

B.C. OLD TIME FIDDLERS' ASSOCIATION FALL NEWSLETTER

Prince George Branch #1



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NEWSLETTER *Beth Bressette, Editor*

September 2021

WHAT'S COMING UP?

The question that's on everyone's minds - is our Fiddle Club ever going to be active again? When are we going to start having weekly jams, monthly dances and scheduled playouts?

It's been difficult to be shut down from our music for so long. Of course we can play our music in our homes, or in small gatherings, but we're all missing getting together as a club. There's nothing like the rousing sound of a large group of fiddles playing together. The Fiddle Club Board has continued to meet occasionally and plan for when the time comes that we can gather again, and recently met to plan an imminent opening of Jam Nights, with some modifications as required. At this point we are still trying to find a venue in which we can do this. ECRA is not open to renting to groups at this time, so we have a few other options that we are looking over. Before long I hope to be sending out a notification of the start-up of Jam Nights; however, we will continue to follow the ever-changing provincial guidelines.

Due to the continued ban on dancing in BC, our small Jam Nights will be more of a mid-floor acoustic circle jam, with all musicians (fiddles and backup) taking a turn at leading their favourite tune and others joining in as able, or learning new tunes. For the first 45 minutes or so we will play Beginner Tunes, and the latter time, more advanced. Because we are not playing for dancers, the tunes can be played slower at first, or we may stop and go over a part that requires more work or has difficult chords. This approach may help both fiddlers and backup to perfect our tunes. We will be wearing masks, as required, and will be spaced apart in sanitized chairs. Spectators are welcome, to a maximum of 50 people. To cover the rent, cost will be \$5 per person for all (children free with parents).

EXECUTIVE: Our club Executive is down by two members - Secretary and Board Member. Please consider if you would like to fill one of these spots - now, or at our AGM in January. Contact one of the executive if you want to help plan events and the future for our club!

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING – NOT A HECK OF A LOT!!

Some of our fiddlers took part in a three day workshop at the Newton Farm in late July with Gordon Stobbe and JJ Guy, who taught two levels of classes; Intermediate + Advanced. Fiddlers came from Smithers, Williams Lake, 150 Mile, McBride, and we wound up with a group payout at the Willow River Farmer's Market. It was an enjoyable few days.

Three of our members attended five weeks of lessons at the Conservatory in June with Holly Bull, who taught varieties of styles with Canadian Old Time, Bluegrass, Celtic and French Canadian flavours. Holly is away for the summer, but does plan to return to Prince George in the fall, when she hopes to frequent our jams whenever she can.

MEMBER NEWS

On July 17 we were saddened to lose one of our long-time members, Marguerite Mackenzie, at the age of 79. She had been ill for a number of months. Marguerite played keyboard and had an uncanny memory for the names of tunes and how they started (something fiddlers are not always good at). She was a Club member, with her husband Jim, for over 30 years and served as Secretary for 3 years. She and Jim had played together at Senior Homes, dances and community events literally hundreds of times over many years. Marguerite took club pictures for 15 years and created many of the beautiful photo albums. She enjoyed a career with children in local elementary schools - teaching for 32 years, and later in the libraries. Marguerite leaves behind her husband of 56 years, Jim, two children Gwyneth and Andrew, and one grandson, Corey.



One of our very earliest life members, John Ryser, is in hospital after an accident on his farm at Red Rock about 6 weeks ago. He was pinned alone under a heavy tire for a couple of days, and, as he's turning 90 in October, it's lucky that he's such a tough guy! I saw him in hospital 2 weeks ago and he really seemed to enjoy having company, so if you're able to go to see him on the third floor, pod C, he would probably greatly appreciate it (as you will likely be behind a mask, just let him know who you are). Maybe even play him a tune! John joined our club in about 1970 and looked after the Bar at our club dances for many years.

All the best to Old Time Fiddle Club Members for a nice autumn; let's hope for warm sunny days! Take care.

Beth Bressette