

# 25 Years of Fiddling

ORIGINAL MICHIGAN FIDDLERS



1976-2001





## ALL FIDDLERS ON STAGE...

It is an amazing thing to hear 35 - 50 fiddlers all playing the same tune at the same time. No two play it alike and yet overall it is melodic and pleasing to the ear!



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A special THANKS to the Board of Directors for approving the book to be written and printed, to those who have helped in any way by taking photos, loaning photos, sending the biographies, It took ALL of you to make this 2nd book of the OMFA Musicians possible.

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## THE O.M.F.A. PURPOSE

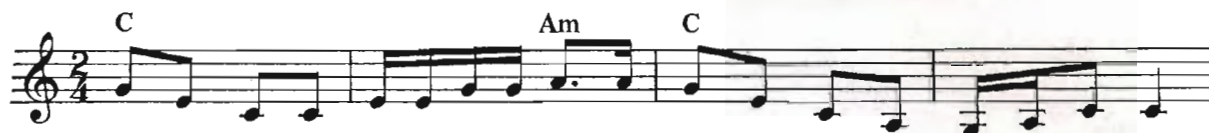
The purpose of the OMFA is ...

**TO** encourage, co-ordinate and bring about a greater public interest in fiddle music activities throughout the State of Michigan

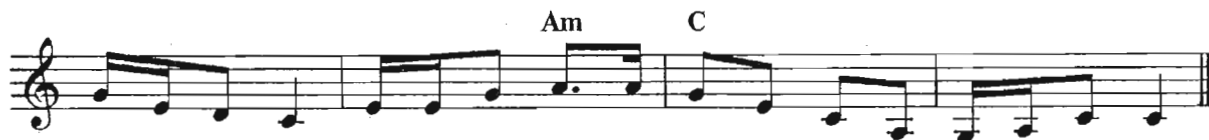
**TO** sponsor the observance of fiddle music 'jamborees' for the citizens of the State of Michigan. The theme of these events is fiddlers and other musicians playing old time square dance tunes, waltzs, two-steps, etc of years past.

**TO** foster and encourage the collection and preservation of fiddle music and to bring about a greater knowledge and appreciation of our musical history.

## CUMBERLAND GAP



Lay down boys and take a lit-tle nap, We're all goin' down to Cum-ber-land Gap.



Cum-ber-land Gap, Cum-ber-land Gap, We're all goin' down to Cum-ber-land Gap.

## FOREWARD

May 29, 1976 was a very important day for those in Michigan who love good fiddle music and wanted to keep the old time fiddle tunes alive, as well as the old fashioned square dancing.,

Michigan was fortunate to have Paul Gifford and Bill White, along with some others, who made that 1st jamboree happen in Sheridan on May 29, 1976. These two young men were involved with the Original Dulcimer Players Club, as Paul was secretary he had a list of musicians. A few contacts we made and the jamboree was ready to be held.

The rest is history. 25 years and 350 jamborees later, the Original Michigan Fiddle Assoc. is still going strong. With nearly 400 members, 12 fiddle jamborees are held per year, with good attendances.

Fiddle music is seldom wrote down, but fiddlers learn it one from another and pass it along to the next generation. Each fiddler has his own style, and way to play a tune. No two fiddlers play the same tune in the same way, and yet when a group if fiddlers play, it all blends together as though written by a director.

Our music has always been a very important part of our lives here in Michigan. Fiddle music can make you clap your hands, tap your toes, dance, sing, or forget your troubles for a while. What a pleasant way to spend a Saturday afternoon. Listening to good fiddle music, along with banjos, guitars, and other instruments. There is no smoking, no drinking, just good clean fun!

The fiddle is small and lightweight to carry. It travels well. Yet it brings forth some lively music to enjoy. In the past it has helped relax people after barn raisings, harvesting of crops, parties for birthdays, weddings, or any reason for having a few friends together.

Fiddling goes with square dancing like toast goes with eggs. The callers enjoy calling to live music. The dancers enjoy dancing to live music, when a fiddle is played. Often on the old TV western movies you see the parties and the dancing to the fiddle of Buffalo Gals, Skip to My Lou, Soldiers Joy, Golden Slippers and so many more.

Fiddle music means people are having fun!

*Seegene Haester*

## TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF OMFA HISTORY

Paul Gifford basically set up the format of the fiddle jamborees. He had been to several fiddle events, including Canada, where it was mostly contests. He wanted something for Michigan, to go and have fun. He put his ideas to work and came up with Fiddle Jamborees as we know them today.

Paul served as Secretary to the ODPC, (Original Dulcimer Players Club and so he had a list of fiddlers as well as other musicians. He made a list, and contacted them for a meeting. This was in 1976. About 20 fiddlers showed up to this meeting.

Bob Fleck & Jane Allison were friends of Paul's. They were planning to make a movie about music. Ken Staines was also involved. They met at Sheridan.

Those involved were Paul Gifford, Ken Staines, Bob Fleck, Jane Allison, Gene & Esther Cox.

The first fiddle jamboree was held May 29, 1976 at the Sheridan High School. The fiddlers were : Frank Mattison, Cloise & Harley Sinclair, Stewart Carmichael, Matt Brown Sr & Jr, Ken Ellsworth, Bill White, Bill Bigford, Bob Spinner, Ralph Schuster, Bill Webster, Merritt Olson, Fred Elton, Jim Herald, Gene Belgraph, and a few others. Paul Gifford was the MC.

Other jamborees that year were held at Elk Rapids on October 16, hosted by Bob Spinner, Hillman on November 20, hosted by Nellie Eisner, then January 29, 1977 to Harbor Springs, this was hosted by Dan and Sherrie Johnston, February 19, 1977 to Alma, hosted by Ken Ellsworth.

1877 and 1978 saw fiddle jamborees at Aura, Webberville, Romeo, Port Hope, Berrien Springs, and Harrietta.

Bob & Jane Fleck, Paul Gifford, and Bill White formed the core of the founding of the OMFA at the end of 1976. Although there were no official officers, Bob Fleck was usually referred to as the President or spokesman of the group.

Most of the OMFA jamborees were held in small towns. The turn out of listeners as well as musicians was good. The people were enjoying the comraderie the jamborees made possible. The musicians enjoyed the jamming, the chance to play their 3 tunes in front of an audience that appreciated them. The audience found a chance to enjoy good music, in a smoke free environment, the jamborees were family orientated.

Twenty-five years of fiddle jamborees have seen the organization grow to 400 members. In 2001 there were 12 jamborees held by the OMFA.

All were well attended by both musicians and listeners. The format is basically the same as Paul Gifford set up back in 1976.



**THE ORIGINAL MICHIGAN FIDDLERS**

**PAUL GIFFORD AND BILL WHITE**





## A VOICE FROM THE PAST...

While Stewart & Lulu Carmichael have been gone from us for several years, many of you either knew him or have heard about him over the years. He was at the original fiddlers jamboree held at Sheridan in 1976, and is perhaps one of the few items remaining from any one who was there that important day. I felt it should be shared as part of the history pages. This was passed to me, I am not sure from who, but it is written by Stewart Carmichael.

"It was in the early part of the summer of '76, not 1977 but 1976, that 3 young lads from Detroit - Bill White, Paul Gifford and Bob Fleck - drove up to our farm in a battered up old station wagon. They asked if I played old jigs, reels, etc. and I said I knew a few. I asked them if they had brought their instruments with them and they said they had. So they brought them in and we forgot about the farm work that afternoon. We had quite a session of music! We talked about other old time fiddlers and they suggested we have a get-together somewhere with other fiddlers. As a result a little later we had our first fiddlers meeting at Sheridan, Michigan. I don't remember the exact date of this meeting, but I know it was before July as at that meeting Fred Stoolmaker asked Lulu and I to play at Crystal Lake for their Fourth of July Celebrations. I don't remember who all the fiddlers were who were there that day, but there were thirteen of us. Bob had us form a circle and we played "The Irish Washerwoman" together. One would stand before the mike and play the piece one over and then step aside and the next one would play it and step aside for the next player until all had played. Lulu had our tape recorder with her and she taped some of the playing. Byard Stevens took this tape and made another tape, so there are 2 of these tapes. Bob and Jane took some pictures that day and they gave Lulu and I two of them. One shows Frank Mattison playing and the other shows me playing. Others in the pictures are Bob Gifford, the Sinclair Brothers, Jane Allison and Ken Staines on the banjo on which he was an expert.

As I remember it was later that summer we met at Harbor Springs. We stayed overnight at a motel and it was there we met Danny Johnston and Pete Keller. Bob and Jane stayed with Danny and his wife. There was a very nice crowd there and some very good fiddlers too.

The next fiddlers meeting was that April at Webberville. I remembered that Ken Ellsworth and his wife were there, along with several other fiddlers. Bob and Jane wanted Lulu and I to stay overnight with them, but we couldn't as we had to go to Grand Rapids the next day to see our grand-daughter who was in the hospital there. She came home a few days later on the sixth of May...my birthday. That is how I remember when it was.

## A VOICE FROM THE PAST...

At one of our business meetings at Omer we took those pictures with us and they were passed around so all could see them. We still have them here but we feel they should go to Rosemary Raber so they can be put into the History of OMFA that she is preparing for the club.

From that time on the crowds have grown larger and larger until now it takes a large hall to accomodate the many people who come to enjoy the music. What a wonderful organization this OMFA has become! One meets so many nice folks, each one nicer than the other. What wonderful times we have had and just know it will continue long after we have passed away!

Friendships and Memories...Something money can not buy!  
God Bless You All!

Stewart and Lulu Carmichael

I have no idea when the Carmichaels wrote this, but such a piece of history needs to be recorded some place. His daughter, Edna Johnson, is now taking up the fiddle and atteding jamborees to continue the legacy of her dad. Her biography is in this book also.

That first jamboree was held on May 29, 1976. Those in attendance were: Stewart Carmichael, Frank Mattison, Danny Johnston, Bill White, Bob Fleck, Jane Allison, Cloise and Harley Sinclair, Matt Brown Sr., and Jr., Fred Elton, Jim Herald, Ken Ellsworth, Bob Spinner, Merritt Olsen, Bill Webster, Jim Herald, Gene Belgraph, and Paul Gifford was the emcee as well as playing. This includes fiddlers and musicians.

Stewart and Lulu were both born in Mecosta County, Chippewa Township, Michigan. Stewart took up fiddle as well as the old pump organ at the age of 7 and played his first dance at age 13. When he was 23 he took up the dulcimer, I am assuming this was the hammer dulcimer. Stewart played by ear. Lulu played piano. After they were married they continued to play at dances wherever they were asked. Lulu on piano, Stewart on fiddle. If caller failed to show, Stewart would also call the square dances as he fiddled.

Stewart refers to the jamboree held at Webberville, I believe this is the jamboree Bob Murphy refers to in his biography, as being his first jamoree.

## CELEBRATION OF 25 YEARS

April 21, 2001 th OMFA celebrated 25 years of fiddling around Michigan. Byard Stevens put together a half hour program to honor those 25 years. This was held at the Grand Rapids jamboree.

All Fiddlers to the stage was announced at 3:00 p.m. Much as those early jamborees 25 years ago were opened. Paul Gifford was on hand to emcee the program, as he had done May 29, 1976.

while the fiddlers gathered on stage, Paul gave a brief history of the OMFA and the first jamboree. Then the fiddlers played 2 tunes.

Danny Johnston was called on the honor Clair Stevens, and LaReine Steven s who had served OMFA as President for 17 of the 25 years. Clair now lives in Boise, Idaho. Danny played "Happy Acre Polka". Danny joined OMFA at it's beginning, and hosted the third jamboree at Harbor Springs.

Edna Johnston played here dad's fiddle. She played "Old Fashioned Two-Step". Her dad was Stewart Carmichael, who attended the first OMFA jamboree held at Sheridan.

Judy DeGroot played one of her dad's favorite tunes on her dad's fiddle, "The Dill Pickle Rag". She is the daughter of Les Raber. I do not have the date but I do know he was a member since the early days.

Carleen Johnson was next. She played her grandad's fiddle and played "Stolen Sweets". Her grandad was Frank Mattison who attended that first jamboree on May 29, 1976.

Paul Gifford played "Jumpin Toochace" on the fiddle.

Bill White played a French Canadian tune on the hammered dulcimer. (The hammered dulcimer festival is where the idea for th fiddle jamboree was born.)

Bob Murphy told of his first jamboree. It was Webberville in 1977...He played the 2 tunes he played there "My Silver Bells" and "Black Hawk Waltz".

Paul mentioned that Clarence Ewing, who was playing back up, had attended the third jamboree of the OMFA which was held at Hillman.

Clarence has attended ever since.

Paul Closed the program.

There were 38 fiddlers there to help with the celebration. Their ages were from 10-97. There was a large attendance for the jamboree. The Grand Rapids jamboree has been held for 21 years. This is sponsored by Joan and Doyle and the North wood Senior Citizens. Byard Wtevens has also been actively involved with the jamboree.



Carleen Johnson granddaughter of Frank Mattison



Judy DeGroot Daughter of Les Raber

# HAPPY 25th ANNIVERSARY

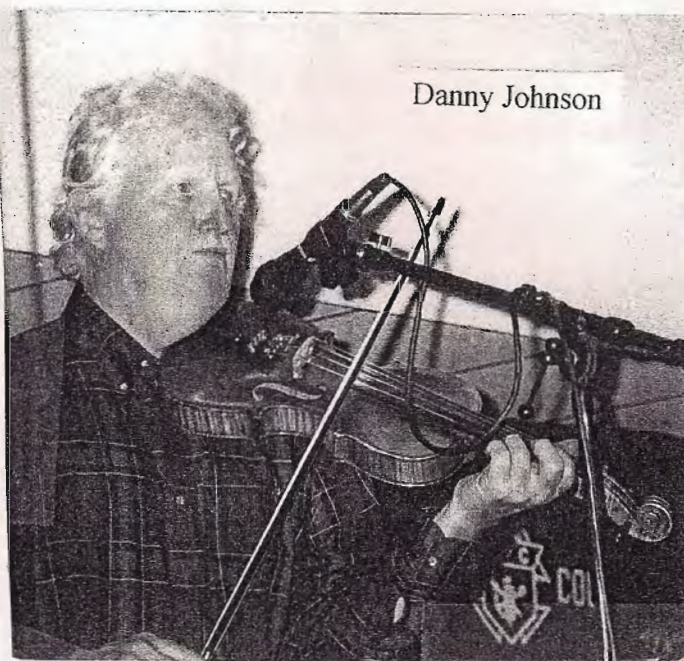


Paul Gifford

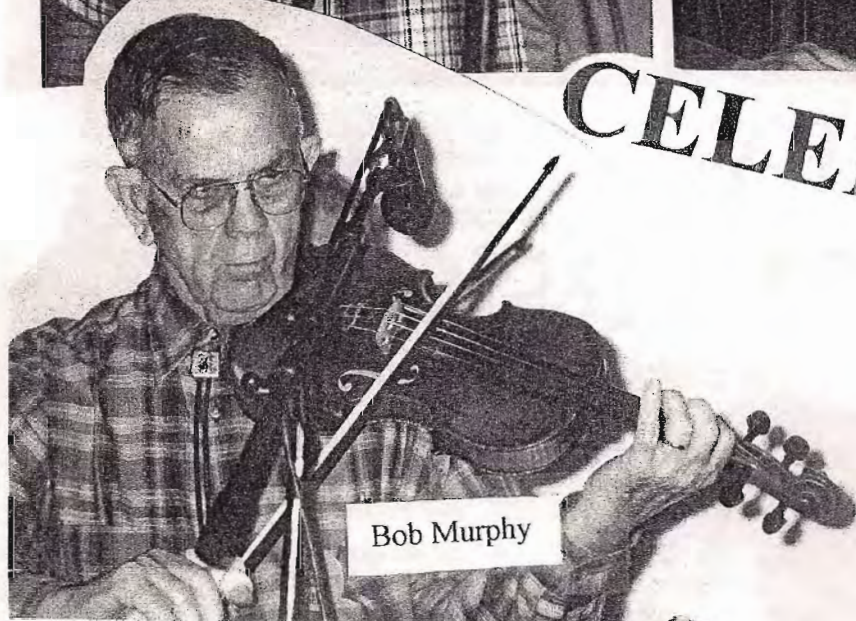
Edna Johnson Daughter of Stewart Carmichael



Danny Johnson



# CELEBRATING



Bob Murphy



Bill White

# 25 YEARS

## VOLUNTEERS ARE GREAT!!!

Our OMFA volunteers are the best! If it was not for the volunteers who sponsor the jamborees, accept an office, help with setting up and taking down equipment, hauling the equipment, setting at the front table signing in the fiddlers, callers and musicians those who assist in any way at the front table...your duties are many, those of you who are just there to call on if needed, there would be no jamborees. It does take a lot of people to put on the jamborees, many whose names are never known. The O.M.F.A. Thanks all of you!

\*\*\*\*\*

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2001

President .....	Byard Stevens	Region 5
Vice-President .....	Chuck George	Region 5
Secretary .....	Londa Howe	Region 5
Treasurer .....	Sandy Jones	Region 5
Directors .....	Bob Murphy	Region 6
	Ed Deming	Region 5
	Bill Sparrow	Region 3
	Caryl Schaefer	Region 5
	Lou Califf	Region 2
Newsletter Editor .....	Suzanne Hauter	Region 4
Newsletter Helper .....	Gene Hauter	Region 4



# MEET THE OMFA OFFICERS

## PRESIDENT

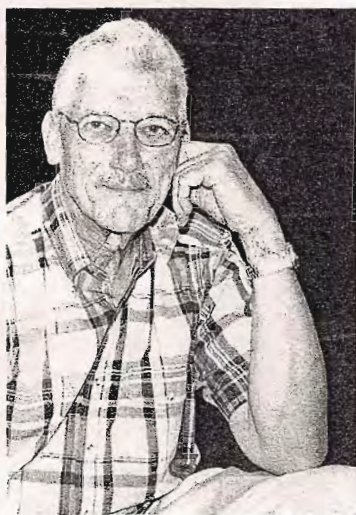


Byard Stevens has been our President since 2000. He has made the jamborees interesting, fun, and one never knows what is coming next. He may stop the fiddlers and announce 'SQUARE 'EM UP' 4 couples take their positions in a square and Byard will call a square dance. Or you may find Byard and Lorraine dancing across the front of the audience, especially to Sandy's 'Duralls Shuffle' better known as the 'Byard and Lorraine Shuffle'. If your having an anniversary Byard often sings "When The Old Wedding Ring Was New"

Byard & Lorraine have been involved in the OMFA since 1979. They have seen many changes over the years, as the organization has grown. Byard and Lorraine have started many of the jamborees we attend today. They helped in starting Coral, Grand Rapids, and the Walloon Lake campout weekend. They also were very active during 1981 - 1983 as they held jamborees in several areas; 1981: Sydney & Stanwood. 1982: Evert, Grand Rapids, Grant & Trufant. Also in 1982, he held a fiddle jamboree on the Lowell Showboat! 1983: Sparta & Cedar Springs.

Lorraine plays piano for a lot of the fiddlers. The OMFA appreciates both of them!

## VICE-PRESIDENT



Chuck George of Muskegon has served as Vice President since 2000. Prior to that he served as Director for 2 years.

Chuck is also a very good fiddler.

Chuck has been an asset to the board, bringing new ideas and thoughts on various items. He has helped a lot with the electronics. Both in purchasing of needed equipment as well as setting up the sound system for the jamborees.

## SECRETARY

Londa Howe has served as Secretary for the OMFA since 1999 and has agreed to a 2nd term for the next 2 years. Londa is kept busy helping her husband Elon with his fiddle travels, but they find time to attend most of the jamborees.

Londa has put the records on the computer and eliminated a lot of paper work, making the job of Secretary a little easier.

Londa plays piano for some of the fiddlers as well.

## TREASURER



Sandy Jones has served as Treasurer since 1998. She has put all the records on computer which makes the job much easier. She teaches computer at the Morley-Stanwood schools.

Sandy has also done a lot of the photography for this book. She has served on the committee for planning this book.

Sandy is a very busy person, especially with her music. She plays fiddle, guitar and piano. She holds a Friday night jam in her Music House. She is always in demand as back up musician for the fiddlers at the jamborees.

Sandy also sponsors the Morley Jamboree along with Ed Deming and Elon and Londa Howe.

She is always ready to play music or assist others in learning. She is a real asset to the OMFA in so many ways, too many to list. She is always there when called upon to do something. She attends all the jamborees.

Byard is always giving her a bad time about the funds and paying bills, but Sandy always has an answer ready for him!



## DIRECTORS



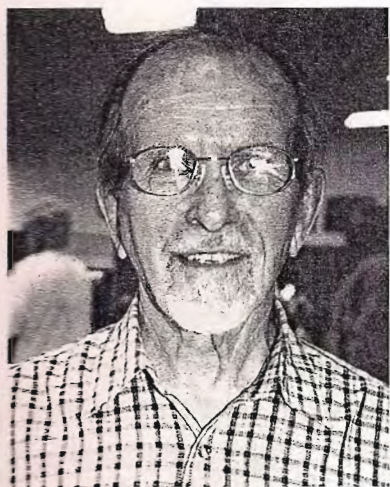
Caryl Schafer of Morley has served 1 year as a Director, and this year has accepted the nomination to run for Vice-President. Caryl is very serious about the future of OMFA. He wants to see the organization continue to grow as it has been doing in the past. Caryl is a fiddler and attends most of the jamborees. he also attends Sandy's Friday night jams. he is a real asset to the OMFA.



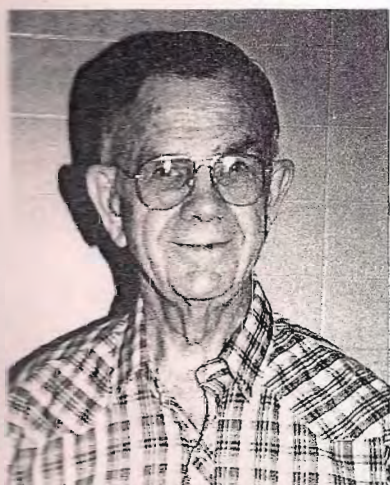
Lou Califf has served as Director for 1 year. Has agreed to accept the nomination for another term of 3 years. Lou is from Boyne City. Lou is very dedicated to the OMFA and seeing it grow. Lou fiddles, and plays guitar.



Ed Deming is from Big Rapids. Ed has served on the board since 1996. Ed fiddles, plays bass fiddle, a little guitar. Ed helps sponsor the Morley Jamboree with Sandy Jones.



Bill Sparrow was elected to the Board of Directors in 2000. Bill is an excellent fiddler, who has played since age 6. He also plays banjo, guitar, and saxophone. Bill spends his winters playing in Florida. Whenever there are 2 or 3 musicians gathered together, you can count on Bill being there too!



Bob Murphy has served on the OMFA Board of Directors since 1996. Bob is an excellent fiddler, and has played fiddle since age 7. Also plays bass fiddle. Bob loves the OMFA and wants to see it continue growing. Bob is from Lansing. Bob and his wife Margaret, were editors of the newsletter. Served as Director 1981, then as secretary from 1982 to 1985.



### **JR. DIRECTOR**

Chad Habermehl has served as Jr Director for the past several years. He is now attending college in the U.P. Chad is an excellent fiddler and we miss him attending jamborees.

## NEWSLETTER EDITOR



Suzanne Hauter of Farwell took over the role of Editor of the newsletter in 1996. Prior to that the newsletter had come out yearly and was mainly a schedule of jamborees. When I took it over, it was made a quarterly newsletter with issues coming out February, May, August, and November. I love to write and I enjoy writing the newsletter.

When I was very little, I spent time with my grandparents, who were involved with the Berlin Center Grange, Ionia, Michigan. Grandpa used to call the square dances. Cousins played fiddle and piano for these dances. Perhaps this is where my love for old time fiddle music was born. Over the years I didn't get to hear much fiddle music.

Then at Harrison, Bill Carr was putting on fiddle jamborees. I went to several, not realizing that some of them were OMFA. Later, I began going to the Clare Country Jamborees, and was planning to retire in April of 1995, when I was at a jamboree and found a schedule...I didn't realize it then but I picked up schedules for OMFA and MFA. Thinking they were the same, I sent dues to MFA. The OMFA was 19 years old and I had never heard of it! (or the MFA)

I attended my 1st fiddle jamboree at Onaway in 1995 and discovered there were 2 organizations and so I joined the OMFA. I love the northern, small town jamborees.

My husband loves the old time fiddling also. As I babysat my grandson, Soren then 4 yrs old, he also went to the jamborees. You can read his story on another page, but through our taking him, he is now starting his 3rd year of fiddling.

Gene helps with the mailing of the newsletter. After written, Gene and I take it to the printer, and come home, fold, address, close, and stamp it. He then takes it to the post office.

I felt the OMFA needed a new biography book, and so I volunteered to help write it. As it turned out, I did write it. But I have enjoyed every minute of it.

I have met some great people through the OMFA, it is such a friendly organization, and everybody seems like part of the family. The OMFA is the GREATEST!

*From the President...*

## BYARD STEVENS

Twenty-five years ago, the Original Michigan Fiddlers Asso. Was started by a few interested people to keep the old time fiddle music going. Naming some: Bob & Jane Flick, Bill White, Paul Gifford, Stewart Carmichael, Bob Murphy, Danny Johnston and several others.

These persons wanted to keep the old time square and round dance music from dying. The Original Michigan Fiddlers Asso. was formed and it has grown to what you see and hear today. Currently there are over 400 members.

The first jamboree that Lorraine and I attended was at Fremont in June of 1978. We met Stewart & Lulu Carmichael, their daughter, June and her husband, Maurice Carey, Frank & Erma Mattison and their daughter, Frances Geiger. We have followed the jamborees ever since.

The jamborees are like a family reunion. If one of the family is ill, or a death, the family is remembered with a card.

We need to do more work to get the young people interested, that's the most difficult part.



## DEDICATION TO FIDDLERS THAT HAVE GONE ON TO PLAY IN GOD'S HEAVENLY FIDDLE BAND...

In 25 years, the OMFA has lost too many excellent fiddlers . I do not have all the names, although I could name several. However, for fear of hurting someone by omitting a name, I will not try to mention them all. There are just too many. But I do want to dedicate two poems I found to those who have gone on to play in God's Heavenly Fiddle Band.

### SINCE YOU'VE GONE

The sun isn't as bright  
As it was yesterday  
Something is surely missing  
Since you went away  
Every Jamboree I go  
Expecting to see you there.

You've left us many precious memories  
Of times and music shared  
But things will never be the same  
Now that you are not there  
To share them with us  
Something is missing.

While we know you're playing  
In a Heavenly Band now  
Something is gone from here  
That can't be repeated  
The memories, music, friendship  
It will ALL be sadly missed  
Since you've gone.

*author unknown*

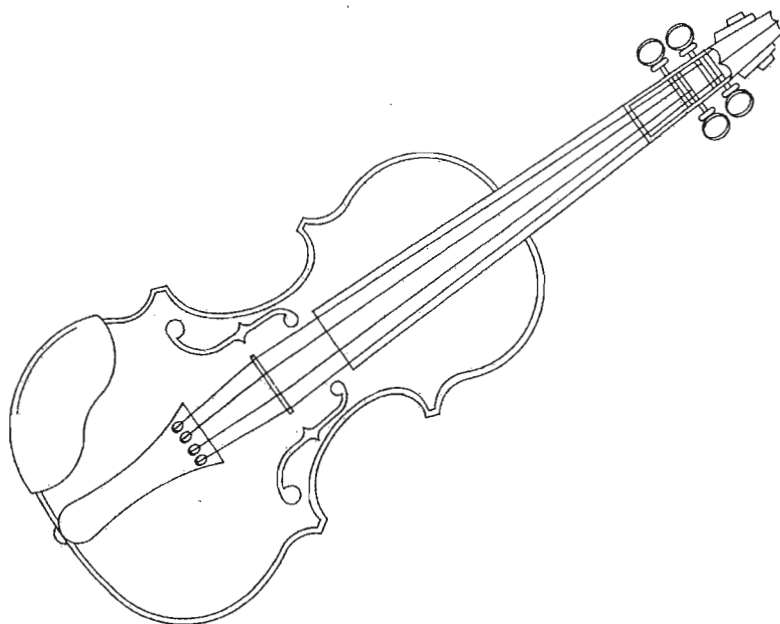
# THE SILENT FIDDLE

*Author Unknown*

Tonight an old fiddle hangs silently on the wall  
It isn't being played much any more, hardly at all  
For the man who always played it has passed on, yes, he is gone  
But the memories of his music lingers on.

If a fiddle could talk, I'm sure this one would say,  
"It's lonesome tonight, since the Master is gone away,  
But I recall the good times that we shared  
When we laughed and sang and sometimes cried, as we played"

Now God asked that we Praise Him with our music and song  
So tonight I know that he is up there playing with some  
Heavenly throng  
On earth tonight, the fiddle stands, waiting for the call  
Somewhere a silent fiddle adorns the wall.



**REGION 5:**

- Ionia**
- Kent**
- Lake**
- Mason**
- Mecosta**
- Montcalm**
- Muslegon**
- Newaygo**
- Oceana**
- Osceola**
- Ottawa**

**REGION 7:**

- Livingston**
- Lenawee**
- Macomb**
- Monroe**
- Oakland**
- Washtenaw**
- Waume**

**REGION 6:**

- Allegan**
- Barry**
- Berrien**
- Branch**
- Calhoun**
- Cass**
- Eaton**
- Hillsdale**
- Ingham**
- Jackson**
- Kalamazoo**
- St Joseph**
- Van Buren**



**1** REGION 1 ALL of the U.P.

**REGION 2:**

- Antrim**
- Benzie**
- Charlevoix**
- Emmett**
- Grand Traverse**
- Kalkaska**
- Leelanau**
- Manistee**
- Missaukee**
- Otsego**
- Wexford**

**REGION 3:**

- Alcona**
- Alpena**
- Cheboygan**
- Crawford**
- Iosco**
- Ogemaw**
- Oscoda**
- Otsego**
- Montmorency**
- Presque Isle**
- Roscommon**

**REGION 4:**

- Arenac**
- Bay**
- Clare**
- Clinton**
- Gladwin**
- Gratiot**
- Isabella**
- Midland**
- Saginaw**
- Shoawassee**

**REGION 8:**

- Genessee**
- Huron**
- Lapeer**
- St. Clair**
- Sanilac**
- Tuscola**

# THE FIDDLER'S PLEDGE

I pledge  
to PROTECT my FIDDLE,  
to RESPECT it's MUSIC  
played upon it.  
to HONOR the DIGNITY  
of it's HUMBLE beginnings,  
to EVERY MEMBER of  
the O.M.F.A. FIDDLE FAMILY  
this PLANET, OUR FAMILY,  
the WORLD OVER  
in HARMONY,  
with MUSIC, INSTRUMENTS,  
and FRIENDS to play the  
OLD FIDDLE TUNES  
for ALL TO ENJOY

## BLACK-EYED SUSIE

*Verse*

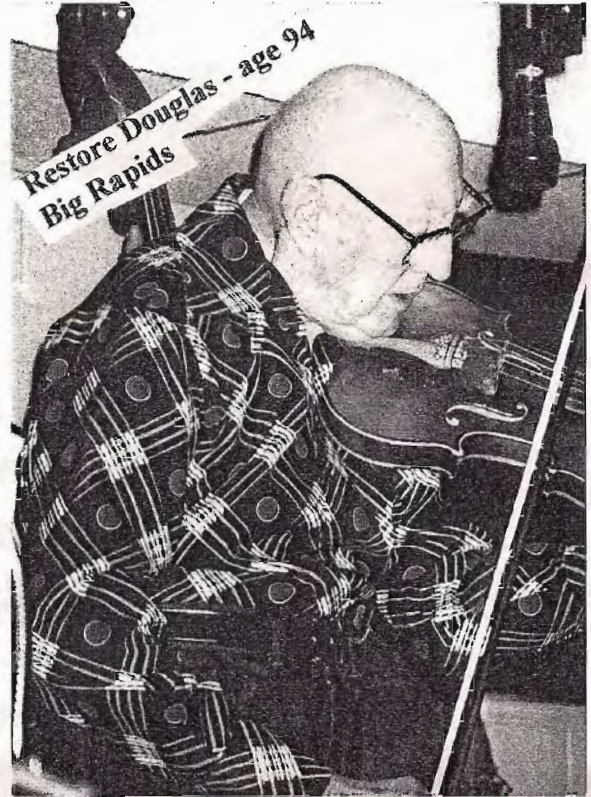
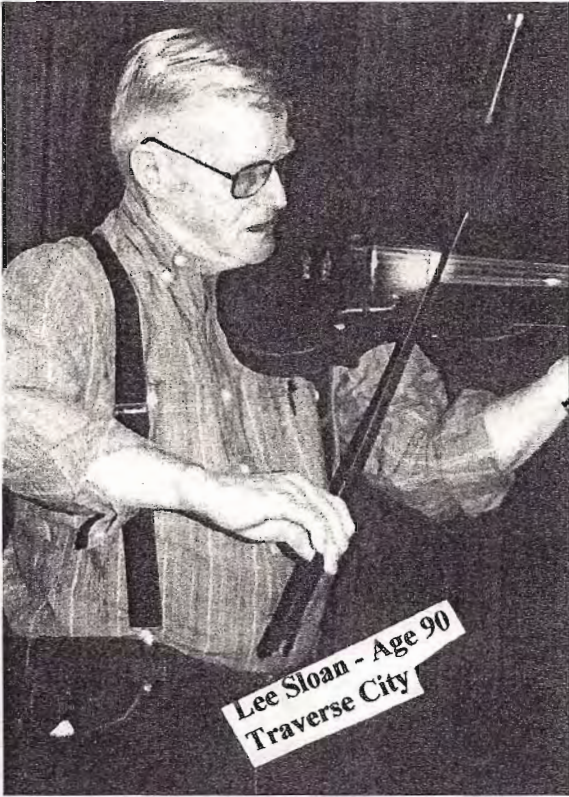
All I want in this cre - a - tion, Pret - ty lit - tle wife and a

*Chorus*

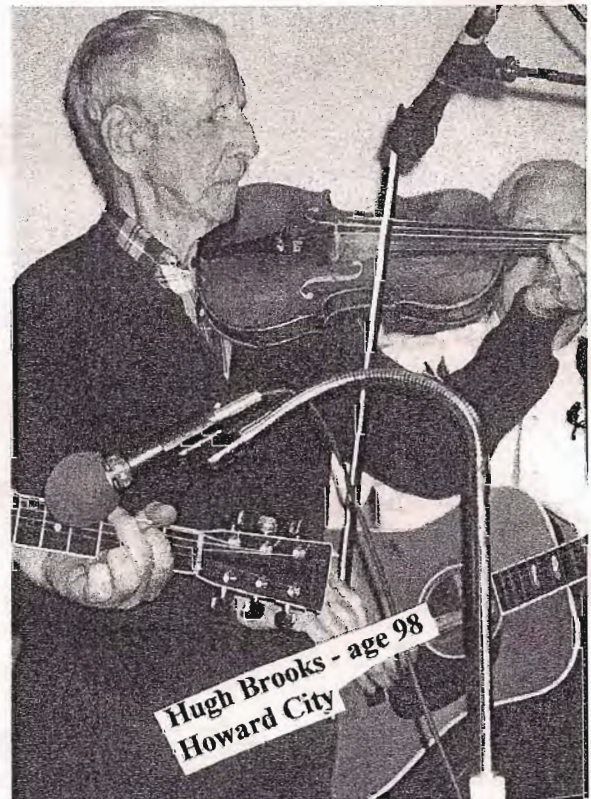
big plan - ta - tion. Hey, pret - ty lit - tle Black - eyed Su - sie, Hey, pret - ty lit - tle

Black - eyed Su - sie, Hey, pret - ty lit - tle Black - eyed Su - sie, hey. —





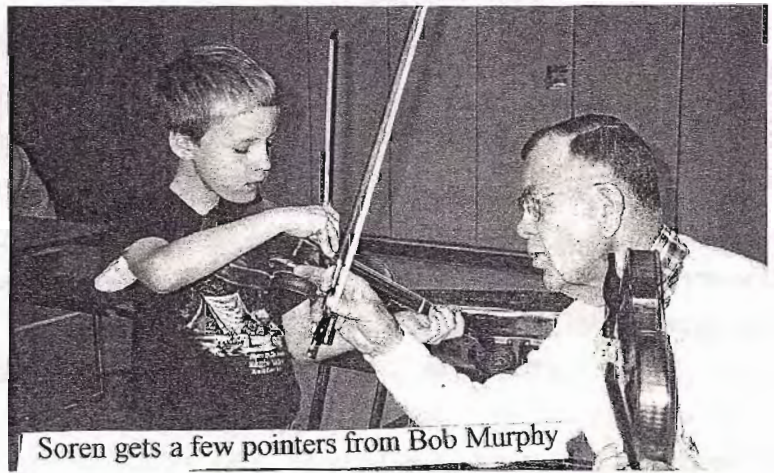
# *Your Never too Old to Fiddle*





Teacher Sandy Jones and student Soren Hauter play at a jamboree

*Or too  
Young to  
Start*



Soren gets a few pointers from Bob Murphy

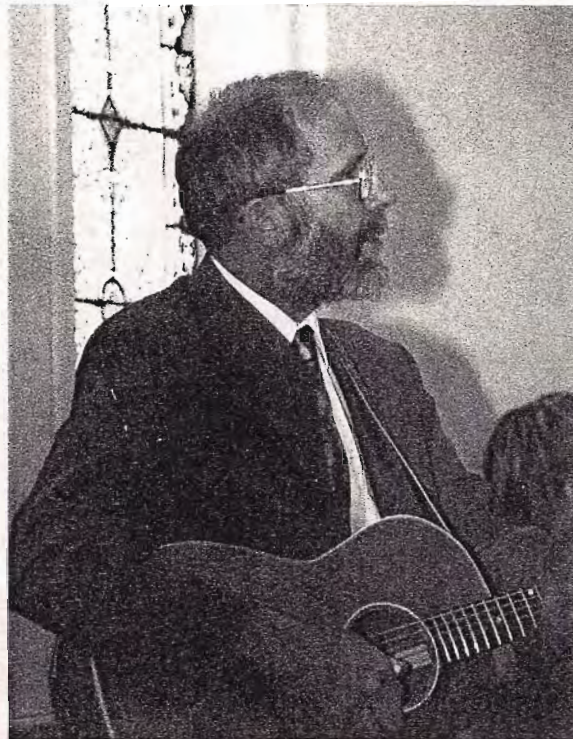


No Generation Gap here! Bob and Soren play a tune together.

