



# Notes from the Soundboard

July 2008

WEBSITE: WWW.SSDSOCIETY.ORG

Issue 7

## President \_\_\_\_\_

We begin July, the festival month, on a sad note with the passing of Derek Channing. I learned from his family that he loved all of you at Silver Strings because you were so nice to him. That is the best tribute that could be paid to our club. After joining SSDS, it did not take Derek long to become actively involved. He attended play dates, hosted variety nights, and entertained us with his variety of banjos. We will miss his smiling face.

On a happier note, we had a very good time at our annual campout at Myers Lake. Please join me in thanking Linda and Val Losse for coordinating the weekend. The Saturday night dinner was excellent. Great job !!! **A BIG THANK YOU** to each who conducted a workshop.

We had one playdate in June at All Seasons Retirement community in Rochester Hills. What a great audience we had ! I think we had as much fun as they did, and took a tour after the performance, because we all wanted to move in. It was great socializing at Big Boy after the gig.

**Note\*\*\* There will be no meeting on July 17** because most members will be at the Evert festival. Last but not least; please consider running for an office on the board for next year. Bring any questions you have to any board member and please volunteer now.

Happy hammering, plucking, & strumming.  
Bob Hlavacek

*July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 will be the actual 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first meeting/jam of the Silver Strings Dulcimer Society. Since so many will be gone to Evert, we will have no meeting that week. We will have a huge birthday cake with our pizza for Variety night, on the 31<sup>st</sup>. No other desserts are necessary.*

*Thank you David Smith for the new 25 year logo.*

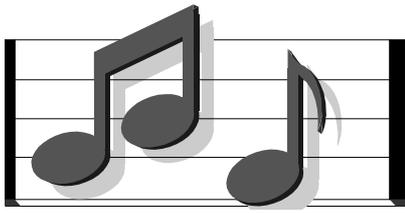
## Playdate Chatter \_\_\_\_\_ VP Business

Just a short article this month regarding the performance side of the club. We had one playdate in June... the All Seasons Of Rochester Hills Retirement Community. This was a new playdate for us and we were received with lots of enthusiasm. Many said we were the best entertainment they have ever had ! We brought out our rhythm instruments near the end, and it was quite a performance by our large audience. We were treated with elegant desserts and fruits afterward, and a tour of the facility. All Seasons is only 3 years old, and a classy place to live. Many of us took brochures and kidded about all moving there and having endless jams. ☺

I had a great experience at the June campout teaching Prairie Flower at one of the hammered dulcimer workshops. Thank you to all who participated. This is a catchy, simple song that can be played either together or some playing 'A' while others play 'B'. If you don't have this sheet music yet, check the table at the club meeting.

The Harmonica Jam at the campout was well attended by 18 people. Thanks to Walt Jabalonski for his tips on playing and caring for your harmonica. Whoever thought we would have so much fun playing simple rounds on the harmonica !

We will have no July playdates, and will start again in August. Check "Mark Your Calendar". There is no official playlist for July due to summer festivals, but you might practice tunes from the "Lost but Not Forgotten" list. If you would like to attend a playdate, sign up at the next SSDS meeting or contact me at: (734) 455-4085 or [karenturner@comcast.net](mailto:karenturner@comcast.net)



**The babbling brook would lose its song, if you removed the rocks.**

## VP Programs

We had a great campout ! Thank you to all who helped make it so successful. It rained on Friday, but we were able to use the barn for jamming and the potluck. The weather was perfect Saturday, no rain and not too hot. We couldn't have asked for a better day, and everything went off without a hitch. We had a great caterer who served us terrific food and gave us plenty of it for Sunday brunch.

**A big thanks** to all who helped make the 2008 campout a success... the people who offered to set up before meals and to clean up afterward.

Karen did a great job leading her first workshop. Everyone was supportive and happy to see how at ease she was, and we look forward to more workshops with her. Seasoned Sharon taught a workshop, and we were all playing the tune by the end. Enthusiastic Theresa led a uke workshop, gearing it to all the different levels that attended. Veteran Marie gave a mountain dulcimer workshop, which involved all levels of players. Walt was very informative in this first SSDS harmonica jam. I had just bought my harmonica before the campout, and I learned so much about the care of the harmonica that I didn't know before. Karen had made a CD that she passed out to everyone attending. It was about learning to play the harmonica. Karen led the well attended Friday night jam, and a slow jam Saturday afternoon. She was my right hand gal, **thank you !**. Bob and Sandi Hlavacek made another spectacular breakfast, and they served brunch to all those who stayed to play for the church service on Sunday.

