

HSGA QUARTERLY

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Honolulu Convention attendees posing in style with Diamond Head in the background on the terrace adjacent to our convention room at the newly renovated Queen Kapi'olani.

Honolulu 2011 Features Hotel Upgrade

By Lorene Ruymar

My first impression when Art and I first walked into our favorite meeting place, the Queen Kapi'olani Hotel, was... Wow!! HSGA had been holding its conventions there since 1989 and it was an old hotel to start with. Under new ownership, the old Queen has come alive! Much expensive renovation has been done. The floor when you enter is gloriously shiny, looks more like a pearl might look if it was ironed out flat. And the major meeting rooms—do you remember? In the past we did our three days in the huge Ākala Ballroom, and we went to the restaurant for breakfast. Between those two rooms, there was a larger restau-

rant for dinner parties, the Peacock Room, where some good entertainment happened many years ago. In the past, all those rooms were walled in, especially the restaurant where they tried hard to keep the birds out. Just outside the wall was the swimming pool and sun deck.

I'm happy to say the new owners saw something nobody else had seen. They simply tore out all those walls and opened the view to... Diamond Head! Hey, that hotel now has the best view of any hotel in the Islands!! It was there all along hidden! So HSGA got smart too, and this time we held our three-day meet in the Peacock Room where the mountain view wall is

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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 e-mail address is hsga@hsga.org. Articles and photos should also be e-mailed directly to the newsletter editor at johnely@hawaiiansteel.com.

HONOLULU 2011 *Cont. from Page 1*

total glass. The stage is along a side wall. The buffet lunch is served there, too, and here's another difference. We used to sit in straight rows to watch our daily show of talent. Now, in the Peacock Room we choose our table of eight, and it's ours for the day. So much more pleasant to watch the show that way and still be with our buddies.

As usual, we enjoyed the great talent of our Japanese members and much of that is due to "Lion" Kobayashi's teaching and encouragement. Others from faraway lands: Ron and Joan Carter, Jim Hassall from New Zealand, Rolf Hansen from Denmark and Rudolf Barten from Germany. Were there others?? A number of our old timers didn't drag along their steel guitars, and it was a strange feeling for Art and me to just sit and enjoy, not to worry about when's it time to play.

Performers on Wednesday included steel guitar students of Alan Akaka, Jack Aldrich, Kiyoshi "Lion" Kobayashi, Hideki Ida and Friends, Yoshinori Nihachi, and Chise Yamagishi.

On Thursday we heard Motoyuki Suzuki, Jim Hassall, Margie Mays, Don and Susan Kellett, Don "Kona" Woods, Duke Ching, Hideko Kobayashi, and Kashio Hashizume.

Finally on Friday we had performances from Ivan Reddington, Doug Smith, Ron Carter, Kunihiko Anzawa, Katsutoshi Ogata, Roberto Alaniz, Rolf Hansen, and Akira "Terry" Saito. Doug Smith was up to his usual tricks—rope tricks, that is!

In case you haven't guessed it by now, attendance by our Japan membership was superb. We got a nice note from "Tom" Tohma, our Japan Coordinator, on behalf of all the Japan members who attended: "All our Japan members enjoyed this year's Hawai'i Convention. It was an especially unforgettable experience for our new Japan members, including Kashio Hashizume, a good steel guitar player, and two lady steel players, Reiko Watanabe and Chise Yamagishi. Terry Saito and others attending called me and said the convention was a great success!"

As many of you know Tom is going through an arduous recovery period

At the HSGA Lei Day performance tent in Kapi'olani Park, Hawai'i's Bobby Ingano (left) and member Motoyuki Suzuki from the Tokyo area playing steel guitar together.





One of our newest members from Japan, Chise Yamagishi performing at the Queen Kapi'olani member playing sessions.



New Japan members Kashio Hashizume (left) and Reiko Watanabe (right) sharing the stage with Kiyoshi "Lion" Kobayashi.

from a stroke he suffered a while back. Our thoughts are with him. He is already back doing our newsletter translations for the Japan membership! Mahalos, Tom!

We did our usual show at the Waikiki-Kapahulu Library, much appreciated as usual. Playing steel were Motoyuki Suzuki, Jim Hassall, Don Kellett, Don "Kona" Woods, Ron Carter, and Roberto Alaniz, who played a "synth" steel! Kudos to the boys on backup: Wayne Shishido, Don Kellett, Isaac Akuna, and Kamaka Tom.

On May Day (Lei Day) the Parks and Recreation Board people had set up the usual stage for our steel guitarists in Kapi'olani Park with chairs for the audience. It always draws a crowd of non-HSGAers who show their enjoyment and amazement at hearing us playing "that instrument." In the later part of the show, the urge to make fun took over. As different steel guitar players took turns, Bobby Ingano stayed on stage and did his special kind of backup playing. Like sound effects. I have never heard anyone imitate birds singing as well as he did it. All the while grinning from ear to ear. Soon the same sounds were coming from up above in the trees. Yes, the birds were joining in! Oh, how I wished I had my camcorder in hand to catch that heavenly chorus!

In the evenings we set out to hear the steel guitar performances of all the local players we could locate. What a disappointment that was! We found very few. Worst of all was the House Without a Key seaside patio at the Halekulani Hotel. They have given their music affairs to an agent who seems to have no sense at all of preserving the Hawaiian music culture. Our favorite steel players are still on staff, standing with the band and playing a Spanish guitar or a slack key guitar, their steel guitars sadly abandoned at home. How can that be? We have always rated the House Without a Key as the best of all places to hear a steel guitar perfor-

mance. And now the band is told to play "contemporary" music. But a hula dancer still performs now and then.

I believe we HSGA people have got to stand up and shout. Please compose a strong letter and then send it to as many of the hotels in the Hawaiian Islands as you are familiar with. Not just on O'ahu. Google can give you the e-mail address or better yet the snail mail address. Send it to the General Manager!! Tell them the only reason you pay the big bucks to come to Hawai'i is to enjoy their musical culture. Heck! The ocean and palm trees can be enjoyed much closer to home. To fly to Hawai'i just to find contemporary music there is a waste of money. Steel guitar is the signature sound of Hawai'i. Don't use my words or they'll catch on! The address of the Halekulani Hotel is: 2199 Kalia Road Honolulu, HI 96815-1936; Tel: 808-923-2311. ■

Derrick Mau steelin' at the Kapi'olani Park Lei Day show.



Joliet 2011 Convention Preview

From Joliet Chairman Don Weber

This has been a year of big weather events. Depending on where they live, everyone has a different story. Abnormal drought, torrential rain, devastating tornadoes, record snow-falls, plunging temperatures, extreme heat, wildfires, and rare dust storms. I'm sure we will hear stories from all over the country when another type of event takes place this October in Joliet. It's the Twenty-Fifth Annual HSGA Joliet Convention, and it's a great fun-filled time for all those who attend. Every year we update the convention information for the newsletter and give you all the details to help you have a great experience. Please read them carefully. Let me tell you what you can expect.

Honored Guest

This year our Honored Guest is Greg Sardinha from Kailua on the island of O'ahu. Greg last appeared as our guest in 1998. Today he's one of the most talented and recognized entertainers and producers in Honolulu. Greg records many artists under his Ke'ala Records label, and operates Sma' Kine studio, one of the busiest studios on O'ahu. Greg will be playing a set each day and will be featured at the Saturday Night Lū'au show.

Convention Registration

The convention is being held at the Joliet Holiday Inn Hotel and Conference Center located at 411 S. Larkin Avenue in Joliet, Illinois. Most folks will be arriving on Wednesday, October 5, the day before the official start of the convention. The Joliet committee needs your help in planning the convention. In order to set up playing schedules, we need to know if and when you are coming. *Do not wait!* Right now while it's on your mind, fill out and send in the registration form included in the newsletter. You can also download it from the website at www.hsga.org. The convention fee is now \$45 per person. Please send it by September 1 along with the registration form to: Wally Pfeifer, 115 N. Clinton St., Dwight, IL 60420. Remember, you can also pay the convention fee upon arrival, but we need to have your registration form in advance.

