

# Silver Strings Dulcimer Society

## Soundboard

February 2010

26 YEARS SHARING ACOUSTIC MUSIC 1983-2009

Issue 298

Website : [www.ssdociety.org](http://www.ssdociety.org)

### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Hi everyone:

Here we are, well into the new year. As we begin a new chapter in the SSDS book I would first like to send out a heartfelt "thank you" to Gerry Hermans for the outstanding job she did as our Treasurer last year. Her dedication to our club is certainly inspiring and it was truly a pleasure to have the opportunity to work with her. She is a kind, gentle lady, and although we board members, will miss working with her, we look forward to performing with her at playdates and seeing her at our regular meetings.

I would also like to thank Linda Osgood, our new Treasurer, for having the courage to step in and pick up where Gerry left off. Linda is a welcome addition to our team and we all look forward to working with her.

Our board members got together to review our mission statement and discuss our agenda for this year. Our mission statement, simple yet powerful, remains the same: "To make Silver Strings an enjoyable experience for everyone, to promote the club in a positive manor, and to make sure the club is well represented at performances, festivals, and all other functions in which we participate". Although the mission statement remains the same, we have set some new goals for this year, including helping newcomers and those who may not be up to the speed we normally play, by having a slow jam prior to our regular meeting on the third Thursday of each month. Carol Ann Matthews has volunteered to lead the slow jam. We will be bringing back the tune of the month, as well as reviving some worthy tunes from our repertoire. We will also be having more workshops featuring various instruments. I think these adjustments will help to make our wonderful club even better.

Larry Roper

### NOTES FROM PROGRAM VPs

Greetings everyone:

We are beginning a brand new year. We are all excited and looking forward to all of the coming events. We are already making plans for the campout, variety nights and more. I know it seems a bit early to be talking about a campout in June, but that's what we thought last year and it was here before we knew it. We began a slow jam in January, led by Carol Ann. It worked out well, and we plan to continue it the third Thursday of each month, beginning at 6pm. We are going to bring back the tune of the month, and dust off some old tunes in our repertoire that we haven't played in a while. We also have plans for more workshops for various instruments. Another annual picnic is in the works for August, as well. We'll keep everyone posted as events draw closer.

Please don't forget to fill out an emergency response card. They are located on the information table at our regular meetings. We introduced these cards last year as a means to help our members in case of emergency. They contain confidential information about possible health or medical concerns such as allergies, medications and medical history, and who to contact in an emergency. If you haven't filled one out, please do, so we will be better able to help if an emergency situation arises.

Janelle Pacic & Carol Ann Matthews

### PURSE STRINGS (Treasurer)

Just a short note to say that I'm working my way through the "numbers" involved with being your new treasurer. So far as I can see we are in fine shape. I will have a detailed report for you at our first meeting in February including our status on CD sales.

Linda Osgood

**PLAYDATE MATTERS** \_\_\_\_\_ V.P.Business

Silver Strings' first playdate of 2010 was on January 11<sup>th</sup> for a monthly social event at the Plymouth Community Council on Aging at the Plymouth Cultural Center. We definitely started the New Year's first gig with a bang - - a very loud bang that made everyone in our group and the audience jump. The bang was produced by Bob Ewald's 200 year old bass when its bridge tipped over and the strings slammed down along with the bridge against the body of his bass. That marked the end of Bob's bass playing for the day, but fortunately at that point we were most of the way through the gig. The audience was lively and appreciative of our music and we started our 2010 gig program with the same high sales rate of our CD's as we experienced during our 2009 Holiday playdates - - 15 CD's were sold after our performance. Our second and third playdates (January 16 and 17) were at the Marshlands Museum at Lake Erie Metro Park in Rockwood for the Erie Ice Daze event and a total of 33 more CD's were sold after those performances. Silver Strings has had a long standing participation in Erie Ice Daze and I found it interesting that when I called up the contact person, Jerry Weicks, for this event last year and asked if he wanted Silver Strings to reserve the January 16-17 weekend to play for Erie Ice Daze in 2010, he said "Oh definitely! - - Silver Strings Dulcimer Society IS Erie Ice Daze". Silver Strings has loved playing for them because it is a very relaxed, informal, laid back affair with a really nice ongoing interaction with the audience. They sit in a single long row of chairs within arms reach of the musicians. People in the audience often get up and dance right in front of the musicians moving back and forth along the whole space between the musicians and the audience. They are quite often spurred on by one of the Marshlands Museum Interpreters, Jane Van Kirk who obviously loves to dance to our music and who generally joins various members of the audience or others on the museum staff in those dances to our music. It is always a great treat to watch. On our second day, Jane took things a step further, brought her fiddle, and played a couple of tunes with Silver Strings, adding to everyone's fun. In a phone conversation with Jerry Weicks just recently (about two weeks after playing for Erie Ice Daze), he mentioned to me that this year's Erie Ice Daze was the best they had ever had, with about 1300 people coming through for that event. He said many people come to the event now just to hear SSDS perform, and he has received many compliments on our performances.

