



# Silver Strings Dulcimer Society

# Soundboard

June 2005

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## PRESIDENT'S corner

The month of May was a busy one for SSDS as we had a lot of playdates. It was National Nursing Home Month and we were bringing our music to the residents of the nursing homes. Here are a couple of happenings in the life of a business manager.

Our Business Manager wants us at a playdate 30 minutes ahead of the actual starting time. When I arrive 30 minutes ahead, Ramona is always there earlier, has talked with the contact, knows where we are to set up, and handled any special arrangements. When we arrived at the Whitmore Lake Nursing home in May, no staff expected us. They didn't know where we were to play, or even who was invited to attend. Ramona said she had just confirmed with the contact person that afternoon. The staff said we could play in the eating area, since we were there, and we began to set up. Ramona just couldn't believe they knew nothing about it. Just before starting time, and the person she had talked to earlier in the day walked in. Everything was resolved, and we played our repertoire. After the performance, we were treated to ice cream and cookies.

There was another nursing home playdate in Riverview and after our performance, the contact asked Ramona if we could play the following week for two hours. Ramona immediately asked us if we could come back. Most of us were available, and she found a few more players by telephone. Roger prepared another program (2 hours) to present. We didn't get ice cream at this location.

When you see these people, say thank you for a job well done. Without them, we would be just another ordinary club. All of us working together can make this an outstanding organization.

Thanks to you all!

George

**The trouble with life is,  
there's no background music.**

## From your PROGRAM DIRECTOR . . . . .

The Silver Strings Campout is just around the corner (June 18-19). Workshop (HD, MD?, Ukulele, saw ) and jam leaders (slow and regular) are lined up. We have the barn for concerts Friday & Saturday nights. So far, we have 22 campsites and 2 cabins reserved. Several more people have indicated they will come up for the day on Saturday. Activities will begin at 9:00 am. Whether you plan to camp, or are coming for the day, **if you want the delicious Swiss-steak dinner on Saturday, you MUST reserve your meal.** The Boy Scouts need a number before we get there, so they can plan the food.

**If you did not make your paid reservation by the May 5<sup>th</sup> deadline,** you will still be able to camp if space is available. We share the campground with the public, so the sooner you reserve, the better chance you have for a spot. An extra 4-person tent is available from Hlavaceks, if anyone wants to use it.

Call me with any questions

Marlin

## Notes from the MUSIC MAN . . . . .

Let's make "Apples, Peaches, Pumpkin Pie" a part of SSDS's repertoire and make it our June song. It was suggested by a seasoned mountain dulcimer player, that this tune could be in medley with Julida Polka. I tried it, and guess what ? It worked !! We can play two of Apples (with the ending) and go right into Julida.

Let's use the Performance list for 2005 during the month of June's jam sessions. That gives us 43 songs. If anyone needs copies of Apples (or anything else), let me know.

Roger

June 18-19 . . . . .	SSDS CAMPOUT, Meyers Lake
July 12 . . . . .	PLAYDATE, Greanmead
July 13-17 . . . . .	ODPC Funfest, Evert, MI
July 22 . . . . .	PLAYDATE, Normandy Apts. 1-2:pm
Aug.26-28 . . . . .	Midland Musicfest
Oct.6 . . . . .	SSDS Banquet

**From our BUSINESS MANAGER . . . . .**

Our five playdates in May are now part of the SSDS history. The smiles on the faces of nursing home residents and the sentiments some of them shared with us said "Thank You" in a way I can't put into words.

We had a pleasant and unexpected surprise, as we concluded our May 12th Rivergate Terrace performance, when we were invited to a repeat booking on May 18<sup>th</sup>. Even on such short notice, fifteen SSDS members rose to the occasion and supported the playdate. What a GREAT group we have !

At this time, there are no bookings for June. We turned down one prospect due to a date conflict with our SSDS Family & Friends Campout.

July is more promising. On Tuesday, July 12th, we have eight members who will perform for the Mid-Summer's Night Tea at Greenmead Historical Park.

Our next scheduled event will be July 22nd, 1-2 pm, at the Normandy Apartments in Dearborn. Details and sign-up sheet for this playdate will be available at our next meeting. Plan to join the fun. We hope to see you there.