*A young fiddler gets  
lots of help and  
encouragement*

# MARK BAUMANN

REGION 5



I started out November 15, 1944 in Mecosta, Michigan. I still live in the same house. I have always enjoyed music and square dancing. My father called for square dances for years. I own a home building and remodeling business and a retail store with cabinets and floor covering. I started playing guitar during my first year in college, influenced by a roommate who played country music... Later on I started playing acoustic bass, and 5-string banjo. I enjoy playing the same music that OMFA members do. I sing old- time folk and cowboy songs.

I joined OMFA about 1999.

\*\*\*\*\*

A preacher was also a very good fiddler. One day he was playing the fiddle when he was asked for the name of the tune. He whispered in the enquirer's ear..."Give The Fiddler A Dram"

\*\*\*\*\*

Thoughtfulness is to Friendship...as Sunshine is to a Garden.

# PAUL BENNETT

REGION 4



I began playing music when I was a kid back in the 50's. I played harmonica and toy instruments. In the 60's I began playing banjo. It was about 1978 when I began playing the fiddle. Now I play anything I can get my hands on but it is getting a bit crowded so I guess I'll taper off a bit and just enjoy. I live in Portland, Michigan.

\*\*\*\*\*

The violin of today dates back to the year 1500. In old English rhyme and story , the violin is often referred to as a fiddle. The nickname has stayed with it. Do you recall 'Old King Cole and his Fiddlers Three'?

The first violins in existence were made over 250 years ago, made in the town of Cremona, Italy. Entire families devoted their lives to this art of violin making. Some of the most famous violin makers were: Andrea Amati 1520-1577; G.P. Maggini - 1580 - 1630; Antonia Stradivarius - 1644 - 1733; and Guarnerius Joseph Del Gesu - 1687 - 1742.

Some of the woods used in making a violin are spruce, maple and ebony. The violin has 80 plus parts to make it the instrument that it is.

## REVA & EARL BILLS

REGION 4



I was born March 4, 1923 near Coleman, Michigan. When I was very small my Uncle Bert & Aunt Gertie from Midland, would bring their 11 children to my parents home to visit. We lived on a farm and Mother would always make chicken and dumplings for dinner. Uncle Bert was an old time fiddler and always brought his fiddle and played a few jigs, reels, and old time tunes. I loved to hear him play, so while my siblings and cousins went outside to play, I stayed in the house to listen to Uncle Bert.

I was 10 years old when my brother Aldon taught me Red River Valley and a waltz he had written. When I was in the 5th grade, I wanted to play in the orchestra, like my sister Myrtle had done, so I went to the instructor. He said I was too little to play the fiddle and to wait until I was in 6th grade. The next year I went back, and he again said I was too small. He said I could not even reach the neck of the fiddle. I told him I had been playing my brother's fiddle, so he said OK bring your fiddle. I joined the High School Orchestra. I was the only elementary student in the high school orchestra.

After graduation I met a nice young man, Earl Bills. He entered the Army the next day. We were married 15 months later. He served 5 years in the Army.

I didn't play the fiddle for about 40 years. Then my brother, Ernest Finney, had began going to the fiddle jamborees held in Harrison monthly, by Bill Carr. He encouraged me to bring the fiddle and come and play. I told him I didn't

play by ear as they did and didn't know as I could do it. He told me to just step in and play in the background for a while and I would soon learn. He was right! This was in 1984 and I have been playing ever since. Earl and I play with a group that plays at nursing homes etc. When I retired from teaching the school personnel and our 2 sons paid for a trip to the Grand Old Opry. A trip I shall never forget! My favorite fiddle tune is Black Velvet Waltz.

I thank my Uncle Bert for inspiring me to learn the fiddle.

I joined the OMFA several years ago.

\*\*\*\*\*

### MOST POPULAR FIDDLE TUNES

- |                             |                                 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1- Soldiers Joy             | 25-Flop-Eared Mule              |
| 2-St Anne's Reel            | 26-Sally Goodin                 |
| 3-Old Joe Clark             | 27-Chinese Breakdown            |
| 4- Ragtime Annie            | 28-Over the Waves               |
| 5-Ashokan Farewell          | 29-Sailor's Hornpipe            |
| 6-Cripple Creek             | 30-Down Yonder                  |
| 7-Liberty                   | 31-Girl I Left Behind Me        |
| 8- Westphalia Waltz         | 32-Irish Washerwoman            |
| 9- Redwing                  | 33-Leather Britches             |
| 10-Fishers Hornpipe         | 34-Wildwood Flower              |
| 11- Mississippi Sawyer      | 35-Billy in the Lowground       |
| 12-Whiskey Before Breakfast | 36-Cotton Eyed Joe              |
| 13-Faded Love               | 37-Cindy                        |
| 14-Golden Slippers          | 38-Joys of Quebec               |
| 15-Tennessee Waltz          | 39-Kentucky Waltz               |
| 16-Devil's Dream            | 40-Bonaparte Crossing the Rhine |
| 17-Over the Waterfall       | 41-Bonaparte's Retreat          |
| 18-Turkey in the Straw      | 42-Buffalo Gals                 |
| 19-Boil 'Em Cabbages Down   | 43-Darling Nellie Gray          |
| 20-Blackberry Blossom       | 44-Orange Blossom Special       |
| 21-Flowers of Edinburgh     | 45-Snow Deer                    |
| 22-Angeline the Baker       | 46-Under the Double Eagle       |
| 23-Midnight on the Water    | 47-Forked Deer                  |
| 24-Eighth of January        | 48-Arkansas Traveler            |

# CHARLES BONNETT

REGION 2



I was born on November 28, 1916 in Cheboygan County, Michigan. My present home is within 1/2 miles of the home I was born in. I began playing fiddle at age 16, I never had a lesson. I play by ear. I played at house parties.

I married in 1940 and stopped playing the fiddle for a few years. A dear old friend, Les Raber, found me after nearly 40 years, and got me started playing again.

My favorite tune is Golden Slippers.

I joined OMFA in 1985.

\*\*\*\*\*

While I dance...I can not judge  
I can not hate  
I can not separate myself from life  
I can only be joyful and whole  
That is why I dance!

Hans Bos

Old time fiddle tunes will never die!

# HUGH C. BROOKS

REGION 5



I was born in Calhoun County, near Augusta, Michigan on August 20, 1903. I now live near Howard City, Michigan.

I worked at several places and then in 1928 I started to work on the Pennsylvania railroad, as a trackman. Later, I became foreman and track inspector. I retired in 1970 after 41 years.

I started playing music around the age of 17. I first played the mandolin. My dad played fiddle, so I took it from there. My neighbor also played fiddle. He gave me lessons to read notes. I played in a dance orchestra for several years.

In 1932 I married Margaret Kohn of Morley. We had 3 sons, the oldest passed away at age 24 of leukemia. We now have 8 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren.

We started going to the fiddle jamborees in 1980.

\*\*\*\*\*

Fiddler styles are UNIQUE!

Old time fiddling takes on a new look!



# NORMAN BUCHANAN

REGION 6

I was born May 8, 1924 in Holland, Michigan. In 1925 we moved to Decatur, Michigan where I lived for the next 70 years.

At the age of 9, I started playing a Hohner harmonica that I bought new for 29 cents! In 1954 I purchased a new arch top Harmony guitar for \$39.95. that I played for many years.

My favorite type of music is old Country & Western and I like to sing the old songs.

In 1994 I met Izzy Miller at a fiddle jamboree and we were married in 1995.  
I am a member of the OMFA

\*\*\*\*\*

The fiddle was once known as the DEVIL'S BOX. It was considered sinful to play for clinch dancing or square dancing and other forms of similar recreation.

\*\*\*\*\*

Old time music lives on!



## IZZY MILLER-BUCHANAN

REGION 7



I was born in 1928 in the village of Marengo, Calhoun County, Michigan. My mother sacrificed to save \$7.50 so she could send to Montgomery Wards and buy me a guitar for my 13th birthday! What a cherished gift!! No book of instructions nor lessons, I learned to play it. At age 14, I began using my earned money to buy old instruments and then learned to play them! In high school I signed up for band. Not being able to read music, I would just play what I heard the others play, by ear. The 3rd day of beginners class I was sent to the Senior band.

I took up the fiddle in the mid 50's. 2 weeks after I bought the fiddle, I stood before an audience and played it.

I also play piano, organ, accordion, button 'squeezebox' accordion, concertina, hammered dulcimer, mandolin, autoharp, 5-string banjo, tenor banjo, trumpet, coronet, drums, guitar, fiddle, and bass fiddle. But I still can't play the VCR!

I love sharing my music with nursing homes, senior dining sites, at church, and wherever I am asked.

The Highlight of my life came when I was inducted into the Michigan Country Music Hall of Fame in 1998 in Prarieville, Michigan.

I thank God and my precious mother for my gift of music.

I am a member of OMFA.

## JORDAN BUCK

REGION 5



I was born January 1, 1933, in a logging camp that my father was employed by. This was near Saranac, Michigan. I was one of eleven children. I was raised in the Montcalm County area, and I now reside near Stanton, in Montcalm Co. I spent my working years with Kent County Road Commission working as an engineer. I worked for the Grand Trunk Railroad as a telegraph operator agent, and I have worked for the C&O railroad. I also worked for 4 years with the GTW Railroad on the old steam engines. These were really something else!! I retired in 1979. Mary is also retired and we are loving every minute of it.

When I was a young boy of about 7 or 8, my dad and mother would take me with them to the dances every Saturday night. Back then they would begin playing about 8:00 p.m. and would often play till early hours of the morning.

As I grew up my dad showed me the C F G chords on the Tenor Banjo and I took it from there on my own.

I have played with different groups and bands. I have been playing for a dance at Trufant, Michigan for the past 20 years on the 2nd Saturday and 4th Friday each month. I also play at VFW, American Legion, extended care nursing homes, and many other places .

The instruments I play are the Plectrum Mastertone Banjo with my own tuning and style of playing. The mandolin is my 2nd choice. I play some guitar and chord some on piano. My favorite music is the old time country, old Bluegrass ballads, polkas, blues.... I am self taught and play by ear..

We joined OMFA in 1984.

# KEITH CALDWELL

REGION 5



I was born September 8, 1944 in Cedar Springs. I still live in Cedar Springs. My occupation is a farrier. You ask why I took up the fiddle? Very simply...I always wanted to, and to follow in my grandfather's steps.

My 1st old fiddle came from my grandparents and was of Irish or Scottish origin...My dad helped me to reglue the old family fiddle when I was 14. It was so bad no one could play it. When my son was about the same age I helped him reglue it. The old fiddle was still bad, so he went to piano.

In 1997 I bought a nice old violin that was properly set up. In several months I was playing it. Then I compared the old family fiddle with the one I had bought. I reglued it to a similar set up to the violin I had bought. Now it is a nice playing old Celtic fiddle!

If you have an old broken fiddle and a young man or lady that would like to play it, take them to someone that plays a fiddle and is qualified to help them get started.

My favorite fiddle tune...Old Joe Clark & Dixie  
I joined OMFA in 1997.

\*\*\*\*\*

Fiddling was developed for dancing - NOT listening enjoyment!

## LOU CALIFF

REGION 2



I am Lou Califf. I currently serve as a Director for the OMFA of Region 2. I was born in Muskegon Heights in June of 1931. but I have lived in Boyne City since 1965. When I was 9 years of age, my brother, a neighbor kid, & I formed a band consisting of a banjo, ukulele wash board, and spoons. I played the washboard! At about the age of 12, my sister-in-law taught me the 3 chords in the key of G on the guitar, and I was off and running. I've played in bands from 2 piece to 7 piece orchestra. My favorite kind of music is Big Band.

When Rays Guitar Store in Boyne City began having jam sessions in about 1991, most of the musicians played guitar, so I taught myself the mandolin. I bought a fiddle from a yard sale in 1981 which was probably about the time I joined the OMFA. The fiddle laid in its case for about 10 years, but I have been trying to learn to play it ever since. I also tinker around with the bass, banjo and piano.

## ELTON COLE

REGION 2



Elton was born in Cross village, Michigan in 1915,, and has lived around that area most of his life. his great-grandfather was the 1st white man in Cross Village. his grandfather ran the stage from Corss Village to harbor Springs, using horses. his mother was born in Morley and was of Scandinavian decent. his wife, Arlene, also came from the Morley area.

Elton took up the trumpet in high school band. After 2 years of this, he learned how to play the banjo, and later the piano. his occupation was farming and his music. In later years he earned his living by playing in dinner clubs and private parties.

Elton plays mostly by ear, although he can play some right hand notes. Elton also plays the fiddle.

He is a very gifted musician. At several of the jamborees in the northern part of Michigan, he sets down to the piano and plays before the jamboree. he plays all the oldies fro years past. The audience loves every minute that he plays. he just plays from one song to the next without missing a beat. he plays a lot of banjo as back up for the fiddlers. And takes his turn at fiddling, also.

Elton has been a member of OMFA since 1981.

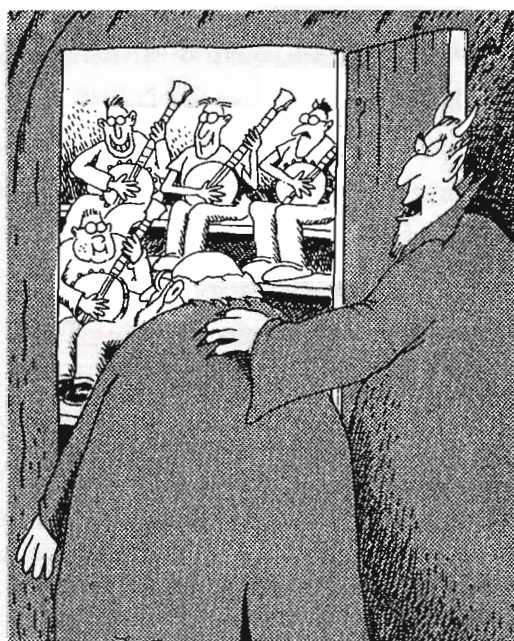
*Written by Suzanne Hauter*

# GEORGE COMBEN

REGION 3

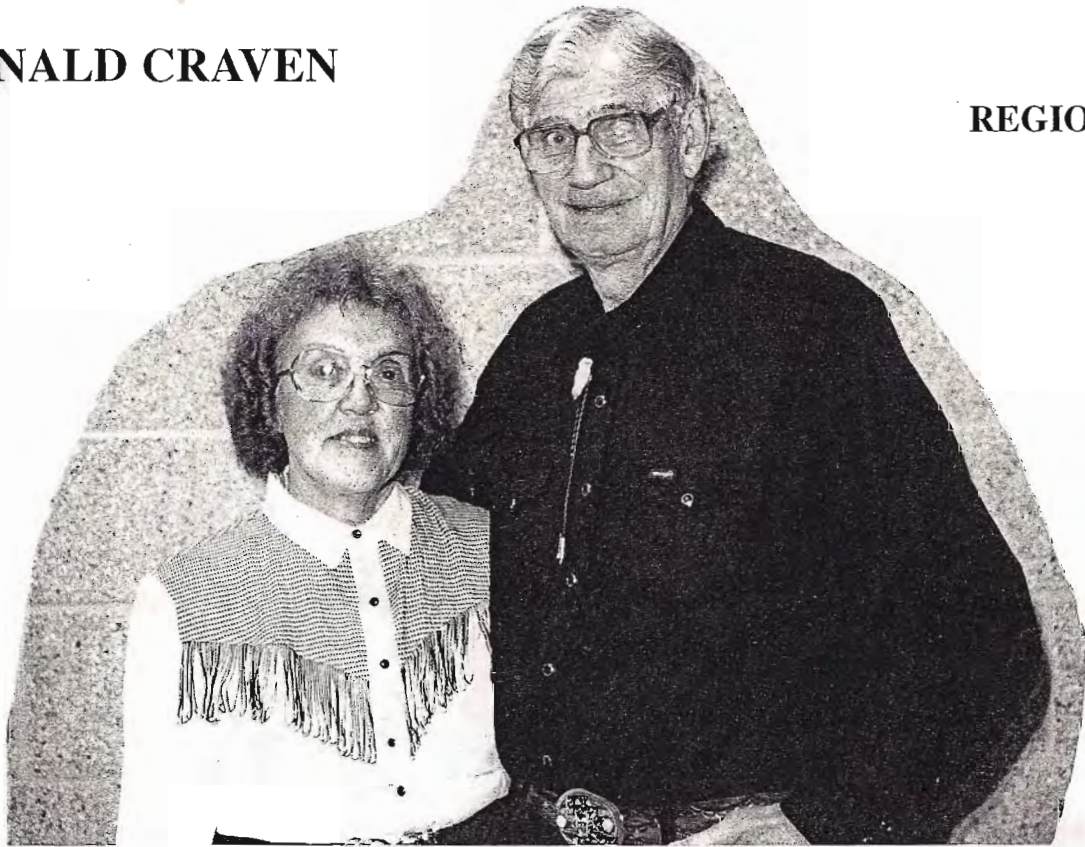


I was born May 5, 1939 at Mt. Clemens, Michigan. I now live in Indian River. I play the guitar and my music preference is Old Time Country.



# DONALD CRAVEN

REGION 4



I was born April 30, 1929 in Owosso, Michigan. I now live at Lake George, Clare County. I am retired after working as a carpenter.

I began calling when I was 69 years of age. We were at a jamboree and a man said if anyone wanted to become a caller he would help them to get started. This man also said that square dance calling was a vanishing art. I did learn to call for my own personal enjoyment but also to keep this art of calling alive.

We joined the OMFA in 2000 at the Morley jamboree.

\*\*\*\*\*





## JUDY DEGROOTE

\*\*\* daughter of Les Raber

REGION 6



My exposure to Old Fashioned Michigan Fiddle Music began at birth. My father, Les Raber, played for dances at local Grange Halls and Dance Pavilions all his adult life and exposed his children to it as soon as we could walk. Although I was a staunch supporter of my father's music, (from the wings) I didn't get the urge to begin to play until 1999. I had felt that previous to this time that this music life was for my parents and it was what gave them strength and solace. My sister and I accompanied my dad to a jamboree in Newberry, Michigan in 1999 and that is when I began to get serious about playing myself.

My father prepared a 3/4 fiddle for me to begin practicing and began to give me lessons. He would set up 2 chairs, face to face, and we would begin our lesson. He would play a tune clear through, then we would sound it out into small bits so that I could get the feel and the melody. The first tune we ever tried together was "Jimmy's Jig" which I knew was my mother's favorite. Daddy could be playing along with me when all of a sudden reach out with his fiddle bow and direct my finger placement on the fiddle and get right back to his own fiddle without hardly missing a beat! I grew to respect the distance between those 2 chairs! I wasn't very successful with Jimmy's Jig at first so we moved on to the

# JUDY DEGROOTE

\*\*\* daughter of Les Raber

first tune that my father had learned from his grandfather "Jesus Lover of my Soul". I had asked Daddy why he started me out on such a hard tune like Jimmy's Jig and he started his other classes at Jamborees out on Peek A Boo Waltz. He grinned at me and said "I expect more from you." I practiced and practiced Jesus Lover Of My Soul and was able to play it for him before he passed away.

Since the passing of my father, I have taken the task of playing the fiddle, his way, much more seriously. I listen to his tape recordings that he made and rewind them several times, until I "get it" and then through hard work and lots of practice, begin to play those wonderful tunes that have been passed on from 4 generations of Raber's.

My 1st experience of playing my fiddle was actually a gift that I gave to my Uncle Merle and Aunt Alice Raber to celebrate their birthdays in the year 2001.

I was asked to perform for the "25th Anniversary" of the OMFA in Grand Rapids, Michigan at Highland High School on April 21, 2001. I chose to play a rag tune called "DILL PICKLES RAG"

The Legacy Goes On.....

\*\*\*\*\*

## DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FIDDLE AND VIOLIN

At a Bill Anderson Show, Bill asked his fiddler to play a classical symphonic piece. She did, and Bill asked "Does that make that a violin you are playing?" She responded "NO!" She then played the "Orange Blossom Special". Bill then asked "Does that make the instrument you are playing a fiddle?" She responded "NO". At this Bill asked "What is the difference between a fiddle player and a violinist?" She responded "About \$2000.00 a night". Bill answered.."That makes you a fiddle player!"

Submitted by Keith Caldwell of Cedar Springs.

Fiddlers...Remember you are unique....  
Just like everyone else.

## ED DEMING

REGION 5



I was born October 23, 1942 in Hartford, Connecticut. My grandfather played fiddle, my Aunt Betty played a guitar, sang, and wrote music, my Uncle Albert played a saw and a half dozen other instruments (all on my mother's side). I always had music in my head but never tried to play any instruments until 1990. That is when I bought my first fiddle from Quinn's in Big Rapids. I spent that winter, (1990-1991) in Maine and went to a Suzuki method violin teacher for six months. I learned a bit about how to read music and the proper way to play the violin. In the spring of 1991 I moved back to Michigan and started going to the local jam sessions around the area. I learned a lot more about how to play. It took about three years before I had the nerve to play in front of a mike and still am really nervous about microphones. That was also about the time I joined up with the OMFA (1994) and I've been fiddling and having fun since.

**EDITOR NOTE:** Ed is serving his 2nd 3 year term on the Board of Directors. Ed often puts in some time as emcee at the jamborees, helps with the sound equipment.

# DENNIS G. DIENER, SR.

REGION 1



*Passed away 8-8-2001*

I was born May 23, 1942. I have lived most of my life in the Beautiful Upper Peninsula of Michigan. ( I was actually born at Sault Ste Marie) I now reside in the area of Nahma.

I play the washtub bass. I decided several years ago to build a washtub bass and learn how to play it. A fiddle player, Rene Coyte, showed me how to play the washtub bass, and I have been playing it ever since. My favorite type of music is bluegrass.

I joined OMFA in 1993.

\*\*\*\*\*

Let us read and dance...two amusements that will never do any harm to the world.

*Voltaire*

## RESTORE DOUGLASS

REGION 5



Restore was born February 2, 1907 near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He was one of five children. After moving to Michigan, his father was a lumberman and a salesman. It was a friend of his father's that started Restore playing fiddle at age 12. By age 17 he was playing in halls, house parties, and any other events that came along. At age 94, Restore is still playing fiddle and appears at a lot of the jamborees and other music events.

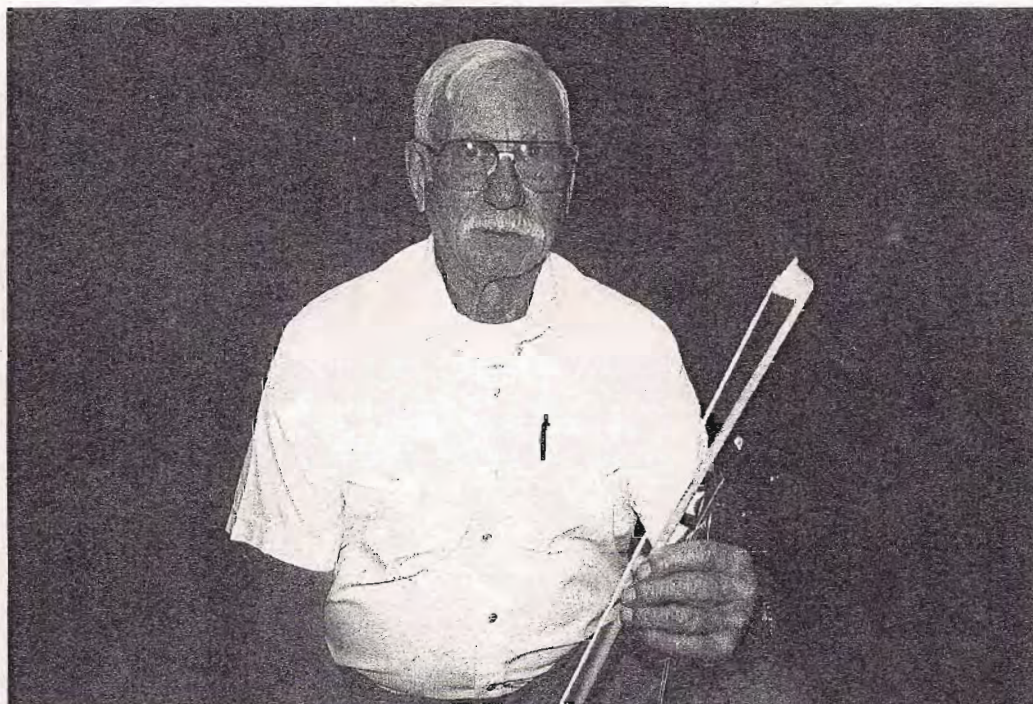
In 1939 he married Freda Foss who passed away last year. They had three children; Carol of Big Rapids, Judy and Nancy of Florida.

Restore is the 2001 recipient of the Michigan Heritage Award for performance in old time fiddle music and was honored in Lansing on August 11, 2001. Restore has been a member of the OMFA for 18 years. Restore is known to many of his friends as 'Goog', a name given to him by his father. One of his favorite songs is "When The Rain and Snow Falls Around My Front Door, I'll Be Coming Home To You Little Girl".

*Written by Sandy Jones*

## DON DUNHAM

REGION 5



I was born on December 30, 1926, in White Cloud. I now live in Fremont. I was a truck driver prior to retiring. I learned to play the violin during school, when I was between ages of 10 and 17. Then I took it up again after retiring in 1990. My favorite fiddle tune is 'KENTUCKY WALTZ'.

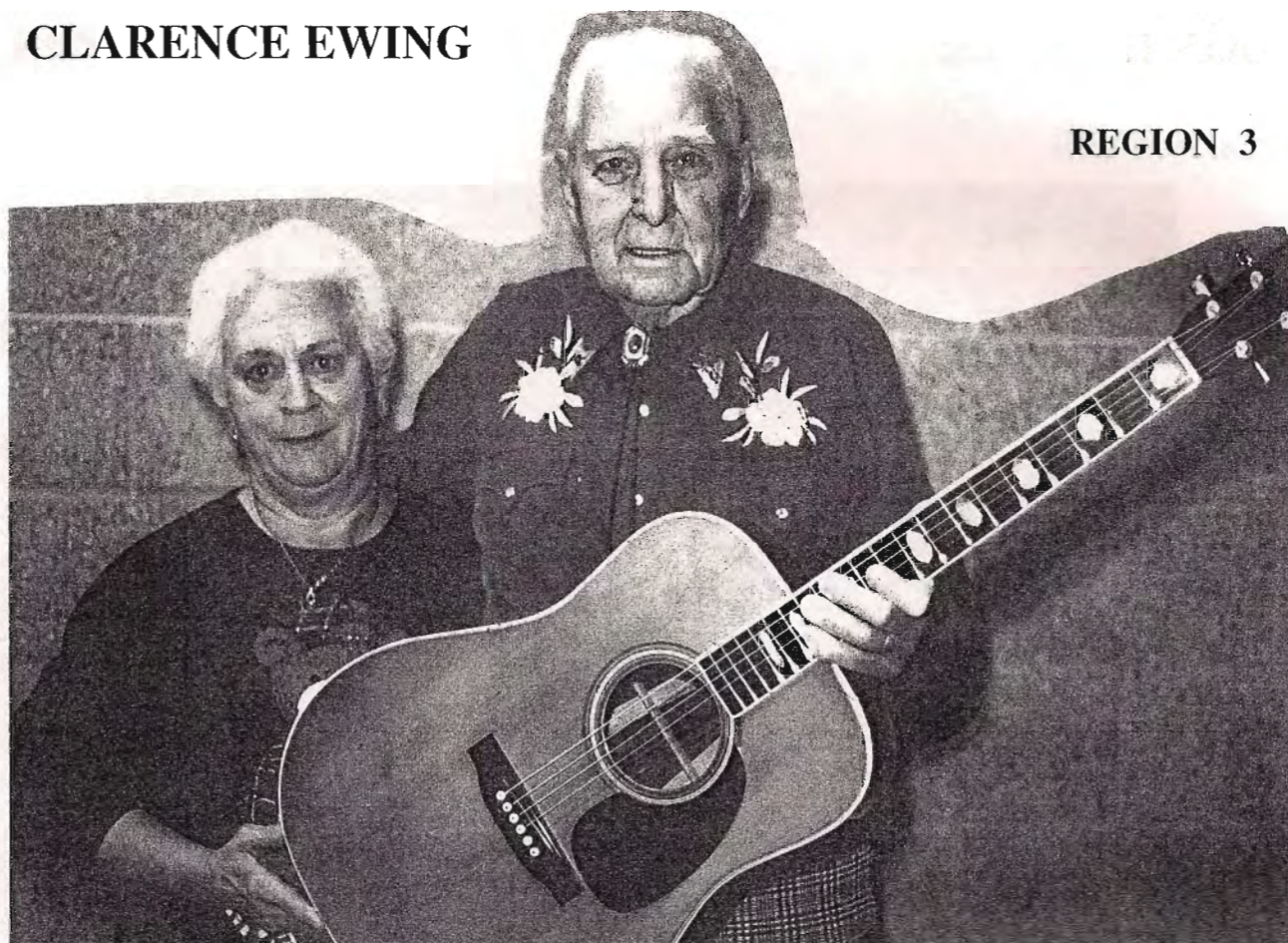
The fiddle I learned to play on during my school days in the 30's and 40's, was a family fiddle. It was many years later before I acquired a fiddle of my own. Last summer I bought 2 fiddles at a flea market. I wanted a winter project. These 2 fiddles were in very poor condition. After much repair, both are sounding real good and I am very pleased with my purchase.

