

# HSGA QUARTERLY

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Hiram Olsen (left) and son Casey Olsen in their first ever appearance at Joliet 2010.

## Joliet 2010 – Best Convention Ever?

*From Joliet Chairman Don Weber*

The usual detailed, in depth report on the Joliet convention is missing from the newsletter this year. That's because our two best reporters, Lorene Ruymar and Betty Bahret, were also missing. They, along with a lot of other regulars, were absent. Those who did attend saw one of the best, if not the best convention ever.

It all started with the weather, unusual for this time of year. The sun shone every day of the convention with temperatures starting at 70° on Wednesday and steadily warming into the 80s for the weekend. Everyone knew that Casey and Hiram Olsen were responsible for our good fortune.

Our guests played for our enjoyment every day and for the lū'au show

on Saturday. Words cannot describe what Casey and Hiram brought to this year's gathering. It was just super, super, super. On Thursday evening we gathered with them to "talk story." It was one big Q&A session, and everyone left satisfied in knowing them a little better.

The board of directors met Friday morning followed by the annual membership meeting. The usual business was conducted and the new board members were introduced.

On Friday evening Chris Kennison launched his Invitational All Star Jam, fancy words for what was not really a jam but a showcase of great steel guitar playing. Each player Chris invited got to play two numbers. The first group consisted of Duke Ching, Doug Smith,

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## HSGA QUARTERLY

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### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association is a tax-exempt, nonprofit educational corporation in the State of Hawai'i under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Our primary purpose is to develop a global network of players and lovers of traditional Hawaiian music and to encourage the study, teaching, and performance of the Hawaiian steel guitar. Our primary financial goal is to provide scholarship assistance through donations to steel guitar students who demonstrate the ability and intent to become accomplished performers.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to all steel guitar players and non-players around the world who support the perpetuation of the Hawaiian steel guitar. Annual dues are US\$30. The membership year begins July 1. Members receive the *HSGA Quarterly* and other group benefits. The *Quarterly* is mailed four times a year First Class to addresses in the United States and by Air Mail to foreign addresses. Members can obtain an Associate Membership for a spouse or family member at a cost of \$10, added to the annual dues; an Associate Member is entitled to discounts at certain HSGA functions and can vote in HSGA Board elections.

### SUBMIT LETTERS & EDITORIALS TO:

HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waioma'o Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424 USA. Our email address is [hsga@hsga.org](mailto:hsga@hsga.org). Articles and photos should also be emailed directly to the newsletter editor at [johnely@hawaiiansteel.com](mailto:johnely@hawaiiansteel.com).

*JOLIET 2010 Continued from Page 1*

and Ian Ufton, followed by Casey Olsen, Ivan Reddington, and Kamaka Tom, who added an impromptu cardiac dance number at the end. The final trio was Gerald Ross, Mike Scott, and Chris Kennison. Those attending enjoyed the evening.

CDs and tee shirts were sold with sales going to the Joliet account. Wally Pfeifer received donations from Cord International, Dancing Cat Records, and Mountain Apple. There were also a few tapes donated by Julie Waters from hers and Bob's collection. Most were commercial tapes, but some were one-of-a-kind tapes of Jerry Byrd appearances or jamming.

The annual raffle raised \$172 for the Scholarship Fund. Millie Tipka got right to work selling tickets on the first day. Raffle prizes were donated by many, many people. If I tried to name them all, I would miss someone, so I'll just say thank you to all of you. You are all special.

Everyone enjoyed the daily music sessions. Fred Campeau on the sound-

board made all the players sound their very best. Two new members joined in on stage this year. Recruited by Gerald Ross, John Lang from the Detroit area showed us a thing or two about western swing. His wife, Annie, was in the audience. From Toronto came Vaughn Passmore who demonstrated what five months of lessons from Mike Scott will do for you. Needless to say, Vaughn sounded great. Although he didn't play, a young man by the name of Mark Prucha from Naperville, Illinois attended the entire convention. On a recent family trip to Hawai'i, he heard the sound of the steel guitar and he's hooked. He already plays classical guitar and is looking for instruction on steel.

The 'ukulele workshop on Saturday afternoon almost didn't happen. Terry Truhart hurt his back that morning and couldn't make it, but Gerald Ross stepped in and saved the day. Gerald is that super hero "Ukulele Man" but without the cape.

The final night was Saturday, time for the lū'au dinner and show. The food was great, and we all had a good time. The show was one of the best. For the

*Cool Joliet shot! (l. to r.) Duke Ching, Doris and Ted Wood, Ted's sister Olive, Janis Crum, Virginia Grzadzinski, Joanne Parker, Janis's husband Dick Crum and Chris Kennison.*







*At the Joliet playing sessions, new member (and future steeler!) Mark Prucha with mother Rosemary from Naperville, Illinois.*

first portion, the Joliet committee hired local dancers from a Des Plaines, Illinois performing arts company “The Barefoot Hawaiian.” Along with our own Mike Beeks and Greg Wong, they danced to the great music from Duke Ching, Ian Ufton, Virginia Grzadzinski, and Kamaka Tom. Then came time for the Honored Guests Casey and Hiram Olsen. With Ian Ufton on bass, the Hiram Olsen Trio gave us one of the most memorable performances seen in Joliet. At the end we all formed a circle, joined hands and sang “Hawai’i Aloha”. The 2010 convention had ended, alohas were said, and the work now starts for 2011. ■

## Joliet Feedback From Members

### **Mark Prucha, Naperville, Illinois**

What was the HSGA convention experience like for me, a seventeen-year-old boy whose passion is music and to learn to play the steel guitar? Let me tell you. Walking into the Holiday Inn, I had no idea what to expect. I had seen videos on the Internet from past convention years, but I still couldn’t help but wonder. Approaching the main room I noticed many familiar faces from those videos. Meeting them was even better. Everyone was so friendly and very willing to help me on my quest to play the steel. Taking our seats, my mom and I were transported back to Hawai’i, as those on stage played the music that we had both come to love. Hours passed and we just sat there, captivated by that distinct sound.

The lū’au was the best part. Duke Ching put on a terrific show, and Casey and Hiram played their hearts out. All I kept thinking was, “I wish I could do that.” The convention was a very good experience, but one aspect turned it into an amazing experience. That was the aloha spirit. As we all joined hands singing “Hawai’i Aloha” and “Aloha ‘Oe” I

felt at home. These people who I had just met had now become my family. I went from barely knowing anyone to, in some way, knowing everyone. This, I realized, is what it’s all about. A good musician becomes a great musician when he or she can play from the heart, and let me just say that each person who came on stage was a great musician. This is what the HSGA convention experience has taught me. I am already counting the days until next year’s convention.

### **Janis Crum, Williamston, Michigan**

This was Joanne’s and my third time coming to Joliet and we absolutely loved it. Sometimes we think the behind-the-scenes persons are truly the ones who make everything work out successfully. Yes, Don was right there to greet us with the aloha spirit when we arrived. Those three standbys behind the desk, who so graciously sat there for three days straight, gave us all the feeling that we were one big happy family. Thank you, Donna Miller, Peg Pfeifer and Elaine Barlo for being so faithful. And Wally and Frank were something else!! First you’d see them in the lobby chatting with friends and newcomers. The next minute they would be at the registration desk with the ladies or in the banquet room making sure everything was “perking” just right. Talk about team work, you folks are to be commended for a job well done. May we say again mahalo, mahalo!

### **Mike Scott, Toronto, Canada**

Although the attendance at this convention was down a little from 2009 it was nonetheless exciting. The Hiram and Casey Olsen duo were outstandingly good and received a standing ovation on their first appearance. Upon reflection I feel that Hawaiian music just doesn’t get much better than that.

Vaughn Passmore, a student of mine, came with me to the convention and although I have only been teaching him steel

*Continued on Page 4*

*Nice to see Wade Pence and wife Shirley back at Joliet this year.*



guitar for five months, I feel that he is going to become a good steel player and he had learned enough to play a full 25-minute program.

Vaughn also was very happily surprised by the high degree of open friendliness amongst the members. Vaughn couldn't be more enthusiastic about HSGA.

### **John and Joanne Plas, Wellington, Ohio**

Many older members did not make the trip this year. In addition to those already mentioned, we missed Art and Mae Lang whose clear music and gentle encouragement of new players were also missed. We just learned that Ernie Coker suffered a stroke a couple of days before the convention, so Ernie and Helen Coker were unable to attend. We are awaiting news of Ernie's status. And some members have passed from this life including Bernice Honold whose lively group always brought happiness and Ian Ufton's mother Doris who enjoyed convention camaraderie for so many years. But in spite of all, new members from Canada, Colorado, Michigan and Illinois were welcomed. Time changes but the music sharing continues.