Hotel Reservations

Make your hotel reservations directly with the hotel. We have found that this greatly reduces any chance of errors. Your reservation must be received by the Holiday Inn and Conference Center before October 1. After that date the rooms being held for HSGA will be released to the general public and are not guaranteed to be available. The hotel reservation form is included in this newsletter. However, we



Playing steel at the Second Annual Beach Walk Ho'olaule'a, Greg Sardinha, our Guest Artist at the upcoming Joliet Convention.

recommend you call the hotel directly at 815-729-2000. Be sure to tell them you are with the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association to get the special discounted room rate, which is good from October 4 through October 10.

Room Rates

The room rate for this year is \$68 plus 13 percent tax.

Breakfast

The Aloha spirit is alive and well at the hotel. Hotel General Manager, Althea Walker, announced that members will get a voucher for a free breakfast in the hotel dining room for each day they are registered. This marks the third year she has made this available to us. Mahalo, Althea.

Lunch and Dinner

All lunches and dinners are on your own. They are *not* included in your registration fee. No group dinners are planned except for the Saturday Night Lū'au. The hotel will provide pre-ordered lunches only. You must pre-order from their menu of available items by 10 AM for noontime serving. Pre-ordering is done during the morning music sessions in the convention room. Menus are available at the podium. This has been a popular feature.

Member Playing Slots

Playing time is again 25 minutes *including setup time* and will be strictly enforced. Failure to comply will result in lost time for other players. Playing times will be assigned by the Joliet Committee. No matter if you are a first time or a long time attendee, *we need your registration form*. We can't make up a program if we don't now who's going or who

wants to perform. If Wally doesn't get your registration, you *will not* have a playing slot. We cannot guarantee which day or time you will appear on stage, but we will honor preferences when possible. When all playing slots are filled, you will go on a standby list. *Don't wait. Register now.*

Limousine Services

Reserve your limo from the airport in advance. You can schedule your return trip to the airport at the same time, OR get a group together during the convention and share the ride back to the airport to save money. Cox Livery Service (815-741-0583) provides good service, and they are looking forward to working with you. Cash, check or credit cards are accepted. For credit cards, add 5 percent. Cox charges a base fare for the first person, and each additional person rides for \$5. So you see, sharing the ride and the cost saves money for everyone. For service after 10 PM and before 5 AM there is an additional charge of \$10.

When reserving, give the limo service your airline, flight number, arrival time, arrival airport (O'Hare or Midway), and the number of people. When you arrive at the airport, *get your luggage first*. Then call Cox at 815-741-0583 for further instructions.

We recommend that you verify your limo rate when reserving—fuel surcharges or rate increases are possible.

Vendors and Evening Seminars

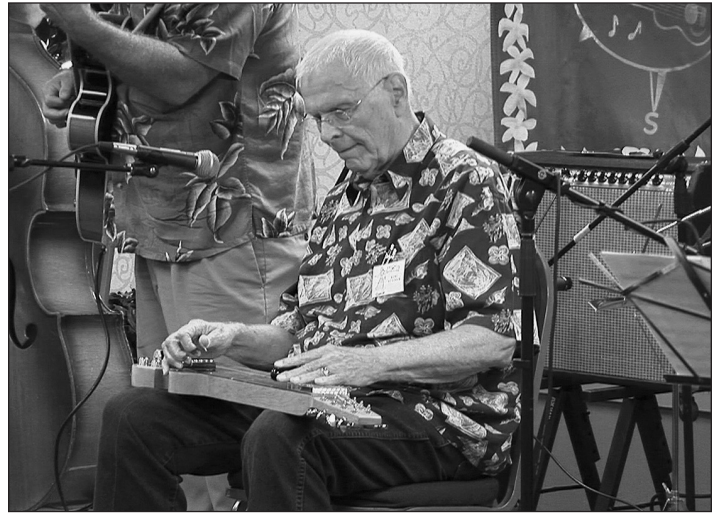
Vendor information is not available at this time. Nothing is scheduled for Wednesday evening—just eat, talk story, relax, jam, or sleep. Thursday evening will be “Talk Story” with Greg Sardinha. Our Honored Guest will answer questions and talk about his background, steel guitar, and music in general. On Friday evening we will have a repeat of the “Steel Guitar Revue” that everyone enjoyed last year. We will advertise this to the general public as a free feature of the convention.

Convention Sound

Our new soundman this year is Dave Chapman. Dave has been working as a sound engineer for over 20 years. He is well known at festivals, coffeehouses, dance halls, and concert venues around Michigan. Currently he is sound director for the Ten-Pound Fiddle Coffee House. A tip of the hat once again to Fred Campeau and Paul Watkins who provided our sound for the past three years. They will always be welcome at Joliet.

Lū'au and Show

Tickets for the Saturday Night Lū'au and show will be sold during the convention. The cost remains unchanged at \$25 per person. The highlight of the evening will be our Honored Guest Greg Sardinha and the show band.



Oregon member Gene McGowan performing at Joliet 2010.

“No Sleep” Jam Sessions

More of the same. ■

Joliet Schedule

Wednesday, October 5

Check in to the hotel, set up, talk story, have dinner, sleep or get a jam session going.

Thursday, October 6

9:00-9:30 Opening ceremonies

9:30-12:00 Music sessions

12:00-1:30 Lunch (on your own)

1:30-6:05 Music sessions

6:05-8:30 Dinner (on your own)

8:30-???? Talk Story with Greg Sardinha. “No sleep” jam follows.

Friday, October 7

9:00-10:00 Annual membership meeting

10:00-12:05 Music sessions

12:05-1:30 Lunch (on your own)

1:30-6:05 Music sessions

6:05-8:30 Dinner (on your own)

8:30-???? Steel Guitar Revue. “No sleep” jam follows.

Saturday, October 8

9:00-11:55 Music sessions

11:55-1:30 Lunch (on your own)

1:30-2:45 Music sessions

2:45-???? Lū'au show rehearsal

5:30-7:00 Cash bar and social time

7:00-8:00 Lū'au dinner

8:00-???? Lū'au show and time for Aloha

Joliet, My Annual Getaway

By Rick Aiello

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 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 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!! ■

A rare close-up of the great Dick McIntire playing steel guitar.



A fascinating vintage photo of Dick McIntire (left), Sam Koki, and Sol Ho’opi’i (center) with other performers from an old photo album of Dick McIntire’s niece, Lani Ellen McIntire.

Vintage Photos Unearthed

From Anthony Lis

I recently received an interesting set of photos containing Hawaiian musicians from the 1920s through the 1940s from Johnny Smith of Bristol in the U.K. Johnny obtained the photos from Derrick Mau and Hal Smith, who—while attending a steel guitar get-together in Honolulu recently—met with Lani Ellen McIntire, daughter of bassist Alfred McIntire (1905-1960). Alfred was the brother of steel guitarist Dick McIntire (1902-1951).

Lani Ellen invited Derrick and Hal to lunch at her home in Waimanalo northeast of Honolulu where they spent the afternoon looking through Lani Ellen’s many photo albums. Among the photos were the two shown on this page—a group photo with Dick McIntire, Sam Koki, and Sol Ho’opi’i, and another showing Dick close up. Lani Ellen apparently wrote the names on the group photo. Does anyone happen to know the personnel accompanying Dick? Any comments from *Quarterly* readers would be most welcome!

Special thanks to HSGA member John Marsden of Sheffield, England for helping me get a hold of Hal Smith and Derrick Mau’s photos. ■

Did You Pay Your 2011-2012 Dues?

