

# HSGA QUARTERLY

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by the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association

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Showing their stuff at the Third HSGA Japan Convention in Roppongi last September, Toshimitsu Shiina (left) and the Lani Welina Band: Yumiko Kusakabe, female singers Kyoko Someya and Kazue Kobayashi, Keiichi Tsuruoka and Nobuyuki Kurata.

## HSGA Japan Convention Report

By Masakatsu Suzuki

The Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association, which was established in 1985 as a global network of steel guitar players and Hawaiian music enthusiasts, recently entered its fourth decade with a membership representing over a dozen countries. In 2012, our former Japan Coordinator, Tom Tohma, launched HSGA's first Japan Convention as a biennial event to be held on even years, allowing Japan members to also attend our Honolulu Conventions on odd years.

The Third Japan Convention was held this past September 17, 2016 at the Hawaiian bar/restaurant "Ho'okipa" in Roppongi, Tokyo. The weather was on our side and transportation was convenient, so most of our participants

arrived on schedule. The show, emceed by Yoshihisa Okano, took place from 11:30 AM to 6 PM with the HSGA Japan Chapter's banner proudly displayed above the stage.

This year's convention featured sixteen groups along with twenty-one steel guitarists, including, Chise Yamagishi, Noriko Tomita, Yukio Katagiri, Naohito Okubo, Shinichi Kakiuchi, Toshimitsu Shiina, Hideki Ida, Yoshiyuki Endo, Hideko Weaver, Motoyuki Suzuki, Hidekazu Kinukawa, Katsutoshi Ogata, Kuniharu Yamamoto, Yoshinori Nihachi, Masakatsu Suzuki, Kiyoshi "Lion" Kobayashi and his haumāna, Tetsuya Ishiyama, Norio Usui, Yohko Tanaka, Kayoko Iwade and Masahiko Ibamoto. Here was the lineup of featured steel guitarists and

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## HSGA QUARTERLY

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### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association's 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](mailto:hsga@hsga.org). Submitted items should also be e-mailed directly to the editor at [johnely@hawaiiansteel.com](mailto:johnely@hawaiiansteel.com).

### HSGA JAPAN Continued from Page 1

backup performers in the order they appeared:

- Chise Yamagishi, backed by her husband Masazumi on 'ukulele, Reiko Watanabe on bass, Yoshinori Nihachi on guitar and Kashio Hashizume on 'ukulele. I was proud of this group, which has performed at all three of our Japan conventions. Their four songs included "Pretty Maui Girl."
- Noriko Tomita with backup provided by Tetsuya Ishiyama on uke, Yoshimi Nose on bass and Tomomi Sekiguchi on guitar. Noriko's magnificent performance included an Alan Akaka arrangement of "Haole Hula."
- Yukio Katagiri from Aichi Prefecture with backup provided by the group Mahana Lua consisting of Tomomichi Suzuki on 'ukulele, Kunio Sakai on upright bass and Shuzo Kohno on guitar. Yukio showed his skill and beautiful tone on five songs including "Beyond The Reef."
- Naohito Okubo with backup once again provided by the Mahana Lua musicians. Naohito played a unique steel guitar that resembled a surfboard,

and performed four songs including a rich chordal rendition of "Waikiki Chickadee."

- Shinichi Kakiuchi with backup provided by the group Nui Loa, which included Shinichi's wife Kumiko Kakiuchi and Mikie Iwabuchi on 'ukulele. Shinichi played "Hana" and three other selections on his 7-string Rick-enbacker Bakelite steel guitar. Adding beauty to the set were Mayumi Tadano and Kumiko Kakiuchi who danced hula to "Ke Aloha."
- Toshimitsu Shiina and the Lani Welina Band with Keiichi Tsuruoka on guitar, Nobuyuki Kurata on bass and Yumiko Kusakabe on 'ukulele with female chorus Kyoko Someya and Kazue Kobayashi. The group's five selections were well received and included the classic "Ku'u Pua I Paoakalani." Toshimitsu said that his beautiful steel guitar sounds were due to custom modifications he made to his amplifier's circuitry.
- Hideki Ida, backed by Yoshinori Nihachi on guitar with Kunio Sakai on upright bass and "Lion" Kobayashi on second steel guitar. Hideki performed four songs including a thickly textured arrangement of "Hawaiian Paradise."

*Kiyoshi "Lion" Kobayashi (front) with his steel guitar halau in a steel guitar quintet! (Back row, l. to r.) Norio Usui, Yohko Tanaka, Kayoko Iwade and Masahiko Ibamoto.*







Masakatsu Suzuki on steel guitar with the Mahana Lua Band: “falsetto ace” Tomomichi Suzuki, Shuzo Kohno and Kunio Sakai.

- Yoshiyuki Endo and the Lohi Lohi Band with Kohei Makino on guitar, Hideaki Takahashi on ‘ukulele and Masahiro Abe on bass. Yoshiyuki played four songs including a beautiful chordal arrangement of “Hana” and finishing with a light hula medley at the end. His double-neck steel guitar featured a special mechanism for freely changing the tuning designed by member Mitsuo Fujii’s Fuzzy Steel Guitar Company.
- Hideko Weaver from California, backed by Mahana Lua. With husband and longtime HSGA photographer Paul Weaver at her side, she played four songs including “Estrellita” on her E7th tuning. She has performed at all three of our HSGA Japan conventions.
- Motoyuki Suzuki backed by sequenced tracks (because his backup group ‘Aloha M 2’ were unable to attend). Motoyuki crisply delivered four songs including “Caravan” with his steel guitar on his lap.
- Hidekazu Kinukawa and the Naleo Island Magic Band with Yoshihisa Okano on ‘ukulele, Kohei Makino on guitar and Masahiro Abe on bass. Hidekazu played three songs including an Alan Akaka arrangement of “Hilo March” on his Magnatone’s triple-neck steel tuned to B11th, E13th and C6th. He has played this guitar for over 60 years and learned to play by carefully imitating the sounds of classic Hawaiian steel guitar recordings.
- Katsutoshi Ogata, backed by Yoshihisa Okano on ‘ukulele, Yoshinori Nihachi on guitar and Kunio Sakai on upright bass. Ogata performed five songs including “Beyond The Reef” with clean, clear tones. He enjoyed the convention and assured us that he will be on hand for the next Japan convention in 2018.
- Kuniharu Yamamoto and the Na Kanaka Band with Kohei Makino on guitar, Hideaki Takahashi on ‘ukulele, Masahiro Abe on bass and Yoshihiko Machimura on vibraphone. The group—a rare example of five musicians who have been

*Continued on Page 20*

## Board Elections Results

We are pleased to announce that the slate of board candidates up for a vote this past winter was approved by the membership with no dissenting votes. The new board will convene at the start of the upcoming membership year (July 1, 2017) or shortly thereafter, and at that time officers will be selected for the 2017-2019 term.

Congratulations to Lanet Abrigo (Hawai‘i), Kay Das (California), Tony Fourcroy (Colorado), John Limbach (Montana), Jackie Luongo (Missouri), and Mark Roeder (Wisconsin)! Frank Della-Penna (Washington, D.C.) will be serving his final term, filling out our 7-member board.

## Where They Are Playing

**Bobby Ingano Trio**—Bobby performs every Monday with Kaipo and Adam Asing at Dots Restaurant’s “Nostalgia Night,” 6-9 PM. Dots is on O‘ahu’s North shore at 130 Mango St., Wahiawa, Hawai‘i 96786-1926.

