

HSGA QUARTERLY

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by the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association

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Inside this Issue...

- 2 Joliet 2012 Hawaiian Music Festival Report (cont.)
- 5 Members Corner – News and Photos from Members
- 5 “Joliet 2012 Mahalos” from Wally Pfeifer
- 6 “Honolulu Convention Preview” from Kamaka Tom
- 7 Coco Wire – News and Member Gossip
- 7 Buy & Sell – Member Advertisements
- 8 Japan News – from Japan Coordinator Tom Tohma
- 10 “... Hilo Hattie Does the Hilo Hop” – Steel Arrangement
- 12 “Byrd-Lee RCA Recordings, Part I” by Anthony Lis
- 16 “My Love For Hawai'i” by Rajnish Sethi
- 17 Disc ‘n’ Data – Recordings Review
- 18 “A Sol Ho’opi’i Steel Guitar Lives On!” by Tim Mech
- 19 Closing Notes – Ernest Paul Coker



A Hawaiian-style “thumbs up” at our first Joliet Hawaiian Music Festival. (l. to r.) Guest Artist, Alan Akaka from Kailua, Hawai'i; Carol Hidy and Don Fullmer; and Dave Kolars.

Joliet Festival: Something for Everybody

From Reporting HSGA Members

From the Williams Twins (Joanne Parker and Janis Crum)

Aloha to all our HSGA VIPs and friends. Janis had the privilege of writing last year. I have the honor of writing this year.

What a great convention! You folks sure know how to do it up right. Wasn't the music great?! Our sister Bev Notestine attended the convention for the first time. She said, “Wow, they are all so friendly and full of fun.” She loved it. Our other guests were from Indiana and California. They came last year for the first time. It speaks well for the club. Now our challenge is to get them playing the guitars.

A special thanks goes out to all of you who worked so hard to make the convention such a success. We must say those cute little wahines behind the registration table, Donna Miller and Peg Pfeiffer, sure did a bang-up job keeping us up to date on the convention. Great job, gals! Wally [Pfeiffer] is a bundle of information; Janis will email him and he will have an answer back in a split second! Now look at Don Weber. There's a man who keeps you on your toes during your 25 minutes on stage. Yes—exactly 25 minutes! Haha! We're sure it's not an easy task to do but a job that is very well done.

We really enjoyed the “Talk Story” with Akan Akaka. It was very exciting

Continued on Page 2

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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.

JOLIET REPORT *Continued from Page 1*

and a great learning experience. Janis wanted to attend the 'ukulele session with Gerald Ross but she forgot her 'ukulele. It must have been her age. I wouldn't have forgotten!

Last but not least, our traditional Saturday Night Lū'au. Wow! What a feast. The food was so good and the fellowship of friends, fabulous! It certainly brought the Aloha Spirit right into the room.

Janis and I would like to thank all who participated in the lū'au. We send Duke Ching and the crew a big mahalo. It was an evening of great memories. Alan Akaka did a fantastic job during the lū'au show. He is such a "people person." He really had his audience in the palm of his hand. It makes us want to go back to Hawai'i just to hear him play and sing. Thanks again for coming, Alan. Just mingling among all our friends after the lū'au, taking pictures and keeping the Aloha Spirit going made it difficult to draw the evening to a close but it did. Now we can start thinking about 2013!

On a closing note we were sorry to learn that Andy Barlo's mom passed away during the convention. We saw them leave in a hurry and thought something must have happened.

We want to leave you with one short funny story. Some friends of ours asked Dick, Janis's hubby, "How did your trip to Joliet go?" With his sense of humor, he said, "Oh, it went very well! Can you picture a car carrying four adults, two guitars, a guitar stand, costumes, wardrobes for three women for five days plus myself and their big amplifier?? Oh, yes! Did I mention *plus* all our personal luggage? But, I had a real break. It was raining when we left, otherwise Janis would have tied me on top of the car!!

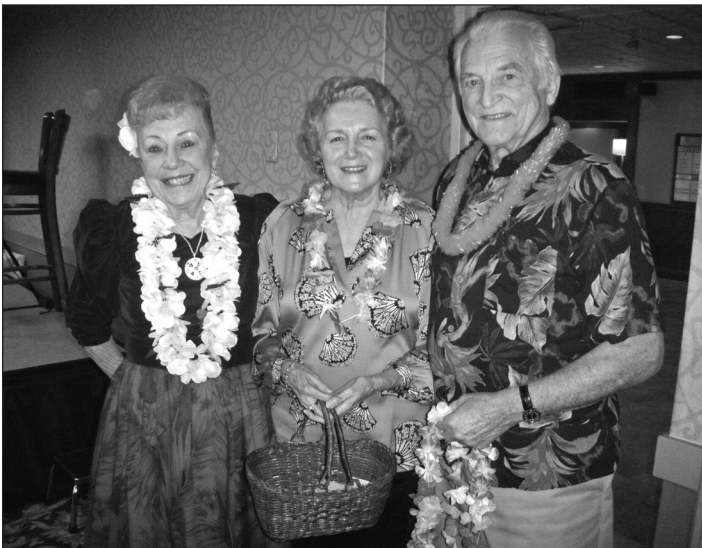
From Chris Kennison (Colorado)

There was so much going on this year at our annual gathering, I don't know if I can remember it all! We had great music, seminars, talk story and ono grinds. I always gain five pounds after a few meals at Syl's and Al's. Yum.

Our Guest of Honor this year was Alan Akaka. He is a past president of

Always a hit at Joliet conventions, the Williams Twins: Joanne Parker (left) and Janis Crum (right), pictured with their sister Bev Notestine, a first-time attendee at Joliet.





Working the door at the lū'au with smiles to spare, ticket-taker Dee Reddington (center) and lei greeters Rhetta Riggs and Jay Zinn.

HSGA and a world class entertainer. In addition to running his successful music school on O'ahu, Ke Kula Mele Hawai'i (www.kekulamele.com), Alan performs and teaches in Japan and on the Mainland. He also finds time to teach students via Skype (on the Internet).

Four of his students performed this year on stage. Tony Fourcroy from Ft. Collins, Jack Aldrich from Washington State, Addison Ching from Hawai'i, and Mark Prucha who lives in Illinois. Tony and Mark did a great duet playing Alan's arrangement of "Ku'u Ipo I Ka He'e Pue One." And Addison, Jack and Mark joined Alan on stage during one of Alan's sets playing "Nani Waimea." Alan arranged the song so each player could take an extended solo and show their stuff. It was lovely.

Derrick Mau was another great player from Hawai'i this year. He's studied with Lorene Ruymar and plays regularly in Hawai'i. He not only plays great steel guitar but has a wonderful singing voice that I'd never heard 'til this year. Look for Derrick's shows in Hawai'i when you are there!

On Thursday evening Alan Akaka led our traditional "Talk Story" session. This is a unique time to sit down with our guest artist and just share information. Alan took questions from the audience and shared stories about his music, his students and school, and stories of playing for audiences and fans in Japan.

Friday brought more great steel guitar to the stage and some great jam sessions after dinner. Jamming is a tradition at music festivals. At HSGA it's big fun! One advantage of our smaller festival size is that you often get to jam with the guest artists and get to know them a bit better. I always learn something at a late night jam. It's not often you can sit a few feet from world class steel players and watch what they do, ask questions, and join in. This sharing of music, friendship,

and more talk story about guitars, strings, bars and such always yields new insights for me.

This year's Joliet Hawaiian Music Festival added a variety of seminars on Saturday in addition to our traditional steel guitar showcase. This drove our attendance up a bit over 2011. All day Saturday, attendees could check out the 'ukulele, slack key, steel guitar and music technology workshops. All these workshops were taught by HSGA members save one; Terry Truhart from Chicago came over and taught some 'ukulele sessions in the morning. Most seminars were well attended and really added to the enjoyment of folks who spent the day with us on Saturday. Our mission in HSGA is to continue to promote Hawaiian steel and Hawaiian music, and these seminars gave many folks a way to learn more about the music we all cherish.

Saturday evening, of course, was lū'au time! We had lovely hula dancers again from the Barefoot Hawaiians in Chicago. They were backed up by a fantastic band led by our own Duke Ching. Duke creates the lū'au show from scratch each year with the talents of those in attendance. Alan performed a final set of excellent music to end the lū'au show and then it was time to say 'Aloha'.

I was so busy running seminars and backing up other folks on stage I didn't get to hear and see all the great players this year, but that's my fault. There's so much to do at the Joliet Festival—you can't see it all. I look forward to next year and more great music, learning and friendship.

From Duke Ching (California)

Once again I directed the traditional Hawaiian music and dance portion of the show, which featured the Barefoot

Continued on Page 4

A nice shot of our lū'au floorshow director Duke Kaleolani Ching (foreground), and guitarist and HSGA Board member Ian Ufton.



Hawaiians from Chicago with *kumu* Gwen Kennedy, Gabriela Mejia, Susan Juskey, and Tina Reyes. The hula maidens open the show with a Tahitian 'ōte'a dance wearing wraparound *pareos* (skirts) with the traditional beating of the *tō'ere* and drums.

The backup band included Addison Ching on bass, Ian Ufton on guitar, Kamaka Tom on uke and myself on steel guitar. Alan, Kamaka and I shared the vocal duties.

Alan Akaka performed phenomenally as always on his portion of the show. The evening ended with a final song from Alan and then we all sang our traditional "Hawaii Aloha" and said goodnight, goodbye and aloha to everyone.

