



The Island Fiddler

The Newsletter of the Prince Edward Island Fiddlers Society



September, 2006

Volume 4 Issue 3

Eddy Arsenault - Evangéline Area Fiddler Extraordinaire by Dorothy Griffin-Farish



In the little community of St. Chrysostome in the Evangéline region of Prince Edward Island resides a quiet, soft-spoken, mild-mannered man in his mid-80s who lives with his wife Rita in a cozy house built by him some years ago. This man has had many occupations during his life: an army vehicle operator in England during World War II; a lobster fisherman for forty-six years, a carpenter - to name but three - but it is mainly for his music that he has become so famous and beloved by all who have had the good fortune to listen to him playing his violin, accompanied by his brother Amand and by various members of his family. This individual is none other than Alfred J. Arsenault, known to all as Eddy Arsenault, cited in Ken Perlman's book *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island - Celtic and Acadian Tunes in Living Tradition* as "the most influential fiddler in the Evangéline region."

Alfred J. Arsenault, son of Arcade and Madeleine Arsenault of St. Chrysostome, was born in 1921. He apparently was called Eddy as a child by family members and he did not realize that his name was actually Alfred J. until he went to the church rectory in Egmont Bay to obtain a copy of his baptismal record so that he could join the Army during the Second World War. As a young person Eddy heard many of his relatives play tunes on the fiddle, so by the age of thirteen years he decided to also learn to play this musical instrument.

Eddy enlisted in the Canadian Army on November 19, 1942, serving with the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps. He went overseas in 1943 as an army vehicle operator. After having served in this capacity during the war years in England, Eddy - or Private Alfred J. Arsenault as he was then known - participated in a European convoy at the end of the war. During his time overseas he was in England, Scotland and Holland. Eddy was discharged on April 26, 1946 and came back to Prince Edward Island. He then got married.

Between 1947 and 1957 Eddy and Rita lived in Charlottetown, where their four eldest children were born. After this period, the family moved back to St. Chrysostome. For over forty years Eddy was a lobster fisherman in Egmont Bay. Work, however, did not interfere with his fiddle playing. Eddy continued to perfect his style and was a standard feature at many house parties in the area. Eddy and his wife Rita raised a family of seven children - two girls and five boys. Four of these children are also musicians. Helen and Albert were two members of *Barchois*, a musical group that traveled all over the world before it disbanded a few years ago. Peter is an excellent fiddle player, and Marie is a whiz on the keyboard, as is her sister Helen. Albert and a friend from eastern P.E.I., Chuck Arsenault, who also was part of the group *Barchois*, have recently teamed up to produce a music and comedy show "C'est What?"

Eddy Arsenault's fiddle playing represents a blend of Cape Breton, Prince County and Acadian French styles. Winston Scotty Fitzgerald was his idol, and he was also influenced by the fiddle playing of Angus Chisholm, both fiddlers being from Cape Breton. To watch Eddy play the fiddle and to hear the music that he produces is a great pleasure, for he is a lively fiddler who plays smoothly but with gusto. Music is in his soul! He delights in entertaining at house parties or any place where music is played, including seniors' homes and manors, Club 50 in Abram Village, and the Atlantic Fiddlers Jamboree held each year in the Evangéline area.

For a time in the 1970s traditional fiddle music appeared to be disappearing on Prince Edward Island, but due to the perseverance of Eddy Arsenault and other fiddlers on the Island this trend has reversed. A re-awakening of interest in traditional fiddle music, particularly in younger people, has been spectacular. Tourists coming to Prince Edward Island are amazed to find so much musical talent in this small province - the Cradle of Confederation.

"Eddy Arsenault - Egmont Baie" was the title of the first record of Eddy Arsenault's fiddle music. It was produced in 1981. Eddy's music is also featured on a record co-produced by the Institute of Island Studies and Fox House Publishers in 1985 entitled "Island Folk Festival - Local and Traditional Songs and Music from Prince Edward Island." "Piling on the Bois Sèc" was Eddy's first cassette tape, produced in 1993. In 1995 his music was featured on the cassette tape "Party Acadien". In 1996 Ken Perlman produced a book entitled "The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island - Celtic & Acadian Tunes in Living Tradition" with an accompanying CD. Eddy is featured in both the book and on the CD. He is also featured on the CD entitled "The Prince Edward Island Style of Fiddling - Fiddlers of Western Prince Edward Island", produced in 1997, as well as on a CD produced in 1999 commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Central Band of the Canadian Forces and the 75th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Air Force. In this most recent CD Eddy played his own composition "The Dragger's Reel".

Eddy Arsenault has had much media coverage through the years. He has had the honour to be featured on the television programs "On The Road Again" and "Up Home Tonight", as well as on "Community Showcase". He has played with the Island musical group Ceilidh Brae. He has performed on Radio Canada, at the Celtic Colours in Cape Breton, in the Magdalene Islands, at the Eastern Lights Festival in 1987 in Cape Breton, to name but a few. He has played in Montreal and in New York, and he even had the honour to play his fiddle before Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. For his music Eddy Arsenault has received numerous awards, some of which are listed here. In 1983 he was named Acadian of the Year. In 1988 he received recognition by la Société Saint-Thomas d'Aquin. In 1999 Eddy was presented with the East Coast Music Association's Stompin' Tom Award for his. . .
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**The Island Fiddler**

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From the Editors Desk

My name is Joseph Hébert and I am the new Editor taking over from Gerry Cheverie. He did such a fine job in the past, and has graciously volunteered to help me in this new endeavor. With his expertise and input from you, the members, we will continue to make The Island Fiddler Newsletter very informative and interesting to read.

