

HSGA QUARTERLY

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All smiles at Joliet this past October: Secretary-Treasurer Kamaka Tom (left), Joliet Guest Artist Greg Sardinha with his Canopus steel guitar, and Vice-President Gerald Ross.

Joliet Report: Big Fun and a New Future

From Chris Kennison

I just returned from my tenth HSGA convention in Joliet, Illinois held on October 6-8. What a good time! Lorene Ruymar usually writes up a wonderful report, but she and Art could not attend this year, so I was elected. I wish I'd had this assignment earlier—I would have paid more attention instead of jamming in the halls!

Don [Weber] and Wally [Pfeifer], thanks for organizing another great Joliet weekend! We don't say that enough! You did great. I loved the [HSGA inscribed] pens again, Wally. And the program looked great! I loved the cover artwork. The food was *ono* this year! The hotel staff always treats

us well. And we were all "Kamaka's Friend" if just for a few days (inside joke—ya shoulda been there!).

Greg Sardinha was our Guest of Honor this year. Greg is one of Hawai'i's best steel guitarists and is also a great guitarist, multi-instrumentalist, composer, and recording engineer-producer. His "Hawaiian Steel" CD series is a substantial body of excellent contemporary steel guitar recordings by many artists in Hawai'i. I had a chance to back him up on guitar for one of the shows and really enjoyed working with him. I learned some new techniques and some new tunes in the process. Greg shared a wide variety of music and steel styles, and many were his

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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.

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own compositions. If you have never heard Greg play, get one of his CDs and you'll hear what we all enjoyed this year in Joliet.

I traveled out with my friend Tony Fourcroy, who has also been a steel student of mine for about a year and a half. This was his first year at an HSGA event, and it was also his first time on stage playing steel. Tony played a great set of music on the first day of the convention. I told him he passed his "final exam" with flying colors!

This was a great year for new and younger players on stage. We had three players this year who have all been studying with HSGA members for about a year or so, and it was great to hear them and know that we've got some new folks playing steel. In addition to my student Tony, we had a student of Mike Scott's, Vaughn Passmore. Vaughn was with us last year and is doing great work with Mike as his mentor. And we enjoyed hearing one of Alan Akaka's students, Mark Prucha. Mark has been taking lessons for a

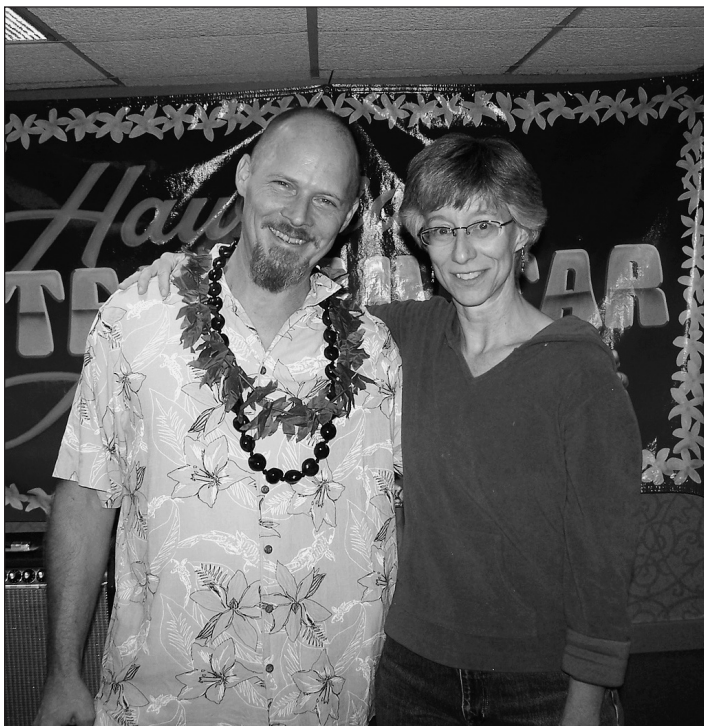
very short time from Alan via Skype! Mark did a great job and we could hear Alan's excellent influence on his style. This young man will be an excellent steel guitarist. I look forward to hearing what he does next year!

For those who have not tried Skype, it is a free program you can get and run on your computer to talk to other Skype users over the Internet. These calls are free. Of course you pay for your Internet service, but you can make unlimited calls anywhere in the world from your computer or smart phone. For us in the music world, this is a wonderful tool because you can also video chat with people if you both have a webcam on your computer. So, this means you can take steel guitar lessons from steel masters like Alan Akaka or John Ely and *see* what they are doing! And they can watch you and help you learn. I know both these great players are actively teaching via Skype now. So check into it. We could all learn much more from each other if we start to employ these new tools. Plus it's Big Fun!

In addition to our three new players, we also had our first performer from

A super Joliet 2011 shot of some of our great, regular convention goers: Don Fullmer (left) and Carol Hidy, Wally and Peg Pfeifer, Donna Weber, and Joan Woods.





Member Vaughn Passmore, who is studying steel guitar with Mike Scott, pictured here with one of our sound techs, Rita Chapman.

the Republic of China. Mr. Hong Yi Shi traveled from Shanghai to Joliet and performed admirably on stage.

In addition to the daily concerts we had a great “Talk Story” with Greg one evening. We spent about an hour and a half just chatting with Greg and asking him questions on all sorts of things like his playing technique, who he works with, and his experiences learning steel from the great Jerry Byrd. As I mentioned previously, Greg has produced a number of excellent steel albums that cover many styles of steel. These should be in every Hawaiian steeler’s library. One of my faves is “Byrd’s Nest” which features Greg, Alan Akaka, Casey Olsen and Paul Kim. Of course, Paul is our current HSGA President and plays with the Sons of Hawai’i.

We also had a steel seminar for new players hosted by Canadian guitarist and steelman Ian Ufton. Ian has a sweet sound and flawless technique, and it was great to sit three feet away from him and watch what hâae does. I was three feet away from him ‘cause I co-hosted the seminar with him. We fielded questions and shared information for about an hour.

We had a vendor on Saturday, Ram Guitars, from the Chicago area who showed us some wonderful console steels that they are starting to make with a nod towards the old Gibson Console Grande design. Check them out at www.ramguitars.com.

Duke Ching organized another great lū‘au show and we had the Barefoot Hawaiian dancers again to share their lovely hula. After the show, Greg played one final set on his Canopus console steel. It was a great closing event.

Looking to the Future

This convention has been going on in Joliet now for 25 years. Each October some of the finest steel players in the world come together to share their knowledge and passion for the Hawaiian steel. If you love Hawaiian music, and especially Hawaiian steel guitar, this is the place to be to learn.

However, our attendance has declined steadily for the last few years. This year we only had 90 people registered, and 78 attended the lū‘au.

Don Weber has compiled the attendance figures for the Saturday Night Lū‘au and show over the last few years to illustrate the obvious trend:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
2005	114
2006	133
2007	123
2008	108
2009	94
2010	101
2011	78

In a nutshell, the numbers were down again for this year. The trend is clear. We may not have enough attendance next year to even have a convention. What to do?

Members at the general meeting on Friday morning shared many great ideas for increasing attendance and membership, ideas that many of us on the board have also discussed in meetings and individually before. It was a very good member meeting! I sensed there is support for making some changes, and I also had comments from members willing to help ensure that we can continue to enjoy this amazing event in the Chicago area for another 25 years!

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More of our longtime HSGA members at Joliet 2011: Dr. Gil O’Gawa (left), Virginia Grzadzinski, and Dick and Donna Lloyd.



To see if we can boost attendance, the board of directors has authorized a bold step. Next year on Saturday—the usual last day of the convention—we are going to try and plan a day of seminars and performances that include ‘ukulele, slack key and hula along with steel guitar.

Modern festivals these days, like the very popular ‘ukulele festivals sprouting worldwide, include more educational opportunities for folks. People like to participate and they want to learn. That format along with concerts by top-notch artists could substantially expand our appeal and help us grow. Details are not clear at this point, but we intend to find the best artists we can afford, to attend, perform, and conduct seminars to share their knowledge of Hawaiian music and instruments.