Raffle prizes were donated by Millie Tipka, Donna Miller and Peg Pfeifer including sweetly crocheted clothing from Peg's own mom. Also donating were Margaret Sampson; William "Diablo," who sent us a ton of sheet music; and Jerry Byrd's wife Kaleo, who mailed several boxes from Honolulu. Proceeds from the raffle always go to the Scholarship Fund.

Dave Kolars made CD copies of a Jerry Byrd concert from a cassette he bought at last year's raffle. It had been donated by Julie Waters. Dave sold them for \$5 with \$4 being donated back to HSGA. [ED: Dave will make additional copies on request. You can reach him for details at <dkolars@comcast.net> or call 815-787-1815.]

*At the Saturday Lū'au, Joanne Plas, Millie Tipka and John Plas.*



*Decked out for the Joliet lū'au, board members Chris Kennison (left) and Kamaka Tom with Darien, Illinois member Ron Simpson.*

At the membership meeting we learned that scholarship monies have been directed to Honolulu teachers this past year including an 8-weekend seminar by former president Alan Akaka on the island of Kaua'i. It might be a good idea to include a summary of our scholarship activities in the newsletter so members can see that our core mission is actually being actively supported.

Our two Honored Guests, Hiram and Casey Olsen put on a fine show. The room was so quiet when they performed and tears were shed during their rendition of "Stardust."

So much of HSGA is goodwill and sharing. It is a pleasure to know these folks!

### **Ron Simpson, Darien, Illinois**

The convention was excellent from start to the end thanks to Don Weber and Wally Pfeifer. Lopaka Young and Julie Cribben joined us for dinner at the Saturday Night Lū'au. Lopaka and Hiram used to play at Honolulu hotels down the street from each other in the old days, and hadn't seen each other in thirty years. To be present to hear these elder statesmen of Hawaiian music talk story, and catch up on news of people they've known and worked with was a once-in-a-lifetime treat.

Julie, a long time member of The Barefoot Hawaiian dance company, received a telephone call that afternoon calling her into service with the dancers. The show was excellent. I used to wonder why Des Plaines, Illinois seemed to be a magnet for all things Hawaiian, but I no longer wonder after meeting Lopaka and Julie.

[ED: It can be challenging finding dancers for the Saturday Night Lū'au—during the same weekend our convention was held, there was a hula seminar in Itasca, Illinois featuring Uluwehe Guerrero and another in Indianapolis with Olana Ai and Sonny Ching. But Ron Simpson and



Duke came through for us. On a tip from Ron, the Joliet committee hired the Barefoot Hawaiian dancers. And Duke never met them until the rehearsal just before the show!]

### Duane Solley, San Antonio, Texas

I had two days of driving back to San Antonio to reflect on my experiences at this year's convention. I was disappointed that several people I enjoy seeing every year were unable to make it, but on the other hand, this was one of the most enjoyable events that I have been to. My thanks to all who made the convention possible and for selecting Hiram and Casey Olsen as the special guests. They were great!

The hotel staff were very friendly and my room was clean and well maintained. However, I must say the hallway carpeting was far below the standards of other Holiday Inns that I have stayed at. I'm not trying to disparage anyone but cleanliness is something that I think we all desire, and I was surprised at the condition of some of the carpeting.

The scholarship program is a great idea and I submit the following comment: Most members will support such a program simply because it is always good to help someone that is interested in learning music, especially if it is in the same area that we enjoy. However, I believe that people will support it with greater enthusiasm if they feel they *know* the students that are being helped. If we could periodically spotlight them in our newsletter and website with lots of pictures of them, their families, their friends, how they are progressing, and what their goals are in life, members would not only feel they were supporting a student, they would feel they were helping Tommy Tonebar, Valorie Vibrato, or Larry Lapsteel. This would make it very personal.

### Wally Pfeifer, Dwight, Illinois

Just a few more mahalos to add. Thanks to John and Joanne Plas for being lei greeters at the lū'au and thanks to all the pre-lū'au musicians: Chris Kennison, Mike Scott, Ivan Reddington, Gerald Ross, Virginia Grzadzinski.

We can't forget to thank Duke Ching for his dedication in producing our floor show year in and year out. He's great at fielding those curve balls we throw him, and we did throw him a few this year! ■

## Newsletter Correction

We goofed in our tribute to the late Letritia Kandle-Lay in the summer newsletter. We incorrectly stated that Letritia was responsible for the invention of talking steel guitar à la Pete Drake and "skip bar" volume gutting à la Speedy West. We happily "return" credit to Pete and Speedy for the techniques they made famous along with our apologies for this editing oversight.

## Honolulu 2011 Announcement

*From Kamaka Tom*

We are fast approaching HSGA's biennial convention in Hawai'i held in the spring on odd years. Convention dates will be set shortly but were not confirmed at press time. The likely dates are Wednesday, April 27 through Friday, April 29, 2011. As in 2007 and 2009, we are requesting a discounted room rate from the Queen Kapi'olani Hotel during April and May. Details and forms will appear in the upcoming winter newsletter and all late-breaking information regarding Honolulu 2011 will be posted on our website.

We are working on organizing HSGA member performances at the Waikīkī-Kapahulu Library on Saturday, April 30, 1-3 PM, and on the following day, our annual Lei Day concert in Kapi'olani Park, 10 AM to 3 PM.

We would also like to do a day trip to the Polynesian Cultural Center on O'ahu's north shore at some point during convention week. Steve Cheney and sons play Hawaiian steel guitar in three separate all-Hawaiian lū'au shows at the center.

Again, official dates and hotel reservation information will be included in the winter and spring newsletters and will be posted when confirmed on our website ([www.hsga.org](http://www.hsga.org)). Please feel free to email me if you have any questions at <[gktom007@yahoo.com](mailto:gktom007@yahoo.com)> or give me a jingle at 808-392-4583.

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## VINTAGE AXES

By Paul Warnick

Hello, my HSGA friends. It was great to see many of you again at Joliet. In the first two editions of “Vintage Axes” I spoke of two important acoustic Hawaiian steel guitars, the Weissenborn and National Tricone. Now we forge ahead into the earliest days of electrically amplified stringed musical instruments with the Rickenbacker Frypan, officially called the Electro Hawaiian Guitar.

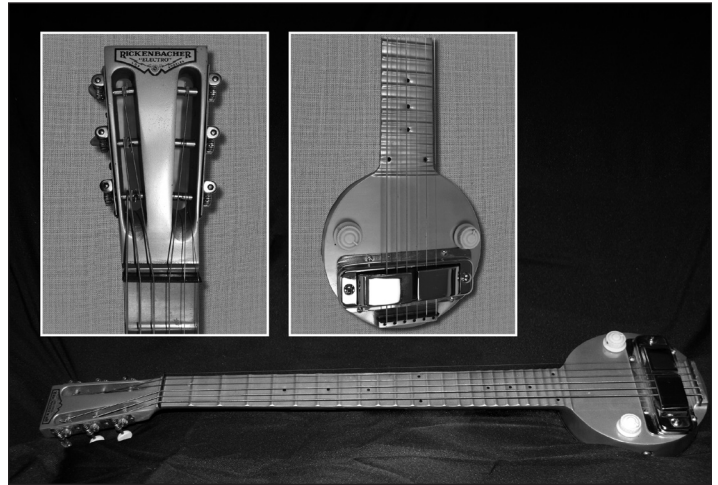
The Rickenbacker Frypan story does not begin entirely with the man whose instruments bear his name, but rather with a man I previously mentioned who was influential in the early National Company, George Beauchamp. By all accounts George Beauchamp was a controversial individual. In published interviews by *American Guitars* author Tom Wheeler, John Dopyera and Adolf Rickenbacker painted very different portraits of Mr. Beauchamp.

While Beauchamp was an early influence in Dopyera’s National String Instrument Corporation, John Dopyera believed Beauchamp knew little about constructing instruments and was not above citing Beauchamp’s alleged reputation as a wild partier and corrupt squanderer who took credit for others’ ideas such as Dopyera’s own Tricone guitar. Adolph Rickenbacker, on the other hand, felt that the Dopyeras at National were not knowledgeable about anything other than violin repair and claimed that Beauchamp was a guitarist whose beautiful playing could make people cry.

Adolph Rickenbacker was a relative of World War I flying ace Eddie Rickenbacker. His skills as a tool and die maker were employed by Dopyera’s National company

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(top) A rare Rickenbacher prototype or possibly a special-order custom model with an ivory krinkle finish owned by member Dave Kolars. (bottom) A well-worn model A-25 long scale frypan shown here in its original case.



A good look at Dave Kolars’s post-war A-25 Rickenbacher frypan.

from the start. He was not a partner in the National Company like Beauchamp but was contracted to stamp out guitar bodies and tailpieces at his shop located just two blocks away from National.