For those of you that do not know me by name, I am the former owner of the Singer Sewing Centre at the Charlottetown Mall. After 35 years with the Singer Business I decided to retire from the retail life. Let's say "semi-retired" as I still do sewing machine repairs and sell parts from my home.

I was most pleased and I would like to take this time to thank everyone for having their reports by the deadline.

Musically, I participate and attend mainly in the Eastern end of the Island. However, since becoming editor, I have been visiting other Fiddling venues. I am happy to see that fiddling in PEI is very alive and strong with the older and the younger up-coming generation. We have some great young and talented Fiddlers.

Eddy Arsenault . . . continued from page 1

exceptional contribution to the musical tradition of Atlantic Canada, and in 2003, during the closing concert of the 16th annual Atlantic Fiddlers Jamboree at the Evangéline Recreation Centre in Abram Village, he was presented with the first Golden Fiddle Award for his continuing contribution to the success of the Atlantic Fiddlers Jamboree.

Still young at heart in his mid-eighties Eddy spends his spare time, when he is not playing the fiddle, fixing traps and nets in his basement for his sons who are fishers. He takes great interest in his community and in his church. He leads the church choir at St. Philippe and St. Jacques Church in Egmont Bay and is also a member of the Wellington Legion. Living life to the fullest seems to be the motto of this fine Acadian gentleman and outstanding musician, Eddy Arsenault.



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From the President



Ward MacDonald

Early this year, we began planning the presentation of Life Memberships to a few of the deserving members of our Society. I couldn't help but get excited with the anticipation of recognizing those individuals in front of their peers, as it is perhaps the best way we can say, "Thank you for all you've accomplished." As we made ready, I did so with the expectation that we were going to be the ones doing the giving, as it turned out, I was pleasantly surprised.

In late May, a small group of us traveled to Stanhope to make our first presentation. The reception we received at the home of John and Mary Gauthier was nothing short of exceptional. After some great conversation, a small presentation, and a couple of photographs, we dug out the fiddles. As I sat down to the lovely Heintzman upright in their living room, I felt blessed with the opportunity to play a few tunes with John and to hear some of his stories about his days as a CFCY performer.

Before we left, we were treated to a beautiful home-cooked meal, and as if that wasn't enough, the homemade cookies and good strong tea topped it all off! On the drive down there, I had hoped that we would be bringing some well-timed cheer to the Gauthiers. As I headed for the door, I almost felt guilty for the amount of joy I came away with.

It has been wonderful and rewarding experience serving as president of the PEI Fiddlers Society. In the time that I have been president, I have watched our members work hard to re-

establish this newsletter, create our Web site, and begin plans for our 30th Anniversary celebrations. Our newsletter and Web site allow the fiddling community on PEI to have its all-important voice. I encourage you all to make use of those media and become active in your Society.

I also offer my encouragement to the new executive that will take over following our AGM next month. As we call for nominations, I hope to see faces from across the Island with fresh ideas and lots of energy.

Ward MacDonald, President, PEI Fiddlers Association. 

Bylaws update regarding Life Members of the P.E.I. Fiddlers Society

At the last general meeting of the PEIFS, it was determined that the Society's Bylaws should be updated since they hadn't been amended since they were developed in 1982. A committee was formed and has proposed a number of changes to the bylaws which includes defining the criteria for receiving the PEIFS Life Membership. The approval of these recommendations will be on the agenda at the PEIFS Annual General Meeting this October.

Life Members (Bylaws Draft Mar 2006)

Criteria for life membership in the Society will be:

- (a) Automatic induction of Society members, who have been members of the Society for at least (10) years; at aged 65; or
- (b) Automatic induction of Society members who have been members for (20) years (cumulative); or
- (c) Exceptional/outstanding contributions to Isl- and Fiddling, by nomination by another member and upon approval of the Executive of the Society.

(2) Honorary Life Membership will be open to anyone residing in P.E.I. on the recommendation of peers and approval of the Executive of the Society.

(3) Recognition of approved Life Members and Honorary Life Members will be announced at a date and location determined by the Executive.



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L i f e t i m e A w a r d s

Ward MacDonald (left), President of the P.E.I. Fiddlers Society, was on hand at the 30th Annual Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival this weekend to present the Society's Life Membership Awards to Chaisson brothers Peter, Kevin and Kenny Chaisson and to Kathryn Dau Schmidt. Kathryn has given fiddle lessons across P.E.I. for almost 30 years, including fiddle classes held at the Rollo Bay School thanks to proceeds from the Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival. Few people have offered more encouragement and support to anyone who wants to pick up the fiddle in order to preserve traditional music in Prince Edward Island than the Chaisson brothers. It was only fitting that the Chaisson brothers and Kathryn be awarded Life Memberships to the PEI Fiddlers Society for their exceptional and outstanding contributions to the Society during the celebration of the Anniversary of the 30th Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival.



