



# FIDDLIN' AROUND

Saline Fiddlers Philharmonic

Vol. 8 No. 6

SPECIAL EDITION

Jul-Aug, 2002

## Fiddlers Reorganize A Personal Letter from Bob and Pam Phillips

June 25, 2002

Dear Fiddler Friends,

*The experience we have had in Fiddlers has been amazing beyond all expectations. Little did we know what would happen when we made the decision to start this incredible group in the summer of 1994. All of the people and special times are forever a very important part of our lives. The support and encouragement from the community has continued to amaze and humble us. Some of you have attended shows, sent financial help or hired the group to entertain you. We thank all of you for enriching our lives in such a wonderful way. So many of you have become like an extended family.*

*We have recently made the decision it is time for us to retire from the Fiddler organization. We both find ourselves in a time of life when we need to step back and take a little time for family and ourselves. We are looking forward to having a little more time to visit our children. Something very special has been created here in Saline but it is a perfect time for new leadership and a new direction. We believe this will be a very exciting time for the Saline Fiddlers Philharmonic.*

*We are thrilled to tell you that Mr. Ben Culver has agreed to take over as Artistic Director. You all know Ben from his many years with the Fiddlers, first as a student, then as a Music Education Intern and currently as Assistant Director. Ben has been an integral part of building the Fiddlers to what it is today.*

*We are forever enthralled with stories from alumni who credit Fiddler experiences with allowing them*



Bob and Pam Phillips on tour with the Fiddlers last summer

*to reach a new level of achievement in their chosen field of endeavor. The fabulous opportunity Fiddlers gives to each student in the group will continue to build the future. The music will be part of them forever, wherever they go.*

*We encourage you as the underpinning of the organization to continue to follow the group's growth. Attend shows, continue a sponsorship, be the moral support for the new leaders as you have been for us. The Fiddler future looks very bright to us and this is the best feeling we can have as we leave - to know it is good hands and will continue to be a positive activity for great young people!*

*We are certain we can count on you! Thank you so much!*

*Sincerely,  
Bob and Pam Phillips*

*See other Reorganization Details on Pages 2 and 3*

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# New Fiddler Director Named - *Mr. Ben Culver*

By Will Warner

Arturo Toscanini and Leonard Bernstein. Arthur Fiedler and John Williams. To this list of legends and their successors, add another pair: Robert Phillips and Benjamin Culver.

With the retirement in July of Fiddlers founder Bob Phillips, Ben Culver assumes the duties of Artistic Director of the Saline Fiddlers Philharmonic. No one was better qualified to succeed a legend than Ben Culver.

On the way to his current appointment as Assistant Director, Mr. Culver has immersed himself in every aspect of the enterprise. While still in high school, he was one of the original performers and was Music Education Intern with the group while in college. As the Philharmonic's Sound Engineer—its expert in sound and lighting technology—he has kept the group's gear state-of-the-art and developed the procedures for transporting, deploying, maintaining, and improving the equipment. For this Ben draws on his eight years' experience as a professional audio engineer in and around Detroit.

“Maestro” Culver holds a Bachelors degree in Music Education from the University of Michigan, where he studied violin with Stephen Shipps. He teaches 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade orchestras and co-directs the Saline High School orchestra.



Mr. Ben Culver

Ben says that he is “overwhelmed by all the support and encouragement” he has received from parents and fans, and “so thankful to the Phillipses for what they have created. I am excited and eager to begin.” He’s thinking that by next summer it will be time to tour Michigan again. The previous statewide tours “were a blast—the most fun I’ve had on the road.”

As fans of the Fiddlers know, Ben is a phenomenal violinist, arranger, and teacher. Ben conducted this year’s “Camp Phil,” the group’s annual summer retreat, at which he introduced the ensemble to the upcoming season’s new material. This intensive, two-day confab reminded the student performers of Mr. Culver’s skills as a teacher, and convinced them and their parents that the troupe has a new Director with the talent, experience, motivation, and commitment to continue the great Fiddlers tradition.

The Philharmonic is a major thread in the cultural tapestry of Southeastern Michigan. It is the magnificent legacy of Bob and Pam Phillips, who, along with everything else, saw to it that a successor was prepared. The organization could not be in better hands.

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## Summer Birthday Celebrations!