So the convention next year will be advertised as the “Joliet Hawaiian Music Festival—Sponsored by the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association.” If we can expand our audience we may be able to not only showcase steel to a

The “Wacky Keys” featuring Dave Kolars on steel with Mike Warfel on bass and Diane Norman providing great vocals.



new, bigger audience, but we may get some more members! We’ll stick to the usual format of member performances and special evening events like seminars and “Talk Story” on Thursday and Friday, and we’ll add some new events on Saturday that we hope will appeal to the public. We intend to expand the advertising of the event as well, and we’ll try and include the local Hawaiian community as well. If you are interested in helping, contact our board at board@hsga.org.

The convention weekend was another wonderful event with great friends, good food and amazing music. It’s always fun. I’m already looking forward to next year.

From Wally Pfeifer

We wouldn’t have had such a nice convention if it weren’t for all the faithful members and guests. I would like to personally thank the following members: Mrs. Ivan “Dee” Reddington for taking lū’au tickets; Rhetta Riggs and Jay Zinn for being our lei greeters at the lū’au; Donna Miller and Peg Pfeifer for donating raffle prizes; Betty Christensen for selling raffle tickets; Jack Walsh for his generous donation to HSGA; Phil Bender for his donation from the sale of his Jerry Byrd bar; Frank and Donna Miller for their help in decorating and tearing down Sunday morning; Donna and Peg for their relentless devotion to the registration desk for three days; Don Weber for his expert guidance and the many hours he spent in organizing the event; and Althea Walker and her Holiday Inn staff for being so accommodating. We couldn’t have asked for better service.

An additional thank you to Jason Wonnell who designed the program again this year. Thanks also to Dave and Rita Chapman who along with John Hatton provided the sound this year. Dave did a great job fine-tuning every performance. And Ian Ufton and Chris Kennison did a great workshop. Mahalos, all!



The snazzy cover of this year’s Joliet program, designed by Jason Wonnell.

From Kamaka Tom

“Greg [Sardinha] and I arrived a day early to ensure adequate rest. Jet lag is always a factor when traveling across multiple time zones. Maybe that’s why our new member from China, Hong Yi Shi, decided to arrive in Chicago two days prior, where his nephew Hong from Michigan could pick him up and escort him to the convention.

“This year’s stage performance schedule allowed Wally to place soloists in more than one slot. Thanks to the soloists who stepped up and much appreciated appearances by first-time and student steel performers, the show was kept a-humming.

A grand time was had by all thanks to solid backup from Ian Ufton, Virginia Grzadzinsky, Gerald Ross, Ivan Reddington, myself, and many others who helped in countless ways to put on a good show. Four solid days of fun were capped off by our Saturday Lū’au-style Dinner and Show. Director Duke Ching wrote up the numbers and rehearsed the musicians and dancers. He’s been

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“Ku‘u Ipo” in Okinawa

By Frank Della-Penna

Stephanie Ortoleva and I recently hosted an NGO (non-governmental organization) staff person, who was assigned to chaperon a group of Okinawan exchange students on a 10-day trip to the Washington, DC area. The purpose of the program was to acquaint high school students with life and culture in the United States and to provide an opportunity for them to meet families of Okinawan descent in the U.S. The Okinawai Kai club sponsored a one-day trip for the students to see New York City, which included a tour of Ellis Island, Wall Street, the World Trade Center Memorial site and Times Square.

Our guest, Yoshiko Kishimoto, expressed an interest in learning ‘ukulele, so I obliged with periodic instruction during her stay. She learned major, minor, sixth and seventh chords in the keys of C, G and A. I introduced Yoshiko to “Aloha ‘Oe” and “Ku‘u Ipo Ika Hee Pue One” plus a few other songs. I also sent her ‘ukulele instruction materials in the Japanese language so Yoshiko can continue her studies in Hawaiian music. I found that the Rickenbacher frypan fit nicely on Yoshiko’s lap, so we had some instruction on Hawaiian steel guitar, too, using the A major low-bass tuning.

When Yoshiko-san arrived at our home, she saw the Hawaiian ceramic plaque at our entry foyer asking guests to remove their shoes. She entered the parlor of our home via a rama architectural panel [ED: decorative panels for lighting and ventilation placed above sliding doors] and was surprised to hear traditional folk music from Okinawa on my automatic Victrola. I showed Yoshiko some of my LPs and 45s of Okinawan folk music I purchased while in the Marine Corps during my stay on Okinawa. Thereafter, another surprise awaited Yoshiko as she was shown her bedroom complete with tatami mats, a futon mattress and quilt, windows covered with shoji screens and my Okinawa doll collection on the fireplace mantle. Yoshiko exclaimed, “I sleep on a bed at home!” Well, anyway, Yoshiko was delighted with our home, and we hope she returns someday playing her ‘ukulele. ■



HSGA Recording Secretary and steel pro, Frank Della-Penna, giving some ‘ukulele pointers to Yoshiko Kishimoto from Okinawa.

‘Ka Himeni Ana’ Report

From Isaac Akuna

On August 27, the annual musical competition known as “Ka Himeni Ana” was held at the beautiful Hawai‘i Theatre in downtown Honolulu. This concert was established by Richard Towill 27 years ago. It was his vision to showcase traditional Hawaiian music in an acoustic, non-amplified setting. Contest rules do allow for the steel guitar to be amplified using a small amp. Competing groups must have between two and five members with at least half of the group performing with instruments. All of the chosen selections must be in the Hawaiian language with each group having no more than seven minutes to perform. This year’s competition consisted of seven very talented groups performing before a capacity crowd. Groups are judged on various criteria including arrangement of songs, harmony, balance, correct pronunciation of the Hawaiian language, projection, instrumentation, and stage presence. This event has become one of the signature Hawaiian music events every year in Honolulu.

I was very pleased to be a part of a group called Mokoli‘i consisting of Nathaniel Stillman (bass), Alike Souza (guitar), Eddie Palama (steel guitar), Kuni Agard (vocals) and myself. We were the only group to feature the sound of the steel guitar, and Eddie did a great job on his solos. For this competition we submitted two songs which were each medleys. The first was a slow rendition of “Mana‘o Pili” and “Aloha Kauai”. The second song was also an up tempo medley of “Ka Ua Loku” and “Hanohano Hanalei”. We were thrilled to have been chosen as the winning performance. ■

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.

Note: Buy & Sell ads are free for paid-up members.

From board member **Pete Kahele**: “Ukulele legend **Bill Tapia** will be 104 years old on January 1, but he has been slowing down, especially during the past year. At a 102, Bill was packing his suitcase when he lost his footing and fell. He broke his hip, survived hip replacement surgery and therapy, but it did have an impact on his physical health. His mental health is still sharp as ever.

“I’ve known Bill for the past ten years and have gotten fairly close to him. We have done several gigs together and have been to his home numerous times. In fact I’ll be at his home next Sunday for a private get together along with four other musicians.

“Bill played with my grandfather back in the ‘20s and ‘30s. My grandfather played with the Royal Hawaiian Band during those times and played with several other groups around Honolulu. Bill said he use to practice with my grandfather at his home on School and Fort streets in Honolulu. Of course, I wasn’t even “thought of” at that point, but I did ask my uncle who is now 91 years young, and my uncle verified *everything* that Bill has told me. I plan to interview Bill and do an article for the Winter issue.” [ED: Mahalos, Pete! We’re looking forward to it.]

Paul Warnik, who has done some great writing for his “Vintage Axes” series is taking a well-deserved break this issue. He’ll be back in the winter with more great stuff. We’re planning a big spread on the Alkire E-Harps along with historical material on the Eddie Alkire system if we can somehow get to the archived material on Eddie at the University of Illinois.

Breaking news from **Les Cook** of Grass Skirt Records: “The **Ken Emerson-Robert Armstrong** recording is almost finished with the duo about to go back to the studio next week to cut one final track. The CD will include, among others, versions of



From the Shanghai area of mainland China, Hong Yi Shi, who played a very nice set on his China-built Akaka steel guitar.

“Song of the Islands,” “Pidgin English Hula,” “Palakiko Blues,” “Hula Girl” and the big U.K. hit from the 1930s “Tiger Shark.” As for the **Jim and Bob-George Ku** reissue project, we [finally] sourced copies of all the 78 rpm copies we need so we’re making some progress. I’m hoping it will be out by spring 2012.”

