



Notes from the Soundboard

April 2009

WEBSITE: WWW.SSDSOCIETY.ORG

Issue 288

PRESIDENT'S NOTES _____

I'm often asked by people, "How is Silver Strings doing these days?" I think if we look at what we have accomplished in the first quarter of 2009 starting with the recording of the holiday CD, along with the many playdates we have played, the huge turnouts at our jams and the fact that people are having fun and playing very well together, we can safely say, "Silver Strings is doing very well".

We are blessed with so many fun loving musicians with an abundance of various talents. We are also blessed with people who are so giving of their time and talent to do all of the "behind the scenes" tasks that are essential in making it possible for our club to be successful. We have a rotating cast of performing musicians who represent our club well.

We now have people who have booked us to play a particular annual function and are requesting us to play other functions throughout the year. In the past we have played at Greenfield Village during the Old Car Festival. We've helped the Ford Motor Company celebrate the One Hundred Year Anniversary of the Model T, and were invited back to play inside the Henry Ford Estate at Christmas time. Equally as important, we have touched the hearts of the many people at the various church functions, retirement communities and nursing homes where we have played.

So now when I'm asked, "How is Silver Strings doing these days?" I can proudly say, "Silver Strings is doing JUST FINE" ! Larry Roper

MANDOLIN WORKSHOP

Tom Montelauro will present a follow up mandolin workshop at our next meeting (**April 2nd**) from 6pm to 7pm. There will also be a **board meeting** at the same time. We've been having very good turnouts at our jams. Thank you all for coming.

PLAYDATE MATTERS _____ (Business)

Silver Strings played for three St. Patrick's Day celebrations in March. I was unable to attend the one at Colonial Acres Senior Co-op in South Lyon, and I greatly appreciate Karen Turner's on-site management of it. Karen told me afterward, that the audience was definitely energized and that it went very well. The other St. Patrick's Day celebrations were at Maple Heights Retirement Community in Allen Park and at Garden City Towers. Both of these were very well received and were fun for the audiences and for our musicians who were well decorated in green ties, hats, and other green items of clothing. As has become a tradition in many of our playdates in recent years, Bob Hlavacek entertained the audiences with interesting historical comments about the tunes prior to our playing them, and with some jokes. At one of these gigs, Bob looked out at a sea of people and a room decorated in green, and evoked a lot of laughter from the audience and the band when he wished everyone "Happy Thanksgiving".

For a list of upcoming playdates, please check the "Mark Your Calendar" article in this newsletter. Please note that I was informed by the contact person at American House in Royal Oak a conflict has developed for the playdate originally scheduled for Friday, June 5, and we have rescheduled that playdate for Friday, July 10, 2009. Roughly one week before each playdate, I send out (as I have been doing) a reminder to everyone who has signed up with detailed information related to it.

Many thanks to all of you who have participated in our playdates. I appreciate your having shown up sufficiently early so we have been able to start our performances on time, and also your being prepared to play the music on the playlists. Bert Stein

A friend hears the song in my heart and sings it to me when my memory fails.

SPECIAL FOR APRIL PLAYDATES

I set up the April playlist with three sections (each section adding more tunes) because the first gig (April 15 at **Heartland Health Care Center** in Canton) is 1 hour long, the second gig (April 23 at **September Days Senior Center**, Van Buren Township) is 1.5 hours long, and the third gig (April 30 at **Farmington Hills Police Department**) is 2 to 2.5 hours long. Bert

SSDS APRIL 2009 Playlist

Key	Tune	Play
D	Smash the Windows	3
D	Over the Waterfall	3
G	Westphalia Waltz	3
G	Red Wing	3
G	Hundred Pipers	3
Em	Road Lisdoonvarna / Riding-Hay	3/3
G	Bellman's Jig	3
G	Down Yonder	3
D	The Ash Grove	3
Am	Cold Frosty Morn	3
G	Maggie	4
G	Planxty Fanny Power	3
Em	Tamlin	4
C	Five Foot Two	3
D	Hey Polka	5
C	Tennessee Waltz	3
D	John Ryan's Polka (All play ^{1st} - then featured solos)	??
G	Silver and Gold Two-Step	4
D	Whiskey Before Breakfast	3