This is your FINAL issue if your mailing label still shows “X 6/11” next to your address. Dues are \$30, which includes First Class delivery (Air Mail overseas). Renew today! Don’t miss out on the latest info on Hawaiian steel guitar, including news, instruction, and lots of photos.

COCO WIRE

Kay Das was featured on steel in a concert at Hulaville in San Clemente, California this past May. Kay played steel guitar in a number of different settings with tunes like “Stardust,” “Waikiki,” “Kalama‘ula,” and “Sleepwalk.” The concert was followed by a series of workshops later in the month, focusing on the C6/A6 tuning, 6- or 8-string. Kay was accompanied by the Orange County Project and other talent at Hulaville, which has a regular jam session on Sunday evenings from 5 to 8 PM. Check it out, folks!

Our Japan Coordinator “**Tom**” **Tohma** informs us that the post-tsunami recovery efforts have been impressive. Check out the before and after photos on the Daily Mail website taken by one of Tom’s former co-workers at Kodak—just Google ‘daily mail japan tsunami recovery’.

We got some distressing news from **Carol Slavin** that hubby **Warren Slavin** was hospitalized with serious internal bleeding shortly after their return from the Winchester Convention this past July. At last report he was still in serious condition in intensive care. This from **Kamaka Tom**: “Warren and Carol Slavin are longtime HSGA members. I first met Warren in the early 1980s in Waikīkī during one of his annual visits for HSGA. He is always willing to share his extensive knowledge of Hawaiian steel recordings from his personal collection with me. Thanks to him, I received dubbings of music from 78 rpm and 33 rpm discs of Alvin Kaleolani Isaacs, Barney Isaacs, and cassette recordings of David Keli‘i on the “Hawaii Calls” radio show. My first time as Guest Performer in Winchester AISGC was most



A nice shot of New Zealand member Jim Hassall playing his Rickenbacker Bakelite at the 2011 Honolulu Convention.

enjoyable, and I was also able to see Warren and Carol again for first time in almost ten years. Let us all pray for Warren a speedy recovery.” Members, you could probably get word to Warren via his e-mail, warcar@comcast.net.

Jan Tavares apparently has unearthed some interesting video and audio of his dad, **Ernest Tavares**, playing some amazing Hawaiian pedal steel guitar. Recall the article we did a few years back on Ernie’s pedal steel design. More on this is the next issue hopefully. I heard one of the resurrected audio tracks and it was astonishing. Stay tuned! ■

Akira “Terry” Saito of Yokohama playing some nice Hawaiian steel guitar at the Honolulu 2011 member playing sessions.



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VINTAGE AXES

By Paul Warnik

Hello again. In this issue I will be covering one of the most popular models of Hawaiian steel guitar—the Fender Stringmaster. The history of Leo Fender’s company has been well documented and while most players think of the famous guitars they made like Stratocasters, Telecasters, and electric basses like the Precision, it should be recognized that the roots of Fender go back to 1946 with the introduction of their first lap steel models.

While 1946 may seem like long ago, Fender was a newcomer in the field of guitar manufacturing when compared to others like Gibson, Rickenbacker, and National-Dobro, which had been established well before World War II. Some of Fender’s early lap steel models like the Deluxe and the Champion and the early console models like the Dual Six, Dual Eight, and Custom Triple Neck would evolve into the Stringmaster. Fender produced an extensive array of steel guitars from early 1947 through September 1980 when all steel guitar production was discontinued.

Fender also had some success with their early cable-operated pedal steel guitars, which were introduced in 1957. Cable undercarriage operation would soon become obsolete as other pedal steel makers developed mechanisms using more durable metal rods by the early 1960s. Still, Fender continued making their cable-operated pedal steels until 1976 when new models were introduced that were made by Sho-Bud in Nashville. The exception to this was the extremely rare Fender PS-210, designed by Gene Fields, which never really got into production with only somewhere between 6 and 15 prototypes produced.

Early Fender steels like the Dual Professional and the Custom all had a 22½-inch scale length. The pickups and

Gert Dilley’s 1954 Stringmaster with slide switches, lollipop tuners, chrome pickup covers, and hard mounted bridge covers.



A photo of a 1959 short scale Stringmaster, courtesy of Jerry Gleason. This is the later design with black plastic pickup covers, Kluson tuners, 3-position neck switch and removable bridge covers.

tuning machines on these early models had design flaws that were eventually corrected with the introduction of the second Stringmaster model in 1955. The early pickups were of a “strings through” design in which the strings are actually threaded through the pickup coil bobbin. On some of these, after time, the top of the bobbin would collapse downward into the strings causing failure. Quick fix attempts, such as inserting pieces of wood dowel to spread the coil back open, were usually short lived and resulted in the need for a complete pickup repair and rewind.

An even more frequently encountered problem was with the early “lollipop” tuning machines. These tuners were apparently made by Fender and were only found on the early models. They are of a low gear ratio and appear to be made of copper or a copper colored metal—the soft metal and low gear ratio make the tuners prone to slippage and stripping of the worm gear. Repair is difficult because the tuners are soldered to the sides of the tuner pan assembly. Furthermore, the posts of the tuners go through holes in the pan and then the lollipop heads are soldered onto them, making removal even more difficult. And the heads are sweat soldered to the posts, in itself a questionable design. If I’m interested in a Fender with these tuners, I make sure to inspect each tuner to ensure that it is not stripped out. If the owner permits it, I’ll slacken the strings and remove the entire tuning machine pan assembly to make complete inspection of all the tuners easier.

The first Stringmaster model was introduced in 1953 and featured a 26-inch scale length, much longer than the early 22½-inch models. They could be had in two, three, or four-neck versions and came in only two colors—blond or dark walnut finish. The lollipop tuners were still there but improvements were made to the pickups. Instead of the “strings through” coil design, the Stringmaster now featured two indi-

vidually mounted chrome-covered pickups mounted under the strings. Each neck had an on-off slide switch and, of course, the master tone and volume controls were retained.

The second and final Stringmaster design was introduced in 1955, and these guitars were offered in the original 22½-inch or a longer 24½-inch scale length. Kluson tuning keys were used, a great improvement. The two pickups were now covered in black plastic and mounted on a single control plate containing the bridge and tone controls. Instead of the on-off slide switches the three- and four-neck guitars had spring loaded “plunger” switches, which allowed any combination of necks to be selected.

Another feature added to the later Stringmaster model is the pickup blend control. The usefulness of this control is somewhat debatable. It is basically a potentiometer mounted on the control plate just to the right of the bridge’s center point. It is concealed under the bridge cover when one is in place (see the photo showing a flipped up cover). It does not have a typical Fender control knob but rather a sharply knurled flange-like piece that allows it to fit comfortably under the cover. In it’s full-on, clockwise position both of the pickups work at full volume. As the control is turned counter-clockwise, it gradually “blends” or reduces the signal output of the pickup furthest from the bridge. In my opinion, using this control to blend the far pickup only serves to decrease volume and fullness of tone. Given the inherent bright sound of Fender steels, I think it would have been a better idea to blend the pickup closer to the bridge, which is the brighter sounding position, instead of the far pickup, which is the warmer sounding position.

The four-neck model was discontinued in 1969. Usually the fourth or outside neck was tuned to a bass tuning. The 22½-inch scale length was discontinued in 1976, and the same year the blond and dark walnut finishes were replaced by white and black.

Fender guitars have often been refinished by their owners, and the Stringmasters and other Fender steels are no exception. Of course, vintage guitars such as these lose considerable value to collectors when they are refinished. Some claim that their Stringmaster is in an original custom color. It is my belief that no Fender non-pedal model has ever been offered in custom colors. Every one I’ve encountered in other than the four stock colors mentioned above (blond, walnut, white, and black) has obviously been refinished. One telltale sign of refinishing is failure to remove all sanding dust from crevices and angles in the wood, which leaves a gritty appearance to the finish after repainting. Another is the obvious remounting of the fretboards. Mounting holes in the the fretboards often become dented and misshapen when the round head drive screws are pounded back in with a hammer.