Some late-breaking news on convention DVDs from HSGA photographer **Paul Weaver**: “I’m continuing to record member performances but the past several years have taught me that taking care of health problems plus the normal house and car problems is more than a full time job! From now on, I will send **Kamaka Tom** the one-hour video masters, and he will then take care of making copies for distribution to interested members.” According to Kamaka it may take some time to prepare the DVD copies. We’ll lay out the details in an upcoming newsletter as soon as inventory and price information is made available. ■

Hong Yi Shi Makes a Splash at Joliet

By Don Woods

One of the highlights of this year’s Joliet convention was the performance of our newest member from the Republic of China, Hong Yi Shi. It was his very first Hawaiian steel guitar convention outside his home country. He played traditional Chinese music with recorded orchestral background on a China-built Akaka steel guitar.

He learned about HSGA through some Chinese students and wanted to attend the convention to learn more about Hawaiian music and the Hawaiian playing style.

Yi Shi lives in Giu Lang Yu in Amoy near Shanghai where he is a full-time music teacher of steel guitar and piano. He has the primary responsibility of teaching Hawaiian steel guitar at the Du Hawaiian Steel Guitar Base (center) in Shanghai. He is one of the top players in China and has been teaching steel guitar for seven years and has approximately 200 students. [ED: the Du Hawaiian Steel Guitar Base was founded by and named after HSGA member Du Ying, who we’ve written about several times over the last few years. For more on Du Ying and Hong Yi Shi, see the Summer 2009 *Quarterly* article, “China’s Secret Hawaiian Steel Guitar Garden.”]

Yi Shi first became interested in playing the steel guitar through his father, who began playing in the 1930s after he was exposed to the steel guitar through Portuguese sailors making port calls in China. Yi Shi, who is now 50 years old, has been playing steel guitar for 30 years. He has adapted his playing style to the Chinese culture, but plays Hawaiian songs as well.

Yi Shi does not speak or understand English, so he brought his young 27-year-old nephew, Hong Hong, to

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BOOK REVIEW



Blue Smoke—The Lost Dawn of New Zealand Popular Music 1918-1964 by Chris Bourke (Auckland Univ. Press, 2010; ISBN 978-1-86940-455-0)

Review by John Marsden

During recent years, some very interesting books have appeared concerning Hawaiian music, hula, and individual performers. *Blue Smoke*, from which four radio programs were also produced, examines in impressive detail the wide range of music heard in New Zealand during five and a half decades, including jazz, dance music of the 1930s, the birth of the New Zealand recording industry in October 1948 with Ruru Karaitiana's song "Blue Smoke," and the arrival of rock 'n' roll in the 1950s. The section specifically on Hawaiian music is small, taking up some 13 pages of a book that runs to 381, but it is still of great interest. Ernest Kaai brought Hawaiian music to New Zealand in 1911. Accompanied by rare photos, Chris Bourke touches on many of the performers who made careers in the genre subsequently, including Mati Hita, Jim Carter (who played steel guitar on "Blue Smoke"), Tommy Kahi, Bill Wolfgramm, Daphne Walker and Bill Sevesi.

There is also much information about Maori performers, including Ana Hato, Deane Waretini, the Rotorua Maori Choir and The Tahiwis, all of whom were recorded either in Australia or by visiting Australian engineers during the 1920s and 1930s. The 1960s saw the rise of the great touring Maori showbands. With reference to these, Chris provides a footnote which led me to a further book, *Showband! – Mahora and the Maori Volcanics*, by Mahora Peters with James George, published by Huia, Wellington (2005), ISBN 1-86969-159-8. The Volcanics vastly impressed us when they came to the U.K., and I wrote about them in the June 1969 issue of *BMG Magazine*. They toured extensively through Europe and the Far East, and in 1976 returned with a new lineup and show, which they also took to America. The copiously illustrated hardcover book provides a riveting account of their formation and travels, told by Mahora herself. I dare say their adventures echo those of the early touring Hawaiians such as Ernest Kaai or the "Bird of Paradise" musicians. *Showband!* comes with a bonus CD.

I should also like to call attention to the following CDs, which nicely relate to the two books:

Kiwi SLC-242: *Ana Hato Raua Ko Deane Waretini – Legendary recordings 1927-49* (1995), Ana Hato and Deane Waretini's complete Parlophone recordings.

BMG 74321-511572: *Bill Wolfgramm and his Islanders with Daphne Walker* (1997), impossible-to-find classics from the Tanza label.

Atoll A-9801: *The Tahiwis – Historic 1930s Recordings* (1998), their complete recordings.

Pita Productions MVCD-001: *Maori Volcanics Showband 1967–2002* (2002), a double CD.

Rajon CDR-0040: *The Great Prince Tui Teke* (2003), a 3-CD set. The late Prince Tui was a member of the original Volcanics lineup and an

extremely talented entertainer in his own right.

Blue Smoke Records BSR002: *For The Record – The Pixie Williams Collection 1949-1951* (2011). Pixie sang on the original recording of "Blue Smoke." All of her recordings are on this CD, and most have Jim Carter playing steel guitar.

An excellent contact for the books and CDs is: Centre for New Zealand Music, P.O. Box 27347, Marion Square, Wellington 6141, New Zealand; Email: info@sounz.org.nz. They are extremely helpful! ■

HSGA Donations

Thanks, HSGAers for your kind donations this past quarter. The following members donated at least \$10:

Rick Collins, Claremont, CA
Solomon M. L. Kam, Honolulu, HI
Edwin K. Maunakea, Jr., Killeen, TX
Edward J. Meisse, Santa Rosa, CA
Greg and Sandra Sardinha, Kailua, HI
Gregory Wong, Milwaukee, WI

"Lei Day" 2012!

From Kamaka Tom

We are beginning to make plans for our informal "off-year" get-together in Honolulu this coming spring. We are expecting HSGA members and friends to perform on May 1, 2012 at the annual Lei Day celebration in Kapi'olani Park. Look for details in the Winter issue. Those who wish to perform on the HSGA stage will need to contact me before May 1. You can send me an e-mail at <gktom007@yahoo.com> or call me at 808-392-4583 to reserve a time slot. We hope also to confirm the annual Hawaiian steel guitar concert at the Waikīkī-Kapahulu Public Library. Stay tuned!

CLOSING NOTES

Kenneth Arthur Ufton (Sept. 2, 1921-Oct 14, 2011)

We got the sad news that member Ian Ufton lost his father Ken Ufton just a couple of weeks before press time. Ken Ufton was a musician of note and had an impact on the music industry that is unusual for someone who did not make music his life's work. Here's Ian's tribute to his father, echoing what many of us already know:

Kenneth Arthur Ufton was born on September 2, 1921 in the village of Whitworth in Lancashire, England. I believe he was a self-taught musician. His two elder sisters were piano players who sang extremely well, one being a performer in a local lounge act, and they no doubt helped Ken. He himself could play piano but that ended when he heard Sol Ho'opi'i and Dick McIntire play steel guitar. He had to have one of those and even though money was tight in those days, the family sacrificed to get him a Hawaiian guitar. He quickly excelled on steel and would eventually become one of the best that England would produce. Steel guitar remained with him throughout his 90+ years.

As a young lad, our Ken was quite the "scourge" of the girls at his school, chasing them around and being a general nuisance! Later as a teenager, when he met my mother Doris Mills, her elder sister asked, "What are you dating him for?" But it was too late as she had already seen his guitar, a real girl-catcher then (if not now!). At age 19, Ken married 17-year-old Doris, a relationship that would last more than 70 years, almost 70 married.

After the wedding it was off to war, though Ken contracted meningitis shortly after being drafted. While in training, the R.A.F. (Royal Air Force) tried to make him take salt tablets—required for anyone going to North Africa—but he refused, believing they were bad for him. So the R.A.F.

From the late '50s, a cool photo of Ken Ufton and a pretty young Ian Ufton playing at a Sunday afternoon gathering of guitarists.