**Alan Akaka and the Islanders**—Sadly, we just learned that Alan and the group are no longer playing their long-time Thursday slot at the Marriott. We understand that they are playing select Thursdays and possibly some Fridays at the International Marketplace on Kalākaua Avenue, 7-10 PM. Be on the lookout!

**Hiram Olsen Trio**—We keep hearing reports that Hiram, Casey and Bla are back at the Halekulani Hotel’s ‘House without a Key’ seaside patio. Unconfirmed and we don’t know what day(s)... Let us know if you find out!

*A nice shot of Yoshinori Nihachi playing his Fender Stringmaster “western style” with backup by Kohei Makino and Masahiro Abe.*



# Honolulu 2017 “Mini” Convention Preview

By Kamaka Tom

As many of you know, we generally hold our biennial Honolulu conventions around May Day on odd years. Unfortunately, no official club events are planned this year at the Queen Kapi‘olani Hotel due to planned renovations to the ballrooms and restaurant. However, the hotel is offering a room discount for HSGA members from April 27 to May 7, 2017, so some of our members will be congregating informally for our show in the park, the library concert and the usual array of sightseeing and music-going opportunities.

## Waikīkī-Kapahulu Library Mini-Concert

On Saturday, April 29, HSGA will again host a Hawaiian steel guitar mini-concert at the Waikīkī-Kapahulu Public Library from 1 PM to 3 PM. Free and open to the public.

## HSGA “Lei Day” Performances

On Monday, May 1 (Lei Day), HSGA will host local and member steel guitar performances from 10 AM to 3 PM as part of the 2017 Annual Lei Festival in Kapi‘olani Park. The festival features daylong entertainment on the main stage with appearances by the Royal Hawaiian Band and the 2017 Lei Queen and Court. HSGA will perform on a separate stage next to the display area for the Lei-Making Contest winners. If you would like to perform, please email me to be scheduled at <kamakatom@gmail.com>.



All smiles at our last Honolulu Convention in 2015, HSGA President Paul Kim (left) with Shinichi Kakiuchi—who is now our Japan Coordinator—and Shinichi’s wife Kumiko.

## Hotel Reservations

The Queen Kapi‘olani Hotel is two blocks from Kuhio Beach in Waikīkī on the Diamond Head end of the Waikīkī hotel district. To make a reservation, you have two options. You can call the hotel toll-free at (800) 533-6970 between 8 AM and 4 PM Hawai‘i time. Don’t forget to mention our group discount code ‘HSGA2017’ to get the best price on rooms. You can also book rooms via email—go to our home page at [www.hsga.org](http://www.hsga.org) and click on the Hotel Discount Information link for details.

The special room rate at the Queen Kapi‘olani applies from April 27 through May 7. A credit card is required at time of booking to hold the room reservation. Cancellations may be made up to 72 hours prior to arrival without penalty. The address of the hotel is: Queen Kapi‘olani Hotel, 150 Kapahulu Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96815.

## Final Thoughts

Our Honolulu get-togethers are always a great opportunity to catch Hawaiian steel guitar playing around Waikīkī and see the sights around O‘ahu if you have the time. We can steer you to nearby Hawaiian entertainment that may feature good Hawaiian music and maybe steel guitar. There are lots of dining options within walking distance of the hotel; ask your hotel concierge. Waikīkī, after all is known as the “Playground of the Pacific.” The Honolulu public bus system is very good and runs near our hotel.

If you have questions about this year’s informal event, feel free to contact me at: Kamaka Tom, 2434 Waioma‘o Road, Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96816; Email: [kamakatom@gmail.com](mailto:kamakatom@gmail.com); Tel: 808-772-6581.

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# Waikīkī Festival Preview

By Addison Ching

To broaden the festival's reach to Waikīkī visitors and local residents, the 2017 Waikīkī Steel Guitar Festival will be expanded to a two-day program. The entire event will be publicized as "The Royal Hawaiian Center presents The Waikīkī Steel Guitar Week," according to Monte McComber, Cultural Director at the center. The event will be held on July 14-15, 2017 with steel guitar performances at the Royal Hawaiian Center every night leading up to the festival. The main festival performances will be held between 5:30 and 9:00 PM on Friday and Saturday.

This year's program will again include ten steel guitar masters, and may also include afternoon workshops offered to students at local schools free of charge. The workshops are designed to acquaint students with our instrument, stimulate interest for further training, and ultimately help create a new generation of steel guitar players.

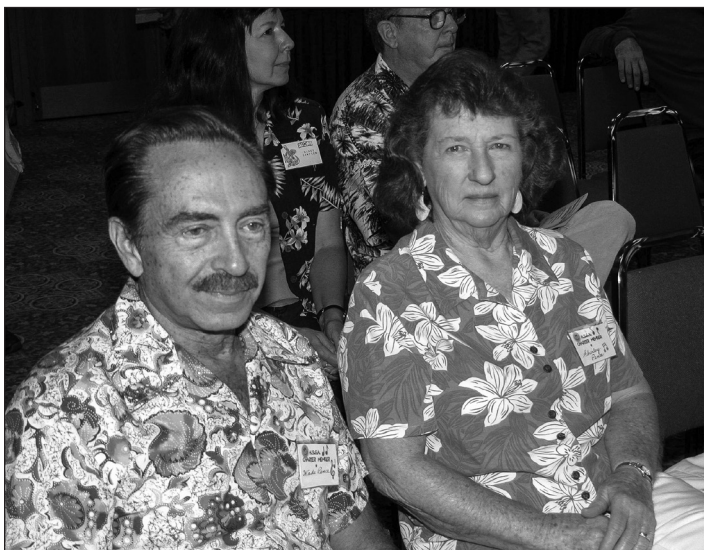
The very popular vintage steel guitar exhibit will again be staged on both festival days in Helumoa Hale, an air-conditioned exhibit hall. Festival guests are invited to see these vintage steel guitars up close and learn more about the instruments from exhibit volunteers.

The festival planners may also add a Saturday music lecture/workshop into the festival schedule. Several music educators well-versed in the Hawaiian steel guitar and Hawaiian music are being considered. ■

## Please Contact Us!

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

A nice shot of Wade Pence and wife Shirley at Joliet 2005.



At the 2011 Waikīkī Steel Guitar Festival, Ke Kula Mele Hawai'i students Alexis Tolentino (left), Summer Nishida and older sister Mikaela Nishida holding up a vintage Rickenbacher Frypan while steel "ace" Bobby Ingano looks on.

## Closing Notes

We got some sad news from board member Ivan Reddington right at press time. Writes Ivan, "Sorry to transmit bad news but I received a call from the Pence Family that [longtime HSGA member] **Wade Pence** died Tuesday afternoon, February 14, 2017. Wade was one of those who helped get the non-pedal room started at the Texas Steel Guitar Association conventions. Wade played both non-pedal and pedal steel guitar. He also played dobro in his church band. I met Wade in Hawai'i during one of our Honolulu conventions and discovered that we both worked for American Airlines. It made a long friendship for us, and I visited his home regularly during my training at the GSW airport in Fort Worth. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Shirley."

Sad news also from board member Frank Della-Penna: "One of our Multi-Kord family has died, longtime HSGA member **Pat Brunner** of Franklin, Indiana. Patty use to hang out at the Harlin Brothers Store in Indianapolis and even play occasionally on Jay Harlin's big Hawaiian guitar." Pat was also a member of the Indy Steel Guitar Club, the International Steel Guitar Club and the Aloha International Steel Guitar Club and attended some of the Joliet and Winchester conventions. Pat volunteered for ten years at the Indianapolis Zoo and at the Johnson Memorial Hospital Gift Shop. Our best thoughts go out to her husband Harlan and the many friends she left behind.

