

Music Afternoon in Wentworth: Come On Over



Willett Stevenson plays the fiddle at a recent Music Afternoon held at the Wentworth Recreation Centre. (Hope Bridgewater Photo)

By Hope Bridgewater

Old Time Down East Fiddle is featured at Wentworth Music Afternoon on the last Sunday of each month (except December) and is located at the Wentworth Recreation Centre beginning at 1:30 p.m. The Old Time Down East Fiddle music is traditional in this part of Nova Scotia since Scotch, Irish, and English settlers brought the fiddle tunes with them starting in the late 1700's. Mingled with these tunes now are Acadian, German and American tunes. This Down East fiddle music is oriented towards dancing, and many volunteer musicians come to give of their time to share their love of this musical tradition to a grateful audience who usually dance free style to waltzes, polkas, hop-polkas and fox-trots with the occasional square dance or a waltz quadrille thrown in. Many of the tunes performed go back in history, but beginning with electronic media, a revival of this Old Time music has begun and now new tunes are being composed and notated in Tune Books, but still keeping to the basic style of Down East music. An example of this is "Sherry's Waltz," composed by fiddler Dave Bagnell, who is the Stage and Floor Manager at the Wentworth Sunday Music Afternoon.

Bagnell, who lives in Truro, published a book in 2011 of traditional and modern fiddle music titled Down East Fiddle Tunes from Both Sides of the Cobequid Mountain Range. He gives credit about assistance with his research to well known fiddler Lloyd

Tattrie, who lives in Tatamagouche and is now aged 100 years.

With Bagnell living on one side of the Cobequid Mountain Range and Tattrie living on the other side, Bagnell tells in his book's introduction how their research works: "On most days Lloyd [Tattrie] will call his friend, Dave Bagnell, and will play Dave a fiddle tune or two over the phone to see if David knows the tune. Dave will then record the fiddle tune and will transcribe it using a software program and is able to print the sheet music for the tunes."

In this way, both Tattrie and Bagnell, working on separate sides of the Cobequid Mountain Range, are able to make sure that certain traditional tunes are not being lost and can be passed down to future generations. An example of one tune being saved by Tattrie is at the footnote of the sheet music in Bagnell's book: "Lloyd Tattrie heard Dave Langille of Brule play this tune possibly 80 years ago." This particular tune is listed as author unknown, but arranged by memory and still played by Tattrie under the name "Dave Langille's March."

In his book, Bagnell also gives credit to Willett Stevenson for sharing his knowledge about tunes for the book.

Another fiddler and author who usually comes to the Music Afternoon is Robert Taylor who wrote a book called Beyond the Music and mentions in his book the following musicians who have played at the Wentworth

Music Afternoons: Al McVicar, Nick Nicholson, Ivan "Royal" Hicks, Budd Gavel, Cye Steele, Dave Buckler, Arden Hayman, Willett Stevenson, Bob Watters, Mel MacPhee, Susie Eisan, Stan Gray, Ron Dares, Jack Sibley, Herman MacKeen, John MacLellan, Keith MacLellan, Owen Davis, and Glendon Stevens.

Taylor sums up the truth eloquently about Down East music: "The sound will often take you to a world all your own. It is a driving force. It has great healing powers. It can, and will, change your life...find time to help others..."

A brief comment about four people listed above is apt at this time. Lloyd Tattrie was born on December 13, 1912, took fiddle lessons from Norman MacBurnie at the age of 11. When older, he often played at local dances from 8 p.m. until 5 a.m. at a wage of 12 or 15 cents per dance and at times no payment at all. When Tattrie needed rosin for his bow, he would often go to the woods for a good piece of hard spruce gum and use it to rosin his fiddle bow. Dave Bagnell has been playing the violin since the age of five, received a college education in music, keeps to the tradition of Down East music, plays both fiddle and saxophone, teaches students, volunteers his musical talents at community gatherings, is the lead member of the Cobequid Mountain Fiddlers, composes Down East music, an author and great supporter of the Old Time Fiddle tradition, and Stage and Floor Manager at the Wentworth Music Afternoon.

Another fiddler and author, Robert Taylor grew up in Musquodoboit Valley and as a teenager, he used to whistle all the time, usually Old Time fiddle tunes. Later, he worked at Canada Post for 33 years. He took his first violin lesson at age 45 from Bill Guest in Dartmouth. His book, Beyond the Music, tells in detail the story of The Last Chance Band and its philosophy: "keep [tunes] simple and above all learn to play good dance music...Music is the lifeblood of all of us."

