

# Flashbacks from the Contests from 50 and 25 years ago

**50 YEARS AGO**  
**Ed Gyurki won Open, Canadian titles**  
 The ninth annual Canadian Open Old Time Fiddlers' Contest, held August 7 and 8, 1959, saw Ed Gyurki, a 21-year-old Woodstock hospital technician and dance band leader, emerging as winner of both the Open and Canadian titles.  
 Al Cherney, 26, of Wingham, placed second in the Open section and Victor Pasowisty, 29, of Toronto, ended up in third place when Ned Landry, 37, of Saint John, N.B., was disqualified because he played two numbers in improper order, the

breakdown before the jig.  
 Cherney is the new Novelty playing champion, having dethroned six-time winner Sleepy Marlin, of Louisville, Kentucky.  
 Runners-up in the Open division were Ken Cameron, of Fork River, Manitoba; Stan Cardinal, of Monroe City, Indiana; June Eikhard, of Sackville, N.B.; Landry, and Marlin.  
 A total of 104 entries were registered in the two classes.  
 The playdowns for the ninth annual contest got under way shortly after 7 o'clock Friday with "Invincible" Vince

Mountford in charge. The judges were Peter McGarvey, of Orillia, Al Aylward, of Toronto, and Wallace Loughton, of Niagara Falls.  
 Four hours into the playdowns, MC Mountford was served a steak dinner, courtesy of the Shelburne Hotel, with Walter Little doing the honours, and at 12:05 a.m. Mrs. Sarah Duffin, 87, mother of former Dufferin warden Claude Duffin, was selected as the oldest lady then in the audience and received Dale Estate roses from Mr. Mountford.  
 The final contestant, who finished playing at 4:08 a.m., was Tex Fortier, of Sherbrooke, Que. in the novelty class. A fiddlers' jamboree followed with players overflowing the stage onto the floor and Dorothy Houston, of Earleton, forsaking her fiddle in favour of the piano to lead the jamboree in one of the most sensational sessions in history.

The judges finally appeared at 4:16 a.m. to announce their selections.  
 Saturday night's show really started about 8 p.m. with Vince Mountford keeping everyone entertained until he turned the official introduction over to contest manager Mac Stewart at 8:30. Rotary Club President Glenn

Ewing welcomed the radio audience to the finals' broadcast and the CBC's Bill Bessey and Gordie Tapp then took over before the finalists began showing their wares in alphabetical order.  
 As the broadcast was about to begin, producer Reid Forsee mentioned that the CBC's Dominion Network was covering 39 stations from coast to coast.  
**25 YEARS AGO**  
**Doctor's son, 23, was champ in 34th contest**  
 Thousands of fiddle fans jammed Shelburne Arena Friday and Saturday, August 10 and 11, to witness the 34th annual Canadian Open Old Time Fiddlers' Contest.  
 Emerging as champion of the annual contest, sponsored by the Shelburne Rotary Club and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, was Frank Leahy, 23, of Willowdale, who was one of 32 competitors vying for top honours in the contest's Championship Class.  
 Dennis Lanctot, of Ottawa, placed second and Raymond Schreyer, of London, was third in the class.  
 Judges Jim Coles, of Kingston, Rudy Meeks of Orillia, and Bob Wood, of Kitchener, faced a tough decision with so many fine fiddlers.  
 Following the presentation of his winnings, a beaming Mr. Leahy said he would like to thank his father, Dr. P. J. Leahy, "who wrote all the tunes I played here tonight." Mr. Leahy said his family has a picture of him holding a fiddle when he was three years old. "But I didn't start playing seriously until I was six or seven."  
 He said he entered this year's competition



## Rotary Club president welcomes all

On behalf of the Rotary Club of Shelburne, I would like to welcome everyone to come out and enjoy all of the festivities of this year's Canadian Open Old Time Fiddle Championship, as we celebrate our 59th year.  
 As Canada's premier fiddle championship, we are proud to present the April Verch Fiddle and Stepdance Show on Thursday August 6th. This is an opportunity to see the Canadian Open Old Time Fiddle Champion and Canadian Grand Masters perform with her band performing numerous styles of fiddling as well as vocal selections and Ottawa Valley stepdancing.  
 If you have never attended our event before please accept my invitation to join us for an excellent weekend of family entertainment.  
 Our Rotary Club is very excited this year to have contestants from as far away as British Columbia and of course Quebec and Ontario; making this a truly C a n a d i a n Championship.  
 The contest starts Friday and concludes Saturday night with over \$17,000 in prizes!  
 We also encourage visitors to participate in all of the activities going on around town including Shelburne's giant parade and farmers market on Saturday. After the parade is over, you can spend some time down-town enjoying our Fiddle Jam Session in Jack Downing Park while visiting our downtown shops and eating places.  
 All the best and enjoy your visit to "Fiddleville!"  
 Frank Fender - President  
 Rotary Club of Shelburne

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 Music - fiddlers and local musicians  
 Speaker - Singing Priest, Father Mark Curtis  
 A freewill offering will be received. Please bring a non-perishable food item for the Shepherd's Cupboard Food Bank.  
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