**Eastern Kings
Carolyn MacDonald.
"Fiddler in training"
Rollo Bay**



Southern Kings Fiddlers Report First of all, I am pleased to report that the string programs of the Eastern School Board have been saved for another year. Many students in grades 4 to 9 have enjoyed playing in these classes over the years, and it is great to hear that they will be continuing in the 2006-7 school year. The summer season has been busy for the fiddlers of Southern Kings. The Fiddlemania Plus concert at Donagh School on June 4th was well attended and \$700 was raised for area food banks. We especially appreciated the support of Peter Chaisson and his advanced class from Rollo Bay, as well as the keyboard backup of Ronita Baird for this event. Area fiddlers will be found playing at Kilmuir Hall on alternate Saturdays (Aug 5 and 19) and at the Georgetown Seniors Centre Ceilidhs on Tuesday evenings. On August 4th,

Montague Regional High students are raising money for their educational trip to Europe next spring with the help of fiddlers Amy Swenson and young fiddling dynamo Dylan Menzie.

The Murray Harbour Six will be playing for the 125th anniversary of the Cape Bear Lighthouse on August 5th. Celebrations include a concert from 1 to 4 and a special lighthouse birthday cake. The Murray Harbour group will also be playing at a benefit Ceilidh August 11th at the Murray Harbour Community Hall

Judy MacLean has organized another Fiddle and Step Dance Contest August 12th at the Arts Guild in Charlottetown, starting at noon. Dancers and fiddlers of all ages are welcome to perform and this year there is a special category of 12 and under beginner fiddlers to give all youngsters a chance to win a prize.

The Point Prim Chowder House is again hosting Tuesday evening dinner and entertainment nights starting at 7 pm. The new owner Robert King has more than doubled the size of the deck overlooking the straights, so the view of the sunset is spectacular. Fiddler Sheila MacKenzie entertains on August 6th and 20th, and fiddler Amy Swenson with Ronita Baird on voice, keyboard and pennywhistle will play on August 1st and 15th. Call the Chowder House at **659-2023 for reservations.**

**This Southern Kings Fiddlers
report was written by:**



Amy Swenson



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Eastern Kings Fiddlers Report:

For some reason, there seemed to be an increased number of fiddle events all over the Island this year. And top quality music as well. The Celtic Ladies, with their Kings County roots, seem to have taken the Island by storm playing one or two nights a week at The Guild along with numerous special appearances everywhere from the Kaylee Hall to the Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival to the News at Six on CBC with Bruce Rainie. What a dynamic group - a performance not to be missed. Sheila MacKenzie even had to take her old fiddle in for repairs and borrow a loaner from Richard LePage. He said for some reason, he wasn't able to reach her to pick up her old fiddle once it was repaired. "She's not returning any of my calls" said Richard who was not all that surprised. Once you play a LePage, it's pretty hard to go back to anything else.

Just ask Chad Mooney. He's been playing up a storm with his LePage fiddle ever since he got it on July 6th, 2005 - he even has the date memorized. Richard gave the fiddle an annual inspection at the Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival this summer and it passed with flying colors. Chad sure knows how to protect and take good care of that fiddle. And with good reason too. He's been playing so much he was even presented with the Youth of the Year award at the Canada Day celebrations in Souris for his generous contribution of time and talent in the Eastern Kings area. "This 14 year old is always ready to play the fiddle for anyone, at any time, for any reason and never asks for anything in return." said Mayor Joe O'Keefe on presenting the prestigious award. Chad has a way of putting everyone at ease with his gracious manner and kind nature and is able to talk to people of all ages. Chad's generosity of spirit is an inspiration for us all, young and old, to share our gifts and talents for the enjoyment of all.

The summer season got off to a great start when Katherine Dau Schmidt's fiddle students from Eastern Kings and Charlottetown joined the Southern Kings and Donagh School fiddle students to put on the Fiddlemania concert at the Donagh School June 4. Close to \$700 was raised for the three

area food banks and it was greatly appreciated.

The Chaisson Family played up a storm at the Georgetown Theatre on July 7. It was such a lively performance, Doreen Chaisson couldn't resist putting on her dancing shoes for the first time in 25 years and demonstrating their tremendous skills on stage for everyone there. What a difference from the flip flops with the pink flower on top that she usually dances in for the hometown crowd at the Goose River building.

And speaking of Goose River, no one seems to know why for sure, but the crowds just keep coming to the Goose River dances every Saturday night. In fact, if you don't get there early enough, you'll have to sit around the corner where you can hear just fine but you won't be able to see everything. Along with the crowds, the potluck lunches have grown as well to include a wide variety of delectable treats to nibble on during the break.

Over the summer, the Monticello ceilidh ran their concert series once again from 7-8pm featuring an Island fiddler and a step dancer. The regular ceilidh and dance followed the concert. JJ Chaisson and Elmer Deagle took charge of the ceilidhs at the Eastern Kings Community Centre on the Munn's Road on Wednesday nights while the seniors still meet at the Silver Threads Club for music in Souris on the same night. The Thursday night ceilidhs at the Rollo Bay Fiddle Barn were a big hit once again with the locals as well as the tourists. It's always fun to see people coming back year after year.

All and all, it's been a real good summer. No shortage of fiddle things to do, rain or shine. With the days getting shorter, plans for the fall are not far from mind including getting back to the fiddle classes at Rollo Bay School in mid October. Hope to see you there!

Eastern Kings Fiddlers

Report was written by:



Anne McPhee

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30th Annual Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival

The 30th Annual Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival was a resounding success once again. The number of players and the quality of their skills and abilities just keeps going up and up. PEI's Keelin Wedge and Courtney Hogan are both dynamic players with CD's out this year. And sixteen year old Chrissy Crawlie of Margaree, Cape Breton will be another one to watch as she is very much at home with the likes of Jerry Holland and Raymond Ellis of Inverness, Cape Breton both older and more accomplished fiddlers. And not much wonder they say, with the likes of Archie Neil Chisholm and Angus Chisholm in her genes.

