

Fife and Drums at Patriots Colony

On a sunny Sunday morning, what can be more invigorating for Patriots Colony's residents than watching the talented and skilled young people marching and playing instruments in the famous Plymouth, Michigan, Fife and Drum Corps? Of course it was a unique treat for all of us, but even more so for the residents of the Berkley Assisted Living and Convalescent centers. The amazing performance took place right outside their front door.

Fifing and drumming was used during the colonial era to relay commands to soldiers, direct movements of units, as well as to provide inspiration and marching rhythm. The shrillness of the fifes and pounding of the drums could be heard over the cries of battle.

The corps is made up of 40 to 50 students ranging in age from 12 to 18 who gather from Plymouth and surrounding communities year round in preparation for its performance season. Its members are self-supporting and dedicated to preserving the ancient arts of color guard, fifing, and drumming through live performances at parades, historical and patriotic celebrations, concerts, cultural affairs and other civic events.

Unique to them, the music spans the 17th to 20th centuries with an emphasis on music played during the Revolutionary War. The corps' music featured medleys of traditional tunes rearranged into three and four-part harmonies. Drum scores range from traditional settings to a more contemporary rudimental idiom, occasionally borrowing elements from modern drum and bugle corps.

Special thanks to Debbie Whybra for arranging this visit! ---*Ron Smith*