Add for 1.5 hr gig		
D	Festival Rag	3
D	Flop-Eared Mule	3
G	Sophrina	3
D	Kesh Jig	3
G	March of St. Timothy	3
D	Road to Boston	3
G	January Waltz	3
D	Chinese Breakdown / Nelly Bly	2/3
D	Mississippi Sawyer	3

Add for 2-2.5hr gigs		
G	Red Apple Rag	3
D	Angleworm Wiggle	3
C	Black Velvet Waltz	3
D	Possum Up a Gum Stump	3
Em	Drunken Sailor	4
G	Larry's Waltz	3
D	Painter's Polka	3
G	Jamie Allen	3
G	Southwind	3
D	Beaumont Rag	3
Em	Dancing Bear	3
D	Boneparte Crossing the Rhine	3
D	Midnight on the Water	3
D	Angeline the Baker	3
G	I'll Remember You Love...	2
Em	Missouri	5
G	Columbus Stockade Blues	3
Am	Star of the County Down	3
D-	Endless Medley (Ragtime Annie, Soldier's Joy, Golden Slippers)	
D-		

WORKSHOPS FOR SSDS CAMPOUT

From Program V.Ps....Janelle & Carol Ann

Here is the tentative schedule of workshops for the campout (Saturday June 20)

8:30-9:30 am....Breakfast (pancakes, sausage, Juice, coffee & tea) Bring your mug. Bob & Sandi Hlavacek hosts, help gladly accepted.

10-11:am....Marie Naster (M.D. workshop)

11-Noon....Karen Turner and Linda Losse (H. D. workshop)

Noon-1:pm....LUNCH (not provided by SSDS)

1- 2:pm....Pennye Scheiber (H. D. workshop)

2-3:pm....Sharon McCauliffe (H. D. workshop)

3-4:45pm....Slow Jam in the pavillion by the lake (Karen T. & Linda L.)

3-4:pm....Theresa Smith (Uke workshop)

4-5:pm....Walt Jablonski and Heavy Breathers (Harmonica workshop)

SECRETARY'S NOTES

The March board meeting was cancelled because not enough board members were available. The next board meeting will be April 2nd from 6-7:pm

SSDS TO HOST ODPC MEETING

On May 2nd, Silver Strings will host the ODPC Spring meeting in our space at Good Hope Lutheran Church. The potluck lunch will start at NOON, with a meeting at 1:00, and jamming afterward. We will provide the meat, and all are asked to bring a side dish or desert. EVERYONE is welcome !

MUSIC NOTES _____

The March new tune, "Knock Knock" by Bill Bosler, has been played at the last couple meetings, and it went really well. That syncopation in the B part can be tricky, but people really seem to be catching on to it. It's a really fun tune, both to play and to listen to. I will continue to have copies at the meetings for anyone who needs the sheet music. It's also available to listen to, as a practice tempo midi file, on our web site. Remember, it will be the "new tune" introduced at the ODPC meeting at Good Hope on May 2, so if you can practice it now, you'll be ahead of the game and can help guests learn it too.

I am in the process of organizing the music files so that I can have at least a few copies of the sheet music for each tune available at all the meetings for people who need replacements. And I've started working on the updating of the SSDS tune book. My goal is to have the music in as large a format as possible, with the chords as big as possible, and with four measures per line, for easy reading (whenever I can possibly do this). In the process, I will correct any little notation or chord errors, and I will add a revision date at the bottom. That way you can always tell if you have the most current version. If you have corrections you've noted in your book, PLEASE do pass these on to me so that I can make them available to everyone.

I will be away in April, so requests for replacement music will be addressed as soon as I get back in May. You may leave requests in the suggestion box at the back table.

As always, I welcome your suggestions, comments and ideas for YOUR Silver Strings music.

Thanks -- Kelly Kaiser, Music Coordinator

LEDGER NOTES _____ (treasurer)

Great to see such a large turnout at the last March meeting, owing, I'm sure, to the approach of spring weather!! And what a smorgasbord of treats at break! All that woodshedding with our new tune, "Knock Knock" worked up some appetites! Nice job, Kelly!