Of course, JJ Chaisson is a hard act to follow. Jerry Holland sat in awe of JJ's playing ability each time he took the stage whether it was with the fiddle in hand or the guitar. "And to think that he doesn't need to read a note to play like that" said Jerry while shaking his head. Tim Chaisson's abilities are hard to beat as well as he rises to a new level each year with his playing and singing abilities. Follow that all up with the music of Jesse Francis of Wellington, Chad Mooney, Kenny Chaisson, and intersperse it with tunes from thirteen year old Allan Cameron of Mabou, Cape Breton and nine year old Emily Lynn Bashour of Connecticut and you have enough variety and entertainment to keep you happy for the next year. And all that happened in the first concert on Saturday afternoon.

Add the vocals of Colette Cheverie, Lem Chaisson and Urban MacAdam with the music of Andrea Beaton of Cape Breton, Francis MacDonald, Francis McCormack, Kenny, Stephen, and Coady Chaisson and the Queens County Fiddlers and you want to stay forever. Finish it all off with a sampling of the lively music of the Celtic Ladies and you're on your feet and dancing in the aisles without even realizing it.

Sunday was a whole new day starting off with mass offered by the Bear River born-and-raised musical priest, Fa-



ther Gerard Chaisson who gave his post-it note sermon on "Keep it Simple", a real good reminder for the organizers of the event and anyone else who has a tendency to complicate their lives.

The Sunday afternoon concert started off with the traditional moment of silence in remembrance of those who have passed on before us. The list of names that come to mind seems to get longer every year. Kathryn Dau Schmidt's students then took the stage in appreciation of the free fiddle lessons they received all winter thanks to the proceeds of the Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival. New this year for the

first time on the Rollo Bay stage were fiddle students from Southern Kings and Donagh school with Amy Swenson leading the fiddlers and Ronita Baird accompanying on piano. Kathryn's students then rejoined everyone on stage for a three part harmony rendition of MacPherson's Lament which was enjoyed by all and left the audience wanting to hear more.


The most challenging part of the Sunday afternoon concert was getting everyone up on stage who wanted to play. Even the very best fiddlers were only given about ten minutes in order to leave time for the many others hoping to get on to perform. The President of the PEI Fiddlers Society, Ward MacDonald waited most of the afternoon for the opportunity to put Peter and Kenny and Kevin Chaisson in the same place at the same time along with Kathryn Dau Schmidt in order to present them with Lifetime Membership Awards for their outstanding contributions to the PEI Fiddlers Society. Of course they weren't really expecting it and Kenny just figured he was being asked to play again. Everyone there was delighted to see Kathryn and the three brothers being recognized for the valuable work they do.

The Sunday evening concert started off as usual with a few of Peter Chaisson's favorite tunes accompanied by brother Kevin followed by a number of old favorites at the fiddle festival over the years including Peter Chaisson senior or "Old Peter", Allan MacDonald and Buddy Longaphee. It was a perfect ending to a perfect day.

30th Annual Fiddle continued Page 7. . . .

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30 Annual from page 6 . Just as important as hearing the music played by accomplished players as well as new ones is the opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones. It's like going to an annual reunion where everyone you know gets together in the same place at the same time year after year. Reggie Grady, well known fiddler and fiddle repairman from East Royalty turned 80 this summer and hasn't missed many fiddle festivals. His trusty old Volkswagen camper is a familiar site at the fiddle field.

Acadian fiddler Marie Livingstone, and Anne McPhee, both contributors to the Island Fiddler newsletter have had numerous telephone conversations over the past year but had never met. How do you find an old friend you've never met? With the help of Kevin Chaisson and Ward MacDonald they were finally able to come together during the Saturday night concert and it was like meeting up with a long lost friend. What a reunion that was.

And let's not forget the organizers of the event. Peter Chaisson for the hours and hours he spends at the fiddle field. When there's a problem, everyone looks to Peter. He is always in the thick of it whether it's solving lawnmower problems or cutting grass, moving picnic tables, hauling garbage, checking the washrooms - his to-do list is endless and he goes non-stop.

Kevin Chaisson accompanies on the piano no less than nine out of ten performers who take the stage - not many breaks there. Kenny goes where he's told to go and does what he's told to do. JJ and Tim and the other offspring are there when you need them. Then there are the girls who have the hot job of collecting the admission fees, the parking attendants and security people as well. And of course, Doreen Chaisson lines up the entertainers and keeps them moving and Bennett Campbell tirelessly MC's the entire weekend. What a team and what a good job they do. Where would we be without them? There are no words to describe our appreciation for the work they all do but let it be said:

Our Thanks Goes Out To All the Organizers for Everything You Do For All of Us. by: Anne McPhee

Fiddle care by Peter Dawson (Temperature/Humidity)



You should try to avoid putting your violin in the trunk of your car. In the summer, the trunk can get very hot, very fast-hot enough to melt the varnish, crack the top, or loosen the glue that holds the instrument together. Also, I've heard of several instruments reduced to splinters in a rear-end accident. As for heat damage, the backseat can be just as bad as the trunk if the direct rays of the sun are on the case for any length of time. Most cases are covered in a dark material that will absorb the heat. If there is a chance that the sun might be on the case, cover it with a light-colored towel.

Instruments can suffer greatly from the extremes of weather, be it dryness in the winter or humidity in the summer. The former can cause cracks to develop as the wood shrinks, particularly on the top; it can also cause old repairs to open. Humidity, usually accompanied by heat, can soften the glue and the wood itself, causing the neck to drop, the sides

to open, and old repairs to give way under the constant tension exerted on the instrument.