## COCO WIRE

Our own **Ed Punua** was featured on steel guitar at the Kaua'i Beach Resort Jasmine Ballroom on March 6, part of the "Music is Our Kuleana" Monday night series of Hawaiian music performances sponsored by E Kanikapila Kakou (EKK) during the winter months. Also featured were Kainani Kahaunaele, Keao Costa, Sean Naleimaile, Kihei Nahalae and Kamakoa Lindsey-Asing. The show opened with a video and "talk story" with Ed, Carlos Andrade, Lady Ipo, Darryl Gonsalves, Chucky Chock, and Kawika Sproat.

We always get interesting Kaua'i news from member **Jess Montgomery**. He got a hold of a rare vintage photo (shown opposite) of Kaua'i's best known Hawaiian steel guitarist **Ernie Palmeira**. Writes Jess, "I got this picture from Ernie. It's from the 1940s at the Blue Lei Bar in Kapa'a back when Kapa'a had a reputation as a real honky-tonk town [the photo is included in the Kapa'a edition of the 'Images of America' series put out by Arcadia Publishing]. Along with Ernie, the band included brothers Wally and Jimmy Palmeira, Joaquin Ornellas and Raymond Mendes. Ernie says that since they were in their teens and too young to drink, they had to come in through the back door. Ernie and his brothers travelled all over the world playing and were regulars at Coco Palms from the '50s through the '80s. Ernie still plays, though I think he is the only survivor from this picture. Joaquin's son, Gabe Ornellas, is the regular bass player and percussionist at the Smith Family Lū'au along the Wailua River."

Jess continues, "Ernie is incredible. He's 87 I think and off to Vegas next week. He packs up that double-neck Stringmaster



*At the Blue Lei Bar in the 1940s in Kapa'a. (l. to r.) Ernie, Wally, and Jimmy Palmeira, Joaquin Ornellas, and Raymond Mendes.*

into a soft keyboard case and slings it over his shoulder—won't let anybody help him with it. I'm blowing it by not recording his stories. I try but he's a hard man to pin down. Ernie generally still plays at Līhu'e Airport in the lobby one night a week, though it varies. Catch him if you can!"

We got the following news at press time from the eldest son of longtime HSGA member **George "Keoki" Lake**: "Sad news—George has been in the Royal Alex Hospital (RAH) for the past month. He had a fall in the kitchen and fractured and twisted several vertebra in his spine. He is bedridden and in acute pain, facing weeks in the hospital, followed by six months physiotherapy at the Glenrose Hospital. It is highly doubtful that he will be returning home. Instead, we are looking for assisted senior living quarters for him. He will be on painkillers the rest of his life, as the doctors are not optimistic about his recovery to his former self." Members, if you would like to send Keoki a note, email his son Randy at [steelguitarpick@gmail.com](mailto:steelguitarpick@gmail.com) and he'll pass it along.

The First Annual Hawaiian Steel Guitar Festival at Ka Makana Ali'i Mall, located at 1-1024 Kuipuakukui Street in Kapolei, O'ahu, was held on March 18, 2017. This is the latest in a series of new community-based Hawaiian steel guitar festivals to spring up around the Islands, most of them located in popular shopping malls. This year's Kapolei program will featured Hawaiian steel guitar masters presenting their own program of traditional and contemporary Hawaiian music, as well as performances by Ke Kula Mele Hawai'i's 'Next Generation' steel guitarists. The festival was presented free to the public by Hawaii Institute for Music Enrichment and Learning Experiences (HIMELE) in association with the Ke Kula Mele Hawai'i School of Hawaiian Music, with grants and support from corporate partners and private donors. We'll get you a report in the next newsletter, which should come out quickly. ■

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- 7 That's the Hawaiian in Me (1936)
- 8 On the Beach at Waikiki/  
My Own Iona (1915/16)
- 9 I've Gone Native Now (1936)
- 10 My Honolulu Tomboy (1905)
- 11 Moloka'i Slide (1988)

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## HSGA Donations

Thanks, HSGA members for your generous donations this past quarter!

Big mahalos go out to perennial donor (and just-elected HSGA board member!) **Mark Roeder** of Madison, Wisconsin and **Sachi Watanabe** of Kailua, Hawaii, who both donated a generous \$100 to our General Fund, so vital to the day-to-day, year-to-year operations of our association.

The following members donated at least \$10:

Robert Clifford, Tumwater, WA

Frank Della-Penna & Stephanie Ortoleva,  
Washington, DC

Catherine S. Ridenbaugh, Columbus, OH

Jeffrey Scott, Greenwood Village, CO

Rusty Strange, N. Falmouth, MA

Yuuzo Tanikawa, Komae-shi, Tokyo  
Japan

## EVENTS CALENDAR

**April 26-27, 2017—Maui Steel Camp**  
Held just prior to the Maui Steel Guitar Festival at the Kā'anapali Beach Hotel, the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Camp is a two-day tuition-based enrichment experience in which camp attendees learn how to play the Hawaiian steel guitar along with other aspects of the instrument. For details, go to [www.hawaiiansteelguitarcamp.com](http://www.hawaiiansteelguitarcamp.com) or contact Alan Akaka at (808) 375-9379.

**April 28-30, 2017—Maui SG Fest**  
The Ninth Annual Maui Steel Guitar Festival will be held on April 28-30, 2017, at the Kā'anapali Beach Hotel and at the Queen Ka'ahumanu Center during the afternoon of April 30. This free, three-day festival will include performances, presentations, instructional workshops and nightly jam sessions. For details, contact Alan Akaka at (808) 375-9379 or go to [www.mauisteelguitarfestival.com](http://www.mauisteelguitarfestival.com).

**April-May 2017—Honolulu Meet**  
No official club events are planned at the Queen Kapi'olani Hotel due to renovations to the ballrooms and restaurant. However, guest rooms will be available at a discount from April 27 through May 7 (see page 4 for details).

**April 29, 2017—Library Concert**  
HSGA will again host a Hawaiian steel guitar mini-concert at the Waikīkī-Kapahulu Public Library from 1 PM to 3 PM. Free and open to the public.

**May 1, 2017—Lei Day Concert**  
The annual May Day Hawaiian music gala at Kapi'olani Park. HSGA hosts a stage featuring member performances and local steel guitarists, 10 AM - 3 PM (see page 4 for details).

**June 10, 2017—Spring Concert**  
Enjoy the music of Ke Kula Mele School of Hawaiian music under the direction of Kumu Alan Akaka. Stu-

dents will perform songs with the theme of Ke Kai (the ocean) on steel guitar, 'ukulele, guitar and Hawaiian-style bass at the Windward Mall Spring Concert, Saturday, June 10, 2017 at 11 AM in Kāne'ōhe on O'ahu's North Shore. Free to the public. For more information call (808) 375-9379 or visit [kekulamele.com](http://kekulamele.com).

**June 11, 2017—Kāne'ōhe SG Fest**  
The 2017 Hawaiian Steel Guitar Festival at Kāne'ōhe will be held on Sunday, June 11, 2017 from 11 AM to 4 PM at Windward Mall, Kāne'ōhe, Hawai'i. This festival provides a community friendly venue with lots of free parking and merchant facilities. Featured are Hawai'i's top steel guitar masters, as well as Ke Kula Mele's 'Next Generation' steel guitar students. Free and open to the public. For more information call (808) 375-9379.