Taylor in his book tells about the Wentworth Music Afternoon: "Playing in Wentworth has always been

one of my personal favourites. There is a great hall there...They have a house band there and fiddlers come from all over to take part...When I first started playing there, I was very nervous as there were so many good fiddlers. I soon learned, however, I could hold my own if I kept the music simple...They have a wonderful facility and the people really enjoy the dancing."

Coming to Willett Stevenson, it is interesting to know that at seven or eight years of age, he travelled by himself for a weekly violin lesson from Hopewell, Pictou County, to New Glasgow on the daily Jitney, a local train which transported miners who worked at the coal mine in Stellarton and who lived between Hopewell and New Glasgow.

As an adult, Stevenson remembers playing with fiddler Lloyd Tattrie and Betty Tattrie on guitar. Stevenson often plays at community events.

Come on over and have fun dancing and listening to the Down East music. Everyone is asked to bring a lunch which is put together in the kitchen by volunteer staff in order to make a potluck meal at 4 p.m.

A volunteer donation is requested at the door and this helps fund the event, keeping the large hardwood floor in good condition for dancing.

THE SHIP'S LOG: August Performances Selling Fast

By Gleneida Canning

Hello from the Ship's Company Theatre! What a great season it has been so far for the Ship's Company. Our run with Diligent River Daughter was wonderful, the numbers were great and people loved the show. Our concert series has also been great thus far and we expect it to continue as we present the best of musical acts for your listening pleasure. Fiddles & Feet, The Divorcees and David Myles are all going to perform on the Ship's Stage in August. Tickets are already going fast for some of these shows, so don't wait too long to book yours.

Once again we are fortunate to have a great crew working for us this year to ensure that everything runs ship-shape. As we are wrapping up one show, we are preparing for another World Premiere that we are very excited about. Making Contact is a wonderful comedy written by Charlie Rhindress and Directed by Natasha MacLellan. It's the story of Shirley, who once

worked for NASA and how she returns home to Amherst Nova Scotia and hires a contractor to build a UFO landing pad in her back yard. Making Contact stars Wally MacKinnon and Sherry Smith, both are familiar to Parrsboro having been here last summer appearing in The Maritime Way of Life, also written by Charlie Rhindress.

We have a great line up in store for you including Squid, on August 1 and 2 and a Hank Williams Tribute show by Ryan Cook on September 27, 28 and 29. On September 21 we present for kids of all ages, Physical Comedy 101/ Fool School with Christian Murray, a great show for the little folk.

Besides our regular season of theatre and music, we are also planning our Golf Tournament, and Fall Dinner, if you are interested in learning more about any of our events or shows please go to our website, www.shipscompany.com or call 254-2003 for more information.

We hope to see you at the Ship!

The Deadline for the September issue of
Shoreline
Journal is August 20

Scotia Metal Products Ltd

Metal Roofing & Siding

Made in Nova Scotia

Many Colours to choose from

Visit our showroom at

188 Joseph Zatzman Drive Dartmouth

902-468-7217

www.scotiametal.ca

Umbrella Walk to be Repeated September 21ST

By Noreen Lewis

The annual umbrella Relay Walk of the Cobequid Pastoral Charge will be held on Saturday, September 21, 2013. It will start at 9:00 am going in both directions at 2 Km intervals from Portapique to Lower Five Islands.

Area residents are encouraged to participate as an individual or a form a team or two or four people to join in the fun of walking only. Prizes of \$100.00 for 1st and \$50 for second top individual sponsor collec-

tion. A trophy will be presented to the top team sponsor collection.

To register as an individual or team and obtain a sponsor sheet contact: Bass River, Darlene Smith, 647-2817; Five Islands, Dorothy Carson, 254-3759 and Economy, Carole Dibbon, 647-2022. Please register by August 10, 2013.

Refreshments will follow the walk at Economy United Church. Everyone welcome. Proceeds to the Cobequid Pastoral Charge of the United Church of Canada.

AUGUST ~~JULY~~ SALE

CONTINUES AT OUR NEW LOCATION

(Sale pricing applies to all Pre-Made shirts)

Short & long sleeve T-shirts, Hoodies, & Caps.

Band, musician, Big Bang Theory, The Walking Dead, Duck Dynasty, Star Wars, Game of Thrones, Horse, Dog, Farming and Automotive themes.

Also instock: High Visibility Reflective Safetywear.

tshirtsrus.ca

914 Prince St. Downtown Truro (across from A.J. Walker building)

890-9850 tshirtsrus@hotmail.ca

OPEN: 9-5 Monday to Saturday Closed Sunday