It has been said that variety is the spice of life, and when it comes to steel guitars, I believe in that variety. I enjoy



Another beautiful shot of Jerry Gleason’s 1959 Stringmaster showing the integrated control plate and pickup blending pot.

owning and playing Nationals, Rickenbackers, Gibsons, Epiphones and Fenders. They all have their own individual merits and good features. While I personally wouldn’t want to be limited to owning just Fenders, I have a genuine appreciation for them, especially after listening to the great sounds versatile players in our club consistently get from their Fenders. I have watched and listened to our own Duke Ching “neck jumping” during performances at the convention. It made me realize the versatility of combining multiple tunings played in a single piece of music to attain fuller chord-melody style. The close spacing of the Stringmaster necks definitely makes neck jumping faster and easier than with other steel brands.

While I am on the subject of variety, a final word regarding Fender scale lengths. Many Fender players favor the original 22½-inch scale. Ease of bar slants, less bar movement between frets, and less bar movement for vibrato are some of the reasons cited by short scale lovers. Well, I am *not* one of them. I really dig the extra long 26-inch scale. I believe it is best for the aforementioned neck jumping. I have large hands and find the short scale harder for accurate bar slants especially in the upper register of the fretboard. I also think the longer scale sounds better. Shorter scale usually requires heavier gauged strings, while longer scale needs lighter gauges. The lighter gauges tend to sustain more than the heavier gauges, which have more “pop.” Our editor John Ely has an issue with long scale Fenders because the wider vibrato motion gave him a chronic sore shoulder. Fortunately, I only get shoulder pain from sleeping on my side! I’ll take that 24-inch scale when I don’t have my old blond triple neck 26-incher!

Until next time, best wishes and I hope to see you all at Joliet in October! ■

Theme from Adventures in Paradise

(Lionel Newman)

Arrangement by John Ely

Tropical Beat

Vs

Chords: G, A \flat /G, G

Steel Gtr. (C6th)

Measures 5-8. Chords: E \flat 7, D13, G

Measures 9-12. Chords: G, A \flat /G, G

slide

Measures 13-16. Chords: E \flat 7, D13, G

Br C D7 G° G

T	12	12-11-12-14-12	12	6
A	12	12-11-12-14-12	13-14	7
B			13-14	6-7

hula pick

21 Cm7 F7 B° D7

T	15	15-14-15-17-15	10-11-10	14
A	15	15-14-15	10-11-10	5
B	15	17-15	10-11-10	14-6-5

strum and slide

25 G A^b/G G

T	14	14-13-14	15-14	15	14-15-14	7-6-7
A	14	14-13-14	14-15-14	15	14-15-14	7-6-7
B			14-15	15	14-15-14	7-7-6-7

slide

29 E^b7 D13 G A^b G B^b A A^b G^{maj}7

T	10	10-9-10	8	7		2
A	10	10-9-10	10-14-13-12	7	7-8-7-10-9	2
B			14-13-12-8	7	7-8-7-10-9	2

slide rit. strum

Lorene Honored at the Hōkūs

From Isaac "Doc" Akuna

The biggest night of the year in the Hawaiian music industry occurs at the annual Hawai'i Academy of Recording Arts (HARA) sponsored Nā Hōkū Hanohano music awards. This year the HARA awards were presented on Sunday, May 29 at the Hawai'i Convention Center. It was a particularly significant night for steel guitar fans because for the first time the Academy and the Maiki Aiu Foundation teamed up to present a very special community service award. Maiki Aiu (1925-1984) was one of Hawai'i's most beloved and respected *kumu hula* (Hawaiian culture dance teacher). In addition, she is also remembered for strongly encouraging all of her students to share their knowledge of Hawaiian culture with the world. The community service award's stated purpose is to recognize the contributions of individuals who have dedicated themselves to the preservation of the art of the Hawaiian steel guitar.

I was very honored to have been asked by the Academy to bestow the inaugural presentation of this award to Lorene Ruymar. Well known among HSGA's membership, it was a privilege to introduce her to the Academy's 1,100 members in attendance. She and her husband Art were kind enough to travel to Hawai'i to receive the award.

Many thanks go out to Kevin Gill and his team for creating a very special award and to the President of HARA, Miss Kuuipo Kumukahi, for including this award in the program. I'm including here the text of my award presentation:

"Aloha Mai. In 1885 a young Hawaiian from La'ie, Joseph Kekuku, began to carve out melodies by placing a metal object up against his guitar strings, a humble begin-

HARA President Ipo Kumukahi (left) performing with Casey Olsen on steel at the Legends of Steel Guitar Concert this past May.



Isaac Akuna (left) with Art and Lorene Ruymar. Lorene is holding her new koa steel guitar, part of her special award at the Hōkūs.

ning to what would become a musical phenomenon around the world.

"In 1984, Lorene Ruymar, a music educator from Vancouver, saw the need and co-founded the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association, which serves to unite players and enthusiasts across the globe. She served on its board of directors and as editor and distributor of its newsletter. She has also spearheaded efforts to teach steel guitar in Hawai'i grade schools and was instrumental in having "Steel Guitar Month" declared by the Lieutenant Governor's office. She is now gathering support to erect a statue of Joseph Kekuku in La'ie. Lorene is the author of 'The Hawaiian Steel Guitar and Its Great Hawaiian Musicians', the go-to resource for the Hawaiian steel guitar representing seven years of research. Lorene and husband Art have funded these projects themselves.

"For her fierce loyalty and devotion to the dissemination and perpetuation of the Hawaiian steel guitar, the Maiki Aiu Foundation presents its inaugural Steel Guitar Community Service Award to Lorene Ruymar."

Your editor here. I'm sure I speak for all members in congratulating Lorene for this industry acknowledgement of her tireless efforts on behalf of our beloved instrument. Here's Lorene to share some details of this very special moment:

Yes, I must admit I had to check with the Hawaiian dictionary to get the full meaning of Hōkū Hanohano. 'Hōkū' means star and 'Hanohano', honored or dignified.

Art and I had booked our flight to HSGA's Honolulu Convention more than a month before we got the exciting phone call from Isaac advising me that I was to receive an

Continued on Page 20

BOOK REVIEW

“Sacred Steel, Inside an African-American Steel Guitar Tradition” by Robert L. Stone

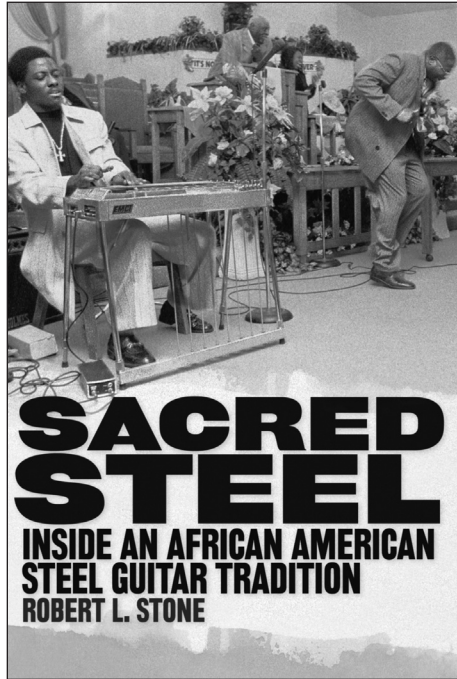
Review by John Marsden

Bob Stone, a folklorist, musician and producer living in Florida, has authored a wonderful account of the use of steel guitar in the Jewell and Keith Dominion Pentecostal churches, where it has been an integral element of services since the 1930s. Utterly different from the religious music sometimes recorded by Hawaiian or country steel players, this extraordinary and volcanic music was unknown outside the churches concerned.