Other playdate requests have started coming in for 2010 (check the Mark Your Calendar section of this newsletter), so I welcome you to sign up at our upcoming meetings for any playdates that are not yet filled.  
Bert Stein

**2010 FEBRUARY PLAY LIST**

Key	Tune	Play
<b>List of tunes for 1 hour long gigs</b>		
D	Whiskey Before Breakfast	3
G	Red Wing	3*
G	Westphalia Waltz	2
C	Five Foot Two	4
G	Maggie	3
D	Over the Waterfall	3
G	I'll Remember You Love in My Prayers	3*
D	Possum up a Gum Stump	3
Am	Cold Frosty Morn	3
G	Down Yonder	3
G	Young Jane	3*
D	Smash the Windows	3
Em	Road-Lisdoonvarna/Riding Load-Hay	3/3
D	Mississippi Sawyer	3
D	Ashgrove	3*
D	John Ryan's Polka (Karen chooses)	5
Em	Tamlin	3
D	Hey Polka	5
C	Tennessee Waltz	3*
D/D	Endless Medley: Ragtime	2/2
D/G	Annie/Soldier's Joy Golden Slippers (If more than 1 hour, use this as final medley)	2/2
<b>Extra Tunes</b>		
G	Let Me Call You Sweetheart	3
A	Red Haired Boy	3
G	Hundred Pipers	3
G	Larry's Waltz	3*
<b>*2<sup>nd</sup> time: Fiddles, Harmonicas, and backup; HD's softly</b>		

**Mark your Calendar**

- February**  
 23...SSDS Playdate..... 2:30-3:30pm  
 All Seasons Retirement Com. Rochester Hills
- March**  
 7....SSDS Playdate.....2-3:30pm  
 1<sup>st</sup> United Methodist Church.....Ferndale  
 10...Buckeye Dulcimer Festival.....For info. see  
[www.buckeyedulcimerfestival.com](http://www.buckeyedulcimerfestival.com)  
 11...SSDS Playdate.....1-1:40pm  
 Assoc. for Blind, KofC Hall.....Lincoln Park  
 16...SSDS Playdate..... noon-3pm  
 Wayne Westland Seniors.....Westland  
 19...SSDS Playdate..... 2:30-3:30pm  
 American House..... Royal Oak  
 19...SSDS Playdate..... 6-7:pm  
 Maple Heights Retirement..... Allen Park

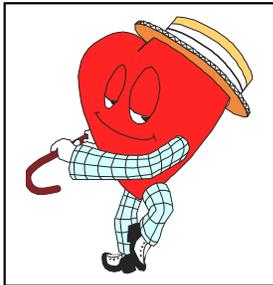
**SECRETARY'S NOTES** \_\_\_\_\_

The official January Board meeting was cancelled, due to a severe storm. The next scheduled board meeting is February 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:pm.

## LET'S CELEBRATE !!!

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

10... Bob Ewald  
13... Sharon Dickson  
14... Barb Davis  
20... Lynn Hartwig  
24... Joe Johnson  
26... Pat Altpeter



### HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

5.... Jim & Evie Bain.(44<sup>th</sup>)  
12... Bob & Sandi Hlavacek.(44<sup>th</sup>)  
13... Tom & Lee Lack.(23<sup>rd</sup>)  
14... Steve & Ramona Hadley.(35<sup>th</sup>)

**If your Birthday or Anniversary are not on the list at the 'Business Table', please write them in so we can help celebrate.**



### PASTIES FOR SALE

If you have any of those delicious Good Hope pasties left in your freezer from the October sale, eat 'em up quick! The second week in March, they will be making them again. This fundraiser for Good Hope happens only twice a year. Order forms will be on the business table through February.