By 1930 Beauchamp had left National and had allied himself with Rickenbacker where he began work on the first designs of the Frypan guitar, the heart of which would become famous as the Rickenbacker “horseshoe” pickup. In *American Guitars* Wheeler writes that Adolph Rickenbacker referred to the frypan’s cardinal electrical principal as an idea that *he* had, although on several occasions he freely credited Beauchamp.

The first commercial frypans—the ‘A-22’ model made of cast aluminum—became available in 1931 according to Beauchamp but were not generally available in the catalog until 1932. Interestingly, Gibson’s first electric lap steel, the EH-150, and National-Dobro’s electric metal body Hawaiian models were not introduced until 1935. Gibson and National-Dobro had followed Rickenbacker’s lead by making their first production electric steel guitars with all-metal body construction.

The very first frypan prototype, which is on display at the Rickenbacker factory, was actually built of maple wood by Harry Watson, who formerly worked as a superintendent at National. The earliest production models have the name ‘Electro’ engraved in script on the headstock and by 1934 the metal logo plate with the Rickenbacker name was added. The earliest models have no volume or tone controls. The volume control was added by 1934 and possibly some with tone controls by 1935.

Besides the A-22 model with 22.5-inch scale length, the A-25 model with 25-inch scale was also available. Frypans could also be had with seven strings. In my years of collecting I have seen more short than long scale models and more six than seven stringers. I would conclude that a long scale seven stringer would be the most rare model.





Many frypans no longer have their original paint; the bodies are often buffed out to a shiny bare aluminum look. The most common factory finishes were the high polished “silver Duco,” which often turned a greenish color, and the black crinkle paint finish. A very rare seven-stringer, possibly a prototype, with an extra short 20-inch scale and solid ivory textured crinkle paint (as was available on the early model 59s) was played by its proud owner Dave Kolars at Joliet last month. This particular frypan does not have any nameplate or logo and is possibly a one-of-a-kind formerly in the Tsumara Collection.

In his book *Gruhn's Guide to Vintage Guitars* the author states that “Rickenbacker’s pre-war one-and-a-half inch horseshoe pickup is considered by many players to be the finest pickup ever made for lap steel playing. The pre-war frypan model—the first production electric instrument by any maker—is rare and highly sought after by collectors.” I must agree with old George on that one! I have seen club members who cherish their frypans often having searched years to find one. It’s worth noting that in pre-war frypans, the strings were threaded through the body with the ball ends seated firmly against the underside of the body. Many players, notably Jerry Byrd, claimed that this string-through-the-body design feature enhanced the overall tone of the instrument.

The frypan took a back seat to other Rickenbacker models after 1935 when more players took to the Bakelite steels. The frypan remained in production until World War II. After the war (1946-1950) the frypan was re-introduced with the horseshoe magnet pickup shortened to 1.25” and a metal tailpiece instead of the string-through-the-body construction. Production ceased entirely from 1950 to 1954. Continuing customer requests for frypans caused a second re-introduction of the model from 1954 to the end of production in 1958. Post-war models also featured a decal logo instead of a metal plate, and a circular Bakelite back plate which could be removed to gain easier access to the electronics. Some also featured a Lucite plastic fingerboard.

Post-war production models with the narrower pickup are tonally much brighter sounding than their pre-war predecessors. This was seemingly in response to the popularity of the post-war Fender steel guitars, which had a bright tone that players of that era were apparently wanting.

For anyone who wishes to learn more about Rickenbacker steel guitars, I recommend the following sources: *The History Of Rickenbacker Guitars* by Richard R. Smith, Centerstream Publishing, 1987; *Gruhn's Guide to Vintage Guitars* by George Gruhn and W. Carter, GPI Books, 1991; and *American Guitars, An Illustrated History* by Tom Wheeler, Harper & Row, 1982.

In the next newsletter I will be talking about the other Rickenbacker steels—like Bakelites! ■

## First Annual Steel Festival

Alan Akaka recently shared with us the fantastic news that the Outrigger Hotels and Resorts sponsored a steel guitar festival on Sunday, July 4, 2010 at the Waikīkī Beach Walk Plaza Stage featuring Hawai‘i’s great and up-and-coming steel guitarists. The event, which boasts a host of sponsors, is part of Outrigger Enterprises Group’s ongoing *Nā Mele No Nā Pua* Music Heritage program.

Said Alan, “Much credit goes to Hawai‘i State Senator Brickwood Galuteria who went to bat for us at the Outrigger corporate office. After I met with Brickwood a couple times in April, he presented the concept to the [sponsors] and convinced each one to support this venture. I believe that the festival will show that the beloved steel guitar is experiencing a renaissance in its land of origin.”

The scheduled events included a free seminar from Alan on the history of the Hawaiian steel guitar and from Dr. Neil Scott on how to build a steel guitar.

Performers at the festival included Greg Sardinha and Po‘okela, Ronald Kanahale with student Timi Abrigo and the Abrigo ‘Ohana, Jeff Au Hoy and the Jeff Teves Trio, Alan Akaka and The Islanders with student Kilipaki, and Casey Olsen and the Hiram Olsen Trio.

We understand that planning for the second annual event to be held July 5, 2011 is already underway.

## Buy & Sell

### Instruments Wanted

Wanted continuously by Michael Cord for his awesome collection: All models of vintage lap steels (like Hilos, Konas, Weissenborns, Rickenbackers), vintage amps and basses. Contact Michael Cord toll free at (877) 648-7881.

### Ho‘olaule‘a Cassette Copy Requested

Looking for a cassette copy of the 1986 or 1987 Jerry Byrd Ho‘olaule‘a, the one that had Bobby Black performing. This tape was widely circulated according to John Ely and has some great playing on it, including Bobby playing his version of “Bali Hai.” Please contact Bobby at 539 Kevenaire Drive, Milpitas, CA 95035; Email: <bobby11122@sbcglobal.net>.

## Please Contact Us!

Send news or comments to: HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waiomao Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424. Email us at [hsga@hsga.org](mailto:hsga@hsga.org).

## MEMBERS CORNER

### Ernie and Helen Coker, Devine, Texas

We, the Coker family, would like to express our gratitude to those of you who have given your time to encourage both Ernie and our family regarding his recent illness. Especially those who continue to check on his progress. There are no words to express the depth of our thanks.

We all had quite a scare. Transported by Air Life to the hospital on September 23, he was diagnosed with a stroke. We feel very fortunate to have Ernie back home with us. Once more our prayers were answered.

Ernie has all his mobility and has been playing his steel some. Actually, it sounds good! He is back to his second love to his steel—reading and studying. He still isn't one hundred percent but is improving every day. The doctor said he should improve with time. We are praying for his full recovery. His speech is good also. [ED: Members, if you'd like to drop Ernie a line, you can contact him at: Ernie Coker, P.O. Box 1040, Devine, Texas 78016; Email: yellow-rose62130@aol.com or cokerranch@aol.com]

### Rick Aiello, Berryville, Virginia

Why do I spend my one and only “vacation” of the year in Joliet? There is just no better place to “hang out.” From the moment I arrive to the moment I leave I get a sense of belonging. Even though the actual time I have spent with the other participants ranges from only a few hours to, at most, a couple of days total, it seems like I'm with folks that I have known all my life.

What could be better than getting up in the morning, walking down and seeing folks all dressed in aloha wear and sitting down to joke around, tell stories and listen to the Hawaiian steel guitar all morning.

Then gathering up a “lunch crew” and enjoying some of Joliet's fine dining—White Castle, that is—and coming

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*At Joliet, Dave Kolars and Judy Maierhofer from DeKalb, Illinois.*



*Another Joliet shot of the Williams twins (Joanne and Janis) with Casey Olsen (left) and Hiram Olsen. Janis is the one next to Hiram, right?*

back to joke around, tell stories and listen to the Hawaiian steel guitar all afternoon.

And when your butt hurts from sitting in those little chairs, you simply go out to the lobby, sit in some soft living room style chairs or the couch and still get to hear Hawaiian steel, tell stories and joke around.

Then the special guest(s) end the day's formal festivities, leaving you with the desire to hear more. Your “dinner crew” assembles and it's off to happy hour and more of Joliet's finest. Sorry, no White Castle for dinner.

Then back to the hotel for more jokes, more stories and more steel guitar. Then you fall asleep or pass out and wake up to do it all over again and again and again.

Where could you find a better yearly getaway than HSGA's Joliet Convention!!