I also want to thank Jane Chevalier and Rich Smith for offering to host the July Variety Night. We look forward to hearing Jane's jokes! **I hope to see you at Evart.** . . . Linda Losse

## LOST BUT NOT FORGOTTEN TUNES

Red Haired Fiddlers Waltz  
 Kentucky Waltz  
 Possum Up A Gum Stump  
 Rochester Schottische  
 Drunken Sailor  
 Wildwood Flower  
 Death Valley Waltz  
 Folk Medley  
 Metsakukkia

## Banker Ours

On Sunday August 3<sup>rd</sup>.our summer picnic will be held at German Park again (northeast of Ann Arbor) (noon to whenever). Hot dogs and burgers, iced tea, lemonade, and soft drinks will be provided. **Please Bring a dish to pass.** Bring your family and friends. There will be a \$3 fee for non-members, free under 5 years old. Please reserve your space with numbers so we can plan for food. Jamming will follow lunch. We have the entire park & pavilion to ourselves.

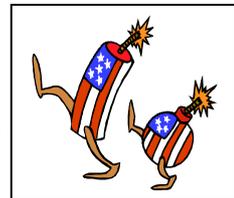
**If you come from the Metro-Detroit area, drive M-14 west, exit at (#15) Gottfredson Rd, turn right .6 miles to light at N Territorial Rd., turn left 4.5 miles to Pontiac Trail (2<sup>nd</sup> light), and left 1.1 miles (past Northfield Park) to German Park entrance on your right.**

George

## IT'S JULY . LET'S CELEBRATE !

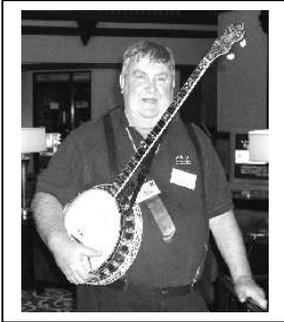
### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- 4..... **U.S.A.**
- 5.... Karen Turner
- 9.... Janelle Pacic
- 14.. Sally Niemczewski
- 17.. John McAuliffe
- 20.. Ramona Hadley
- 23.. **Silver Strings Dulcimer Society**
- 26.. Pat Jablonski



### HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

- 11... Roger & Barb Davis (49 years)



Derek Channing easily endeared himself to most he met. His quick wit and his humor was endless. He was a brilliant man, whose unassuming ways allowed everyone to feel his equal.

He introduced us to the bouzouki, but his true passion was his banjo. He was always conscious of the fact his banjo could easily overpower any and all instruments playing around him, and made sure that didn't happen. He was always willing to help anyone with anything.

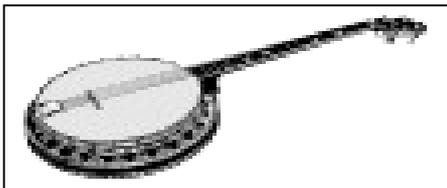
He wasn't famous, but did so much to preserve and promote the banjo and the "lesser known music" that he became, indeed, an important figure in its history. He was mentor and friend to countless youth, and like a "favorite uncle" to most.

His commitment to preserve and promote the voice of the banjo was manifested in his development of the "Next Generation Banjo Band". When he noted the banjo players he saw seemed all over 60 years, he spread the word he wanted to change that. He gathered donations of banjos from attics, basements, manufacturers and shops around the country, matching them with young people he taught for free. He was so proud of his students' accomplishments, it was as if they were his own children. He was in the process of spreading that venture across the USA, when his time ran out.

Derek's passing is a HUGE loss to the musical world, and to the countless lives he touched. We are truly lucky to have known him. Surely, there is a really fine new banjo player in the band of angels.

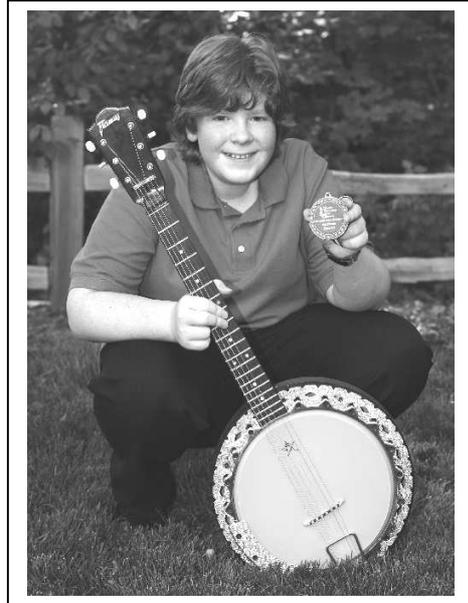
*Lynn Ellen Kaiser had just completed an interview with Derek and a biography for the Soundboard "Getting to Know You" column. When we heard of his passing, it was edited into a tribute to his life. His VERY interesting story is available at meetings or by contacting me at [datadoc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:datadoc@sbcglobal.net) or (734)663-7974.*