Bob became aware of it in 1992. He met and interviewed some of the performers and went on to produce a series of CDs for Arhoolie, a video, and now this book, which documents the history of the churches and their distinctive use of steel guitar.

There is a good chapter on the instrument itself, while others examine some of the main players, including Troman and Willie Eason, Henry Nelson, Calvin Cooke, and modern players such as Chuck Campbell and Robert Randolph.

While a thorough, well-illustrated and scholarly book, there are plenty of fascinating anecdotes about these larger-than-life individuals. I was considerably amused by a much-publicized cruise organized by Willie Eason, an inventive entrepreneur as well as musician. It would feature the ‘Biggest Battle Of Songs And Guitars Ever To Be Held’, with a \$500 prize supposedly for the best guitarist. The propeller drive transmission refused to engage and the boat was stuck at the dock. The owner went below deck with some friends and was able to rock the boat to give the impression of motion. Incredibly, the audience was so wrapped up in the music that no one noticed they hadn’t left dock!!



Afterwards, Willie was chased by the seven Holy Wonders, his opening act, for nonpayment of their fee!

Sacred Steel is published by the University of Illinois Press. The ISBN number is: 978-0-252-07743-2. In case of any difficulty, I’m sure you could obtain it from Bob himself, and no doubt he would sign it for you: 8123 SW 47th Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; E-mail: mangoton@bellsouth.net. ■

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This is your FINAL issue if your mailing label still shows “X 6/11” next to your address. Dues are \$30, which includes First Class delivery (Air Mail overseas). Renew ASAP using the renewal forms included with this issue.

HSGA Donations

HSGA members came through with some very generous contributions this past quarter. *Mahalo nui loa!*

Bill Rhyme of Sebastopol, California donated \$100 to our Scholarship Fund and \$70 to our General Fund! Hawai’i member **A. Hinano Kaumeheiwā** gave \$120 including \$100 to our Scholarship Fund. **Julie Haunani Waters** once again donated \$100 to the Scholarship Fund in memory of her husband **Bob “Pulevai” Waters**. **Bill Thomson** from Ocean City, Maryland also gave \$100 to the Scholarship Fund. And **Margo Klundt** of Sherrard, Illinois gave \$50 to both our General and Scholarship Funds. Big mahalos for these generous donations. The following HSGA members donated at least \$10:

Clifford & Barbara Adams, Huntington Station, NY
Betty Foster Bahret, Poughkeepsie, NY
Bo Bahret, Poughkeepsie, NY
Ed & Bonita Bettinger, Buckeye, AZ
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Gloria V. Umbarger & Joyce Stuart, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA
Jack Walsh, Des Plaines, IL
Donald & Donna Weber, New Lenox, IL

David Samuel Kanui – Part II

By Anthony Lis

In this two-part series, we are detailing the life and career of Hawaiian-born steel guitarist and vocalist David Samuel Kanui (1892-1965). In part one, which appeared in the last issue, we covered the first four decades of David Kanui's life, including his Honolulu childhood. Around age seventeen, David came to Utah to work for egg magnate Soren Hanson. By the mid-1910s, David had married hula dancer Siottha Jane Fuller and was living with her in Denver, teaching steel guitar. From around 1917 through the 1920s, David and Jane were active on the vaudeville circuit, first in the Midwest, then on the East Coast. By 1930, David and Jane had settled in New York City, where David worked as a theater musician.

In August 1932, Kanui backed country music pioneer Jimmie Rodgers on steel guitar on five unreleased takes of "In the Hills of Tennessee." Hawaiian music scholar and record producer Les

Henrietta Evalyn Brunemer, AKA Ewalani Kanui, after her marriage to David Kanui.



Nice vintage photos of David Kanui and his wife Ewalani in a backstage/performance setting. Although David played, Ewalani was the featured steel guitarist.

Cook, in a 2008 article in the British Hawaiian music magazine *Aloha Dream*, has noted the irony that the destroyed takes were the only recordings on which Kanui played steel guitar. Cook notes that although Kanui would make four recordings for the Continental label fourteen years later, he apparently only sang on those sides.

In the early to mid-1930s, Kanui worked in several bands that toured the East Coast. He also may have performed at Atlantic City's Steel Pier.

Sometime around 1933, Kanui met Henrietta Evalyn Brunemer (1909-1983) while searching for a female vocalist. Evalyn quickly became Kanui's new performing partner and, in 1942, his second wife.

Evalyn was born in Connoquessing, Pennsylvania, 26 miles north of Pittsburgh, on May 8, 1909 to parents from Pennsylvania. In a December 2007 e-mail to the author, Evalyn's daughter Ewalani Kanui explained how her Pennsylvania-born mother acquired an early interest in Hawaiian culture and Hawaiian language: "When [my mother] ... was a young girl back in Western Pennsylvania, her brothers [who were involved in oil and gas well work] brought home some Hawaiian people they were working with. ... One

of them ... taught my mother steel guitar and [how] to sing Hawaiian songs in Hawaiian. My mother was a natural singer and quickly learned all things Hawaiian from him."

In a September 2008 e-mail, Ewalani added that: "My mother's brothers ... brought the Hawaiian boys who worked with them home, probably for some home-cooked meals, and they taught my mother how to sing Hawaiian songs during their visits."

Regarding how her father met her mother, Ewalani related in a December 2007 e-mail that: "[My mother] ... went on the radio in Pittsburgh as a singer but got bored with the venue and decided to go to New York City to pursue a music career. This was a bold thing to do back then, and coming from a simple farming family, [her parents] ... were not pleased by her decision. She got a job as a nanny and looked for music work on her days off or any free time she had. She met my dad, and since he was looking for a female vocalist, she really impressed him when he heard her sing in Hawaiian. So that was the start of Ewalani and her Hawaiians." As Les Cook has noted, David Kanui gave Evalyn the professional name 'Ewalani', the Hawaiian version of her name for use during performances.

Ewalani related in two fall 2007 e-mails that in the Hawaiians, which were sometimes billed as Miss Ewalani and Her Hawaiian Boys, her father played standard guitar and her mother, steel guitar. Ewalani added, “They both sang but my mother was the featured vocalist. Her voice was incredible—natural vibrato and perfect pitch. She didn’t dance.”

Les Cook relates that David and Evalyn “performed professionally for over twenty years ... playing at clubs and hotels [in the New York City area].” Cook also notes, “Interestingly, David didn’t really fully embrace the electric lap steel guitar but continued to play and teach the acoustic steel for the rest of his life.”

David and Evalyn had four children, Onolani Davlyn, David Samuel Kanui, Jr., Henry Haleniau, and Lillian Ewalani.

By the summer of 1939, Miss Ewalani and Her Hawaiians were appearing at the Bronx Beach and Pool resort northeast of Manhattan. The cover of the July 29, 1939 edition of *News and Views of Bronx Beach and Pool* features a picture of the Hawaiians, including David, Evalyn, and two other musicians, who were then appearing on the Beach and Pool’s “Hawaiian Nights” series (see the photo on this page). The circular relates that “every Wednesday and Saturday evening ... Miss Ewalani and her Hawaiian Boys [perform] popular and native numbers,” adding that “Miss Ewalani’s solos to the accompaniment of [stringed instruments are really well worth a trip to the pool to hear] on these special evenings.”

In December 1939, the Hawaiians received mention in the *New York Times*, in a Theodore Strauss entertainment column relating that the group was one of six acts secured by “Hello, Ma Baby” composer Joseph E. Howard to provide entertainment at his recently opened Gold Room in the Ambassador Hotel in the East Midtown area of Manhattan. As a testament to Evalyn’s mastery of the Hawaiian language and Hawaiian songs, Strauss mistakenly described Pennsylvania-born Evalyn as a “young maid from the mid-Pacific.”