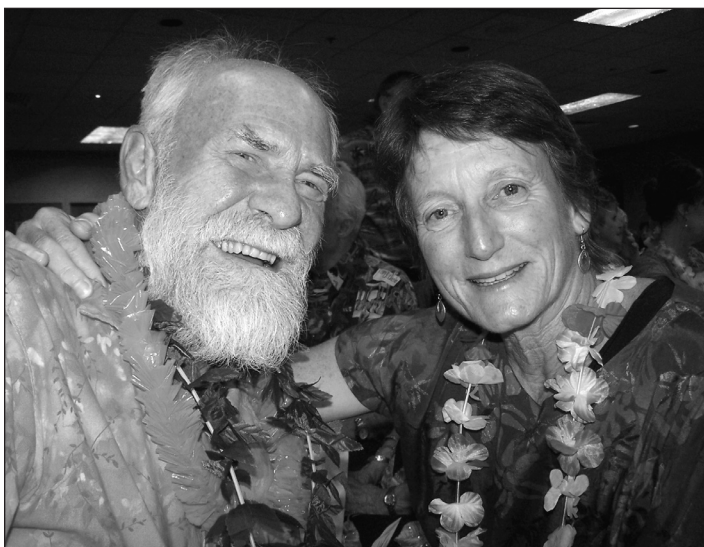
From Paul Warnik (Illinois)

I had a great time at the Joliet festival this year! It is always great to see my good friends Evelyn Brue-Roeder and Kay Koster in good health and still playing their hearts out. Recent club member Dr. John Troutman (University of Louisiana-Lafayette) came by on Saturday and did interviews with Evelyn and Kay for inclusion in a book that he's in process of authoring about the history of the steel guitar. In days prior, he had gained access to the Eddie Alkire archive and collection in the Sousa Center at the University of Illinois at Champaign, which we mentioned in the Spring 2012 newsletter.

I was also very proud that Helen Coker (and daughter Linda) came so soon after her husband Ernie's passing. He will be remembered as a good friend and true gentleman.

I have to say that the best moment for me was sitting alone with Kamaka Tom in the lobby while he was warming up on his JB Frypan. He asked me what tune he could play

At the Saturday Night Lū'au, Rusty Strange and friend Laurie Raymond. We heard they came by train all the way from Cape Cod!



Member Don Kellett playing his Weissenborn-style steel with the Hot Club of Mars, a gypsy swing band from Vancouver, BC.

for me. I requested "Sand." And then one of my favorites, "Lovely Hula Hands." As Kamaka serenaded me in dreamland off to the Islands, I couldn't help but feel as peaceful as I've felt since my last dose of nitrous in the dentist's chair a few months ago. Haha!

From John Mumford (Colorado)

This was my first time at Joliet. I have been going to music festivals for several years, and I found this one to be more of a club gathering—everyone knew each other—rather than just an event open to the general public. Alan Akaka was a great headliner/special guest. His music was very rich in sound and he was very good at connecting with the audience. Every time he played I learned something new. I especially enjoyed his workshop. I found that everyone had different ideas on technique, but Alan would analyze different players and talk about the pros and cons of using different equipment and techniques. I can see why he has been successful with all of his students.

I tried to attend every activity and event. I also ate most of my meals at the hotel, but unfortunately I seemed to have met more first time attendees rather than some of the more established members.

The food at the lū'au was great as well as the entertainment. There was a lot of variety in the songs played so that I now have new songs to learn. I also enjoyed the enthusiasm of the Williams Twins with their matching outfits and the wonderful music they played. I was only able to attend the jam session on Saturday night, but the room that was provided for the session had only two other players beside myself. One of them was Gerald Ross. It seems that the other players thought the room was too cold and stayed in the big

Continued on Page 20

MEMBERS CORNER

Don Kellett, Vancouver, BC

This from member Don Kellett about his band Hot Club of Mars (www.HotClubOfMars.com) that features some steel guitar playing: “We are a gypsy jazz band based on the style of Django Reinhardt and the Hot Club of France. We are based in Vancouver but we also perform around British Columbia. The leader of the band is Michael Dunn, guitarist and world-renowned luthier. He specializes in the gypsy jazz models but also builds acoustic steels in the Weissenborn and Knutsen styles including Harp Hawaiian guitars—16 strings on that baby! The band is the latest incarnation of a band started by Michael almost 30 years ago known as the Kitalano Kat Kickers.

“While we are not a Hawaiian-themed band, the steel guitar is an important part of our repertoire and we always play some steel in our shows. Michael learned to play steel from his association with Bob Brozman. He plays a Tri-cone resonator with the band, using the G low-bass tuning. I play steel on some numbers, a Weissenborn-style guitar that Michael made for me tuned to A6th or B11th. It is solid koa and has a brilliant sound. And with Greg Sardinha now playing with the Hot Club of Hulaville—who knows?—maybe they will invite us to a gig someday!” [ED: You can check out their sound by going to the above website or by doing a YouTube search on ‘hot club of mars’.]

J.F. Connolly, Bound Brook, New Jersey

I’m enjoying the three-part article about Jerry Byrd’s early recordings with Ernie Lee. There was a point in the early ‘50s when a New York broadcast affiliate, probably WNBC-TV, carried a weekday noonish show from WLW Cincinnati with Ernie Lee, Jerry Byrd, and probably Zeke and Zeb Turner and Louie Innis. I watched that when I could. I remember Jerry once or twice disappointed his fans by playing stand-up bass instead of steel guitar. Ernie and Jerry made a really nice recording together called “My Mother’s Smile.” I’m sorry to see from the article that Ernie passed away (in 1991, I believe the article said). He was also on the Midwestern Hayride with Jerry and the others when the NBC-TV network carried it. On April 29, 2012 another former WLW performer passed away, singer-yodeler Kenny Roberts. Kenny and Jerry made several records together including “Jealous Heart,” “There’s a Bluebird on Your Windowsill,” “A Mighty Pretty Waltz,” and others. A few years ago Kenny told radio/TV personality Joe Franklin that he had also done some children’s programs when on WLW. I heard Kenny and Jerry on an early morning WLW country radio show that I stumbled onto while radio station surfing one morning. [ED: Thanks so much, James. I’m sure the author of our series, Anthony Lis, will be interested to read this.] ■

Joliet 2012 Mahalos

From Wally Pfeifer

Now that our Joliet Hawaiian Music Festival is over, I have my personal list of people to send my mahalo to. First and most important are the members and guests who attended to make our festival the very success that we believe it was. Mahalo to you all.

Mahalo to Donna Miller and Peg Pfeifer who sat at the registration desk for three days signing up attendees, selling lū‘au tickets and taking care of all the paperwork. We couldn’t have done it without them.

Mahalo to Chris Kennison who took charge of organizing the various workshops along with Gerald Ross, Alan Akaka and Terry Truhart. I know they were a huge success as I have heard people comment on them.

Mahalo to Elaine Barlo and the Williams Twins for selling raffle tickets, and a big mahalo to Kaleo Byrd, Donna Miller and Peg Pfeifer for donating the prizes for the raffle. This raffle raised \$179 for the Scholarship Fund.

Mahalo to Dee Reddington for taking tickets at the lū‘au. Nobody got by her without a ticket! And mahalo to lei greeters Rhetta Riggs and Jay Zinn at the lū‘au. I went through the line twice to get an extra greeting from Rhetta. Sweet!

Mahalo to the Williams Twins, Rick Aiello, Don Woods and their backup groups for the pre-lū‘au music. Nice! And to Duke Ching for planning and presenting the lū‘au show. I’ve lost track of the number of years that Duke has done this for us. And mahalo to soundmen Dave Chapman and John Hatton. Mahalo to Kamaka Tom for all his help.

Mahalo several times to our Honored Guest, Alan Akaka for his music, his workshop and just for being there. In addition, during one of his sets, Alan Akaka conducted a song request. For Alan to play your song, you had to put a donation of any amount into a ‘ukulele case. This raised another \$136 for the Scholarship Fund. Mahalo, all!

Last, but by far not the least, mahalo to our Joliet Chairman, Don Weber. He is busy all year meeting with the hotel for contracts, arranging for hula dancers, contacting sound people, and the list goes on and on. Next year we will double his pay. Zero times two is zero. Enjoy it, Don.

I have come to the point where I must relate to you my most touching moments of the whole festival (sigh). Although my favorite Hawaiian song is not “Blue Hawaii,” in a short time during the festival, I’d have to say it was my absolute favorite. The moment happened with Alan Akaka playing “Blue Hawaii,” Kamaka Tom singing “Blue Hawaii” and with Terry Cass silently singing “Blue Hawaii” in sign language. Not a hula but just a gentle swaying along with Terry signing the song. Beautiful! Thank you Alan, Kamaka and Terry. You sure made my day! ■

Honolulu Convention Preview

From Kamaka Tom, Honolulu Convention Coordinator

The 2013 Honolulu Convention will be held Monday, April 29 through Thursday, May 2 in the Peacock Room of the Queen Kapi'olani Hotel from 9 AM to 3 PM except for Wednesday, May 1, when HSGA will provide live steel guitar music by members at the annual Lei Day Festival in nearby Kapi'olani Park.