A photo of Ken Ufton and his Harmony Hawaiians taken in 1958 with Don Wilde on bass and our own Ian Ufton on 'ukulele (left).

decided to get him up every morning at 5 AM in full uniform and parade him around for an hour or two. Then they had him cleaning toilets, thinking he would give in to the salt tablets. Eventually they gave up and shipped him out—they needed all the able-bodied men they could get!

Stationed in Libya, Ken found a way to build a steel guitar and played with other musicians until the end of the war. It was upon his return to Doris and two sons that Ken began to excel both in both playing and building steel guitars, always searching for "that sound." At around that time he began entering the BMG annual music contests in England. He would compete in the solo, duet and quartet categories, winning everything he entered year after year. Eventually A.P. Sharpe, the publisher of *BMG Magazine*, asked him not to enter anymore as people would not compete if his name was on the list—he was virtually killing off the steel guitar categories. He complied gracefully with Sharpe's request. (I wanted to enter myself but we stopped going to the competitions altogether.)

Ken Ufton's band, Ken Ufton and his Harmony Hawaiians, featured his lifelong friend (and mine) Harry Greenwood throughout the band's history. I learned so much from him. He could really make things swing and was himself a fine steeler. The 'ukulele players over the years were Jack Buckley, myself, and my brother Chris. The bass players were Jack Morris and then Don Wilde. The first group—Ken, Harry, Jack Buckley and Jack Morris—did an audition for the BBC around 1950 or so. The producer listened to them play mostly Hawaiian music and then asked if they could play something more modern. They played some

boogie-woogie they had messed around with, and the guy was impressed and said, "Play that kind of stuff and I'll get you a regular half-hour show." "No thanks," said Ken, and off he went doing things his way.

The group carried on playing gigs around Northern England for the next few years. Soon a call came from Lambda Records owner Bernard Whitty in Liverpool, asking if Ken would bring the band to the studio to cut some single ten-inch sides. This was still in the days of direct-to-disc recording. I don't recall how many sides we cut but I do remember one title, "Na Alu." The correct title was "Nā Ali'i," but Ken had seen a misprint of the title, and since nobody knew any better, it went on the record label like that. Oops!

The group used three or four vocalists over time, most notably, Joyce Aubrey, who along with Ming Luhulima, were featured on the great recordings of legendary Dutch-Indonesian steel guitarist Rudi Wairata. In 1962 or thereabouts, Bernard invited her to record with the band and she accepted. My brother Chris was on the session, but unfortunately, I did not get to meet her. I had taken up standard guitar and was away playing professionally.

In 1965 Ken moved his family to Canada and started producing his own music at home when work allowed, using a Fender 800 ten-string pedal guitar. He completely rebuilt it going with a new body of African Macori wood and an all-new rod pulling mechanism. The guitar sported 6 pedals and 4 knee levers and an individually adjustable custom built bridge, which did away with problems associated with "equal tempered" tuning. The guitar played in tune to the last fret. I did the same thing with the steels I built, which makes it easier on the ears. Ken's Fender now sports an Aiello pickup, although all his recordings were done with the original Fender pickup. I'm sure most of you would agree that he coaxed a beautiful tone from that guitar.

An interesting side note: Ken built many guitars over the years. I had one of them around 1964 and just before I left

A fun shot of member Jack Montgomery on steel guitar with Ian Ufton, Ken Ufton (center) and other music buddies (1995).



At a Liverpool recording session circa 1962 for Lambda Records, Chris Ufton on uke, Harry Greenwood on guitar, Ken Ufton on steel guitar, and Joyce Aubrey of Rudi Wairata fame standing in front of Jack Morris, who also played guitar. Says Ian, "I believe Jack did a short stint with Felix Mendelssohn, and incidently taught me to read "dots" in C, F and G. The rest I figured out myself."

England for Canada in 1966, I gave it to Sammy Mitchell whom I would run into every Saturday night at an after-hours club musicians used to frequent. I later found out that he sold it to the Rolling Stones for \$30! [ED: Sammy Mitchell was a noted steel guitarist in the U.K. known for his work with Felix Mendelssohn and His Hawaiian Serenaders.]

Upon meeting U.A. Tom Shilstra—I believe the 'U.A.' stands for Urqhart Alexander—they cut the first LP in the "Sweet, Sweet Steel Guitar" series for Tom's Maple Records label. Others followed featuring Jerry Byrd, David Keli'i, Pua Almeida, and others. Not a bad crowd to run with I'd say, and it was a credit to Ken that Tom felt him worthy of the label's initial release. The final release of the series featured Tom himself on "Uncle Tom Alexander," a sort of old-time steel guitar recording.

Shortly after Tom's passing, Ken created the Duo-Sound and Carousel labels, recording many LPs and cassettes such as *Pacific Pearls*, *Heavenly Hymns*, and *Polynesian Pearls*, which are still available. His version of "Paradise Isle" on *Polynesian Pearls* can bring to tears to your eyes.

Ken visited Hawai'i once, and attended a Joliet and a Winchester convention as well. To the many people who have asked me to bring him to the conventions over the years, I can say that no amount of coaxing worked. But my mother Doris accompanied me many times. She loved to come and made many friends. I thank you all on behalf of both of them. ■

Hanalei Moon

(Bob Nelson)

Arrangement by John Ely

Ballad

Vs

G

A7

Steel Gtr. (C6th)

let ring -----

5 Am7 D7 G G#0 Am7 D7

strum (thumb)

slide

slide

Note: slurs tell you to slide bar toward the next note or chord — see the tablature key.

9 G A7

slide

slide

13 Am7 D7 G Cm G D7

strum

slide

slide

strum

slide

slide

Cho

G E7 A7

7 7 10 11 10 9 9 7 5 4 4

7 10 11 10 9

21 Am7 D7 Am7 D7 C Cm G D7

3 2 4 3 2 4 8 8 7 5 6

3 2 3 2 4 8 8 7 5 7 6 7

slide slide

25 G E7 A7

7 9 10 11 10 10 9 9 7 9 4 4

7 9 10 11 10 9 9 9 4 4

slide

29 Am7 D7 Am7 D7 G G#0 Am7 D7(#5) G

3 2 8 7 5 5 6 7

3 2 2 (7) 7 8 6 7

(2) (7) 5 7 5 5 6 7

slide strum

(to vocal)

How Do You Get To Carnegie Hall?

According to the classic joke, the best way for a musician to get to Carnegie Hall is to practice, practice, practice! Well, there's no getting around practicing, but you do need a few "breaks" along the way, and HSGA member John Mumford seems to have the knack. He hails from the greater Denver area and has an interesting story. Take it away, John!

For me the route to Carnegie Hall was by walking into a bar in Denver in 1972 and also being a 5-string banjo player. The club was called Your Father's Mustache (YFM). For those of you who are not familiar with the club, the best description would be to call it the adult version of a Shakey's Pizza Parlor with banjo, trombone, tuba and washboard. I enjoyed this experience so much that I took a job as a part-time waiter. When the tuba player in the band found out that I played 5-string banjo he asked me to sit in with the band. Which led to a career of playing four-string banjo for the next 39 years!

There were several YFM clubs across the United States and two in Europe. The first one opened in 1962 and the last one closed in the mid-1970s. The owner, Joel Schiavone, wanted something special to honor the fiftieth anniversary of YFM so he decided to have a reunion concert at Carnegie Hall. What a concert it was! Alumni from 24 states attended with 59 musicians on stage. I was part of the Denver group. The stagehands at Carnegie said they had never seen a concert like this one. Not only was it sold out but from the moment the musicians walked on stage, the crowd responded with a standing ovation. There was clapping and singing through out the concert. The evening was a nostalgic return to the days of when music was a shared activity of community and singing songs from a bygone era.

The other element that led to Carnegie Hall was the 5-string banjo. In high school I was visiting a classmate who had just purchased an open-back banjo for performing in a folk group. When I looked at it and heard the sound, something told me that I needed to have one. My parents bought my first banjo. Shortly thereafter some friends found out that I was playing banjo, so I was asked to join a new rock band that was forming. This led to a second instrument, the guitar. The group was successful playing gigs in the Southern California area where I grew up. The typical venues the group performed at were high school dances, sorority parties, ski areas and a few clubs in Hollywood.