Don't forget, you can still pay dues; (\$15.00 renewal), and I'll have a roster at the table so you can check to see if you're updated for 2009.

Thanks! Gerry Hermans

NEW MEMBERS

Jack & Marilyn Mullins (517)254-4828
5262 Bent Oak Hwy. .Adran, Mi.49221
e-mail marilynmullins@hotmail.com
Jack plays Guitar & Bass
Marilyn plays Hammered Dulcimer
& Mirimbula



APRIL CELEBRATIONS !

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- 1.... Alice Avery
- 1.... Larry Roper
- 7.... Jack Mullins
- 10... Luke Kawecki
- 13... Bill Deighton
- 27... Jason Yanity



Please Check the back table to see if your birthday & anniversary are registered on the list. If not, please add it to the appropriate month.

GREEN EMERGENCY CARDS are on the back table in the brown recipe box. If you haven't filled yours out, please do. The box will go with us to all SSDS functions. These cards are designed to give us contact information, in case you have an accident or a medical emergency while you are with us.

If you placed an order for Good Hope's delicious pasties, they may be picked up any time after April 2nd from the freezer in the kitchen. Payment is to be left in the coffee can in the freezer.

THE SUGGESTION BOX on the back table is used for many things.

If you are missing music from your book/pack, you may list the songs you need, add your name, and leave it in the box. It will be available at the next meeting.

If you find a tune you would like to see introduced, put it in the box.

If you have a suggestion for improvement in our meetings or a workshop idea, put it in the box.

JAM ETTIQUETE

With the start of festival season, some timely tips for newcomers and reminders for old-timers might be helpful to avoid difficult situations. This is a reprint from Dottie Decker, an old SSDS friend.

- + Make sure your instrument is tuned.
- + Walk around and see what kind of jams are happening.
- + Stand back, watch and listen. (very important)
- + Are the jammers tuned to standard tuning ?
- + See what kind of jam it is and whether or not you can fit into what they are doing (they were there first)
- + Fitting in - Do you know the repertoire? Can you match the speed? Are you able to play at their level? Are they using music (probably not)? If not (most jammers aren't) can you find a way to join in and add something good? Can you chord along even if the tunes aren't familiar ?
- + Does it appear to be an 'open' jam, or one in which people may be practicing their own stuff, maybe for a gig, and aren't really open to joiners?
- + Once you get a sense of what they are doing, and it seems like a fit for you, you can ask "Mind if I join in?" (wait for a break in the music.) In some situations, this can be done non verbally.
- + Find a place to stand or sit that doesn't disrupt everyone. They may actually move a bit and make room for you. Otherwise, stay at the outer edges and don't worry about it.
- + If you stand and play behind someone who is sitting, make sure you are not playing in their ear !! (guitarists, bassists, banjo players, please take note).
- + Be subtle at first, especially if you don't know the tune but can figure out something to play.
- + See if they are going around and letting everyone take a turn picking a tune, or if there is another way they are deciding what to play and/or sing.
- + Is the jam more instrumental or more vocal? If it is vocal, please play back up and play softly enough for voices to be heard, until or unless they take an instrumental break. Singers shouldn't have to shout. If you aren't used to doing this, don't join that jam.
- + Get used to playing without music!
- + Get used to playing at a steady tempo so you don't speed up (practice at home with a metronome or some other tool.)
- + Bring some kind of recorder to record tunes you want to learn at home. Have fun !!!

NEWS FLASH...Jane & Rich have accepted an offer on their home, and are on their way back from New Mexico to finalize things.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

April 2.....**Board mtg. & Jam @ Good Hope** .6:pm
Mandolin workshop 6:pm
Good Hope Pasties Pay & Pick-up
Apr.15.....**Playdate** 2:30-3:30pm
Heartland Health Center Canton
Apr.23.....**Playdate** 8:30-10am
Senior Center VanBuren Twp
Apr.30.....**Playdate** 10:15am-1:pm
Farmington Hills Police . . . Fmgton.Hills
April 30.....**Variety Night** . . . Good Hope . . . 7:pm
May 2.....**ODPC potluck/meeting @ Good Hope** noon
May 7.....**Board Mtg. & Jam @ Good Hope** .7:pm
May 8.....**Playdate** 2:30-3:30pm
Baldwin House Birmingham
Jun-13.....**Playdate** 11:am-1:pm
Maybe Days Maybe, Mi
Jun14.....**Playdate** 3-4:pm
Pine Ridge Sr. Comm. . . . Sterling Hts
Jun.19-21....**SSDS Campout** . . Myers Lake, Byron
Jun.26-28....**UCDC Campout** . . Waffle Tree Farms,
Coldwater, Mi.