### Jack Aldrich, Seattle, Washington

I wasn't able to attend our Joliet convention because [of knee replacement surgery]. I wanted to show off my [progress on] the B11th tuning (thanks to Alan Akaka, my *kumu mele*) and pick Casey's brain. [But I did get to see] Greg Sardinha and Sonny Lim at Cyril Pahinui's slack key festival here in Seattle. Got to jam wid' 'em last night at a local Hawaiian restaurant. I've been trying to meet Casey for about six years. We just haven't been in the same place at the same time. I have a friend, Bernie Simeona, a fabulous bassist and 'ukulele player here in Seattle who grew up with “Jiggy” (AKA Hiram Olsen) in Honolulu. Please pass the word that I'll be on O'ahu for the convention next spring and also at Henry Allen's festival in Ka'anapali, Maui. Oh, I played steel on two CDs last month: “Under The Midnight Sun” by Smoky Joe's Ocean, an Exotica group, and Gary Madieros's CD to be released in December. Gary was the 2002 Falsetto champ.



**Jerry Croom, Hemet, California**

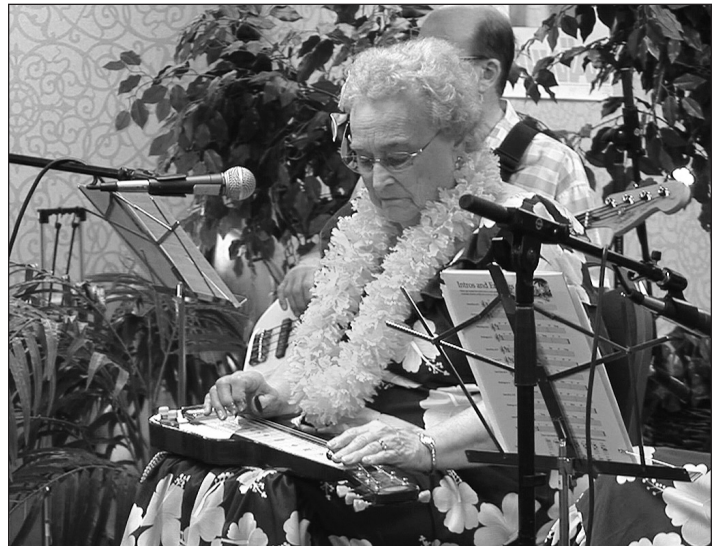
Thanks for reminding me about "The One Rose" and Lani McIntire featured in the last *Quarterly*. You might find this interesting. I first sang this song on radio station KBTM, Jonesboro, Arkansas in January 1935. A steel guitar, dobro, and guitar player trying to get a class of students going played several half-hour programs on Sunday afternoons, and when his rhythm guitar player left town, I played some with him. He had taken lessons in Los Angeles from Dick McIntire. We played the song as "The Red Rose." It sounds the same either way!

**Alton Sasaki, Honolulu, Hawai'i**

I was unable to Joliet. I am a new member still learning the steel with Alan Akaka and attending all the steel events I can. I am not retired yet and love my steel guitar music. I like old traditional Hawaiian steel like Alan, which is why we get along so well. I only wish that "Joliet" was here in Hawai'i more often! Mahalo and malama pono.

**Theresa Lopez, Joliet, Illinois**

This year's Joliet convention was super awesome! The players, both new and experienced, were fantastic. I am a beginner on steel guitar but acquired more motivation to succeed in learning, though I need a teacher closer to my home, espe-



*Trusty upright bassist Virginia Grzadzinski stepping out and playing steel guitar at the Joliet member playing sessions.*

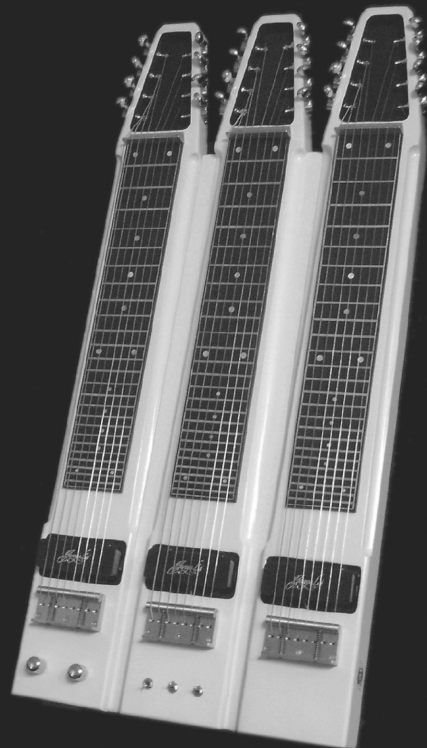
cially during cold winter days in Illinois. We did miss Kay Das very much. He sent me a text to say 'Hellooo' to all of his friends. He did not make it due to kidney stone surgery; he was under orders from his doctor not to fly. We missed his awesome music. Darn great and a super player! Thanks again for the wonderful time at Joliet! ■



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# Tiny Bubbles

(Leon Pober)

Arrangement by Chuck Lettes

Easy 2-Beat



F

C7

7

Ti - ny bub - bles \_\_\_\_\_ in the wine. \_\_\_\_\_ Make me hap - py, \_\_\_\_\_ make me feel

T	5 3	5	6 5	7	7 5	5 5 3
A				7	7	
B		5				5

Steel Gtr. (C6th)

7

F B $\flat$  B $\flat$ min

fine. \_\_\_\_\_ Ti - ny bub - bles \_\_\_\_\_ make me warm all o - ver \_\_\_\_\_ with a

T	5	5 3	5	5 5 3 5	6	2	5 7
A			5				
B							

13

F C7 F *Fine* B $\flat$

feel - ing that I'm gon - na love you 'til the end of time. \_\_\_\_\_ So here's to the gold - en moon and

T	5 5 8 8 5	5 7 7 6 6	7	5	5	5 5 10	10 5
A			7			5 5 5 5 5	
B				5			10

19

F G7 C7 *D.S. al Fine*

here's to the sil - ver sea, and most - ly here's a toast to you and me. \_\_\_\_\_ Ti - ny

T	5 5	5 6 7 5	5 5	5 5 8	7	5 3
A	5 5 5	5 6 7 5 7 6	7 6	5 5 8	7	
B	5 5					



# Pagan Love Song

(A. Freed - N. H. Brown)

Arrangement by Basil Henriques

Adaptation by John Ely

## Medium Waltz

9

C F7 C

Come with me where moon-beams, Light Ta-hi-tian skies,

E T 8 8 8 8 8 11 8

C# A 8 8 8 8 8 11 13 8

B A 8 8 8 8 8 11 13 8

E B 8 8 8 8 8 11 13 8

D 8 8 8 8 8 11 13 8

Steel Gtr. (E13th)

17

G7 C G7 C

And the star-lit wa-ters, Lin-ger in your eyes,

T 10 8 3 1 3 3 10 8 3 8 8

A 8 8 3 1 3 3 10 8 3 8 8

B 10 8 3 1 3 3 10 8 3 8 8

25

C A<sup>b</sup>7 C

Na-tive hills are call-ing, To them we be-long,

T 8 8 8 8 8 8 8

A 8 8 8 8 8 16 16 8

B 8 8 8 8 8 16 16 16

G7 C G7 D<sup>m</sup>7 G<sup>13</sup> C

And we'll cheer each oth-er With the Pa-gan Love song,

T 10 8 3 1 3 3 3 7 8 15 15 8

A 8 8 3 1 3 3 3 7 8 15 15 8

B 10 8 3 1 3 3 3 7 8 15 15 8

# Getting to Know Lorene Ruymar (Rīm'-ər)

The "Getting to Know You" series is usually used to introduce members who are to some degree unknown to the at-large membership. Well, club founder Lorene Ruymar needs no introduction, but she has a story to tell, one that has impacted the club as perhaps no other has. So, throw a log on the fire and settle in for a good yarn. Take it away, Lorene!

I was born on a farm in the Canadian prairie wheat field and deep snow province of Saskatchewan in 1931. I was second in a family of four girls. Mum completed the whole project in five years, but our dad needed *boys* to run a farm. Darn it! So we two oldest had to be the boys, harnessing the horses and driving them three and a half miles to our one-room schoolhouse and back each day. Plus cleaning the barn, and tending the cows, horses, turkeys, ducks, chigs and pickens. Well, I guess dad and mum did do a little of that, too. No skating, swimming, or downhill sledding, because the land was so flat we could watch our dog run away for three days. Seventeen dirt road miles to the nearest town, so we only went there for church on Sunday in summer.

At age four I got hooked on steel guitar. In the darkest days of winter mum knew how to pick the crystal set to get radio waves coming up from Council Bluffs, Iowa to hear a Hawaiian music show. Mum was hooked, too, and found that a teacher in a nearby school would teach us. She bought a wooden steel guitar with picks and bar for \$7 from the Sears catalog and then loaded the four of us up and drove to that school. The teacher gave the lessons to mum and daughter #1. "You're too young," he told me. "You go out and play on the swings with the little ones." Sheesh! Was I jealous!! And he moved away from that school within the year. I learned much later that it was David K. Ka'ili in Des

*Lorene Ruymar with Jerry Byrd in Vancouver, Canada in 1986.*



*A very young Lorene playing her brand new National New Yorker with her first group, the Regina-based Mauna Kea Hawaiians.*

Moines, Iowa who played the steel guitar on that radio show. Much later in life I caught up with him, and you can see him on page 93 of my book.