We are asking all who plan on attending to pre-register as soon as you can—we must meet the hotel's quota of 50 paying guests. The pre-registration fee of \$120 per person may be paid by PayPal (via our website at www.hsga.org) or by check or money order to: 2013 Honolulu HSGA Convention, 2434 Waioma'o Road, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96816-3424. This non-refundable fee covers your daily buffet luncheon in the Peacock Room and also covers our daily rental for the Peacock Room. We are asking that pre-registration be received in Honolulu by April 7. Convention registration forms will be sent with the upcoming Winter newsletter, but we recommend that you get the fee to us sooner than that, so we can be assured of our deal with the hotel. The fee for walk-in registration is: \$15 per day, \$40 if ordering lunch. The lunch price is on a space-available basis as seating is limited.

The Queen Kapi'olani Hotel will again be offering a discount on rooms for members staying during the week of our activities.

Several Hawaiian steel guitar related events may be on tap during convention week, including the "Lei of Stars" evening event on May 1 sponsored by the Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame and the annual "Legends of Steel" concert and

At the Joliet Saturday Night Lū'au, steeler Kay Das (left) with Joliet member Theresa Lopez and her friend Al Gencur.



Secretary-Treasurer Kamaka Tom (left), our "go to" guy in Honolulu, pictured here with Missouri member Ray Franson at Joliet.

luncheon, tentatively set for Saturday, May 4 and sponsored by the Maiki Aiu Foundation. Both organizations have websites that list these events and related information. Also in the works is the 2013 Henry Allen Steel Guitar Festival, which will be coordinated by Alan Akaka.

Please feel free to contact me prior to making your air and hotel arrangements for the latest regarding the convention. Write me at the above address or email me at gktom007@yahoo.com; Tel: 808-392-4583. Look also for updates on our website at www.hsga.org. ■

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COCO WIRE

From **Ron Simpson** just after this year's Joliet festival: "On October 21 my wife and I went out to dinner at the Tiki Terrace in Des Plaines, Illinois. This is the year around place for all things Hawaiian in Northern Illinois. When Nancy and I sat down at our table before the show started, who should be up on stage with steel guitar in hand but **Mark Prucha**. The show featured the Hawaiian band **Hoapili**, and Mark did a great job in what might have been his first non-HSGA public appearance. A week or so later, Nancy and I went to see Hoapili in Downers Grove. Mark was with them once again. Rather than playing four or five steel solos and getting off stage "convention style" as he had done at the Tiki Terrace, he played one song on steel in the lead role first and then remained on stage the entire evening playing backup for Hoapili. I'm sure you know that playing backup requires a different approach than playing at the conventions. Mark again did an excellent job, playing not too much, not too little, and not playing over the vocals. I told **Ron Cabanada** it was time to get Mark a matching shirt and sign him on permanently."

Gerald Ross has a new release for the holidays, *Mistletoe Mazel Tov*, featuring Gerald playing holiday classics on both 'ukulele and steel guitar. You know Gerald—he sounds great and he's got deals! Check out his website for details at www.geraldross.com or write: UkeTone Records, P.O. Box 3245, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

From **Kamaka Tom**: "The Legends of Steel Concert held this past May 6 in Waikīkī is available for viewing online. It was an excellent show sponsored by the Maiki Aiu

At the Saturday Night Lā'au, Ron and Nancy Simpson with "Pineapple" Jack Walsh (left), leader of the group "A Bunch of Coconuts" who play monthly at the Tiki Terrace in Des Plaines, Illinois, THE local hangout for Hawaiian music lovers.



Up-and-coming steel guitarist Mark Prucha (right) at Joliet with his brother Matthew and sister Melissa from nearby Naperville, Illinois.

Foundation and hosted by **Ku'uipo Kumukahi**. I produced the video with videography by Pono Kealoha, and editing by Scotty Wong. The show was held in the ballroom of the Pacific Beach Hotel in Waikīkī. To access the video, go to www.olelo.org, select "'ÖleloNet Video on Demand" from the "What's On" menu, and then search on 'Legends of Steel'. Performers included **Alan Akaka** and students of his school Ke Kula Mele Hawai'i, the Kamehameha Alumni Men's Glee Club, **Eddie Punua**, **Eddie Palama**, **Owana Salazar**, and **Isaac Akuna**.

Distressing news from **George "Keeki" Lake**: "Mary suffered a mild heart attack in mid-September followed by a severe stroke on October 16. She has shown only minimal improvement during the past four weeks at the hospital. Mary is still our same sweet Mary with her *big* smile. Her memory is quite remarkable and her speech varies from poor to fair." Our best thoughts and wishes go out to both Keeki and Mary. ■

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.

Steel Guitars For Sale

Offered by member Elva West: Stringmaster clone made by Tradewind Steel Guitars and other steel guitars, including double-8, single-8 and lap models. Please contact Elva at (714) 637-4084.

Annual Mita-kai Concert

From Tom Tohma

The Twenty-Eighth Annual Hawaiian Mita-kai Music Concert was held on August 26 at the ANA Intercontinental Hotel in Tokyo. Mita-kai is a Japan-wide (and beyond!) network of Keio University graduates who gather together regularly, and the Hawaiian Mita-kai is an association of Keio graduates who belonged to the Hawaiian Music Club of Keio in their college days and who play or appreciate Hawaiian music. Around 600 attended the concert including Keio graduates, their families and friends. Nine Hawaiian music bands performed each of which featured steel guitar, and the guest band was an 18-piece big band. The musicians were all Keio University graduates.

The special guest of the evening from Hawai'i was Alan Akaka and the Islanders with Alan on steel guitar, Gary Aiko on bass and Kaipō Asing on guitar. This great trio performed all hapa haole Hawaiian music, which everyone in attendance knows and loves. In Hawaiian Mita-kai there are about 30 Hawaiian steel guitar players, and all of their band members are hapa haole Hawaiian music lovers.

For the Islanders, the Mita-kai concert was part of a Japan tour that took them to Yokohama on August 23-24, a small club in Tokyo (the Cozy Circle) on August 25, and a show at the B-Flat club in Akasaka on August 28. What a busy schedule!! But all their gigs were greatly successful. ■

The First HSGA Japan Convention

From Tom Tohma

Since HSGA's founding in 1985 by Lorene Ruymar and Jerry Byrd, there have been no HSGA conventions in Japan despite a sizeable Japan membership who are hapa haole Hawaiian music buffs (we currently have 50 Japan members, in prior years as many as 72).

On Sunday, September 9, 2012 the first HSGA Japan Convention was held in Tokyo at the B-Flat Club. Just short of 150 attended including HSGA members and their guests from all over Japan. Nineteen bands performed including nineteen steel guitarists, and entertainment during the intermission was provided by the young and beautiful Hina Ishihara and ten gracious girls from her hula halau. Here was the convention line-up:

10:40 AM—Yoshinori Nihachi (steel), Kohei Makino (guitar), Mike Abe (bass) and Mark Onodera (uke). Yoshinori



The Islanders at the B-Flat Club in Akasaka featuring Alan Akaka on steel, Gary Aiko (left) on bass and Kaipō Asing on guitar.

showed a great pro-style skill with a double-neck steel guitar playing Latin, Hawaiian, and country and western tunes.

11:00 AM—The Mahana Lua band featuring M. Suzuki (steel), T. Suzuki (uke), H. Ikeda (guitar) and K. Sakai (bass). The band gigs often in the Yokohama area with a good steel guitar sound and good vocals.

11:20 AM—T. Ohkubo (steel), Y. Nihachi (guitar), Terry Saito (bass) and Yoshi Okano (uke). Good, in-tune steel guitar playing with a sweet Hawaiian chording style.

11:40 AM—The Spa Hawaiians band featuring Mrs. Chise Yamagishi (steel), Masaki Tokoro (guitar), K. Ohno (uke and vocals), K. Hashizume (guitar) and Miss Reiko Watanabe (bass). Chise's playing shows great potential and she was ably backed by Masaki's guitar and Reiko's bass.

12:00 PM—Moto Suzuki's "one-man band" using sequenced musical backup. His steel guitar sound is accurate and clear as usual, and he has been a Honolulu Convention goer. He played a variety of songs including "Sleepy Lagoon."

12:20 PM—The Nuts Islanders trio featuring Akira Ohuchi (steel), H. Nemoto (guitar) and K. Sawai (bass). Akira played nice chords on his triple-neck steel on tunes like "Sand" and "How D'Ya Do."

12:40 PM—Terry Saito (steel), Kohei Makino (guitar), Mike Abe (bass) and S. Sasaki (uke). Terry played nice chords on three tunes using the B11th and Bucky Shirakata's famous A-minor tuning.

1:00 PM—The Blue Hawaiians band featuring Yoshiaki Otake (steel), K. Inagawa (guitar), S. Sasaki (uke and vocals), T. Endo (uke and vocals) and T. Yorozu (bass). They are all from faraway Hokkaido!! Otake is good player who played at the 1997 Ho'olaule'a in Honolulu.

1:20 PM—Mitsuo Fujii (steel), Y. Nihachi (guitar) Y. Machimura (bass) and Mark Onodera (uke). Mitsuo is

owner of the Fuzzy Pedal Steel Guitar Company and plays pedal steel with a good ability to improvise.

1:40 PM—The Moana Islanders band featuring Yukinobu Ujiie (steel), M. Matsumura (guitar), Kouji Furutachi (uke and vocals) and H. Shimizu (bass). Their average age is around 80! Yukinobu sticks to the old Dick McIntire style and also sings nice old songs. Kouji has a great falsetto voice.