## 2010 SSDS Board members

(back) Larry Roper, President, and  
Bert Stein, VP Business  
(front) Janelle Pacik, co-VP Programs  
Bev Scott, Secretary  
Carol Ann Matthews, co-VP Programs  
Linda Osgood, Treasurer

## Replacing a String Phobia On the Hammered Dulcimer

Do you have the restringing phobia that I do? Are you challenged to change a string? Does it scare you? I can answer yes to all three. I recently had several strings break on my Dusty Strings 600. I tried to replace one of them, and broke 6 replacement strings in the process. What was I doing wrong?

I wrote Dan Landrum [www.everythingdulcimer.com](http://www.everythingdulcimer.com). He was so helpful and produced a video on stringing your dulcimer and put it on the everything dulcimer site for me and others to see. So I watched it, and I tried to replace the string again, and I still had trouble. How do you hold the pre-looped end on the little pin, while you are stringing it through the hole on the big pin with hole in it on the other side, and get it to wind without unwinding in the process! I ended up with a really sloppy coiled end that had the string winding on top of itself! I tried again and the string wound "up" the pin, not "down" the pin as it should. It was not neat, and guess what, it broke again!

I wrote to Dan again, and he produced Part 2 "How to string your dulcimer". I named the videos the "Restringing Hammered Dulcimers for Dummies" videos. Okay, I admit it, I qualify.

So enough talk, how can you view this great Part I and Part II video? They can be found by going to [www.everythingdulcimer.com](http://www.everythingdulcimer.com) Then click on JamSocial. On the right you will see Links to Instructional HD videos. And you will find Part I and then Part II. You have to scroll down a bit to find them.

I now am a successful restringer!!! I feel confident, well, I am more confident than before. I review the video before and during the replacement process!

He also has an interesting video he just posted on the playing angle of your dulcimer, playing with the dulcimer flat, or playing with an angle. Dan demonstrates both so you can see how it looks. He also demonstrates playing while sitting, and standing. It's also very interesting to watch what happens to the flow of playing. There is no right or wrong way to play, and everyone has their own comfort in this, but it does show how the movement of the arms changes with the differences.

I love the [www.everythingdulcimer.com](http://www.everythingdulcimer.com) site. You can ask questions under the discussion section and get help with just about any hammered dulcimer issue you have. Also there is a mountain dulcimer chat area. Check it out, you will get hooked!

Paula Brawdy

### Detailed officer contact information

can be found on the website at

[ssdsociety.org/sections/contactus/contactus.asp](http://ssdsociety.org/sections/contactus/contactus.asp)

Karen Turner



**Mentoring** the young is an important part of the SSDS mission. Below is Ernie Stuart encouraging Catherine Farry at the new monthly slow jam.



Our **jams** are well attended (68 on Jan. 21<sup>st</sup>.) Newcomers are always welcome to share the joy of music.



**Workshops** have become a very popular way to learn or “polish” skills on a new instrument. Tom Montelauro is leading many new mandolin players, and Bob Niemczewski is encouraging new autoharp players.

\* \* \* \* \*



**Variety Night** is always filled with surprises and fun. Who knew Bob could accompany Dorothy on the autoharp or Dave is a “closet concertina player”? It was great to see Lee & Tom Lack, fairly new members, show what they can do. Luke and Dave demonstrated instruments we don’t usually see, Tom sang for us, and Bob “wowed” us again with his autoharp.



## MUSICAL JUG...

your next toy ?



The eponymous jug (musical jug) is just that... an empty jug. Although it is usually a stoneware jug, (ceramic and glass jugs and bottles, plastic bleach bottles, tin kerosene cans, etc. are also played, as the player blows with the mouth. Different materials produce different sounds, as do different sizes.

Rather than blowing across or into the opening like you would a bottle or flute, you play the jug more like a brass instrument (but without a mouthpiece), or didgeridoos. But whereas brass instruments or didgeridoos are held directly up to the mouth, the musical jug is held about an inch from the mouth and the player emits a blast of sound, made by a "buzzing" of the lips, directly into it. The jug serves as a resonating chamber to amplify and enrich the sound made by the musician's lips. Changes in pitch are controlled by loosening or tightening the lips. A tiny, tight opening gives a high pitch. Loose lips flapping around give you the lowest bass notes (and spray the folks around you).

