



Winnipeg Comhaltas Newsletter



Welcome to the January newsletter! Hopefully you enjoyed (survived) the holiday season and now you're ready to take on 2022. We all have every reason to be hopeful about the coming year. For one thing, although this new Omicron variant spreads faster than other variants, the symptoms may be less severe. As for CCE news, please note that our annual AGM hasn't happened yet. We postponed our December, 2021 AGM, meeting and session due to Covid, but once we have a better idea of new Covid restrictions, we'll re-schedule the AGM. In the meantime, we need to be scouting around for the position of Treasurer, as our current Treasurer is stepping down. If you are interested in this position, please contact us.

We're not desperate but we're begging you to consider taking on this wonderful opportunity to be Treasurer, or if you can think of someone you would recommend, send along any names you come up with. Being on the board as Treasurer will be fun. We often have a nice session after our meetings. You'll be made to feel welcomed and appreciated.

In the coming weeks there are lots of activities coming up such as the Thursday night sessions at the Irish Club, but please note: **The Irish Club is temporarily closed, until January 6. They hope to re-open in 2022, provided Covid restrictions allow.**

Also, some workshops are starting to be organized for later in the Winter. Fiddle, Whistle and Mandolin are definite possibilities.

Here's wishing you all a wonderful new year!

Our beloved mascot, the Irish Donkey. Suggestions for a name, anyone?



Meet Our Members

Cathy Rayner



I grew up in a musical household where live music and recordings were held in high regard. I started taking violin lessons at the age of 7, and soon after played in quartets and youth orchestras. I enjoyed playing with others, but it wasn't until I was exposed to the sound of the "fiddle" at the Winnipeg Folk Festival, that I found my passion in music. The first fiddling genres I explored were Canadian Old-Time and Appalachian/StringBand. Then, 25 years ago, I fell in love with Irish Traditional music while listening to the album Frankie Goes to Town, which I had on repeat in my car as I drove to my weekly Appalachian band practice. While I have continued to have an interest in other styles, right then, Irish music became an integral part of my life.

Cathy's Bio

It was with great fortune that I was introduced to Paul and Susan Hammer, and I began attending Susan's Tea and Tunes sessions. Through Paul and Susan I met many musicians and began taking workshops once a year as Masters-Of-The-Style came in from Ireland, Chicago, Boston and New York to perform and teach at the annual Irish Festival. In a time before UTube, smart phones or even CDs, the only option was to practice what I'd recorded on cassette or learned at the workshop (rewind, rewind...) day in and day out until the next expert arrived. I practiced and played in as many sessions around town as I could. I played in several bands (Culainn, Stray Celts) and performed as far away as the Milwaukee Irish Festival. In 2009 I began playing for the McConnell dancers. Along with some of my favourite musicians, I had the opportunity of travelling and performing at festivals all across Manitoba, in Ireland, Costa Rica, Bulgaria, and Peru. I spent some time in Ireland, playing in the pubs of Limerick Galway, and had a grand time playing at fabulous sessions here in town until Covid put an abrupt "pause" to it all. While many things may be paused at this time, I am still actively learning and enjoying playing Irish Traditional music with people, many of whom are my students. I have been hosting Irish Traditional Fiddle workshops, with the intent on doing more in the new year. After teaching fiddle as a side-hustle for 17 years, I now have plans to expand my music teaching capacities to include online and outdoor lessons, with many more spaces available for individual and group activities. I look forward to spring when we all get together outdoors for tunes and Craic no matter what wave we are currently in.

"After a number of attempts I was able to consistently produce a passable whistle. See the attached photo. I have included a link to a YouTube video of Auld Lang Syne that I created (not the greatest recording but what the heck) to demonstrate the whistle in action. I thank Guido Gonsato of Italy for his great plans and tips. Play along if you dare as I also include the score.... hope you had a safe Christmas and all the best in '22" ... Craig

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eY-rKh8F_IU

Tune of the Month

The Good Natured Man: Hornpipe

Taught by Martin Hayes

<https://youtu.be/Q3dGRHyrHHo>



Martin describes this Hornpipe as one of his favourites. He says it's been with him for most of his life.

Martin Hayes has recently published a memoir: **Shared Notes, a Musical Journey**. According to the reviews, the book is a memoir, yet it also offers a wealth of insights on traditional Irish music. It looks like a good read! Published by Transworld.

Our member Craig Mackenzie creates his own whistles