2:00 PM—Intermission entertainment featuring the charming Hina Ishihara and ten girls from her halau and backed by the Nā Kanaka band with Kuniharu Yamamoto (12-string pedal steel), Kohei Makino (guitar), H. Takahashi (uke and vocals), Masa Abe (bass), Y. Machimura (vocals) and Yoshi Okano (uke). The band has not changed since their formation 50 years ago as members of the Hawaiian Music Club at the college they all attended together! They perform at a variety of music events.

3:00 PM—The Wiki II band from faraway Hiroshima featuring Kunihiko Kadoi (pedal steel), D. Morisawa (guitar and vocals), T. Teramoto (uke and vocals), Miss E. Fujii (vocals) and H. Hiraki (bass). Kunihiko uses 3 pedals and has a good chord sound.

3:20 PM—Naoki Santo (steel), Kohei Makino (guitar) and Mike Abe (bass). Naoki has a good improvisational jazz sound using a triple-neck steel guitar on swing tunes like “Sophisticated Lady.”

3:40 PM—Miss Hideko Kobayashi (steel), Y. Nihachi (guitar) and Terry Saito (bass). Hideko’s steel playing and singing is much improved over the past couple of years!

4:00 PM—The Trade Winds band featuring “Lion” Kobayashi (steel), T. Harasawa (guitar) and K. Sawai (bass). Lion is a true pro, playing and improvising over both jazz and Hawaiian tunes.

4:20 PM—Masao Katagiri (steel), Terry Saito (guitar), Y. Machimura (bass) and S. Sasaki (uke). Masao is leader of the Blue Coconuts Islanders in faraway Aichi Prefecture. He came to this convention by himself playing steel guitar, but is planning to attend the 2013 Honolulu Convention, hopefully with all of his band members.

4:40 PM—The Pearl Islanders band featuring Kunihiko Anzawa (steel), Y. Koketsu (guitar), O. Kamiya (bass) and Mark Onodera (uke). Kunihiko plays nice chords with his double-neck steel. The band performs around the Tokyo area and has been together more than 50 years since their college days. Mark, Koketsu and Kamiya are all good singers.

5:00 PM—Katsutoshi Ogata (steel), Yoshi Okano, Terry Saito (bass), M. Suzuki (uke) and K. Takagi (vocals). Katsu is a longtime convention goer and he loves Hawaiian steel guitar. He performed as more of a novice at the 2011 Honolulu Convention but had a much better sound this time. Kiyoshi sang with great humor!!

5:20 PM—The Luana Sounds band featuring Taku Ouchi (guitar and vocals), Yuichiro Seki (steel), Y. Saito (guitar

and vocals), K. Ikeda (uke) and N. Koseki (bass). Yuichiro’s plays a nice steel guitar on tunes like “How D’Ya Do” and Taku is a good singer. The band gigs around Yokohama.

We appreciate the great help of four ladies, Terry Saito, Kohei Makino and his group, and all the HSGA Japan members who made this first Japan convention a success.

Big kudos go out to Tohma-san for all he does to galvanize our Japan membership, which is such an important part of our association. ■

Lū’au Dinner Issues at Joliet

From Don Weber and Wally Pfeifer

This year the Joliet Committee was not happy with the dinner buffet presented by the hotel. Among other things, it was difficult to determine the various cuts of chicken and even whether some of the cuts were chicken or pork. The bread pudding was being served in a cup instead of a plate, and the sauce was not identified as sauce for the pudding. Some people thought it might be soup or chowder. The clue that gave the sauce away was the chunks of pineapple in the bottom of the pot. Our whole table was not too satisfied with everything. Overall, both the quality and the presentation left something to be desired. Some attendees commented on it, but many did not.

We have since met with the general manager, and in the future, we intend to have better communication between HSGA, the hotel, and the hotel’s food supplier. Rest assured that the problem *will* be corrected. Be sure to come hungry for next year’s buffet. You will get a better lū’au meal in 2013.

Treasurer’s Report

(as of October 31, 2012)

General Fund	\$13,221.06
Scholarship Fund	\$13,658.53
Joliet Checking	\$ 452.82
Japan Account	\$4,393.73
Grand Total	\$31,726.14

Email Address Reminder

Remember to keep us informed if your email address changes. We have quite a few invalid email addresses in our database. Please update us at johnely@hawaiiansteel.com.

When Hilo Hattie Does The Hilo Hop

(McDiarmid – Noble)

Medium Swing

Dick McIntire Solo Adaption
by John Ely

Vs

F F#° C7 G7 C7

Steel Gtr. (C6th)

7 | 8 8 5 5 | 5 5 0 | 8 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 8 6 6 3 3 0 | 2 3 4 | 9

slide slide

E T
C A
G A
E B
C C

(♩ = thumb, ♪ = finger, take notated fingering as a suggestion only)

5 G7 C7 F C7 F

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T
A
B

9 F F#° C7 G7 C7

8 8 5 5 | 5 5 0 | 8 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 8 6 6 3 3 0 | 2 3 4 | 9

slide slide

T
A
B

13 G7 C7 F C7 F

10 10 7 7 3 3 1 1 | 0 0 10 8 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 3 | 5 | 7

T
A
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T 5 0 6 0 7 8 | 5 0 6 0 7 8 | 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 | 6 ~~10~~

A | | | |

B | | | |

V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □

T 7 8 9 10 | 7 0 8 0 9 10 | 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 | 12 ~~10~~ 10 7

A 7 | | | 10 9

B | | | |

V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □

T 8 7 8 5 5 | 8 5 | 7 8 8 6 6 3 3 0 | 2 3 4 9

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To simplify play measures 9-10 here

T 10 9 10 7 7 3 3 1 0/1 | 0 3 8 10 8 4 | 5 5 4 3 5

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Jerry Byrd's RCA Recordings with Ernie Lee, Part I

By Anthony Lis

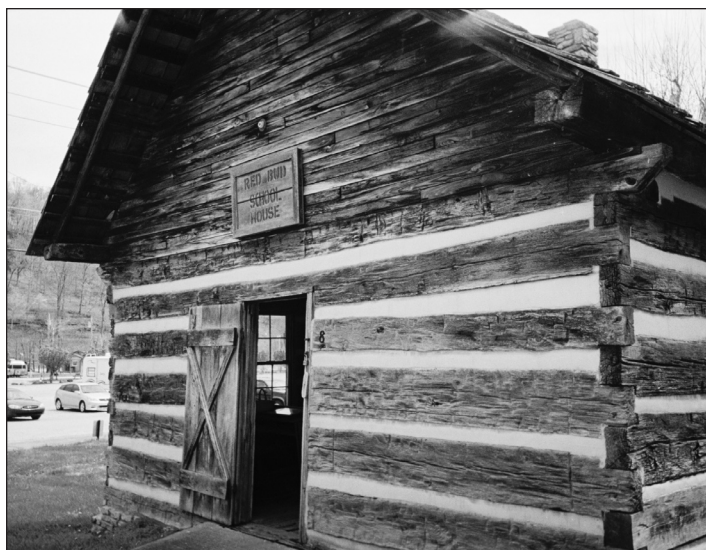
This new series is a sequel to “Jerry Byrd’s First Recordings,” which ran in the Fall 2011, Spring 2012, and Summer 2012 issues. That series detailed Byrd’s first eight recordings, made with Ernie Cornelison (aka Ernie Lee) for Victor in October 1940 while the two were working together on the NBC/CBS radio network program the “Renfro Valley Barn Dance.”

In the late 1940s, Byrd and Lee recorded together again when Byrd joined Lee’s backing band on seventeen RCA sides waxed between December 1947 and January 1950. As Hawaiian music scholar John Marsden has noted, these largely unknown sides are of interest in that they occurred on the cusp of Byrd’s work on the Mercury label, which was to establish him as an important solo instrumentalist.

In his 2003 autobiography *It Was a Trip: On Wings Of Music*, Byrd related that “Ernie was a real, for-sure country gentleman who had a real, for-sure baritone voice with just enough of an accent to verify his Berea, Kentucky origins. We soon became fast friends and gradually ended up as a duo [on the ‘Renfro Valley Barn Dance’].” Byrd recalled that Lee “played rhythm guitar very well.”

Byrd began performing on the “Renfro Valley Barn Dance” in early 1939 as a high school senior when the program was based in Dayton, Ohio, seventy-five miles south

The Redbud Schoolhouse of John Lair’s youth, on the grounds of the modern day Renfro Valley Entertainment Center northeast of Mt. Vernon, Kentucky, where Jerry Byrd performed on Lair’s “Monday Night in Renfro Valley” NBC radio network program in early 1941. (Photo taken by the author on April 13, 2011.)



Jerry Byrd (left) in western “duds” as a member of Ernest Tubb’s Texas Troubadours, lobby card advertising for the film “Hollywood Barn Dance,” released in the fall of 1947 and starring Ernest Tubb and the band. (From the author’s personal collection)

of his hometown of Lima. Ernie Lee joined the program permanently in early 1940 after it had moved to Renfro Valley, Kentucky, a newly built entertainment center nineteen miles south of Berea. Lee first attracted the attention of the show’s producer, John Lair, in early November 1939, when he successfully filled in for the ailing host (future country star Red Foley) on short notice. Byrd and Lee’s Atlanta recordings (released on Bluebird, Victor’s budget label) were a well-performed mix of minstrel-show-era tunes, original songs by Lee and Lair, *hapa haole* instrumentals, and recent “hillbilly” hits.