When I was 12 years old, Pop sold the farm and we moved into the "big" city of Regina. What a change that was! Pop found a studio where a young lady taught steel guitar. Yes! At last I was the one who got the lessons. But after a year, that one moved away, too. I kept banging away at it, buying Oahu Publishing stuff in the music store. That's where I spotted the first electric steel guitar to hit our city. A beautiful 6-string National New Yorker with amp and all for \$149. That got me into a Hawaiian group, the Mauna Kea Hawaiians, and by grade 12, age 16 (yes, that's correct) I was playing in a classy dance band, the Club Aces. The men in tuxedos and me in a strapless gown every Friday and Saturday night.

We played strictly from special arrangement booklets. The only spare book they had for me was for Bb trumpet. So I not only sight-read but transposed from Bb to C as well. Plus, I was required to double on rhythm guitar, so I played the barre chords on a Martin acoustic, which has the greatest tone. I still use it. I should tell you about the pay. On Friday night we played until 1 AM and got \$7. On Saturday nights we had to quit at 12 midnight (Lord's Day Act) and each of us got \$6. Hey, that added up pretty fast! I didn't have to buy my gowns; mum sewed them for me.

I had worked my way up to a great salary at General Motors Acceptance Corp. and at age 22 took the opportunity to transfer to their office in Vancouver, BC. Now, that was a *really* big city! Got married, became Lorene Petersen. Music career stopped. Getting rich was the game. Bought a house for the outrageous price of \$10,000 with a suite in the basement to rent, and I was the one who had the \$2,500 down payment. Wow! Made our first trip to Hawai'i in 1954.

I could write a book about how different O‘ahu was then. We stayed in a little one-bedroom house at the corner of Liliu‘okalani and Koa for \$7 a day. Webley Edwards did his radio show, similar to “Hawaii Calls,” but called something like “Lunch in Hawaii” under the Banyan Tree at the Moana Hotel. He held a ‘ukulele up high and called for a contest. Best player wins it. Nobody took the bait. So I took a chance and won it. Not to make it too easy for me, Webley strummed it, and I had to sing “Little Grass Shack.” I am *no* singer but I wanted that ‘ukulele. I expected it was just a toy, but no, it was a Kamaka. I still have it.

Child #1 arrived in 1958, little Kathy with great brains, very charming, musically gifted. Child #2 in 1960, little Billy. Life not so easy for him. No music gift. And I was expected to go back to work, no staying at home with the kids like other moms. So I did three years at the Univ. of B.C. to become a teacher. Music specialty. First posting was at Maple Grove School, grade four. I wanted my kids to attend the same school but that was against the rules. I schemed and I plotted. Here’s how we did it. Bought an old wreck of a house just two blocks from Maple Grove, tore

*A more up-to-date Lorene playing a frypan with her book shown in the background.*



*Still barely high school age, Lorene playing with a classy dance band, The Club Aces.*

it down and sold one lot. Built a smaller house on the other lot, moved in. Okay, now the kids are entitled to register at Maple Grove. But the principal would have to transfer me away. How to stop him? Give him what he wanted so desperately for the parents of this elite school, a school band!

I had no training for that, so I played the game differently. I put out the word that all kids no matter what they played were welcome to join the new Maple Grove Orchestra. Well, they turned out with every oddball instrument you could imagine. Kids from grade four to seven. Normally, a band teacher would buy the beginner level band instruction books and the kids would play honk honk honk-a honk. And the band would flop, as they had done before. But with this higgly piggly group, I had to write the arrangements by hand.

I gave them the songs that were popular at the time. “Winchester Cathedral,” “Swingin’ Safari,” “Darktown Strutters Ball,” “In The Mood,” and for comedy “Hey Pedro, Sit Down!” We had about 50 kids in the band. They loved it! And when the parents saw that this was a going thing, they gave the kids lessons on real band instruments. It took about four years for this group to become a real school band. We were the best school band in town!

I also taught the music classes on the curriculum, in which every kid had a ‘ukulele, read the notes, played the melodies, strummed the chords, and sang. So when the band played a concert, each one had a ‘ukulele standing on end by his or her chair. Half way through the concert, they’d put down their band instruments, pick up their ukes, and show their stuff. As their director, I stepped over to a table where my National New Yorker was plugged in and ready to go, and I led them with some steel guitar solos.

Every year we took the band on a bus trip, usually down to Tillamook, Oregon where we visited the cheese factory and played concerts in local schools, staying in homes of the kids in a Tillamook school. Then their choir visited us in Vancouver.

“Hey, Mrs. Pee-der-sun, yer forgettin’ about yer own kids.” Oh yeah, Kathy and Billy. Kathy came into the band on flute in grade four. No problem! Smart kid! I put her onto euphonium in grade seven for a challenge. And little Billy? By grade four he sure did want to be in the band, and I sure did want him to come along on those band trips. Bought him a clarinet, gave him lessons. Just no music bones in that kid! So he sat there in the front row

*Continued on Page 20*



## “Hillbilly Hawaiian”: Lani McIntire’s Influence On Mainland Country Music – Part II

By Anthony Lis

In this three-part series, we are examining the influence of Hawaiian-born bandleader and multi-instrumentalist Lani Ululani McIntire (1904-1951) on early country music. McIntire led steel guitar suffused groups backing country music pioneer Jimmie Rodgers and country singer Jimmie Davis in the 1930s. He also co-wrote two songs eliciting country-style covers, while his floor show at the Hawaiian Room at New York City’s Hotel Lexington is known to have included at least one “hillbilly” number.

At around the age of eighteen, McIntire had moved to Los Angeles where he played and probably recorded with steel guitar virtuoso Sol Ho‘opi‘i. Around 1929, McIntire wrote his best-known song, “The One Rose (That’s Left in My Heart)” with advertising copywriter Del Lyon. By 1936, McIntire had twice recorded the song. The following year, the song was covered by Bing Crosby as well as three hillbilly acts, among them Gene Autry, who also sang the song in the film *Boots and Saddles*.

By the time of the *Boots and Saddles* release, McIntire was leading a ten-piece orchestra, the Aloha Islanders, at New York City’s Hawaiian Room, a recently opened South Sea Island themed supper club in the Hotel Lexington on Manhattan’s east side. McIntire had performed at the club’s opening in June 1937 as a member of Andy Iona’s band, backing tenor Ray Kinney (1900-1972). Iona left the Hawaiian Room in the fall, and McIntire was hired as his replacement.

A month or so later, McIntire and a quartet called the Hawaiians backed a second hillbilly musician, singer-songwriter and future Louisiana governor Jimmie Houston Davis (1899-2000) on

four sides at Decca’s Midtown Manhattan studios.

Signed to Decca in the fall of 1934, Davis had made fifty-eight recordings for the label’s “Hill Billy” series prior to meeting McIntire, his biggest hit being “Nobody’s Darlin’ But Mine,” a dying young woman’s request for a vow of fidelity from her fiancé.

To infer from Davis’s remarks in a 1985 *Journal of Country Music* interview with Peter Mikelbank, his session with McIntire took place to afford him the opportunity to re-record “Nobody’s Darlin’” with a more professional sounding backup group. Davis’s original 1934 recording was a bare bones track with just two guitars and dobro. The remake had a fuller sound with added vocal texture, including effective use of 3-part harmony and humming behind the lead vocal. For the remake, Davis also replaced the title’s “Darlin’” with “Darling,” tightened up the narrative, and changed the dying fiancée to a male.

Davis was extremely pleased with the Hawaiians’ remake, released in Decca’s “Popular, Dance, and Vocal” series, telling Mikelbank that the recording was “beautiful, one of the finest records I’d ever heard in my life.” Unfortunately, Decca’s experiment of backing a hillbilly performer with a more pop-style accompaniment was years ahead of its time. The first successful blending of pop and hillbilly would have to wait another twenty years or so with the emergence of the “Nashville Sound” at RCA under the direction of Chet Atkins and Owen Bradley. As it was, Davis confessed to Mikelbank that the remake “didn’t sell a hatful,” adding that “[the public] ... went back to that old two-guitar thing,” that is, the sound of the original recording. “You can’t ever tell,” mused Davis, “It’s not what I like; it’s what the people buy.”



James Houston Davis, Country Music Hall of Fame inductee who served non-consecutive terms as Governor of Louisiana.