I was at a restaurant in Newberry for the jamboree when I met Sandy Jones. We struck up a conversation. I had never played in front of anyone before, and Sandy convinced me to give it a try. Even though I am nervous about playing on stage, Sandy, Ed Lodden, Clarence Ewing and several others have given me encouragement and confidence to play. I have had a lot of fun, met a lot of nice people and made a lot of new friends at the jamborees. I want to THANK everyone who has helped and encouraged me, it DOES make a difference when you are on stage to play.

I joined the OMFA April 1999.

# CLARENCE EWING

REGION 3



I was born in Alpena on June 13, 1916. I retired in 1977 from working in a concrete plant. I attended my first fiddle jamboree in Hillman on November 20, 1976. This was also my first time to call for a square dance.



# THELMA FASSETT

REGION 6



I have lived in rural Nashville area for most of my life. My first connection to music was piano lessons as a child...short lived. I was in the high school band and played clarinet. My sister and I used to sing together. I sang in the church choir and with a ladies quartet. I began playing hammered dulcimer in 1989. I am now President of the Thornapple Valley Dulcimer Society. I also formed a band called Dulcimer Friends and we go out to play at several events.

I started teaching myself the violin/fiddle about 3 years ago. People who encouraged me were Paula Brawdy and Willard Myers. I play both instruments every Tuesday night at Maple Leaf Grange - south of Nashville on M-66. Also Friday nights at a benefit dance for the Lakewood Ambulance. I am a member of the O.M.F.A. and also of the M.F.A.

\*\*\*\*\*

How do you tell the difference between old time fiddle tunes?

By their names

Why did the fiddler cross the road?

It was the chicken's day off.



## HOWARD FOUST

REGION 7



I was born March 11, 1933 in Poplar Bluff, Missouri. My family moved to Pontiac, Michigan in 1943. My wife, Mary Lee, my sister, Ramona, and I live in Rochester Hills, Michigan for part of the year, and the rest of the year we live in Thompsonville, Michigan.

I always liked the guitar, so I bought one and learned how to play it when I was 14 years old. A neighbor helped teach me how to play. I have played guitar and bass in church for about 30 years.

I retired from Ford Motor Co. in 1995. That same year I went to the Evert Funfest for the first time. I was like a kid in a candy store! I had to borrow an acoustic guitar. It was there that I heard about the OMFA and the MFA. I started going to the jamborees and I love it! I didn't know until then that there was anything like this going on!

I joined the OMFA in 1995.

I like most types of music. I enjoy playing back up for the fiddlers for the dances. I like gospel and country music.

\*\*\*\*\*

Old Time Fiddle Tunes are the Greatest of all!

## CHARLES 'BUD' & MINA GARRETT

REGION 4



I was born in Isabella County in 1926. I married Mina in 1946. We have 9 children.

We started going to jamborees in about 1981. The first OMFA jamboree we went to was advertised on radio. It was at Conley's barn near Coleman. We have always danced and really liked the music.

I had my grandpa's fiddle in the closet and decided to learn to play it. Being a full time farmer I gained in winter and lost in summer. It took me five or six years, and a lot of help and encouragement from good friends, before I made it to the mike...and another five years to feel comfortable there! Mina says she learned to chord piano in self defense!

I started calling square dances in the late 70's. My grandpa played fiddle and my dad was a caller.

I have been a member of OMFA for several years.

\*\*\*\*\*

### KIDS PROVERBS

If at first you don't succeed...Get new batteries.  
You get out of something...What you see pictured on the box.  
When the blind leadeth the blind...Get out of the way.  
Children should be seen...And not spanked or grounded.

## CHARLES 'CHUCK' GEORGE

REGION 5



I started taking violin lessons when I was about 9 or 10 years old and played through high school, all classical except for a kids dance band that played the dance songs of the 40's. I stopped playing when I got out of high school.

When we retired my wife and I started going to an RV park in Arizona in the winter that had a band but didn't have a fiddler. When I mentioned that I had played as a kid they talked me into getting started again. Doris bought me a violin that year and I found there were still some sounds in there that I could make come out. It sounded pretty awful to start but Doris put up with the noise. I learned 3 songs and went to the Hart fiddle jamboree... Bill Stevens played back up guitar and Lois Shaver was on the piano. I was shaking so hard that it sounded like I had a vibrato but we got thru the 3 songs. Bob Murphy told me about the dulcimer festival at Ewart, so I went and there I met Les & Rosemary Raber. Les & Rosemary were very complimentary about what I was doing. Les took me under his wing. Les spent many hours with me and I can not say enough about his patience to me and to Doris. When we got home from Arizona the next year, Bill Stevens asked me to come to the tractor show at Walloon Lake. and I began playing with him and Lorraine Stevens there. We have worked together ever since.

## CHARLES 'CHUCK' GEORGE

In the meantime, I joined OMFA, about 1995-1996, and I have made many friends. I have received much encouragement from them all! If it had not been for this organization I probably would not have kept up with the fiddle, but now it is a very big part of my life!

NOTE: Chuck served on the Board of Directors from 1998 to 2000.. He then served as Vice President from 2000 -2001.

\*\*\*\*\*

### MY DAD'S FIDDLE

Written by Arlene Grothaus

My dad was a fiddler, but not one of reknown  
Few people had ever heard him, even in his hometown.

He liked to play the old songs, and he played them sweet and low  
And if he couldn't remember their names, he called them "Toxey Doe"

It helped to keep away the lonesomes after Mother died  
And he would play away the hours as tho she were still there by his side.

His eyesight dimmed and his hand was shaking  
And no longer could his ears hear the fiddle play

I know in MY heart that HIS was breaking  
WHEN HE GAVE THAT OLD FIDDLE AWAY.

\*\*\*\*\*

The first 30 jamborees were held without ELECTED officers. Paul Gifford, Bill White, Bob Fleck, and Jane Allison took care of business. In 1988 elections were held.

CLAIR STEVENS	President 3/80 - 3/94	Presided at 226 Jamborees
RALPH SHAVER	President 4/94 - 6/96	Presided at 24 Jamborees
RON DAUGHERTY	President 4/96 - 6/97	Presided at 17 Jamborees
ED LODDEN	President 6/97 - 6/00	Presided at 34 Jamborees
BYARD STEVENS	President 6/00 - present	Presided at 16 Jamborees (as of Sept 22,2001)

## JON & MARY GIDDINGS

REGION 5



I was born in Eaton Rapids, Michigan on October 25, 1935. My wife, Mary was born on February 7, 1937 near Lansing, Michigan. Having known each other most of our lives, we were married on February 26, 1954. We lived most of our lives near Lansing where we raised three daughters, north of town in the country.

I was employed at Fisher Body in Lansing for 30 years, retiring in 1985. A few years later we moved to our cottage at Johnson Lake, north of Mecosta.

We first joined OMFA back in 1977 and then again in 1999.

I began playing the fiddle in June of 2000. I have always had a love for music. As a young lad of 10 I took lessons on a Hawaiian guitar for a year, and then put it away and didn't touch it again. I got a Spanish guitar when I was 15, learned to play it. I also had a harmonica which came up missing after a couple of years. About 15 years later, Mary bought me a 12 string guitar which I began to play.

Mary & I have enjoyed going to the different jams around our area and to the OMFA jamborees around the state. We both have a great love for dancing, especially square dancing.

**Mary:** Jon bought me an autoharp about 1970 and after many hours of strummin' and singing, I then bought a tenor guitar, learned to play it some and then pushed it under the bed 25 years ago. This past year Jon got it out, put new strings on it and told me he wanted me to learn to play it again. I'm still working on it.

## **JON & MARY GIDDINGS**

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### **OLD DAN TUCKER**

Written by Dan Emmett about 1830, Dan was not yet 17 yrs of age. He wrote it with a young man in mind who was light-hearted and yet seemed to be in trouble most of the time. The song is a comedy about a person who was always into mischief, somehow.

In 1842 Emmett and his friends decided to try out their new minstrel sound in front of an audience. This happened in New York City, in the Bowery district with an enthusiastic crowd that had been drinking a bit also. To the shock of Emmett and his friends the minstrel sound was a huge success!. Thus began the Minstrel sound which hit the nation from Broadway stage to to the riverboats on the Mississippi River and the goldfields of California.

### **OLD JOE CLARK**

This seems to be one of those songs that has no true author but everyone just makes up their own lyrics,. This Old Joe Clark character was full of mischief and fun. Much like Old Dan Tucker.

Along with Turkey in the Straw and Soldiers Joy, it is one of the best known Southern fiddle tunes, and there is hardly a fiddler that doesn't play it.

### **OH SUSANNA**

Written by Stephen Foster on February 25, 1848, it is one of Foster's best known songs. It was written just in time for the gold rush in California and was a very popular song in the goldfields.

There are several verses to this song, and a few probably made up along the way, but it seems people mainly remember one verse and the chorus.

### **BLUE-TAIL FLY**

Dan Emmett wrote this one in 1845, about the lowly fly. It was an instant hit! People were singing it as they traveled in covered wagons to the goldfields, to the riverboats traveling on the Mississippi River. President Lincoln called it 'that Buzzing song', and may of played it on his harmonica.

## PAUL GIFFORD

\*\*\*Founder of O.M.F.A.

REGION 8



I was born October 28, 1950 in Detroit, Michigan. Dad was a musician and got me interested in old-time music. His father and grandfather were fiddlers in western New York state, and he and my uncle played for square dances in the 20's.

I started playing the dulcimer in 1968 and the fiddle in 1971. I was involved with the Original Dulcimer Players Club serving as secretary from 1974 to 1980. In the early 70's I went to a lot of fiddlers contests and get-togethers in various states. Michigan didn't have much, but the Dulcimer Club had a lot of old-time fiddlers, and so we put on the first fiddle jamboree in 1976 at Sheridan, Michigan.

Later I went back to college in Ann Arbor, Michigan and since 1987 I have been a librarian and archivist at the University of Michigan - Flint - where I live.

My favorite tunes are the forgotten ones with no names.







# MICHAEL GLEASON

REGION 7



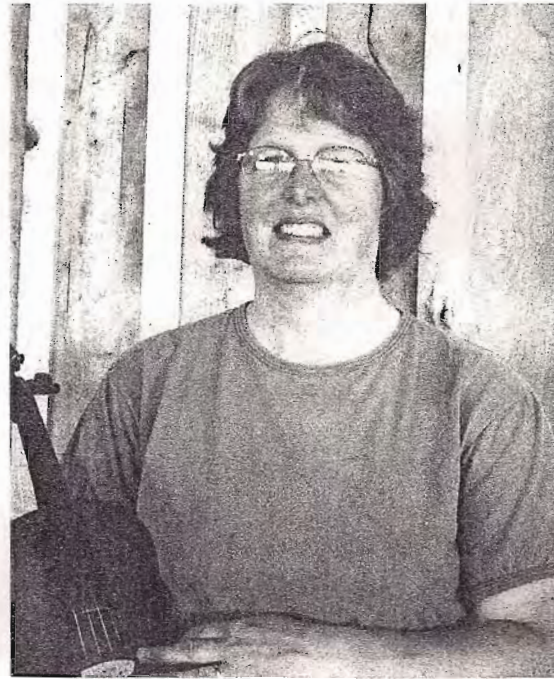
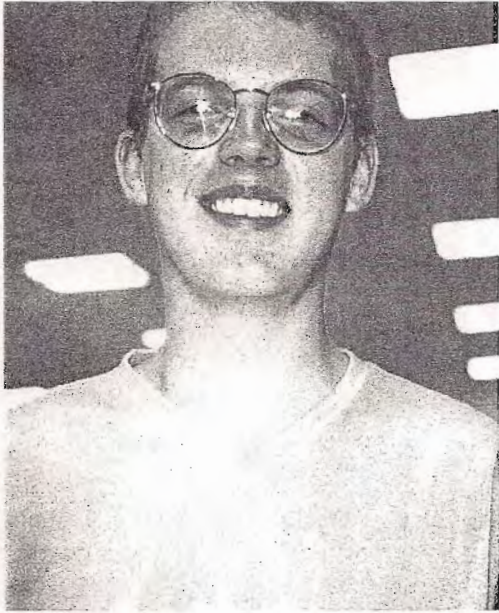
I was born in 1948 in Collingwood, Ontario, Canada, U.S. naturalized in 1964 and I served in Vietnam in 1967. I presently live in Manchester, Michigan and am trying to learn the accordion. I took up violin in public school. A relative had a violin and a drum for sale \$40.00 for both. My success with school orchestra was questionable, but one weekend I found a \$2.49 'Cole's 1000 Fiddle Tunes' book that I really liked in the basement of Grinnell's Music Store in Detroit. That changed everything! Unfortunately it was at a time when 'swing' was being replaced by 'rock' so I took up the bagpipes. Some time later I met Susan, my first wife. She danced to pipe music. We got together and had a fling. Twenty years later 'fiddle music' was getting popular again, so I took up bass guitar. The guitar player in a country band convinced me to play some fiddle and I started playing that for dances too. Now another 20 years later when people are beginning to recognize what I'm trying to play, arthritis sets in just to keep me humble. No big deal. Susan still goes along with most anything but the accordion. Music has been such a great pastime that I intend to keep blundering along. Organizations like the OMFA make good times happen! Thanks OMFA.

\*\*\*\*\*

Fiddle music is the greatest!!

## BUDD GREENMAN & PATTI GREENMAN

REGION 5



**BUDD GREENMAN:** I was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan in 1985. I live with my parents, 2 sisters, and 2 brothers in Big Rapids, Michigan. I am a home schooled student and just completing 10th grade. Next year I will study welding at the area career school.

I have been playing violin since I was 8 years of age. I began with the Suzuki method and graduated to fiddle playing about 3 years ago. Sandy Jones has been an encourager and mentor to me. Christmas 2000 I also took up the mandolin and I enjoy this also.

Besides learning the old time tunes at fiddle jams I have also been diligently studying Celtic music and I am currently writing some tunes of my own.

**PATTI GREENMAN:** I was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan many years ago! I am a teacher and writer and I took up the violin so that I could play duets with my son, Budd. I live with my husband and 5 children in Big Rapids, Michigan.

## GROWING UP IN THE OMFA

by CHAD HABERMEHL

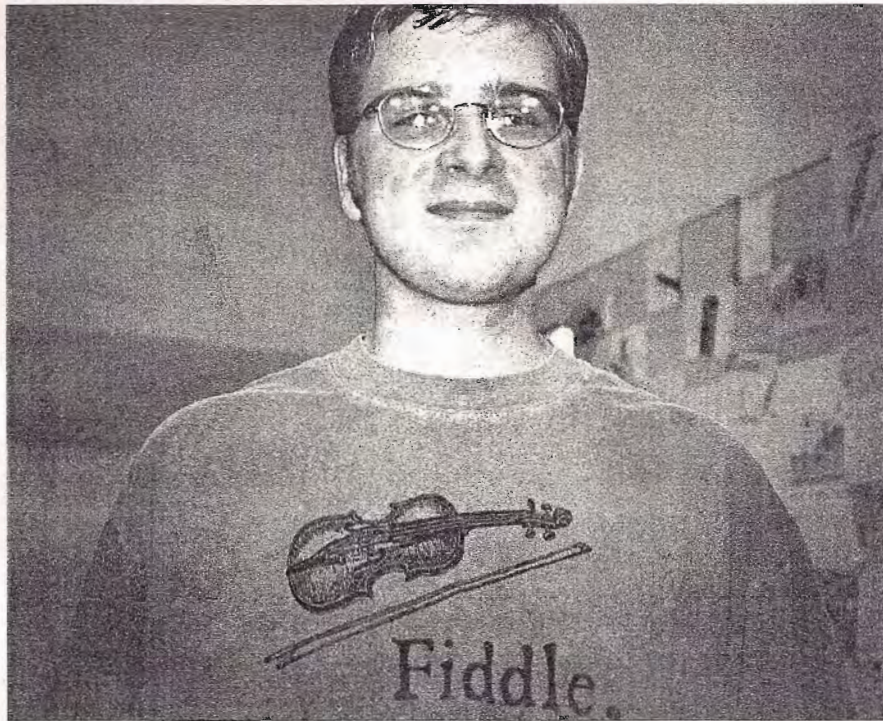
Growing up in the OMFA was like having another family ,only one that I only saw maybe six times a year. I remember my first jamboree, it was in Metz in 1988 or 1989. I don't know if it was OMFA sponsored, but some of the same people were there. From then on, I attended jamborees that were fairly close to home like East Jordan, Johannesburg, Onaway, Cheboygan, Newberry, Omer, and some others. I didn't always want to go, being just a kid, but my mom always persuaded me to, and I am glad she did. I never had a hard time getting up in front of the people to play; it was just some what natural. I can remember many faces from the jamborees, but not many names. Some of those people have passed away, but some still continue to carry on the tradition.

I think about how every time I got done playing people would say "Good Job!, don't ever stop playing!" and how I would tell them I wouldn't. Of course, being a kid I didn't fully comprehend what that meant. I hardly ever practiced. Only a few days before a jamboree I would go over the songs I was going to play. I have an incredible memory that has a bunch of songs stored in it and they don't go away. That was always also kind of a drawback, because not needing to practice, I didn't improve as much as I could have. I look back now and think of how much more that I could have done. However, the OMFA did give me a reason to keep me playing along with the encouragement from my family.

Nowadays, I hardly ever make it to the jamborees. The last few years it's been maybe one a year. When I go, it is always great to see familiar faces and to hear everyone play. I enjoy it more now than I used to because I appreciate more what I have.

I was elected a Jr. Board Member, I don't exactly remember when, maybe in 1996, but wasn't involved much because I couldn't make the meetings. It is a great honor to be elected to the office though I can't serve it as I would want to.

Thank you, OMFA for the fun and experience. I would like to share more stories but I can't remember any detail, only the overall feeling of being a part of a larger family and sharing good music with good friends.



I was born in Alpena, Michigan on March 24, 1981. I lived in Rogers City with my parents, William & Terry, until I graduated High School in June 1999. I currently attend Michigan Technological University in Houghton, Michigan. I am studying to become an Accountant and hope to earn CPA status.

I took up the fiddle at age 7 1/2. The moment I knew I wanted to play the fiddle was when I saw the group Bluegrass Plus play in Alpena. I was also influenced by my grandma's involvement in folk music. My mother was also influenced by her and took up the autoharp. We have gone to many OMFA jamborees over the years. We have also gone to the Music Festival at Ewart, Michigan since I was 5. Usually when I see most of my family we play music, but unfortunately it isn't too often because we live so far apart. There is nothing better than playing music with your family, whether it is your real family or your music family.

Being a lover of music I have picked up several other instruments I was given an antique mandolin by Izzy Buchanan one year at the Ewart Festival and have learned to play it mostly for accompanying. In 6th grade when I started band I picked up the clarinet because it was what my mom had played. I have had many solo performances and have won several honors on the instrument. I am currently using that talent in the Wind Symphony at Michigan Tech. In 9th grade I picked up the bass guitar for jazz band I still play that today also.

## CHAD HABERMEHL

As a fiddler I am partial to slow tunes & waltzes. My favorite one would have to be Ashokan Farewell & Westphalia Waltz. The plain tune is not so exciting but what can be added by improvisation is exciting. My favorite fast fiddle tune is probably the old standby Ragtime Annie.

The fiddle I currently play belonged to my great Uncle Jess. It was given to him by his friends when he was stationed in Japan in WWII. It was his only instrument that made it back to the states. with him. After he died his wife kept it in storage and gave it to her daughter to keep. Several years ago at our family reunion my Great Aunt told her daughter to get it and give it to me, as no one else in the family played it. It was in great disrepair from being stored improperly. I gave it to Elon Howe who fixed it up wonderfully! It's a good sounding with great sentimental value.

I joined OMFA about 1989.

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### OLD TIME MUSIC and HOW TO UNDERSTAND IT

*by Kailey Kirksey*

There are many definitions for the difference between Old -Time Music and Violin Music. For instance 'A violinist carries his instrument in a case and a fiddler carries his in a flour sack...' which does not necessarily hold true.

To make it as simple as possible, classical violin playing and old-time fiddling are two different branches of musical expression. Each has an advanced technique unique in itself. A good fiddler is a great artist, as is a good violinist. A concert violinist often makes a dismal flop when they try to produce old-time fiddling and on the other hand an excellent fiddler sounds like the poorest beginner when he tries classical music.

The authentic old-time fiddler is not reproducing the music of our forefathers, he is playing the actual music itself. Old-time fiddling comes down to us by ear, alive.

How do you make a cello sound beautiful? Sell it and buy a violin!

What is the best thing to play on a guitar? Solitaire

## TERRY HABERMEHL

REGION 3



My name is Terry Habermehl. I was born February 15, 1949 in Saginaw, Michigan, to Clayton & Opal Wolfgang. Growing up I remember my mom playing the guitar. Mom played by ear and really enjoyed playing for us. I had an uncle that played the fiddle whenever we went to visit them (Chad now plays this fiddle)

I can remember music being a big part of my life while growing up. I lived in the country in the Breckenridge area. I graduated from Breckenridge High School in 1967 and that fall began attending Central Michigan University. I graduated from CMU in 1971 with a Bachelor's in Education degree - Vocal Music Major, & Education Minor.

I then moved to Rogers City and began my teaching career. I began as a Music/Art/Kindergarten teacher, and presently teach remedial reading to 1st through 4th grade students.

I married William Habermehl on February 28, 1976. He is an electronic technician and works in Gaylord. We had a son, Chad, on March 24, 1981.

I was always interested in music. I played Clarinet in grade school through 2 years of college. I then got away from my music until I heard a group of ladies (Ladies Choice) from Alpena playing autoharps on a local TV program. I had used one a little in my music classes I had taught, but had never seen them used the way they did.

## TERRY HABERMEHL

The bug bit me. I could not rest until I had an autoharp. I found one at a yard sale for \$35.00. It was an old black box type. I soon outgrew it and purchased a new one in 1980, which I still play today.

I got involved with OMFA about 1989. Chad had begun to play the fiddle & we learned about the OMFA at the Metz fiddle jamboree in Sept. We attended our 1st OMFA jamboree at Cheboygan in October. I have made many friends through OMFA and enjoy getting to the jamborees when I can. I hope to be a part of the OMFA for many years to come. By getting involved with the OMFA, I have renewed my interest in the clarinet. I have been a part of the Rogers City Band for the past 4 years. I also play in church and often sing.

I enjoy playing waltzes, old-time and gospel music. I enjoy listening to just about any type of instrumental music. Music is something a person can take with them through their whole life and it brings much enjoyment through playing and listening. I enjoy watching the people in the audience. The look on their faces as they enjoy listening to the music is priceless!

This would not be complete without giving thanks to God for my musical abilities and also for bringing me together with so many great people.

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### DEFINITION OF OLD-TIME MUSIC

Music played on a fiddle. The fiddle was developed in North America, from time of English, Scotch, Irish, Scandinavian, French and German settlers. The music was primarily passed on by TRADITION - not a lot was written down. It is primarily dance music and developed after 1900. Why it isn't written down...Fiddling is one of the few musical forms that can't be taught! It can be shown to potential fiddlers and if he has the talent, he will learn it. By contrast violin music is TAUGHT!

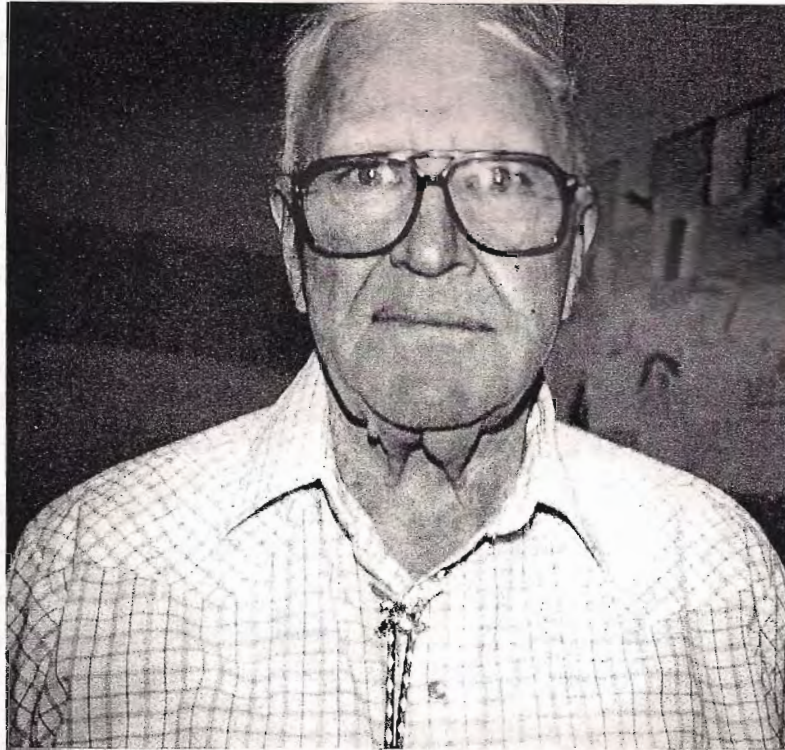
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The fiddle goes back to the 11th century. During the 17th century a distinction was made between the violinist and the fiddler. The violinist plays serious, composed, and parlor music. The fiddler was known as 'melodic rogues' who played fiddle for feasts, dancing and other forms of merriment.



## HAROLD HALLAM

REGION 2



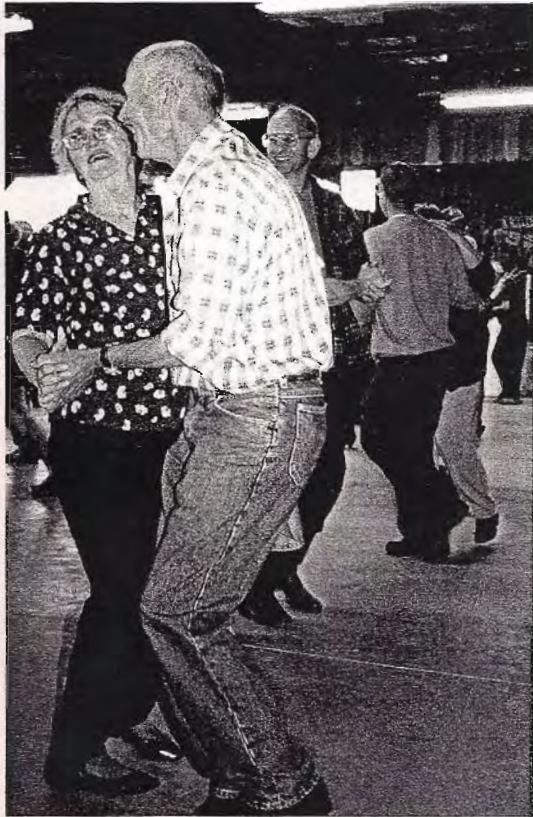
I was born in Inkster, Michigan on January 6, 1920. I went to school at Plymouth, Michigan.

I first learned to call from my dad as he was a square dance caller. He worked as a watchman for the Fords at the Greenfield Village when it was built and he knew Henry Ford personally. Mr Ford gave him a square dance book and I still have it.

I started playing drums when I was about 20 years old. I played with Lloyd Burns off and on for about 60 years. I also played for many years with Newt Miller, both were members of the OMFA.

I have made many friends and have enjoyed old time music and dancing. I can't remember just how many years I have been going to the OMFA but I have been going for several years, and have enjoyed calling. My wife and I enjoy dancing so we plan to attend as many jamborees as we can for as long as we can.





## ED HANKS

REGION 1



I was born on January 14, 1906 in Goetzville, Michigan where I still live. Goetzville is located in the SE corner of the Upper Peninsula. I carried mail, worked in lumber camps and for the county road commission.

I grew up watching my father play the fiddle along with his small band of friends and relatives. They played fox-trot, mazurkas, polkas, square dance tunes, and some tunes my father composed. In time, my father taught me how to play. I played 2nd fiddle for him at about age 10.

I worked all winter at the Hossicks lumber camp to earn \$12.00 to buy my first violin from Sears Roebuck. Because there were no cars available, I walked the 2 miles in the spring to the Goetzville post office to pick it up. I am not good at expressing my feelings about that day, but I am sure the distance seemed short to get my prized possession!

## ED HANKS

I played for many years at weddings, many lasting for 2 days. Dances were a regular routine also. I put the fiddle aside when a family was started and didn't pick it up again until after my wife died in 1981.

I now have 4 violins; a Hoff, an Amadie, a Stradivarius copy, and one of unknown origin.

At 95 years of age, I now play for myself, and occasionally at an OMFA jamboree. I now spend my winters in Florida with one of my daughters and her family.

Working all winter for a violin led to all kinds of wonderful experiences.

I joined OMFA about 1983.

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### OTHER JAMBOREES

Aura, Michigan in Baraga County hosts a jamboree every year on the 3rd Saturday of July. This is open to all to come and enjoy. The year 2001 they will also celebrate 25 years of jamborees. This is held at the Aura Community Center on Townline Road, about 10-12 miles east of L'Anse.

The Aura jamboree is for acoustic instruments only. The mikes are the only item used for amplification. They begin their jamboree at 10:00 a.m. and they play until ????. They play the old time music, some Finnish tunes, and food is available also. They do have a great time...Just ask Bill Stevens, he goes every year.

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East Jordan hosts a good jamboree every year at the Jordan Valley Express in East Jordan, Michigan. This is a huge jamboree. They now start at 12:00 p.m. and play until 10 p.m.

This is for acoustic instruments only. They have a fiddle jamboree during the afternoon until 5:00 p.m. and then open mike time until 7:00 p.m. then it is square and round dancing until 10:00 p.m. There is food available, including a McDonalds within the building. They often have 18 squares on the floor dancing and 40 fiddlers taking part.

The year 2001 saw 1500 people attend this jamboree. The excellent sound equipment makes the sound the same through the entire building. They have several young people taking part in fiddling and dancing. They sell ads to pay their expenses, so all monies donated goes to those who need help to attend music camp; they also have violins to loan out.

## MARY HANSON

REGION 5



In 1949, I was born in the back seat of a '36 Dodge near Rockford, Michigan. My first stop was at the Rockford State Police Post. After that I lived with my parents, Nels and Beatrice Hanson, near Cedar Springs, Michigan. I have lived near Grand Rapids since 1975. I have three brothers, two of which are still living.

I come from a musical family. My father played trumpet, fiddle, drums and piano, my mother played drums, my grandfather played fiddle and both grandmothers played piano. They played at Grange dances and other parties, mostly around Newaygo County. When each of us kids were big enough...about 10 years old, we were assigned an instrument and then played in the school band and to dances with dad and Grandpa. My brothers and I still play for dances at Ensley Grange near Howard City.

I'm really a piano player. I started taking lessons when I was 7 or 8, and kept them up until I was in high school. When I was 10 I started playing the clarinet. I tried a fiddle several times, but didn't have much luck with it ... I couldn't find the notes. When I was in college, I decided to learn to play one. I took some group lessons and then spent about 10 years practicing. I finally figured it out. Since then I have started playing tenor banjo and mandolin.

## MARY HANSON

I inherited one fiddle from Grandpa Hanson and the other one from my dad. Grandpa's fiddle is the one I play most often. It has a dragon head scroll which is rather unusual...particularly since the tongue fell out and got stomped to smithereens during a square dance one night. That fiddle was probably made in Germany during the 1800's... I guess it was the 'Sears Roebuck ' model of its time. Grandpa bought it from a hired hand who wanted some spending money for a Saturday night trip to town. This young man's father wasn't very happy about the deed but Grandpa kept the fiddle and learned to play it. My piano belonged to Grandma Hanson who bought it from the Hackley Co about 1915.

I have been a member of the OMFA since 1983. My fiddling has improved a LOT since then, and I can play by ear fairly well now, although I still prefer to read the music. I am especially fond of old time jigs and reels.

**EDITOR:** Mary was the newsletter editor prior to my taking it in 1996. I believe Mary edited it for about 10 years.

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### FISHERS'S HORNPIPE

The 'hornpipe' was was a primitive European wind instrument. It was made from a shin bone of a sheep with a cow horn attached as a bell.

Hornpipe was a term also used to describe a dance that was danced to the instrument. The dance was popular in both America and England between 1770 and 1850. Its featured some fancy footwork. Later this dance became associated with sailors who danced it with crossed arms.

The hornpipes were played slower than the reel, probably due to the intricate dance steps when danced. As the hornpipe dancing became less popular, the musical hornpipe instruments gradually increased its speed to the tempo of the reel.

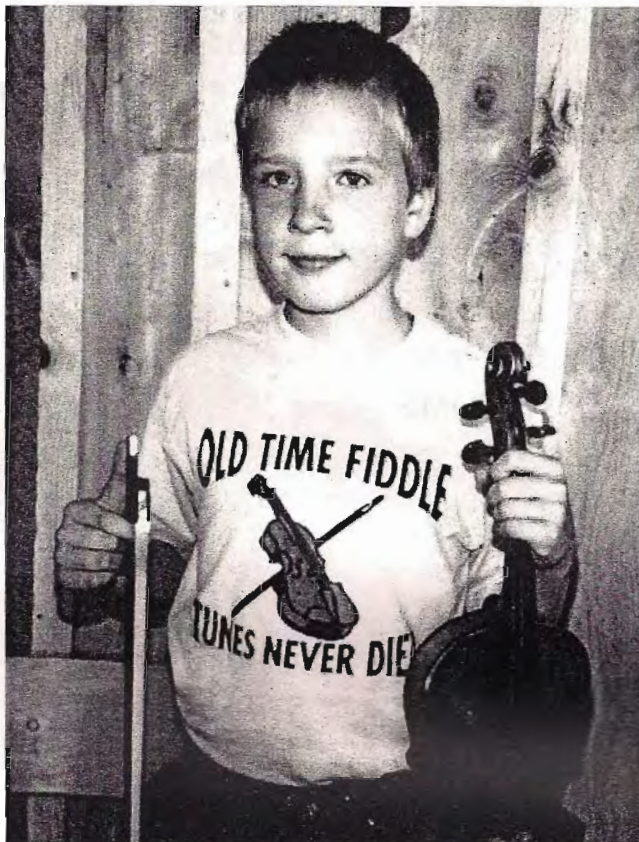
Fishers Hornpipe was introduced about 1780 in London. It was composed by J, Fisher.