**July 14-15, 2017—Waikīkī SG Fest**  
The 2017 Waikīkī Steel Guitar Festival, expanded this year to a two-day program, will be held on Friday and Saturday, July 14-15, 2017 at the Royal Hawaiian Center. Featured festival performances will be held between 5:30 and 9:00 PM on both days.

**Sept. 21-23, 2017—Ft. Collins Festival**  
The 2017 Mainland Hawaiian Steel Guitar Festival is scheduled for September 21-23. The contract with the Hilton has been signed and our featured guest artist is veteran steel guitarist Eddie Palama! Festival registration and hotel information will be made available soon. ■

### Mahalo, Members!

*Keep those great emails, letters and photos coming! If possible, send original photographs or digital camera output. Please send news, comments, or photos to: HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waiomao Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424. Email us at [hsga@hsga.org](mailto:hsga@hsga.org).*



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# The Second Annual Kaua'i Steel Guitar Festival

By Addison Ching

The Second Annual Kaua'i Steel Guitar Festival was held under beautiful Kaua'i weather on February 3-4, 2017, immediately preceding the annual Keola Beamer Aloha Music Camp. The event was held at the Courtyard by Marriott at Coconut Beach in Kapa'a, Kaua'i, and this year's sunny weather permitted the outdoor program to be presented without problem. The festival was presented by the Hawaiian Institute for Music Enrichment and Learning Experiences (HIMELE) and underwritten by private donations and support from the Hawaii Tourism Authority's Community Enrichment Program. The festival was well-received by the almost-300 festival guests, and HIMELE executive director Alan Akaka declared the festival a huge success.

The festival kicked off on Thursday morning and afternoon with teams of steel guitarists and Next Generation players visiting local Kaua'i schools to give presentations about the Hawaiian steel guitar. These presentations are designed to encourage interest, and in some cases, introduce the instrument to the future generation of players. After a brief introduction to the instrument and a musical interlude by the visiting performers, students were encouraged to ask questions and participate in "hands-on" experiences with the instrument with guidance provided by the Next Generation keiki steel guitar students of Ke Kula Mele Hawaii School of



Alan Akaka (left) and Addison Ching displaying the proclamation by Kaua'i Mayor Bernard P. Carvalho Jr. (center), designating February 3-4, 2017 as Kaua'i Steel Guitar Appreciation Days. (Photo courtesy of Don Touchi)

Hawaiian Music. Presentations were given in Lihue at Kaua'i High School and Chiefess Kamakahahei Middle School.

On Thursday, a festival kick-off kanikapila was held at the Sheraton Kaua'i Resort in Poipo Beach. The late afternoon event was well attended with local guests and festival and Aloha Music Camp participants performing on a variety of instruments.

Friday activities began with the first of two Open Stage sessions featuring a variety of steel guitar performers and steel guitar groups. The indoors sessions were well-received by festival and hotel guests. Evening workshops featured a presentation by Dave "DK" Kolars on steel guitar construction and a question-and-answer session moderated by steel guitarists Alan Akaka and Greg Sardinha.

Saturday festival activities included the second series of Open Stage sessions with a different set of performers, all students of the Ke Kula Mele Hawaii School of Hawaiian Music. The evening ho'olaule'a program featured seven steel guitarists: Kilipaki Vaughan and Ed Punua from Kaua'i; Geronimo "Geri" Valdriz from Maui; and from O'ahu, Eddie Palama, Greg Sardinha, Bobby Ingano, and Alan Akaka in separate programs. In addition, the ho'olaule'a featured Next Generation steel guitarists Alexis Tolentino and Mālie Lyman in separate programs and accompanied by the Chiefess Kamakahahei Middle School 'ukulele band under the direction of Elias Gonzales. The ho'olaule'a concluded with a round-robin jam session featuring the main steel guitar players.

A highlight of the ho'olaule'a was an appearance by Kaua'i Mayor Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr. The mayor recited a proclamation declaring February 3 and 4 as Kaua'i Steel Guitar Appreciation Days and also offered a musical selection to the delight of festival attendees.

## Wanted to Buy!

### 1920s-1930s Hawaiian Steel Guitar Material

- Steel guitar instruction books or lesson books
- Photos and autographs of early artists
  - Anything related to Sol Ho'opi'i, "King" Bennie Nawahi or early artists
  - Related memorabilia

**Contact HSGA Member  
Dennis McBride  
dennismcb@gmail.com  
(971) 271-7920**







*Mālie Lyman with the Chiefess Kamakahalei Middle School 'Ukulele Band under the direction of Elias Gonzales in a prime slot at this year's Kaua'i festival. (Photo courtesy of Don Touchi)*

Both Friday and Saturday evening activities were followed by a public kanikapila in the hotel's Makai Lounge where festival guests (and Aloha Music Camp participants) brought their instruments and jammed together.



*A recent playing session with Kapa'a, Kaua'i member Jess Montgomery (left), Kaua'i great, Ernie Palmeira, playing his Fender Stringmaster and Larry Allen.*

The 2018 Festival will again be held at the Courtyard by Marriott at Coconut Beach, immediately preceding the 2018 Aloha Music Camp, and is tentatively scheduled for February 2-3, 2018. Stay tuned for details! ■



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# My Little Grass Shack

(Harrison - Cogswell - Noble)

Arrangement by Chuck Lettes

Swing  $\text{♩} = \text{♩}^3$

**A** B $\flat$

C7

T			9	10	11	12			12-13
A	10	10	10	10	10	10			
B	10	10	10	10			10	11	12 12

Steel Gtr. (C6th)

5

F7 B $\flat$  D7

T	14	12	10	12	12	10			9
A		12	10	12	10				9 9
B						10		8 9	10 9

10

G7 C7

T	10	9	9-10	9	7	7	6	7		5	3	3	4
A		9								5	7	7	
B				7	7			7		7	6	5	

15

F7 **B** B $\flat$  C7

T	5	5	4	3	5	4	3	10	10	10	10	10	9	10	11	12
A	5	5	4	3	5	4	3	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	11	12
B								10	10	10	10		10	11	12	12



20

F7 D7

T 12 10 12 10 10 11 10 10

A 12 12 10 9

B 10

25

G7 C7 Bb

T 11 10 11 10 11 10 10 10 10 12 12 10 12 10

A 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10

B 10 10 10 10

30

C7 F7

T 9 10 11 12 7 3 4 5 5 3 3 5 5 4 4 3 5 5 8

A 10 10 11 12 7 7 5 5 4 4 3 5 5 8

B 10 11 12

35

Bb F7 Bb

T 10 3 4 5 5 3 3 5 5 4 4 3 5 5 8 10

A 10 3 4 5 3 5 5 4 4 3 5 5 8 10

B 10 5 5 8 10

# The Harlin Brothers of Indianapolis and the Birth of the Pedal Steel Guitar

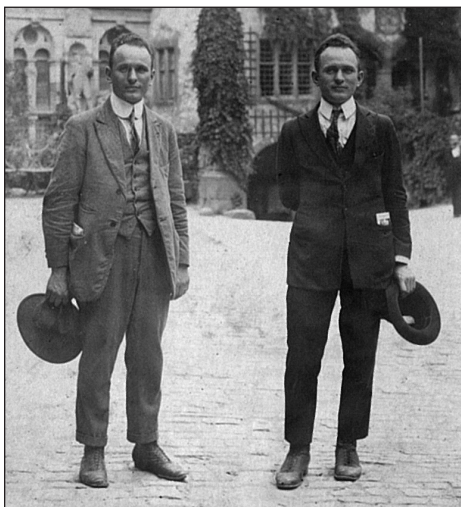
**Part Two: A Pitch-Changing Attachment, Arthur R. Harmon's Harmolin, Antony Freeman's Electric Lap Steel With Pedals, a Possible Harlin Brothers Connection, and the Early Career of Alvino Rey (1928-1937)**