“Nobody’s Darlin’” was packaged with Peter Tinturin and Jack Lawrence’s “Have You Ever Been In Heaven?” on the B side. Several covers of the latter tune were made in advance of the release of Republic’s film *Manhattan Merry-Go-Round*, which included the tune. The version cut by Davis and the Hawaiians features a swinging solo section propelled by Bob Nichols’s electric steel guitar, George Kainapau’s vigorous ‘ukulele strumming, and Al McIntire’s driving walking bass lines. One can almost imagine western swing bandleader Bob Wills—who had recorded “Steel Guitar Rag” and “Right or Wrong” a little over a year before—erupting with an “ahaaaa!” during Nichols’s steel solo. Other swinging McIntire arrangements from the fall of 1937 with similarly driving Nichols solos include “Hula Blues” and “Hame Pila,” recorded a month to the day after the Davis session.

Davis and the Hawaiians’ other record, likewise released in Decca’s “Popular, Dance, and Vocal” series, paired the popular 1905 Hawaiian waltz “One, Two, Three Four” with “The Greatest Mistake Of My Life,” by Welsh singer-songwriter Dmitri Mes-sinis, more commonly known as Jimmy Mesene (1908-1969).

By the time of the Davis-McIntire session, “One, Two, Three Four” had been recorded over sixty times by over fifty different Hawaiian acts, including Toots Paka, Kanui and Lula, and Frank Ferera and Anthony Franchini, as well as hillbilly guitarist and harmonica player Walter C. Peterson from Chicago. Davis and the Hawaiians’ version opens with Nichols playing the first four bars of “Aloha ‘Oe” recast as a waltz! As on “Nobody’s Darling,” McIntire, Kainapau, and Nichols sing the first half of the second chorus, then hum behind Davis during the final portion of the side.

Davis and the Hawaiians may have been the first Americans to cover “The Greatest Mistake of My Life,” a melancholy waltz ballad recorded by at least five British dance bands in the three and a half months preceding the Hawaiians’ rendition. The Davis-McIntire cover features Bob Nichols playing an embellished version of the last half of the chorus as a mid-song break.

The four Davis-McIntire recordings plus the original version of “Nobody’s Darlin’ But Mine” are available on Bear Family Records’ 1998 boxed set entitled “Governor Jimmie Davis: Nobody’s Darlin’ But Mine” (BCD 15943). “Nobody’s Darling” and “The

*The yodeling DeZurik Sisters, originally from rural Minnesota, one of the early female stars of the Grand ‘Ole Opry.*



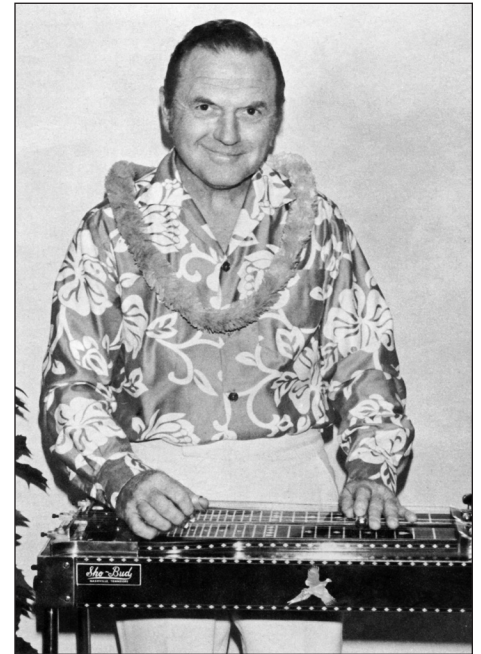
Greatest Mistake of My Life” also appear on Proper’s 2008 compilation entitled “With My Little Ukulele in my Hand” (Properbox140).

Sometime in the late 1930s, a teen-aged Jerry Byrd living in Lima, Ohio heard Lani McIntire’s Hawaiians for the first time while listening to one of Kate Smith’s radio programs. Byrd was immediately struck by the sound of Bob Nichols’s Rickenbacker “frypan” electric steel guitar. “I was so excited, I could hardly sit still. I could not believe it. The tone! And sustain! It just kept coming,” recalled Byrd in his autobiography some sixty-five years later.

In late 1938, a second Lani McIntire collaboration was given a “hillbilly” cover when “Sweet Hawaiian Chimes” was recorded by the yodeling Dezurik Sisters. McIntire’s collaborators, Dick Sanford and George McConnell, had written pseudo-country songs, mainly mountain ballads and cowboy songs, for New York publishing companies in the early 1930s.

McIntire recorded two versions of “Sweet Hawaiian Chimes” at a March 1938 session in New York, his last with Bob Nichols. One of the takes has recently been reissued on Cumquat CQCD-2753, one of five CDs containing digital restorations of McIntire’s recordings engineered by the late Australian jazz guitarist and music producer Bruce Clarke. Clarke’s reissue features McIntire on vocals, backed by an expanded version of the Hawaiians, including chimes, piano, and vibraphone; these instruments play a mid-song interlude complemented by Nichols’s mellow steel guitar.

Roughly nine months after McIntire’s “Sweet Hawaiian Chimes” recordings, the Dezurik Sisters waxed their version at their one recording session in Chicago for Vocalion/OKeh. At the time, the Dezurik’s were appearing on that city’s “National Barn Dance” and “Checkerboard Time” radio-pro-



*Probably the most seen photo of Jerry Byrd playing his Sho-Bud Hawaiian steel.*

grams. The track features the sisters imitating the sound of the steel guitar via wordless vocalizations. The recording concludes with a striking, slow arpeggiation of an E major triad in their pure, clear “sisterly harmonies” to mimic one last, slow “slide” of the steel.

Nearly twenty years after the Dezuriks’ cover, pioneering country music pedal steel guitarist Speedy West (1924-2003) included an instrumental version of “Sweet Hawaiian Chimes” on his 1958 LP release *West of Hawaii*. Joining West via overdubbing was a Hawaiian quartet led by Honolulu-born Sam Koki (1902-1968), who by the spring of 1941 had replaced Bob Nichols as McIntire’s steel guitarist. Rounding out the quartet were Harry Baty, who played guitar on the Lani McIntire-Bing Crosby recordings of “Sweet Leilani” and “Blue Hawaii”; and Danny Stewart, who appeared with McIntire in *His Jazz Bride* as an adjunct member of Sol Ho‘opi‘i’s Novelty Trio.

West’s “Sweet Hawaiian Chimes” cover takes advantage of a bit of word-play involving the double meaning of ‘chimes’ as either tubular bells or steel

*Continued on Page 16*



guitar harmonics, with West making effective, conspicuous use of the latter in the introduction and tag section. *West of Hawaii* also includes a rendition of “Blue Hawaii.” In 1997, Bear Family reissued *West of Hawaii* as part of a four-CD set entitled *Flamin’ Guitars* (BCD 15956) containing many of West’s Capitol recordings.

Another Lani McIntire connection with country music in the late 1930s to early 1940s included his recording of Fred Rose’s “My Heaven is a Shack in Old Kalua,” composed during the country music songwriter’s pre-Nashville publishing days. Rose (1897-1954) is best remembered for co-founding the nation’s first country music publishing firm Acuff-Rose in 1942, and composing country standards such as “Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain” (1945) and “Take These Chains from My Heart” (1952).

Rose had previously collaborated on Hawaiian-themed songs in the 1920s. In the months preceding McIntire’s “My Heaven is a Shack” recording, made with vocalist Ann Tell

*A snappy shot of HSGA member and Hall of Famer Leonard T. Zinn taken during his tenure with the 101 Ranch Boys.*



(1917-1999), Rose had co-written songs for Gene Autry in Hollywood and performed on Tulsa’s “Saddle Mountain Roundup” radio program.

Rose’s lyricist was Dave Kapp (1904-1976), son of American Decca founder Jack Kapp who had apparently overseen McIntire’s backing of Jimmie Davis. Kapp’s lyrics detail “a real old-fashioned luau” while an unidentified steel guitarist (Bobby True or Sam Makia?) plays the introduction and solo.

Ann Tell and the Hawaiians waxed one other side, the probable debut recording of “Evening in the Islands,” covered by Jerry Byrd on his 1961 *Byrd of Paradise* LP.

Bob Nichols took leave of McIntire sometime after late March 1938, and McIntire was without a permanent steel guitarist until April 1941 when he hired Sam Koki. Prior to joining McIntire, Koki had backed the “singing cowboy” acts The Sons of the Pioneers and Gene Autry in California.

Koki’s late-1937 recordings with the Sons of the Pioneers were surprisingly the group’s first with a steel guitarist. Koki played on fifteen gospel and western themed sides, including a 16-bar solo on “One More River to Cross.” Koki’s eleven sides with Autry recorded in the spring of 1939 include the Hawaiian themed Autry-Rose collaboration “Paradise in the Moonlight,” which also includes a Koki steel solo.

