



# Fiddlin' Around

Volume 11, Number 3

www.salinefiddlers.com

Spring 2005

## On to the Smoky Mountains

# Fiddlers to tour the home of traditional American fiddling

Appalachian Mountains, white water rafting, coal mines, fireworks, riverboat touring, Celtic and Bluegrass festivals are all part of the experience planned for the Saline Fiddlers as they prepare to embark on a journey through the home of traditional American fiddling. The Fiddlers are sure to feel right at home playing their repertoire in the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountains of Appalachia June 29 through July 10 for their Summer 2005 Tour.

The first performance stop on the schedule is at Rocky Mount, Virginia, where the Fiddlers will perform in the Franklin County High School Auditorium for the Rocky Mount Summer Festival, an outdoor summer concert series.

Gatlinburg, Tennessee, the second stop, will be a destination for both performance and fun. The Fiddlers will play at the Christus Gardens, a 45-year-old park featuring monuments and statues that portray the Life of Christ. White water rafting, shopping and taking in the sights of Gatlinburg will occupy the remainder of the time there.

In Nashville the group will play at the Gaylord Opryland Resort. While touring this country music Mecca, hopefully the kids will get the chance to bump in to some of the many world-class musicians who live there, and again, enjoy some shopping at the mall in Opryland. A riverboat trip and fireworks viewing are in the works for Nashville, who boasts some of the biggest Fourth of July fireworks in the country.

Moving down to North Carolina, the group will play a show at Appalachian State University's Cannon Music Camp in Boone. This gig may be interesting because they tell us that they do not have enough level ground to place our dance boards. The cloggers will have to learn to clog on a slope. Here the kids

will stay in college dorms.

The final shows scheduled so far will be held at the 50th Annual Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in Linville, North Carolina. This is the largest Celtic festival in the country. The Fiddlers will be playing several gigs during the festival.

A great concept for today's Fiddlers is "host housing." The group used to do this a few years ago and brought back the practice last year in Northern Michigan. Staying with local families instead of in hotels was a great experience; however, this tour will not involve staying with local families, but the kids will receive housing at some of the venues. The

*(Please see More... page 2)*

### \* Senior Edition \*



We dedicate every Spring newsletter to our graduating Fiddlers and their parents. Look inside for features on the Class of 2005 graduates.

# Culver wins Arts Education Award

By Mike Beck

Saline Fiddlers Artistic Director and Saline Middle School Orchestra Director Ben Culver was recently honored with the Arts Education Award from the Arts Council Lake Erie West.

The Arts Council Lake Erie West (ACLEW), a regional multi-arts agency founded in 1983, serves artists and communities throughout the Lake Erie West Basin. ACLEW was started by artists, educators and businessmen of Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan as an independent non-governmental, tax-exempt non-profit arts and education agency.

ACLEW's goals are to "Provide Leadership for the arts as advocates for and partners in: community

building, economic development, education reform, and cultural sustenance. ACLEW's mission is to provide, promote, and produce quality creative and cultural opportunities as well as facilities for artists, agencies, educators, residents, and visitors."

In the teacher category this year's "LEWIE" award was presented to Mr. Culver and accepted by Executive Director Will Warner on April 9, 2005 at the ACLEW's Gala in Toledo, Ohio (Ben was with the Fiddlers at a benefit for the American Cancer Society at the time).



Artistic Director Ben Culver

This award recognizes Ben's achievements in developing excellent string musicians through the use of alternative styles of music, especially American fiddling, in the Saline Schools' orchestra program and in the Saline Fiddlers. Mr. Culver was also recognized for his contribution to the arts through his popular fiddling workshops for students from other districts, his workshops with other string educators, his innovative techniques for teaching fiddling, his use of extracurricular programs to supplement school-based programs, and for his contributions to other community arts programs through his expertise as a sound technician.

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## More on the Southeast tour

*(Continued from page 1)*

Grandfather Mountain resort, for instance, is providing a large house for the group to stay in for two or three nights. As of this writing, it is unknown if sleeping bags will be required.

Just one question remains for this writer: Do they get to go to Graceland?

**We're Fully Non-Profit now**

It took nearly a year to receive the 501C3 status for the Saline Fiddlers' non-profit corporation, but it is truly here. In March 2005 the Fiddlers received the Letter of Determination, which makes the status official. (Your contributions to the Fiddlers prior to receiving the status are still tax-deductible.)

Now, you can also designate your **United Way** contribution to the Saline Fiddlers! Although they will not be listed as a "United Way Agency" at this time, you can still specify that your contribution goes to the Saline Fiddlers. Check it out!