By Anthony Lis

This series (which debuted in the Summer 2016 issue) is examining the development of the pedal steel guitar from initial experiments with adding pedals, buttons or levers to guitars (or guitar-like apparatuses) in the late 1880s through the custom-built, multi-neck pedal steel guitars assembled by Paul Bigsby after World War II. Particular attention is being paid to the contributions of the Harlin Brothers, a teaching, publishing, and pedal steel guitar-building enterprise active in Indianapolis from the mid-1930s through the early 1980s. Jay D. Harlin (1911-1996), the steel guitar playing, third-oldest Harlin brother, is known to have developed the Kalina Multi-Kord, an early commercially successful pedal steel guitar, by August 1947; there is

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*John T. and Chris T. Kaufman (with John apparently on the left) in Germany. In May 1922, the brothers sailed from Galveston to Germany with a shipload of dairy cows that were sent as a relief project sponsored by different (Mennonite?) churches.*



evidence that Harlin constructed working prototypes some six to eight years before that. The Harlins also wrote numerous arrangements and made Hawaiian-style recordings to accompany hula-dancing instruction at their downtown Indianapolis studios.

The previous installment surveyed innovators who experimented with altering a stringed instrument's open tuning between 1888-1926, beginning with Edwin Norcross's elongated piano-like instrument of 1888, with twelve foot pedals providing all twelve transpositions of the chromatic scale. In May 1903, Edward Stevenson applied for a patent for a nine-string guitar with four foot pedals. Roughly thirteen years later, recently retired vaudevillians Edwin Wilber and Nathaniel Boswell applied for a patent for a seven-string lap steel guitar enhanced by a series of buttons attached to the soundboard (apparently five in the final manufactured version, sold under the Tonaharp brand name). Different combinations of depressed buttons produced variations of the guitar's unusual D minor seventh tuning.

Part one ended with mention of a leg-mounted steel guitar with three pedals and apparently four necks for which a patent was filed in summer 1925 by John Westbrook, a multi-instrumentalist and music teacher in Danville, Virginia. (Westbrook played steel guitar with country music pioneer Jimmie Rodgers on four sides in 1928, and also recorded several songs with ties to Hawaii or Hawaiian performers.)

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Closing out the 1920s, Richard Smith—in his November 1988 *Guitar*



*From the cover of the Harlin's 1939 folio "Nights in Hawaii," a photo of the four Harlin Brothers actively involved in the family music business: (back row, l. to r.) Jimmy, Winiford and Herbert, with Jay D. Harlin in front, perhaps playing one of his two pedal steel guitar prototypes constructed around c. 1940? (Photo courtesy of Beth Harlin)*

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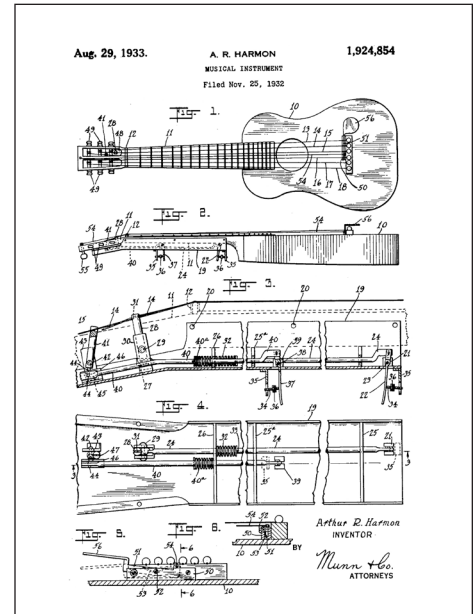
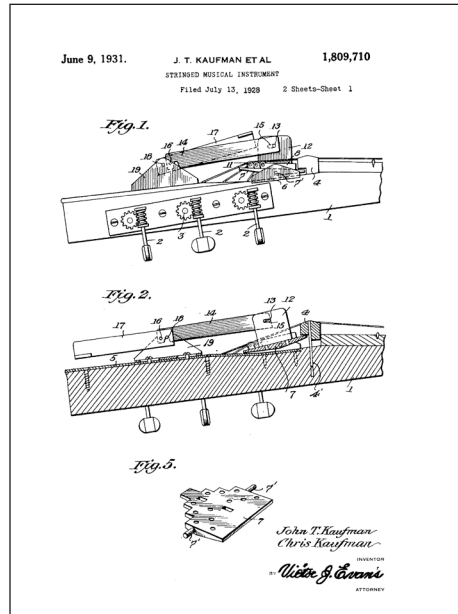
*Player* article "Rare Bird: Origins of the Pedal Steel"—mentions one other invention from the decade, a "pitch-changing attachment for guitars ... [which was] attached to the headstock of a standard guitar with wood screws," conceived in 1928 by John Tobias Kaufman (1897-1965) and Chris Tobias Kaufman (1897-1952), two brothers from southeast South Dakota. Regarding the Kaufmans' attachment, Smith explains that "by pulling a lever that engaged the strings and raised the nut, a player could shift from standard [guitar] tuning to a[n] [open-chord] steel guitar tuning" (and vice versa).

From a Google Patents search, the author learned that the Kaufmans applied for their patent (#1,809,710) on July 13, 1928, which was granted roughly thirty-five months later. Ancestry.com's *U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925* database reveals that the two Kaufmans were twin brothers engaged in farming, and that their



parents were Russian immigrants, with their father Tobias having immigrated around 1874. (In their patent application, the Kaufmans hoped “the advantages and novel features of our invention will be readily apparent.”)

Rudy Brockmeuller (who maintains a memorial page for Chris Kaufman at the Findagrave.com website) related in a November 22, 2016 e-mail to the author that the Kaufman family “has a rich history of musical talent.” Brockmeuller helped the author contact Harriet Kaufman, wife of Chris Kaufman’s son youngest son, Elrod, who lives on the Kaufman family homestead outside Freeman, South Dakota, southwest of Sioux Falls. Harriet related in a November 27 e-mail that Chris was killed in a tractor accident when Elrod was twelve (in September 1952, according to Kaufman’s October 2, 1952 obituary in the *Mennonite Weekly Review*). Harriet relayed that, although Elrod had a stroke about twenty years ago, his memory was still fairly good, and he did recall his father having a steel guitar and working on a “gizmo” for it. In her e-mail (and a November 29 follow-up and an early-December note), Harriet added that before Chris married (in October 1935, according to his obituary), he worked as a band director



(Left) One of two drawings accompanying John and Chris Kaufman’s July 13, 1928 application for a “stringed musical instrument” with a “tuning device” for shifting between a standard guitar tuning and an open-chord steel guitar tuning. (Right) The drawing accompanying Arthur R. Harmon’s 1932 application for a musical instrument which was subsequently marketed as the Harmolin.

