

EDITORIAL: Fiddle hard and stay safe this Fiddle Championship weekend

Hello visitors and welcome to Shelburne, Ontario, home of the Canadian Open Old Time Fiddle Championship!

This year, as our community celebrates the 63rd Anniversary of the fiddle contest, we are pleased to have you with us. Please enjoy any or all of the five days of fun and excitement that has been planned for you through the involvement of the Rotary Club of Shelburne, the Town of Shelburne, the Kinsmen, the Kinettes, the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 220 and the Lions Club of Shelburne, plus many more who volunteer their time ? with your participation, it's sure to be the best Fiddle Championship ever!

Here in Shelburne, it's okay to 'fiddle around'. In fact, we encourage it! That's why we attract the best stage performers and fiddlers from across North America. We may have a population of 6,500 but over the course of the competition that swells to more than 10,000 for a reason.

Not to be a name dropper, but we have a few big acts such as Everything Fitz with special guests Nate Douglas and Emily Flack, The Black Family attending this year's competition.

'Everything Fitz has roots in the Canadian old-time fiddle tradition and Ottawa Valley step dancing, their high energy stage show combines a variety of musical styles ? everything from traditional jigs and reels, bluegrass, swing, Celtic, and gospel to novelty numbers and choreographed dance routines,' reads a Fiddle Contest Committee press release. 'The group features Julie Fitzgerald, the 2009 Canadian Grandmasters Fiddle Champion and 2010 Canadian Grandmasters and Canadian Open winner, as well as her brother Tom, who won both the 2012 Canadian Open Fiddle Championship as well as the Canadian Grandmasters. The family group will be joined by special guests Emily Flack and Nate Douglas. Emily, a multi-talented performer has been a guest artist with Leahy and Natalie MacMaster and will provide vocal numbers as well as piano and step dancing. Nate is a graduate of the music programs at Western University and Humber College. He is a much sought-after guitar player and recently toured with Natalie MacMaster.

These spirited young performers are noted for their polished performances and will provide captivating entertainment for a diverse audience.?

'The Black Family consists of ten children ranging in age from 21 down to 5. They have made music a large part of their family life. They started with piano as young children, and were inspired to get a fiddle when they saw Leahy in concert for the first time. Now, aside from two pianos and ten fiddles, their Markdale, Ontario home also has guitars, a mandolin, an accordion, a banjo, step dance shoes, and an assortment of other instruments. Their music has taken them to many small towns in Ontario. Their music, ranging from old-time fiddle tunes to vocal favorites from years past, has added many happy times, memories and laughter to their family life. They are sure to get your toes tapping and your hands clapping!?

In addition to the great stage performances, there are many things to keep you busy this week in our quaint community. We have open air markets, a parade, 24-hour meals at the Legion, jam sessions, and of course world-class, competitive fiddling.

In addition, our local shops, restaurants and markets are open to meet your needs as you enjoy a relaxing and musical week in a community that we're proud to call home.

We remind all residents, visitors, and visiting musicians, to fiddle hard and stay safe over the duration of the fiddle contest week ? please plan ahead and don't drink and drive. The Shelburne Police and Dufferin OPP will be on patrol to ensure that all of our guests have an enjoyable and accident free weekend.

'The Canadian Open Old Time Fiddle Championship starts with the playdowns on Friday August 9 at 1 ? 7 p.m. at the Centre Dufferin Recreation Complex (Shelburne Arena). Classes that will compete in the afternoon include the young (9 and under, 12 and under) and the young at heart (56 and over). The evening features the remaining classes.

The contest finals happen on Saturday, August 10 at 6 p.m. and will once again feature entertainment by the Black Family, as well

as the judges' showcase.'

Event Package: (Thurs. eve., Fri. all day, Sat. aft. and eve.) Adults: \$45, children: \$22 (12 and under)

Everything Fitz: Thurs. Aug. 8, 7:30 p.m. Adults: \$20, children: \$10 (12 and under)

Competition Playdowns: Fri. Aug. 9, 1 & 7 p.m. Adults: \$10, children: \$3 (12 and under)

Fiddle/Stepdance Show: Sat. Aug. 10, 3:15 p.m. Adults: \$7, children: \$2 (12 and under)

Fiddle Championship: Sat. Aug. 10, 6 p.m. Adults: \$20, children: \$10 (12 and under)

Tickets: By phone at 519-925-8620 or in person at Holmes Appliances, 135 Main Street West, Shelburne, 519-925-3037.

For more information visit www.ShelburneFiddleContest.com

As you take in the 63rd Annual Canadian Open Old Time Fiddle Championships please keep in mind the importance of this event to the Shelburne community. We ARE 'Fiddleville' afterall and we're proud of it.

Thank you for being a part of this years event and remember to look online at www.shelburnefreepress.ca to see if your picture made it into our photo highlights (which will also be shared with the Dufferin County Museum and Archives on permanent record).

Come for Fiddlefest, return for the great shops and our small town values. We hope to see you in Shelburne again, really soon!

By Wendy Soloduik