



Silver Strings Dulcimer Society

Soundboard

DECEMBER 2010

27 YEARS SHARING ACOUSTIC MUSIC 1983-2010
Website : www.silverstrings.org

Issue 308

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Hi Folks:

As I write my last article as president of our club, I find myself looking back at all of the adventures of the last two years, and feel a great sense of pride and accomplishment. I remember back to the beginning when I was first asked to run for the position of president, and I wasn't sure I was up to the task. I received some encouraging words from some people whom I admired and respected a great deal. When I asked Hal Bain what he thought, he said, "You'll do a fine job". Derek Channing told me, "I can't think of anyone I'd rather see in that position". I don't know if "con't" is a British word or not, but that's the way he pronounced it. Although I had lost my father several years earlier, I remembered some of his words of wisdom. He said son, "Anything worth having is worth working for," and "Life is like a bank account. You can't keep taking withdrawals without making a deposit once in a while." I saw an opportunity to "make a deposit" and give back to this club that had given so much to me. So I nervously read my acceptance speech, using notes I had written on a roll of toilet paper.

I was then blessed with my fellow board members, who understood and supported me and worked very hard to make sure the club was well represented. We adopted a mission statement that we would work to make Silver Strings an enjoyable experience for everyone, and make sure that the club would be well represented in everything we do. Bert Stein has done a superb job as VP of Business right down to the last detail. He does everything in a very professional manner and displays a great sense of humor as well. Gerry Hermans took good care of our money in 2009 when the production costs of the Holiday Tradition CD and several other expenses made our bank account dip very low. Then with a very good holiday season of playdates and sales of the new CD booming, it recovered at an amazing rate, to what might have been a record high. Linda Osgood took the position of Treasurer for 2010 and has been an asset to the club and a pleasure to work with. The team of Carol Ann Matthews and Janelle Pacic as VPs of Programs has done a great job planning and organizing club functions such as, campouts, variety nights, picnics, and pot lucks to name a few. Carol Ann has been rock solid dependable in getting the church opened up and set up before our meetings. She also has been the slow jam leader, was in charge of the club shirt and jacket acquisition and sales, and has been involved in many other tasks as well. Janelle has worked hard on organizing and planning the functions of the club, but most of all she has brought a great deal of enthusiasm and energy to the club. We have received countless compliments about how she smiles and enjoys performing. She has energized the club, given us much laughter and enjoyment, and has introduced new arrangements that have made our music much more interesting and exciting. Bev Scott has done a wonderful job as our secretary. She is always on the ball, and is always there to give a helping hand wherever and whenever she is needed. It has been a real pleasure working with all of these folks, and I'd just like to say, "Well Done Guys!"

I have spent a great deal of time thanking folks for the many things they have done to help make our club what it has become today. We have been blessed with an abundance of talented musicians that make our performances exciting, and we've received more and more bookings as a result. We invite everyone to join in on our jams, have made them feel welcome, and have become known as one of the friendliest and most well respected groups around.

I'd like to congratulate our new board members for 2011 and I look forward to working with them as VP Business. Most of all, I would like to thank each and every one of you for all of the support you have given me for the past two years. As I have said before, it has been a pleasure and an honor to have had the opportunity to serve this wonderful club.

Larry Roper

NOTES FROM PROGRAM V.P.s

Happy December Everyone!

As our time to serve as your Program Vice Presidents draws nearer to an end, we bid a fond farewell to all of you, our beloved Silver Strings musicians and dearest friends. But before we say our "final goodbyes" we have one more event planned that we hope will put a smile on all of your faces and add some fun and merriment to your holiday season. We're calling it the **HOLIDAY HAPPENING**, and it's being held on Thursday December 30th at Good Hope Lutheran Church, **our musical home**. The event will begin at 6:30 pm for dinner. The club will provide glazed ham, a variety of meatballs, mashed potatoes & gravy, dinner rolls, beverages and a holiday cake. (Plates and silverware will be furnished.) We ask everyone planning to attend, to bring a dish to share... appetizers, relishes & salads, vegetable dishes, side dishes, or holiday desserts would all be **great!** After dinner we will have a *Variety Night* entertainment, hosted by the incomparable Bob Niemczewski and David Smith. Bob and Dave thought that it might be fun and would make the evening extra special if the musicians performing that night could share with us some of their *very favorite* holiday tunes. (This is not a hard and fast rule... we *love* all kinds of music here at Silver Strings.) We hope **everyone** will be able to attend, and send the year out in **STYLE!!!**

We have truly enjoyed serving as your Program VPs these past two years, and have grown to know and love all of you, our *Silver Strings Family*. It's also been an *incredible* honor serving with our fellow board members these past two years: Bev Scott, Gerry Hermans, Linda Osgood, Bert Stein, and Larry Roper. They have all done a phenomenal job leading this club and helping it to soar to new heights. Through it all, criticism was handled with grace and wisdom, differences were handled with respect and compromise - and challenges were faced with courage, strength, and determination.