Sandi



### FAVORITE FESTIVALS & FUN :

July 17-20. . . . . Evart Funfest  
 Aug.3. . . . .SSDS Annual Picnic  
 Aug. 21-24. . . . .Midland Dulcimer Fest  
 Oct. 2 . . . . .SSDS Annual Banquet



Those of you who attended Variety Night in January may recall that 13-year old SSDS member Greg Kaiser performed three songs on his guitar banjo, accompanied by his parents Ken and Lynne Ellen (on guitar and bass). At that time, he told us that a video recording of that performance would be submitted to the Fretted Instrument Guild of America (FIGA) as an entry in their 2008 National Competition for Youth.

Kids aged 18 and under from all over the country were urged to submit recordings of live 2008 performances (on any fretted instrument) which would be judged by a panel of experts, in a manner similar to the Solo and Ensemble tradition of school bands and orchestras.

The results are in! Greg received a Superior rating, and placed third overall. He was awarded a certificate of recognition on stage by the FIGA Vice President after the Kaiser Family Band performed at the Great Lakes International Banjo Convention on April 26 in Dearborn. When his medal arrived, this photo was snapped. **Congratulations, Greg!** It is a pleasure to watch you growing into a fine young man, and growing musically.

**FESTIVALS ARE HERE !  
WANT TO CAMP,  
BUT HAVE NO EQUIPMENT ?**

Here's a deal for you... **FREE** use of a tent (sized to sleep 4, and you can stand up in it). Included in the "price" is a queen sized air-bed and linens. We can even throw in a porta-potty for night-time ! We will help with set up (very easy). It's available for the Evert, and/or Midland festivals.

It's a dry place to "stash your stuff"... it's quite comfortable for sleeping... and **the price is right... FREE !** There actually are people with campers who leave them home so they can enjoy "Tent City" at Evert, surrounded by a terrific bunch of people. The restroom and shower facilities at both festivals are very good to excellent.

To experience this musical adventure, contact Bob or Sandi Hlavacek to reserve your housing (734) 663-7974.

**EVART... HERE WE COME !**

Here are the Saturday night pre show tunes for the attempt to break the record for the most Hammered Dulcimers ever assembled for a performance. Everyone is encouraged to participate... beginner through advanced.

<b>Saturday Night</b>	<b>Key</b>
<b><u>Hey Polka</u></b>	G
<b><u>Over the Waterfall</u></b>	D
<b><u>Rakes of Mallow</u></b>	G
<b><u>John Ryan's Polka</u></b>	D
<b><u>Soldier's Joy and Whiskey Before Breakfast Medley</u></b>	D
<b><u>You Are My Sunshine</u></b>	G
<b><u>Star Spangled Banner</u></b>	G

You may print the music from the Evert Funfest website by clicking on each individual tune on the Saturday night list, or purchase a packet at the ODPC desk when you arrive.

**This year, the Friday night pre-show concert will be performed by MOUNTAIN DULCIMERS ONLY.**

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

**Thurs, July 31<sup>st</sup>, SSDS Variety Night**

**PLAYDATES:**

- Sat, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 1:30-3:30 pm  
Marine City Garage Sale Jam
- Sat, August 30<sup>th</sup>, 7:00-9:00 pm  
Marine City Concert Series
- Thurs, September 11<sup>th</sup>, TBA  
Escapees RV's, Belleville,
- Sat, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 12:00-1:30 pm  
Northville Victorian Festival
- Sun, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 12:00-1:30 pm  
Northville Victorian Festival
- Fri, October 17, 2:30-3:30 pm  
Royal Oak American House



Workshops and jams are the main focus of the SSDS annual campout. The harmonica jam (above) enticed a lot of people to try out a new instrument. After some good, basic information was shared, actual tunes were being played by almost all.

The "Prairie Flower" workshop (below) was well attended, as were all of the others offered. Learning is fun in the relaxed atmosphere of the campground. Music is almost everywhere, and Myers Lake has lots for the non-musical family members to do.

The weather was cool and comfortable. The Friday potluck, Saturday breakfast and catered dinner, and Sunday brunch gave enjoyable time for socializing. If you missed it this year, try really hard next year... there is so much to gain.