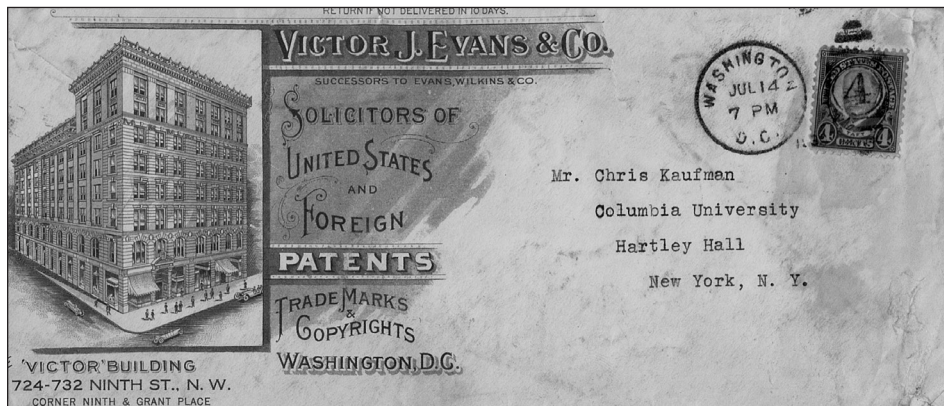
in Montana, learning the bassoon along the way, while John—who eventually managed a lumber company—played oboe. (From Chris’s obituary, we learn that he also “studied one term at ... Columbia University.”)

Harriet was unsure what happened to her father-in-law’s “gizmo”; her husband originally recalled his father selling it, but in her note, Harriet

offered that “now we’re thinking that [Chris’s brother] John kept it and it could be lost forever.”

Moving now into the 1930s, on November 5, 1932, Arthur R. Harmon, of La Grange, Illinois (in southwest suburban Chicago) applied for a patent for a musical instrument (#1,924,854), which was subsequently marketed as the Harmolin. Richard Smith describes the Harmolin as “the first known steel guitar with integral levers for changing the pitch of certain strings.” Careful research at several Ancestry.com databases revealed that at the time of his patent application, roughly-twenty-nine-year-old Harmon was employed as a decorator-contractor and had also recently worked as a painter. Smith states that the Harmolin had seven strings tuned to A7th (low to high, E-A-E-G-A-C#-E) and three pitch-changing attachments: a “palm-lever” attached to the top of the guitar near the bridge; a pedal located to the right of the player’s left knee; and a pedal

*The envelope from Washington, D.C. attorneys Victor J. Evans & Co., postmarked the day after the Kauffman brothers submitted their patent application. (Victor Evans assisted the brothers with the application process.) The envelope—which was unfortunately empty when found by Harriet Kaufman (wife of Chris Kaufman’s son Elrod)—assumedly contained follow-up paperwork for the Kaufmans’ application?*

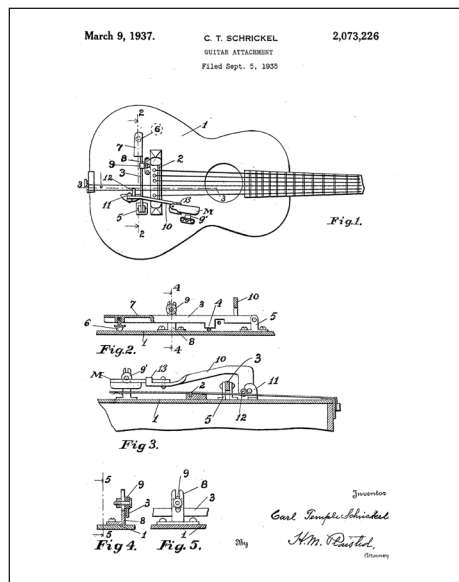


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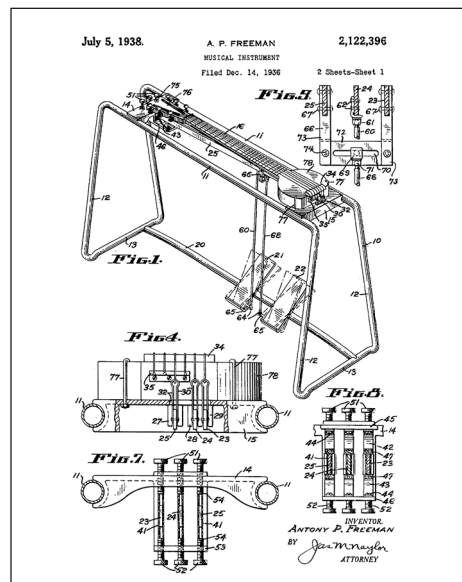
located on the left side of the player's leg—all a bit difficult to discern in the patent application drawing. In a January 30, 2013 post at the online Steel Guitar Forum ([bb.steelguitarforum.com](http://bb.steelguitarforum.com)), steel guitar researcher Michael Lee Allen (based in Des Plaines, Illinois, sixteen miles north of Harmon's La Grange) related that there were three other Harmolin models, a "six-string with two knee-levers, [a] seven-string with two knee-levers ... and an electric lap steel with six strings and the same two knee-levers." In an earlier Steel Guitar Forum posting on January 7, 2009, Allen related that on the seven-string model with a palm-lever first identified above, the palm-lever "pulled the lowered center string up to the other six."

Several other inventors and companies looking to alter a steel guitar's open tuning in the 1930s embraced button mechanisms. Lorene Ruymar, in *The Hawaiian Steel Guitar and Its Great Hawaiian Musicians*, relates that the St. Louis Music Supply Company advertised a "Hawaiian All-Chord Guitar" in 1935. (*Polk's St. Louis City Directory 1936* shows the music supply company located on the third floor of a building at 708-B Pine Street in central St. Louis which also housed a bookstore and a billiard parlor.) Ruymar describes the guitar as "an acoustic six-string with two buttons placed on the top of the guitar, handy for pushing with the right hand." To infer from Ruymar, a player pulled one button to lower the second string for minor chords, while the other button enabled the playing of seventh chords—pushing down a button with one's palm disengaged it. Ruymar adds that "the buttons were a special attachment that had to be built into the guitar upon request."

With some careful and determined Internet searching, the author was able to ascertain that the inventor of the All-



(Left) The drawing accompanying Carl Temple Schrickel's second patent application (in 1935) for an invention "provid[ing] [a] means for varying the tension ... of one or more strings of a musical instrument ... whereby different chords may be produced by a particular group of strings," subsequently marketed as the "Hawaiian All-Chord Guitar." (Right) The drawing accompanying Antony P. Freeman's December 1936 application for a musical instrument which pedal steel guitar researcher Timothy Miller has labeled as "the earliest documentation of an electric lap steel with pedal devices."



Chord Guitar was Cincinnati-born violin teacher Carl Temple Schrickel (1879-1959). By September 1918 (when Schrickel registered for the World War I draft) Schrickel was working as a self-employed teacher in Ferguson, Missouri (the site of recent police-shooting unrest) in the northwestern part of the St. Louis metropolitan area.

Schrickel applied for two patents related to his guitar (#1,926,561 in April 1932 and #2,073,226 in September 1935). Schrickel explained in the latter application that he had made improvements allowing his guitar attachment to be "locate[d] ... on the upper face of the guitar, adapting it to be readily applied to practically all sizes of th[e] ... instrument, and ... operat[ed] by the forearm and edge of the hand of the player (instead of the fingers) ... thus facilitat[ing] [fi]nger-ing of the strings."

In July 1933, Schrickel also applied for a tone bar patent. In 1934, Schrickel—by this time ensconced in

west-central St. Louis— assembled an apparent multi-volume *How to Play the Hawaiian All-Chord Guitar*. Volume one somehow found its way to the British Library. According to the library's main online catalog ([explore.bl.uk](http://explore.bl.uk)), Schrickel's volume was published by the New York-based, Hawaiian guitar-oriented William J. Smith Music Company.