We want to extend our best wishes to Dawn Hayes, who will be assuming the position of Program Vice President on January 1, 2011. Both of us will be there to help her in any way we can, and we encourage everyone to be as warm and wonderful to her as you've been to us these past two years. She will do a great job for Silver Strings, and we wish her the best.

In closing, we would like to leave you with a beautiful poem that was written for and handed out at our 2010 Silver Strings Banquet by our Club's President, Larry Roper. This poem captures the very essence of what it means to belong to the Silver Strings Dulcimer Society. We share it now with you.

Your Program VPs , Janelle Pacic and Carol Ann Matthews

SILVER STRINGS

by Larry Roper

*There is a group called Silver Strings, out there among the rest.
Some say that they are very good. Many say they're among the best.
They play odd instruments, trapezoid in shape, that emit a heavenly sound.
Folks love the music as they hammer the tunes . . . they come from miles around.
Wherever they go, whenever they play, they always draw a crowd.
Some folks get up and dance in the aisles while others sing out loud.
There's magic in the music they play that's felt by young and old.
It's even been said that it goes real deep and touches the very soul.
It has the power to make folks laugh . . . to even bring some to tears.
It has withstood the test of time throughout many, many years.
Who are these folks who play the notes as the years pass by?
They are the folks of Silver Strings who vow, "never let good music die."*



Our last playdate in October (the 29th) was at American House in Royal Oak. As one indication of the enthusiasm of our audience, one of the residents, Theresa Cerda, decided to play her own tambourine with us and sat down with our group to play. Although this was unusual, it is not without precedent (Erie Ice Daze comes to mind), and it turned out that Theresa had a good feeling for what to do as part of our "rhythm section", played throughout the gig, and appeared to really enjoy participating. I spoke to her afterward and she mentioned that her husband, Ramon Cerda, had a 10 piece dance band that played in many of the well known dance venues many decades ago in Detroit including the Graystone Ballroom. As we were packing up to leave, another resident, Christine Lowery, said "You hurry on back!" and then began singing "Angels Heard on High" which Karen Turner and I had just finished playing a harmonica/fiddle duet on after our gig to try out an arrangement. I asked Christine about her music background and she said, "I only play gospel music, but I know a thousand tunes!" I asked her if she would be willing to sing a couple of her favorites and she sang one for me - - it was amazing! I asked her if she played piano. She answered "yes". There was one a few feet away and I pointed to it and asked her if she would like to play. She said "yes - but I haven't played in a long time." I pulled out the bench for her. She said "I know a thousand tunes but can't remember one right now". I said "Don't worry - - take your time." I got Larry Roper to come over to listen. She tried playing a gospel tune in a few different keys (all sounded fantastic) and then found one that worked for her, and off she went, singing and playing music that was so exciting it got straight to my heart. I said, "God, that was beautiful!" She said "you're pulling my leg." I said "No way". She pointed to a man sitting across the room and said "Ask him if I passed the test." I did and he responded "Yeah - - she passed the test." There was no way to top that day for me.

On Nov. 5, we played at Trellis Gardens in Jackson where Karen Turner's mother, Margaret Turner is a resident. In the early 1950's Margaret composed 13 tunes (copyrighted) and several were recorded by the famed big band orchestra of Teddy Phillips. We played one of those songs, "That's My Prayer", for Margaret and the rest of the audience, with Sandi Hlavacek, doing the singing. It was a powerful, very moving experience to be part of that.

So now, I'm close to the end of my term as VP/Business Manager of SSDS. Serving in this position during the past two years has given me an opportunity to work with and get to know many of you better, and that has been a great experience for me. I feel that Silver Strings is a remarkable group of people. It never fails to amaze me when I see you coming prepared and on time without fail to so many playdates (40 last year and 48 played or still to be played this year so far), and giving so much joy to our audiences and to each other. I want to thank the other members of this Board for their tremendous support, kindness, and excellent work, and all of those in Silver Strings who do so much extraordinary work "behind the scenes."