## GETTING TO KNOW YOU. . . . Hal Bain

Hal Bain was a salesman for 3 years, joined the US Army for 5 years, and served overseas in Guadalcanal. He graduated from Wayne State University with help from the GI Bill of Rights, and hired into Ford Motor appropriations and accounting services, coordinating an assortment of accounts. On Oct. 1, 1979, after 30 years and 9 months (who was counting?) he retired. He has traveled all over Europe, Asia, Hong Kong, China... almost everywhere except South America... with Ford tours.

Hal had heard dulcimer music before and liked it, but after retiring he met Carl Hakes (founder of Uncle Carl's Dulcimer Club in the Jackson area), who was building hammered dulcimers at Greenfield Village. Hal had to have one. He bought a 12/11 and took lessons at the Village from Celia Rodriguez. He jammed with Lynn & Frank Bower and other metro-Detroit musicians at Evert, and they decided they would like to keep playing together.

On July 23, 1983, 13 musicians met in Wyandotte at the gazebo where the Bob-lo Boat docked, and they jammed till they got tired. The youngest was 17 and the oldest was 68 (Hal). There were 8 hammered dulcimers, 5 guitars, and a mandolin. They knew only 3 songs, Amazing Grace, Redwing and Westphalia Waltz (their favorite). People stopped to listen... even asked if they had any recordings. That was the birth of Silver Strings Dulcimer Society.

Whenever they met, they had to sweep the gazebo before set-up, and they were at the mercy of the weather. They officially met there 3-4 times, then had an opportunity to move indoors to the Fischer middle school gym in Dearborn Heights. Their first playdate was a festival in downtown Wyandotte. There were only 4-5 players, and it was for free. It was about 1½ years before they were offered money to play. They had "hit the big time". Some of his favorite playdates over the years have been Greenfield Village, the Dearborn Inn, holiday Festival of Trees at Cobo Hall, Ford High homecoming, and Northville Victorian Festival. He really enjoys the costume events.

Practice hours and space were restricted at the school, so in 1990 they made an agreement with Good Hope Lutheran Church to use their meeting room. At that time, they had grown to about 30 players. Hal served as the historian for 8 years, keeping great scrapbooks.

Hal has also been a member of Uncle Carl's Dulcimer Club (Jackson), Original Dulcimer Players Club (Evert), and Paint Creek Folklore Society (Rochester). He loves his winter home in Punta Gorda, Florida. He was very lucky... when Hurricane Charlie went through, he only lost 6 awnings. Those around him suffered extreme losses. His music was always here, so in the fall of 1997, he placed a notice in the community center asking for dulcimer players. Four people responded, they called their musical friends, and the Suncoast Dulcimer Society was born. They do playdates around the Port Charlotte area. Then the Michigan festivals call him back each spring. He says, "There's too much Bluegrass down there. I can only take so much..."

Hal never played an instrument until he retired. He was 68 years old when he began his musical adventures. He played the hammered dulcimer for about 12 years, and decided to pursue other instruments. He now plays the banjo, Marimba, the African log drum, Bodhran, xylophone, electric organ, ukulele, spoons, and is attempting the mandolin and guitar and autoharp. He never played an instrument before he retired, and credits his busy schedule for his sharp mind at 91. He insists, "Music keeps you young". Genetics might also help. He had uncles who lived to 102 and 112.

Hal has lived his whole life in Detroit. He has enjoyed the trolley rides, the parade for Charles Lindbergh, Belle Isle, the Detroit Zoo, Pleasant Lake, the Vernor's plant by the river, and Bob-lo Island & boat. He has witnessed the transition from street cars to expressways, and the rapid development of the electronics industry with televisions and computers. He recalls the total segregation of the races, his first time voting (for Franklin D. Roosevelt's first term), shopping in an army surplus store when he learned John F. Kennedy was shot, and attending the Detroit Tigers' 7<sup>th</sup> championship game in 1967.

He has extensive collections of stamps, Hummel figurines, and Hummel plates. He enjoys his back yard with his flowers, and he most enjoys his music. He taught himself to read music, and he can manually transpose a tune to a different key, but says he has never been able to play by ear.

Hal has enjoyed watching SSDS grow and progress. He is the only one of the original 13 to stay with us for the entire 25 years. He is very happy to see Kelly and Greg Kaiser involved. His biggest hope is that the club continues, and we recruit more young talent. That way, although most of us will be gone, SSDS will celebrate a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2033. We owe that to him, for the opportunities he has given us to learn and to grow. **Thank you, Hal Bain !**



Hal Bain started Suncoast Dulcimer Club, which includes many snowbirds, entertains regularly in the Point Charlotte, Florida area. They meet in the Wintergarden Presbyterian Church, which frequently holds concerts for the community. Hal and his friends draw a large crowd of listeners.