By the time David filled out his World War II draft registration card in late April 1942, he and Evalyn were living in the Washington Heights area of far north Manhattan. David’s employer at the time was Jones’ Hawaiian Palms and Tahiti Hut in central Harrison, New Jersey. An undated flyer for a New Year’s Eve party at the Palms shows David and Evalyn appearing on the same bill with guitarist-vocalist David Kaleipua Munson and his Royal Hawaiian Orchestra.

By 1944, David and Evalyn had moved to Brooklyn, where daughter Ewalani was born. The Kanui’s lived in an apartment house on Fourth Avenue in the southern part of Brooklyn. For a time, Kanui operated Dave’s Coffee Shop and played in a club across the street on weekends. Les Cook relates that David and Evalyn played in several New York clubs frequented by mobsters, noting that: “Evalyn



Miss Ewalani and Her Hawaiians on the cover of the *Bronx Beach and Pool* publication promoting their “Hawaiian Nights” series.

would in later years relate tales to her children of meeting Dutch Shultz and Lucky Luciano, and one recollection was of David being almost killed by Luciano after the gangster made a pass at Evalyn!

Around March 1946, David and Evalyn recorded four sides in New York for the Continental label with a five-piece backing group dubbed the David Kanui Hawaiian Orchestra. On the recordings, David and Evalyn sing while two musicians play steel guitars. T. Malcolm Rockwell in *Hawaiian and Hawaiian Guitar Records: 1891-1960* identifies the steel guitarists as Ben Hano and Tommy Cristobel, but Ewalani Kanui in a February 2011 e-mail to the author relayed that: “It’s most likely my mother playing [steel guitar] on those records, along with another person—[I’m] not sure who, but that’s Mom playing. I heard her so many times playing the steel guitar that I know her style when I hear it even now.”

A standard guitar player (probably Abe Lang?) and two anonymous musicians playing ‘ukulele and string bass rounded out Kanui’s ensemble.

The Kanui Orchestra’s sides consisted of four songs from the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, “Halona,” “Aloha No Au I Ko Maka,” “Ua Like No a Like,” and “Waiialae.”

“Halona,” a waltz composed by J. Elia in 1902, apparently refers to a mountain and gulch in western Maui. A 1916 translation offered by Charles E. King in King’s *Book of Hawaiian Melodies* refers to the silent rain that “sweeps across the hills up yonder on Halona.” The Kanui Orchestra’s recording opens with a steel guitar solo, followed by Evalyn Kanui singing the verse, followed by male voices (Kanui, Hano, Cristobel, and Lang?) joining Evalyn on the chorus.

Continued on Page 16

“Aloha No Au I Ko Maka” (“I Love Your Eyes”), composed by Hawaiian Prince Leleiohoku, was originally a waltz; Kanui’s Orchestra performs the tune in four-four time. Following an opening steel guitar solo, Evalyn sings the chorus, and the recording closes with sounds of steel guitars and standard guitar.

“Ua Like No A Like” (“My Heart’s Choice”) was performed at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915 and recorded by many performers thereafter. The Kanui Orchestra’s recording opens with a steel guitarist playing the verse and chorus, A male vocalist (Lang?) then sings the verse, with the other male voices including Kanui joining in at the chorus.

“Waiialae” (“My Waiialae Home”) is a waltz composed in 1902 by Mekia Kealakai, who led the Royal Hawaiian Band from 1895-96. The Kanui Orchestra’s recording opens with a steel guitarist playing through the verse and chorus with a second steel player entering at the chorus to “answer” each phrase of the melody played by the lead player. Evalyn then sings the chorus, followed by a steel guitar solo, after which Evalyn sings the tune with each of her lines now echoed by the men.

The Kanui Orchestra’s four sides were issued as half of the Continental album set *Hawaii* along with four sides by the Waikiki Wanderers, which consisted of steel guitarist Hal Aloma plus several other unknown musicians.

Sometime around the latter part of 1946, David and Evalyn relocated from New York City to Meridian, Pennsylvania just a few miles northeast of Evalyn’s birthplace of Connoquessing. Ewalani recalled that her father opened a teaching studio and played at local clubs on weekends until the early 1960s with a repertoire consisting of Hawaiian tunes and popular standards. Ewalani also remembered her parents putting on Hawaiian shows at one of the local movie theaters in nearby Butler adding that some of her parents’ old musician friends from New York City would come to Butler to perform with them.

In a late December 2007 e-mail to the author, Ewalani spoke further about her parents’ teaching careers: “My parents taught both ... steel ... and ... [standard] guitar to kids and adults for most of my childhood years ... [in] grange halls or fire halls where they would teach anywhere from fifteen to twenty students at a time. Then later on, individual students would come to our home to be taught mainly by my dad. ... He taught from the Oahu [Publishing Co.] music sheets. [The company] ... was based in Cleveland, Ohio and not only did he get his music from them, but all of his picks, steel bars, and boxes of student guitars. ... I saw just a few students go on to become professional musicians and those



David Kanui’s daughter Lillian Ewalani (Lani) Kanui, who provided us with story details and great photos of her parents.

were the ones who continued learning from my dad when they became adults. My mom had ... one special student who was so talented that when Mom quit playing she gave him her Oahu Multichord steel.

Ewalani also relayed that her father was good friends with Hawaiian bandleader Johnny Pineapple (AKA David Kaonohi, 1906-1981), and that in later years Pineapple would come to the Pittsburgh area with a Hawaiian review and always get in touch with her father on those trips.

According to Ewalani, her father worked for the Pullman-Standard Car Manufacturing Co. in Butler in the late 1950s after he and her mother had retired from performing.

David Kanui was diagnosed with cancer in 1960 and struggled with the disease during the last five years of his life. Regarding her father’s hospital treatment, Ewalani recalled in an April 2008 e-mail that: “... when my dad was in the [Butler County Memorial Hospital] going through all of the ... procedures for cancer ... his attitude was never negative. I can still see him sitting on the edge of his bed playing his uke and humming songs. Humming because the cancer was in his mouth and he couldn’t speak, so he hummed. What a trooper! They didn’t have private rooms at the ... hospital, so he was in a ward with about four other patients. His fellow patients would say, ‘c’mon Dave, play that song—you know, the one about the swaying palm trees’, etc. Of course he would and they loved him for that because it took their minds to another place where there was no sickness or pain.”

David Kanui died at age seventy-three on April 11, 1965 at the Butler County Hospital. He was buried in the Butler County Memorial Park and Mausoleum in far-west Butler.

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Annual Steel Ho'olaule'a Gains Momentum

From Alan Akaka

The Hawaiian steel guitar community has another event, an annual one mind you, where you can enjoy the sweet enchanting and exciting sounds of the instrument we all adore. On Sunday, July 3 we held the Second Annual Waikiki Beach Walk Hawaiian Steel Guitar Ho'olaule'a at the Waikiki Beach Walk Plaza Stage. As in last year's inaugural event, Hawai'i's great and up-and-coming steel guitarists were featured.

Joining me on the stage were Hawai'i's top recording artists Bobby Ingano, Casey Olsen, and Greg Sardinha. In addition three of steel guitar's "next generation" played some tunes to great applause and adulation. Alexis Tolentino, Mikaela Nishida and Raven Young, whose ages range from ten to twelve, are recipients of HSGA scholarships. Together the trio played and sang "Henehene Kou Aka." Someone from the audience remarked how thrilled he was with their playing and that they could do ad lib solos as well.

The show opened with former radio deejay and event co-organizer, State Senator Brickwood Galuteria, and Territorial Airwave's host Harry B. Soria, Jr. welcoming the crowd. The two emceed the event and provided much information about the steel guitar in between sets.

The Independence Day weekend festival began with the Islanders at my side doing steel standards such as "Sand" and "How D'ya Do" as well as featuring Gary Aiko and his golden baritone voice. The next generation trio joined us on the stage and did a fabulous job that would make all the members of HSGA proud.