After three years I transferred to the University of Denver to finish my college studies. This was the end of my rock 'n' roll days. Looking to continue playing music, the 5-string banjo became my main instrument again. It was during this



Member John Mumford on plectrum banjo singing "The Denver Song" with Denver YFM alums at Carnegie Hall. The big time!

period of time that I began playing with the YFM Banjo Band. The lead banjo player in the group wanted me to play 5-string banjo on stage, but I found the sound of the plectrum banjo (4-string banjo) intriguing and decided to learn to play it. With this new instrument there were numerous opportunities for performing. Some of the more notable ones were a two-year engagement at a local restaurant, ski areas, Shakey's Pizza Parlor, musical shows and a role in a Shakespeare play. This was an "on stage" part as a performing musician in the play *Troilus and Cressida*. The play is set during the Trojan Wars but the producers of the show converted the play to the civil war period—therefore, the need for a 5-string banjo!

Some of you may be asking how does playing the banjo relate to the steel guitar? The banjo took me in different directions. One direction was back to college. I decided that I needed to learn more about music theory, so I thought that taking a few classes would be all that I needed. Well the instructor who was in charge of the ensembles said that I could also play with the traditional jazz ensemble. This turned out to be a great opportunity since the band was traveling to jazz festivals every year. As time went on, it turned out I had stayed long enough and took enough classes to get a degree in music!

In 2006 a friend of mine encouraged me to attend one of the monthly meetings of the Denver Ukulele Community. Some of their members had created a spin-off group called the Denver Ukulele Orchestra. The purpose of the group was to be a performing group and play for the public. One of the members asked me if I could help the group become better at what they did. This led to a two-year engagement as their music director. The only problem was that I had only just started to play the 'ukulele. However, my college experience not only helped me develop the group but also made learning the 'ukulele easier. A few of the members in the group decided

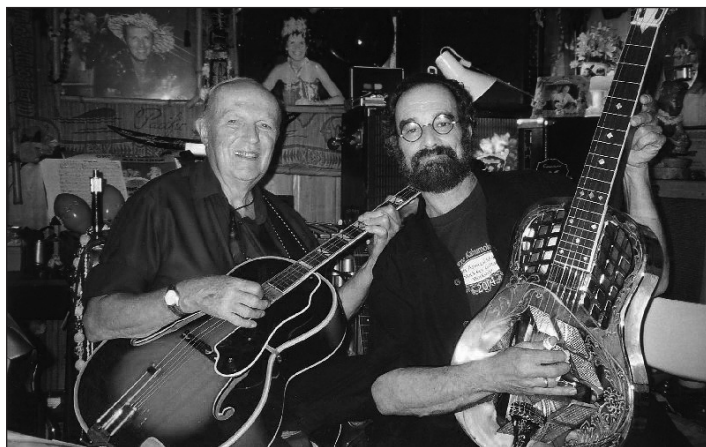
they wanted to form a Hawaiian band. I couldn't pass this up since as a child I was always fascinated with our fiftieth state. In the 1960s I had created my own tiki bar in the basement of my parents' home. I was only 13 or 14 and enjoyed listening to Martin Denny and Arthur Lyman.

Since no one in this new group was from Hawai'i we recruited someone who was familiar with the songs and the language. Her name was Patricia McGinn. We would sit out on the patio in the summertime and learn to sing and play the traditional songs of the Islands. The group called itself Patio 'Ohana. I decided that we needed something else besides just 'ukuleles. I thought that steel guitar would be a great addition, but I had no idea how to learn the instrument.

An Internet search led me to the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association. I purchased Lorene Ruymar's video course on Hawaiian steel guitar, bought a steel guitar extension nut for my guitar, and took up the instrument. I thought I was going to have my first lesson with an instructor when I saw that Gerald Ross was teaching a class at the Portland Uke Festival. By now I had acquired a Weissenborn-style steel guitar. I carried it on the plane along with my uke and headed to Portland. When I got there it turned out that his class was only a demonstration and not a true class. Gerald was kind enough to give me an hour lesson while I was at the festival. Another bonus in attending the festival was getting instruction on the 'ukulele from Lyle Ritz.

For a short period of time I did find an instructor in Denver. He was teaching a dobro class but he also played non-pedal steel in a country band. When I asked him if he could teach me non-pedal steel he was astonished. He said, "No one wants to learn to play that instrument anymore!" After a few months he stopped teaching, but by then I found the online Skype lessons with John Ely. He has been the one thing that has accelerated my playing. Today I play steel guitar with a Hawaiian group called The Hale Kahiki Band. I find playing steel guitar just as rewarding as the days when I played with Your Father's Mustache Banjo Band. ■

George "Keoki" Lake (left) and Bob Brozman in Edmonton (2010).



Jamming with Bob Brozman

We never got a chance to print this story, which George "Keoki" Lake sent us a couple of summers ago. This one more than qualifies for the "better late than never" category.

My wife Mary and I had just returned home from vacation in B.C. last summer when I spotted an article in the local newspaper stating that Bob Brozman would be performing at the blues festival here in Edmonton—our city is noted for its many summer festivals. Apparently the tickets were completely sold out. Also, the event required a long walk across a field which would be rather difficult for Mary. So I emailed Bob that we would be unable to attend his show. However I invited him to our home for a BBQ dinner if he had time after the show.

Bob arrived in Edmonton and called me at noon from a hotel located just six blocks from our home. I renewed the BBQ invitation and he said he would call me around 6 PM [after the show]. When he called, he asked that we stop by. I figured we'd shake hands, renew old times and he would be off to bed to catch his 3 AM flight. To my complete surprise, as we drove up to his hotel, he was outside waiting for us, opened the back door of our car and hopped in! Wow! As soon as we arrived home, we headed for my Polynesian room and commenced jamming!

Bob and I met over 26 years ago in Winchester where we became friends. Bob's mentor was and is the late, great Tau Moe. We would rendezvous in Waikīkī and in later years we played a live show for KCCN at the Royal Hawaiian Shopping Center.

It was during a prior meeting in Waikīkī when the topic of Tau Moe came up. Bob was aware that Tau lived in Hawai'i but wasn't sure exactly where. Tau and I had become great friends over the years, and I mentioned to Bob that I knew Tau. I arranged a visit to Tau's home in La'ie the following Sunday afternoon. It was a wonderful event, especially for Bob to finally meet Tau, and of course a jam session ensued. Mary taped the entire event. I later sent a copy of the tape to Bob in California. I like to think that perhaps this tape may have inspired Bob to head back to La'ie to produce that great LP featuring the Tau Moe Family with Bob. In any event, this fantastic disc was made and is now available on CD. It is a lasting memory of this famous family. Bob and I managed to play together on other occasions over the years—the Bishop Museum and Kailua-Kona come to mind.

Back to the present, Bob and I had a blast together here in Edmonton. He played my new National Tri-cone and also my 1934 dobro. It was very exciting for me to accompany this fine virtuoso and friend. I hardly slept that night! Bob

Continued on Page 20

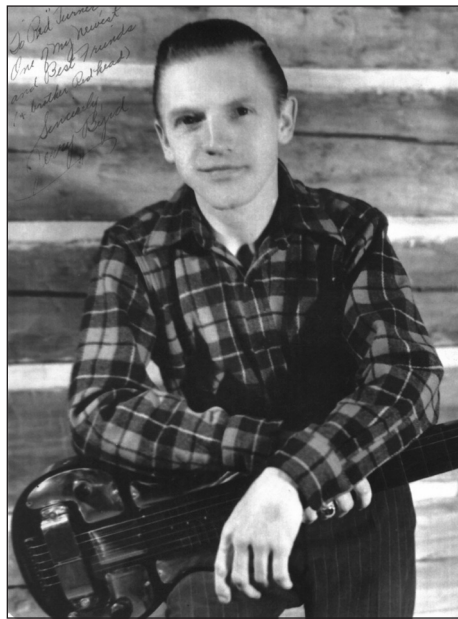
Jerry Byrd's First Recordings, Part I

By Anthony Lis

This three-part article details the first recordings of steel guitarist and HGSA director emeritus Jerry Lester Byrd (1920-2005), made with singer-guitarist Ernie Eli Cornelison (1916-1991) under the name “Happy Valley Boys” for the Bluebird label (a subsidiary, budget imprint of Camden, New Jersey-based RCA Victor records) during an RCA field recording trip to Atlanta in October 1940. Byrd and Cornelison (who later adopted the stage name Ernie Lee) recorded eight sides during the session, which was held at a temporary recording studio in Atlanta’s Kimball House Hotel.