Maintain humidity in the winter by way of a humidifier in the room where you store your violin. A commercial dampit installed in the violin would also be very helpful.

A dehumidifier is recommended in summer when those humid days play havoc with instruments.

Considering how responsive instruments are designed to be, and how delicate they are compared to the amount of tension they are constantly subjected to, most of them are remarkably stable and durable. A modicum of care is all it takes, usually, to prevent a visit to the repair shop. **(Peter Dawson, a well-known luthier, composer, and recording artist in Ottawa, has a web site at [Http://www.peterdawson.ca](http://www.peterdawson.ca))**

Acadian Fiddlers by Marie Livingstone



Marie Livingstone

Without fail, summertime always creates a lot of excitement ALL across P.E.I., with people wanting to spend more time outside enjoying the longer days and good weather. It seems you can actually feel the electricity in the air. One of the best ways to tap into this extra energy of course is, to take in one of the many concerts presented in most communities. During the past season, fans were not disappointed with the great line-up of entertainers taking the stage, beginning with Karine Gallant's June concert. She had rounded up a super bunch of musicians including Louise Arsenault, who puts so much heart into her fiddling and fire under her feet., Peter Arsenault who impresses everyone with his beautiful compositions & style, Elmer Deagle who wows audiences with his fiddle, banjo, mandolin and guitar, and Tim Chaisson who plays with an ability beyond his years. Also, two members of the group Vishten amazed an appreciative crowd — Pascal Miousse who has an unbelievable bowing technique, and Pastelle LeBlanc whose fingers just dance on her accordion. Karine herself is a versatile fiddler with a mix of Acadian/Irish/Scottish/Quebec styles which she handles expertly. Accompanying on guitars were Simon & Jonathan from Quebec, and Karine's father Gary, who also sang a few popular songs. Karine's mom, Monic, presented her lively young dance troupe "Les Eloizes" and Nathalie Arsenault revved up the atmosphere even more with her talented feet. Even Burton MacIntyre from Cape Breton couldn't resist jumping on the stage for a few steps.

Our Friday night jam group played at the Wellington "Meet Your Neighbour" event at which Lt. Governor Leonce Bernard and his wife Florence, were honoured by the community for having represented the province so well for the past five years as goodwill ambassadors. Everyone is pleased to have them move back home. As well to entertain were Roger Co-Op Arsenault who played some traditional tunes on the accordion and Marie Arsenault who sang and played the piano.

On July 9th, our jam group played in Mont Carmel for the launching of the local summer festivals. That evening, the dinner theatre "La Cuisine à Mémé" opened at the Church Hall with Marianne Rouselle, Fr. Eloj Arsenault, **Acadian Fiddlers . . . Continued Page 12**

How about a smile by Teresa Wilson

I hope most readers enjoy the old stories and wit like I do. This was a means of entertainment among the Scottish and Irish folk of long ago. I heard a lot of this at home when I was a child. My father was good at it himself and got a big charge out of witty answers that other folks had said.

Now! I'll tell them as I heard them.

A resident of Goose River, who was noted for his wit, went shopping to St. Peter's Bay driving a very thin and miserable looking horse. When he came out of the store a smart alec was standing by, looking over the nag. He said laughingly, "That's some horse you have there sir, is he a stallion?" "No," said the Goose Riverite, "but his father was."

Many years ago at a dance in Monticello School, Big Dan Roderick invited an elderly lady to do a square dance with him. She, having a dizziness problem said, "Oh Lord no Dan, I can't dance with my head." Dan staring at the old lady, said, "what if you tried it with your feet."

Some men were working on the road in an isolated area where just one elderly man resided. After going there for water from his well several times, they probably assumed this man didn't have all his faculties. They thought it would be fun to ask him something and of course expecting a silly answer. One young man volunteered and early in the morning knocked on the old man's door and quickly asked him, "Did you see a truckload of monkeys going by?" "No," declared the sleepy old man, and looking out the window inquired, "What happened? Did you fall off?"

Attention All Fiddlers

Mark your calendar now and plan to attend the Annual General Meeting of The P.E.I Fiddlers Society to be held from 2:00 to 4 :00 PM Saturday 28 October 2006 Tentative Location: The Atlantic Superstore, University Avenue & Belvedere Ave, Upstairs Community Room.

Revised By-Laws to be discussed

Mark your Calendar now!

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Teresa Continued...

A resident of Big Cape was born on a sailing vessel coming through the Strait of Gibraltar off the coast of Spain, and although his parents were from P.E.I., he was labelled as Spanish. There was an argument on one evening as to what his nationality would be, when one quick thinking Joe said, I think he is a Canadian, after all, if the cat got into the oven and had kittens we wouldn't call them buns, would we? **To be continued in next issue**

Fiddler's ShopTalk

Where did the time go since my last column? Well we're into the heat and humidity of the summer so I thought I'd cover a few key points for summer playing. But first, I'm happy to say

I seem to be rid of those pesky carpet Beatles that were eating my bow hair.