I think there is nothing that I could say that would convey the impact that we have had on our audiences more effectively than the following note I received from Maryeileen Hogan, Volunteer Coordinator & Treasurer for the Downriver Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired earlier this year after our performance on March 11 for their group:

"Dear Bert Stein,

My house slippers are worn out from dancing throughout the house while playing your Traditional CD! With multiple family in Ireland and from Ireland, Celtic music is in my history and blood. However, none like the likes you gifted musicians created for us! Your music is certainly entertaining, but it is so much more...It is truly a ministry...You bring a warmth and compassion visible in the friendships you share with each other that is peace-filled and healing. Our members felt that as they continue to call me with their appreciation for you. Thank you for coming. May you be blessed, as you so abundantly bless others."

Thanks to all of you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your VP/Business Manager and best wishes to you for the Holiday Season and the New Year. Larry Roper who has done a super job as President of Silver Strings during the past two years will be taking over the VP/Business position on Jan. 1, 2011, and I'm confident you will be in very good hands under his playdate-management along with the leadership of the rest of the capable new Board.



Pictured in front, is Margaret Turner and her daughter, our own Karen Turner. Margaret composed and published over a dozen songs in years past. She now resides in Trellis Gardens Retirement Center in Jackson. We were privileged to perform a concert for the residents, including her very meaningful song, "That's my Prayer". Audience response to our concert was spectacular!

PURSE STRINGS _____ Treasurer

Our finances vs expenses are going well and with the Christmas Season upon us we will be receiving our bulk of income. This will put us in a position to afford our CD expenses as well as the cost of printing our new music packets. Thanks for all the support and giving of your time to promote our wonderful club!

We have 6 new members for you to meet.

Catherine Byrd . . . Plymouth
She plays violin and mandolin

Christine and Michael Hurt . . Commerce Twp.
Both play hammered dulcimer
Christine also plays the flute

Christopher LaRue . . . Livonia
He plays hammered dulcimer

Lyle Thompson . . . Allen Park
He plays the tenor banjo, bass, & whistle

James Mabarak . . . Grosse Pointe
He plays the mountain dulcimer

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS !!!

SOUNDBOARD NOTE

One of the "perks" of Silver Strings membership is access to our Soundboard newsletter. We ask those people with computer access to print their copy at home. This saves the club a LOT of money per year, and you can get it on the 1st of each month. You do not have to wait for snail mail to bring it to you.

I DO understand we have some members without computers. For them I have copies made, and mail them to a few who cannot attend the jams. I update the mailing list every January. If your dues are paid for 2011, and you want to remain on our mailing list, please contact me at **(734) 663-7974** or drop a note to:

**Sandi Hlavacek...5598 Dixboro Rd.
Ann Arbor, Mi. 48105**



OUTGOING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We say a big **THANK YOU** to the outgoing board, which has led our club well. Bev Scott, Linda Osgood, Larry Roper, Janelle Pacic, Bert Stein, and Carol Ann Matthews... you have given generously of your time and talents, to make Silver Strings shine. Another big **THANK YOU** goes to Kelly Kaiser, our music coordinator, who worked hard to revise and test each song in our entire music packet, with the help of her family.

SECRETARY'S NOTES _____

SSDS Board Meeting, Nov. 4, 2010

Old Business

Larry discussed the suggestion, made by one of our members last month, to increase the percentage of pay to members during the holiday season. The Board voted no for the following reasons:

- * Could create hard feelings within the club.
- * The funds received by the club are used for club activities and club enrichment.
- * Members sign up and perform for the pure pleasure of playing, not for money.
- * Since most gigs are filled, members don't seem to need money as incentive to sign up.
- * Could be construed as a conflict of interest, since all of the current Board members usually sign up to play.

Larry will check with Bob and Dave about new mike.

New Business

The Board approved 4 new members. In addition to Board approval, he interviews each perspective new members to get to know them and explain what our club is about and what would be expected of them as members.

The old packet of music will be printed for new members, because they need music now. Everyone will get the revised packet later.

The revision verification has been completed. Larry will give corrections to the Kaisers.

The Board will have a business meeting on Dec. 2, at the usual time.

Diane, from Good Hope, will notify church members about the HD workshop for beginners when it is scheduled. Some church members have expressed an interest in learning the instrument. Larry asked for volunteers to teach the workshop.