Koki encouraged young steel guitarist Leonard T. Zinn (b. 1924), who soon joined the Hawaiian Sharps, later recorded with the 101 Ranch Boys, and toured extensively with Ernest Tubb, Faron Young, and Tex Ritter. In his late teens, Zinn made several bus trips from his hometown of Hanover, Pennsylvania to New York City where Koki would tutor him while on break at the Hawaiian Room. Zinn recalled that Koki stressed bar control as the key to smooth, Hawaiian-sounding playing. At some point, McIntire discussed the possibility of Zinn backing him on a recording. However, McIntire’s unexpected death

from a heart attack in June 1951 closed the door to that possibility.

In homage to Koki, Zinn and the 101 Ranch Boys cut a version of Koki’s 1937 theme song “Paradise Isle,” one of several sides released in early 1947 on the Rich label, the band’s first time in the studio. The tune had been covered by McIntire in early 1945 and was used in a 1943 “Soundie” film featuring McIntire’s hula dancers backed by Koki. As Zinn explained in the Spring 2010 *Aloha International Steel Guitar Club Quarterly*, “Although we were a western band ... [Rich] allowed me to record a Hawaiian song.”

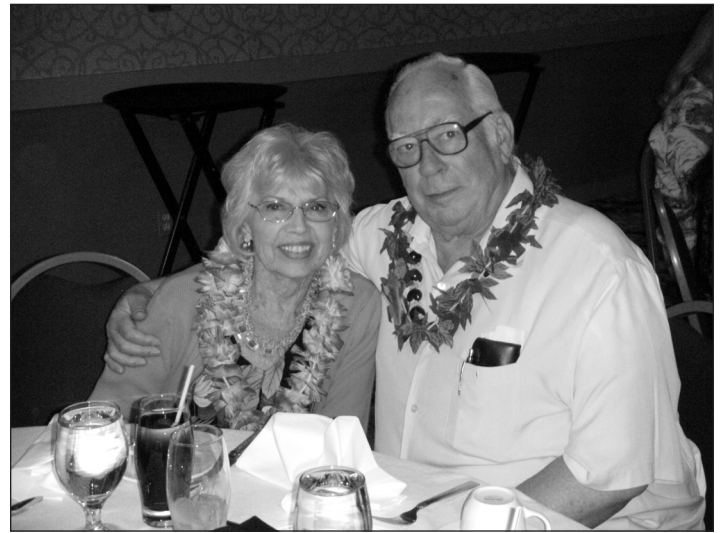
One other McIntire connection with country music in the early to mid-1940s can be gleaned from the April 1944 issue of *Dance* magazine, which devoted their “12 Midnight” column to a lengthy description of an evening of dining and dancing at the Hawaiian Room to the music of McIntire’s Aloha Islanders. According to the column, McIntire’s set list included, surprisingly, Al Dexter’s current hillbilly novelty song “Pistol Packin’ Mama.” Renditions of this tune by Dexter, Bing Crosby, and the Andrews Sisters had been the most-played jukebox hillbilly recordings several months before. The *Dance* magazine columnist—apparently not a hillbilly music fan—opined that the tune improved greatly under the Hawaiian influence!

[Discographical information was taken in part from Tony Russell’s *Country Music Records: A Discography, 1921-1942* and T. Malcolm Rockwell’s *Hawaiian & Hawaiian Guitar Records: 1891-1960*. The final installment of this article will appear in the Winter 2011 issue.] ■

### Changed Email?

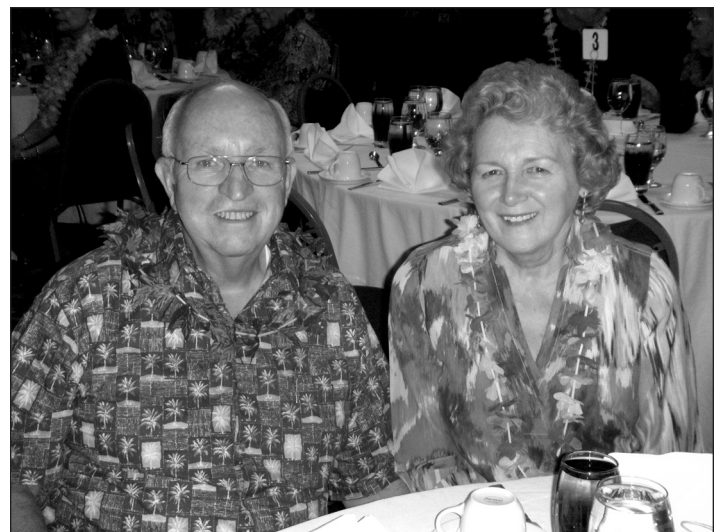
Please send email changes to both our office ([hsga@hsga.org](mailto:hsga@hsga.org)) AND to John Ely ([johnely@hawaiiansteel.com](mailto:johnely@hawaiiansteel.com)). Mahalo!





## Joliet 2010 Pix

*Yes, HSGA is about more than steel guitars! (Clockwise from upper left) Fabulous poses from Joliet regulars Don and Joan Woods; Peg and Wally Pfeifer; Duke Ching with the Barefoot Hawaiian dancers from Des Plaines, Illinois: (standing) Gwen Kennedy, (front row, l. to r.) Susan Juskey, Tina Reyes and Gabriela Mejia; Ivan Reddington and Dee Ryan—rumors about a wedding were swirling around HSGA at press time (stay tuned!); and from the Detroit area new HSGA members John and Annie Lang, friends and recruits of Gerald Ross.*



# Holland Update

From Walter Niesing

In Holland there are not many Hawaiian-style steel guitar players left. The popularity of Hawaiian music lasted about 20 years and then began to fade out around 1957. The remembrance of Hawaiian music, however, lingered and annual Hawaiian conventions were held until around the year 2005. In the '90s some conventions attracted up to 750 guests.

In the early '70s, the Kilima Hawaiians were featured on a weekly radio broadcast. Formed in 1935, they were Holland's oldest and most popular Hawaiian band.

Indonesian steel guitar players who immigrated to Holland, Rudi Wairata and George de Fretes in particular, had a great impact on Dutch steel guitar playing in the '50s. Wairata's hit song "Klapper melk met suiker" (coconut milk with sugar) was very popular with the local Indonesian population.

In the nineties the Wahelo Hawaiians performed regularly throughout the Netherlands including radio broadcasts and television appearances.

In The Hague today, monthly Hawaiian gatherings feature bands with steel guitar, including the Swinging Hawaiians, the Kameha Strings, Pacific Malihini, the Mauna Loas, the Honolulu Minstrels, Lei of Emerald, and Nani Mele. Most of the steel players are in their sixties and seventies, and these groups perform mostly Hawaiian music in the Indonesian style. Who knows how long this will last?

Hawaiian music is still heard at some of the annual Indonesian market festivals, called Pasar Malam (night market, literally). The Pasar Malam started out as a meeting place for Indonesian people living in Holland, the brainchild of Tjali Robinson (AKA Jan Boon-John) in 1959. They were held in a building where you could eat and watch performers playing Gamelan,



*Dutch performers Walter and Loes Niesing.*

Kroncong (an Indonesian 'ukulele-like instrument), Hawaiian music with hula, and Indonesian rock.

It was not long before the Pasar Malam became a mainstream festival around Holland. Today the events are held in big tents with big stages and a host of displays related to Indonesian culture. Hawaiian music with steel guitar can be heard at the popular Pasar Malam in The Hague and in some other Pasars around Holland. Bob Brozman, Keola Beamer and Basil Henriques have appeared at the event in The Hague. Dutch and Dutch-Indonesian Hawaiian bands perform every year.

Over the years the Hawaiian music performances at the Pasar Malams have dwindled to around six shows over a ten-day period. Hula dancing, however, is still popular. At the smaller Pasar Malams, you're not likely to hear Hawaiian music at all, although you can usually buy Hawaiian music recordings. The festivals have gradually become more commercial and culturally broad, including Antillean and Surinamese events and displays.

Sometimes Hawaiian music is played in beautiful parks around Holland. Usually you hear a combination of Indonesian (sort of Kroncong) and Hawaiian standards mostly in the Indonesian style.

## HSGA Donations

Thanks, HSGAers for your kind donations this past quarter in spite of continued hard times.

**Julie Haunani Waters** donated \$100 in memory of her husband Bob "Pulevai" Waters. We miss both of them at each and every HSGA convention. **Kris Oka** from San Francisco gave \$100 to our Scholarship Fund. Mahalo!

Big mahalos to everyone who contributed. The following members donated at least \$10:

Armand Bertacchi, Wheaton, IL  
Jerry Croom, Hemet, CA  
Dr. John J. Davis, Winona Lake, IN  
Frank Della-Penna and Stephanie Ortoleva, Washington, DC  
Virginia Grzadzinski, Macomb, MI  
Doug Hazelberg, Kenosha, WI  
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Ian K. Ufton, Brampton, ON Canada  
Gregory Wong, Milwaukee, WI

Although today there certainly are "closet" Hawaiian steel players in Holland—I know some personally and also know of a young boy here just beginning to play steel at age 17—this article is mostly about what *was* in Dutch Hawaiian steel guitar.