### CHICKEN REEL

While there are no words to the Chicken Reel, one can almost see the humor intended when Joseph M. Daly of Boston wrote this in June of 1910. One can almost see the old hen strutting around, feeling pretty proud of herself for the egg she has laid. Some fiddlers make quite a tune out of this, imitating the chicken on the fiddle strings.

## SOREN HAUTER

REGION 4



I was born on October 30, 1990 in Farwell, Michigan. I have lived in Farwell all my life. My grandma and grandpa - Gene and Suzanne Hauter - have took care of me since I was 20 months old while dad worked. In 1995 they began going to Fiddle Jamborees and so I went also. At first I was not very impressed but I am glad now that I went to the Jamborees for I learned a lot about music and instruments. Grandma would then play games with me about how you play different instruments. Pretty soon I began using a pretend fiddle to play whenever I heard fiddles playing in the movies grandma watches.

Then grandma would play games with me about listening to the music on tapes and radio, at first telling me what instruments I could hear playing. and then later asking me what I could hear like the fiddle, guitar, piano etc.

Then I would play my pretend fiddle at the jamborees. Bob Murphy caught me doing this and began helping me to play my pretend fiddle. He showed me how to hold this fiddle, how to bow, and talked to me a lot about fiddling. One night I was playing pretend fiddle, sitting with grandma and she suddenly asked me if I would like to learn to play a real fiddle. I said YES! This was in May, by the jamboree

## SOREN HAUTER

at Walloon Lake, I had an OMFA fiddle to play with for a day, as it was promised to someone else. Les Raber worked with me. He taught me how to play scales and how to bow with the real thing. Next, after Walloon Lake, I went to Newaygo to Elon Howe. Elon had a 1/2 size fiddle for me to learn on. Elon showed me a lot about how fiddles were made from the very beginning. I was quite impressed by this. I learned a lot from Elon that day.

Next grandma and grandpa took me to the Evert Dulcimer Fest, where I sat in on some classes. I really didn't understand a lot and yet I learned quite a bit, I realized later. The best class was one taught by Dan Levenson.

Les Raber showed me how to play Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star. Grandma said I could play 3 tunes at Newberry jamboree if I learned them.

Grandma talked to Sandy Jones, who agreed to work with me at least until Newberry jamboree so I could learn 3 tunes to play. Sandy has been a wonderful teacher. She is still working with me, My first lesson with Sandy was July 28, 1999. Sandy helps me get my tunes ready for the jamborees, and plays for me at the jamborees. Lorraine Stevens also plays piano for me at the jamborees.

Newberry Jamboree 1999, I made my fiddle debut. Not to many people knew I was taking lessons and so were surprised to see me play my 3 tunes. I have really enjoyed going to the jamborees and playing. I have met some very nice people there since I began playing, the people have really encouraged me a lot.

Grandma has me practice daily. Grandma and Grandpa take me to my lessons as well as the jamborees.

I am now in fifth grade and thinking of band. I think I will enjoy this also. I also enjoy playing soccer, the computer, history - especially civil war era, and television. I love knowing the names of the old fiddle tunes they play in the movies, and it is neat knowing I play them also!

At Walloon Lake in 1999, I also began square dancing. I enjoy this a lot also. I have never had a lesson, but learned by watching. I enjoy the old time music I have learned from all of this.

I joined OMFA in 2000 and hope to be a member for many years.

I would like to take this chance to say how much I appreciated all the help I received from Bob Murphy, Les Raber, Elon Howe for the fiddle and all the help he has given me, and most of all to Sandy Jones. I could not of done it with out Sandy!! Elon!! Les & Bob!! and my grandparents for taking me to the jamborees and lessons!! And THANKS to all the people who have encouraged me at each jamboree!



## RUSS HAWTHORNE

REGION 6



I was born June 1, 1929 at Hastings, Michigan. I now live at Battle Creek. I was raised on a farm in the Lacey & Dowling area. My father loved to sing and played harmonica. He got me started playing harmonica at age 5, then when I was 8 he encouraged me to play the guitar. I just picked it up by ear. He also got me to singing and I still love to sing! Growing up I played and sang at PTA's and all kinds of social gatherings, which we had lots of in those years. In the late 70's I sang and played in a group that went to Nashville, Tennessee and made an album of old country. This was fun and a big thrill for me! Believe it or not, they did sell! I got with the MFA about 1979. I joined the MFA about 1979, and was an officer in that organization. Now I belong to the OMFA for about 5 years...1997. I enjoy playing back up guitar for the fiddlers, and I play some on the mandolin. I still play my harmonica and I still love to sing!

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What is the difference between a fiddle and a violin?  
Who cares?  
Neither is a GUITAR!



My first experience playing old-time music was with my brother when I was a child. He could play many stringed instruments but he favored the fiddle. He taught me to back him up on the piano, playing tunes like Soldiers Joy and Turkey In The Straw. We also played piano duets like Sailors Hornpipe and 12th Street Rag. Throughout our lives, whenever we got together we had a jam session. This is how we connected, even though he was older and we had not been raised together.

When I lost my brother, I missed our music together. One day I saw a flyer for an OMFA Jamboree at North Branch. I took my autoharp and Don Knott made me feel very welcome. I remember playing My Blue Heaven for Bob Murphy that day. I thank the OMFA for putting the fun of old-time music back in my life.

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A violinist reads a printed piece of music.....

The fiddler learns a tune by listening

## GLENN HENDRIX

REGION 5



I grew up in Ann Arbor and started playing violin in 1964 when I was 10 years old. I played violin through high school as well as in orchestra at my own graduation. There were 800 students in my class and I thought 'Pomp & Circumstance' would never end! I still play the violin that I bought for \$50.00 while in high school. It was made in Germany by E. Martin in about 1920. My family vacationed on Beaver Island and I worked there during the summers.

Then I went to Michigan State University and began playing fiddle with folk musicians there. Sally Rogers encouraged me, Joel Mabus and Carrie Potter...The 'Pretty Shaky String Band' and many others influenced my playing then. I was involved with The Tenpound Fiddle coffeehouse @ MSU. In 1977 I started playing for Contra dances at MSU. I met Bob Fleck about that time and played at my first jamboree in 1977 at Webberville and another at Romeo, also in 1977. I started learning the old music from Beaver Island recordings of Pat Bonner, an old Island fiddler. I worked in Ann Arbor after graduation from MSU and continued to play for contra dances with different callers and musicians, but there were lots of good fiddlers and not much opportunity to play.

In 1979 I went to Graduate School at Michigan Technological University of Houghton, Michigan.

## GLENN HENDRIX

I was almost the only fiddler around! I met Frank Farthing and some other musicians, played at bars and some college events. I learned some Finnish Music from Helmer Toyras and Oren Tikkanen and went to the Aura Jamboree. I also played for a short time with Oren Tikkanen band - "Thimbleberry".

I moved to Bay City and then to Reese for 2 years after graduating from Michigan Tech. I didn't play much then, but met Starr Eby at a contra dance in Ann Arbor and we were married in 1985. We lived in Grand Rapids for about 8 years before moving to Lowell. Starr, John VanVoorhees, of Fennville, and I started a contra dance band called 'Piano, Buttons & Bows. Starr played piano, John the accordion and I played fiddle. We played at lots of dances at Grand Rapids and Ann Arbor for about 7 years. We also played at the Michigan Dance and Heritage Spring and Fall Dance Camp. A career in environmental engineering and three children have since changed my priorities and I rarely play for dances any more.

In about 1989 Ed Palmer, a musician from Beaver Island, asked me to play with his band for the Beaver Island Party of Grand Rapids after Ed Sobie passed away. I had only heard Ed Sobie play once but was able to fill in. Now I play almost every night for the Grand Rapids Party and the Homecoming Party on the Island, plus occasional Island weddings and other parties. The Islanders love the old time fiddle music.

I have played for jamborees off and on since 1977. I have been a member of OMFA since about 1977.

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### THE TOUCH of the MASTER'S HAND

Whenever your life is out of tune  
And no melody soothes your soul  
Look to the Master whose gentle touch  
Will Bless you and make you whole  
Like an old violin with so little worth  
A life may be less than grand  
But may be transformed in a moment  
By the TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S HAND.

## RIBY & 'WILLIE' HOLMES

TEXAS



I was born 8-9-17 and my wife, Willie was born 5-7-19. We recently celebrated our 59th anniversary. We lived in Fowlerville, Michigan for several years. We now live in a retirement home in Denton, Texas. I was a teacher for 30 years, retired in 1980. Willie was a receptionist at different doctor's offices in Fowlerville for about 30 years. I was also in different 'business' for about 10 years, feed & grain, real estate, and insurance, always went back to teaching as I loved that, especially working with young people.

My wife and I have danced together for 59 years as we both love music. I started calling square dances in 1940, played piano for my brother Herbie at house dances before that, but never took to the fiddle until I was 77 years old and have really enjoyed it!! Play mostly be ear as I had 7 lessons on the fiddle. We both love the old square dance and round dance tunes. We joined the OMFA one year before the first book was published. (book printed in 1986)

We have always enjoyed the OMFA, have made a great number of friends and really do miss all of you! We had hopes of coming to a couple of jamborees this fall when the color is so beautiful but not sure as of yet if we will be up to it or not. Our love and prayers to all.

\*\*\*\*\*

Square Dancers love Fiddle Music.

# ELON HOWE

REGION 5



Elon started making violins in 1984, and is currently working on his 47th instrument. He has won two Grand Champions, 5-1st place and 6-2nd place trophies in the annual Violin Makers Association of Arizona, International Competition in Tucson, Arizona. He has sold 6 instruments - 2 violas and 4 violins to- Shoji Tabuchi in Branson, Missouri. He now has instruments in Germany, Hawaii, Arizona, and several other states in the U.S. Elon semi-retired in 1993 from as a masonry contractor. He enjoys making and repairing violins and runs a small business from his home. They also set up booths at several music festivals around Michigan through out the year. Londa and Elon have been married 19 years and have traveled many times back and forth across the country going to many different violin functions. Elon has been playing fiddle off and on for many years, and only recently has Londa started accompanying him on the piano.

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Londa served as Secretary to the O.M.F.A. 1999 - 2001.

Elon s a true friend to all fiddlers, with his encouragement, and help in what ever way he can. THANKS ELON!

# OSCAR JAQUISH

REGION 2



I was born April 30, 1949 in Frankfort, Michigan. I now live near Interlochen, Michigan. I am employed as an electrical contractor.

My wife bought me my first fiddle as a Christmas gift when I was about 47 yrs of age. Listening to recordings of fiddle music, I heard 'MAIDENS PRAYER' by Reno & Harrell. I thought I sure would like to play like that! I still can't play that tune but I enjoy playing.

I like the hymns and gospels best.

We joined OMFA in 1999.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Wagner's music has beautiful moments but some bad quarters of an hour"

*Rossini*

"Richard Wagner's music is better than it sounds"

*Mark Twain*

## DANNY & SHERRIE JOHNSTON

REGION 2



I was born in Harbor Springs in 1940 and have lived here all my life. I started playing fiddle in my 20's. I have played in the area for lots of parties. My favorite style is Canadian and Irish.

Sherrie and I were married in 1961, and we have two sons. We have always enjoyed OMFA ever since it started. We love the idea of meeting so many great people. We have been members since its beginning.

**EDITOR:** Dan and Sherrie sponsored the Harbor Springs fiddle jamboree in 1977, which was the 3rd jamboree for the OMFA. Danny took part in the 25th anniversary special at Grand Rapids on April 21, 2001. He played the Happy Acre Polka in honor of Clair Stevens, long time member and President for many years. Danny and Sherrie are also involved with the East Jordan Fiddle Jamboree.





## EDNA JOHNSON

\*\*\* daughter of Stewart Carmichael

REGION 5



I was born in Mecosta County -- Ewart, Michigan -- , in the home my Mom and Dad built on my paternal grandparents' property, in 1935. I attended country school through 5th grade then to Ewart Public School 6th through 12th grade. My parents were Stewart & Lulu Carmichael who were two of the original members of the OMFA. Dad was a self taught, left handed fiddler and mom played the piano with him. Mom had also taken violin lessons in her teen years playing for weddings and at her graduation from high school. My mom's father played violin, as did her oldest sister and one brother while grandmother played the pump organ and later the piano. Many of her siblings were musical.

Dad taught me to play the simple chords on the piano and the hawaiian guitar. I played with them for some dances years ago. As young children we were taken with the folks when they played for dances, when bedtime came we were put to bed on the stage beside them.

I took a few piano lessons in the 6th grade but decided to play the cornet instead and was in band for 6 years. After high school I went to Grand Rapids to

## **EDNA JOHNSON**

**\*\*\* daughter of Stewart Carmichael**

live with an aunt and worked for an insurance office. Dad's violin that was purchased from Sears Roebuck had come unglued and he was using a neighbors to play for dances. He saw an ad in in the Grand Rapids paper which he clipped out and sent to me to see if I would call on it and go look at it for him. My uncle and I went across town to look and I purchased the violin, case & bow for \$10.00. It was made by William Bronson in 1908. This is the violin Dad played from 1953 till his death in 1990 and this is what I play now.

I married Herb Johnson in November of 1954. We have 4 children and 4 grandchildren. They live in different states where their work took them. Herb's work took us to Chicago, New Hampshire, and ended up in Fayetteville, Georgia for 22 years. After the children were gone I went to college for 3 years, passed state boards to become a RN in 1984. I worked at a local hospital near us for 7 years, before we sold our home and moved back home to the farm here in Ewart, Michigan in 1993.

After dad died I took the violin to Georgia. I knew absolutely nothing about fiddling! In one of our local papers I saw a picture of a lady teaching children lessons by the Suzuki method. I called and asked her if she would take me as a student. I started taking lessons in October 1992. In April of 1993 we moved and I have been trying to teach myself some of the old tunes that I remember my folks used to play.

I am trying to learn to play with others I always enjoy music and try to get to some of the jamborees.

We joined OMFA in 1998.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **WE MAKE THE BEST**

Three violin manufacturers have all done business for years on the same block in the small town of Cremona, Italy. After years of a peaceful co-existence the Amati Shop decided to put a sign in the window saying:

**WE MAKE THE BEST VIOLINS IN ITALY.**

The Guarmeri Shop soon followed suit and put a sign in his window:

**WE MAKE THE BEST VIOLINS IN THE WORLD.**

Finally, the Stradivarius family put a sign in their shop saying:

**WE MAKE THE BEST VIOLINS ON THE BLOCK.**

# KARLEEN GEIGER JOHNSON

\*\*\* Granddaughter of Frank Mattison

REGION 5



Wherever my road may wind - I'll always be from Smyrna, Michigan! I inherited a love for music from my mother, FRANCES GEIGER ( daughter of Frank Mattison, played piano for Frank) and from my grandparents, Frank & Irma Mattison. Frank attended the very 1st OMFA jamboree at Sheridan. In my grandfathers later years he tried to make me into a fiddler. I will just have to keep on trying because I am not one yet.

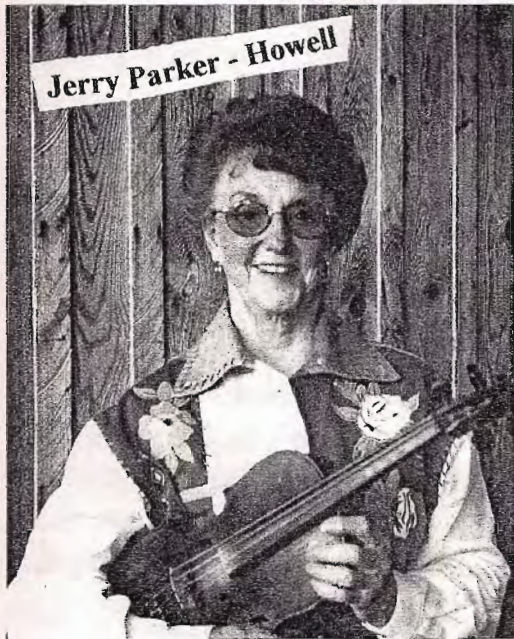
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## ODE TO THE FIDDLE by ELDON McFARLANE

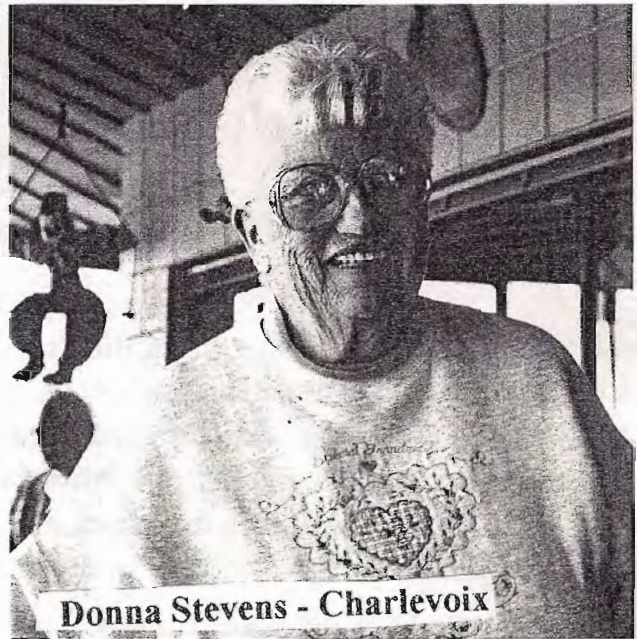
Fiddle Fiddle on the wall  
Alone - no music at all  
But when I take you down  
You are far from a frown  
Stings tuned, bow rosined, actin' snappy  
Hands clappin', toes tappin', makin' people happy.



**Grandma Jo - Big Rapids**  
a regular attender of the jamborees when in Michigan



**Jerry Parker - Howell**



**Donna Stevens - Charlevoix**



**Fiddle collection**

## SANDY JONES

REGION 5



Many years ago I was born on a farm near Big Rapids, Michigan. Being raised with 9 kids, 8 of them being boys, didn't leave me much time to learn music. Mom was persistent, however, and decided I would take piano lessons at age 5. Lessons continued until I was 7, but practicing piano became too painful when the other kids were outside having fun. After tearing several pages out of my music book, grandmother, who was the overseer of my practice time, said, "that's it". I was free at last!!!

A few years later my parents moved one mile away, leaving the cousins behind. At loose ends, I spent more time playing piano than ever. My mother bought me all the latest sheet music so I could play the music I heard on the radio. Over the years I played in churches, school activities, and many, many dances.

When I met my husband, Jim, we moved to Ohio. No one played music down there so I listened to Ft. Wayne radio station all the time, keeping up on the latest music. Then some people were going to have a dance and they needed a piano player. They called me to play the piano and I did in an actual barn with all the 'trimmings'. The next day they delivered the piano to our small house. We made room for it and for the next two years I played piano whenever I got the chance.

## SANDY JONES

After moving back to Big Rapids not too much music was played as I to Ferris State University and then on to Central Michigan University to receive degrees in Business Education and Administration. At the time there was many teachers and money was scarce for the schools, so continuing on for my doctorate would of placed me out of the job market. However, I was lucky to get a job teaching in the business area at Morley Stanwood High School 29 years ago. Needing a computer teacher, I went back to school for more education in that field. For the last 22 years I have been teaching in the computer area. When am I going to retire? No one knows the answer to that question as I still love working with the students.

Ed Lodden deserves credit for getting me back into music. After finding out that I could p[lay the piano he put me in his Country-Western Shows that he put on every year for the Varsity Club at the high school Ed taught at Morley Stanwood until his retirement. He wasn't happy, however, until I was going to the monthly jam sessions at Aetna in Morley. We spent many years playing, singing, and having a good times with friends.

About 6 years ago, I decided to try to play fiddle. I took lessons for about 3 years from a lady who thought the word "fiddle" was a swear word! She taught me classical music and signed me up to play in the Ferris Chamber Orchestra, which I did for the next 5 years. A shoulder surgery forced me into semi-retirement, but I will go back in the fall.

My husband, Jim, who supports my music entirely, deserves a lot of credit for living with someone who is as changeable as the wind. When he tried to watch TV with a Coon Theatre Organ, piano, keyboard, and synthesizer he gladly consented to my building a music room! Six and a half years ago a music building was completed on our farm that allows musicians to come here and have fun. We meet every Friday night from 7:00 p.m. until whenever.

At present I am treasurer of the O.M.F.A. and I have been a member for about 7 years. Meeting people and being with friends is one of God's greatest gifts! I'm blessed with knowing musicians and friends who keep my life rich in many ways.

\*\*\*\*\*

What is the fiddler's favorite cheese?  
String cheese.

OLD TIME FIDDLE TUNES ARE ALIVE AND WELL!!

## ARVO A. JUNTUNEN

REGION 1



I was born on May 3, 1917 in Republic, Mi. In 1939 the jobs were scarce in the U.P. So I went to Fitchburg, Ma in hopes of finding a job. I lived with my aunt & uncle there. They had some friends that owned a chicken farm, where I was able to find work. They had a son, 18 yrs, who had taken violin lessons, and given them up. My being a music lover, especially violin, I began to practice by ear with it. In the spring of 1940 I found a job on a truck farm, in Fitchburg, and with the same violin, I began taking lessons for about a year. Being 23 yrs of age, this helped me a lot. This is where I learned to read music. Being of Finnish descent, I learned to play Finnish Folk Songs.

In March of 1943 I was drafted into the Army. I now laid the violin aside during the 37 months I served. The next 11 yrs I played violin off and on. In 1968 I began working on a mink ranch in Illinois. I worked there for about 10 years. I then met some people, who had a daughter who had played violin and given it up. I bought her violin and still have it yet today. It was made by Stradivarius, and was made in Germany.

I am now retired. I am not a very good singer, so I always wanted to play melody. The violin/fiddle is pretty and my 1st choice.

My favorite fiddle tunes are Turkey in the Straw, Irish Washerwoman, Golden Slippers.

I joined OMFA about 1996.

## WALTER 'PETE' KELLER

REGION 2



I was born December 6, 1926 in Cross Village, Michigan, where I've lived all my life. I was a lumberjack and saw mill worker most of my working years.

My Uncle Frank showed me how to play chords on the piano when I was about 10 years old. He was a good fiddler and I soon was able to follow anything he played. I started playing in a 3-piece band, playing mandolin, when I was 16 years old. We got \$1.00 a night and played mostly in town halls. I took up the fiddle in 1945 and have been playing it ever since. I also play guitar, banjo, accordion and dulcimer, but the fiddle is my favorite instrument.

My first jamboree was at Elk Rapids with Paul (Gifford) and Bob (Fleck). I joined OMFA shortly after that, this was in 1984. I still like the old square dance tunes with a caller that calls....not sings.

\*\*\*\*\*

Little Sammy was practicing his violin while dad was reading the paper in another room. The family dog was lying at the man's feet.

As the screeching sound of the violin reached the dog's ears, the pup began to howl dismally. The father endured this racket for as long as he could. Finally he threw his paper to the floor and yelled above the din "For heavens sake, can't you play something the dog doesn't know?"



## FRANK & VADA KIDDER

REGION 7



I was born in Petoskey, Michigan on June 13, 1923. I grew up on a farm near Good Hart north of Harbor Springs.

When I was about 10, I traded 5 of my dad's Plymouth Rock chickens for an old tenor banjo, which I still have.

WWII came, and when I came home, it seemed like there was just no time for music. I moved to Oxford in 1946 where I met my wife, Vada. We were married in 1948. Four kids and 30 years with Ford Motor Co. later, here we are still in Oxford.

In 1990 we went to an OMFA Jamboree in Cheboygan, and I decided then that I wanted to play back up banjo for the fiddlers. I bought a better banjo and we joined OMFA in 1995. We attend all the jamborees we can and we really enjoy the music. We have made so many new friends! We are looking forward to many good years with OMFA and its people.

\*\*\*\*\*

The difference between a violinist and a fiddler...The fiddler plays his OWN music .. while the violinist plays other peoples music.

## BILL & CAROL KING

REGION 8



I was born in 1925 in Bad Axe, Michigan. When I was 14 yrs old, I played guitar along with my brother Russell. Then I got married and put music aside for a while. I worked driving truck for my own business. I then moved to Port Huron, where I was a mechanic until I retired. About 1987 I began to play music again. First just the guitar and then got into more violin and going to OMFA jamborees. I played my first solo at an OMFA Jamboree at Port Hope with Herb Wiles on piano. Been playing the violin every since. I enjoy buying, selling and repairing violins. My trademark is the big Stetson hat I wear. I joined OMFA in the early 90's.

**Carol:** I was born in Port Huron in 1935. A girlfriend taught me to chord on the guitar in the 80's I began attending OMFA jamborees, playing back up guitar and piano. I sing a little also. I joined OMFA in 1985. I served as Secretary from 1996 - 1998.

Bill & I were married in 1977. We have made many dear friends from many places around the state of Michigan. Playing music at jams and jamborees has been a big part of our lives, we also enjoy sharing our music with others in nursing homes and senior residences.

## ELDON KNAPP & VIOLET ONDUER

REGION 5



I was born May 15, 1920 in Blanchard, Michigan. In 1925 I moved to Ionia, Michigan, where I have resided most of my life. I used to play the Victrola and liked to play a record called Peggy O'neal. I kept singing 'Peggy O Peggy O.' I was about 6 at this time and began asking for a fiddle. At age 6 1/2 my folks decided to see if I really did know what I wanted. They started me in a group of 50 students. If you finished the 50 lessons, you were given a 3/4 size fiddle. Out of the 50 students, one girl and I finished the 50 lessons! That fiddle now hangs in my living room along with several of my awards which I have received over the years. My award from Governor Engler, and the Michigan Country Music Hall of Fame at Prarieville, when I was inducted. Also hanging there is a recent front cover and write up from the Jammin' magazine where I was featured.

In 1942 I married Lilah Keehn from Eaton Rapids. She passed away in 1999. I have a daughter, 2 sons, 7 grandchildren & 11 great grand children. I served in WW11 in 1941 - 1945. I served with the 5-32nd Engineer Army, Land, Air & Sea Special Brigade.

I joined OMFA in 1993.

## THE KNAPP FAMILY

ELDON KNAPP was considered a child prodigy at age 6 1/2 when he took up the fiddle. He did take some lessons, and was soon being asked to play around the area of Ionia County where he lived. As he grew older, the family became more involved and soon they were known as the KNAPP FAMILY as they made appearances at various functions.

They played many instruments including fiddle, guitar, bass, washboard, the saw, and more. There was Eldon's dad, a sister, sister in law, and Eldon in this group.

I, editor, 1st saw them at the Ionia County fair when I was real young. I was quite impressed with the young lad who could play fiddle in all sorts of weird positions! Like under his legs while sitting, or behind his head, and other ways. Plus the 'funny horse' that had 2 people inside it.

At one time Eldons father was approached by John Laird of Renfro Valley, Kentucky about becoming a part of the show there. But dad had to say no, as the children were still in school.

Today, Eldon is very active with his fiddling, belonging to OMFA and MFA. He takes part in several jam sessions around the area...Nashville, Ionia, Muir, just to name a few. Eldon has been inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame. He has had some health problems along the way, but he is still very active in the fiddle world.

Eldon plays all the old time songs including 'Darktown Strutters Ball', 'I'm Looking Over A 4-Leaf Clover', '5 foot 2", as well as fiddle tunes.

Eldon at age  
6 or 7





Eldon during a performance

The Knapp Family



## THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S HAND

T'was battered and scarred, and the auctioneer thought twas hardly worth his while to waste much time with the old violin. But he held it up with a smile.

"Give me a dollar and who'll make it two? Only two dollars, who'll make it three? Three dollars twice and that's a good price, but who's got a bid for me?"

The air was hot and the people just stood there as the sun was setting low. Then from the back of the crowd a gray haired man came forward and picked up the bow.

He wiped the dust from the old violin, and he tightened up the strings. Then he played out a melody, pure and sweet, sweet as the angels sing.

The music ended and the auctioneer, with a voice that was quiet and low, said "What is my bid for the old violin?" and he held it up with the bow.

"A thousand dollars and who'll make it two? Only two thousand, who'll make it three? Three thousand twice and that's a good price, but who has a bid for me?"

And the people called out , "What made the change? We don't understand" The auctioneer stopped and said with a smile, "*It was the Touch of the Master's Hand*"

Now many a man with his life out of tune is battered and scarred with sin. And he's auctioned cheap to a thankless world much like the old violin.

But then the MASTER comes and the foolish crowd, they never understand the worth of a soul or the change that is brought just by the *Touch of the Master's Hand*.

## WYATT R. KNAPP

REGION 5



I was born in Phoenix, Arizona and I am 44 years of age. I now reside in Allendale, Michigan. I am an author and a website designer. In 2001 I designed and began hosting the official website for the Original Michigan Fiddlers Assoc.

I play fiddle and guitar, and I also sing. My mother and father were both musicians. I come from a long line of fiddlers on my mothers side of the family. I was introduced to the old time music by my parents and often went to sleep at night listening to The Carter Family and other great old country music recordings that were played on the family record player.

Some of my fondest childhood memories are of the trips to Cross Village, Michigan where I would visit my grandparents, uncles and cousins. There I would get to stay up later than usual because the family would get together to play music, laugh and talk until late into the night. My Grandpa Keller, Uncle Pete Keller, and two great uncles played the fiddle.

I always wanted to learn to play the fiddle and in 1984 with the help of Uncle Pete Keller of Cross Village I began to realize my dream. My uncle Pete not only gave me helpful advice, but also shared many of the old fiddle tunes that had been played in the family for generations.

My first fiddle was one that I bought from my sister-in-law and restored to playing condition. A handwritten label inside the fiddle showed that it had been played in a St. Louis orchestra in the 1860's.

## WYATT R. KNAPP

My family is a musical family. I have played professionally in a number of bands in West Michigan. My wife played piano for many years and so far three of our four children are musicians. My goal is to learn all of the family's old fiddle tunes and to pass them on to the children and grandchildren.

I have been a member of OMFA off and on for about 15 years. My favorite fiddle tune is Ragtime Annie.

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### DID YOU KNOW...

Jimmie Rodgers was known as the 'Father of Country Music' but he didn't think he was a father to anything except his three daughters. 'Discovered' by Ralph Peer of RCA, Jimmie was trying to be a snappy vaudeville act. Peer stated that if he 'couldn't find them in town, he would go to the woods'. Peer discovered Jimmy Rodgers in 1927, and also the Carter Family that same year.

Henry Ford, the auto maker, put more money into the promotion of country music than anyone during the 20's. Ford was scared by what he saw in the urban community with couple jazz dancing. So he organized fiddle contests, and promoted Square Dances, what he saw as the older, more wholesome forms of entertainment.

The first record released by Fiddlin' John Carson was "The Old Hen Cackled" and on the flip side "The Rooster's Going To Crow"

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### WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME

Written in 1863 by Patrick S. Gilmore. A Civil War tune, it became a national hit not only during the Civil War but also during the Spanish American War. The North and the South had their differences, but one thing they shared in common was MUSIC. Both sides enjoyed singing When Johnny Comes Marching Home.

Any fiddlers that play this tune?





I was born in 1926 in Alpena, Michigan. I have played musical instruments since age 6. They include the violin, piano, organ, harmonica, banjo, guitar and mandolin. I bought my first fiddle in 1964 from the International Violin Co. of Baltimore, Maryland. I taught myself to play. My father was also a fiddler.

I entered the U.S. Army in January 1945 and was discharged in December 1946. I was an engineer on Great Lakes ships for 41 years.

I married my childhood sweetheart, Dorothy, in 1958. We have 3 sons. We have lived at Long Lake 10 miles north of Alpena since we got married.

I joined OMFA in 1975, the year it began.

\*\*\*\*\*

For the good are always merry  
Some by an evil chance  
And the merry love the fiddle  
And the merry love to dance.

*written by William Butler Yeats*

# WAYNE AND GERTRUDE LANTZ

REGION 2



Wayne was born in Grant Township, Mecosta County. He was a journeyman welder working with Pontiac Motors, working on high pressure pipe steam lines. Wayne and his wife, Gertrude now live in Kalkaska, Michigan.

Wayne's interest in music began with the old pump organ, and at age 16 he began playing the violin. At age 18 he started on the tenor banjo. Wayne has taken lessons from the U.S. School of Music and during the 30's he was a member of a dance band. He also has a fine singing voice and his favorite song to sing is "Girl of my Dreams". Wayne has been a member of OMFA for 22 years.

*Written by Sandy Jones*

\*\*\*\*\*

## O.M.F.A. JAMBOREES

1st was held on	May 29, 1976	@ Sheridan
20th was held on	October 31, 1981	@ Hastings
100th was held on	August 11, 1989	@ Lansing
200th was held on	June 2, 1990	@ Omer
300th was held on	October 25, 1997	@ Hastings
350th was held on	June 9, 2001	@ Walled Lake
The last jamboree of our 25th Anniversary year will be:		
357th on	December , 2001	@ Clare

## DAN LEVENSON

OHIO



I was born June 28, 1955 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I now live in Vinton, Ohio.