Next was Bobby Ingano who I consider to be the smoothest and sweetest player today who wears that pleasing smile throughout his performance. Perhaps he is having too much fun behind that steel. He played his standards including "Mapuana" and "Hula Blues."

Following Bobby was Greg Sardinha who decided to whip out his 'Surf and Contemporary' Hawaiian repertoire he is known for.

Casey Olsen was accompanied by his dad Hiram on rhythm guitar and Ocean Kaowili on the bass. Casey is 'Mr. Technique' and he wowed the audience playing on his grandfather Billy Hew Len's 6-string Rickenbacher Frypan, which caught my eye because is it refinished with a pearl white paint coating and looks like a million bucks. It also plays like a million bucks.

The icing on the cake was the jam at the end of the festival. We plowed our way through Johnny Almeida's "A 'Oia" and then after asking for requests from the audience,



Performing at this year's Beach Walk Ho'olaule'a, kumu Alan Akaka (uke) showcasing his students Mikaela Nishida (left), Raven Young and Alexis Tolentino, and with Gary Aiko on bass.

attempted to do each one with Bobby playing "Beyond the Reef", me on "Blue Hawaii", Greg on "Sleepwalk" and Casey on "Aloha 'Oe".

The afternoon was breezy and cool and the sky blue. We could not have asked for better weather and a better day to have this ho'olaule'a.

An added feature was a steel guitar display with instruments of all makes, sizes and designs from Bobby Ingano, myself and some of the Ke Kula Mele students.

If any of you members are planning to visit Honolulu, consider coming during the Fourth of July weekend and join us at the next Waikiki Beach Walk Hawaiian Steel Guitar Ho'olaule'a. And support the Outrigger Hotels and Resort, a major sponsor, by booking a stay at any of their many properties in Waikiki. ■

Treasurer's Report

(as of June 30, 2011)

General Fund	\$24,697.73
Scholarship Fund	\$15,655.53
Joliet Checking	\$1717.93
Japan Account	\$2,028.21
Grand Total	\$44,099.40

Mahalo, Members!

Mahalo for the great articles and photographs. Send news, comments, and photos to: HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waiomao Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424. E-mail us at hsga@hsga.org.

CLOSING NOTES

Frans van Oirschot (July 16, 1929-February 20, 2011)

We received some sad news from our Holland correspondent John Schaaphok earlier this year. Here's the report that John sent to us:

On February 20, we lost one of our great Dutch steel guitarists, Frans van Oirschot, at the age of 81.

Frans van Oirschot was born on July 16, 1929 in the town of Tilburg, which is located south of Amsterdam near the Belgian border. He began studies on violin at the Tilburg Music School at the age of 12 and continued his studies until age 17.

After World War II in 1946, he heard a Hawaiian band called the Tilburgse Waikikis, later called the Palmyras. Soon after he heard the beautiful sound of the Hawaiian guitar and switched completely from violin to steel guitar. In 1946 he formed his first Hawaiian ensemble called the Aloma Hawaiians and then formed another Hawaiian group, the Malua Hawaiians in 1949.

Drawing from his extensive knowledge of the violin, he soon became an excellent steel guitar player with his own unique style. In March of 1950 he launched his new band the Honolulus and finally changed the name to the Honolulu Strings in May of 1951, the band that cemented his reputation as virtuoso steel guitarist throughout The Netherlands, Belgium, and France.

In 1964 Frans was asked to play in Holland's premier Hawaiian band the Kilima Hawaiians led by Bill Buysman. He agreed and was with the group from 1964 to 1967.

Frans van Oirschot played steel guitar on many recordings on both vinyl and CD. He played steel on the LP "20 Melodies from Paradise" featuring the band The Islanders, a release that sold over 500,000 copies worldwide by the year 1980. The Honolulu Strings' first CD was released in May 1992 and featured some great steel guitar performances from Frans. The CD was re-released in 1996.

Frans was a founder and treasurer of the Hawaiian Music and Culture of the Netherlands Foundation (HMCM). During a special event called Hawaiian Promotion Day on April 8, 1996, Frans van Oirschot received an award for his service perpetuating Hawaiian culture in the Netherlands.

In 1999 Frans occasionally performed with fellow Hawaiian guitarists Will Bouquet, Wil Gijsman and Will Levenbach, under the name "Frans van Oirschot and Friends" with Luut Buysman on vocals, a former member of the Kilima Hawaiians and brother of Bill Buysman. The group recorded a CD as well.

A couple of years ago I tried to get some Hawaiian guitar lessons from him, but due to his age he was not able to do me this favor, and I regret it very much.



Frans van Oirschot with his Fender pedal steel guitar and his group, The Honolulu Strings, in Tilburg, Holland (1985).

Your editor again. We include here excerpts from an interview Jan Visser did with Frans van Oirschot in 2005. The following is directly from Frans:

"My musical education already started in elementary school. I was a member of the boys choir and had to learn to read notes. Already from my early youth I played all kinds of instruments. I got these mostly from my grandma: mouth organs (both diatonic and chromatic), all kinds of flutes such as blockflute and occarina, accordions, etc. On my tenth birthday I got a violin and soon after ... got lessons from a music teacher by the name of Pierre Robert. It was 1940, we were in the Second World War, and I had to open my violin case for the Germans many times, as they thought I might hide some weapon in it.

"I am an enormous advocate for using the pedal steel guitar in Hawaiian music and so I play various Hawaiian melodies on the instrument. Nevertheless there is quite some resistance in the Dutch Hawaiian music scene against the use of pedals. Some even say that one "can always hear" the use of pedals. I doubt if non-players can ... Worldwide this is a tough proposition in Hawaiian music. The anti-pedal [crowd] swear by the lap steel, as in their opinion that instrument is atmosphere-determining in Hawaiian music. I think this is because on a lap steel one plays the melody strictly with the steel bar. Think especially of the so-called "vamps" that are used many times in all kinds of variants and that are characteristic for this kind of music. They are much harder to execute on a pedal steel guitar. Also the playing techniques are totally different. Think, for instance, of the "tickling" of the strings. In the discussion, which I [started] in the magazine *Spirit of Aloha*, I tried to break a lance for the pedal steel guitar, as many real-Hawaiians and Japanese also use that instrument. [Regardless] it all depends on the musi-

cian who plays the instrument. Whether it is a pedal or a lap steel, it is the feeling that counts in the first place and that has to come from the heart.

“Only during my ‘Kilima’ period was I a full-time musician and that could not have been otherwise [given our tour schedule]. All the other years I was making music with my own group The Honolulu Strings, but I was also working as a salesman in the [recording industry] as manager of Basart Records Int’l in Naarden/Bussum, a production and distribution company. Originally, I was a metalworker and I worked with the Nederlandse Spoorwegen (Dutch Railways) for a few years, but I left to save my fingers!”

Vern Cornwall

We got the sad news this past April from members Frank Niespodziany, John Plas, and Andy Barlo about the passing of veteran HSGA member Vern Cornwall of South Bend, Indiana. We received the following tribute from one of Vern’s close friends, Phil Bender:

“Vern and I shared some great times, memories, and music over the past twenty years. It began in 1991 after meeting Jerry Byrd in Hawai’i in 1987. Jerry gave me information on the two steel guitar clubs and encouraged me to join one or both. During the next four years I lost my mother and did not join either club until 1991.

“I was fortunate to meet Vern at the 1991 Joliet Convention. Our interests seemed to match up at once, and we spent some time together that year. His style of playing rhythm guitar really impressed me, and he offered to accompany me in my first performance at the convention. He was just so rock solid, and we formed a lasting bond right then. We discussed family, religion, politics, and, oh yes, Jerry Byrd and his music. If my memory serves, he told

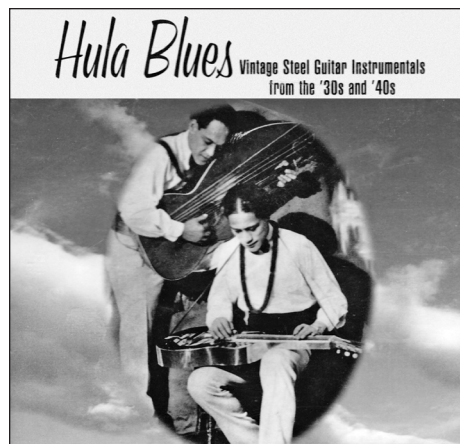
me that he started playing steel about the same time as Buddy Emmons in South Bend, and they were friends.