On other fronts, country style pedal steel guitar has enjoyed some success in Holland. There is a sort of revival of lap steel playing but mostly in the area of blues and heavy metal. ■



## CLOSING NOTES

### Bernice Honold

We are sad to report the passing of one of HSGA's longtime members, Bernice Honold, who led the Coral Islanders group, so popular at our Joliet conventions. Here are just a few tributes from our membership.

From Don Woods: "Bernice was a stalwart and pillar in our Hawaiian steel guitar clubs. She had a unique talent and an ability to play Hawaiian style that we will sadly miss. May she rest in peace. My thoughts and prayers go out to the family. *Aloha Ke Akua.*"

From Chris Kennison: "...Bernice was inspiring to me because of her talent, her love and passion for the music, and her open friendship. Seeing her play was always a joy. I'm so glad I got to see her in Winchester in July. I'll miss her."

From Jeff Strouse: "...I always looked forward to seeing Bernice perform. Her music had that old style beauty and charm. We were chatting at a convention one time, and she said that back when she learned, the teacher would slap your hand if you didn't keep a constant vibrato going! She was full of life and fun. My thoughts are with her family and loved ones during this difficult time."

From Isaac and Gloria Akuna: "Gloria and I are very saddened by this news. As much as anyone, Bernice reflected the spirit of Aloha that surrounds both HSGA and AISGC. She always had such enthusiasm for both clubs and the people who were drawn together by this common interest. I also think a little bit of the history of our instrument and its music goes with her. *A hui hou* Bernice until we meet."

Here is part of the obit: "Bernice Mathilda Honold of Clinton Twp. died Monday, September 6, 2010 at her home at the age of 84 years. Bernice was born October 11, 1925 in Detroit, a daughter of Gustave and Martha Koster. On April 15, 1944, Bernice married



Richard Leonard Honold at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in Detroit. Bernice and Richard were foster parents for Lutheran Child and Family Service for over 33 years fostering 79 children. She and her husband played Hawaiian music professionally and for enjoyment and were members of the Aloha International Steel Guitar Club, HSGA and the music group, Coral Islanders with the Maui Maidens. Bernice was predeceased by her husband, Richard on April 8, 2005."

### Bob Garth

We are sad to report that Bob Garth, an active member for most of the past 10 years, has passed away. Bob regularly amazed convention goers with his ability to play without the benefit of eyesight. This from Barbara Garth:

"Bob started singing with local bands while in high school. When he was 16 years old, he heard Jerry Byrd play in Newark, New Jersey. He had never heard anything so sweet and was determined to play. He bought his first steel guitar around that time, and being totally blind he taught himself to play entirely by ear. In his early years he wore glasses, but because of how completely unselfish he was, he did not want to hurt his mother's feelings by saying that the glasses did not help.

"He graduated from Keystone Junior College, William Paterson University, and the Chiropractic Institute of New York in New York City. He played and sang all through college and played and while at the Chiropractic Institute. While at Keystone College he wrestled with the Scranton, Pennsylvania WMCA and made it to the try-outs for the Olympics. He was defeated by a policeman from New York City, who went on to win the gold medal.

"We were married in 1963. In 1968 we moved to Sparta, New Jersey and Bob practiced there for 42 years, sending four kids through college and one through medical school.

"In the 1980s Bob started a band called 'The Band in the Corner' with three friends. They played all around Sussex County, mainly retirement and nursing homes. They played at the New Jersey State Fair and anywhere else they were asked.

"Bob also teamed up with a female vocalist and guitarist (Maryann) who performed together as Silk and Steel. Bob retired in 1999 and the band broke up about the same time. There were transportation problems as Maryann was also blind.

"Bob was a wonderful, sweet, talented man who never said I can't do that because I can't see. He's in Heaven now and he can see!" ■





## *E Komo Mai! Welcome, New Members*

Is your address correct? Please notify us!

### **UNITED STATES**

TONY FOURCROY, 3442 Greystone Ct, Fort Collins, CO 80525  
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JAY SEIBERT, PALOMA STONE SLIDES, 205 Nevala Road, Woodland, WA 98674  
JOE O. ELK, 632 W. 5th St., Marysville, OH 43040  
DELLA COPIN, 10494 Desert Sparrow Ave., Weeki Wachee, FL 34613-5377  
JOE AND JOANNE FOX, P.O. Box 294, Olney, IL 62450  
JOHN AND ANN LANG, 53616 Dryden, Shelby Twp., MI 48316  
DALE G. MILLER, 15130 Jackson Road, Mishawaka, IN 46544  
RAYMOND FRANSON, 606 NW Central St., Lee's Summit, MO 64063  
JACQUELYN LUONGO, 606 NW Central St., Lee's Summit, MO 64063  
JOEL KATZ, 1320 Hiahia Place, Wailuku, HI 96793

### **OVERSEAS**

GUY CUNDELL, 8 Short St., Wayville, SA 5034 Australia  
BIN TIAN, Cattle - 76 Sand Road, Rm. 201, Bldg. 6, Unit 5, Jinjiang District, Cheng Du, Sichuan 610066 China  
YI-WEN AND GT. CHAO ZHANG, 171 N. JinJi Road, 4th Center Garden, Bldg 16, Unit 1-1B, WuHou Dist., JiTou Town, Cheng Du, Sichuan 610045 China  
CHISE YAMAGISHI, 2203, 1-22-3, Nishiwaseda, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 169-0051 Japan

*LORENE Continued from Page 13*

faking it. You'd swear that kid was trying his hardest and playing his best, but actually he wasn't making a sound. I pretended I didn't notice. He "played" in the band right through to the end of grade seven and never played a wrong note! I was proud of that kid!

On one trip to Hawai'i in the 1970s, I asked a man at the Kamaka 'ukulele factory if he knew of someone who could give me steel guitar lessons. "Yeah," he said. There was a Jerry Byrd in town who could teach. Jerry Byrd?? Hey, that couldn't be *the* Jerry Byrd, because he's in Nashville and he plays country music.

The Kamaka man got on the phone and spoke to this Jerry Byrd and arranged for him to come to our hotel room and bring his steel guitar along because I didn't have mine. I still didn't believe it. *The* Jerry Byrd would certainly not be coming to our hotel room! We sat side by side while he demonstrated (with no amp) on his

steel guitar and then I showed him what I could do. Yeah. I played E13th in the Club Aces band and that's all I knew. Jerry's guitar was tuned to C6+A7. But still, I guess he could see that I did have pretty good skills because he arranged to give me lessons by correspondence. I found out later that Jerry did not teach female students because they are not as dedicated as he'd like, not as free to give long hours to the guitar. Owana Salazar is an exception, too. Jerry mailed me one lesson a month, complete with a tape recording of his backup strumming. And he charged me no more than the going rate of the day.

In 1981 my husband died and I took a leave of absence from teaching. In past years I had heard about a steel guitar club that held annual meetings in Winchester, Indiana. I had joined and read their newsletters, but I had not played in public since I left the dance band. Still, I had bought a double-8 Sho-Bud steel guitar from Shot Jackson under Jerry's direction. I flew to

Indianapolis, sat at the airport for many hours before taking a small plane to Muncie, then a bus to Winchester. All I could carry was my 'ukulele and the Sho-Bud. I did play both instruments on stage in Winchester and felt so happy to have met those fine people. Later, Charlie Moore appointed me to serve on his advisory board.

Through that club, I met this fine fellow named Art Ruymar who also played the steel guitar, was also a Canadian (from Winnipeg) and whose spouse had died. But we lived a thousand or more miles apart. Eventually he had to take early retirement so we could get to know each other. Got married in 1987.

In 1986 Jerry and Kaleo Byrd came to see Expo '86 in Vancouver, and were guests in our home for over a week. Jerry asked us not to tell anyone so he could truly relax and for a short time not be *the* Jerry Byrd. We got to be close friends that way. And we found out he loved to cook and always took his cookbook with him. We had great fun together. This leads to the "History of HSGA" story printed in the Spring 2005 newsletter.

After seven years of research, I wrote my book *The Hawaiian Steel Guitar And Its Great Hawaiian Musicians* and it was published by Centerstream Publications in 1996. In the year 2000, I designed an instruction course aimed at use in the Hawai'i schools. I'm still working at bringing steel guitar into the music curriculum of the Hawai'i high schools. It's never been done before.

Art and I have been a musical duo much in demand in seniors care homes of Vancouver where Hawaiian music is loved. He plays steel and I play backup, then we switch and I play steel while Art plays backup. We are known as "The Couple That Would Rather Switch Than Fight."

Thanks for listening, folks. They say that playing a musical instrument keeps Alzheimer's away. ■