



StrathPotomac Fiddler

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In This Issue

- ◆ News from the October Board Meeting
- ◆ Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas Delight Celtic Music Fans with Area Concerts and Workshops
- ◆ The Piper's Corner
- ◆ Upcoming Fiddle Club Meetings
- ◆ Directions to the Next PVSFC Meeting
- ◆ Goings On About Town

News from the October Board Meeting

by *Becky Ross, PVSFC Treasurer*

The first meeting of PVSFC's 17th year was held at Elke Baker's house in Ellicott City, MD. The theme, as is now traditional for the first meeting, was tunes every Scottish fiddler should know. We learned three tunes by ear. The first was the march "72nd Highlanders Farewell to Aberdeen," which has many alternate titles with different regiment numbers or different Scottish cities they were saying farewell to. It is also known as "A Boy's Lament for his Dragon" when played as an air. Next we learned "Harsh February," a reel by Phil Cunningham. Elke learned the tune on a ferry boat from fiddler Callum McKinnon so this is his more fiddley version. Our third ear tune was a lovely waltz, "Bonnie George Campbell," collected from Barbara McOwen, who was instrumental in the 1970s in rekindling interest in the United States in Scottish fiddle music.

We then played the rest of the tunes from music. The strathspey "The Lodge of Glentana" was on J. Murdock Henderson's list of Best Strathspeys Ever. "Maggie's Pancakes" was the "it" tune of 2000 — everyone was playing it... and now we can too!

After the workshop, we held our annual general meeting as required by the PVSFC bylaws. During the meeting, the slate of nine nominees (eight current

board members and new nominee David Anker) were elected by acclamation. The meeting adjourned, and we got on with the serious business of sampling the fine potluck supper selections and eventually playing more tunes in the jam.

Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas Delight Celtic Music Fans with Area Concerts and Workshops
by *Barbara Saliunas and Leah Sparks*

Scottish fiddle legend Alasdair Fraser and gifted young cellist Natalie Haas played two Maryland concerts in October, with a show in Leonardtown on October 4 and one in Rockville the following evening.

During the two-hour Leonardtown show, Fraser and Haas took the audience on a whirlwind tour of 300 years of Celtic music around the world. After describing the fiddle and cello as the standard accompaniment to 18th-Century English and Scottish dances, the duo played a lively minuet that was a favorite of Robert Burns. Other highlights include "John MacDonald's Slow Reel" from their new CD *In the Moment*; a set of Shetland reels; several Celtic-influenced tunes from Galicia, Spain; "Alasdair Fraser's Compliments to Lorna Mitchell" (featured in the animated film *Treasure Planet*); and Fraser's haunting, beautiful "A Theme for Scotland" from the album *Dawn Dance*.

On October 5, Fraser and Haas again performed in a concert sponsored by the Institute of Musical Traditions, held at the Kreeger Auditorium of the Jewish Community Center in Rockville, Maryland. The duo performed much of the same repertoire, and concluded by inviting their good friend, Bruce Molsky, to join them for a couple tunes that have crossed the Atlantic Ocean and found their way into the old-time tradition, including Highlander's Farewell to Ireland.

(continued in the second column on page 3)