We had a great turnout for the Alzheimer's Fund-raiser on May 24th. We enjoyed tasty hors d'oeuvres, visited with the sponsors, and participated in door prize drawings. Bob Hlavacek won 10 car washes, Carol Balogh will enjoy her dinner gift certificate, and Dorothy Ewald won a pizza prize package, Luke Kawecky should be in fine shape after his aerobics classes, Bobbi Hurst (or I should say her son) won keyboard lessons, and the big prize went to Gerry Hermans, who won a cemetery plot in Canton. There may have been others, but you get the idea...just some more fun while enjoying playing together. Thanks, one and all. Ramona

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**Several asked for Dorothy Ewald's Pineapple Pie recipe. She says, "It's so simple, it's kind of embarrassing".**

COMBINE:

- 5.1 oz. box vanilla instant pudding
- 1 can (20 oz.) crushed pineapple in heavy syrup, (not drained)
- 8 oz. cream cheese

MIX BY HAND

POUR into 9 inch graham cracker crust

(Optional, frost with whipped cream & sprinkle with nuts)

REFRIGERATE for 2 hours

YOU'RE DONE ! ENJOY !

Thanks Dorothy !!!

## HOW DO THE BRIDGES AFFECT THE SOUND OF A HAMMERED DULCIMER?

Submitted by: Sharon McAuliffe

This question was posed to Russell Cook of Wood 'n Strings and builder of the Master Works hammer dulcimer and is a question that I thought would be of interest to the many hammer dulcimer players in Silver Strings. Russell Cook has been kind enough to give me permission to share this article with you.

How do the bridges affect the sound of a hammer dulcimer?

1. More dense woods such as rosewood or ebony seem to produce a darker or mellower tone. Lighter material such as walnut or cherry tend to produce a little brighter tone and are definitely less efficient in transferring the musical energy of the vibrating strings, thus producing less sustain.
2. The overall size of the bridge affects the tone somewhat. In my opinion a larger, more massive bridge is less desirable than a smaller, more petite bridge.
3. Bridge caps (the material on top of the bridge that the strings sit on) as well as the side rods (the rods on the extreme left and right sides of the instrument) have more to do with the instruments sound than any other single part of the instrument as they are the only things that come in direct contact with the strings.
  - ?? Hard metal promotes brassy tones and extensive sustain and is more difficult to tune (because of the friction of the strings on metal).
  - ?? Wooden rods or bridges without rods are extremely soft and dramatically reduce sustain.
  - ?? Delrin rods (which most instruments have these days) are somewhere in between metal and wooden tone-wise and are very slick which promotes ease of tuning.
4. Separated bridge caps tend to reduce sustain somewhat compared to continuous bridge caps and side rods.

The sound of any builder's instrument can be changed dramatically by varying nothing more than the bridge or bridge caps!

What do you get when you cross a palamino with a guitar player ?

a rocking horse

**HOW WONDERFUL IT IS THAT  
NOBODY NEED WAIT A SINGLE MOMENT,  
BEFORE STARTING TO IMPROVE THE WORLD.**

Helen Keller

just a story . . . or is it ?

### **The Carpenter and the House**

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told his employer-contractor of his plans to leave the house-building business and live a more leisurely life with his wife, enjoying his extended family. He would miss the paycheck, but he needed to retire. They could get by. The contractor was sorry to see his good worker go and asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favor. The carpenter said yes, but in time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end a dedicated career. When the carpenter finished his work, the employer came to inspect the house. He handed the front-door key to the carpenter. "This is your house," he said, "my gift to you." The carpenter was shocked! What a shame! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently.

So it is with us. We build our lives, a day at a time, often putting less than our best into the building. Then with a shock we realize we have to live in the house we have built. If we could do it over, we'd do it much differently. But we cannot go back. You are the carpenter. Each day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall. Life is a do-it-yourself project." Your attitudes and the choices you make today, build the "house" you live in tomorrow. Build wisely! Work like you don't need the money. Love like you've never been hurt. Dance like nobody is watching.