Roy Johnstone

Summer brings a lot of challenges for your instrument and the bow. Because the glue used to hold the instrument together is a hide glue it will soften and sometimes let go with changes in temperature and humidity. Make sure you never leave you're your instrument in a closed car or in the trunk on a hot or cold day. These extremes in temperature can do serious damage to your violin. High humidity can also cause problems, making the instrument fingerboard slippery and more challenging to play. I have a soft cotton cloth to wipe mine off. Also, keep your instrument out of the rain and direct sunlight. The heat of the sun will lower string tension and make the instrument out of tune and any precipitation can loosen the glue points and also make it more difficult to play. Sometimes you have to let an employer know that under no circumstances do you want to play in direct sun or in a wet area. They should provide a shaded and covered area. One in which the sun, rain and mist do not directly fall on you.

Summer humidity can cause a build up of rosin on your strings. So check them on a regular basis and wipe the strings with a damp cloth to remove excess rosin. If you find your instrument is sounding scratchy and bowing takes more effort check to see you don't have a rosin build up. I try and use as little rosin as possible to get a good clear sound. If you put too much rosin on the bow it will gum up and get sticky and also contribute to a scratchy sound. Always remember to loosen your bow after each bout of playing. The summer heat and humidity can affect bow hair tension so keep a close eye to make sure you're slacking off the tension or with time your bow will loose the camber.

Playing in the summer is challenging on the fiddler as well. Drink plenty of fluids, and if you're playing a lot make sure you warm up before each performance. Excessive playing can lead to serious injury such as carpal tunnel problems as well as shoulder and arm injuries. Stay relaxed and try to play with as little physical effort as possible.

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

ECMA multi-nominee, performer and recoding artist,

Roy Johnstone, has a Website at

www.royjohnstone.com



NEW PROJECT ON ISLAND FIDDLE MUSIC

Ken Perlman will be back on PEI in October and November collecting tunes and interviewing fiddlers, thanks to a grant from the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa. This is intended to be a follow up to the project he conducted back in the early 1990s. He would certainly like to meet again with those he has previously interviewed, but he is also eager to meet with old-time fiddlers that he missed the first time around. Although he is primarily interested in older tunes and in fiddlers who were active before the current revival, he would also like to meet with some younger players.



Ken will be on the Island from about the middle of October through the end of November. If you would like to meet with Ken, and have access to email please contact him directly at kenperlman@aol.com. You can also call him (812 334 7992) or write him at his new home, 1018 E. University St., Bloomington IN, 47401. If you need a number to call on the Island, you may call Ward MacDonald at 902 626-8084. Be sure to include your home phone number, and suggest a good time for Ken to contact you.

Queens County Fiddlers Report

It has been a busy season of performing so far for the Queens County Fiddlers, both as a group and for individual members. The summer season got off to a great start on June 10 with our annual spring concert at the Carrefour Theatre in Charlottetown. Fiddlers and Friends delighted a packed house as the audience members were treated to more than two and a half hours of great music from performers such as Sheila MacKenzie, John Murley, Kenny Chaisson, Nathan Condon, Courtney Hogan and a great group led by Elmer Deagle. There was also step-dancing by Kristyn Visser, Taylor Mundy and Celia Koughan, Irish dancing from the BIS Dancers, as well as group numbers from the Queens County and Prince County Fiddlers and wonderful numbers from our guest vocalists Eddy Quinn and Jeff MacDonald.

Thanks to the efforts of Sheila MacKenzie, MacDonald also put on a wonderful day of Gaelic workshops prior to the concert. If there is enough interest, more will be held.

A special part of the show this year was the chance to award several members with honorary life memberships

. . . to the P.E.I. Fiddlers Society. Those honoured at the concert were Patsy Cook, Jim Halliday, Father Charlie Cheverie and Cecil Trainer. Also honoured but not able to attend the concert were Dr. Bud Ings and Kathryn Dau Schmidt.

Everyone who was involved played a role in making this concert such a success, but a big thank-you goes to Patsy Cook (and all the staff at Capital Auto) who agreed to be our advance ticket outlet and managed to sell out the show in advance) and to Ward MacDonald for a great job as master of ceremonies. A small but enthusiastic group of fiddlers performed as part of the Saturday night concert at the annual Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival on July 15. As usual, it was a wonderful night of music.

The group has one more major performance on its calendar for the summer months as it will play at the Prince County Fiddlers annual summer concert at the arena in Kensington on Aug. 12. Watch local media for the start time of the concert and a complete list of performers.

The group is also pleased to announce that it has awarded the first scholarship for a young fiddle student to attend the renowned Gaelic College of Celtic Performing Arts in St. Ann's, Cape Breton, N.S. The scholarship will cover the cost of a one-week fiddle camp this summer (approximate value of \$805). This year's winner is Daniel McKenna, who is one of the young members of the Queens County Fiddlers.

Here are some other highlights so far for various members this summer:

Matthew Reid, 12, another of the group's young members, took part in the National Heritage Fair in Halifax in July. His project described the Avro Anson Aircraft crash in which two Royal Air Force planes crashed over Southport, P.E.I., in 1942, killing six soldiers and one civilian. Matthew is also getting in some extra playing time this summer as he performs with his teacher, Aaron Crane, at the Ceilidhs at St. Andrew's Chapel on Tuesday evenings.

Longtime time QCF member Paul Cheverie had his first solo performance on the stage at Rollo Bay this year as he played the fiddle while his daughter, Alice, stepdanced. Sheila MacKenzie leads The Celtic Ladies on stage at The Guild in Charlottetown this summer. Check out this show; it's a lot of fun. Sheila is also playing at several other locations, including the concert series at Peakes Quay and the Chowder House Ceilidhs. . . . **Queens County continued Page 10**



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Supporting P.E.I. Fiddlers

Queens County .. From page 9

Darlene Pound was involved in a new CD that was launched on June 11. Entitled Blessed Are They Who Hear, it was recorded by the group, Revelation, of which Darlene is a member, along with seven others from the Central Parish Presbyterian Charge. The album includes 12 tracks of contemporary Christian music.