“In 1993 I was trying to learn the C Diatonic tuning that Jerry had developed, and Vern said he could help. He said Jerry had asked him not to divulge the info on the tuning, but Vern asked Jerry if he could help me out. Well the next thing I knew, here came some tabs on several songs, some of which I had heard on Jerry’s records. Vern had written down the arrangements for several songs, and sent them to me free of charge. His arrangements were impeccable, and over the past 20 years he would send me tabs that he had apparently done just for me, including “Estrellita” that I love so much. I never had the pleasure of hearing Vern play the steel, though I asked him to play several times. He said he was too nervous and he would rather hear us all play.

“To try and list all of the good things we all remember about our friend and mentor would fill a very large book, so maybe he would like to be thought of as a Christian man that tried to help all of those that he came in contact. I believe that in Heaven, the line of those he came in contact with will extend as far as the eye can see.

“Vern my friend, I only wish that I could repay the kindness you showed me and all of the rest of your friends. May you rest in peace.” ■

The cover of Robert Gear’s “Hula Blues” for the Rounder label (CD version).



‘Grass Skirt’ News

From Les Cook

Well our three current Grass Skirt recording projects are still underway! This is where we’re up to: Ken Emerson and Bob Armstrong return to the studio this week to do some editing, so that project is getting closer. With luck we’ll have it out later this year. The ‘Jim and Bob-George Ku’ reissue could be a bit delayed while we find a source for a good, clean copy of one of the original 78s. We have however located a couple of “new” photos of Jim and Bob. And if anyone knows of a photo of Ku’s steel player, Charlie Oponui, then we’d like to hear from them! Oponui had a long career as a musician and was still playing clubs and hotels in California until the late ‘50s or early ‘60s, so there must be photos out there! The limited edition release of Spanish steel player Daniel Arnau should be going to press in the next two weeks.

I’m already starting to think about what we should do next. At the moment I’m favoring Kanui and Lula if we can locate a couple more of their 1922 Berlin recordings. I have some really great photos and other material found in a Paris junk store after Lula died. Those Berlin records for the Star label are next to impossible to find, though.

I heard this week the sad news that Robert F. Gear from Cambridge, Massachusetts passed away in 2007. I didn’t know Robert personally that well but exchanged correspondence with him for a while. He was a real enthusiast for old acoustic steel guitar and produced what was I think the first reissue LP of the genre for Rounder Records. That LP was called “Hula Blues” and included Sol Ho’opi’i, Roy Smeck, Frank Ferera, Andy Sanella and Jim and Bob. He also produced a book of transcriptions of some of the tunes on the LP. Robert also recorded an LP of his own steel guitar and bottleneck playing in the late ‘70s. ■

E-mail Changes?

Please send e-mail changes to John Ely (johnely@hawaiiansteel.com). Mahalo!

E Komo Mai! Welcome, New Members

Is your address correct? Please notify us!

UNITED STATES

BOBBE SEYMOUR, STEEL GUITAR NASHVILLE, 123 Mid Town Court,
Hendersonville, TN 37075

WILL TEMPLETON, 2106 Butler Drive, Friendswood, TX 77546

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DICK MARTINY, 2714 Winslow Road, Imlay City, MI 48444

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BARBARA L. HUDMAN, 2333 Kapiolani Blvd. #2903, Honolulu, HI 96826

BILL ROSEN, 3208 Cascadia Ave. South, Seattle, WA 98144

SACHI AND ALICE WATANABE, 333 Aoloa Street, #324, Kailua, HI 96734

OVERSEAS

ALAN SALMON, 10 Boardman Street, Kallangur, QLD 4503 Australia

STUART WILLIAMSON, 76 Montague Street, Campbell Town, Tasmania 7210

Australia

MIKE ANDERSON, 877 Pinebrook Place, Coquitlam, BC V3C4C1 Canada

DAVID KANUI Cont. from Page 16

Kanui's first wife Jane died in a hotel fire in Pittsburgh in February 1970.

Evalyn Kanui moved to Butler sometime after her husband's death. She died in her Butler home on December 9, 1983 of an apparent heart attack. Evalyn's body was cremated with her ashes interred in the Butler County Memorial Park.

In his *Aloha Dream* article, Les Cook supplies an overview of the later years of David Kanui's children. Onolani performed hula dances with her parents beginning in the late 1930s, and danced with them through their later performing years in Pennsylvania. Henry, who had a long musical career playing 'ukulele and guitar, worked on one of Sammy Kaye's television shows in New York before moving to Ft. Worth, Texas to play rhythm guitar in a trio with his sister Ewalani.

Ewalani—who learned to play not only the steel guitar, but also the electric bass, standard guitar, and 'ukulele—enjoyed a thirty-year performing career. From 1973-1983, Ewalani played bass in the Kass Kanui Kombo with her now ex-husband and her brother Henry. The

Kombo served an extended residency at a Quality Inn in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area performing a mix of Hawaiian, country, classic rock, and Top 40 tunes. Following the Kombo's 1983 breakup, Ewalani formed the Mixed Emotions (later Lani K. and the Mixed Emotions), which played for a number of private parties in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. In a mid-December 2007 letter to the author, Ewalani related that "nowadays, I just sing for my own pleasure and try to help every young person in my life—nephews, nieces, [and] sons and daughters of my close friends—to learn about all kinds of music."

Thanks to Ewalani Kanui for her gracious assistance in assembling this narrative and for the photographs and memorabilia connected with her parents. Thanks also to Hawaiian music scholar, record producer, and HSGA member Les Cook for providing important biographical information about David Kanui in his article "The Kanui Mystery Resolved," which appeared in the March 2008 issue of Aloha Dream magazine, published by HSGA member Basil Henriques. Check out sample pages of Basil's magazine at www.waikiki-islanders.com. ■

LORENE HONORED Cont. from Page 12

award at this year's Hōkūs for the work I did in promoting the steel guitar. For those who don't know, the Hōkūs are similar to the Grammys. The event is televised live throughout the State of Hawai'i and winners are asked to come to the stage to accept the award and make a few brief comments.

Well, fellow HSGAers, I didn't even know there was such an elegant, huge convention center in Honolulu. There was a crowd of over 1,200 people in attendance with huge video screens over the stage and on both sides of the auditorium. Reporters and photographers were at work everywhere.

When it was my turn to go on stage I found Dr. Isaac Akuna very elegantly clad in black tuxedo waiting to make the presentation. In 29 seconds or less I spoke like the nut I am, "I thank the Maiki Aiu Foundation for making this award possible, and I thank my dear husband Art for doing all the cooking and cleaning while I punched the keys, and my dear pet iguana who perched on my shoulder and read every word." Now, is that what you'd call an astute pronouncement?

Am I one happy wahine? You bet your boots! And that, dear friends, is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about why Art and I had to go to Hawai'i *twice* in one month in the year 2011. It has nothing to do with the end of the world coming soon. ■

Live Haw'n Music Webcasts

This from Lorene Ruymar: "I've spent some time exploring the Pakele Live website (www.pakelelive.com), which kicks out good Hawaiian music every Thursday night 6:30-8:30 PM Hawaiian time. I logged on just in time to listen to the Abrigo kids. What a talented family that is! There's a place on the website where you can see what acts will play on Thursdays to come, right into September 2011. We'll be waiting to catch Ledward Ka'apana in August.