Bev Scott

VICTORIAN COSTUMES

If you would like a costume which is appropriate to join our Victorian playdates, here is an opportunity for you to get your costume and to help lots of people, at the same time. Sandi Hlavacek has been loaning out an assortment of blouses in varied sizes, and has decided to sell them. For a \$10 charitable donation, you may choose any blouse. For a \$20 donation (plus the fabric of your choice), she will measure you and sew a long, coordinating skirt to fit. You would write a check directly to **Hope Clinic**, and it is totally tax deductible for you.

Of course, you may donate more... the more you give, the more people they can help. **Hope** offers free medical and dental assistance to people with no insurance, (along with many other needed services). For every **\$1** they receive, they give almost **\$5** in services. That is an **amazing** record !!!

Blouses will be at the jams to try on, or you may phone Sandi at 734-663-7974 for other arrangements.

IT'S DECEMBER... LET'S CELEBRATE !

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- 1.... Jim Bain
- 4.... Dave Lovelace
- 12.... Sharon Hall
- 13... Theresa Smith
- 15... Carol Balogh
- 25... Carol Harmon
- 31... Sandi Hlavacek



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

- 22.....Bert & Elaine Stein(47th)
- 28....Ken & Lynne Ellen Kaiser (25th)

FESTIVAL NOTE

ATTENTION: all mountain. and hammered dulcimer, clawhammer banjo, autoharp, fiddle, and penny whistle players from beginning to advanced levels... Do you want to improve your playing, learn from some of the best instructors, enjoy 4 days of great food, JAMS at all ability levels, Shows, and friendly people who play the same instruments? **CHECK OUT:** www.buckeyedulcimerfestival.com or call **Louise Zeigler 740-747-2326** or see Luke or Ernie at our club meetings for more info. Registrations are due before Feb. 15, 2011. The festival runs from March 9-13 in Ashley, Ohio and fills fast. It's a great experience for all folk players. By Ernie Stewart



NEW BOARD FOR 2011

A new board of Directors was elected in November, to take over on January 1st. They are Bob Hlavacek, President... Linda Osgood, Treasurer... Larry Roper, VP Business...Carol Ann Matthews, Secretary... and Dawn Hayes, VP Programs.

We are confident they will continue to make SSDS a productive and welcoming place to come and play. Guests at our concerts, jams, festivals and campouts consistently say, "You have a lot of FUN together!" We do indeed, and it's visible.

If you are interested in being Music Coordinator or Historian, Contact Bob Hlavacek.

PLAY LIST NOTE

Members should print the current December play list from the website this month. It is not published in the Soundboard because it may be periodically altered to fit certain playdate requirements.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2010

- 01..**PLAY Holiday Concert** 7-8:00pm
Wayne Public Library. Wayne
- 02..**PLAY Holiday Concert** 7-8:00pm
Good Hope Lutheran Church. Garden City
- 04..**PLAY Cool Yule Concert** 2-3:pm
Chapel, Witches' Hat Park South Lyon
- 07..**PLAY Ladies' Holiday Tea** 6:15-7:15pm
Cross Pointe Community Church Wayne
- 08..**PLAY Christmas Luncheon.** 12:45-1:45pm
Mich. Association Retired School Personnel
Knights of Columbus Hall Livonia
- 09..**PLAY Holiday Concert** 2-3:pm
Inn at Cass Lake Waterford
- 10..**PLAY Holiday Concert** 3-4:pm
Village Manor Retirement Community Howell
- 11..**PLAY Holiday Concert** 2:30-3:30pm
Caroline Kennedy Library. Dearborn Heights
- 12..**PLAY Holiday Concert.** 2-3:00pm
St. Richard's Catholic Church Westland
- 13..**PLAY Holiday Concert** 2-3:00pm
Plymouth. Council on Aging
Plymouth Cultural Center Plymouth
- 13..**PLAY Holiday Concert** 6:30-7:30pm
Pine Ridge - Hayes Sr. Comm. Sterling Hts.
- 15..**PLAY Holiday Social (V)** 6:30-7:30pm
John F. Kennedy Jr. Library Dearborn Heights
- 16..**PLAY Noontime Concert** 12:15-1:pm
Livonia Civic Center Library Livonia
- 16..**PLAY Holiday Concert** 3-4:pm
Northville Community Center Northville
- 20..**PLAY Holiday Concert.** 6-7:00pm
Maple Heights Retirement Comm. Allen Park
- 30..**SSDS Holiday Happening.** 6:30pm
Club Potluck @ Good Hope Church

JANUARY 2011

- 15...**PLAY Erie Ice Daze** 11:am-3:pm
Lake Erie Metropark Rockwood
- 16...**PLAY Erie Ice Daze** Noon -4:pm
Lake Erie Metropark Rockwood
- 17...**PLAY Concert** 8:30-10:am
Laurel Manor Banquet Ctr. Livonia

PLAYDATE FUN...