Ruymar's *Hawaiian Steel Guitar* also includes a rather assertive essay written by the late Bud Tutmarc emphasizing the innovations of his father, Minneapolis-born inventor/instrumentalist/singer Paul H. Tutmarc (1896-1972). Bud states that by the mid-1930s, his father—by then teaching stringed instruments in Seattle—had constructed a six-string double-neck steel [guitar] "supplied with automatic tuning," effected "at the press of a button." Bud explains that one "could pre-set the amount of pressure that would be put on the string and raise the pitch a half step or a full step." Bud infers that his father started making pedal

steels in the late 1940s, relating that in “about 1949 he made [a pedal steel] ... just for me with my name on it,” adding that “it had three pedals.”

*Polk's Seattle City Directory 1935* shows Tutmarc operating his teaching studio at 806 Pine on the northeast edge of Seattle's business district, and living with his first wife Lorraine roughly six miles to the north on 8th Avenue Northeast. Online, the author found articles in newspaper archives and on webpages referencing Tutmarc's pioneering of the electric guitar and a horizontally held electric bass guitar, but nothing further about any button-equipped, six-string double-neck steel or pedal steel (nor any instrument patents in his name).

Timothy Miller, in *Technology and Culture: Co-Constructing the Pedal Steel Guitar* states—perhaps a bit too hastily—that “the earliest documentation of an *electric lap steel with pedal devices* [emphases added] is a patent (#2,122,396A) applied for in 1936 by Antony Paul Freeman [1904-1999] of San Francisco.” Ancestry.com research revealed that Freeman was born in Rocklin, California (outside Sacramento). *Polk's Crocker-Langley San Francisco City Directory 1934* shows Freeman as an employed musician living at 1859 Vallejo Street (northwest of downtown) with his wife, Marie. Google Patents lists a Martin P. Grauenhorst (born c. 1904) as the “original signee” of the patent application, and the 1938 edition of the *Official Gazette of the United States Patent Office* lists Freeman as assigning one-half of the patent to Grauenhorst. Research at Newspapers.com determined that Grauenhorst was a banjoist born in Beatrice, Nebraska who by mid-April 1929 was performing with the Pacific Vagabonds, a twenty-piece “symphonic jazz” orchestra broadcasting over the NBC radio network from San Francisco. One wonders if Antony Freeman perhaps had a connection with the Vagabonds, and met Grauenhorst via that ensemble. In *Polk's 1934 directory*, Grauenhorst is shown living at 3651 Scott Street (roughly nine blocks northwest of the Freemans) with his wife Ruth. The last Grauenhorst reference the author found at Ancestry.com was the 1940 census, where Grauenhorst is listed living in northwest San Francisco, employed as musical director at NBC radio.

The Freeman/Grauenhorst “musical instrument” patent was submitted on December 14, 1936 and granted on July 5, 1938. Miller notes that the first of two patent drawings “shows a lap steel in the style of Rickenbacker's famous “Frying pan” model mounted on a stand and operated by two pedals ... .” Miller continues that “a device built into the end of the stand provides a separate anchor for three of the six strings ... [whose] tension is adjusted by pressing the pedals. Three different pedal positions [dubbed ‘neutral, toe, and heel’ by Freeman] ... provide three different pitches for each affected string.”



*Seattle-based musician Paul H. Tutmarc, who by the mid-1930s had constructed a six-string, double-neck steel guitar with button-effected “automatic tuning.”*

Despite Timothy Miller's claim that the Freeman/Grauenhorst patent provides the earliest documentation of an electric lap steel with pedals, Freeman is careful to explain that while his patent application shows and describes “an electric steel guitar, it is to be understood that my invention is adapted for use with *any* guitar [emphasis added] and, in fact, any instrument of the lute type.”

In the application, Freeman claimed that his invention “immeasurably increased the utility of the [Hawaiian] guitar in modern arrangement[s] and orchestrations,” rendering the instrument “capable of supplementing the instruments of an orchestra to produce unheard-of tonal effects.” Miller offers—tantalizingly—that “although no evidence exists of a surviving example, [the] ... patent states that two prototypes were “operated by outstanding guitarists.”

A reposting of an early 2011 post by an unidentified author at the antiques and collectables pricing website, WorthPoint (worthpoint.com), suggests the possibility of a rather intriguing link between Antony Freeman and the Harlin Brothers. In a detailed description of a Harlin Brothers six-pedal Kalina Multi-Kord steel guitar from 1949 (a “D-8” model, i.e., a double-neck with eight strings), the author (who originally posted at eBay) relates that “around the end of 1938, Jay D. Harlin ... bought the patent for an original design for a pedal-pulling system to change the pitch of a string on a Hawaiian steel guitar from an engineer [sic] he knew named Freeman.” (By late 1938, the Harlin Brothers were ensconced at 40 1/2 West Ohio Street in central Indianapolis, an address they'd assumed in 1937, about a block northwest of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument.)

*Continued on Page 16*



The WorthPoint poster continues that “by 1939, Harlin and his brothers were manufacturing a pedal steel guitar based on an improvement of that original [Freeman] system and selling the guitars out of their own store front—along with lessons—in Indianapolis.” Your author cannot at present vouch for the veracity of the entire latter statement; while he has identified a Harlin Brothers presence in Indianapolis going back to 1934, the United States Patent and Trade Office online database (uspto.gov) shows that Jay D. Harlin did not apply for a patent for the Multi-Kord (as a “string musical instrument with chord-tuning mechanism”) until August 21, 1947 (#2,458,263), and the patent was not granted until nearly sixteen-and-a-half months later on January 4, 1949.

Efforts to identify (and query) the WorthPoint poster have unfortunately come to naught. However—as will be detailed in future installments—Amy England (a music store service manager and fretted instrument repairer at Arthur’s Music Store in Indianapolis) has gathered some testimony from an elderly Indiana-born, Indianapolis-based steel player, Lou Urbancic (b.

*Young Alvin Henry McBurney, who adopted the stage name Alvin Rey.*



1928) that Jay Harlin may have completed one Multi-Kord prototype around 1939-40, and a second around 1941.

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By the mid-1930s, steel guitarist Alvin Rey (1908-2004) enters the discussion of pedal steel pioneers. Originally a banjoist and standard guitarist, Rey became fascinated with the steel guitar in the early 1930s. In 1935 (according to the liner notes to the Steel Guitar Record Club’s 1977 Anthology LP, *The Big Band Steel Guitar of Alvin Rey*) Rey, ever the tinkerer, asked engineers at the Gibson company to add foot pedals to the steel guitar he was then using. Around 1939, he began experimenting with Epiphone’s Varichord, a seven-string steel guitar with pitch-altering levers manufactured between c. 1939-1943. Also, in the late 1930s, Rey played what appears to have been an advisory and consultative role in the production of Gibson’s Electraharp, regarded by some as the first pedal steel guitar to be mass-produced by a major guitar manufacturer).

*Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association Quarterly* editor John Ely relayed to the author in a September 2, 2016 e-mail that Rey’s other innovations

*College football offensive lineman turned “sweet” swing bandleader Horace Heidt.*



*1931 photo of radio steel guitarist Andy Sannella, who served as an inspiration to young McBurney.*

included being the first steel guitarist to “play chords rich in upper extensions” (i.e., altered ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth chords), as well as so-called “substitute” [i.e., more complex] chords. Ely observed that “it was so remarkable to have a mainstream bandleader with a steel guitar front and center [during the big band heyday of the 1940s].”