Audio files (produced from radio transcription discs) and John Lair’s program scripts in Berea College’s Hutchins Library offer us a glimpse of some of the solo performances Byrd and Lee rendered over the air in Renfro Valley during 1941, after returning from their Atlanta recording trip. Audio files show Lee performing “When the Roses Bloom in Dixieland” (popularized by the Carter Family) on the barn dance on March 29, and “Peach Pickin’ Time in Georgia” (popularized by country music pioneer Jimmie Rodgers) on the program twenty-eight days later.

Scripts show Byrd performing “Old Folks at Home” on a “Songs of Stephen Foster”-themed episode of Lair’s new NBC Red Network program “Monday Night in Renfro Valley” on January 6, and Queen Lili’uokalani’s “Aloha ‘Oe” during a “Grandparents”-themed episode seventy days later. Byrd, in a March 1999 self-recorded interview for Berea College, recalled that “Monday Night in Renfro Valley”—broadcast from the restored, single-room “Redbud Schoolhouse” of Lair’s youth—was a little more solemn and

less raucous than the barn dance program, “a little more homey, you know, fireplace-type things ... [the] school house and [all] that.”

By late March 1942, Byrd was back in Lima, Ohio, apparently recuperating from a bout with pneumonia. While recovering, Byrd played four Lima area venues with West Virginia-born bandleader Mitchell Dyer and his five-piece Del Rio Cowboys. The venues included some pretty rough honky-tonks in north-central Lima such as the Alpha club and the nearby Dixie club, which Jerry mentions in the fourth chapter of his autobiography. Sometime in 1942, Byrd married eighteen-year-old Thelma Marie McWiley (from Delphos, Ohio, northwest of Lima); in the wake of their marriage, Byrd gigged briefly with Lima’s Buckeye Trio consisting of Byrd, accordionist Lewis [“Don”] Fabian and the (so far) elusive “Smilin’ Bill.”

By mid-1943, Byrd was back working for John Lair as a member of Lair’s Renfro Valley Folks touring tent show, gigging in Ohio and Indiana that summer and in South Carolina and Tennessee by late fall. Byrd, in his 1999 self-interview, recalled he “did enjoy the tent shows because we were out of ... [Renfro Valley] and moving to a new town every day,” adding that “[the] shows were well-attended. This was during the [World War II] years and everybody was working and had good-paying jobs ... so we usually had a good turnout. ... I enjoyed ... the freedom that went with [the shows and the] fun.”

By early autumn 1944, Byrd and Lee had left Renfro Valley for Detroit, where they eventually found work on 50,000-watt radio station WJR. Byrd and Lee spent their first few months in the Motor City gigging at the Jefferson

The author standing in front of the former Alpha nightclub where Jerry Byrd played with local groups such as Mitch Dyer’s Del Rio Cowboys and the Buckeye Trio in 1942, and Dyer’s Del Rio Boys in early fall 1944. (Photo taken in August 2011.)



The author standing in front of the former Dixie nightclub, another rough “joint” just across from the Alpha club (pictured below) where Jerry Byrd did short stints with the Del Rio Cowboys and the Buckeye Trio in 1942. (Photo taken in August 2011.)

Inn, a rather notorious east side honky-tonk; as Byrd explained to John Rumble in a 1988 interview, “the musician’s union would not allow you to take any steady job for three months [to keep new arrivals from snatching work away from established Detroit musicians] ... so we played a beer joint out on Jefferson Avenue, where all the hillbilly people lived. They[‘d] come up ... to work in the automobile plants [turned defense factories] when things really started booming during ... [World War II].”

Detroit newspaper publisher Neal Shine, in his 2007 book *Life With Mae: A Detroit Memoir* recalls growing up in a house that overlooked the back of the Jefferson Inn, stating bluntly that the bar “passed for a fleshpot in [our] ... neighborhood,” adding that “the inn was [an un-air conditioned] noisy place ... [whose] back door was always open to catch whatever breeze might be drifting through the alley. Shine continued that “it was not unusual to get up in the morning to find one of the ... inn’s customers from the previous night lying spread-eagled in our backyard.”

Once ensconced at WJR, Byrd and Lee—along with former Renfro Valley bassist-comedian Bronson Lee (“Barefoot Brownie”) Reynolds—formed the core of a five-piece band dubbed the Goodwill Billies (in honor of WJR’s nickname, “The Goodwill Station”). Rounding out the quintet were Detroit-based musicians Casey Clark on fiddle and Smilin’ Red Maxedon on vocals and guitar. The Goodwill Billies furnished music for two different morning shows (one commercial-free program which ran on weekdays, and another broadcast on Saturday); they also appeared on WJR’s late Saturday night “Goodwill Frolic Barn Dance”

Continued on Page 14

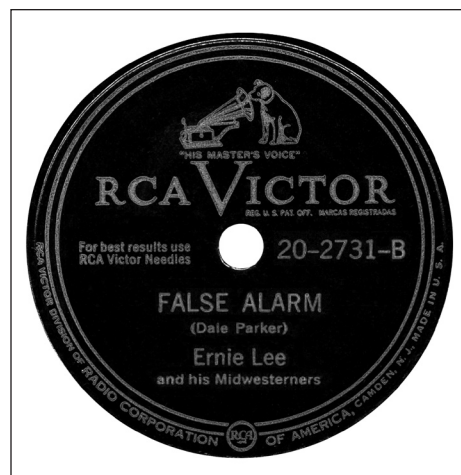
program (which appears to have gone on the air around October 1945).

A transcription disc recording of a May 1946 “Goodwill Frolic” program (supplied to the author by Lee’s cousin, Joe Fothergill) reveals Byrd delivering a slide permeated, solo rendition of “St. Louis Blues” (which he would record some four years later). Byrd also contributes steel fills to an ensemble performance of “Mama Don’t Allow,” while Lee offers the “nonsense song” “Johnson’s Old Grey Mule.”

To infer from two photograph captions in *It Was a Trip: On Wings of Music*, Byrd’s months in Detroit afforded him the chance to interact with Hawaiian musicians Danny Kuaana, Al McIntire, and Mel Peterson. One wonders if the three perhaps visited Detroit while working as musicians in an early incarnation of Olympic skater Sonja Henie’s Hollywood Ice Review, which is known to have played Detroit’s Olympia Stadium. (By the time of publication of *Billboard* magazine’s January 28, 1950 review of a Henie Madison Square Garden performance, Kuaana, Peterson, and McIntire were members of her “Hawaiian Quartet.”) Byrd’s Detroit interactions with Hawaiians laid the groundwork for his *Nani Hawaii* album, recorded with Kuaana, Peterson, and McIntire (plus guitarist-vocalist George Ku, another Henie “alumnus”) in Chicago in early 1950.

In late 1946, WJR hired a new station manager who, unhappy with the fact that the Goodwill Billies’ commercial-free weekday program was not generating income for the station, fired the entire band. After some indecision, Byrd joined the Texas Troubadours, the touring and recording band of nationally known, “honky-tonk”-style performer Ernest Tubb.

Byrd backed Tubb at his weekly “Grand Ole Opry” performances in Nashville. In February 1947, Byrd entered the recording studio for the first



(Left) The RCA label for Ernie Lee’s recording of his own composition “Love Me Now or Never,” recorded in 1947 during Lee’s first RCA session in Chicago. (From the author’s personal collection) (Right) The RCA label for Ernie Lee’s recording of “False Alarm,” a tuneful ballad penned by radio banjoist Dale Parker cut during the same 1947 session. (Courtesy of the Bob Pinson Recorded Sound Collection, Country Music Hall of Fame)

time since his 1940 recordings with Ernie Lee when he and his fellow Troubadours backed Tubb on four Decca sides in Chicago. Byrd recalled in a circa 1976 radio interview with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s Laurie Mills that “the first records I made on a big scale were with Ernest Tubb,” adding that “I played the same things that I’d been playing for years. ... the same type of fills and everything ... and all of a sudden I was ‘discovered.’”

Byrd played on fourteen more Tubb recordings in Los Angeles and Nashville through August 1947. He also appeared in Tubb’s loosely autobiographical feature film *Hollywood Barn Dance* as a Troubadour. In the film, Byrd plays steel guitar during a stage performance of “You Were Only Teasing Me,” which Tubb had co-written and recorded before Byrd joined his band. The film’s arrival in Byrd’s hometown prompted the *Lima News* to proudly proclaim in its December 28 “Looking at Lima” column that “that fellow who plays the electric steel guitar in the film *Hollywood Barn Dance* now showing at the Sigma theatre is a local boy who made good! The young fellow is Jerry Byrd, son of Mr. and Mrs. H. O. Byrd, 1628 Spring St[reet].”

Nineteen-forty-seven proved to be a busy recording year for Byrd. By August, he had extricated himself from Tubb’s arduous touring schedule to join the Nashville-based backing band of former “Renfro Valley Barn Dance” colleague Red Foley (by this point a national country music star). By early December, Byrd had backed Foley on eleven Decca recordings in Nashville. He also accompanied young Hank Williams on eight MGM sides in the city. Although Byrd in later years cast himself as an unflinching, lifelong admirer of Hawaiian music and culture, it should be emphasized that at this point, twenty-seven-year-old Byrd was immersed in the late-1940s country music scene, a seasoned veteran of Midwestern honky-tonks who’d had a hand in creating such Top 5 country chart successes as Tubb’s “Have You Ever Been Lonely (Have You Ever Been Blue)” and Foley’s “Tennessee Saturday Night” and “Never Trust a Woman” as well as Williams’s early Top 20 efforts “Honky Tonkin” and “A Mansion on the Hill.” Byrd had even tried his hand at composing at least two honky-tonk originals during the war years, including “You Said You Loved Me” (copyrighted in March 1944, and published by Peer

International in 1948) and “You” (copyrighted in December 1942, but apparently never published).