At the time of the recordings, twenty-year-old Byrd had been playing steel guitar as cast member of John Lair’s “Renfro Valley Barn Dance” radio program for a little over twenty months. Lair’s program—broadcast on Cincinnati radio station WLW and carried by the NBC and CBS radio networks—

Jerry Byrd (left), Ernie Cornelison, and Henry “Homer” Haynes, at Renfro Valley, around 1940. (Courtesy of the Special Collections and Archives, Berea College.)



Jerry Byrd around the time he started performing on the “Renfro Valley Barn Dance.” (Used with permission of the Special Collections and Archives, Berea College.)

originated from a specially built “broadcast barn” in Renfro Valley, an early theme park located alongside the Dixie Highway (now U.S. 25) in the hills of south-central Kentucky, about 260 miles south of Byrd’s hometown of Lima, Ohio.

As Byrd explained in his 2003 autobiography *It Was a Trip: On Wings of Music*, he garnered his “Renfro Valley Barn Dance” gig with the help of Lima radio announcer Charles Gordon Shaw. Around 1937, Shaw was the announcer for a locally produced, Saturday afternoon barn dance program on Lima station WBLY, on which Byrd’s Jay Byrd Trio performed. According to Byrd, the Jay Byrds then consisted of circa 18-year-old Byrd on steel guitar, Byrd’s cousin Carl H. Miller on ‘ukulele, and automobile painter Emerson Meyers on rhythm guitar.

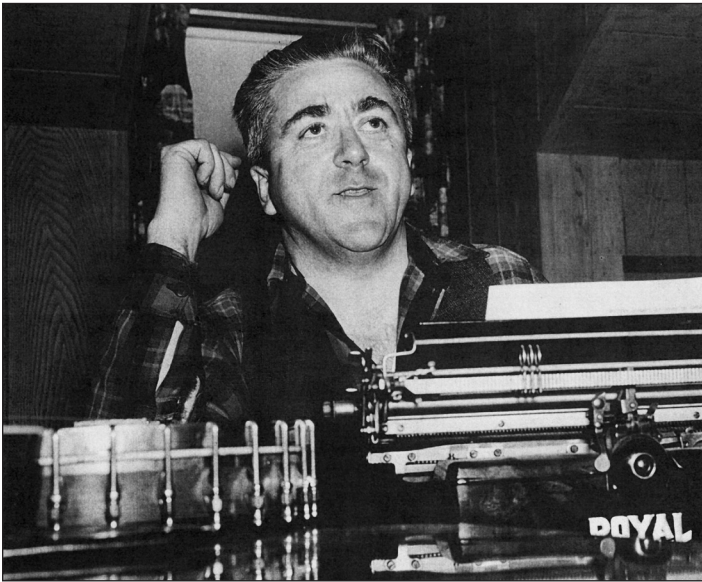
In February 1938 Shaw landed an announcing job in Cincinnati, which entailed working at WSAI and WLW radio. Shaw’s WLW duties included reading commercials for John Lair’s “Renfro Valley Barn Dance” program, which by late 1938 had moved from its

home base of Cincinnati to Memorial Hall in Dayton, north of Cincinnati. As Byrd related (a bit immodestly), “Lair ... heard from Shaw about ‘this terrific young steel guitar player from Lima.’” Heeding Shaw’s recommendation, Lair invited Byrd to travel the fifty-two miles south from Lima to Dayton to appear on two evening performances of his program on January 28, 1939. At the time, Byrd was in the middle of his senior year at Lima Central High School.

On the strength of Byrd’s performances, which included a rendition of Sam Koki’s “Paradise Isle” and perhaps the recent *hapa haole* song “My Little Grass Shack in Kealakekua, Hawai‘i,” Lair offered Byrd a place on the weekly broadcast of the “Renfro Valley Barn Dance.” On January 31, Byrd’s hometown newspaper, the *Lima News*, announced Byrd’s achievement in a three-paragraph story on page four titled “Local Guitar Player Joins Renfro Show.” The story related that Byrd was replacing West Virginia-born steel guitarist and radio musician George Clayton (“Custer”) Allen (1907-1943), who had appeared on the program in the preceding weeks.

Byrd continued traveling down to Dayton to appear on Lair’s barn dance program through the remainder of his senior year. A contract in the Berea (Ky.) College archives show that Byrd eventually signed a three-year agreement with Lair on June 1, 1939. After his graduation from Lima Central High, Byrd continued his performances throughout the summer in between helping his father paint houses in Lima.

In late fall 1939, John Lair moved the Renfro Valley Barn Dance from Dayton to a remote area of south-central Kentucky from which the show got its name, Renfro Valley, along the north bank of Renfro Creek. Byrd, in his words, “packed some clothes, grabbed my steel guitar and amplifier and headed for Kentucky,” having sold all his 78 rpm records—including Hawaiian recordings by Dick McIntire,



John Lair at his typewriter perhaps typing up a “Renfro Valley Barn Dance” script? (Used with permission of the Special Collections and Archives, Berea College.)

Sam Koki, and Andy Iona—for four or five cents each to raise money for bus fare.

During his first three months in Renfro Valley, Byrd lived in one of the little log “tourist cabins” Lair had local builders construct to accommodate overnight visitors, before moving to a boarding house in Berea, about fourteen miles up the Dixie Highway to the north.

Byrd must have met Ernie Cornelison in Renfro Valley in late 1939. Cornelison—Byrd’s senior by nearly four years—was born in Berea. In his early teens, Cornelison learned to play the guitar from inmates at the Madison County jail in the neighboring county seat town of Richmond, where his father served as jailer. In his late teens and early twenties, Cornelison played in several local bands and also served a stint as an assembly line worker at one of Henry Ford’s factories in Detroit before returning to Berea, where he took up truck driving and house painting and played for parties when he could.

Cornelison appeared on the “Renfro Valley Barn Dance” during the show’s first broadcast from Renfro Valley on November 4, 1939, filling in for the show’s regular host—future country music star Red Foley—who had been stricken ill. Cornelison’s successful performance, which included a rendition of “The Yellow Rose of Texas,” led to him being offered a permanent spot on the show some two months later.

Byrd related in *It Was a Trip* that he and Cornelison “soon became fast friends and gradually ended up as a duo, even though nothing was ever said to that effect,” adding that “it seemed natural. He [Cornelison] played rhythm guitar very well, so I was able to do many solo instrumentals [as a result].”

Sometime in 1940, John Lair, with the assistance of Berea photographer Coleman Ogg and Chicago art studio manager Jerry Bryant, produced a booklet titled *Renfro Valley Keepsake*. The publication introduced Lair’s listeners to his barn dance cast members and touted his entertainment complex’s attractions, which, in addition to the performance barn and tourist cabins, included a restored gristmill, the one-room log schoolhouse Lair attended in his youth, and a lodge with an in-house restaurant, gift shop, post office, and music library.

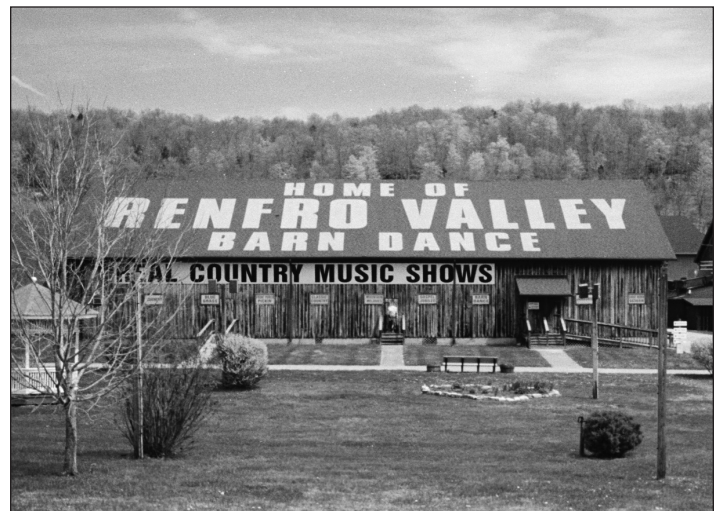
Concerning Jerry Byrd, the *Keepsake* noted that “Jerry is the boy who plays that beautiful Hawaiian guitar music you hear behind most of the sentimental numbers put on the air from Renfro Valley,” implying that Byrd was doing a great deal of backup work in addition to his solo performances. The *Keepsake* also relayed that “[Jerry] also works in the music library during the week,” describing the circa twenty-one-year-old performer as “a clever musician, and a good fellow.”