What do you call it when you throw an accordion into a dumpster and it hits a banjo? Perfect Pitch

How many bass players does it take to change a light bulb? One...Five...One...Five...

A Nose For Music

By Gerry Hermans

Ozella displays a victrola
in her antique shoppe,
stashed between a blonde
vanity and mahogany sideboard.

Caught my eye numerous times;
the Twelfth Street Rag sidles
into my mind when I recall
how bobby socks loved their
phonograph records. Once at
a party in my garage, jitterbuggers
thought the old victrola was swell;
went into stitches when it slowed
down! Took turns cranking it up.

So I thought if I stepped closer to
Ozella's find and took a whiff ??... Sure
enough, perky strains resounded, and
I browsed to a ragtime beat...
nosey old me!



GETTING TO KNOW YOU Bob Ewald

Submitted by Lynne Ellen Kaiser

If you've been to a Silver Strings meeting, chances are you've admired the amazing Bass playing skills of Bob Ewald. Perhaps you've thought Bob must have played as a pro , and you'd have been right! But that's only one of Bob's accomplishments.

Born in Detroit, Bob has lived his whole life in the area. He has one younger brother, Ray. Bob started playing a banjo-uke, taught by his father, at age 7, and he and a friend began putting on musicals for the neighborhood kids. At 12, he switched to guitar, and in high school he got involved in folk music, which was getting popular at that time. Bob sang and played as a solo act through high school and college.

By college, Bob was involved with folklore clubs, and even appeared on a weekly TV show. During this time, he became acquainted with Noel Stuckey (who went on to become the "Paul" of "Peter, Paul and Mary". Noel decided to quit school, and move to New York, but Bob decided to stay here in Michigan. He completed his studies at MSU and got a degree in Veterinary Medicine.

While employed as a vet in 1958, Bob met a lovely young lady named Dorothy, when she brought her dog in to be spayed. "She was the only client I ever married," quips Bob. "We've been married for 46 years. I really liked that dog!"

Bob established his own clinic, the Ewald Veterinary Hospital, in the Rosedale Park area of Detroit in 1961. He practiced as a vet there, until he sold the hospital and established a house call practice, which he still operates part time.

Shortly after Bob and Dorothy were married, they started traveling around the world. "We'd put on our knapsacks, put an "on vacation" sign on the business, and take off for a month or two" says Bob. They've visited six continents and over 60 countries! "I've always said, 'I'm only going to be in this world once, and when I leave I want to know where I've been!'"

All of that travelling never stopped Bob from pursuing his music. He began playing the bass fiddle in 1971, when he discovered "Bluegrass" and found there was a shortage of bass players. He and some other musicians then formed the "Michigan Consolidated Grass Company" band, and he played with them for about 10 years. "We were the lead-on band for the 'Statler Brothers' and 'Whispering Bill Anderson' when they did shows in Detroit."

Bob first saw Silver Strings perform in the Livonia Mall in about 1990, and thought it might be fun to join. But he didn't pursue joining until 1993, when his friends Joe Bwatti and John Mercier told him they had joined. Bob had known Joe and John since 1960, when they all played at the American Youth Hostels monthly songfests! So, Bob joined Silver Strings, and has been playing his bass fiddle with us ever since.

For the last 14 years, Bob has played Old-Time music with the Golden Griffon Stringtet, with three wonderful people he met at Silver Strings. Their forte´ is contra dances and civil war re-enactment dances.

Bob sums it up this way: " Music, as you can see, has been an important part of my life. It has given me the opportunity to make many wonderful friends, have many unique experiences, and to be part of "show business".