I started music pretty young in my life. My mom and dad met at a square dance and continued their musical interests throughout their life. Mom played piano and guitar and dad called square dances, so it was inevitable that I would be exposed to traditional music from an early age.

My first instrument was the piano, when I was seven. They had lessons at school in second grade. The piano lessons didn't last for long though because we soon found out that our piano had a cracked soundboard and repair was beyond the means of my folks. So mom trotted me down to visit with her friend, Stanley Levin, then director of music for the Pittsburgh public schools.

Stanley let me try out all kinds of instruments and it wasn't too long till I had it down to choosing between the violin and the trumpet. About that time, Mr. Levin pronounced, "This is going to be a violinist" and the choice was made. I don't know if it was really clear for me, but it was to him. Perhaps he was being a good friend to my parents. My son, in later years, took up the trumpet with no urging from me...And so I started violin lessons late in the 3rd grade with Marcus Klein - a retired symphony violinist. I still remember the look on his face when I asked him to teach me to play "Classical Gas" on the violin.

## DAN LEVENSON

I stayed with the violin through high school. Along the way, I picked up guitar so upon graduation the guitar stayed and the violin was put in its case for the next 15 or so years. I retrieved it in the form of fiddle about the grand age of 35. I had picked up the banjo in the interim and gotten back into the traditional banjo and fiddle music of the southern Appalachian mountains which was much like the music of childhood. Even though I enjoyed the banjo a lot, the fiddle held a new attraction to me and its role in the music I was now drawn to

It was a pretty quick study when I got back to it. Intonation came back right away but the bowing was another story. But I got good enough to join the Part Time Pleasure Stringband out of northeastern Ohio. Billie Westenfelder was the leader of the band and she took me to the Evart, Michigan funfest - my first trip to Michigan! From there my involvement with the fiddle grew stronger leading me to finally meet Les Raber. Little did I know how much that meeting would come to mean to us both.

Over the next 5 or 6 years, I visited Les whenever I was in the area. We would play together, me playing guitar and him fiddling and me paying attention and listening to his every note. OK, I played fiddle too, enough to make Les wonder why I came to hear him. I knew why and in fact I learned my most important lesson from one of those visits. And he and his brother Merle are the ones who helped me find the OMFA.

So, I still play banjo, and a lot of fiddle as I tour nationally playing and teaching the old time fiddle the old time way.

I have been a member of OMFA for many years.

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**EDITOR NOTE:** Dan plays banjo clawhammer style, and was voted one of the top 10 clawhammer banjo plays by Banjo Newsletter readers. Besides the banjo, he plays fiddle, strums guitar, clog dances, and is a story teller. He is in demand as a teacher and performer, traveling the states, bringing old time music to others. He regularly holds workshops at the Evart Dulcimer Funfest every year. He teaches fiddling and clawhammer banjo there.

The joy he finds in traditional music spills over into his teachings and performances. Every song has a story and every story has a song.

Dan asks everyone to remember a time before electricity and automobiles when people entertained themselves. Making their own music, and not listening to CD's, was a way of life. At square dances, barn raisings, or on the front porch, music was in every aspect of the settler's life.

## ALFRED & SHIRLEY LIETZ

REGION 3



I was born February 11, 1915 at Mount Clemens, Michigan. Shirley, my wife of 54 years, was also born in Mount Clemens. We lived there until my retirement in 1983. Then we moved to Tawas City. We have 3 sons, a daughter, all married, we have 7 grand children and 1 great grand child. I retired at age 65 after nearly 45 years of doing accounting, except for the 4 years I spent in the service.

At the age of 9 I received a violin for Christmas from my grandfather. This was a new copy of a "Strad" made in Czechoslovakia, with a bow and a wooden case. All of this for \$5.00! I played this violin until I got into high school. I briefly attended a group violin class in grade school and was privileged to take lessons for a number of years...mostly in the classics. It was a thrill to play in our high school orchestra numbering about 60 kids. We were the Michigan High School Class B, State Champions for 3 consecutive years!! Our city had at least 3 qualified violin teachers and several piano teachers.

Pursuing more education and earning a living, getting married with family responsibilities reduced the violin to a lesser priority, but by no means out of sight or forgotten.

Shirley participated in high school glee club, singing in operettas, singing in the church choir, but did not have the opportunity to receive formal instrumental training. However, for the past many years she has been playing the autoharp and

## ALFRED & SHIRLEY LIETZ

occasionally gets at our keyboard. We both actively play in dulcimer groups, the 2 of us have played in schools, for Seniors, and in nursing homes.

In 1976 we became interested in fretted and hammer dulcimers. I have always had an interest in working with woods, and with assistance from Shirley have built a few fretted dulcimers and a hammered dulcimer. Consequently we have become very active in attending various dulcimer festivals in Michigan and nearby states. While learning to play these instruments at these events, which also included the usual jam sessions, my interest was aroused to get active on the fiddle again.

In 1981 we attended an OMFA jamboree at Midland; I decided to join this league of old-time and country music. I played my 1st tunes at Omer, Mi in 1982. I had memorized these 3 tunes and fortunately I knew 1 more. Since that date we have gone to many, many jamborees, and Lord willing, hope that we may be able to attend more when family, weather, travel and health permit us to do so.

Here we have met many friends and have enjoyed their fellowship in a most satisfying rewarding common interest. Many have left their legacy and have given us memories of talent, love and fun.

I can name no favorite tune...way to many! I especially enjoy old-time fiddle tunes including the many good Canadian tunes; those with a good dance tempo.

My favorite fiddle was made by Josef Deulin, a luthier in Detroit which I received in 1929

We have been members of OMFA for 20 years.

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What do you get when you drop a piano down a mine shaft?

A flat minor.

Why did the Philharmonic disband?

Excessive sax and violins.

Gone Chopin, Bach in a minuet.

How do you get a guitar player to turn it down?

Put a piece of sheet music in front of him.

## ED LODDEN

REGION 5



Ed Lodden has been a member of the OMFA for seventeen years. He was President before Byard Stevens (1997 -2000). During his term in office, he encouraged many new people to join the organization. He makes it to as many jamborees as his busy lifestyle will permit. He and his wife, Blanche, have 3 sons. Jim, who lives in Texas, Wayne and Tom who live near them in Morley.

Ed taught school for many years and was head baseball coach at Morley-Stanwood High School. He retired 16 years ago and now raises draft horses. While at MSHS, Ed raised funds for his Varsity Club by putting on and performing in Country-Western Shows. These shows are still talked about to this day. Ed knows more words to more songs than most people and he's always in demand to sing a song. Ed has played guitar for many fiddlers and musicians, of which, Bill Huff, Herb Wiles and Wayne Fields are a few. Ed is also responsible for getting me back into music and he gave me, Sandy Jones, permission to write his biography.

**Editors note:** Ed Lodden always had a 7th inning stretch during the jamborees at about 3:00p.m. During this time he encouraged people to shake hands with those that were sitting around them. This encouraged many friendships to be formed. No need to be a stranger here for long. Then he would sing a Gospel song. He sang all the old and often, forgotten ones.



Ed Lodden



Sandy Jones





Bill Stevens and Danny Johnston



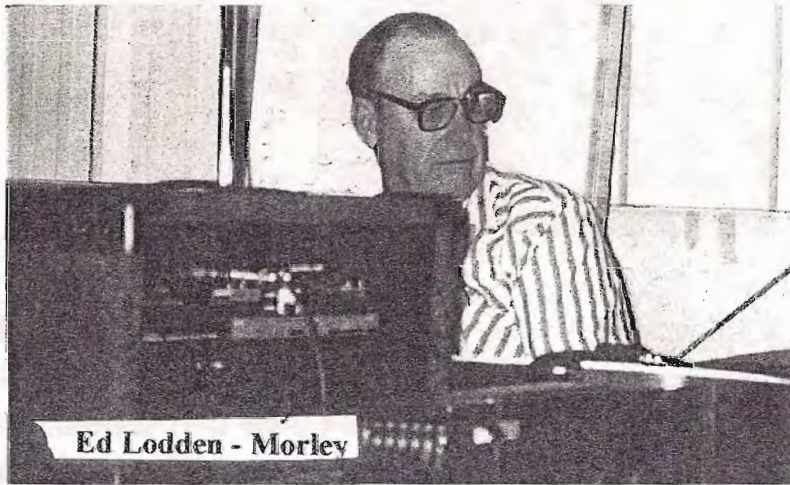
Keith Caldwell



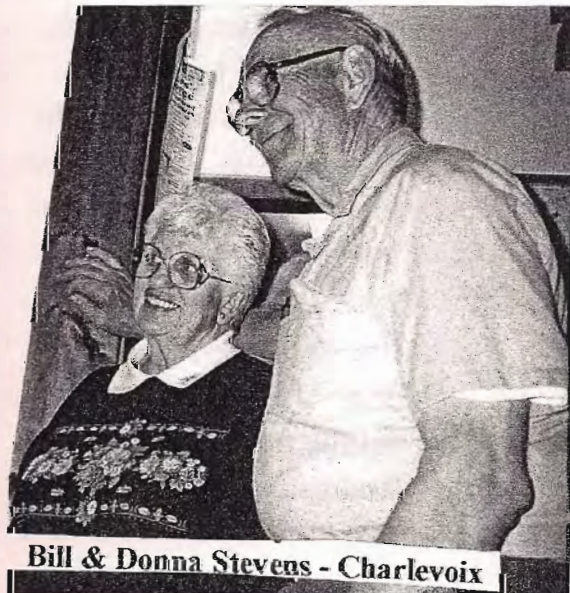
**Elon Howe - Newaygo**



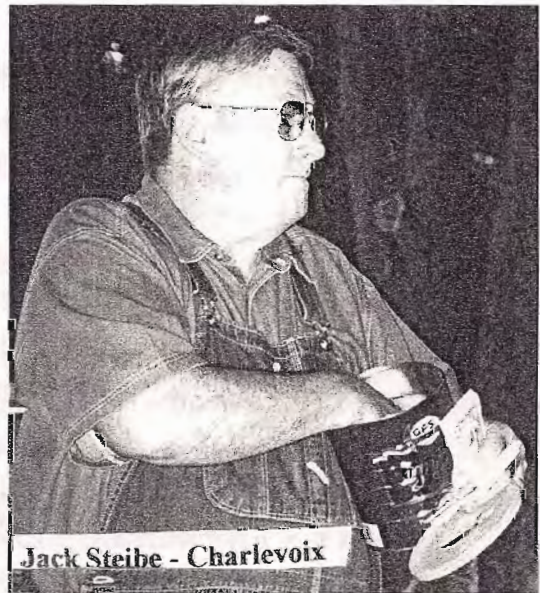
**Byard Stevens - Big Rapids**



**Ed Lodden - Morley**



**Bill & Donna Stevens - Charlevoix**



**Jack Steibe - Charlevoix**

## WILBUR 'WILL' LYMAN

REGION 7



My name is Wilbur 'Will' Lyman. I was born in Whitehall, New York on June 23, 1939. My dad's parents, aunts & uncles all played musical instruments, most played 2 instruments.

I began playing guitar for my Uncle James Lyman. We played for square dances and house parties. I always wanted to play the fiddle but was told that we had too many fiddlers in the family, that I should play the guitar, I would love it. But I didn't! As I got older and started my own family I still wanted to play the fiddle but did not pursue it. I started drinking heavy and ended up an alcoholic by the time I was 30. My dad died in 1970 & I got his fiddle which I put in the closet until 1982 when I stopped drinking. Some of my supporters told me to learn how to play the fiddle as a way to stay away from drinking. So I began and taught myself how to play the fiddle.

My biggest influence while learning to play the fiddle was Herb Wiles who I met at an OMFA jamboree. We became friends until his death in 1999. He was the finest fiddle player I ever played music with! He always let me play with his group, even when I was just beginning. He always took the time to teach me new tunes. I could not love him any more even if he had been my own dad. I sure miss him and his music. He was a very good friend!

## WILBUR 'WILL' LYMAN

My favorite fiddle tune is Julia's Waltz which I wrote for Julia Hayward, who is also a wonderful piano player and friend. She taught me to play the piano and encouraged me to keep playing the fiddle.

My wife Ruth, supports me but does not play, she's always ready to go to a jamboree or a contest with me.

Last but not least, my favorite style of fiddle music is Canadian style like Don Messer, Gerald Bailey, and Graham Townsend play.

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### THE FIDDLER AND HIS FIDDLE written by LOU CALIFF

I walked on stage with my fiddle and my bow  
And looked at the people all sitting in a row  
I gulped two times and blinked a little  
Then stared for a minute at the old fiddle  
I knew the three songs I was going to play  
After all, I had practiced them most of the day  
I turned to the lady sitting to my left  
She played the piano with considerable deft  
Told her the first song I was to do  
Then announced to the people "Flop-Eared Mule"  
I drew the bow across the string  
And that old fiddle began to sing  
I played the song with all my skill  
And when the song was finally done  
I knew the audience I had won  
Then I played the second song  
And then the third, it wasn't long  
The people out there sure gave me a hand  
And that was the end of my one day stand  
So I put down the fiddle with so much sorrow  
But, I'll be back some other tomorrow.

Fiddle tunes are THE best kind of music!

## ROGER & HELEN MARTIN

REGION 2



I was born in 1928, in Missaukee County, Michigan. My father was a farmer his entire life. I drove truck and farmed. Then in 1966 I became a water well driller. I retired from this in 1993. When I was 10, my mother bought me a guitar from Sears Roebuck for \$3.29. I served 3 years in the Air Force in Japan. In December of 1948 I married Belva Ingram & we bought 40 acres in Missaukee County, which we farmed. I still reside on that same 40 acres. Belva passed away in 1990. Then in 1993 I married Helen Kinney.

I began playing the fiddle in 1984 because I was interested in music. A friend of mine told me after I had played a tune that I could learn to play it. That's all it took! From then on I began playing. I bought my first fiddle from an auction sale near Cadillac for \$30.00 and I still have it. I had planned to do some work on it but when I played it I decided not to. It is the same today as the day I bought it. The fiddle was a Lyons & Healy originally bought in 1874 by a Civil War veteran who was wounded in the war and lived in Ohio. The wound would not heal so his Dr. advised moving to Northern Michigan. The veteran moved to Manton and operated Bay's Photo Studio for years.

My favorite tune is Red River Valley.

I joined OMFA in 1985 at Cadillac. I became Secretary in 1987 and served for 1 term.

## THE FIDDLER

*written by Helen Martin*

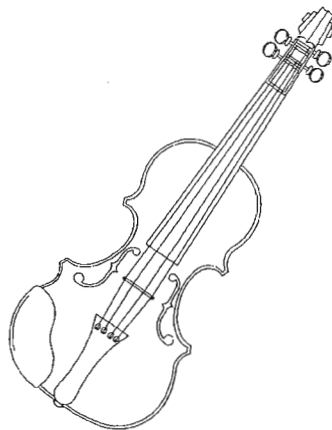
He lays the bow gently  
Across the strings  
What beautiful music  
Just listen to it ring.

A melorious song  
Fills the air  
His fiddle is tuned  
With precision and care.

Whether a hoedown  
Or waltz so fine  
The fiddler is always  
In perfect time.

And when everyone's gone  
The dance floor is bare  
The fiddle is returned  
To its case with care.

This poem was written by Helen Martin for her husband, Roger Martin.  
They have been members of the O.M.F.A. for many years.



## GLEN McDONOUGH

REGION 5



I was born on Beaver Island, St James, Michigan, on April 20, 1934. I moved to Wyoming, Michigan in 1955. I have worked as an electrician the last 15 years of my career, I was employed as Electrical Inspector for city of Wyoming. I married Eleanor Gallagher in 1959, we have 1 son, Patrick. Eleanor often chords for me on the piano when I practice. I learned to play the guitar when I was a teenager. I played with Patrick Bonner, on of the best old-time fiddlers on Beaver Island. Patrick offered to teach me how to play the fiddle but when I was young I had no desire to do that.

About 20 years ago I acquired an old fiddle but I didn't know how to tune it. After much research and practice I figured it out and found I could get a few notes in a row on certain tunes. I was about 50 years old. I went to an OMFA jamboree in 1985. The following year I joined the OMFA and about a year later I played at the jamboree for the first time. One of the tunes I played was 'Marching Through Georgia' which is one of my favorite tunes. Later that evening Rod Stevens asked me to play for a square dance which he calls to the same tune. That gave me a lot of confidence and I have been practicing and playing ever since then.

I joined OMFA about 1985.

# ROY McFARLAND

REGION 3



I was born in 1946, near Harbor Springs, Michigan. I now live in Cheboygan. I have been a builder/carpenter since 1968.

I bought my 1st mandolin for \$5.00 at the age of 13. My father played the violin, and this is how I got interested in music.

I play mandolin, guitar, banjo and sometimes I can even squeak out 3 tunes on the fiddle!

I learned to square dance early and I like to call for square dances, if I can get signed up early enough.

Music has been a big part of my life and now I sure enjoy hearing those youngsters play.

I have been involved with OMFA since about 1980.

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Square dancers are fast steppers!

Square dancers have more fun!

If you dance with a grizzly bear.....it's best to let him lead!



## ELSIE & KURT MERROW

REGION 5



I was raised in Chicago and took accordion lessons. I played in bands and orchestra, also for dances and parties. I began playing violin in my mid 60's. I have 2 violins. One is an old Staines from Richard Parrott, a well known fiddler here in southwestern Michigan. I worked as a bookkeeper and as a credit officer. I was a stay at home mom for our son and daughter.

I met Kurt when I was 16 yrs of age, while he was stationed at Navy Pier going to naval school. He had joined for 6 years, serving 4 years at sea on destroyers and mine sweepers. We married in 1945 when he got a 10 day leave. He was raised on a farm in southeastern Ohio. He played guitar as a young boy. He now plays 12 string banjo and 12 string guitar.

Kurt retired after 40 years, from the Allstate Insurance Co.

Kurt and I have lived in the southwestern part of Michigan most of our lives, presently living in Middleville. We have 3 grandchildren. When I have time again I would like to continue in art and oil paintings.

We are members of OMFA.



## BOB MURPHY

REGION 6



I was born on July 24, 1922 in a farm house near Grand Ledge, Michigan and about 5 miles west of our present home, which is located on the west side of Lansing near the Grand River. As my life's work was that of a carpenter & building contractor, I built our present home 46 years ago. I was the only child of Louis & Lilah Murphy. I attended the Michigan Ave school in Lansing through 2nd grade, and then my parents moved to Pottersville, where I graduated high school in 1940.

My wife Margaret and I met on a blind date (10-26-46). We went to the old time dance at the Legion Hall in Mason and danced to the music of Mrs. Nick & her Hayseeds 6 piece orchestra from Flint. Our first dance was to the song "The Waltz You Saved For Me". Before this date I had filled in for the bass player for the Hayseeds several times, and also for Mr Nick & his Cornhuskers.

Margaret and I were married on March 19, 1948. We have 2 sons, 1 daughter, 5 grandchildren, and 1 great granddaughter.

I had my first violin lesson on October 6, 1929. I was 8 years of age and in the 2nd grade. A smaller sized instrument was furnished, and if I took 55 lessons costing \$1.00 each, the violin, bow and cardboard case, on November 15, 1930, it would belong to me! I did this plus an additional 22 lessons. The first song I learned to play was AMERICA and I learned to play it in 7 key signatures.

## **BOB MURPHY**

Clarence Post was my teacher for advanced violin lessons. He was my father's age and had studied under Leopold Auer in the early 20's.

During WWII, I served 3 years in the U.S. Air Force including 2 1/2 years in the Pacific Theatre. When I got home in November of 1945, having already given much thought about whether I should or wanted to continue my music studies and make it my livelihood. The answer to the majority of the aspects that I considered came out 'No'. For 40 plus years I used another God given talent. Today I can drive by buildings that bring back memories from the past when I was the man on the job, and in many cases, also at the drawing board, that was responsible for their being.

O.M.F.A. has been a special blessing for this fiddler for 24 years, and still is! I was appointed to serve as Director on the Board in 1981. I served as Secretary from April 1982 through May of 1985. This included doing the Newsletter, also. In 1988 I was involved in preparing the OMFA By-Laws and having them approved. Currently I am in my 5th year of serving on the Board as a Director.

I have 2 violin/fiddles that are a part of me. Number 1 came to me in September 1935 upon the death of my grandfather, Orrin Eddy. In about the year 1885 As a young man he cut, split and piled several cords of wood for the man who owned it. This man was a fiddle fixer/maker in the vicinity of Westphalia, Michigan. Remember the Westphalia Waltz?

For Number 2 fiddle...see Bob's Memory Page.

I have been a member of the OMFA since 1977.

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### **DOWN IN THE VALLEY**

Country people seem to love sad songs. Legend has it that DOWN IN THE VALLEY was written by E.V.Body while sitting in the Birmingham jail. Play it sad.....

### **BUFFALO GALS**

Composed by John Hodges in 1844, it was known as LUBBLY FAN. It did not become Buffalo Gals until 1848. The minstrel shows took it on the road and was often known by the town they were in such as...Bowery Gals, Cincinatti Gals, Louisiana Gals, Charleston Gals, and then Buffalo Gals. Even the composer changed his name to Cool White.

## MEMORIES *by* BOB MURPHY

My 2nd violin teacher, Mabel Blackett, was a wonderful teacher as she made it clear that every note that I must look at in the melody of a song, usually wants to tell me to do (express) something more. "I am a quarter note and my name is F natural, not F sharp". "Robert those notes are supposed to sound like soldiers marching and beginning to get tired. In music, what is the word that means you are to SLOW DOWN?"

My teacher for advanced studies, Clarence Post, was my father's age and had studied under Leopold Auer in the early 20's.

I was 17 when one day I went for a violin lesson and Mr Post told me to carefully open a worn looking violin case lying near by. I proceeded to open the case, then he said, "Robert You are looking at a very valuable violin that Anton Stradivarius made in 1712 and it is 227 years old! Now pick it up and play on it!" Oh What an experience for me! The instrument belonged to Michael Press, who was head of the violin department at Michigan State College in East Lansing. He was born in Russia in 1871 and by 1917 he had achieved great fame through out Russia and the entire musical world.

From 1947 till 1977 I hardly touched the violin, except to play in church once or twice a year. Then on our anniversary date in 1977 something very special happened. We attended a fiddlers jamboree, #6, at the Twp Hall in Webberville. First we sat down at the back of the hall and listened to a couple of fiddlers take their turns. Then Ella Arnold of Romeo, age 85, came on the stage and sat down to the piano. I still remember the names of the songs she played that day! Before she finished her 2nd song, I was standing at the left end of the piano playing along with her. She is in the 1986 book, page 10.

I have two violin/fiddles that are a part of me. Number 2 I call 'My Snake Charmer'

It gets its name from an incident that took place during WWII. The Supply Officer for the Fighter Squad I was assigned to (Capt. Rosenberg) got me the violin when he went to Australia for supplies. I carried it with me from Island to Island for 2 1/2 years.

Picture this: One night in a tent pitched in the jungle-like surroundings. Murphy is standing up making music with 2 fellows setting on a cot playing their instruments with other men standing around. Then all of a sudden I am entertaining an extra large snake that has come into the tent, coiled itself up to about 3' high, and keeps sticking its tongue out at me. Did he like the sound of 'snake inspired vibrato' or what?

## AUSTIN & GENEVA MYERS

REGION 3



On September 1, 1921, in a small log home in Bradley County, rural Southern Arkansas, I was born. The log home was my grandparents (Hansen) home. The log cabin was built in 2 sections. I was the oldest of 10 children, 6 boys and 4 girls. My father, Homer Myers, was an old time fiddler. Homer had served in WW I, and while stationed in Germany he had bought a used Stradivarius. Today the fiddle is over 100 years old, and I have it. My mother, Lena, tells how I always wanted to play the fiddle and guitar which were hung on nails over the bed. When I was real young I used to climb up on the bed and thump the guitar and try to sing. The first tunes I learned to play when I was a teen, was 'Go Tell Aunt Rhody' & 'Sally Goodin'. I played with my father and friends, learning to play some by ear.

Then I laid the fiddle aside for a few years. Geneva & I were married August 23, 1941. I then served 2 years in the Navy during WW 2, in the South Pacific. In 1953, Geneva & I moved from Arkansas to Dearborn, Mich., where I worked in construction building homes until retiring.

In 1973 we moved to Johannesburg.

It was in 1986 when we attended our 1st fiddle jamboree. In 1987 we became members of the OMFA. We have met a lot of nice people. We have enjoyed the fiddle music, the square dancing, and the many friends we have made. In 1998, we became the co-ordinators of the Johannesburg Jamboree which is held in May.

## WILLARD MYERS

REGION 6



I was born on a farm south of Charlotte, Mi. on June 2, 1922.

I have always enjoyed music and when I was 11 years old, my parents sent to Sears for a violin. I took lessons for 11 months and then lost interest for a few years. I now use that violin as a wall decoration.

About 12 years ago, I started a music group in our home. Soon after our group moved to the Maple Grove Community building in Nashville. We soon decided to move to the Maple Leaf Grange, south of Nashville. Our group is called NASHVILLE STRINGS. We play every Tuesday night from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. People enjoy dancing. We do not have any electrified instruments.

Bessie was born December 24, in Detroit. She moved to Charlotte August 1926. We were married on November 16, 1946.

We live on a 100 acre farm south west of Nashville since 1961. We have 2 married sons, 4 granddaughters, and 5 great grandchildren.

I enjoy playing the violin.

I joined OMFA in 1999 and enjoy the whole group.

## ROBERT NELSON

REGION 2



My interest in the fiddle began at a very early age. I have memories of my grandfather, Bill Coleman, getting out his fiddle after Sunday dinner, with my aunt at the pump organ he'd begin playing many of the old tunes. How I wanted to play that fiddle!! Maybe it was my grandfather saying one needed to start playing at the age of 8, I was 12, or maybe it was the lack of money while growing up that I never had lessons. I finally had my first violin lesson in my early 40's. The Cadillac area symphony had offered adult violin lessons and I signed up. But now I ran into a problem. I wanted to play "She'll Be Coming Around The Mountain" and not symphony orchestra music. I could not read the music. I found it easier to hear the tune and with a little practice play it. My method of learning was not working with the teachers method of teaching.

Around 1987 I found out about Bill Carr's fiddle jamborees in Harrison. I began going to the jamborees and recorded the music. I would then practice and practice! I continue to learn by purchasing instructional music tapes and books for new tunes.

I also enjoy playing rhythm guitar for the old fiddle tunes. Favorite music I like to play are waltz's with my favorite being Lake Charles Waltz.

Today with my wife, I enjoy going to the jamborees, playing the music, and visiting with the many people.

I joined OMFA in 1999.



## JEANETTE NEMETH

REGION 2



I was born November 11, 1929 in Flint, Michigan. I lived most of my life in Montrose, Michigan and now live in East Jordan, Michigan. I am married to Geza. We have 3 grown children, and 2 grown grandsons. I am retired.

I have been around music all my life...The Irish Cannon's on my mothers side. She as well as my grandparents (her parents) were musicians and played the stringed instruments. They live in Mississippi and ah such wonderful summers visiting when relatives and neighbors all gathered to have evenings of music and dancing! The grinding of the ice cream maker all packed with ice salted...the zinc tub swooshing with ice and fresh lemonade to quench the players thirst...fresh slices of red and yellow sweet and cool watermelon, fresh from the hill Springbox...and the look on my grandmothers face as she sat in that old rocker and watched Grandfathers sons and daughters play music of the Angels! On my fathers Scottish McIntosh side played and still play the pipes.

I learned very early to play the piano...then the Flamenco style guitar my mother played...then on to flat pick so I could teach my son to play Beatles...then on to the fiddle...on to tenor banjo...then to 5-string banjo...onto the mandolin...then the Plectrum Banjo as I was teaching these instruments...my hands sort of gave out...They call it Carpal Tunnel...Perhaps they were just tired. Now I mostly play just the keyboard, mandolin and my most favorite...FIDDLE.

# JEANETTE NEMETH

I have one of the first books the OMFA put out. I know many of the fiddlers downstate as that is where I attended the jamborees up as far as Clare. I also belong to the MFA. I am an avid fan of Wheatland. Then we retired and moved to East Jordan and I began to go here as often as I could. I'm a bit shy to play my fiddle on stage and I get so nervous I could faint but I keep trying. I love to listen to the players, and do backup, everyone at these Jamborees is a friend and I so enjoy seeing the dancers and the happiness when they dance.

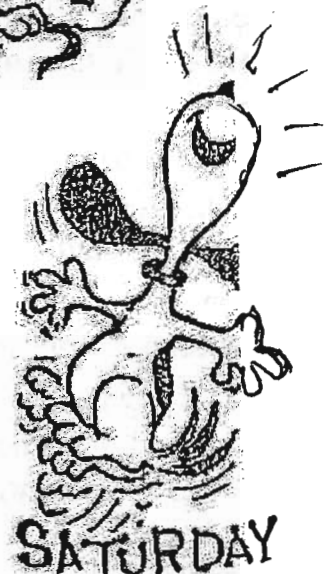
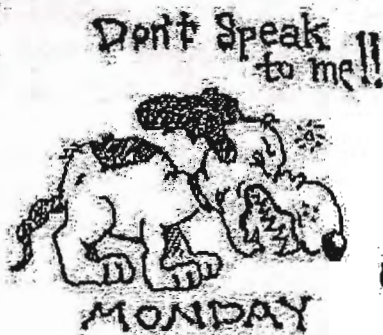
I know I am alive today because of the wonderful music. It is like food to me and to many others, when playing, all of ones problems disappear...you are lifted up...up...up and for just a little while you travel on Angels wings.

I have been a member of OMFA since about 1983.

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## TYPICAL WEEK BEFORE A

### FIDDLE JAMBOREE



## MARILYN NIEWIEK

REGION 5



I was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1942. My parents, Elmer & Lilly Malfroid, were both musical and self taught on a variety of instruments. My father played the fiddle and specialized in the Irish jigs, reels, and hornpipes. My mother enjoyed playing a little of everything; fiddle, banjo, guitar, harmonica, and was the only one in the family to play the accordion on which she loved to play songs from her native Denmark.

I am next to the youngest of 6 children, and we all had musical talent ranging from singing to banjo, guitar, mandolin, and fiddle...although I am the only child to take up the fiddle.

Upon graduation from high school, I was employed for 9 years doing clerical and secretarial work for a motor freight co.

Two of my uncles, Fred & Gene Malfroid and my aunt Lillian Malfroid, all of whom played old time music on guitar, banjo, and fiddle also enjoyed going on antique car tours. It was through this hobby that I met my husband Joe Niewiek, who had always owned several antique autos, including a rare 1915 White, 4 cylinder, 16 valve, Limousine, which was our 'courting car'.

## MARILYN NIEWIEK

Although I did play a little on my dad's violin as a child, it soon gave way to the rush of teenage years, working years, and the many new activities involved in married life. It was not until a family reunion in 1982 that someone handed me a fiddle during the 'music time' that I realized how much fun it could be and that I should not waste a God-given talent simply because I did not read music!

So my first violin was one my dad gave me, and my husband Joe, bought me several nice ones, including one with a fancy inlaid back, of leather and abalone on mother-of-pearl. To me, really, it is not so important how good a violin looks, but rather what you can do on it, and how it sounds.

While I have many favorite hymns, and old time songs including my dad's jigs and hornpipes, one of my special favorites is Repaz Band March. Because so many people enjoy it. I love playing in church to praise and honor the Giver of all good gifts.

I joined OMFA in 1984.

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Did you hear about the banjo player who died drinking milk?  
The cow fell on him.

What's the difference between a banjo player and a savings bond?  
A savings bond eventually matures and earns money.

How many banjo jokes are there in existence?  
Only THREE, the rest are true stories.

Why was the banjo player staring intently at the orange juice?  
Because it said "Concentrate".

Happy music comes from fiddles!

OMFA fiddlers love to fiddle the old time tunes!

## STACY NIEDZWIECKI

REGION 5



I was born on July 23, 1967 in Monticello, New York. I now live in Rockford, Michigan. I am employed as a graphic designer & communications consultant. October 2, 1992 I married Russell, a corporate trainer & magician. We have 1 son, Alexander, born November 8, 1999.

I was 30 years of age when I took up fiddle playing. When my grandfather, from New York, passed away I asked Mom not to get rid of his prized fiddle. Mom wasn't sure WHY I 'wanted that old thing' But I did! It had a lot of sentimental value... My grandad was one of the best fiddlers in Hebron, Washington County, New York. He met my grandmother at a grange hall dance, he was playing fiddle at. I had many fond memories of sitting in the farmhouse parlor, playing alongside of him on the piano. There were all those evenings spent on the front porch watching the sun set on the distant Vermont mountains, listening to him make the fiddle sing effortlessly. I kept the fiddle in my possession through the years mostly as a dust collector sitting beside his photograph. Then one day while dusting, I told my husband that I sure wish I could play it. His response was 'then take a lesson'

## STACY NIEDZWIECKI

Three days later a flier came in mail advertising violin lessons at the Rockford Arts Center. The teacher taught more classical type but I learned to read music. Then she moved away. I could find no one in Grand Rapids to teach anything other than classical and I wanted to FIDDLE!! I wanted to play the old time music my grandad had played, 'Turkey in the Straw' 'Soldiers Joy' 'Redwing' Etc...

Then came the day I went to Hastings for my 1st OMFA Jamboree. I had found a gold mine! There were lots of folks there and they all played FIDDLE MUSIC the way I remembered it! After spending the afternoon in amazement I had a conversation with a fiddler named Willard Myers. Just a few minutes of talking to me and he said "I know JUST the person I need to introduce you to -- Delbert Bassett" He walked me over to meet the man who I had just observed a short time earlier in the hallway playing the 'Orange Blossom Special'! Del told me right off he would not take a new student unless I was willing to take weekly lessons, & practice at least 1 hour a day. He wanted only serious students. This would require 1 1/2 hours driving time also. We began lessons in November of 1998. We started from the very beginning. There were times I had a hard time breaking old habits, but Del was always there helping. I learned I was holding the bow wrong, I had to learn how to keep time while reading music, I learned to read music, again. In the spring of 1999 Del held a recital at his church for his students. There was a good attendance that day. It was both fun and frightening. Most of Del's students are good fiddlers. Anyone who attended that 1st recital could see the time, effort and love Del puts into his teaching the art of fiddling.