### **WEB NEWS . . . . .**

After much hard work, our new website is up, [www.sdsociety.org](http://www.sdsociety.org) is alive, and well ! It's an impressive site. **Be sure to check and make use of the new message board.** Please do take the time to thank Karen Turner, and helper Dave Smith for their great work. We have added Midi music files to the repertoire list. You will be able to hear what the song sounds like and get a feel for the timing and rhythm. Thanks to Jim McKinney for his contribution 128 midi files. Jim's CD's, in WAV format (for a CD player), with the complete repertoire, are available from :

**Jim McKinney, P.O. Box 386, New Boston, Mi. 48164.**

**Cost is \$5 plus \$2 shipping.**

**Why does a fiddler put a hanky on his chin rest ?**

Because it doesn't have a spit valve

### **SECRETARIAL notes. . . . .**

I want to thank each one of you who have been bringing refreshments to Silver Strings. It really pleases me to see such enthusiasm. It makes me feel that we are all part of a great music society and that we are all doing our part to make it a success. Keep up the good work!!

Carol

### **You can bank on it . . . TREASURER's notes**

What a busy month we had in May... 5 play dates, 2 jam session/meetings, a trip to Uncle Carl's jam in Jackson, and some attended the Adrian jam. We had plenty of opportunity to play together.

We added five new members to Silver Strings, and one member returned. Debby Suchyte has a break from school, and now has time for music. Welcome back !

CD's are generating interest at our play dates. We have sold over 20 CD's and a few tapes. CD's are \$15 and tapes are \$10 for non-members. They are \$10 for CD's and \$5 for tapes, for members. Father's day is approaching, and they make terrific gifts. With all this activity, the treasury stands at \$6627.

The summer fun of campouts and festivals, begins soon. Happy hammering, strumming, bowing, & picking.

Bob Hlavacek,

**The way to know life, is to love many things.**

Vincent VanGogh

**The way to enjoy life, is to love many people.**

Sandi Hlavacek

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### **A Fond Farewell.**

For those who did not attend the Governor Warner Museum open house in Farmington on May 1<sup>st</sup>, you missed a real treat. Rob & Nancy Downie have been great supporters of the museum, playing for them on many occasions. They played their farewell performance while "Proud Mama", Mary Lou Battley (Nancy's first Hammered dulcimer teacher) and many visitors simply enjoyed.... Nancy provided a splendid display of the dulcimer's versatility (from classical to cowboy), and her very fine musicianship, while Rob provided banter and back-up on his bass. Spring was in the air, and their music and humor were delightful... What a day !!!

Their move to Oregon is a good move for them, where they will be nearer to family. But it is a real loss for Silver Strings. They will be missed. We wish them the greatest of luck and happiness in their new community. They will most certainly make wonderful music, wherever they go.

## ADD THESE NEW MEMBERS TO YOUR ROSTER

Peter Alway, 734-677-4399 [petalway@aol.com](mailto:petalway@aol.com)  
2830 Pittsfield Blvd. Ann Arbor, 48104

Mountain dulcimer, keyboard, harmonica

Val Losse, 734-994-9097

1319 Wells, Ann Arbor, 48104  
ukulele

Dave & Carol Ann Matthews, 734-981-5675,  
[goatlover@prodigy.net](mailto:goatlover@prodigy.net) / [carolannmatthews@yahoo.com](mailto:carolannmatthews@yahoo.com)

42297 Wickfield Ct., Canton

Autoharp, recorder / Hammered dulcimer

Charles Plunkett, 313-561-7551

24634 Cherry, Dearborn, 48124

Mountain dulcimer

Debbie Suchyta, 734-692-4674

[Gsuchtya0477@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Gsuchtya0477@sbcglobal.net)

3171 Daniel Dr., Trenton, 48185

Hammered dulcimer

## IF YOU STOP TO THINK, DON'T FORGET TO START AGAIN!

All members are invited to submit a newsworthy and/or educational article to the Soundboard for publication. Deadline for publication is the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Space will be provided as available. The newsletter is posted on the web by the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month, and available for pick-up at all jam / meetings each month.

Back issues of the Soundboard or financial reports are available from Sandi or Bob Hlavacek, and if you are missing any songs of the month or other music, contact Roger Davis.

If you want to play in a playdate, please contact Ramona... don't just show up. Sometimes there is limited space for performers, and it is necessary to balance the instruments. Sometimes she needs to reserve a pass in your name, or give a number for meals, if they are feeding us.



Photo submitted by John McAuliffe

Silver Strings provided background music for an Alzheimer's Association fundraiser at Laurel Manor in Livonia. 25 players had a really fun time. Great information on health care and senior citizen services was available at the many vendor's booths, Dr. Terri Orbuch presented an informative and humorous talk centered around the differences between men & women, and there were many door prizes, with lots of SSDS winners. This was one of our most interesting playdates.