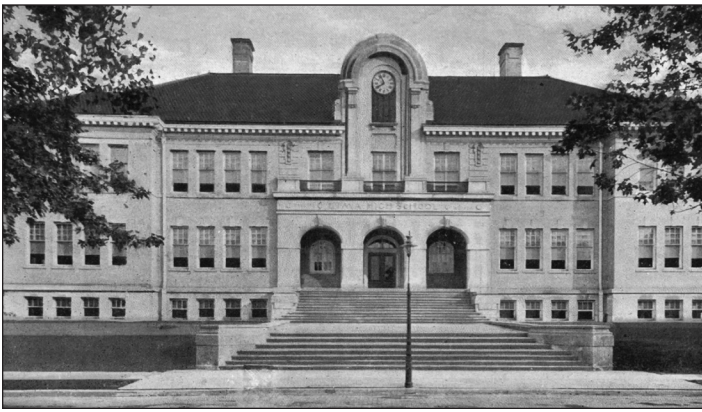
According to the *Keepsake*, John Lair had built up Renfro Valley’s music library through thirty years of book collecting. The *Keepsake* also related that Lair’s collection—which contained examples of folk music and sheet music for songs popular through the time of World War I—was “used by all the boys and girls appearing on the Renfro Valley broadcasts...” Lair encouraged the young musicians in his employ to scour the music library for folk tunes to perform during the show’s weekly airings.

The *Keepsake* described Ernie Cornelison as likely “the first person to greet you when you drive up to the Renfro Valley Lodge,” noting that Ernie “looks after the comfort of overnight guests to the extent of seeing that they are properly housed [in the tourist cabins],” adding that “that man-sized baritone you hear on many broadcasts belongs to Ernie.”

Continued on Page 16

The refurbished “old barn” at Renfro Valley, a venue that thrives to this day. (Photo taken by Anthony Lis on April 13, 2011.)





Lima Central High School, where Jerry Byrd was attending twelfth grade when he played his January 28, 1939 audition for John Lair's "Renfro Valley Barn Dance" program.

JERRY BYRD'S FIRST RECORDINGS Continued from Page 15

In *It Was a Trip*, Byrd speaks of he and Cornelison "[receiving] word that we would go to Atlanta and record eight sides for RCA Bluebird Records," suggesting that the two had been in prior contact with RCA about reserving a place in the label's field recording trip lineup.

Once Byrd and Cornelison's place on RCA's recording docket was confirmed, Cornelison sought advice on fashioning song introductions from fellow Renfro Valley cast members Henry Haynes (1920-1971) and Kenneth Burns (1920-1989). Guitarist Haynes and mandolinist Burns had joined the "Renfro Valley Barn Dance" cast sometime in 1939, and the two would soon attain national fame as the comedy duo Homer and Jethro.

Cornelison found Haynes's suggestions to be particularly helpful. As he recalled in a 1976 interview with Douglas B. Green, "Homer and Jethro were working in Renfro [Valley] with us ... [in the fall of 1940, and they] showed me a little introduction for a tune or two that I could use on my [Atlanta] recording session... I said, "I need an introduction for this [song]," and Homer showed me. He was always so good to show you about the guitar... Boy, he was a musician. Whew!"

Byrd and Cornelison's Atlanta recordings took place on October 9, 1940, in rooms 104 and 106 of the mammoth Kimball House Hotel, which occupied an entire city block in the Five Points area of downtown Atlanta. (The hotel was demolished in 1959 and replaced by a parking garage and retail stores, the latter apparently now abandoned.)

Other acts recorded by RCA Victor during their Atlanta field recording sojourn included Bill Monroe's Bluegrass Boys (who cut their first eight sides two days before Byrd and Cornelison recorded), Roy Hall's Roanoke-based Blue Ridge Entertainers, and the Birmingham area African-American gospel quartet the Four Great Wonders.

Monroe's bassist, Billy Westbrook, in his 1979 autobiography *Everybody's Cousin*, relayed memories of RCA Victor's October 1940 field recording sessions along with thoughts on the general state of contemporary field recording, recalling that "they did [recording] ... [differently] from what they do now... [RCA] rented two rooms together with big sliding doors, and they took and hung quilts on the walls to make the sound a little better. All the instruments recorded on one microphone. The lights would come on and you knew it was time to start recording... [You'd] cut [your tune on] ... a two-inch thick [block] ... of beeswax ... about sixteen, maybe eighteen inches across."

Westbrook added that once the recording masters had been made, they were fitted into specially made slots in steamer locker trunks and shipped back separately by train to RCA Victor's Camden headquarters for record printing.

Next, in Part Two of this series, details on Byrd and Cornelison's recordings, an eclectic mix of sides, including Cornelison's arrangement of a minstrel tune from the 1870s and a contemporary reworking of a so-called "black dialect" song from the 1880s (perhaps "discovered" by Byrd or Cornelison in John Lair's music library?). The duo's other recordings included a recently composed song by Cornelison and four tunes from the 1930s: a humorous song by Lair, a current hillbilly music hit, and instrumental renditions of two Hawaiian *hapa haole* tunes.

Information on Ernie Cornelison's early years and Cornelison's recollections of the events leading up to his 1940 recordings with Jerry Byrd were taken from his February 26, 1976 interview with Douglas B. Green in Tampa, Florida, conducted as part of the Country Music Foundation's Oral History Project (interview OH90). Information on Byrd and Cornelison's Atlanta recordings were taken from RCA "session sheet" 018-0154 held by the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. Thanks to Harry Rice, Sound Archivist at Berea College, for his assistance in obtaining Renfro Valley era photos of Byrd and Cornelison. Thanks also to Lima-born Lee W. Brentlinger for his suggestions and assistance, including information on Lima's public school system. ■

Treasurer's Report

(as of September 30, 2011)

General Fund	\$22,163.14
Scholarship Fund	\$14,600.53
Joliet Checking	\$3,887.93
Japan Account	\$2,561.12
Grand Total	\$43,212.72

The 'Bender' Steel Prototype

By Capt. Ivan L. Reddington

I started thinking about the project when Phil Bender and I discussed the fact that some people have difficulty finding a cheap guitar to learn steel playing. In particular, Phil was interested in providing affordable steel guitars for students in Hawai'i. Phil thought that by using inexpensive materials he could build such an instrument. I told him that I would subsidize the experiment and promote it by playing it at conventions as long as I got the first one! I wanted it to be an eight-string since I already own a number of sixes. Here's Phil to talk more about the technical aspects of the design:

"Thinking about simplicity, I thought that a section of structural aluminum tubing would serve well as body-neck combination. The dealer found a section of tubing 2" by 4.5" by 36" in the 6061T6 alloy. I was cautioned about using tubing because of resonance that might produce a hollow or tinny sound. I used a piece of hard maple for the headstock and hand-carved it to fit the tubing. I also used a piece of maple for the end cap on the pickup end. For the prototype, I used the P-90 pickup from my 1954 Console Grande steel guitar. I designed a fretboard to Ivan's specs with colored markers at 12-fret intervals. I wanted to personalize the guitar for him so near the pickup I placed the name 'Ali'ikoa's Ho'opili', which means "the Captain's Stick" in Hawaiian.

"The scale length is the standard short scale, 22.5 inches. The string spacing is .390 inches at the bridge and .312 at the nut. The only reason for the taper is that my Gibson console



Phil Bender (left), Ivan Reddington and the new 'Bender' steel.

was like that as I recall. The tuners are Grovers. I used the roller bridge mechanism I made last year for my guitar with the tuning changer, the one that was covered in the Spring 2009 *Quarterly*. (I'm still working on that guitar by the way.) My shop is very, very small and includes a drill press, precision lathe, band saw, scroll saw, table saw, miter saw, and all sorts of sanding, routing, and buffing equipment."