While Byrd was establishing himself as a member of Nashville’s burgeoning recording scene, Ernie Lee was likewise advancing his career. In the wake of his WJR firing, Lee was invited to audition at Cincinnati’s WLW radio, another 50,000-watt enterprise. Lee won the audition and was awarded his own, daily fifteen-minute, morning “Ernie Lee Show,” complete with backing group, a “pop-oriented” quintet composed of trumpet, vibraphone, accordion, guitar, and bass. Lee also appeared on WLW’s Saturday evening “Midwestern Hayride” program. By early fall, he was also hosting “Ernie Lee’s Omega Show,” a half-hour, flour company sponsored program carried by the Mutual radio network’s southern affiliates on Sunday afternoons.

In summer 1947, Lee signed with the RCA Victor company proper, and plans were made for him to record sixteen sides during the coming year. At Lee’s inaugural RCA session in Chicago on August 12, he made ten recordings accompanied by his WLW quintet (being advised to do so by the president of the Crosley Broadcasting Corporation, which owned WLW). Lee’s radio colleagues provided a fine, solid backing, particularly on songs such as Lee’s own “Every Doggone Time” and “Love Me Now or Never,” concerning commitment-phobic steadies. Given the polished state of the performances, one wonders if the tunes were ones that Lee regularly performed over WLW.

Polished performances aside, however, the overall sound of the recordings—heavy on Keith Wildeson’s nimble muted trumpet and Ed Richley’s prominent vibraphone—was decidedly more pop than hillbilly, and none of Lee’s recordings cracked the Top 40 on the country charts. As *Billboard* opined in their usual clipped, slangy style in their October 4, 1947 review of Lee’s first two RCA releases, “A new ranger voice for the [RCA] label, the free style and husky baritone chanting of Ernie Lee cuts no fancy western capers ... and while the rhythms of his Midwesterners ... are pronounced, their playing is without that folk flavor of the West.”

Curiously, when the time came for RCA to release Lee’s recording of Dale Parker’s “False Alarm” from his August 1947 session, the company’s “new releases” advertisement in the March 13, 1948 issue of *Billboard* proclaimed (erroneously) that “this rustic number features Jim Byrd [*sic*], one of the really great steel guitarists.” A true “false alarm”! Interesting, though, that as early as March 1948, Byrd had amassed enough of a reputation that RCA executives believed that identifying him as a backing musician on a recording (albeit mistakenly) might help boost sales.

One wonders if Lee’s decision to in fact use Jerry Byrd at his second RCA session (in Chicago on December 4) was part of a conscious decision to effect a less pop, more coun-

try sound. At this session, trumpet and vibes were jettisoned, while the sound of the accordion, upright bass, and guitar was retained.

By the time of Lee’s December session, Byrd and his wife Thelma had taken up residence in Nashville. The RCA session sheet for Lee’s recordings lists Byrd as living at 131 North Park Circle in the western end of the city, in a house that was later demolished during the construction of West End Avenue’s intersection with Interstate Highway 440, the southern bypass around Nashville. A large apartment complex currently stands in the vicinity of the house site. In *It Was a Trip*, Byrd explained that the Park Circle address was actually his second Nashville residence, with he and Thelma having rented an upstairs apartment in the same neighborhood during their earliest days in town. Byrd described his Park Circle house—which he and Thelma apparently had custom-built—as “a little five-room red brick place” which proved to be, in Byrd’s words, “quite suitable for us.”

As will be seen, the Byrds’ initial investment in the Nashville housing market proved to be a short-lived one, as Jerry moved northeast to Cincinnati to join Ernie Lee on WLW by October of the following year.

In the next installment—details on Ernie Lee’s eight December 1947 recordings with Jerry Byrd and his four other backing musicians, a varied assortment including a tale of love gone wrong, a lament for a departed lover, an elegy for a deceased mother, a wistful Hawaiian-sounding waltz, the ruminations of an older-and-wiser lover, a song detailing the impatience of a wannabe fiancé, and—as a reflection of life in early Cold War-era America—an anti-Communist proclamation.

Information on Ernie Lee’s recording sessions of August 12 and December 4, 1947 were taken from RCA session sheets 024-1190 and 024-1186, held by the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. Byrd’s self-interview was recorded on March 8, 1999 in Honolulu in response to questions sent to him by Harry Rice, Sound Archivist in the Hutchins Library at Berea College (interview JL CT 074-002). Byrd’s October 24, 1988 interview with John Rumble in Nashville was conducted as part of the Country Music Foundation’s Oral History Project (interview OHC48). Thanks to Joe Fothergill for providing the author with a dub of the spring 1946 “Goodwill Frolic Barn Dance” program. ■

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 johnely@hawaiiansteel.com. We love photos, but for print we need high quality originals or hi-rez camera output.

My Love For Hawai'i

By member *Rajnish Sethi*

I have a special attraction and affection for Hawai'i, its people, its culture and Hawaiian steel guitar music. For me the sound arising from a steel guitar is so sweet, heavenly and blissful that I can imagine myself floating on sea waves on Hawaiian beaches.

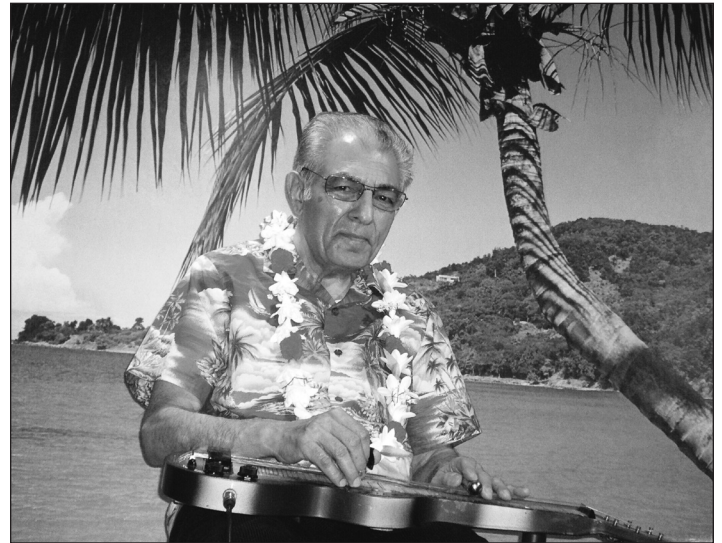
I first fell in love with the sound of steel guitar when I heard it being played at a club called The Beachcomber in a hotel in London. This was back in 1964 when I was a student studying for my degree in chemistry and working at the same time to support myself. At that time I could not afford to buy a guitar, and I had no time for extra activities.

I had emigrated to the U.K. from India in 1961 to work as a long-term volunteer in rehabilitation camps for World War II refugees, which were set up in Europe by the United Nations Association of Great Britain.

After completing my studies, I purchased an old guitar and started to learn to play by listening to old Hawaiian music LPs. I was self-taught as I could not afford a teacher. Over quite a few years, the guitar was put aside due to my marriage and family commitments, but I still kept listening to Hawaiian music, and now and then played my steel guitar. My progress was hampered by my problem keeping a steady beat. I used to play straight from the heart, but my emotions would take over and I would linger too long on some musical phrases.

During my search for other Hawaiian guitarists I came across a group of enthusiastic players in England who held a convention every year in Droitwich in the Midlands. These players often pointed out my incorrect timing. As soon as I retired, my passion for the steel guitar came to the forefront, and I decided to learn music theory by attending evening classes at the Royal School of Music in London. Three years of studies gave me quite an insight into the construction and discipline of music. This gave me encouragement to look for a teacher to guide me in playing steel guitar, and after a long search I eventually found Lorene Ruymar on the Internet. I followed her "Hawaiian Steel Guitar Lessons" course and found it very helpful. Lorene proved to be an excellent long distance teacher for me. With her encouragement and guidance I practiced to improve my timing. I felt I was reaching my goal and that was one of the most thrilling days of my life. Now, I am pleased to say that after hard study and many hours of practice, I can manage to play a few Hawaiian songs like "Blue Hawaii," "Hawaii, Aloha," "Twilight in Hawaii," "Pagan Love Song," and "Sweet Leilani."

Ever since my visits to The Beachcomber in London it had been my dream to visit Hawai'i and see, hear and experience for myself the magical attraction of these islands.



A nice shot of U.K. member Rajnish Sethi playing his steel guitar.

Lorene's encouragement gave me a double incentive. She suggested that I visit Hawai'i and attend the HSGA convention to listen to eminent steel guitar players and pick up some useful techniques to improve my playing. Though the trip to Hawai'i was very expensive, somehow my wife and I managed to fulfill our dream.

In 2006 we took the plunge and booked our flights to Honolulu. It turned out to be a truly memorable experience for both of us. We stayed at the Queen Kapi'olani Hotel and attended the HSGA convention and other seminars there. We visited many well-known tourist places like Diamond Head, Waikiki Beach, and the 'House without a Key' seaside patio of the Halekulani Hotel where a band plays Hawaiian music with hula to beautiful sunsets every evening.

