



Winnipeg Comhaltas Newsletter

Welcome to the May Newsletter! I hope this newsletter finds you safe and well. Here at Comhaltas, we've been receiving lots of great submissions for the newsletter, and it's so interesting to learn what people have been up to during the lockdown: For instance, photographer Eric Borley has been doing night astronomy photography during the outbreak, and he submitted an example of his work...Guitarist Bill Kilpatrick submitted a link to an interesting guitar instructional app he's been using...there's lots more, so I know you'll enjoy browsing through this newsletter.

Looking forward to seeing you all again soon, take care till then!

Submitted by Larry Fisher



"There is little chance of contracting Covid-19 while engaged in harp making"



Don't forget to wash your hands

Submitted by
Virginia
Lockett
(note: it's a little hard to see, but the toy's hands are in the washing machine!)

Member of the Month

Al Thomson



This month's featured member is Al Thomson. Al has been a friend and supporter of Comhaltas for many years and we're proud to feature him.

Al immigrated to Canada in 1975, from the Northeast of England, bringing with him the colourful heritage and music of his home, and Al still sings his large repertoire of songs in the Geordie accent of Northumberland. He learned many of his traditional songs in the pubs and clubs of England, as well as here in Canada. He plays Irish whistle and Northumbrian small pipes, and sings in venues around the city. Al has been the lead singer for the band "Marty's Party", half the duo "Traditionally Yours" with Nancy Ibner, one third of the trio "Curragh", and is a member of the Flatland Ceili Band.

In the 1970's, Al regularly attended Irish Club functions, Folkarama Pavillions, and the early traditional folk and Irish music sessions. By 1977 Al had become acquainted with Joe Kinsella, who was a huge influence on the Irish music scene in Winnipeg.

Al enjoys the Thursday night sessions at the Irish Club...Guinness and Irish music, the perfect blend!

Submitted anonymously

COVID-19 SALE

ALL SOCIAL DISTANCING INSTRUMENTS 40% OFF

(limit two of each per household)

sale ends without April 30
free delivery on orders over \$200

Musicville
SUPER STORE

BONUS: 90% off all Trombones!

Submitted by Gord Menzies
Flatland Ceili Band Update

Lately, with the COVID-19 pandemic raging, the Flatland Ceili Band's schedule as you might guess, has been decimated, as most of the band's gigs are in senior homes. Despite providing an hour of all good things traditionally Irish, we certainly wouldn't want to give more than that to our friends there.

So with no gigs anywhere in sight, has the band become despondent? Have they put down their instruments in despair? Of course not! When life throws you a curveball, you rise up to the challenge and create lemonade....or something like that. We have technology to save the day. Huzzah! Over April, the band has been having its regular bi-weekly practice evenings through the miracles of modern technology, specifically using the ZOOM meeting format. Our stellar mandolin virtuoso, Al Amyot, has been great in organizing them. We are slowly getting a handle on how to run an efficient 1 to 2 hour mini session where we can slowly learn everyone's current favourite tunes, and practice the ones from our set list, not to mention brushing up on our TV appearance skill set. At our first ZOOM, Al Thomson, one of our whistle virtuosos, looked resplendent in a formal garb which included a bow tie! It set a high watermark for ZOOM fashion that the rest of the band I can guarantee will never attain. When we eventually roll back the stones from our caves with the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, the band will emerge triumphant with many new tunes to play and share. Take some time to work on your music during the down time and if you can, access ZOOM technology or its alternatives, the world can be your virtual oyster! Just make sure the camera doesn't point up your nose.....here's lookin' at you!

Gord Menzies, for the Flatland Ceili Band

Submitted by Bill Kilpatrick

Bill wrote: During this covid -19 outbreak, I've been using a flashcard app called Anki, to learn chord inversions in DADGAD (Irish) guitar tuning.
<https://apps.ankiweb.net>

Submitted by Eric Borley:
Moon in the night sky



Submitted by Susan Hammer
This is a lovely quote from Frank Delaney about ornamentation in Irish music:

"We Irish prefer embroideries to plain cloth. To us Irish, memory is a canvas--stretched, primed, and ready for painting on. We love the "story" part of the word "history," and we love it trimmed out with color and drama, ribbons and bows. Listen to our tunes, observe a Celtic scroll: we always decorate our essence."

— Frank Delaney, [Tipperary](#)

Submitted by Susan Hammer
More links to Irish Music!

<https://www.tg4.ie/en/player/playlist/?plid=1658437560800515607>



Old Irish Road

Images from Ireland

Let's all visit Ireland together, once they create a corona vaccine!