And Bob's musical talents and fun personality have made Silver Strings a better group as well!

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BUCKEYE FESTIVAL NEWS: Submitted by Ernie Stewart

Two of our members, Luke Kawecky and Ernie Stewart attended the Buckeye Festival in Ashley, Ohio on March 11th-15th. This festival celebrated its 18th year along with it's director, Louise Ziegler's 75th Birthday. The festival is held at a handicapped outdoor center named Recreation Unlimited built with private funds so that handicapped persons can enjoy a camping experience throughout the year. This year they celebrated the opening of the new Life Center Building, which houses a complete handicapped gym with a climbing wall, classrooms, conference rooms, and new offices.

The Buckeye Festival has paid professional players who teach intensive classes on a folk instrument. The classes run for 3 days- the first 2 days are 8 hour sessions devoted to learning the instrument, reading music and tab, developing various playing techniques, and using these things so that you can play in a JAM. The third day offers short mini sessions, devoted to a variety of folk instruments so students can either experience a new instrument or get pointers on how to improve playing on their old one. Luke took classes on the autoharp, and Ernie on the fiddle and mountain dulcimer.

Throughout the festival, you meet a lot of really neat people and JAM with players who range from beginner to professional in abilities. Both Luke and Ernie performed at Open Stage... Luke played his hurdy-gurdy and Ernie played with his fiddle class. If you need a nice break from winter, and a time to get refreshed and motivated, think about this festival for next year. You don't need to cook or worry about where you will stay, or if good teachers will be there, because it's all provided. You also get the latest information about all of the festivals coming up

Tips for Learning songs!!

From our (past SSDS) friend, Nancy Downie:

First, you may be able to learn a song by ear, even if you think you can't! When I started playing the dulcimer, I had been playing classical violin for almost 40 years, totally by reading music, and I was certain that I could never play anything by ear. Well, I fell in love with Bill Staines' "River" and wanted to learn it, and didn't have any music. I must have listened to Maddie MacNeill's version of it 200 times in my car. I learned to sing the melody, then picked it out on my dulcimer, BY EAR!! It didn't happen all at once, but I was able to do it, and was I proud of myself! So don't say you can't -- if I could, anyone can. You may never be totally comfortable with it, but you will get so you can do it better than you thought you could.

Second, there is a technique for memorizing that my piano teacher taught me MANY years ago. I hated it when I was a kid, and, if I remember correctly, I smarted off to my piano teacher about it and got a spanking from my dad. But now, I must admit that, although it is somewhat tedious, it works! My piano teacher called it "backwards sections".

You take the last phrase of the song and learn that first, until you can play it by memory. Then, you go back to the next-to-the- last phrase and learn that. Then you play both of the phrases together. You keep doing that, backwards phrase by phrase, until you can play the whole song. There is something about doing it that way that keeps you focused and helps you memorize, and helps you retain what you memorized. It would be very hard to do this if you were learning by ear, but if you are learning from printed music, it is a good technique.

Also, as someone else said, don't try to memorize large chunks of music all at once. Even if you can't do the "backwards" thing, memorize in small sections -- solidify one phrase before you go on to the next. It may seem to take more time at the beginning, but it will save you time in the long run. It will also help you know the sections of the piece so that if you have a brain lapse, you can get right back in on the next section.

Two musicians are walking down the street, and one says to the other, "Who was that piccolo I saw you with last night?"

The other replies, "That was no piccolo, that was my fife."

Who **are** these silly people ? Just regular SSDS members having their usual fun time !!!

(Sharon Hall & Marilyn Catt) (Right)

Advice: from (Evert friend) Gail Perna:

I've always found it interesting, to hear about the number of methods people use to learn a new tune. There are gadgets to record others and gadgets to slow down those recordings. Several have told a variety of ways used to struggle through getting a tune down in the head.

Bottom line is: the fastest, most efficient way to learn a new tune and to keep it in your head is: LEARN TO READ THE MUSIC, and LEARN WHERE THE NOTES ARE ON YOUR INSTRUMENT! How many are there who perhaps know the names of the marked bridges but not much else?