But best of all was the Polynesian Cultural Center (PCC) in La'ie on O'ahu's North Shore. We were introduced to the culture of the various Polynesian islands and how the musical instruments evolved from ancient times to the modern era popularity of 'ukulele and Hawaiian steel guitar.

The PCC celebrates the customs and art of Polynesia over the centuries, which has been preserved here before they are forgotten forever. With its large lagoon, waterfalls, tropical flora and an erupting volcano, the PCC captures all the romance and excitement of the South Pacific islands. We took in the Rainbows of Paradise Canoe Pageant on the lush lagoon and, a highlight for us, the Ali'i Lū'au dinner and show, a Polynesian extravaganza describing the history and culture of Hawai'i through music and dance. It was all superb and a wonderful experience. The staff at the PCC were very pleasant, caring and helpful. We also visited Kaua'i, the Garden Isle, truly a unique and charming place.

A few years later, my wife and I decided to host a party to share with friends our experiences in Hawai'i. We called

Continued on Page 20

HSGA Donations

Thanks, HSGAers for your terrific donations the past two quarters.

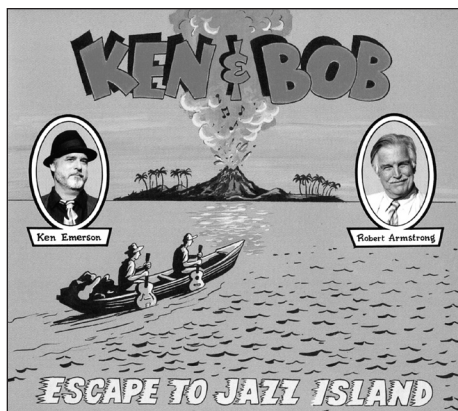
Don and Lynn Keene of Cambria, California, **Bill Rosen** of Seattle, and **Greg and Sandy Sardinha** from Kailua, Hawai'i, each donated \$200! \$100 to the General Fund and \$100 to the Scholarship Fund. Mahalo nui loa!

Tony Fourcroy from Fort Collins, **Margo L. Klundt** from Sherrard, IL, **Kris Oka** from San Francisco, and **Bill Thomson** from Ocean City, Maryland all gave \$100. We appreciate these generous donations!

The following members donated at least \$10:

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DISC 'N' DATA



“Ken & Bob – Escape to Jazz Island,” Ken Emerson and Bob Armstrong; Grass Skirt Records, GSK-1004.

Review by John Ely

“Escape to Jazz Island” is one of those recordings that are a blast to listen to, and then when you go to write the review, you pause a bit. It’s just hard to categorize. It’s not a steel guitar album. Don’t get me wrong—there’s plenty of acoustic steel work from Ken Emerson and also from Bob Armstrong, who adds a second steel part on several tracks. And there are several instrumental tunes on the CD, but steel guitar must wait its turn, sharing solo space with a host of other timbres: Bob Armstrong’s ‘ukulele and guitar solos, David Paquette’s jazzy piano solos, Ken’s own guitar solos, and even a couple of musical saw solos by Bob! So the CD is really about the band and what each musician brings to it. Bob Armstrong, like Ken, is heavily rooted in early Twentieth Century music and is a founding member of the Cheap Suit Serenaders. David Paquette is an internationally recognized jazz pianist with nearly 50 albums to his credit.

Speaking of musical saw solos, what immediately jumps out when you listen to the CD is the humor that abounds on most of the selections. At times, it’s pure “camp” taking the listener back to an era when Tin Pan Alley reflected with humor the musical

forces of the day including New Orleans jazz, blues, the hapa haole side of Hawaiian music, and the dance music of Europe.

There is singing on seven tracks, by Ken and Bob mostly, with a kind of tongue-in-cheek informal delivery that fits well with the music of this period. The one track that has a Hawaiian sounding vocal is “Pidgin English Hula” featuring Elaine Hoffman who really sounds “authentically pidgin” (if you’ll pardon the oxymoron) à la Hilo Hattie. Well done!

Ken has that flashy, humorous acoustic steel style down, and you can tell he’s having fun playing with Bob. In “Song of the Islands” during a recap of the original theme, “someone” irreverently launches into “When Hilo Hattie Does The Hilo Hop”! It’s hard to tell who the culprit is—they both play steel on this track (but we know, Ken, we know!). The CD abounds with that kind of cleverness and mischief. “Tiger Shark,” a classic from the 1930s in the U.K., opens with the “Jaws” theme and ends with signature riffs from the surf tune “Pipeline.”

Eleven of the tunes feature only Ken and Bob, and on a few of these they overdub additional instruments. There are a couple of fine originals on the CD, “Bees in Blue Flat,” written by the band and one of Ken’s, a very nice “Minkow Tango.” Other tunes on the CD include “Fish and Poi/ In a Canoe,” “Japanese Sandman,” “Hapa Haole Hula Girl,” “Shanghai Lil,” “Breeze,” “Ukulele Bounce” with Ken on uke, “Someday Sweetheart” with swinging piano by David Paquette, a very fine “Palakiko Blues,” “Girl of My Dreams” and a reprise of “Tiger Shark.”

No, “Escape to Jazz Island” isn’t a steel guitar album and it isn’t purely Hawaiian either, but it reminds us that during the early years of the Hawaiian craze, acoustic steel guitar was, in a real sense, a jazz instrument, possibly the one time in its history that can be said,

Continued on Page 20



Sol Ho'opi'i's B-6 Bakelite Rickenbacher, the steel guitar he favored during his "electric" years, complete with letters, clippings, and other documentation authenticating its history. Wow!

A Sol Ho'opi'i Steel Guitar Lives On!

By Tim Mech

I love Hawaiian steel guitar music. And I am passionate about the Hawaiian steel guitar being an indispensable part of Hawaiian music. It has given me countless hours of fascination and enjoyment as a player and a listener. I have also always loved studying the history of musical instruments and the people who played them. I repair instruments by trade and have toured around the world with some of the finest artists as a professional guitar technician, and every time I handle a guitar, I'm still struck with wonder.

In the history of Hawaiian steel guitar, Sol Ho'opi'i has always been one of those artists who constantly bring about those feelings of wonder. "How did he do that?" "Where did that idea come from?" "Wow!" I have tried to gather information and learn about Sol's career as much as possible in hopes of finding a better understanding of his take on Hawaiian music.

Sol Ho'opi'i has been associated with many different guitars over his playing career, a Weissenborn and Lyon & Healey acoustics in the early years, moving along to National Tri-cones, with "The ONE" being engraved with Sol's name on the side, still lost in action somewhere.

Later in his career, as he moved his focus to gospel music near the end of the 1930s, he went on to play electric instruments, namely Rickenbacher steel guitars. A 1938 Rickenbacher Bakelite-body Electro String Model B-6, the steel guitar pictured above, is recognized to be the instru-

ment Sol favored during this period, the instrument that he truly played for the longest period in his musical career.

This Rickenbacher is assumed to have been purchased new by Sol, although it possibly could have been given to him by Rickenbacher for promotion. Sol most likely acquired the guitar in the Los Angeles area sometime in 1938 around the time of its manufacture.

1938 was a big transition year for Sol Ho'opi'i as he was inspired after a moving church service to convert to Christianity and continue his musical path in service of the Lord. And this Rickenbacher B-6 would be Sol's voice of praise for the next 15 years until his passing in 1953.

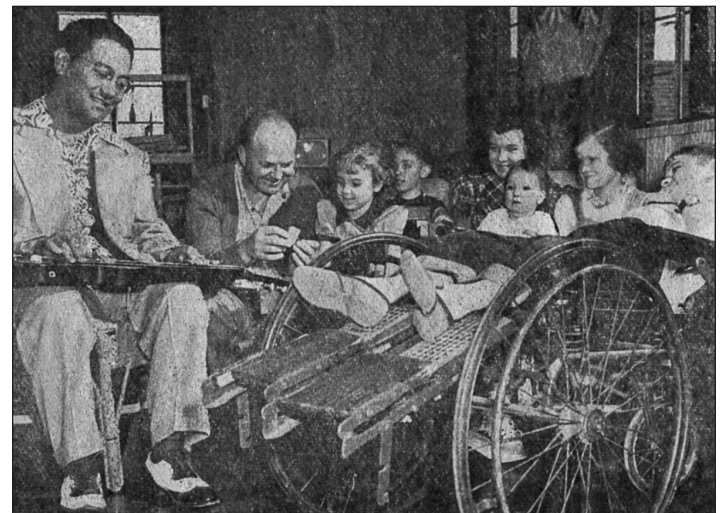
As Sol dedicated his musical and personal life to the church, he toured the Christian gospel circuit of church services and special events. It's at this point in his career that he met Paul H. Tutmarc, a fine musician and musical instrument manufacturer with his company Audiovox. It is also during this time that Sol met Paul "Bud" Tutmarc, (Paul H.'s son) and began a close friendship and long-term musical connection.

Later in life, Sol suffered from diabetes and was in ill health but still continued to perform even after his vision was failing. When Sol felt that his health was truly deteriorating, he gave his well-played Rickenbacher B-6 to Bud sometime after Sol's last live performance on September 28, 1953 and prior to his passing six weeks later on November 16, 1953.