It's me [Ivan] again. Well, with the hard-shell case Phil built, the cost of the guitar came to around \$425. I asked him to put the 'Bender' name on the guitar so he would get credit for the design. At my suggestion, he used red, white and blue trim on the front of the guitar like the airplanes I flew for American Airlines. He also placed the airline's eagle logo on the guitar.

After all of his efforts, I picked up the guitar at his home in Plantation, Florida. I decided to use it at the Joliet convention since I could carry it with me in the cabin of an airliner. It works fine but proved to be more expensive than we had planned—possibly too expensive to make on a large scale. It was very demanding and time-intensive work for Phil. A final word from Phil:

"The 2011 Joliet Convention was the first time I heard it played through a real good amp and it proved to be a good sounding instrument, so I am very pleased. If they were to be produced in quantity, we would change the headstock to a piece of half-inch aluminum and close up the tubing around it. We would change the fretboard to acrylic construction, silk screened on the back side, and would do without the roller bridge to further reduce cost. If the project were to go forward, we would probably have a lot of the basic work done off-site, and only do the assembly and finishing here. To go into full-on production we would need additional funding, donation of parts such as the wood, nuts, bridges, and machined parts." ■

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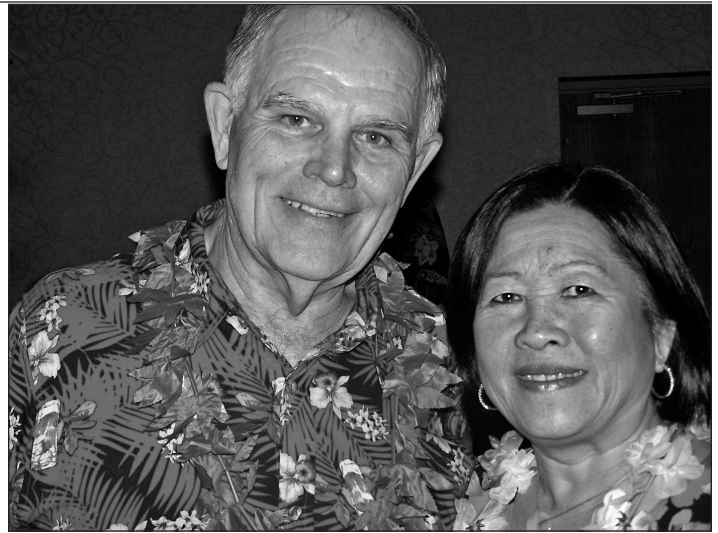
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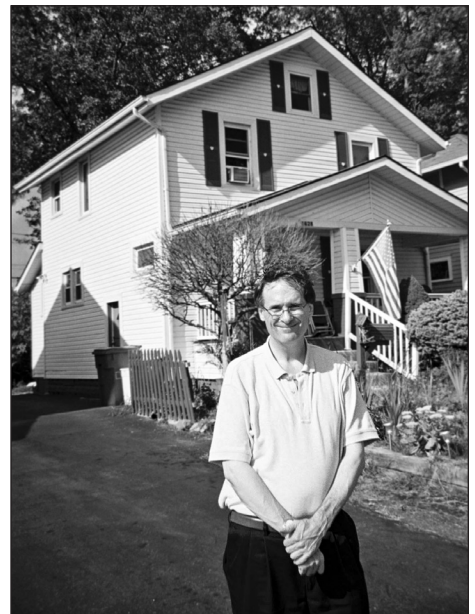
(Clockwise from upper left) Joliet Guest Artist Greg Sardinha with Jamie O’Connell and Chris Kennison; “Judge” Joe and Joanne Fox from Olney, Illinois; The Barefoot Hawaiian dancers making their second appearance at Joliet—kumu Gwen Kennedy (left), Gabriela Mejia, Susan Juskey, and Tina Reyes; Chris Kennison’s student Tony Fourcroy playing a great set; Texas member and world traveler Ernie Coker; and Texas member Herbert West, who plays hymns at the church where he serves as pastor.





From the Archives

(Clockwise from upper left) The Abrigo 'Ohana—Emily, Quinn, and Timi—with the late Ronald Kanahele; Isaac “Doc” Akuna on steel with Dennis “Bla” Keohokalole and James “Kimo” Stone at the Royal Hawaiian Shopping Center; another great shot of young Lorene Ruymar with the Club Aces dance band; Anthony Lis posing in front of Jerry Byrd’s childhood home; HSGA scholarship steel student Alexis Tolentino; and Duke Kaleolani Ching performing at the Honolulu Convention earlier this year.



E Komo Mai! Welcome, New Members

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JIM KABAGE, 356 Eastmoor Ave, Daly City, CA 94015
RON KEMPKE, 804 Shurts Street, Urbana, IL 61801
RON MIELZYNSKI, 803 Ridgeland St., Fox River Grove, IL 60021
ROBERT H. MOECKLY, P.O. Box 153, Saint Helena, CA 94574-0153
RUSTY STRANGE, c/o 31 Davis Road, Falmouth, MA 02540
WILLIAM STRICKLAND, 115 N. 16th St., Wilmington, NC 28401
RANJIT WAHI, 8 Cascade Ct. W., Burr Ridge, IL 60527
LARRY WOOD, 129 Harris Grove Rd., Humboldt, TN 38343

HONG YI SHI Continued from Page 6

the convention to be his interpreter. Hong is a student at Michigan State University where he is studying for his masters degree in music performance in cello. He previously received his bachelor's degree from John Hopkins University. Hong Hong and Hong Yi Shi both said their stay at the convention was a very enjoyable and relaxing experience. ■

China's Hong Yi Shi (left) hamming it up with Guest Artist Greg Sardinha at Joliet.



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doing it for some 20 years now and has never missed a year. In all, it was good, old-fashioned fun Hawaiian style with great food and entertainment. I'm already making plans for next year's Joliet bash!"

From Duke Kaleolani Ching

Everyone enjoyed Greg Sardinha's performances. I played two sets plus the opening program with Kamaka Tom who did the *pule* (prayer). Everyone enjoyed the Barefoot Hawaiians, who danced for us for the first time last year. It makes all the difference in the world to have dancers from the same *halau*. We used to have to recruit dancers at large, which meant lots of work piecing the show together from scratch. These girls did an awesome job dancing to the *toele* drum beat and live music throughout the floor show.

I used my wireless microphone headset and in-ear monitors, which worked just great, giving me more mobility when performing and talking for the floor show.

Changed Email?

Please send email changes to John Ely at johnely@hawaiiansteel.com. Mahalo!

About the Barefoot Hawaiians

Barefoot Hawaiians *kumu* Gwen Kennedy sent us the following little note about The Barefoot Hawaiian dancers who made their second appearance at Joliet this year:

"The dancers represent our company, The Barefoot Hawaiian, Inc., which has been based in Des Plaines, Illinois for the past 29 years. We are a professional team of dancers, both men and women, who perform for a variety of events such as corporate parties, weddings, parades, TV promotions, sports halftimes, and private celebrations. Training all year long, the dancers enjoy spreading the Spirit of Aloha nationwide. Displaying costuming and dances from Hawai'i, Tahiti, New Zealand, Fiji and Samoa, our audiences get a taste of the islands of Polynesia. A highlight of our shows is the audience participation segments as well as the Samoan fire knife dance."

We got many nice comments about the Barefoot Hawaiian dancers. You can send them your comments or get more information at: www.barefoot-hawaiian.com. ■

BOB BROZMAN Continued from Page 13

left after two and a half hours of jamming as he had to get some sleep prior to catching his 3 AM flight. Otherwise, I'm certain we would have jammed well past midnight!

By the way, to my dismay, I completely forgot about the BBQ dinner and apologized to Bob via email. No huhu. He had eaten at the festival. Music was "food" for both of us! ■

Please Contact Us!

Send news, comments and/or photos to: HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waiomao Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424. Email us at hsga@hsga.org and copy to johnely@hawaiiansteel.com. We love photos, but for print we need high quality originals or hi-rez digital camera output. Mahalo!