*Fiddlin' Around* is the official newsletter of the

**Saline Fiddlers.**

We publish four times yearly.

Jen Lahnala, Editor.

Photos courtesy of loving Fiddler families.

Will Warner, Executive Director

[www.salinefiddlers.com](http://www.salinefiddlers.com)

Cleveland, Ohio, April 2005

## Fiddlers get encore Cattle Baron's Ball performance

By Brian, rhythm section

Once again, the Saline Fiddlers have traveled to another town to brighten peoples' lives. This was an exciting trip down to Cleveland, Ohio for the Cattle Baron's Ball, a program that raises money for the American Cancer Society. The Fiddlers played for this program in Detroit last fall with country star Reba McEntire. This ball was held at the Cleveland Browns' football stadium with Chely Wright providing the entertainment. We arrived a little bit after noon, set up our equipment, and went through a rigorous sound check. Afterwards, we all just hung out until dinner.

When dinner was over, we went out and played a five-minute set as people were coming in and getting settled down. We were told that we had an hour before we would open the show for Ms. Wright, during which time the ball participants would have their dinner and make their auction bids and contributions. On our way back to our dressing room, Nick and I each bought a Chely Wright shirt as a concert souvenir.

Being in Fiddlers has its perks of free tours of sweet places. At this show, they let us all go into the stadium to see the field. We took large amounts of pictures with different placements and poses. (Those photos will hopefully be posted on our website or in a newsletter soon.)

Later, as we were getting ready to perform, Ms. Wright stepped out of her dressing room to get a few pictures with the group. We all told her our names and shook hands with her. She is a very nice and very

pretty lady. I could tell that she was a little tired, but she did a good job of looking happy whether she was or not. Nick and I got her autograph on our shirts, which was the highlight of our entire trip.

The Fiddlers played the 10-minute opening and then watched Ms. Wright's show. While the performance was happening, people were still bidding, chatting, and having a good time. As the event was coming to a close, the Fiddlers went down by the exit to play for people who were leaving. We



**Do, Re, Mi, Fa, So.....** How do you solve a problem like the Fiddlers? Put them anywhere and they will have a fun time. Here they are in the Browns' stadium before the Cattle Baron's Ball performance.

finally packed up and left the stadium after midnight. But, instead of driving three hours back home, Cattle Baron's Ball provided all of us with rooms at the Renaissance Hotel. We spent a wonderful night there and went home the next day. It was a great way to end our spring break.

## Two class acts the Fiddlers are sure to miss

# A salute to the graduates:

*Six individuals made up the Class of 2005 back in 2001, when they were selected to belong to Fiddlers. No new people from this class were ever added in later years. Four went on to other musical and non-musical pursuits. These two young women have proven real leaders when called on during their senior year.*



## Kim

A classical violinist from age seven, Kimberly might never have tried out for Fiddlers, had it not been for Bob Phillips. The now-retired founder encouraged Kim to try out for the group, even though she was not enrolled in the fiddle club at the time. That gave Kim the confidence to go for it. "I liked playing violin and I wanted an opportunity to perform," Kim remembers.

Kim begged her parents to let her take violin lessons for two years before they gave in, realizing it was more than a childhood whim. She began with the Suzuki method in Newport News, Virginia, and moved on through two states and five teachers. Now she plays occasionally for

the praise group at her church and teaches several young students. Her musical talents include playing the sousaphone in the Marching Band and clogging for the Fiddlers. Other high school activities are cross country, track, and National Honor Society.

Clogging has been an especially fun part of Kim's Fiddling experience. Her favorite fiddling tunes are "Buffalo Gals," "Bonaparte's Retreat," "Low Down Dirty Dog," and any of the clogging tunes.

Kim's favorite Fiddler trip was the Northeast Tour of 2004. "We got to see so many different things — New York City, Boston, rural New England,

a spooky hotel. One of my favorite Fiddler memories is touring New York City Harbor with Mary and a couple others. No one else wanted to go on the boat tour and it was one of the coolest things I have ever done.

"One other memorable experience would be when Andrea, Nicole and I took our skirts and wore them way up high so we looked liked some weird form of an oompaa-loompa."

Kim's future will be in service to her country as a midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy, an interest that also took root in Virginia. Sadly, she will miss the Fiddlers summer tour because 'Plebe Summer' begins the same day as the tour. Kim wants to study flight or medicine there.