There is a place for learning by ear in the dulcimer world. And, many of us use both ways: reading and by ear. In addition, many people are excellent musicians who can't tell a line from a space. However, with the exception of a very few, and we all probably know who they are, using the excuse of "I can't read music" handicaps most musicians to a lifetime of slow and frustrating learning.

How much more pleasure do you get from reading a book when you can do it for yourself, than if you always had to have someone else first read it to you?

Learning to type is another example. If you allowed yourself the hunt and peck method of typing because it was faster in the beginning, and didn't discipline yourself to learn where the letters were without looking, over the long haul you will forever type slowly and inefficiently.

The same goes for playing an instrument. It requires learning 2 skills: (1) reading the language of music (2) learning where those notes are on your instrument. You can survive without both skills, but your life will be richer and less frustrating if you work on both of them. And, you won't need all those gadgets that merely serve to circumvent what you probably knew you should have done in the beginning: learn to read, and learn your instrument.





Get ready for camping at the SSDS campout in June, the Uncle Carl's campout, and the festival season to come.

Uncle Carl's Dulcimer Club is a group meeting once monthly, near Jackson. Many of our SSDS members are also associated with this group. This campout is one week after SSDS. We join each other's weekend, and as with our own, you are invited for the entire weekend or to drive in for Saturday. (Motels are available for non-campers.)

REGISTRATION FORM

.Uncle Carl's Dulcimer Club Campout
Waffle Farm Campground, Coldwater, Mi.
June 26-27-28, 2009

Reservations due MAY 1st

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone & E-mail _____

Type & size of camper _____

Number of people camping with you _____

Circle overnights you will be there June 26 June 27
Will you want A/C ? yes.. ..no

Rates: \$27 per night

**Send registration and deposit of \$25 payable to:
Kathy Culy, 625 N. Union City Rd.
Coldwater, Mi.49036**

If you have questions, call Kathy at 517-278-4853 or Penny Scheiber at 517-547-7448.

\$25 deposit will be returned to you on Sunday. If you would like to come earlier or stay later, you may make reservations with Waffle Farm directly at 517-278-4315 or www.wafflefarm.com.

Payment in full is due on arrival. There is a \$2 fee for a 1-day entry into the campground. There will be potluck dinner Saturday and Pancake breakfast Sunday.

BOTH CAMPOUTS WILL HAVE A POTLUCK DINNER AND A PANCAKE BREAKFAST.

Silver Strings Dulcimer Society Campout

With questions, call
Janelle Pacic, (248) 437-5403 or
Carol Ann Matthews (734) 981-5675

Send registration & payment to :
Myers Lake Campground,(at bottom of this form)

Check-in Fri. June 19TH Check-out June 21ST

To get all sites grouped close together,
You **MUST** specify you are with Silver Strings
Reservations are due by **MAY 15th, 2009**
Cabin (sleep 4-6) reserve by **MAY 1st**

Rates \$27 per night \$35 per night with A/C
(2 adults are included, each added is \$2 per night)

Cabin rental for non-campers (\$70 per night) _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone & e-mail _____

Type & size of camper _____

Slide-outs? yesno

Air conditioner? . . . yesno

adults (18+) _____ #children _____ # pets _____

Type of vehicle (1 per site) _____

Driver's License # _____

Late arrival or extended departure ? _____

Minimum deposit \$25

Full payment gets curbside check-in and no long line.

Payment.....CHECK . . .VISA . . . MC . . . DISCOVER
Account # _____ exp. Date _____

Sign _____

**Make checks payable to – and send to:
Myers Lake UMC Campground
10575 Silver Lake Rd., Byron, MI.48418**

The sites near the jam barn are ideal for people with mobility problems... you must request them. There will be a potluck dinner Friday at 5:30pm.

For the convenience of those attending only Saturday, SSDS will have a pancake breakfast 8:30-9:30 am and catered dinner (**Adult \$10, Child \$5**) 5:30-6:30 pm. Send reservations and check to:

Carol Ann Matthews,
42297 Wickfield Ct., Canton, MI. 48487
Breakfast.noyes.....(how many)
Dinner . . no . . . yes (Ad.....)(Ch.....)(how many)