The last day included a stop in Death Valley for lunch and pictures (128 degrees F), and the red-eye home from Las Vegas. Early the next morning (6:00 o'clock), our parents cheerfully met us at the airport and were reunited with their amazing children.





Attention Fiddlers Alumni! We are in the process of putting together an email list by which we can keep in touch with former Fiddlers. If you would like to be included on an alumni-only mailing list, or if you have current email addresses for any other Saline Fiddlers alums, please email our webmaster, Nancy Warner, at webmaster@salinefiddlers.com. While you're at it, please include a few lines about what you're up to these days and we'll publish an update in a future newsletter. Thanks, and we hope to hear from you soon!

A tribute to our Audiences



" Bravo, bravo, bravo!!! Fantastic Hometown Concert!! It was well worth the 850 miles (one way) we traveled to see it and the frigid temperatures we endured. We tried to bring you some South Carolina weather, but it escaped!" Well, thanks for trying, anyway, Ralph and Carol from South Carolina, but, this is Michigan, after all. 850 Miles!! Wow! You are some fans!

The Saline Fiddlers love their audiences. What an honor to have what you love to do best so appreciated with tremendous applause, dancing and cheering. You are the fuel that keeps this group motivated and so enthusiastic.

To regulars like Saline teen, Nicole who says, " I think you all did so well! I heard about your concert when you guest starred at W4 Country. So keep up the good work!!!!!" We say, "Thanks for sporting our Saline Fiddler shirts all the time and coming to all the local gigs."

To diehard fans like Mary Kay, from Owosso, who says, "I was one of the brave souls who attended the rain soaked concert Thursday, August 9 at the Amphitheater in Owosso….We thoroughly enjoyed the evening!" We say, "Thanks for your enthusiasm. Fans like you are priceless!"

To Krysten, from Casevill, MI who writes, "As I left with my mother, I was about to go talk to a few of you and get pictures, but I was too shy. Maybe next year! " We say, "Come on over and say, 'Hello!' We love to get our pictures taken with fans!"



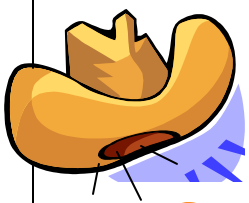
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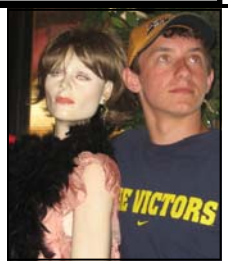
To the people of Creteil, France who played Fiddler CDs we sent them during the "Farewell Party" for our students from Saline, we say, "Vive la France!"

To give back some of the compliments we have received on our web site that bolster our confidence and make our spirits bright…..you are the best!!

Norman Cupit, of the Muleskinners Association from Wade, Mississippi said it best when he wrote, "HOLY MOLY!" You younguns sure know how to crank up a crowd. Meeting y'all and playing on the same stage has to rank right up there with Vienna sausage and sardines in my book." Well, our crowds sure know how to crank us up…..sardines and Vienna sausage…...and all that….stuff.

Fiddler Funnies





During the flamenco show on the West Coast tour, cellist Jacob found himself on stage for the closing number to gales of laughter from the audience. The female dancers guided Jacob through the flamenco steps and movements, which he executed extremely well…. for a guy. I hope to see the video on YouTube someday.

Will Warner





Bravo Jacob!



West Coast Tour

SALINE Fiddlers

Will Warner, Executive Director
Ben Culver, Artistic Director
Doug Rhine, Event Manager
Lynda Shea, Administrative Manager
Ed Brosius, Technical Manager

For bookings call: 1-866-257-5333

www.salinefiddlers.com

Upcoming Public Events

- September 9, 2:30 and 4:00 PM **Beaumont's Backyard EdVenture**, Beaumont Hospital, 3711 W. 13 Mile Rd, Royal Oak, MI
- September 15, 4:00 PM, **Harvest Moon Family Festival**, Hall Rd. & Van Horn Rd, Woodhaven, MI
- September 23, 2 Shows; 3:00 & 4:00 PM, **Thumb Friends of the Arts**, USA High School Auditorium, Sebewaing, MI, (advance tickets $10.00/$12.00 at the door)
- September 29, **Hartland Relay for Life**, Hartland, MI
- October 6, 6:15 PM, **Oktoberfest**, Tri County Sportsmen's League, 8640 Moon Rd, Saline, MI
- 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

For the latest info visit our website:

www.salinefiddlers.com

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The Saline Fiddlers
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