Emily - June 8  
Brandon - June 11  
Ana - June 18  
Hannah - July 6  
Linda - July 26

Nicole - August 1  
Ben - August 9  
Christina - August 20  
Brad - August 22  
Bobby - August 27

\*\* HAPPY BIRTHDAY \*\*

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# Other Fiddler Reorganization Changes:

By Pam Phillips

**Mollie Nieves** will be handling the duties of scheduling and finance. Mollie's daughter, Jessie, is a violinist. Alumni **Jesse Mason** will step in as Assistant Director. **Carl Newton** will coordinate the technical end of the shows. Guitarist, Mike, is Carl's son. **Jim and Joan Roth** have graciously agreed to stay on as tour managers. The Saline Community Education Department is providing even more support services. We would like to thank **Kim Covert** and **Scott Graden** for their help in this transition. Of course, many, many parent volunteers will continue to make the group function.

For now the Fiddlers will continue to be reached at 734-429-0004. Soon a new phone number will be available. Look for it in the September newsletter. The web site will remain the same so you can always

**Ben Culver – Artistic Director**  
**Mollie Nieves – Business Manager**  
**Jim and Joan Roth – Tour Managers**  
**Jesse Mason – Assistant Director**  
**Carl Newton – Technical Coordinator**  
**Sheila Graziano – Choreographer**  
**Reid Smith – Music Education Intern**

check the schedule or email us through there. Our new mailing address is: Saline Fiddlers Philharmonic, Community Education, 200 N. Ann Arbor, MI 48176.

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## FOR NOW:

**Direct Booking Inquiries to: 734-429-0004**  
**LOOK FOR NEW NUMBER IN THE NEXT EDITION**

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## 9th Annual Hometown Concert, 2002

In keeping with the Hometown Concert tradition, the Fiddlers will be joined by Norman Blake and Peter Ostroushko at the 9th Annual Hometown Concert. Mark your calendars now for Friday, November 1st and Saturday, November 2nd.

Tickets will go on sale beginning September 1. Prices: \$12 for adults, \$5 for students grade 12 and under.

Look for further information in the September edition of *Fiddlin Around*.

## Calendar of Public Events

Thursday, July 4 : Birmingham Concert in the Park, Shain Park. 7:00 pm. Bring lawn chairs.

Saturday, July 13: Saline Celtic Festival. [www.salineceltic.org](http://www.salineceltic.org).

Wednesday, July 17: Cain Park Summer Series, Cleveland Heights, OH. Tickets available at 216-291-5796. [www.clvhts.com](http://www.clvhts.com)

Thursday, Aug. 22: Saline Concert in the Park

Saturday, Sept. 7: Saline Community Fair. Washtenaw County Fairgrounds. 7:30-9:30 pm. Tickets at the gate.

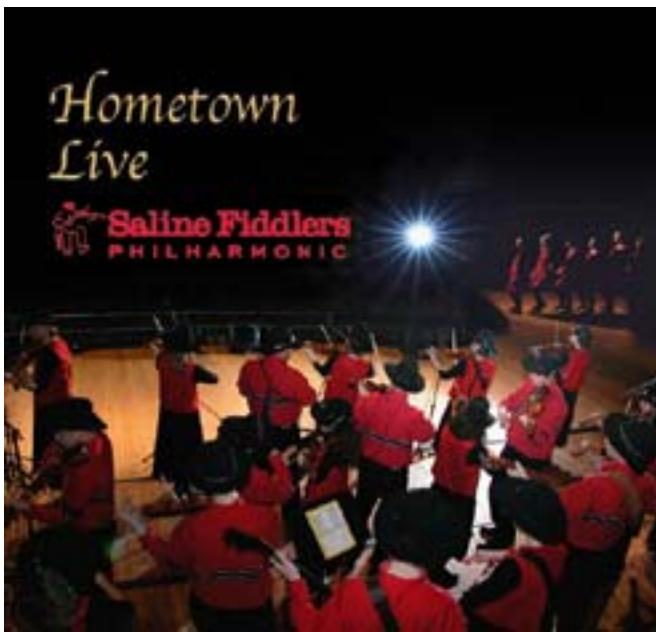
Saturday, Sept. 28: First Presbyterian Church, Ann Arbor, MI. 7:30 pm.

Sunday, Oct. 13: Nashville Baptist Church, Nashville, MI. 2:00 pm.

**Watch the website for more details:  
[www.salinefiddlers.com](http://www.salinefiddlers.com)**

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## Fiddlers NEW C.D. To Be Released This Summer!



**Sneak Preview:**  
Cover to the Fiddlers' upcoming CD.  
(Available by September)

**Send order form and payment to:**  
Saline Fiddlers Philharmonic  
Saline Community Education  
200 N. Ann Arbor  
Saline, MI 48176

Current Titles	CD \$15	Tape \$10	Total
Down By The Old Mill Pond			
Mothers Request			
Better Than Bingo			
P&H \$1.00 per item			
Order Total	\$		

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