

# Celtic band a hit with local crowd

Submitted by Assiniboia & District Arts Council

It may have been blustery and frigid outside on Nov. 23, but inside the Prince of Wales Cultural & Recreation Centre, when Vancouver's Blackthorn Celtic Band hit the stage, it was lively and warm.

Around 140 people braved the elements to hear this multi-talented group singing and playing everything from 6 to 12 string guitars, fiddle, flute, piccolo, pennywhistle, fife to bodhran, the mandolin, bouzouki and unique electric bass.

Early into the show band member Michael Viens' comment "Ireland's greatest export is their people" led into the tune "On Valleys Green Shamrock Shore". Crossing cultures and generations with their own style and interpretation of traditional Scottish and Irish jigs, reels and airs, plus the folk music of English and French Canada, Blackthorn was a real crowd-pleaser. The group formed an audience reprieve which translated into fun for everyone.

Michael Viens couldn't help mentioning that when he ran into Nash's Restaurant for take-out food he attracted a bit of attention as he was wearing his kilt - hopefully enough to get a few more people to their concert! Later in the evening he put on a Metis sash over his kilt and commented "hey, this attire is my culture," and then the group proceeded to play their French Canadian reel segment. Michael's seafaring shanty "Home Boys Home" reflected another side of his heritage.

The group's sense of humour and antics throughout the evening definitely added an extra layer to their performance.

Blackthorn played several pieces off their latest CD "Sweet Forget-Me-Not". The writing contributions, collaborative arrangements and presentation of their material showcased each performer's musical talent such as Michelle Carlisle's interpretation of the haunting



Times Photo by Vivian Kell

Blackthorn performs before a fullhouse inside the Prince of Wales Centre in Assiniboia November 23.

airs "Cumha A Chuliein/Jimmy's Tune written by Scottish piper Chris Armstrong, or her adaptation of Wade Hemsworth's "The Log Driver's Waltz" a song that depicts a colourful piece of Canadian History.

Michelle's vocals epitomizes the Celtic voice, especially in "Sailor Boy" which has a lyrical melancholy that brings tears to your eyes.

Vocalist Rosie Carver played jigs & reels on her 1898 "French" fiddle pulling your heartstrings and got your toes tapping. "The Holy Ground" is Tim Renaud's first lead solo on Blackthorn latest CD and the outcome indicates that it won't be his last!

Various other selections like the English Country Song "Rumble in the Newborn Hay"; Canadian composition "The Black Fly"; Spaghetti Western Songs; Donald Where's Your Troosers and ENCORE - "Oh, I wish They'd Do it Now" -all added up to a fun evening.

The Assiniboia & District Arts Council's COMMENT BOX from the audience reviews echoed a familiar line, "bring them back again!"



Times Photo by Donna Cheyne

Members of the Blackthorn Celtic Band from Vancouver have been touring throughout the province of Saskatchewan in November and will return next April.



Members of Katimavik pose with the Blackthorn band members following the concert in Assiniboia.

**SGI**

[www.sgi.sk.ca](http://www.sgi.sk.ca)

## Public Consultation

### Reviewing farm-class licence plates

SGI is holding consultations to provide information and obtain public input on possible changes to the farm-class licence plate program. Options under consideration include making farm plates available to more individuals (e.g. retired farmers), while others would expand the allowable uses of farm trucks (e.g. hauling for other farmers).

A list of possible changes identified to date are listed on SGI's website at [www.sgi.sk.ca](http://www.sgi.sk.ca). SGI welcomes other suggestions for improvements to farm plates in determining any changes to current rules and policy. Public meetings for those interested will be held:

**Monday, Nov. 8  
DAVIDSON**  
Davidson Town Hall  
206 Washington Ave.  
7 - 9 p.m.

**Tuesday, Nov. 30  
CANORA**  
Canora Activity Centre  
(Golf course club house)  
333 Canora Ave.  
7 - 9 p.m.

**Wednesday, Dec. 1  
MELFORT**  
Kerry Vickar Centre  
CJVR Performing Arts Theatre  
206 Bemister Ave. E.  
7 - 9 p.m.

**Thursday, Dec. 2  
MAIDSTONE**  
Maidstone Senior  
Drop-in Center  
406 Main St.  
7 - 9 p.m.

**Monday, Dec. 6  
MILESTONE**  
Old Legion Hall  
203 Main St.  
7 - 9 p.m.

**Thursday, Dec. 9  
SWIFT CURRENT**  
Holiday Inn Express  
1301 N. Service Road East  
7 - 9 p.m.

If you plan to attend, please RSVP to: [farmplates@sgi.sk.ca](mailto:farmplates@sgi.sk.ca)

#### Other ways to provide feedback

If you are unable to attend a public meeting, we still want to hear from you. Let us know your thoughts through one of the following avenues:

**Through the web**  
Take our online survey at [www.sgi.sk.ca](http://www.sgi.sk.ca).

**By phone**  
Call us toll free at 1-888-751-1816.