Courtney Hogan launched her first CD to a packed house on June 24 at the BIS Hall in Charlottetown. She also hosted her first Ceilidh in July at Afton Community Centre. Our music director, Ward MacDonald, is continuing another summer of music at the Kings Playhouse in Georgetown. Watch local media for details of the show. The Chaisson family put on an excellent show in early July—

Continued . . . >

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The Travel Store

one of the best Celtic concerts this summer, without a doubt.

Virginia Kinsman, who has been a summer member with the group for years, has recently recorded a CD with the Caledonian Scottish Fiddle Orchestra (of Nova Scotia) entitled Take the Floor.

The group will be resuming its weekly practices in September. Watch your e-mails and The Guardian for our start-up date or feel free to call around to other members.

Queen's County Fiddlers Report was written

by Carolyn Drake

Prince County Fiddlers

Since our last report the Prince County Fiddlers have been meeting regularly on Monday evenings. We have been practicing and making plans for our annual concert on August 12. We have been attempting to recruit new members and have received some expressions of interest.

On July 20 the Prince County Fiddlers entertained the residents of Clinton View Lodge. Fiddlers Jim MacDougal, Patsy Bulger, Leith Thomson accompanied by Darlene Harding on keyboard, Ronnie Albert on guitar played at St Patrick church annual picnic on July 16th. Fiddlers Lottie Locke, Thelma Campbell and Edgar Millar play regularly at the Jamborees held at the Irishtown and Sea View Community Halls on alternate Saturday nights. Edgar Millar and Nathan Condon have been playing at a variety of venues with Mary Smith and Friends. Nathan also continues to play with the Blue Grass band BlueStreak. Nathan continues to be very much in demand for his lively fiddle styling and does not have much free time.

The Prince County Fiddlers have accepted an invitation to participate in a musical fundraiser for the P.E.I. Cancer Society. The concert will take place at the Bloomfield Provincial Park on Sunday afternoon August 27th.

This Prince County Fiddlers Report was written

By: Barry Thompson



Barry Thompson

A couple of visitors at the Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival



Doreen and Theresa



An Acadian Music Perspective on Fiddling style Interview By: Fiona Ritchie, Scotland

Albert Arsenault and H  l  ne Bergeron spoke with Fiona Ritchie while performing as the group Barachois in 1999.

FIONA RITCHIE: You're here at Celtic Connections. What is the Celtic Connection for you?

H  L  NE BERGERON: We all grew up in musical, "fiddling" families. Fiddling in Acadian communities goes back a few centuries and the Acadian race have been on PEI since the 1600s, surrounded by Scottish and Irish communities. Over the past few hundred years the music has merged and the cultures have influenced one another.

All play the fiddle but all use it differently -- especially rhythmically: Acadians use their feet. Style is different although some of the tunes are the same -- the songs are all from France and have been handed down through the generations.

FIONA RITCHIE: People are familiar with other Canadian musical traditionals: Quebecois music or with music from Cape Breton. But Acadian music from PEI is a well kept secret. Is it a fairly small community?

H  L  NE BERGERON: There are only 400 families and the music has all been handed down in families in the kitchen. It's only being played more commercially now. Traditional music is very popular now.

ALBERT ARSENAULT: It's on the upswing. People, even from the next province, often don't realize there's a French speaking community on PEI. Our style is fairly different from the Quebec style and the songs are from a different area in France too. The Acadians are from Poitiers in the North West, a different region from most of the Quebecois.

ALBERT ARSENAULT: PEI is separated from Quebec by a twelve hour car drive so the cultures have taken on their own directions.

FIONA RITCHIE: When most people listen to fiddle music from any part of the world, but particularly Scotland or Ireland, they can't help but tap their feet. But with Acadian music, you tap your feet while you're playing -- it's part of the music. Talk

about the rhythm in the music and how you're expressing that with your feet because your feet are really another instrument.

H  L  NE BERGERON: In the old days, the fiddlers had no accompaniment and so the fiddlers and singers used their feet to accompany themselves. The guitars only appeared after the Second World War. A lot of people had pump organs which is related to the church, but they were also used to play traditional music because it was the only other instrument that was around.

ALBERT ARSENAULT: We were in a room last night practicing and we didn't want to bang our feet too much with the plaster ceilings and there were rugs. Banging feet softly on the rugs -- we couldn't hear anything -- we weren't really gelling and we knew it was because the feet weren't there. " **More . . . in upcoming issue**

Fiona Ritchie Reporter for: A program created weekly at the foothills of the Scottish Highlands, it is called The Thistle & Shamrock. This is the most listened to Celtic music program in the world. Information on where and when to listen and **it is free.** podcast @ thistle.npr.org"

In God's Hands

GAY, Myrtle (nee Thomson)

The death occurred at the Garden Home, Charlottetown, on June 24, 2006, of Myrtle Gay (nee Thomson) formerly of Cornwall, P.E.I., aged 95 years. Beloved wife of Ralph of the Garden Home. **Ralph is a Life member of the PEIFS (P.E.I. Fiddlers Society)**

SMITH, Reuben C.