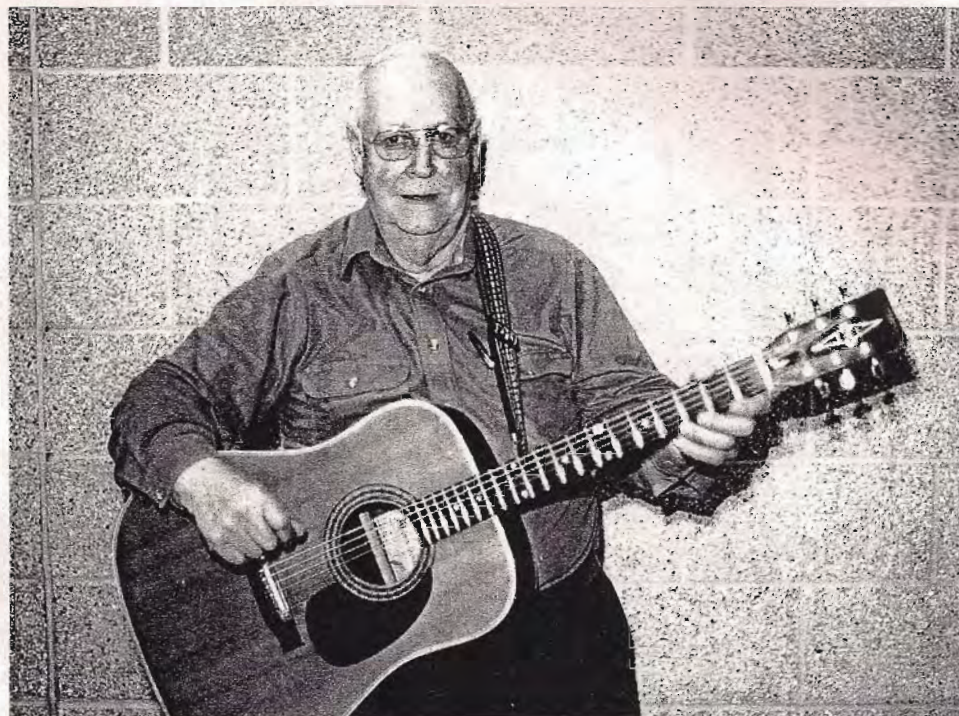
Our son Alexander was born in November of 1999, and his middle name is Wilson after grandad. Already he seems to have an appreciation for fiddle music...no small wonder as for '9 months he attended a lot of fiddle jamborees and spent a weekend at the Ewart Music Fest'.

I want to thank Del and his wife Rena for all they have done for me. The babysitting times while I played, had lessons, and just for being there for me the past 3 years! Del has even given me lessons while holding Alex more than once.

I am really glad I decided to take up the fiddle. I have met many interesting folks and felt like part of a 'family'. I hope for many more years of learning & experiencing the music, as well as creating memories for my family as fond as the ones I gained from my grandfather!

## DAVE PARKER

REGION 2



I was born April 29, 1925 in Benzie County. I spent my working years as a machinist. I lived most of my life in Benzie County, only recently moving to Mesick.

I learned to play guitar at age 52. I found my first guitar at a yard sale. I learned to play without lessons. As I went along I got better guitars. I learned to call at age 15. I had attended a town hall dance and they needed a caller. I learned as I went along from there.



## GERRY PARKER

REGION 7



I was born in Detroit in 1936, into a musical family. I now live in Howell, Michigan. My mother played piano and her brother the violin. I understand that I am a distant descendant of Robert Schumann, the composer. I started piano lessons at the age of 7 and with the gift of an old violin from my uncle I started Classical violin lessons at age 9. With other interests entering my life as a teenager the old violin was relegated to a closet when I was 15. Many years later, about 1987, I became fascinated with the Hammered Dulcimer after hearing one played at Mackinac Island. That led to learning to play the hammered dulcimer and getting back into the music world at places like Ewart festival. There I was exposed to 'fiddle music' with the violin. In 1990 I finally pulled out the old violin from the closet and together that old violin and I began to learn to FIDDLE! Couple of years later I joined the MFA and then the OMFA about 5 years ago...1997. I have retired after 35 years with Ford Motor Co. My main hobby is playing old fiddle tunes and old country music at festivals and jamborees.

\*\*\*\*\*

A violin can be a fiddle...but a fiddle can NEVER be a violin!

Old time fiddling is the BEST!



## EUGENE R. PEETZ



REGION 8

I was born February 3, 1938 in Flint, Michigan. I now live in Grand Blanc, Michigan. I am retired but when I worked I was employed as a metallurgist and mechanical engineer.

I play the guitar and mandolin. My dad played guitar and fiddle, which is what inspired me to play guitar. My favorite type of music is Blue Grass!!

I have been a member of the OMFA since about 1997.

\*\*\*\*\*

### WHERE HAVE ALL THE GRANDMA'S GONE

In the dim and distant past  
When life's tempo wasn't so fast,  
Grandma used to rock and knit,  
Crochet, tat and baby sit,  
When the kids were in a jam,  
They could always call on Gram.  
But today she's in the gym  
Exercising to keep slim.  
She's checking the web or surfing the net,  
Sending some e-mail or placing a bet,  
Nothing seems to stop or block her,  
Now that Grandma's off her rocker.  
(or attending a fiddle jamboree!!)

## STELLA & LAWRENCE PEOPLES

### REGION 4

Somewhere someone said, 'Music is my shield in struggles and adversity; my friend and companion in moments of joy; my comforter and refuge in dependency and solitude'.

Music has always been an important part of our lives. I was born November 23, 1920. Lawrence was born on June 29, 1920. We were born in Bay County, and in farm homes of our ancestors. We now live in Essexville. In our 56 years of marriage, we've had great joy in raising 5 children. Lawrence was employed at Dow Chemical and I was employed as a teacher in Bay County Schools.

My first year as a teacher was quite challenging and yet rewarding too. I was teaching in a one room school house, with 26 students from Kindergarten to 8th grade. My fear was not in the students but of keeping the fire going. A 7th grade boy saved the day when he asked if he could be my janitor. His dad would bring in the wood from his woodlot and help him. For pay, he would like to be able to buy a guitar. I was happy to get him his guitar, a book and teach him the basics of tuning and chord playing. Years later I met him again and I asked if he still played the guitar, he replied, "Yes, I sing my children to sleep every night."

My dad was an old time fiddler and needed me to accompany him on the piano. House parties, preludes for plays and intermission gave us much experience in playing. My first experience in playing violin was high school orchestra. Lawrence enjoys singing and calling for square dances. He was awarded a plaque by George Dallaire. This was for calling for square dances for over 20 years of jamborees and gatherings.

Lawrence and I have attended OMFA Jamborees for several years. I have had the pleasure of chording on the piano for Russ Nelson, Frank Mattison, Les Raber, Norm Weber, Lawrence Jeffery, Bob Murphy and many more good fiddlers.

My favorite fiddle tune is Ragtime Annie.

We have been members of OMFA since 1981.

## LYLE PETERMAN

REGION 3



I was born and raised on the same farm where Jo & I live now, south of Onaway. I was born June 27, 1923. I graduated from the Onaway high school, I worked with my father-in-law. I also started building homes and commercial buildings, in this area. I also done some remodeling on homes and built some new ones on what is known as Canada Creek Ranch just off of M-33 South of Onaway. My Special Fiddle is the one I use now. I love the rhythm of the bow. I like to play old fiddle tunes, just to watch the audience tap their feet. In about 1985-1986 we attended get-togethers where fiddlers congregated at Sault Ste Marie, Michigan. These were held in a building that was also used as a skating rink. In my early fiddle gatherings, about 1985 - 1986, I was helped by Lee Sloan and his wife Doris. They insisted that I play at the Cheboygan Jamboree I did and I never quit. I want to Thank Lee & Doris for their insisting that I Get Started. I started to play the fiddle about 1986. I had repaired musical instruments for friends. One day I repaired a fiddle, tuned it, and got a TUNE out of it. I have to play the fiddle with my fingers up and over the top-side due to my crippled arm. I love the old fiddle tunes as they seem to bring back memories of the old house parties. I never want to give up the fiddle because of the sweet music and the rhythm of the bow. I want to Thank everyone that play back up for me at the jamborees.

# DURWOOD REICHELT

Region 5



I was born March 4, 1923 in Cedar Springs, Michigan. I now live in Kent City, Michigan. I farmed all my life.

I began playing music when I was 14. I bought a mandolin and played it for about 2 years. When I was 16, I learned to play the fiddle. I didn't have one of my own but a friend I played music with had one he had bought in Chicago. He could not play it so I bought it from him for \$5.00. This was in 1939. I still play this fiddle! The fiddle is 100 years old this year. When I was 65 I bought a hammer dulcimer and learned to play it.

My favorite tune is Ragtime Annie.

I joined OMFA about 1980.

\*\*\*\*\*

A little boy once said that a fiddler was the meanest man alive. Because he was pulling a horse's tail across the guts of a cat.

## AL ROOT

REGION 4



I was born November 24, 1919 in Detroit, Michigan. When I was a young boy I went to live on a farm with a German family near Byron, Mi. They were a very musical family. They had a Victrola and I would play records. I was given an old violin by an aunt. She had a rooming house in Detroit. and the violin was left by a man that was a music teacher and could not pay his rent. He never came back for it and so my aunt gave it to me. I would play records on the old Victrola and then play along on the violin. I had no formal training. I kept practicing and trying to improve myself. My love for music has inspired me to play. I like jazz, bluegrass, old time Country, and waltzs. I have played and sang the song "When Your Old Wedding Ring Was New" at several friends anniversaries. I have also made several tapes of my favorite songs.

I have enjoyed traveling to Jamborees & contests in South Dakota, North Dakota, Idaho, Missouri, Canada, and Michigan. I have also played at a jamboree in Renfro Valley.

I spent 4 years in the U.S. Air Force as a flight surgeons assistant. I served in Guatemala & England. I served from 1942 until 1945. I have been married to my wife, Mildred, for 59 years. We have 6 children, 12 grand children and 7 great grand children. One of the children, Lisa, is interested in playing the violin, and also plays guitar.

## AL ROOT

I took advantage of the G.I. Bill and got my Bachelors Degree in Agriculture. My life's work was with the Extension Service as a 4-H Agent. During my working years, my violin lay idle, but on retirement in 1976, my love for music was rekindled and has been a big part of my life. I play by ear, and can read a little music.

I joined OMFA in 1980.

### A touch of humor from Al...

When I was in Renfro Valley, jamming, a fellow came up to me and said "Boy that is a nice looking fiddle you have there!" I replied, "Yes it is! It is a Chinavarious". He looked started for a minute and said "Chinavarious? I have never heard of such a violin!" I replied..."Yes it is a Chinavarious. It was made in China by Various People!"

\*\*\*\*\*

Do you know what the Official National Folk Dance is?

It is Square Dancing. In 1982 President Ronald Reagan established that square dancing would be the official national folk dance for the nation.

While the form of square dancing has changed over the years, it is still a very popular form of dancing. Both styles. While in the OMFA we practice the old time way of square dancing that our ancestors brought to the American Shores. The Puritans set dancing aside for a few years until the settlers in Virginia and the Carolinas began dancing again.

Square Dancing can be good for your health. It is good exercise as well. it is good, clean fun and make for an enjoyable social life. It is something the entire family can get involved in, making it a night out as a family. It has been discovered that people who square dance live longer. It is not only good physical exercise but also good for the mental health, keeping your mind alert.

Old Fiddle tunes and square dancing go together like ham and eggs!

Fiddlers love to fiddle for old time square dancing!

Old Time square dancing is alive and well!

## LYNN (CY) & RUTH SAVAGE

REGION 5



I was born on September 23, 1936, in Antwerp, Ohio. In 1957 I married Ruth Hahn. We have 3 children; Yvonne, Matthew and Luke. We have 4 grand children.

My father was a farmer. He and my mother belonged to a grange near Antwerp. Mom played piano and dad played the guitar for the grange dances. My grandfather played the fiddle, but I never got to hear him play. Attending the grange as a young boy of 6 or 7, I learned to square dance along with my cousin Shirley. Through this experience I learned to play the guitar at age 13, I also learned to play the trumpet and I played in a high school dance band at age 14.

At age 16 I began calling for square dances. From there I began playing in a dance band almost every weekend. At the age of 27 I attended college to become a school teacher. I taught school at Tri County High School for 32 years.

We belonged to the OMFA for 3 years (1984-1987) as my son, Luke, was learning the violin. He took lessons from Frank Matteson. We rejoined OMFA in 2000 as my wife and I both love to square dance and, of course, I love to play the guitar and call.





## CARYL & DORIS SCHAEFER

Region 5



I was born on March 1, 1930 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and grew up on a fruit farm near Sparta, Michigan. My parents were second generation settlers on the Peach Ridge area from Germany. I lived most of my life in the Sparta area until moving to Pickerel Lake at Newaygo in 1970 with my wife Doris and three children. We have 11 grandchildren.

I graduated from Sparta High School, and Michigan State University then served in the Army 1952 to 1955 and was a liason pilot serving in Korea. After completing my tour of duty I worked with my father and brother on the fruit farm for several years. I then ventured into agricultural aviation and was FBO at Fremont airport. I then started a new business in developing controlled atmosphere apple storage equipment at Sparta, Michigan.

During high school I played the cello in the high school orchestra. I gave it up after entering college and involvement with a busy self-employed work schedule. I acquired a violin in 1992 from a good friend's estate and decided that I would try playing it. I became interested in a local group of musicians playing the old time music and eventually joined the OMFA in 1994.

I enjoy playing many songs of the 40's and 50's along with the typical jamboree music. I have many favorite tunes a couple of which are "Come Josephine In My Flying Machine" and "I Left My Heart At The Stage Door Canteen". My violin has had major reconstruction and modification by Elon Howe.

## CARYL & DORIS SCHAEFER

**NOTE:** Caryl has served as Director for 2 years.

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Elsie Merrow of Middleville had purchased a Stainer violin. Inside the violin case she found the following newspaper clipping:

### **HEY DIDDLE DIDDLE FARMER HAS FIDDLE TO TRADE FOR A FARM**

*St Paul, Minn...Dec 20 (no yr given)*

A Kingdom has been offered for a horse and great wealth has been offered for a song, but it remained for a North Carolina mountaineer to proffer a fiddle for a farm.

John W. Haw, director of the agricultural development of the Northern Pacific railway, received this unique proposition in a letter from W.D. Fleming of North Carolina which read:

"I saw in a magazine where you have some farms in states. I am interested in Oregon and Washington and would like to own a good arm with my wife and four children. I would like to trade an old violin in good shape, made in the 1700's in Germany by Jacob Stainer, or would sell it and buy a farm".

Investigation disclosed that such a violin, if genuine, would be worth on the market in normal times up to \$1,400.

No one has yet offered to make a swap. The fiddle will have to be converted into cash and cash delivered to Oregon. But the trade remains intrinsically 'a fiddle for a farm'.

Elsie found this article inside the violin case when she purchased it from a Mr Richard Perrott. He said this was the Stainer that was written for the newspaper article, but he could not remember the year. Mr Perrott was a well known fiddler from the area, and Les Raber had taken Elsie to Mr Perrott's home where she purchased the Stainer violin.

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### **DID YOU KNOW.....**

Atlanta, Georgia, should of been 'MUSIC CITY USA' and not Nashville, Tennessee? Atlanta had more local talent in the 1920's, as well as the 5 major elements of making Country Music possible... Radio, Record Making, Live Touring, Song Writing, and Song Publishing were all available in Atlanta. Polk Brockman was also there with his first find FIDDLIN' JOHN CARSON!

# MOSE SCHROCK

REGION 5



I was born in LaGrange, Indiana on July 19, 1936. I grew up in the LaGrange area. I now live near Morley, about a stones throw from where the Morley Jamboree is held.

Most of my work has been in the field of construction, putting up round concrete silos, sticking up all around Michigan. Then I farmed and milked cows for about 13 years.

Today I putter around doing wood work, making fiddle bows, and such. I was about 13-14 when I sent to Sears for my 1st fiddle and instruction book. I learned to fiddle, from that book. I guess the teacher I had at that time inspired me to learn the fiddle.

As for favorite tunes... they are ALL my favorites. I guess you could say I am partial to Faded Love and Maidens Prayer. Then, of course, there are all those hoedowns, and Cajun types, I like it all.

I joined OMFA about 5-6 years ago.

\*\*\*\*\*

# MOSE SCHROCK

**EDITOR:** Mose has a unique hobby. Making bows to play the fiddle/violin. I asked Mose to write a little about this hobby.

## MAKING FIDDLE BOWS

I guess the real reason I started making violin bows was due to necessity. It seems I was always looking for a bow, and could never find one that was any good. They were always limber and lifeless and did nothing for the violin. So I started whittlin' and I am still whittlin'!

The first ones I made out of Brazil wood. Well, there are lots of different types of Brazil wood! Some pretty good and some not so great! The wood that all the people who are supposed to be in the know, told me that the only wood that a good bow can be made of is Pernambult, a certain type of Brazil wood. But it is terribly hard to find! Ironwood makes excellent bows, that's when I realized what a good bow will do for a mediocre violin. It'll make it a whole different instrument.

Ironwood is a white wood and I leave it that way. I think a lot of people get a shock when they see a white bow! They think "oh my goodness I couldn't be caught using something like that, its not traditional."

Bows are supposed to be dark, so be it. Mine are white and going to stay that way.

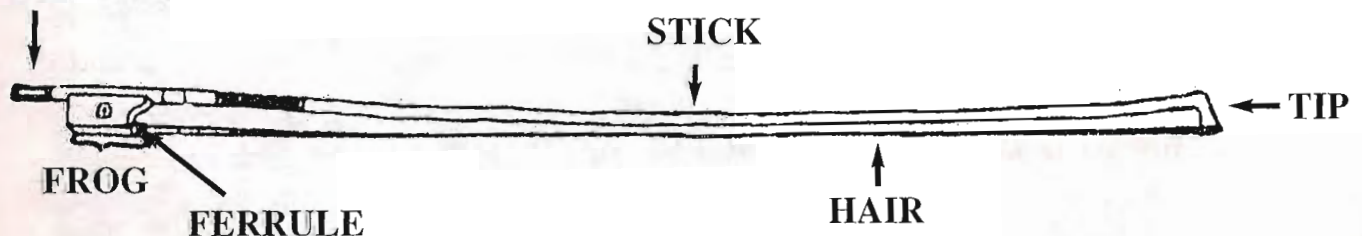
The frogs are the tedious parts to make. I make them either from purple heart wood or a bow from ebony. I make all the silver linings and trimmings from sterling silver. This frog is a big part of the cost of the bow.

I actually start with a 5" block of wood. I then sand off the edges and from there I whittle and scrape to make the bow. It takes about a week to make the bow.

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## DIAGRAM OF A BOW

ADJUSTING SCREW



# FRANK SCHWIESOW

REGION 3



I was born 1 mile East of Metz, Michigan on April 8, 1914. I began to play fiddle when I was 16 yrs of age. My neighbor loaned me a fiddle to learn with. My 1st fiddle I traded a plow and some money for. I gave this one to my brother and bought me one in Detroit from a pawn shop, on Michigan Ave, for \$5.00, in 1936. I still have it plus 2 more.

My wife, Mary, will be 80 years old on December 26.

I have been a member of the OMFA for several years.

\*\*\*\*\*

In years gone by, fiddling was handed down from family members or friends within the community. Because of changes in our culture, this is no longer a common occurrence. Associations such as the O.M.F.A. have become an extended family and in some cases, represent the only opportunity to learn the tunes in the traditional manner, that is, from fiddler to fiddler. In most cases, the only perception the general public has of fiddling is what we present to them. For those reasons we must stay focused on WHY the O.M.F.A. was founded while, **HAVING SOME FUN ALONG THE WAY!!**

# DON & HELEN SHEPHARD

REGION 4



My birthday is on the 29th of September, the year of 1927. I was born in the city of Owosso. We now live in Henderson, Michigan which is about 10 miles northwest of Owosso. We have lived here since 1956.

I began calling in 1954 when we went to a square dance and by chance they needed a caller as theirs didn't show up that night. I have called all over the state of Michigan from Newberry to the Ohio state line.

Helen and I were married in 1953 and we have a son and a daughter. I have worked in dairies, laundries, and factories. I retired in 1990.

I have been a member of the OMFA for several years.

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## LEE SLOAN

REGION 2



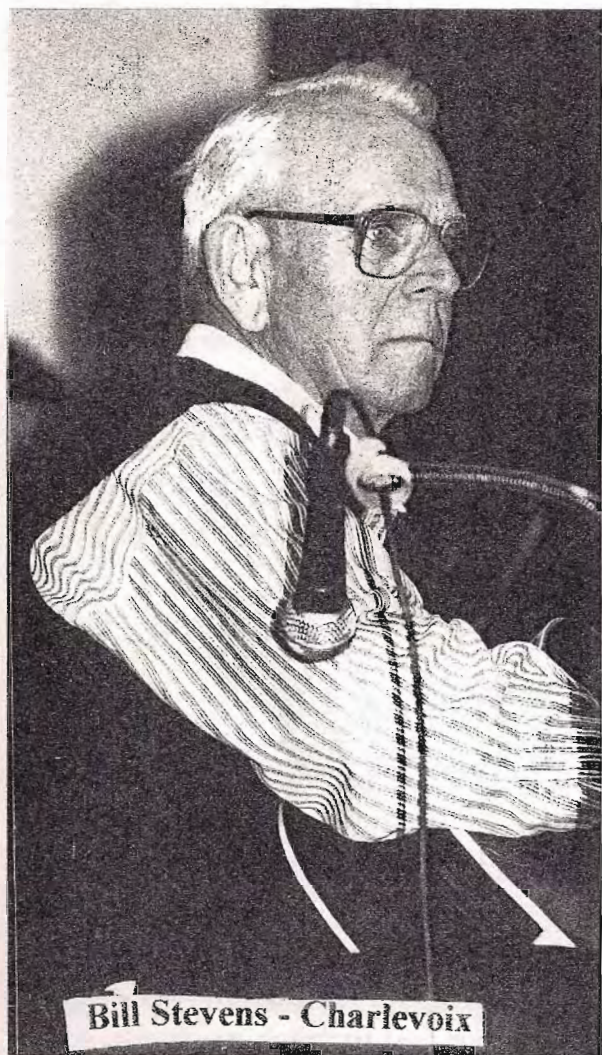
Lee was born in 1916, in Milan, Tennessee. Lee had 5 brothers and 1 sister. Lee's family all played musical instruments, some more than one. Lee says his dad was best fiddler he had ever heard. Lee used to sneak dad's fiddle out, but no matter how carefully he put it back exactly as he found it, he seemed to know Lee had got it out. Lee still has his dad's fiddle.

When Lee was about age 6 he started to learn the banjo, at age 10 he took up guitar and fiddle. Lee had a few lessons but soon found it was more fun to play by ear!

During WWII, Lee was in Belfast, Ireland where he was employed as a technician for Lockheed who had a government contract. They lived with the military but were not considered military. Lee met his wife, Doris while working there. Doris was working for the American Red Cross as a hostess. Lee found that she was a very good dancer and very attractive. They were married in 1944 in Ireland.

Lee joined the OMFA about 1984 after attending his first jamboree at Ortonville. Lee has served as a Director. Lee was the official Photographer for the 1986 fiddlers handbook. Doris served on the editing committee.

*Written by Suzanne Hauter*



**Bill Stevens - Charlevoix**



**Byard Stevens - Grand Rapids**

**Singing**



**Lou Califf - Boyne City**



## BILL J. SPARROW

REGION 3



I was born in Ypsilanti, Michigan on March 25, 1923. I am retired from Ford Motor Co. I now live in Ocqueoc, Mi, and spend the winter in Zephyr Hills, Florida. Dottie & I also spend some time in Allendale, Michigan. My father was a fiddler, and I would play with his fiddle. At age 6, I began taking fiddle lessons from Mrs Moffit. I played left handed, and my teacher had to teach me to play right handed.

At age 11, I began attending school sponsored by Henry Ford. My dad worked on the Ford Farms where they raised soy beans. Mr Ford had several farms in an area of about 60 miles circumference. The kids whose fathers worked on the Ford farms attended these schools. There were about 20 of these schools. I attended the Willow Run School. We were taught out of the old McGuffey Readers. Mr Ford would come out to the schools to visit. He was very much into the Early American dance music, he promoted it and it was taught at the schools he owned. Mr Perry, a fiddler, and his group came to the schools to teach dancing. Mr Lovett was the caller for square dancing.

One day Mr Ford came out to the Willow Run school and had me play the fiddle for him. I played my dad's fiddle which, needless to say, was too big for me. Mr Ford asked Mr Perry to bring him a 1/2 size fiddle and to give me 1/2 hour lessons weekly, before the dancing lessons. This is how I learned to play all the dance tunes, gavottes, heel & toe, polka, square dances, etc.

## BILL J. SPARROW

This was the beginning of my learning the fiddle.

I feel very fortunate that Mr Ford was so gracious and kind. After I left school I played music around the Ypsi area until I retired.

While living in Florida during the winter, I met Dot and we were married December 25, 1999. We play music for ice cream socials, potlucks, dances, etc in Michigan and Florida. Music and fiddling has been a great part of my life. I thank Mr Ford and Mr Perry for my success in music.

I also play saxophone and some banjo. My favorite fiddle tune is "When It's Springtime In The Rockies" because, it is the first fiddle tune I learned to play.

I joined the OMFA in 1991.

\*\*\*\*\*

### SHINGLES ANYONE?

A fellow walked into a Doctor's office and the receptionist asked him 'what he had'. "Shingles" he replied. So she took down his name address, medical insurance number and told him to have a seat.

Fifteen minutes later a nurse's aide came out and asked him 'what he had' "Shingles" he said. So she took down his height, weight, a complete medical history, and took him to the examining room to wait.

Thirty minutes later, the nurse came in and asked him 'what he had'. Again, he replied "shingles". So she gave him blood tests, blood pressure test, an electrocardiogram, and told him to take all his clothes off and wait for the Doctor.

An hour later, the Dr. came in and asked him 'what he had'. The man replied "Shingles". The Dr. asked "where?" The man answered "outside in the truck, where do you want them?"

A violin is high class...A fiddle is folk - down to earth.

Why do they call it a fiddle, instead of a violin?  
How are you going to 'violin' around?

Why are viola jokes so short?  
So violinists can understand them

## DOTTIE SPARROW

REGION 3



I was born in Coopersville, Mi on October 29, 1924. I retired from cosmetology. I spend my winters in Florida and summers in Michigan.

I plays guitar, 6 string banjo and sing. My favorite type of music is Country and Western.

I have always loved music, ever since I can remember. My mom would play piano and the kids would join in singing the old songs. I got my first guitar when I was a teenager. I was the happiest girl in town!

After retiring I began spending winters in Florida where I met Billy J. Sparrow. We met in 1996 at the Zephyr Hills City Park, we began playing music together at jamborees. December 25, 1999, at Bradenton, Florida we were married. Since then we have played at jamborees, ice cream socials, churches, potlucks etc. We are having a great time playing music, and are very thankful for good health.

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Question: What is big at the bottom, little at the top and has ears?

Answer: A mountain.

( But what about the ears you asked? Didn't you ever hear of 'mountaineers?')

# DOTTIE SPARROW

I would like to share a song that Bill wrote for me.

## MY SONG

My love, I know it's you  
Because I know you love me true,  
You give me strength when I am gone away,  
I know you're there for me each day,  
And when I come back home you'll say,  
"It's good to see you back my Billy Jay"  
We've come a long way down the road together,  
And each day and every day gets only better,  
That's because the love I feel from you,  
Keeps me from feeling blue,  
And for that my Darling, I love you.

*BILLY J. SPARROW*

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The fiddle is a member of the LUTE family, which originated in Assyria, located between the Middle East and Southeast Asia. It is more accurately a bowed lute and has gone through many transitions since its first inception. Originally used as an accompaniment instrument for the violin, it was played at lap level, even had frets. It was seen as a low class instrument. The first pictures of the fiddle in a recognizable form appeared around 1400 when the instrument begins to be more respected for serious music. Since that time, the fiddle has gone on to be one of the most versatile and popular instruments. Due to its size, portability and existence in every culture, it is the most recognized instrument today.

\*\*\*\*\*

Be GOOD to your friends. Without them, you'd be a total stranger!

## BILL & DONNA STEVENS

Region 2



I was born June 21, 1934 in Phelps, just seven miles south of Charlevoix. Today Phelps is a ghost town. My wife, Donna, and I live in Charlevoix. We have four grown sons, and 5 grandchildren, who all reside in Charlevoix. I worked as a mason and concrete contractor until I retired. I love playing the guitar! I have always enjoyed the sound and music from the guitar. My favorite type of music is from the 30's and 40's, and the early fiddle tunes. My family has always been very supportive of me over the years, in my music endeavors.

My sons, Dudley, Rodney and I formed a band known as the Tag-A-Longs. We play at nursing homes, parties, the grange hall, and wherever we are needed.

A highlight of my music career was when our band, The Tag-A-Longs, were asked to play at the 'Annual Michigan Folklife Festival' which was held at the Michigan State University. Then in 1997 I was honored with receiving the 'Heritage Award' from Michigan State University for perpetuation of old time music and calling in grange halls and bringing the older and experience together with the younger generation.

## MEMORIES *by* BILL STEVENS

One of my first impressions of attending a jamboree was the openness and relaxation at the jamborees with Bob & Jane Fleck, Paul Gifford & Bill White as leaders.

Some of the musicians that attended the first jamborees were Dan Johnston, Stewart Carmichael, Bob Spinner, Russ Nelson, Paul Gifford, Jasper Warner and many more.

One of the first jamborees Donna & I attended was held at Harbor Springs at a town hall. There was such a crowd that many could not get into the building. So, several couples came to our home where we had music, pushed back the table and danced.

Donna & I sponsored our first Jamboree in January of 1981. It was held in the Civic Center in East Jordan. The first few jamborees there was not a charge for the use of the building. In 1982 & 1983 we held 2 jamborees, with the 2nd one being held in October. We sponsored OMFA jamborees from January 17, 1981 until March of 1995.

On Friday night for the past 20 years we have gathered at the Barnard Grange Hall for music and to entertain the musicians who are in the area. Also, for the past 20 years we gather for a 'farewell breakfast' at one of the restaurants in Charlevoix. And of course there is a lot of music. The restaurant opens early for us so the musicians won't be late in starting for home.

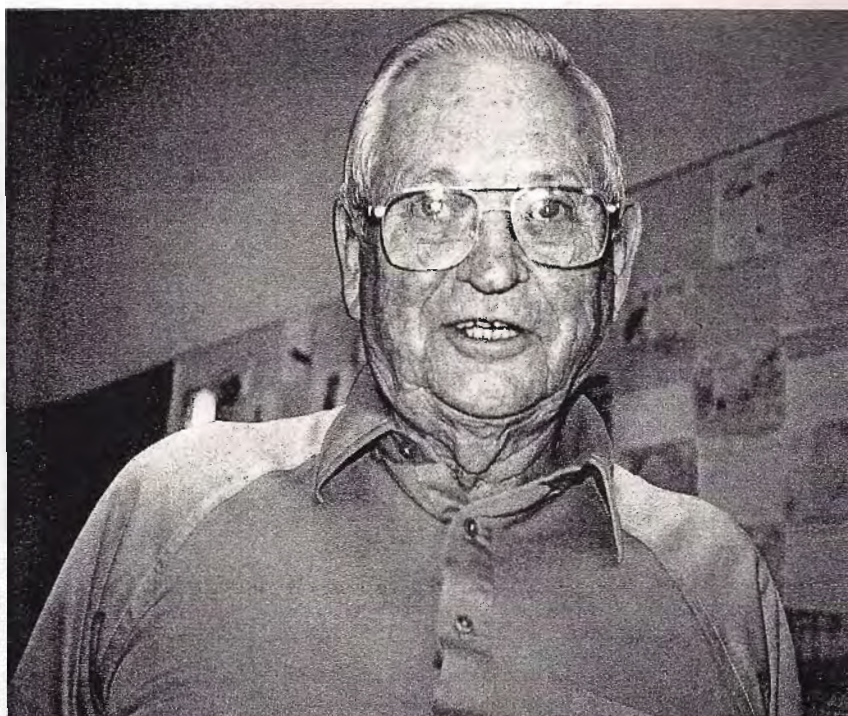
In 1995 five couples formed our own committee, Jordan Valley Fiddler's Jamboree, and hold a jamboree the first Saturday of March every year.

The OMFA Jamboree in January of 1982 had to be postponed until February 16th, 1982 because of a severe winter storm that hit our area on Friday night and Saturday morning. Many fiddlers here for the jamboree were marooned in Charlevoix because the plows could not open the roads. There was music in different homes and motels all over Charlevoix on Friday and Saturday. Our road was full so I did not get in on all the music. The roads were cleared by Saturday evening and everyone was able to get home.



## BYARD STEVENS

Region 5



I was born on a farm in Charlevoix County. My parents were Charles & Geneva Stevens. I grew up in a musical family. My father called for dances, and I call a few of his calls. I started calling in 1991 in Florida. Lee Sloan told me I should learn to call. Lorraine was playing in a band and that is how it all got started. I have always loved to dance. Lorraine and I enjoy stepping to the light fantastic.

Calling is fun! There is always room to learn new calls. I have had the pleasure to call with Lorraine at the piano, brother Clair with fiddle, and brother Bill playing guitar.