If you are tempted to join the performing group at playdates but have been afraid to try, consider the Erie Ice Daze in January. It is a very casual time with fun interaction with the audience. If you aren't quite sure of a tune, there is safety in numbers, and nobody needs to know it. It's a PERFECT starting point for you !!!



GETTING TO KNOW YOU.....Tom Koppin

You have probably heard of the expression, “You can't teach an old dog new tricks”. Well, my name is Tom Koppin and it's not true. I was born in Detroit but grew up in Dearborn with 2 brothers, a Mom who played piano, and a Dad who played guitar. In my elementary school days, I was interested in music, especially singing soprano in our school choir. When I went into Jr. High, I wanted to learn to play the string bass, but the school's music director needed a tuba player for the school band. So that's what I did, along with playing the bass in the orchestra and continuing singing in other choral groups. In my senior year, 2 buddies and I formed the IVY THREE, a folk group. We got to play on the Jimmy Lanz and Dale McCarin's Music Hall Cavalcade Program on WJR one Memorial Day, which was really exciting.

After High School I started college, but Uncle Sam had another plan for me, and that was the Navy. I was Stationed in Hawaii, and while there played guitar in three different bands. One group had 2 guitars, a bass, accordion and drums, and played a lot of traditional music. Another group was a Jazz group, and the third was a Hawaiian group. So I really got exposed to a lot of different music styles. After the Navy, I met my wife, Linda, who plays some piano, and we raised 3 great children Paul, Kelly, and Andrew. Paul now plays the mandolin, Andrew plays the bass and mountain dulcimer, and Kelly enjoys listening to them. I got a degree in photography from Washtenaw Community College, ended up as a tab instructor for 3 years on their staff, and later went into graphics and printing. I currently work for Heidelberg, a German company who manufactures printing equipment, and I have been in the pre-press equipment department for over 35 years. I am always on the road, and my guitar goes where I go, to practice and enjoy. Linda and I have 2 grandchildren, Elizabeth and Luke, 2 dogs, Storm and Ozzie, plus 5 cats, 8 Australian Bourke Parakeets, and some fish. You probably are wondering why so many pets. Kelly, our daughter, is a Vet Technician (nurse), and most came from her, having been abandoned or abused. Our love for animals came from being president of the Wayne County Fair Association, superintendent of the rabbit and poultry barns, and having our kids all active in the 4 H program, where they earned trophies and ribbons showing pigs, goats, sheep, and cows each year at the fair. I found out about Silver Strings when I went to Evart 7 years ago, saw you perform, and learned your meetings were near where I lived. I decided to give it a try, and joined. Since then I have played in most of the play dates and faithfully attended the monthly JAMS and meetings. Linda and I fill our lives with camping, fishing, and enjoying lots of family time together with our children and grandchildren. I have one goal right now, and that is to learn to play my grandfather's old fiddle. It was in pieces when I got it, and slowly (with the help from books and the internet), I have restored it so it is playable again. I even learned how to re-hair a bow. I also play the ukulele, string bass, and sing baritone when I can. Silver Strings has opened up a lot of opportunities for me, as well as meeting some awesome people who have taught me new tunes that I never knew existed before. You will know me at the meetings, because I will be playing on my guitar, also trying to play the old fiddle I restored, and you might even hear me sing some verses to tunes we play, that I really like. Music is a big part of my life, and you can teach an old dog new tricks after all. Look me up and I'll tell you all about my work on my grandfather's old fiddle, and even let you handle it if you promise to be careful!



A **LOT** of work has gone into planning, experimenting, and practicing new arrangements for our 16 Holiday performances. There were 4 “special practice” nights, plus the first half of one jam night (for those who might like to join in the performances, but could not attend the other practices). The performance value of not playing the same thing the same way 2-4 times is noted by the audience reaction. The “layers” we put into the music are visible on their faces. The entertainment value is measurable by our CD sales.

One new song, “Star in the East”, was met at practice with strong resistance as “one too many new songs to learn”. Then Karen Turner played it on her harmonica. It was “mystical and haunting”, and the perfect way to start the song.

Our first holiday playdate was another new experience. We were welcomed by a huge banner outside, and our usual “concert format” was broken up and pieced into **their** format for their Sunday service at Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church. It was an interesting challenge, and very much a welcome addition to their “Christmas kick-off”.