Advice to younger Fiddlers: "Looking back after four years, I just want to remind the underclassmen that this is as good as it will get. Become friends with all the Fiddlers, they are your support group when you're having trouble, they rejoice with you when something great happens, and they mourn when something bad happens. Value each and every moment spent with these people, they are awesome and you never know when it could be your last gig, last Fiddler get-together, or even last tour. I'm leaving early this summer and am going to miss everyone terribly, and wish that I could spend just a bit more time with these amazing people."



# Class of 2005

## Stefanie

It resembles that giant bug, the walking stick. She's been straddling that unusual-looking instrument for years, the electric cello, only hopping up occasionally to sing or dance to one of the high-spirited clogging tunes. It all began in fifth grade, when Stefanie originally wanted to play bass in the school orchestra. "My parents wanted me to play violin because they thought the bass was so big. The compromise was the cello." Now she teaches the cello to younger students.

Stefanie became interested in the Fiddlers early on, too. "I like to perform in front of people. Fiddlers looked like a cool thing to do. It's exciting and it's a cool environment." She has sung harmony on "Used to Be" and "Grass Is Blue," and solo on "Big Brown Trout." She clogs the new "Octoped" dance number and many fiddling tunes.

Stefanie has been a dancer since she was three years old. She dances jazz and lyrical and is performing a senior piece with her dance company. She has been in Girl Scouts for ten years, achieving the Silver Award and working on her Gold. Other activities keeping Stefanie extremely busy are National Honor Society, Drama Club, Hornet Sound & Light, Varsity Quiz Bowl, Saline Outdoor Leadership, Link Crew, church choir and managing the track team.

Outdoor Leadership and Mancinos add to Stefanie's employment experience.

This summer Stefanie hopes to visit with friends that she won't be able to see much more and whittle down her belongings that she will be taking to Michigan State University in the fall. When not touring with the Fiddlers, that is. At MSU she wants to study elementary education, with double minors in psychology and theater directing and technical productions, so that she can teach and work on small productions. She will live in the dorms and investigate a sorority recommended by her cousin.

Picking her favorite Fiddler tune is hard, but she thinks it would be "Hungry Man #1." Stefanie's favorite tour was the Northeast Tour of 2004, where she fell in love with host housing. "I met a lot of cool people and was able to bond a lot with everyone." She has many good fiddling memories. A standout is the memory of Camp Phil her freshman year, at a cottage on Lake Huron in Canada, when the neighbors would come over and watch the Fiddlers play in the evening.

Advice to new Fiddlers? "Stay energetic and positive because it's the best way to have fun, and that's what life is about. Definitely become family with each other. It makes the experience so much more unique and rewarding to know everyone on some kind of personal level."



A Special  
**Thank You**  
goes out to our  
graduating parents  
this year. See  
Page 6 for details  
of only some of  
the help these par-  
ents have given the  
organization.

## And now, put 'em together for our graduating parents:

The Saline Fiddlers surely would never go anywhere without the love, sweat and tears of the parents. Fortunately for us, we're only losing one family this year, Dave and Priscilla Olsen. Tom and Jen Lah-nala, will still be around at least two more years for their sophomore. And, Dave and Priscilla, you're certainly welcome to stay behind longer with us!

**Dave Olsen** has served the Fiddlers in many capacities, the most recent being soliciting support from corporate sponsors, and seeking the gigs for the 2005 Southeast Tour. He says he has probably spent 200 hours preparing and sending promo packages and making phone calls for the summer tour.

**Priscilla Olsen** arranged parent drivers for the gigs for the past two years. She provided the refreshment table at the Hometown Shows for four years, and designed and wrote Thank You notes for contributions. These are only some of the things Priscilla has done for the organization.

Thanks, Dave and Priscilla. We'll miss you!

## Welcome new Fiddlers!

Auditions for the 2005-2006 Saline Fiddlers were held on February 26, 2005. Choices were difficult, as so many truly talented people sought membership in the group. Nine new Fiddlers have been chosen and will be performing before school's end.

We congratulate and extend a warm welcome to:

Alex —violin  
Andrew —viola  
Aubrey —violin  
Brad —rhythm  
Evi —violin  
Hannah —violin  
Ian —sound technician  
Jacob —cello  
Tyler —violin

### *Artistically Speaking*

## Fiddlers get the beat

*Nine newcomers are on board and getting acclimated to the Fiddling way of life. One newcomer plays the drums – the first dedicated drummer to join the rhythm section. We asked Ben Culver to tell us the story behind the new instrument.*



**Ben:** Long-time fans will surely recognize the new instrument added to the Saline Fiddlers sound: a drum set, played by Brad. A long time was spent considering adding drums, but little time was needed to choose Brad for his great talent and the wealth of musical possibilities he brings to the group. He is doing a great job! We purchased an electronic drum set for its portability and capabilities of making many different sounds. After several intensive practice sessions with Brad, it was fun to hear the full group rehearse together for the first time – everyone started listening closer and got very excited. We're still figuring out how the drums best fit with our music, especially considering that the drum set isn't really a "traditional" instrument, but, then again, a 30 member stage band with violas, cellos, and 15 fiddles isn't really traditional either! So far we've played five gigs with Brad and the drums, and I'm very excited about it. I hope our audiences will join us in our excitement as they listen to our newest addition to the Saline Fiddlers sound!