Some players augment this sound with vocalizations, didgeridoo style, and even circular breathing. An accomplished jug player might have a two octave range.

The preparations needed to convert a vessel into a musical instrument involve emptying and cleaning. If your jug is filled with Mountain Dew, (not the Trademarked kind), then emptying is clearly the most rewarding part of this process. If you use a bleach bottle, then cleaning is extremely critical. If someone has let a good jug "go bad" (such that the extreme odor of vinegar knocks you backward when you play a note), multiple applications of baking soda should help reduce the smell, although you probably won't be able to eliminate it completely.

The jug is primarily an acoustic instrument, although amplified and "electric jugs" have appeared from time to time. As a bass instrument, the jug is part of the band's rhythm section, but jug solos are common. Most jug bands use a single jug player. The jug as a musical instrument reached its height of popularity in the 1920s.

Jugs will also produce sound at their main resonance frequency when air is blown across the top opening. This method is not used in bands, since it is relatively quiet and produces only a single pitch. It is typically used for making glass bottles whistle. A larger bottle produces a lower musical pitch while smaller ones produce higher pitches. The pitch of a bottle played in this way may be controlled by changing its volume by adding or emptying contents. Loudness is a function of the speed of the air blown across the top.

## Cyber News – Karen Turner, Webmaster

As of late January, there are 83 Silver Strings videos posted on YouTube. Each video also entertains comments and I wanted to share some of the comments I have received through email. As my mother keeps saying, "we are making quite a name for ourselves..."

*Absolutely Brilliant, Nice Job, Love the Ukes, love it, Another excellent video, Yes lads, Unique, to say the least, I don't think I've ever seen that many hammered dulcimers together in one place, Way to go SSDS, Sounds great, What a nice arrangement, Outstanding, Hey....you group did very well with this song, I just stumbled upon it and am glad I did, This sounds fantastic, Glad to see so many playing the dulcimer and playing it well, It sounds stereophonic, Beautiful, probably my favorite Christmas carols and it was played so amazingly, Thanks for posting, I love this song.. i recently learnt to play it on my autoharp, fantastic playing guys, Amazing emotion my friend, A flawless rendition of one of my favorite songs, Most enjoyable.....thank you, I really enjoyed your performance and the arrangements, Hey, that sounds really nice, such a lovely song.. fantastic playing guys*

## NOTES ABOUT YOUR SOUNDBOARD

Lynne Ellen has provided several wonderful biographies for the "Getting to Know You" column. Her time is now limited by busy teenagers. She designed a great questionnaire, which makes getting information easy, and it's fun to uncover interesting lives of those people we see but don't know. Would you consider helping with this column?

If you run across an interesting article, poem or joke, or have an instrument for sale or trade, PLEASE submit it. This is **the club's newsletter** ! If you would like to do some research on songs we play or instruments we associate with, your efforts are **MOST WELCOME** ! If you have an idea for a regular or spot column, your input is **TRULY encouraged** ! If you know of a really good festival or workshop coming up, **PLEASE** let me know, so I can pass the word. I only have 2 eyes, 2 ears, and 2 hands... yours can be a **BIG** asset.

**Sandi Hlavacek..(734)663-7974**  
<datadoc@charter.net>

## FOR SALE

Maple Valley 15/16 size Hammered Dulcimer with beautiful case. It is lightweight and easy to carry, in excellent condition, and plays and sounds good. Maple Valley was Michigan made. Please call for more information. Phone 616-240-0445

Lost Valley 13/13 size Hammered Dulcimer, in Excellent condition. Lost valley is made in Michigan. It comes with a case. For more information, call 616-240-0445

Thank you **Bill Smith & Val Losse** for photos for this issue.  
Thank you **Bob Hlavacek** for your consistent great technical assistance with the Soundboard.



Carol Ann clogs...

“Lake Erie Ice Daze” is always a fun 2-day playdate. With a steady stream of listeners coming to enjoy our music and an informal atmosphere, there is plenty of dancing in the aisle and clowning around. This year, Carol Ann Matthews clogged to John Ryan’s Polka, Tom Koppin sang, Karen Turner irritated a duck hunter, and we were joined by Erie staffer, Jane Van Kirk, for a couple of songs. As always, a GREAT TIME was had by all !



in our little corner of the world.



Erie dancers in action.



Karen met the duck hunter



Erie staffer, Jane, dusted off her fiddle for us.



Tom Koppin sang