\*\*\*\*\*

**EDITOR NOTE:** Byard served as Vice President from 1997 - 2000. He then served as President from 2000 - 2001. Byard has been an exciting president. One never knew just what to expect. Byard and Lorraine dancing across the floor, or he might grab a mike and sing a few square dance calls to a good fiddle tune. Byard tries to make all board members feel a part of the jamborees, having them emcee for a while, or help in some other way. He is often found talking to those in the audience, making them feel welcome.

**FAVORITE TUNE:** Deurell's Shuffle AKA Byard & Lorraine Shuffle

**THANK YOU, BYARD!**

## LORRAINE STEVENS

REGION 5



I was born in a farm area called Pogy, the youngest of 5 siblings. My parents were hard working farmers. My father started playing fiddle at an early age and was a good player. He played for a lot of dances, house parties, and country dance halls. After my parents married and my older siblings grew old enough to play piano they took their turn at the keyboard. When I got to be 8 or 10 years old my father didn't play for dances but he taught me chords and that is where it all started.

I have enjoyed playing for so many fiddlers such as... Frank Mattison, Les Raber, Ernie Keena, to mention a few. These fiddlers are now deceased. I have the pleasure of playing for so many that come to the jamborees to entertain. We need more young people to keep OMFA active and supportive.

\*\*\*\*\*

Lorraine is married to our President Byard Stevens. She has been very supportive of Byard, and is always there to help wherever she can. Lorraine has always been very active in the OMFA. She stays very busy on the piano, also. THANK YOU, Lorraine for ALL you have done for the OMFA.



## CLAIR & LAREINE STEVENS

Idaho



*Clair passed away 5-10-2001*

I was born in Michigan, lived and worked there most of my life. My entire working life has been spent in construction as a Master Plumber. The last 15 years of my career was working for the University of Michigan as their chief Mechanical Inspector. My wife is a native Idahoan and we visited Idaho often to see her family, and I even participated twice in the fiddle contest of Weiser. We really liked the climate of Boise so decided to move here about 3 years ago.

When I first heard the fiddle, I knew I liked the 'A' string because of it's catchiness and tone. I was told I had a 'Cornfield A Ear'. Around the age of 7 I was given an old fiddle by my uncle who didn't play. None of my family knew any thing about the fiddle, so I just had to listen & learn by trial and error. At age 12 I could play well enough to play for socials and later began playing for dances. As an adult I started playing regularly each week for dances. Later I took up the banjo too. I would call my style of fiddling as Canadian Style which is more expressible and danceable than other styles. In 1980 I was elected President of the Original Michigan Fiddlers Assoc. and remained president until 1992. We held jamborees, 12 - 15 a year, all over the state to promote old time fiddling activities & dance. We loaned fiddles to youth who were interested in learning to play the fiddle to help encourage a continuation of the joys of fiddling.

## CLAIR & LAREINE STEVENS

When we moved to Idaho we joined the Idaho Old-Time Fiddlers and participate with them regularly at nursing homes, festivals & special activities. Through fiddling we have met people all over the United States and Canada! and even heard from people in foreign countries. Just as music, fiddling is a language unto itself that is universal!

\*\*\*\*\*

**Editors Note:** Sadly I must add here that Clair Stevens passed away on May 10, 2001, following a short illness. On April 22, 2001, Clair was admitted to the hospital with some problems breathing.

I, personally never got to know Clair very well. But over the years I have heard so much about him that I felt like I knew him. In the OMFA he was very well respected. He, of course, served as President of OMFA for many years. He and LaReine were also very involved in the 1986 fiddle book of fiddlers.

I understand, had it not been for Clair, that perhaps there would not of been a OMFA today.

Clair was an excellent fiddler. His favorite tune was 'the Five Acre Polka' This was played in his memory by Danny Johnston at the Grand Rapids Jamboree Special Tribute for the OMFA 25th Anniversary.

I think Wyatt Knapp summed it up very well when I advised him of Clair's passing...I was saddened at the news of the passing of Clair Stevens at the age of 81. When I joined OMFA he was President for many years and he had become for me, an inseparable part of the organization. My first memories of the excitement of being a part of the OMFA and meeting all the fun people for the first time. Clair had such a clear voice. He was very supportive of me and my fiddling. He will always be a part of the good memories of my early fiddling years"

Clair will be very much missed by his family, his many friends of the OMFA, and the fiddle friends he had in Idaho. God has gained an excellent fiddler for his Heavenly Fiddle Band!

\*\*\*\*\*

To me, the sweetest music comes flowing from the fiddle strings of the fiddle.

It is impossible to capture old time fiddling on paper. It flows from the heart through the hands of the individual fiddler.

## VICKIE STEVENS

REGION 2



I was born on November 25, 1984. I have lived in Charlevoix, Michigan all my life. I am a sophomore in high school, attending Concord Academy - Boyne Charter School.

I was 6 years old when I started lessons with a local violin teacher, Krista Knight. She taught by the Suzuki method, but she also enjoys fiddling, thus teaching her students about old time music and fiddling. I began on the violin mostly due to my grandparents, Bill & Donna Stevens. They had restored a violin for me long before I had any interest in music, hoping I would use it one day. The violin they had was a full-size violin which was too large. I 'borrowed' a half-size violin from the OMFA for most of my first year. I became an OMFA member when I was very little. I think my favorite fiddle tune is one called 'Angle Worm Wiggle'. I am not certain that is the true name of this tune. It was a tune played almost exclusively by Joe Stutzman (Charlevoix). After his death a couple of years ago, I adopted the tune as my own.

I truly enjoy fiddling! I have always had a strong interest in music and am very proud of my Stevens family heritage that has allowed me to be a part of square dance and old time music. I have made many friends of all ages, a treasure for all time.

I also play many other types of music, thanks to my beginnings with the violin. I love classical music and especially jazz. I play the piano, keyboard, flute, baritone

## VICKIE STEVENS

sax, alto sax, tenor sax, soprano sax, clarinet, bass clarinet, valve trombone, baritone, viola, violin and some guitar. I am planning to make music my career.

\*\*\*\*\*

### DID YOU KNOW...

The year was 1760, a young, freckle-faced lad, carrying a violin case, knocked on a door in Hanover County, Virginia. He asked if he could spend the night. He was made welcome and after dinner was asked if he would play an Irish jig. The young lad played the jig so skillfully that his host, Patrick Henry, jumped up and danced the jig. The next day the young lad went on his way to William and Mary college.

This young lad went on to become quite famous... He was known as a paleontologist, lexicographer of Indian dialect, inventor, author, he was also a musician. Some historians consider him to be the first great amateur violinist. He was known to practice his fiddle 3 hours a day. This man went on to become the President of the United States.

His name?? Thomas Jefferson.

Thomas Jefferson owned two fiddles. The one he played the jig for Patrick Henry was nearly lost in a fire in 1770. The house had caught fire in his absence, and a Negro slave, knowing how much the violin meant to Thomas, risked his own life to save the violin.

The second violin he acquired from John Randolph. Who had acquired this fiddle while in Italy as an attorney for King George the III. It was a Cremona, made by Nicholaus Amati in 1660. It was done in a brilliant amber varnish which the maker was noted for. The fingerboard, tailpiece and chin rest were made of ebony, the string pegs of ivory, the back of curly maple, and the top of spruce. A beautiful violin which Jefferson could not resist.

Jefferson played his favorite violin for the last time in 1786 when he fell and dislocated his right wrist while in France. The bone was not set properly and it left his wrist permanently stiff.

113 years later...in 1899 Albert Hildebrandt a known cellist and dealer of rare violins, from Baltimore, was in Charlottesville doing a recital and went for a shave. He asked the Negro barber if he knew of any old violins for sale. He directed him to another Negro, age 93, who had inherited a 1660 Amati from his father, a slave for Thomas Jefferson.

It was last exhibited in 1945 in Los Angeles, in perfect condition. The sound was still sweet and full.

## BERNIE SULLIVAN

### REGION 2

I was born on a farm 10 miles from Bad Axe on April 21, 1927. As I was growing up I went with my parents to a lot of house parties and grange hall dances. The thing that most interested me was the peppy fiddle music and the square dancing! As the evening wore on, I would fall asleep and very often I would be woke up to come and fill in as someone's partner during square dancing.

Henry Ford had a summer home east of Bad Axe. He was a great promoter of house parties and the grange hall dances.

I have been a square dancer caller for 52 years. I played other instruments but didn't get my fiddle until I retired.

In 1998 I went to Renfro Valley, Kentucky with Jerome Stacer for the fiddlers weekend.

I have been a member of OMFA for several years.

\*\*\*\*\*

Three fiddlers who also loved to fish were sitting along the edge of a river, holding fishing poles with the lines in the water. A Game Warden walked up behind them, tapped them on the shoulder and says " Excuse me, guys, I'd like to see your fishing licenses."

"We don't have any" said the 1st fiddler.

"Well, if your going to fish, you need fishing licenses" said the Game Warden.

The 2nd fiddler said "But officer, we aren't fishing! We all have magnets at the end of our lines and we are collecting debris off the bottom of the river."

The Game Warden lifted up all the lines and, sure enough, there were horseshoe tied on the end of each line. "Well, I know of no law against it. Take all the debris you want" said the Game Warden. With that the Game Warden left.

As soon as the Game Warden was out of sight the 3 fiddlers began laughing hysterically!

"What a dumb fish cop" the 3rd fiddler said to the other 2, "doesn't he know there are steelheads in this river!"

# NELLIE THOMAS

REGION 2



I was born July 15 in Frankfort, Michigan. I now live in Interlochen. I am employed in Traverse City as a Traffic & Export Coordinator for a corporation.

I became interested in fiddle music when I was about 8 years of age. I had a few lessons but then didn't play again until about 6 years ago.

I attended my 1st jamboree at Coral. The people have been very nice to me. My favorite music is hymns and old time tunes.

\*\*\*\*\*

We consider that any man or woman who can fiddle all through one of those Virginia Reels without losing his grip may be depended on in any kind of musical emergency.

*Mark Twain*

\*\*\*\*\*

"Haven't I seen you before?" demanded the judge as he looked down on the defendant.

"You have, your honor" the defendant said. "I gave your son violin lessons last year"

"20 years" said the judge.

# HELMER TOYRAS

REGION 1



I am Helmer Toyras and I was born on May 9, 1926. My parents were both born and raised in Finland, but I was born in the small community of Aura, in Baraga County. This is located in the western part of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. I was born on the property that my wife, Pearl, and I now live. I actually live 200 from the actual site of my birth. I am the youngest of 10 siblings.

I started playing the violin in high school. I played in the L'Anse high school orchestra for four years until I graduated.

I operated the family dairy farm with my parents until 1957. In the 1970's my wife and I owned and operated a tavern known as Happy's Bar in Kenton, Michigan. From 1963 till 1993 I worked as a lab tech in L'Anse.

I began taking a stronger interest in the fiddle while owning the tavern. I made the most progress during that time when I would perform for the customers and playing with musical groups that would stop by the tavern.

I met Bill Stevens who comes to all the Aura Jamborees. He asked me to join the Original Michigan Fiddlers Assoc. and invited me to play at the East Jordan fiddle jamboree in 1992.

I joined the OMFA in 1992 and attend the jamborees I can.

## FIDDLER'S PRAYER

*by Lloyd Fossum*

Dear Gabriel,

When I hear your trumpet blast  
And I will be coming home at last  
When I'm done with this life's riddle  
Would it be okay if I brought my fiddle?

It has been a grand companion  
Been right with me all these years  
Many a time when I was lonely  
It has driven back the tears.

We have been the rounds together  
Soothed many an aching heart  
That's why I love my fiddle  
We two just hate to part.

I know the harp is beautiful  
It causes angels to rejoice  
But the fiddle is the instrument  
That has the human voice.

So, when life on earth is ended  
If by chance I escape the griddle  
Won't you please find me a corner  
Where I can sit and play my fiddle?



## NORM & WANETA WEBER

REGION ?



I was born in New Salem, Michigan in 1915. Waneta was born in Grand Rapids in 1925. We met at a square dance in June 1977, and married November 11, 1977. I had 11 children, and Waneta 3. Together we have many grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren. Summers we are kept very busy visiting family and our Michigan music family from all around the lower peninsula.

I began playing fiddle when I was 12 yrs old. My father played fiddle and I would chord for him on the piano. My youngest son, Peter, now plays grand-dads fiddle.

Waneta: I began playing the guitar because in the Weber family you end up in the kitchen doing dishes unless you play something.

## NORM & WANETA WEBER

We spent 10 winters in Arizona playing weekly sing-a-longs and Friday night campfire programs. On the way back to Michigan in April or May we attend fiddle conventions in Oklahoma and Missouri. Since moving to Tucson in 1993 we go back to Michigan later and usually attend the Hart jamboree in June. We spend the summer playing music, visiting friends and family.

We play several times a week in Tucson, attend several campout jams, and play dates in the winter. In the summer we get to the Hart jamboree, spend a couple of weeks at the Evert Dulcimer Fest, 1 or 2 MFA jamborees, have attended the Hillsdale Fiddle Convention several times, unless we run out of time.

We joined OMFA in 1978. We also belong to Southern Arizona Old Time Fiddlers, Michigan Fiddle Asso, and the Original Dulcimer Players Club.

We have found that no matter where you go music opens the doors to enjoying life!

\*\*\*\*\*

Some people call it a violin and others call it a fiddle. Then there are the jokes about the difference between a violin and a fiddle. Is there a difference? Mainly, it is the way in which the instrument is played. However, if there is a technical difference, it would be in the bridge.

The violin has an arched bridge. This allows the violinist to bow a single string more easily. The fiddle has a flattened bridge. The flattened bridge can cover many errors in pitch and stroke of a note, like one note can hide the sound of the other. The flattened bridge can also enhance the sound! As in allowing for two strings to be played together...one is a drone string and one string played as the melody string.

The violinist usually learns his music from a piece of sheet music, by reading notes following an arrangers writing of the music. The fiddler learns a tune mainly by 'ear', fiddling with it until they make it sound right. Maybe he learns a song from a written piece of music, then he adds 'himself' to it, making it his very own. Often times a tune learned by someone else later on will know it as 'Joe's Tune' or 'Bill's Tune' rather than by an actual name.

\*\*\*\*\*

What is the difference between a violin and a fiddle?

It is a fiddle when you want to buy it, and a violin when you want to sell it!

## BERNARD 'BERNIE' WEEKS

REGION 6



I was born 4-3-33. I was born in the same place we now live, between Hastings and Nashville, Michigan. I worked 39 years for the E.W. Bliss Co. in Hastings, as a machinist. I retired and went to work for the Hastings Area Schools for five or six years and then retired again.

I play guitar mostly. I prefer Country music. I have several instruments that I like to pick up and play at home.

In June Norma and I will be married 49 years.

We have been members of OMFA for several years.

**EDITOR:** Bernie and Norma sponsor the Hastings Jamboree.

\*\*\*\*\*

### MORE KIDS PROVERBS

Strike while the...bug is close.

As you shall make your bed...so shall you mess it up!

You can't teach an old dog new...math.

An idle mind is...the best way to relax.

A penny saved...is not much.

Two's company, three is...The Musketeers.

# AMANDA WESTRICK

REGION 2



I was born on December 26, 1986 at Port Huron. I now live in Boyne City. My grandma Westrick inspired me to play the fiddle. She plays a piano.

I began taking lessons at age 6 on classical violin. At about age 9 I changed to the fiddle.

It is my desire to become a famous fiddler in the professional field.

My favorite fiddle tune is the Orange Blossom Special.

I would like to thank my parents, Grandma and Grandpa Westrick, and Bill Stevens for all the help they have given me with the fiddle. I play at nursing homes and area events with Bill Stevens and this has been very rewarding.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Editors note:** Amanda played for her first square dance at the Walloon Lake Campout Jamboree on Friday evening. The caller was very pleased to have her playing for him, and said she could play for him any time he was calling.

Bill Stevens told me Amanda had been invited to play on stage at the Michigan Magazine Craft Show the end of June 2001.

She plays the old fiddle tunes and plays them very well!

## BILL WHITE

REGION 6



I was born in 1950, I lived in Massachusetts, Florida and Illinois before settling down in the Lansing area in 1975. I have earned my living as a baker, cab driver, day laborer, construction worker, busker (street musician), restaurant manager and violin repairman. For the past twenty-five years I have owned and operated White Brothers Music Store in Okemos.

I was brought up a Methodist, sang in the church choir for many years. My parents were born musically inclined and they got me into music early. I learned a little piano at the age of 6 and joined the elementary school band at age 9 as a tuba player. As a high school student, I traveled to Europe and Mexico with a musical youth ensemble as a tubist and singer.

In seventh grade I met a French horn player named Paul Gifford. Eventually we became good friends as we explored the world of music. He introduced me to the (hammer) dulcimer, which an uncle of his had built and played. After high school, we played in several folk music groups, and learned the basics of the fiddle, dulcimer, guitar, and bass. Mostly I am self-taught, learning tunes from the old timers we met over the years. Many were from the Original Dulcimer Players Club, whose meetings we started attending in the early 1970's. I made my first of many dulcimers in 1973, and since then have built a few violin family instruments and restored many others.

## BILL WHITE

I distinctly remember driving home one night from a Dulcimer Club meeting listening to tape recordings Paul had made and talking with him about the different fiddlers. He bemoaned the fact that other States had fiddler associations but Michigan did not. I said "Well maybe we ought to tart one". A little while later, Paul lined up a hall in Sheridan through Ken Staines and got together a mailing list of fiddlers we knew from the Dulcimer Club. Bob Fleck helped print up some posters and we put them up around the towns nearby.

At the first meeting in 1976, nearly all the fiddlers were from the Dulcimer Club, but we all had a good time and decided to do it again. For the first few years there was no official organization and eventually Bob Fleck and his partner, Jane Allison, were pretty much running the show. The non-profit Michigan Fiddlers Association was incorporated on October 5, 1978, after a disagreement over when and where to have jamborees. Although the original incorporators, (myself included), elected Bob as President he chose not to work with the official group and kept up on his own. The second group called the ORIGINAL Michigan Fiddlers Association was incorporated as a non-profit organization on May 15, 1980, when Bob turned over his mailing list to other members.

Over the next twenty years a number of dedicated, hardworking individuals stepped forward and did a splendid job of carrying on the Michigan fiddlers tradition. While the two groups have operated well independently, it would be nice to see them back together again sometime in the future.

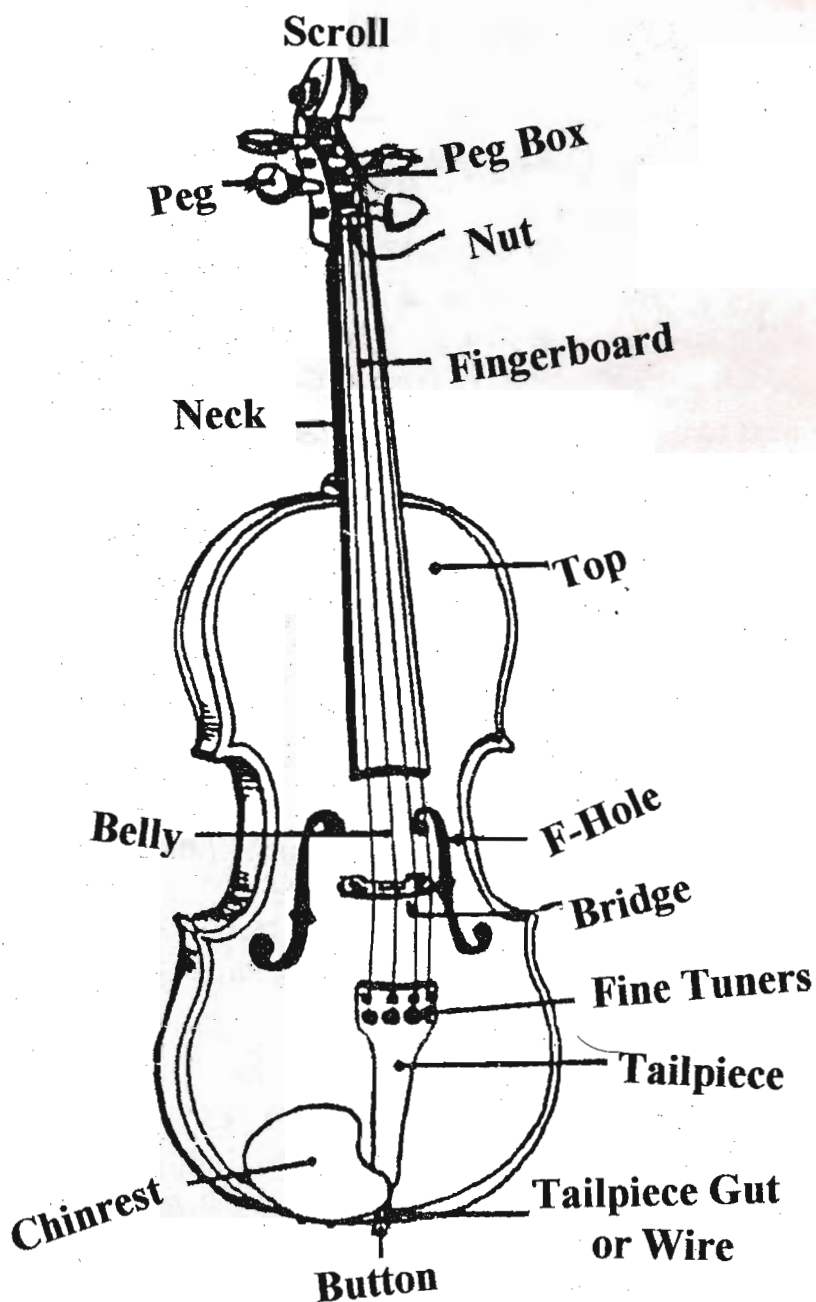
Of course the best thing about the Fiddlers Organization is the people you meet, the tunes you learn, and the dancing and carrying on. I hope that will never change.

As I think of the people that most influenced me, some immediately come to mind. One was Bill Bigford, who knew many unusual lumberjack songs and made his own fiddle from the trees on his lot, using just an ax and a pocket knife. Les Raber, who was one of the smoothest fiddlers, had an extensive repertoire. had a strict sense of rhythm. Les and his longtime pal, Varsal Fales played the sweetest fiddle duets I can remember. Then there was Stuart Carmichael, who played the (hammer) dulcimer in addition to the fiddle and usually brought along his friend, Jim Beam. Danny Johnston, always had a friendly word and a ticklish tune on his mind. Frank Mattison, began playing professionally at age seven, impressed me with his technique. Coincidentally, the first thing we both learned on the fiddle was "Wooster Oddity". I believe he learned it in 1904 and I picked it

up around 1974. Many others, like banjo player Dorsey Lawrence or Larry Franklin, callers like Clarence Ewing or Guy Lincoln, accordion players, piano players and guitarists, can not be forgotten and are too numerous to mention. All in all I am proud to have had a small part in creating the Fiddlers Association, and it has been a pleasure to meet and mingle with everyone involved.

KEEP YOUR ROSIN DRY AND THE TUNES WILL FLY!!!

\*\*\*\*\*



# LELA YAGEMAN

REGION 8



I was born on April 8, 1928, in Elkton, Michigan. I have lived in Bad Axe, Michigan (thumb area) for 60 years. My husband and I have an appliance store where I work part time. We have three children and eight grandchildren.

I have two fiddles which were given to me by Mark and Annie Smith of Sandusky, Michigan.

I started playing fiddle at age 68. when Mark put a fiddle in my hands and said "Here play this" It was a challenge that has brought me great joy and many friends.

When Mark passed away last August (2000), I received my 2nd fiddle and I'm hoping that some of the talent he had might of been passed along with it.

I joined OMFA in 1996.

\*\*\*\*\*

The WILDWOOD FLOWER became a country classic after being recorded by the Carter Family in the 1930's. The song was first published in 1860 by Maud Irving and Joseph P. Webster. Not much is known about Maud, but J.P. was an active Methodist during the Civil War. He also wrote 'Lorena' and 'Sweet Bye and Bye'.



# LOWELL 'BILL' ZIMMER

REGION 5



My real name is Lowell but I go by Bill, so most people know me as Bill. I was born near Grant, Michigan on a farm. The date was June 7, 1925. I now live near Nunica and spend my winters in Mission, Texas.

I played the fiddle a little as a kid, but never really played until I was about 60 years old and here in Texas. There is a lot of music here in Texas and so I started to play again. Now I play quite a bit at the jam sessions.

My favorite tune is Redwing and my wife, Ruth's favorite tune is Golden Slippers.

Ruth and I have been married 55 years and we have 2 boys, 4 grandkids, & 5 great grandchildren.

My fiddle was passed down from my great grandfather to my grandfather, then to my father and then to me. As a child I would go to sleep while my dad played the fiddle. My mother also played the fiddle.

I am retired from Continental Motors after 40 years, and been retired over 18 years.

I am a member of the OMFA.

\*\*\*\*\*

What is the difference between a violin and a fiddle?  
The fiddle is FUN to listen to!

## JAMBOREE HOST and SPONSOR for 2001

MORLEY:	SANDY JONES ED DEMING ELON and LONDA HOWE
GRAND RAPIDS:	JOAN DOYLE HIGHLAND NORTHVIEW SENIORS
JOHANNESBURG:	AUSTIN and GENEVA MYERS
ONAWAY:	LYLE and JO PETERMAN
WALLOON LAKE CAMPOUT:	BYARD STEVENS NORTHERN MICHIGAN FLYWHEELERS
HART:	HERB and ARDITH MERTENS OCEANA GRANGE
BENZONIA:	ERWIN and SHIRLEY LANDIS
NEWBERRY:	GUS and LOUISE WALKER
CHEBOYGAN:	LARRY SOCZEK KNIGHTS of COLUMBUS
HASTINGS:	BERNIE and NORMA WEEKS
CORAL:	JO SEARS JON and MARY GIDDINGS
CLARE:	MARVIN and KAREN KRELL LeROY and SHIRLEY SCOTT

Also to ALL those who help with carrying equipment, helping to set up and tear down the sound equipment at the jamborees. ALL the people who assist the hosts with the jamboree in whatever way you help:

ALL of you who come to the jamborees so faithfully  
ALL who contribute to the donation box so that we can pay expenses  
Without ALL of YOU there could be no jamborees!

## ABOUT THE JAMBOREES

I thought it might be of some interest to those who have joined OMFA over the years to know a little history about the jamboree locations and sponsors of those jamborees. In 2001 these were the jamborees that were held.

**BENZONIA.** Ervin and Shirley Landis sponsor this jamboree. They started it in 1999. This year of 2001 it will be held at Honor, just a few miles from Benzonia at the Platte River Association building.

**CHEBOYGAN.** This jamboree began in 1984. Ray and Ruth Zbieratz sponsored it for the 1st 4 years, and then Larry Soczek took it over and has been sponsoring since. This is held at the Knights of Columbus in Cheboygan. This is perhaps one of the largest



**CLARE.** This jamboree will be held in a new location the fall of 2001. It had previously been held at the local school, but will now be held at the Grant Township Hall on Surrey Rd. Sponsors are Marvin & Karen Krell and LeRoy and Shirley Scott. They also host a Saturday night jamboree on the 2nd Saturday of the month. This jamboree began in 1995. In 1999 they began hosting a Friday night jam for those who wanted to play music. This will continue at the new location. Clare's jamboree is the last one of the year and very well attended.



**CORAL.** The jamboree held at Coral was actually started in Trufant. Don Hendrickson sponsored it while there. Then it was changed to Coral and Fred & Jo Sears were the sponsors. When Fred passed away a year ago, Jon & Mary Giddings began helping Jo to sponsor this jamboree. Coral is a small town in the country and host a nice jamboree.



**GRAND RAPIDS.** Byard & Lorraine Stevens started this jamboree in 1982. In 1987 Joan Doyle and the Highland Northview Senior Citizens took it over and are still sponsoring it. This is another very large jamboree! Located on the east side of Grand Rapids it is quite easy to find.

April 21, 2001, we celebrated our 25th anniversary with a special program. Paul Gifford and Bill White were there to help celebrate.



**HART.** This jamboree is sponsored by Herb & Ardith Mertens and the Oceana Grange. The jamboree is held at the Hart High School. This jamboree has been around since 1987 when it was held in Shelby. It has been held in Hart since 1990, except for 1992 which was also held in Shelby. Ardith also served as OMFA Vice President for 3 years and Herb served on the Board of Directors for 8 years. This is a nice jamboree.



**HASTINGS.** Les & Rosemary Raber started this jamboree in 1979. After Rosemary passed away, Bernie & Norma Weeks took over the sponsorship. They also moved the location to the new Starr Elementary School on Starr School Rd. This jamboree is one of the oldest jamborees.



**JOHANNESBURG.** Ron & Shirley Daugherty began this one at Gaylord in 1985. Then in 1986 brought it to Johannesburg where it has been held in the Charlton Hall on M-32. Ron also served as President of OMFA April 1996 till June of 1997. In 1998 Austin & Geneva Myers took it over. This is always a fun jamboree with a Friday night jam session.



**MORLEY.** The jamboree was started in 1996 by Sandy Jones and Ed Deming. In 2000 Elon & Londa Howe also began helping to sponsor the Morley jamboree. This is a very welcome jamboree after nearly 4 months of winter and no jamborees. Friends are always glad to see friends again, and a real treat to listen to the fiddlers after the long winter. A nice carry in supper and jamming time at Sandy Jones Music House on Friday night helps get this jamboree off to a good beginning.



**NEWBERRY.** Pete & Rose Anderson along with the Logging Museum sponsor this jamboree. It was started in 1991. In 2000 Pete & Rose turned it over to Gus & Louise Walker. A Friday night carry in supper and jamming session is held at the Logging Museum Cookshack. This is about 2 miles N of Newberry. The Saturday Jamboree is held in the American Legion Hall next to the State Police Post. This is the only jamboree we sponsor in the Upper Peninsula, and is a very popular jamboree.

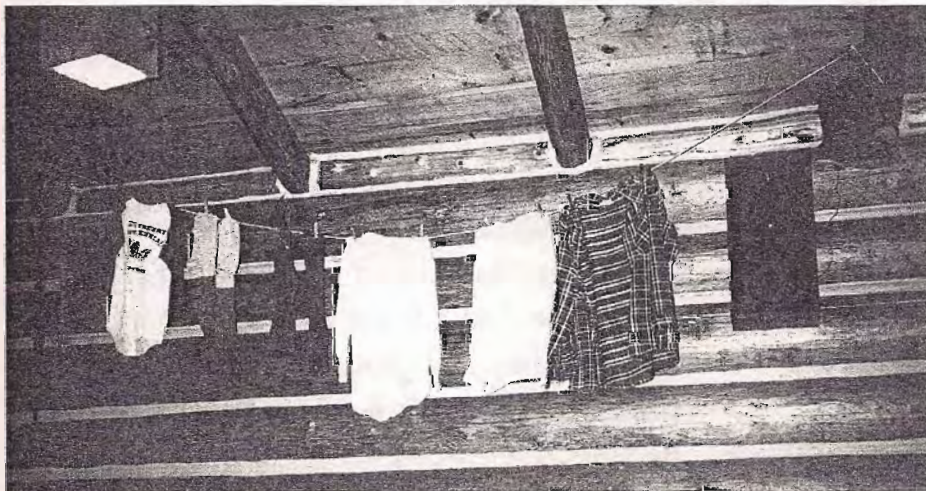
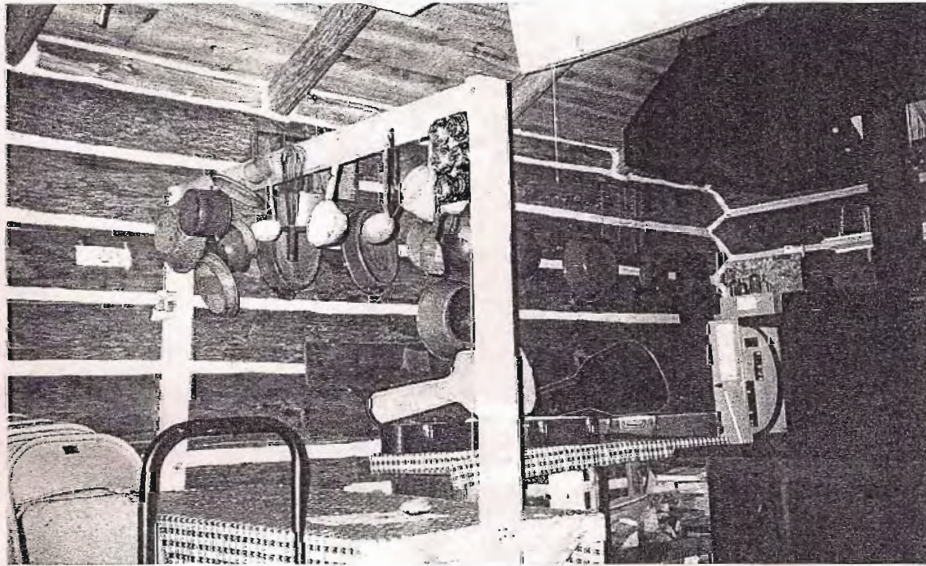


**ONAWAY.** This jamboree was started in 1991 by Lyle & Jo Peterman. Lyle served as Director of OMFA for many years, and Jo served as Vice President for 2 years. The jamboree is held in the High School on M-33. A Friday night jam at a local restaurant with a buffet supper. Sunday morning at the VFW breakfast is served and a gospel jam is held. Always a nice jamboree.!