The death occurred at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital on Monday, July 10, 2006, of Mr. Reuben C. Smith of Blooming Pt., in his 75th year. Beloved husband of Theresa (nee McKearney) Smith **Reuben was a Senior Member of the PEIFS (P.E.I. Fiddlers Society)**

Bolger, Cornelius Patrick (Lenie)

1908-2006 passed away in Summerside on August 8th. He is survived by his wife Estelle and his daughters Arlene Bolger and Patricia Brooke.



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Events forecast

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11 Sep—27 Oct	Celtic Blaze—Stephanie Cadman	Charlottetown Confed Centre	566-1267
Daily	Island Shindig	Cavendish I Avonlea Village	963-3050
Mondays	Ceilidh & Dance	St Peter's Bay Circle Club	961-2899
Tuesdays until sep 26	Celtic Ladies	Charlottetown The Guild	620-3333
Wednesdays Last day Sep 13th	Brackley Beach Ceilidh	Brackley Beach Community Centre	626-5040
Wednesdays	Ceilidh	Souris—Seniors Silver Threads	687-2396
Wednesdays	Ceilidh at the Corner	Orwell Corner Historic Village	368-6600
Wednesdays	Square Dance	Lorne Valley Hall	687-2584
Wednesdays	Ceilidh (21 Jun Sep 06)	Malpeque Hall	836-4310
Thursdays	Ceilidh (22 Jun 28 Sep)	Stanley Bridge Hall	836-4310
Thursdays	Close to the Ground Concert Series Pooles Corner - kaylee Hall	Stanley Bridge Hall	394-1115
Fridays	Ceilidh at The Irish Hall	Charlottetown B.I.S. Hall	892-2367
Fridays	Ceilidh on the Water	Montague	838-3444
Fridays 7:30 pm	Mary Smith and Friends	Stanley Bridge Hall	963-2356
Fridays (alternating)	Ceilidh	Murray Harbour Community Centre	962-2273
Saturdays (alternating)	Ceilidh and dance	Kilmuir Hall	962-2273
Saturdays	Dance	Goose River	961-2205
Sundays	Ceilidh & Dance	Monticello Log Hall	687-2547
Mon/Wed/Sat	Fiery Faith and Fiddles	Clinton – Red Road Country Inn	886-3154
Su/Mo/We/Th	Scottish Music Concert	Richmond - MacKinnon Homestead	854-2245
Every 2nd Monday 8pm Sept 11	Ceilidh/Kitchen Party	Bingo Country Hall	566-9908
October 21 2PM -7PM	Fiddle-Doo and Pot Luck 5pm	Murray Christian Ctr, Kensington	963-2356

Acadian Fiddlers from Page 7. Christian Gallant, Jacinta Henry and Julie Gallant making up the cast and dishing out great food, comedy, songs and fiddle tunes. Another all-summer production began July 11th in Abram Village called "Café au Laid", again serving a terrific meal with lots of laughter and music by Anastasia Desroches, Diane Racette, Caroline Bernard, Pierre Poirier, Donald Richard and Raymond J. Arsenault. Caroline and Anastasia also starred in a cabaret-style show called "Le Fricot". The cast had audience members taking part on stage and dancing to the fiddles of not only Anastasia, but also Nicholas Arsenault. Krista Landry and Julie Arsenault were also in this production. Everyone got to sample a bowl of "Fricot", a delicious Acadian chicken stew. Anastasia, Caroline and Julie are members of the group "Chiquésa" featured at several venues over the summer including the Confederation Center and the Harbourfront Jubilee Theatre. "Chiquésa" excel in harmony singing but also present some lively fiddling and stepdancing to suit all tastes.

"**Les Girls**" ran seven times at the Guild with the much enjoyed music of Louise Arsenault, Hélène Bergeron, Samantha Gallant, Janelle Richard, Robyn Richard, Stephanie Collicutt and Paige Gallant from the Abram Village/Mont Carmel areas. All these "Girls" play multi-instruments and step-dance. They finish their show with a dazzling number with all seven of them on fiddles – it's pretty sensational.

Chuck Arsenault and Albert Arsenault put on another great show at the Confederation Centre and Harbourfront Jubilee Theatres, giving out their usual fare of side-splitting comedy and wonderful music on various instruments. This well-loved duo always gives a fast-moving and entertaining performance.

Jocelyne Arsenault from Wellington was adjudicator for the College of Piping Dance Competitions in June. She also did some very lively fiddling three evenings a week for the Highland Storm dancers all July and August. This was a beautifully presented show with a cast of thirty pipers, singers and dancers easily grabbing the audience's attention with their tremendous talent.

On July 28th, a variety show was enjoyed at the BIS hall with performances by Wellington Fiddlers Jesse Francis who also sang, Iain MacInnes played uilleann pipes and whistle with Grady Poe who accompanied on Guitar

Rémi Arsenault from Wellington has been traveling all over doing guitar backup for numerous musicians. He's in great demand by many fiddlers in recording studios as he has a natural feel for the tunes. His fancy picking can be heard on the recently released CD by Keelin Wedge from St Louis. This young lady really knows how to heat up the fiddle and her enthusiastic fans really let her know how much they appreciate her talent and poise.

Robert Arsenault demonstrated some nimble finger-picking on his mandolin accompanying Roy Johnstone at the Shipyard Market in Summerside on July 28th. Robert also performed at the Carefour Theatre and Confederation Center's studio Theatre presenting "Les Acadiens de L'Isle" in August Tuesdays & Thursdays with Mario Robichaud, Julie Arsenault & Louise Arsenault.

Anyone is welcome to come to the Wellington boy's and girl's club for the Friday night jam. Info: marie at 436-5532

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