

B.C. OLD TIME FIDDLERS' ASSOCIATION WINTER NEWSLETTER

Prince George Branch #1



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Executive and Phone Numbers

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Board Members: Michelle Sims, Shane Smith, Breanne Palik, Elizabeth Eakin, Ron Kushniruk

NEWSLETTER *Beth Bressette, Editor*

Dec 2025

WHAT'S COMING UP?

CHRISTMAS JAM - TUES DEC 16

Come and celebrate **Christmas** with the Jammers at our last jam of 2025 by enjoying snacks and listening to, or playing/singing along with, fiddle tunes and Christmas songs. Please bring a goodie to share if you are so inclined, but if you don't have anything, come anyway! In lieu of our usual \$5 contribution we are asking everyone to bring food items or cash donation for the Salvation Army food hampers. It's happening 7 - 9 pm at the First Baptist Church, 5th and Harper St. Jam nights will resume 7 pm Tuesday, January 6.

WINTER DANCES - 4th SATURDAYS of JAN/FEB + MAR 27

Mark January 24 and February 28 on your calendar for Fiddle Club dances at 425 Brunswick St, 7 - 11 pm with prizes and ice cream treat included in the amazing door price of \$10 (kids and teens under 18 are free if with parents). Our March dance falls within the Jamboree weekend, so will be a different day of the week at a different venue - Friday March 27 at Knox Performance Centre - and everyone will be welcome, whether or not you are signed up for other Jamboree events.

JAMBOREE 2026 - MARCH 27 - 29

Plans are well underway for our 9th Annual Jamboree. This has always been a fantastic weekend of instruction, dancing, jamming and concert, and this year will be no exception! If you are a musician you will receive excellent instruction from 3 fiddle instructors and one guitar instructor, Clinton Pelletier. These gifted musicians are sure to present a fabulous concert on Saturday night, preceded by a set by our own fiddle club members. And the dance Friday night - keep the dates free! Volunteers needed and welcomed; contact a board member.

WHAT'S COMING UP? (continued)

AGM - JANUARY

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on a Sunday in January - date and venue will be confirmed shortly. For the last 57 years our club has had a tradition at AGM of getting together for a potluck dinner at 5 pm, followed by a meeting (about 6 - 7:30 pm) to review any new ventures and issues within the club and to elect a new executive. Please consider running for a position on the Board so you can share your ideas for direction and initiatives for our club - contact any current board member listed at the beginning of this newsletter. The Board generally meets by Zoom monthly. Everyone is welcome to attend the AGM, although only paid-up members can run for office or vote. Memberships will be available at the AGM.



Current Board, elected last AGM

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

PLAYOUTS IN THE COMMUNITY

Since the last newsletter our musicians have been busy, as usual, entertaining out in the community. Thanks to Shawnee, Doug, Michelle, Elizabeth, Richard, Beth, Breanne, Sandy, Chris, Amanda, Alex, Marge, Shane, Christine, Gianna, John Paul, Arielle and Terry for sharing your talents at one or more of the following events: July 1 Canada Day, Orchestra North Youth Dance Aug 4, Pops in the Park Sept 7, French Club Corn Roast Sept 13, Ferguson Lake picnic at Shane Lake Sept 21 and the Catholic Diocese Youth Dance Nov 5.

Thanks to Michelle, Elizabeth, Sandy, Beth, Richard and occasionally Tony for entertaining seniors in their residences almost weekly Sept - Dec at Gateway Complex Care and Assisted Living, Jubilee, Rainbow Day Program and Residential Care, Parkside and Riverbend (as well as for the Salvation Army Kettle at two different stores!). The music is so appreciated by the seniors in care who can't get out to community events.

Playout Coordinator Michelle Sims is doing a great job keeping us organized and out in the community. If you would like to be playing at care homes in the afternoons or at other events in the City anytime, call Michelle at 250 301-1101. We'd love to include you!

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING (continued)

CELTIC CHRISTMAS CONCERT Dec 13

Twenty-seven of our musicians had the opportunity to be involved in an amazing concert on Sat Dec 13, and were able to feel the excitement of receiving standing ovations from two sold-out crowds! It was a combined concert under the direction of Roxi Dykstra, with the PG Symphony Youth Orchestra (Roxi, Director), Ensemble Classical Celtica (7 professional players and instructors), Twasome Highland Troupe (director Tina Sidorov), piper Marvin Hawke, PG Conservatory of Music 6 Harps Ensemble and US! The PG Old Time Fiddlers did our own tunes and combined tunes. Thea did a fabulous job of coaching us and getting us together for multiple practises, and Shawnee also 'shone' by including and coaching ten of her students who are taking the group beginner fiddle lessons each Tuesday. She and Thea arranged drone parts for beginners that complemented the melody lines played by the more experienced fiddlers. Saturday was a long 9 hr day with two shows and warm-ups, but that was okay because we enjoyed pizza between shows (yum)! The concert was truly a remarkable experience for all of us who took part.

SUMMER/FALL TRIPS

A number of our musicians enjoyed fiddle instruction and fun times at the BC Fiddle Treat at Gavin Lake during the last weekend in July, and others enjoyed local group lessons and concert with Gordon Stobbe and JJ Guy the week before.

Members Elizabeth, Michelle, Beth, Shawnee, Amanda, Thea, Laurel and Bev, as well as a group from the Quesnel club attended the Canadian Grand Masters (CGM) Fiddle Competition in Kamloops the weekend of August 22-23, and were treated to many fiddlers from across Canada who excelled in their instrument, including Adam Johnson from Quesnel. The winner was Max Francis, a youth from Victoria.

MEMBER NEWS

AWARDS

The CGM Fiddle Association *Fiddle Hall of Honour* inducted 14 new members in 2025, and interestingly seven of them were from Prince George and had been members of Branch #1 at one time. Most were awarded posthumously as they've passed away; those include Bob Montgomery, Mike St Germain, Len Sexsmith, Max Sexsmith, Charlotte Lapp, and Ruth Townsend (formerly St Germain). Jean Gelinis, who is still active in the Quesnel club was also honoured as an Inductee. The only Inductee into the Hall of Honour from Branch #1 *still living* was our own Jim Dow! Congratulations, Jim.



MEMBER NEWS (continued)



Cy Fortin
23Feb/39-13Oct/25

Sadly, one of our previously active members and presidents has passed away. Cy attended every jam and dance, and could often be heard singing and playing his guitar at senior residences, the French Club and many other playouts. He loved to sing 'The French Song' and fiddle tune 'The Old Man and the Old Woman,' in French, of course. He was known to often tell a good joke or play a prank. Cy and Irene were members of Branch #1 for over 25 years, and each served 2 years on the board. Cy was president of Branch #1 for 3 years, 1997 - 99. He taught welding at CNC, and after work and music he loved to hike, paddle and camp in BC's wilderness. Cy is survived by Irene, his wife of 60 years, two daughters, four grandchildren, and many friends.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Membership renewals were due September 1, 2025. If you've forgotten to renew, please contact membership coordinator Elizabeth Eakin at (250)981-6092, or in her absence, treasurer Beth Bressette. Membership fees are extremely modest compared to many other non-profits, and your \$16 for adults can be e-transferred to pgfiddlers@gmail.com. It would be great to have all renewals in by the New Year! Membership entitles you to receive this newsletter and notices of upcoming events, and we're working at developing further incentives!

From the Board - **A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS** and **HAPPY NEW YEAR** to all of you!

Beth Bressette, Editor