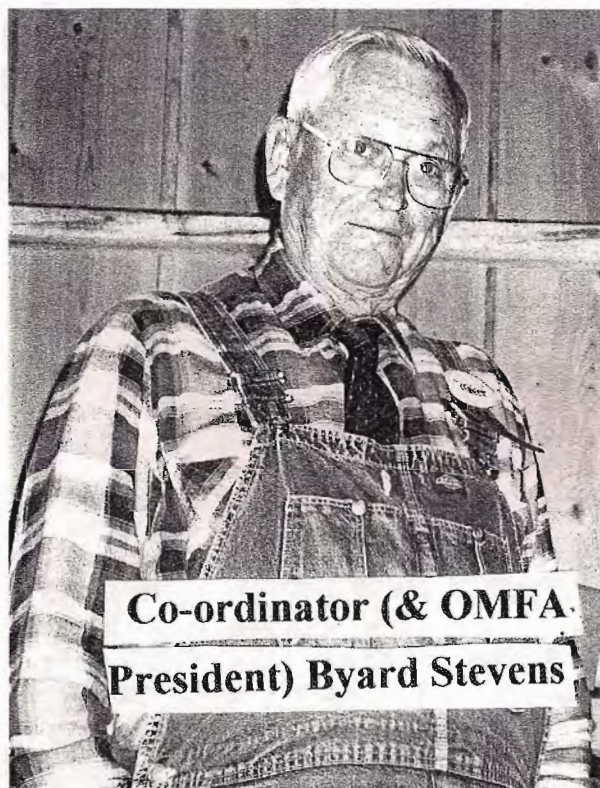
Inside the Logging Museum cookshack at Newberry.



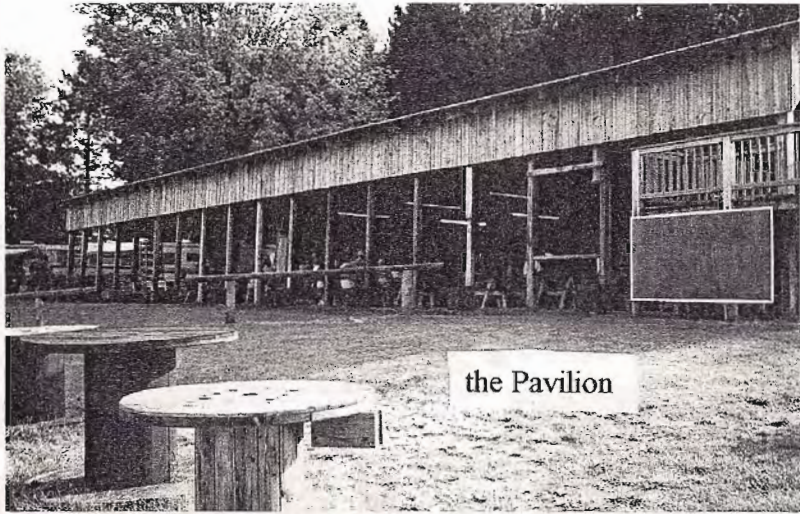
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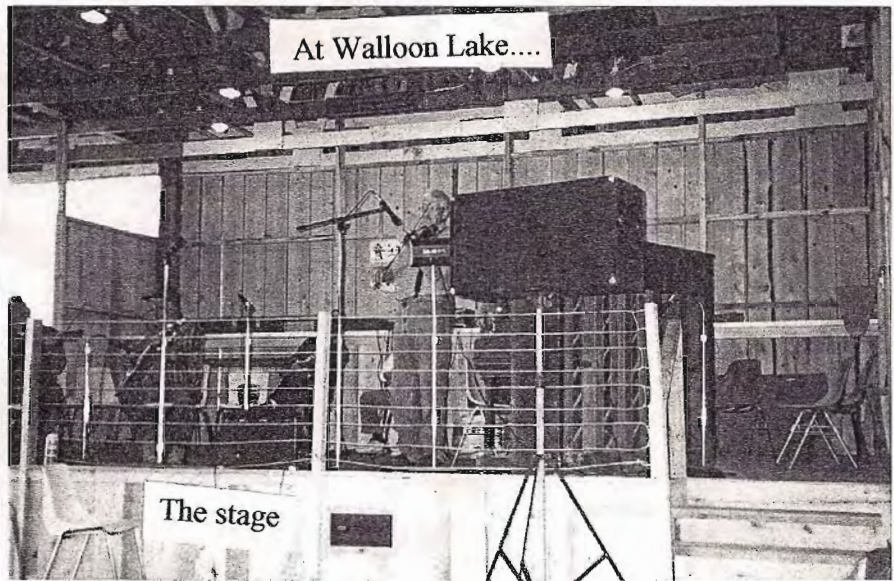
**WALLOON LAKE.** Byard & Lorraine Stevens along with the Northern Michigan Antique Flywheelers sponsor this event. It is a weekend campout. The camping is free. It is held on the NMA grounds. This was started in 1998. There is always a nice turnout of campers and a lot of jamming at campsites, plus jamming most of the time at the pavilion. Friday night there is a carry in supper with music and dancing at the pavilion. Saturday is the normal jamboree schedule. with a steak supper put on by the Flywheelers. Sunday morning is gospel time. Breakfast is served by the Flywheelers on Friday, Saturday and Sunday,. A great weekend and well attended.



The jamborees begin at 1:00p.m. The fiddlers, musicians, and callers have all signed in. The jamboree is opened with "ALL FIDDLERS ON STAGE" and they, as a group, play 3 tunes. The fiddlers then take their turns playing 3 tunes each until 5:00p.m...or they have all had their time to play. From 5:00 to 7:00p.m. is open mike. Anyone who wants to share their talent can do so here. This is not for fiddlers only. From 7:00 till 10:00p.m. is dancing. Both round and square dancing. The calling and dancing is done to live music, the fiddle is the lead instrument, and done in the old time styles. This is always a fun time and dancers of all ages are welcome to dance. Many young dancers learn to dance during these dances. Everyone is always welcome to join in for these fun filled afternoons and evenings.



the Pavilion



At Walloon Lake....

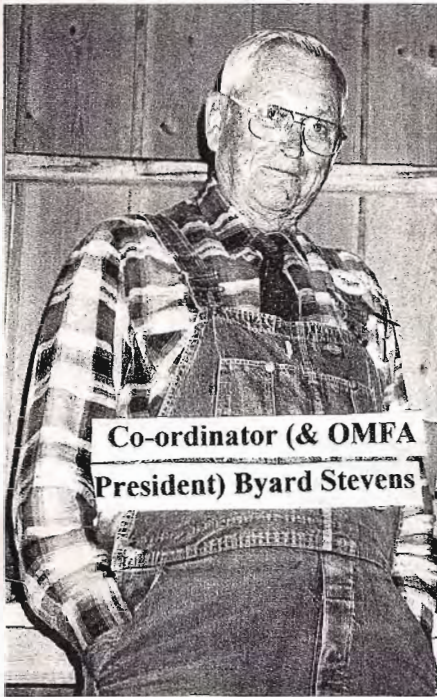
The stage



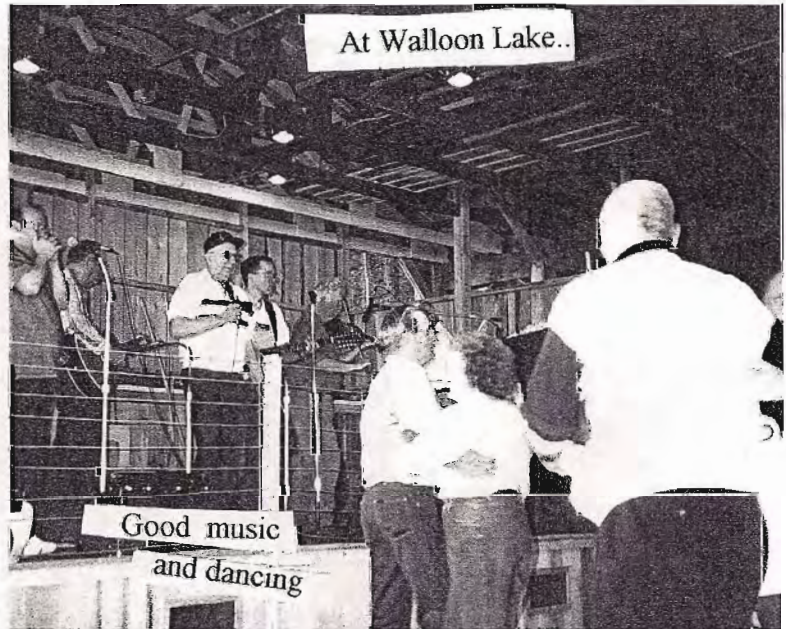
Camping

# Walloon Lake

# Walloon Lake

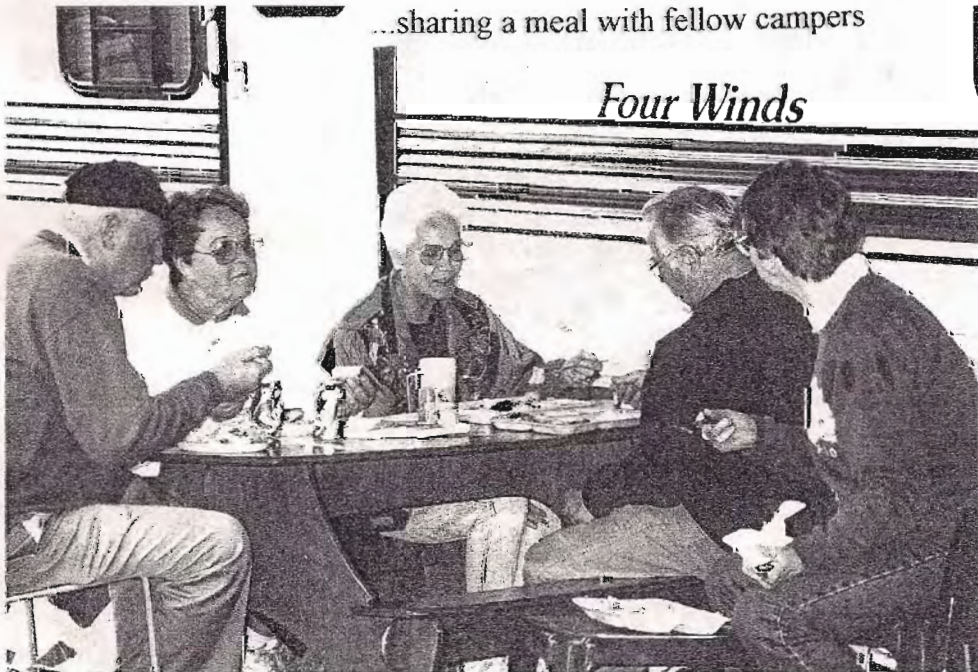


Co-ordinator (& OMFA  
President) Byard Stevens



At Walloon Lake..

Good music  
and dancing



...sharing a meal with fellow campers

*Four Winds*

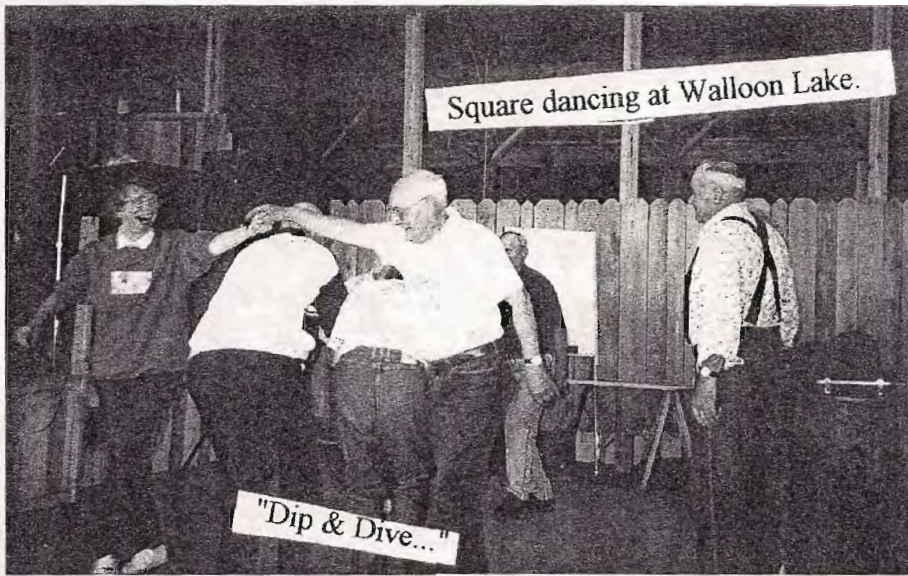


Having fun at Walloon Lake.



4 young fiddlers playing together





## HISTORY OF THE FIDDLE & SQUARE DANCING

The fiddle was the back bone of the old-time dance music. It was lightweight, easiest to carry of all the old time instruments. Many of the early immigrants from the British Isles carried their fiddles with them into the New World. They also brought with them 100's of fiddle tunes; these melodies were the beginnings of the old-time music we know today. The Irish and Scottish peoples seem to have brought what has become Southern mountain fiddling traditions.

The fiddle turned out to be the most versatile of instruments. In the early mountain settlements there were many community dances held and any excuse to hold a dance , such as barn raising, ,molasses stir off, cornhusking, apple butter boiling, flax pulling, welcoming newcomers to the community, marriages, births, or any other excuse one could come up with. These dances gave the fiddle its most important function.... to provide the music. The fiddle could play any type of music from reels to the waltz and it was enjoyed by all.

In some communities home made liquor ran free. Law enforcement was lax. These dances sometimes provided an outlet for feuds to turn into real battles. At times, shots were heard above the fiddle and banjo music and the sound of dancing feet. This caused the dances to become associated with violence and rowdiness. This led to the dances decline and the square dance clubs were born. These were tightly controlled and remained popular over the years.

The fiddle was one of the most love and respected of all musical instruments. And, it was one often despised. To some religious groups, the fiddle was the instrument of the devil. Playing the fiddle was referred to with scorn, as doing the devil's handiwork. Fiddle tunes such as the Devil's Dream, Give The Fiddler A Dram, The Devil in the Strawsack, as well as folk expressions such as "Thick as fiddlers in hell" did not help the fiddles reputation. The practice of keeping a rattlesnake rattle inside the fiddle as a good omen was looked on with suspicion.

The fiddle was not too popular for a few years. They could not be sold as no one wanted to be associated with owning a fiddle. They were seldom played as no one wanted to be caught with one. So many people of the Appalachians buried their fiddles in the walls of the cabins. In later years, as these cabins were torn down, many old fiddles were found hidden there in the walls.

However, over the years the fiddle has become more popular than ever. Most states have some type of fiddle events going on. Some states, such as Idaho, hold many contests, and then fiddle get together in various areas of the state. Other states have one major fiddle event per year which draws many people,

much like the Ewart Dulcimer Fest. Then several states do as Michigan does, and holds Jamborees. Michigan also holds a Fiddle Convention at Hillsdale every summer, and also a Fiddlers Hall of Fame held at Mourrice each October.

Michigan has two fiddle organizations who hold jamborees throughout the year and several individual groups who host a single jamboree event each year. From these jamborees there are numerous jam sessions held throughout the week where people in the area can come to spend a fun evening enjoying the music and musicians can jam together.

Michigan also has the Western Style square dance clubs. A live caller calls to taped music. The calls range from what is known as hash calls to singing calls to the latest pop music. The caller must be able to sing as well as to call. But where the jamborees are held, in the evening is a real old fashioned square dance. Callers call to live fiddle music, to the old-time tunes such as Bully in the Town, Golden Slippers, Turkey in the Straw, etc.

The square dance is American born. It really began in the New England states when the first settlers/immigrants came together. These people were from various parts of the world and had brought with them their native dances as well as the fiddle and old fiddle tunes. Some of these included the schottische, jigs, reels, etc. After a week of hard labor building homes, clearing the land to farm, they were ready for a Saturday night dance. They taught each other the dances they had brought with them. As they learned more of the dances, it also became more difficult to remember the steps.

There was always a fellow in the group that seemed to have the knack for catching on to them, as well as being able to coach others. He would prompt the dancers on the dance steps and later became known as the figure caller. This person would sometimes bring dances from other communities and teach them in his own community, he also developed a few colorful sayings, which he would throw in as the couple executed the calls. Later these callers would develop their own calls for the dances. This soon led to groups of four dancing together to the calls. This is how the square dance and callers evolved.

People began to move south and west. There was no organized recreation, but the pioneers felt the need for social contact with the neighbors and recreation. Square dancing filled the need very nicely. The only requirements were a wooden floor, fiddles and a caller. The barn, a living room of some one's home, the town hall, and later the grange halls provided the place. Music was always provided...usually a fiddle, sometimes an accordion, guitar, banjo would also be on hand. Someone in the area usually could call a dance, and if one was not available, then they would dance to ones they knew or someone could prompt.

As more people came to America, they brought even more dances from home, more modern music, different instruments. Soon the square dance was surviving only in the isolated areas of the country. As time went on, the dances became more area oriented until a dancer from one area could hardly dance in another area's dances. Square dancing was slowly fading from the scene.

Then Henry Ford came along. In the early 30's, Henry wanted to see square dancing and other old style dancing back into popularity. He got the interest of other individuals and they were soon working to bring back the old time dancing, including the square dancing. The square dance clubs began forming, and led into the more organized clubs with taped music. No more dancing in the barn, sitting on hay bales, with live music.

As Americans have moved overseas now, they have taken the square dance with them into the old countries where it is being enjoyed.

Grange Halls have helped keep the old time square dancing alive. Many callers have learned to call by going to a dance and no caller being available, so some one steps up and says "I'll give it a try." So the old time square dancing has been kept alive.

Today, there are usually dances held in the evening after an afternoon of fiddle music. Live fiddles and backed up by other instruments provide the music, callers call these dances in the old way. This is very popular method of dancing. Round dances, from schottische to waltz's, are done between sets, also to live music. The fiddle is the main instrument here, as in the old days. Square Dancing and the fiddle are alive and well!





Harold Hallam - Vanderbilt

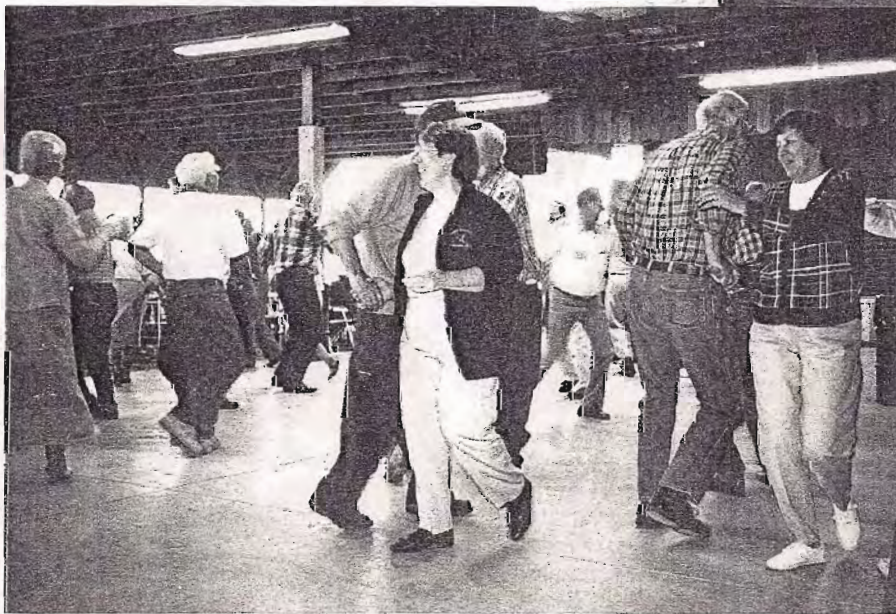


*A good caller...PLUS...*

Al Root - Owosso

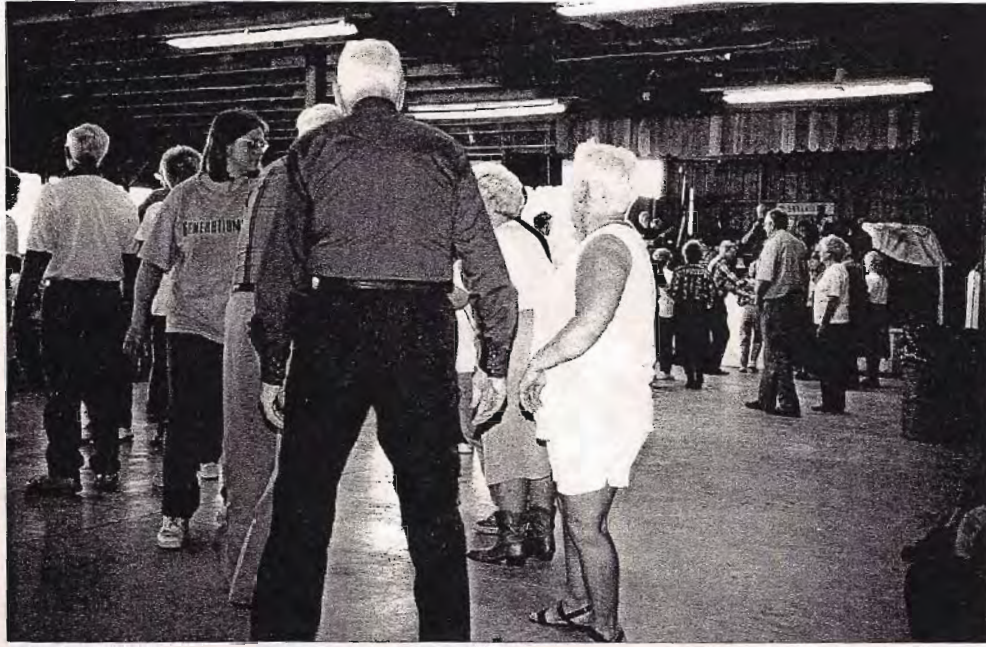


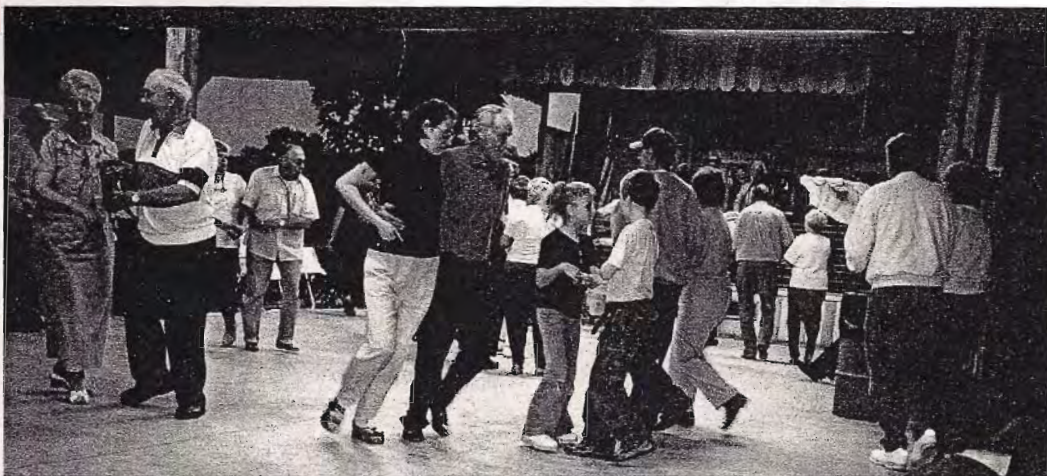
*A good Fiddler...*



?

*equals a  
Square Dance*







## COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE



**DWITT HUTCHENS**, age 75, of Flint, and Lucille Drelan, age 77, have attended a few jamborees during the year of 2001. They say the music is the greatest!! The music is a great healer for the lonely. The best music I've heard since leaving North Carolina!! Better than Nashville! Dwitt is a World War II buddy of Archie Campbell.

**MELVA & DON STAGG** of Glennie they have attended OMFA jamborees for about 20 years! We go for the old time music and the nice people we meet, the good clean fun, no smoking or drinking.



**VALENTINE DONAJHOUSKI** age 85, and Julia Domajhouski age 77, are from Posen. They attended the Onaway Jamboree. We (editor) had met their son at the motel, and he had heard Soren practicing, asked about the jamboree, called his parents to come down. This was their 1st time to attend, enjoyed the music.



**EVA HOFFMEYER** lives in Onaway. She has been a member for several years. Her 1st jamboree to attend was Hillman. Eva said she tries to never miss a jamboree. She loves the old time music. She always requests a schottische. She plans her summers around the jamborees. She has grown children who also love to attend with her.



**DAN & MARGE GOLDSMITH** of Petoskey seldom miss a jamboree. Dan is also a member of the Northern Michigan Antique Flywheelers club, and helped in organizing the weekend campout. "We enjoy all the friendly people we have met and the great music"



**KARL & ELFRIEDA KIHN** of West Branch wrote about how they discovered the OMFA.

"They were camping in the Upper Peninsula, at Grand Marais, on Lake Superior when 2 camping units came in to park beside them. After introductions were met, Ron Daugherty and Norm ? brought out their guitars and played & sang around the campfire with Gitchee Goomie - Lake Superior providing the background music - beautiful sounds! They told us about the OMFA and the fun & music at the jamborees. The next jamboree was at Cheboygan. We went and really enjoyed it and the rest is history! We try not to miss any and someday we will get to the ones in the south. The Friday night jam sessions are super!

As we get older I see more and more pillows for the chairs - sometimes I forget ours - a pillow makes the music sound that much greater! The OMFA definitely does not have an age limit - not too young nor too



Males left to right: Norman Weller, President Byard Stevens, Dewey Coon  
Females left to right: Shirley Weller, Avis Coon, Lorraine Stevens

Norman and Shirley Weller are from Canada, and know Byard from Florida. They came up to the Walloon Lake jamboree in June 2001. Norman said he had attended a lot of jamborees but this one was the best! He already has his motel reservations for 2002.

Dewey Coon, came to the Walloon Lake jamboree. He runs a tourist club in Zephyrhills, Florida, where he also met Byard. He stated he wished he could get some of our fiddlers to come and play for him! He said we have the best fiddlers! He also has made motel reservations for 2002.

Andy and Connie Norton, no photo available, were also on hand at the Walloon Lake from Maine. Really enjoyed the great fiddling!

# *Musicians*

**Bill Sparrow - Ocequoc**



**Chuck George - Muskegon**



**Bob Murphy - Lansing**

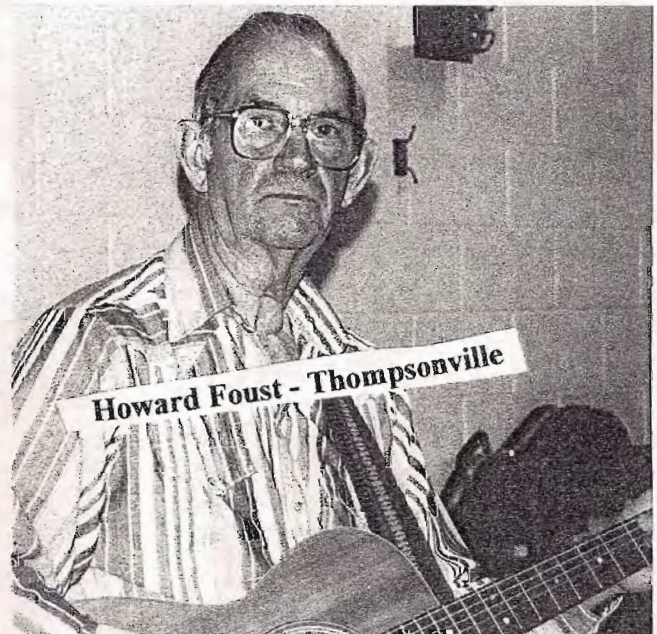




**Roy McFarlane - Cheboygan**

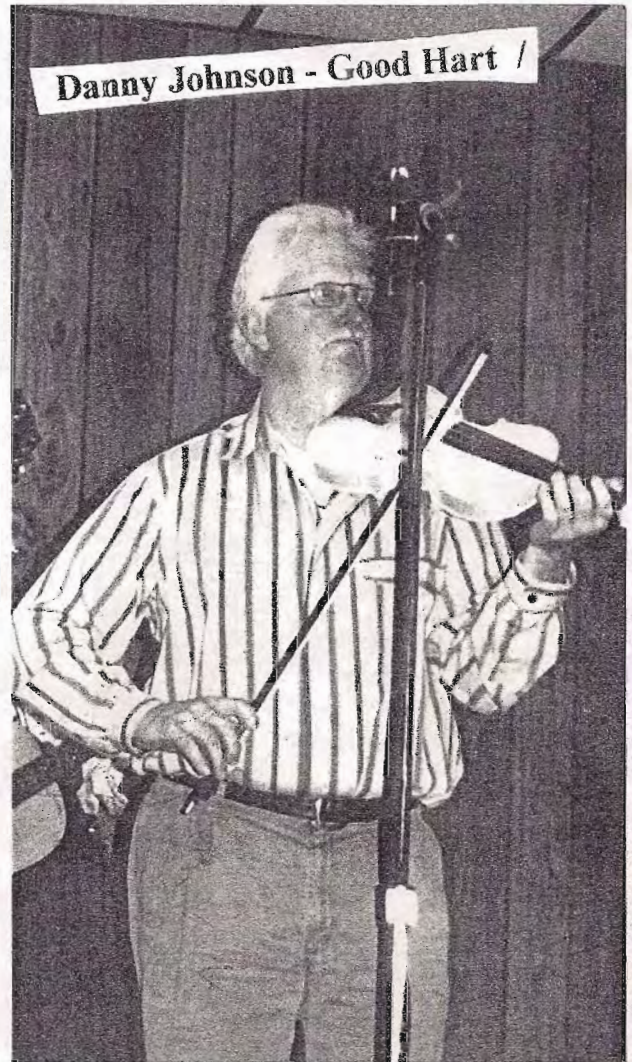


**Bill Sparrow - Ocequoc**



**Howard Foust - Thompsonville**





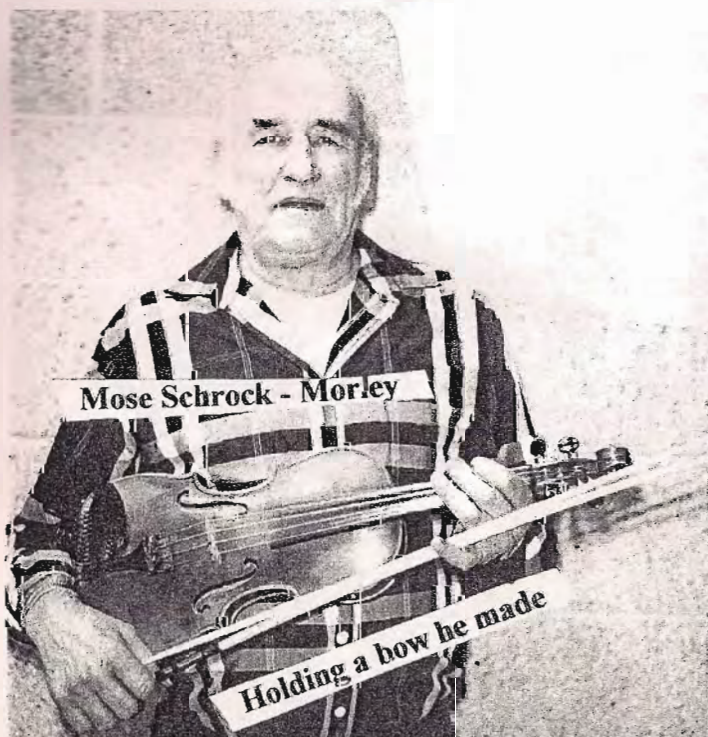
# *Musicians*



**Frank Schiersow - Onaway**



**Elon Howe - Newaygo  
Holding fiddle he made**



**Mose Schrock - Morley**

**Holding a bow he made**



**Riby Holmes - Fowlerville, now Texas**



Wayne Lantz - Kalkaska



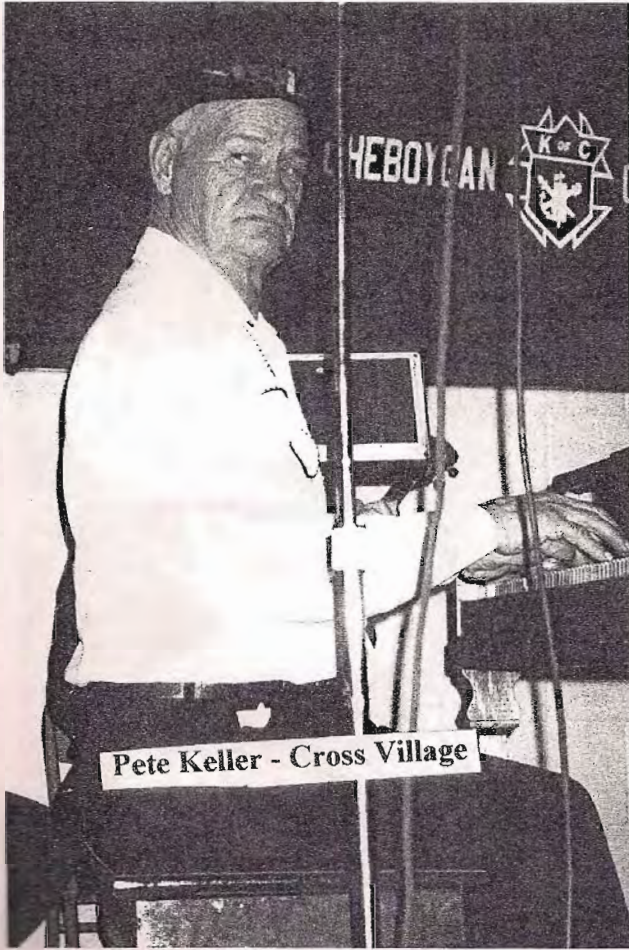
Caryl Schaffer - Newaygo



Wayne Lantz - Kalkaska



Lyle Peterman - Onaway



# *Musicians*



# Musicians

Old Thumper - Dennis Denier, U.P.



Kurt & Elsie Meroow - Middleville



Russ Hawthorne - Bellevue

Jerry Parker - Howell





*Audience*



# *Autographs*