The cherished B-6 was safely kept with the Tutmarc family and, as the love of Sol's music spanned their generations, Sol's Rickenbacher was handed down to Bud's son, Greg, around the time of Bud's 80th birthday on July 11, 2004.

I have known of the Tutmarc family for ages; the Audiovox history is important in my repair world since Paul

A newspaper photo from a 1950 issue of Christian World News showing Sol Ho'opi'i serenading polio victims, playing the same steel guitar pictured above, the one given to Bud, then to Tim!



CLOSING NOTES

Ernie Coker (February 9, 1929 – September 2, 2012)

We recently got the sad news about longtime member Ernie Coker, who we featured in the Spring issue this past year. Ernie and his wife Helen, relentless promoters of the steel guitar, have been popular wherever their many travels have taken them, and they count as friends many in our club and many at steel guitar events both here and abroad. Here is an excerpt from the obituary:

“On September 2, 2012, in Devine, Texas, at the age of 83, Ernest Paul Coker went home to be with the Lord. He was born February 9, 1929 in Honey Grove, Texas to Bruce Earl and Pearl Coker, the fourth of six children. His early years were spent on farms in Fannin County, Texas. He left home at age 16 and enlisted in the U.S. Navy. While in port in Long Beach, California, he met the woman of his dreams, Helen. They were married on January 7, 1949.

“In 1950 he joined Helen playing with The Gospel Stars group on KFSG Radio, Los Angeles. In 1951 they started their own group The Gospel Rhythmaires also on KFSG as well as other radio programs, and toured Southern California playing gospel music. He later started a pop group called The Jesters, playing only private venues around the Los Angeles area, performing at such places as the Disneyland Hotel, the Queen Mary and for larger companies like Douglas Aircraft. They regularly played military clubs at the nearby bases.

“Music was just one of his various hobbies. He enjoyed restoring old cars, deep sea fishing, was an avid reader, and still held a private pilot’s license. He loved to learn. He studied Spanish reading all his favorite novels in that language. He also studied French, and then re-read his favorite novels again in French.

“He was a very successful businessman in the aerospace industry, starting his own aerospace business. Before retiring, his last challenge was for Northrop Aircraft helping develop the B-2 Stealth Bomber. He spent his retirement days on his ranch in Devine, Texas, returning to his roots of living in the country, enjoying his ranch. He took pride in raising his cattle, growing hay and all that goes along with running a ranch.

“Retirement gave him time to return to his love of music, and playing his steel guitar. He was a member of several steel guitar clubs. Over the last several years he was invited to play in many countries around the world. He enjoyed traveling and meeting people of all nations and cultures. He was particularly fond of France. The sound of his music will forever remain in our hearts, leaving us with lasting memories.

“Ernie’s last message: ‘I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith’ (II Timothy 4:7).”
Aloha A Hui Hou E Ernie (aloha until we meet again). ■



A touching photo of recently departed Ernie Coker with his wife Helen at the this year’s steel guitar festival in Charlieu, France.

H. Tutmarc was one of the “founding fathers” when it comes to electrified instruments. I own records by and followed Bud Tutmarc for years, never knowing of his connection to the Sol Rickenbacher. My friendship developed with Greg Tutmarc after I had purchased some CDs of rare Sol tracks from their family-run Marc Records label. It was only shortly after this that I found out that the Tutmarcs had the famous Sol B-6.

Being the inquisitive, guitar-history-driven person that I am, I had to ask about the B-6. Its legacy was something that struck me hard, and I felt there was some reason that I was brought into the fold. Sol’s B-6 had been safely kept in its original case with all the items left by Sol when the guitar was given to the Tutmarcs in 1953.

It was my understanding that Greg wanted Sol’s guitar to be *played*. He thought that it deserved to be used to make music instead of going into a museum or archive where it would simply be a number on paper. On April 12, 2012, Sol Ho’opi’i’s Rickenbacher B-6 was graciously handed down by Greg Tutmarc to me and my family.

Sol Ho’opi’i’s Rickenbacher B-6 is played daily. It is a beautifully balanced, tone-ful instrument. It simply emanates Sol’s magic sound. The world is a better place when Sol’s guitar is singing and with this Rickenbacher B-6 guitar, Sol Ho’opi’i lives on.

Tim Mech is a guitar repair technician, a songwriter and recording artist who plays the Weissenborn Hawaiian guitar and most importantly, a devout follower of Sol’s music. ■

E Komo Mai! Welcome, New Members

Is your address correct? Please notify us!

UNITED STATES

LANET AND TIMI ABRIGO, 67-420 Aikaula St., Waialua, HI 96791
 KEVIN J. GENEST, 62 Pond View Drive, Barnstead, NH 03218
 JEROME HAWKES, 1033 Bragg Blvd, Fayetteville, NC 28301
 DELANO D. KRUZAN, P.O. Box 451, Macomb, IL 61455
 KRISTY LARSON, 1228 Elizabeth St, Madison, WI 53703
 SHERRY MAYRENT, 199 Coolidge Ave #107, Watertown, MA 02472-1521
 CATHERINE S. RIDENBAUGH, 792 Eastmoor Blvd., Columbus, OH 43209-2635
 LARRY ROBINSON, 414 Apollo Dr., Joliet, IL 60435
 DAVID B. SMITH, 4087 Mefford Lane, Cincinnati, OH 45241
 JERRY GEORGE THOMPSON, 227 Phoenix Hills Dr., Phoenix, OR 97535-9457

CANADA & OVERSEAS

PEARL ANDERSON, 2560 10th Ave, Port Alberni, BC V9Y 2P4 Canada
 ANDY COSTIGAN, P.O. Box 639, Hamilton, NSW, 2303 Australia
 RICHARD J. LANE, PO Box 1073, Thuringowa Central, Townsville, Queensland,
 4817 Australia
 DON LORUSSO, 1489 Nash Rd, Courtyce, ON L1E 1H3 Canada
 JAMES EDWARD MCKAY, 89 Cornwall Rd Eltham, Hawera, 4673 New Zealand
 LOIC NAVENNEC, 6 Rue Mistral, Charleval, 13350 France
 KATSUHIDE SAWABE, Koto-ku Etchujima 3-6-3-504, 135-0044 Japan
 TOSHI SHIINA, 245-8 Ohwada, Yachiyo-shi, Chiba Pref. 276-0045 Japan
 TOM TEASDALE, P.O. Box 16070, Calgary, Alberta T2T 5H7 Canada

JOLIET REPORT Continued from Page 4 *DISC 'N' DATA Continued from Page 17*

room to jam. This actually turned out pretty good since the three of us, plus a fourth that showed up later, had a nice session together.

From Ian Ufton (Ontario)

On Friday night I ran into a lovely guy with a super falsetto voice, Ron Cabanada, a Hawaiian living in Illinois. After I heard him sing "I Kona," I was so impressed that I told Duke, "Ya gotta put him on the show." Ron told me that he had only recently started singing falsetto, and I encouraged him to do more. For me it was the highlight of Duke's show. He was the only falsetto voice there and the audience loved it. What is Hawaiian music without it? Steel and falsetto are the signature sounds of Hawaiian music. I wanted to also mention that Alan Akaka did his usual flawless rendition of "Whispering Lullaby" on request. ■

and its use was hardly confined to hulas and hapa haole tunes. The CD is full of good playing with an infectious off-the-cuff feeling from a band of "ringers" who seem to live and breathe this nearly century-old musical air.

The CD is available direct from Grass Skirt Records (www.GrassSkirt.co.uk). HSGA members can order at a discount price of \$13 including shipping by emailing les@GrassSkirt.co.uk. You can also order via mainstream music websites on the Internet such as Amazon or Elderly Instruments. If you do not have access to the Internet, you can send a check for \$13 in U.S. dollars to: Robert Armstrong, 213 Grant Ave, Winters, CA 95694. Please indicate that you are ordering the Ken and Bob CD and make your check payable to 'Robert Armstrong'. ■

it the 'Hawaiian Evening Get Together'. On arrival each guest was greeted with an authentic lei from Hawai'i, a warm hug and an 'aloha'. I gave a short talk about Hawai'i and its history from "pre-contact" to statehood, and a little bit about steel guitar music.

The evening was filled with Hawaiian music, including songs I played on my steel guitar and music from classic Hawaiian recordings. My wife did a few hula dances, and then our guests tried to follow her. She had learned hula while in Hawai'i and also brought back some hula instructional DVDs. It was all great fun. My wife prepared and served Hawaiian food and drinks. I think most of our friends thoroughly enjoyed this get-together. The program ended with the song "Good-Bye, Hawaii" when everybody held hands and moved in a circle in front of a panoramic scene of Waikiki Beach.

None of our friends in London had been to Hawai'i, and they had practically never heard Hawaiian music before. They were fascinated by its rich and colorful culture and above all its heavenly music.

Recently, as members of U3A (University of the Third Age), we were invited to present a show on Hawaiian culture and music for other members at West London's Ealing Town Hall. Volunteers from U3A practiced hard to learn the hula movements and music. On December 1, 2011 we gave a delightful presentation of hula, which was well attended and much appreciated by the audience.

A DVD of Rajnish's show is available for \$12 (U.S. dollars), which includes shipping and handling. To make payment arrangements or for more information please contact him at: Rajnish Sethi, 1 Sherborne Villas, Sherborne Gardens, Ealing, London W13 8AT U.K. You can also drop him a line by email at vkeertix@gmail.com. ■