## Brynn on Broadway

By Kristen, junior violist

During every Fiddler gig, our Artistic Director likes to brag about our grades, our extra curricular activities, musical skills, leadership...the list is endless. Now Fiddlers can add another achievement to that list: a Saline Fiddler alumna on Broadway.

Brynn O'Malley, who was a Saline High School student in the group with Ben Culver, presently performs as a member of the ensemble in "Disney's Beauty and the Beast" at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre

on W. 46<sup>th</sup> Street. Brynn is also the understudy for Belle, whose part she had the thrill of performing on a very memorable night in February with her family and friends all there to see her.

Ben Culver remembers Brynn as very dedicated to her craft, practicing for hours before a gig. "She was a great beacon of energy; honest, caring, vivaciously talented and just plain fun!" He recalls she knew every part of every Allison Krauss recording outright and was compared a number of times to Allison by reviewers. He also ran the sound for Saline's rendition of "Oklahoma" during which Brynn's strong voice always blew out the microphones!



Fiddler alum Brynn O'Malley

I also know Brynn. In fact, it was Brynn that gave me my first ever viola lesson, back in 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade. I remember watching her star in "Oklahoma" and as Maria in Ann Arbor Civic Theatre's production of "The Sound of Music."

It was my privilege to meet Brynn again a month ago in New York City. My family visited the city for spring break and was able to catch a showing of "Disney's Beauty and the Beast." Her enthusiasm and bright angelic face were easy to spot among the other animated characters. It was a wonderful show, and she graciously greeted us afterwards for a backstage tour of the costumes, scenery, and dressing rooms. She also introduced us to many of the actors and actresses.

Brynn graduated from the University of Michigan's musical theatre program in May 2003. It was certainly exciting to see her doing so well since her graduation. Perhaps we will have a chance to see her perform again sometime soon.

*This just in!* Rumor has it that Brynn has landed the star role in "Avenue Q" in Las Vegas!

### Upcoming Public Events

- ♫ May 19: **Coldstone Creamery**, near Farmer Jack's, Saline, MI. **Fundraiser for Habitat for Humanity**, 4 to 9 PM.
- ♫ May 21: **West Michigan Bluegrass Festival**, Lowell 4H Fairgrounds, Lowell, MI. Visit [www.wmbma.org/wmbma/](http://www.wmbma.org/wmbma/) for more information.

#### 2005 Southeast Tour:

- ♫ June 30: Rocky Mount, Virginia
- ♫ July 2: Gatlinburg, Tennessee
- ♫ July 4: Nashville, Tennessee
- ♫ July 6: Boone, North Carolina
- ♫ July 6: Grandfather Mountain, North Carolina
- ♫ July 14: **Mott Children's Hospital**, Ann Arbor, MI, 12:00 PM
- ♫ July 15: **Farmington Founders' Festival**, Farmington, MI
- ♫ July 16: **St. Joseph Church Festival**, Dexter, MI
- ♫ July 23: **Ann Arbor Art Fair**
- ♫ July 27: **Alpena, MI**
- ♫ July 28: **Canadian Lakes Club**, Stanwood, MI
- ♫ August 3: **Clinton 4-H Fair**, St. Johns, MI
- ♫ August 13: **Kent County 4-H Fair**, Lowell, MI
- ♫ September 4: **Arts, Beats & Eats**, Pontiac, MI
- ♫ September 17: **West Michigan Bluegrass Festival**, Lowell 4H Fairgrounds, Lowell, MI. Visit [www.wmbma.org/wmbma/](http://www.wmbma.org/wmbma/) for more information.
- ♫ October 22: **Oktoberfest**, Saline, MI
- ♫ October 28 & 29: **12th Annual Fall Hometown Concert**. Guest artist to be announced soon.

For bookings call: 1-866-257-5333

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\* Senior Edition \*

*Going cyber...*

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Thanks from the staff at *Fiddlin' Around*.

**See page 7 for  
upcoming  
events!**



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**To:**