Rey was born Alvin Henry McBurney in Oakland, California. Sometime after 1920, Rey moved with his family to the Cleveland area, where—to infer from Ancestry.com’s *U.S. School Yearbooks, 1880-2012* database—he graduated from Lakewood High School (in the western suburb of Lakewood), in spring 1927. (Young Alvin’s caption in the Lakewood High School yearbook—which perhaps offers some insight into his personality—stated “Mac’ was a quiet, rather thoughtful fellow, but he was as good-hearted and helpful as

anyone possibly could be. Whenever anyone wanted a favor done or an errand run, he could always be perfectly safe in calling on ‘Mac’.”)

After winning a banjo audition with Phil Spitalny’s orchestra (in residence at Midtown Manhattan’s Pennsylvania Hotel), McBurney changed his stage name to Alvino Rey. Gigs with the Russ Morgan and Freddy Martin bands followed.

In an eponymously titled article in the March-April 1957 issue of *Music Studio News* (forwarded to the author by Hawaiian music researcher/chronologist John D. Marsden), Rey also revealed that he “first became interested in the Hawaiian guitar after hearing Andy Sannella ... [with] the first Lucky Strike Orchestra” (on the radio, beginning in the early 1930s), adding that Sannella’s use of the E7th tuning produced a “nice, rich, full sound” that caught his ear. Rey stated that he didn’t become seriously interested in the steel “until the development of the pedal [steel] guitar,” which helped overcome “the limitations as to chords” that—in Rey’s view—had handicapped the earlier instrument. (Rey also stated—from a rather uninformed viewpoint, it must be said—that “the ordinary [i.e., non-pedal] steel guitar, I always regarded as an effect instrument.”)

According to A. R. Duchossoir in *Gibson Electric Steel Guitars: 1935-1967*, in January 1933, Rey joined pianist Horace Heidt and His Brigadiers, which began life as a “sweet” swing band in the San Francisco Bay area, where they were joined by the King Sisters (a vocal trio from Utah composed of daughters of choir director William King Driggs) then—about a month later—by Rey, before relocating to Chicago. The earliest newspaper reference to Rey specifically playing *steel guitar* with Heidt found by the author appeared in the *Des Moines Register* of July 25, 1935, where—in a story about a Brigadiers broadcast to be carried locally on KRNT—Rey is mentioned being slated to render one of the several currently popular tunes titled “Two Guitars” on the steel.

By late 1936, Heidt, Rey, and the King Sisters were playing the Bowman Room at New York City’s Biltmore Hotel, an Ivy League college hangout adjoining Grand Central Station in Midtown Manhattan. Between June 1937 and November 1938, Rey made seventy-eight Brunswick recordings with the Brigadiers in New York City, with at least twenty-six of these including either the King Sisters (now a quartet) and/or Yvonne King on vocals (according to Brian Rust’s *The American Dance Band Discography, 1917-1942*).

Rey explained in his extensive liner notes for *The Big Band Steel Guitar of Alvino Rey* that “Horace Heidt was using my [steel] guitar as a trademark [during his band’s performances], [having it] provid[e] bridges between tunes and [using it in] other applications. I needed to be able to get minor chords, diminished chords, and other ... chords that



A June 1939 photo of the quartet incarnation of the King Sisters, Alyce, Donna, Luise (second-from-left) and Yvonne.

the songs in those days required.” Rey noted that “we could get these [chords by this time] by means of levers. I asked the engineers at Gibson to make me a lever that would permit me to do the same thing, but with my feet [i.e., a pedal, which would work better than hands for resetting the tuning].” “That was in 1935. I would have them [Gibson] add a pedal to one string at a time to increase the chord potential,” Rey recalled, adding that “Horace was always wanting expressiveness in chords and I had to have a string changer [i.e., a tuning-changing mechanism working in tandem with pedals] that would do it.”

Ancestry.com’s *New York, New York, Marriage Index 1866-1937* relates that on May 21, 1937, Rey married Luise Driggs (the third-oldest of the King Sisters) in Manhattan. Luise relates in her 1983 memoir *Those Swinging Years* that the ceremony took place in the apartment of George Leaman, an NBC arranger who shared an apartment with one of Heidt’s singers, Larry Cotton, who subsequently appeared on several Brunswick sides with the King Sisters and Rey.

*Thanks to John Marsden for supplying the author with a copy of the liner-notes to The Big Band Steel Guitar of Alvino Rey LP. Some of the historical information here was taken from Luisa Rey’s Those Swinging Years.*

*In the next installment we examine the Harlin Brothers’ activities in Indianapolis in 1938-39, the publication of Rey’s Modern Guitar Method, Hawaiian Style, Rey and the King Sisters’ Brunswick recordings with Horace Heidt, their move to Los Angeles, including their appearances on KHJ radio and their live Pasadena debut, Rey’s specially made, pedal-operated Gibson Console Grande steel guitar, and Rey and the Kings’ later-1939 recordings on MacGregor and Bluebird.* ■



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# The 2017 SWSGA Non-Pedal Session Report

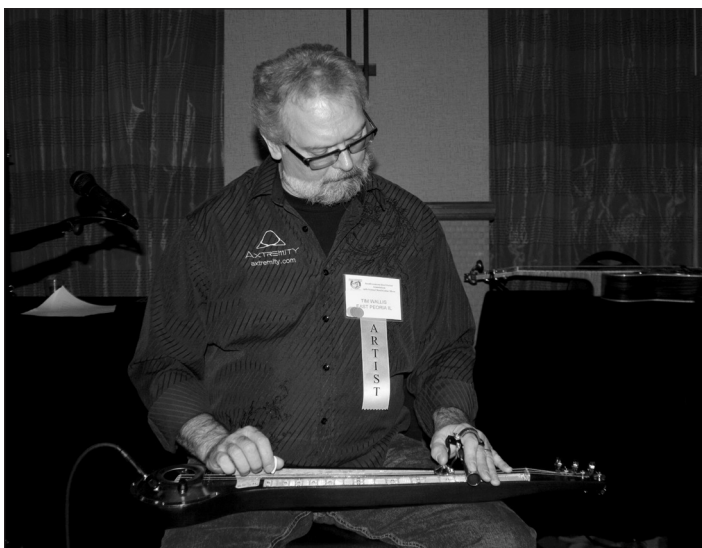
By Chuck Lettes

Bob Blair and I hosted the Non-Pedal Session at this year's Southwestern Steel Guitar Association (SWSGA) show in Mesa, Arizona this past January. Unlike the large hall of the Main Stage, our smaller performance room provided a more intimate setting. The audience could be closer to the performer and his backing group, and the volume level gave us the opportunity to hear all of the musicians. I could tell that this would be a good year for the non-pedal steel guitar since we needed to get extra chairs for the people who came early.

After fitting in some more chairs, I tuned up my Frypan and opened the show with "Coconut Grove" and ended with my "debut" version of the Beatles tune, "Yesterday." Bob Blair's Benoit Resonator and Cajunborne guitars sounded sweet, and he and Peter Burak (on guitar) had a unique set. Carco Clave played some great traditional favorites that the audience immediately recognized. It is a treat to hear Bobby Black in any setting, but a room filled with his fans can't be beat. Tim Wallis is an inventor with some great sounding "toys" for the steel guitar. His custom four-string steel, along with Jerome Vogel's bass guitar had a unique sound that filled the room. Ivan Reddington's Hawaiian stylings are always popular with the audience, and his choice of material is the sound of the Islands. Margie Mays continued with that Hawaiian tradition as she closed out the afternoon. She always amazes me with her spot-on pitch and Jerry Byrd-like vibrato. Here's a rundown of performers and featured selections:

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*Tim Wallis using his patented Pedal Slide at the SWSGA show.*



*Colorado steeler Chuck Lettes playing his frypan at the SWSGA Non-Pedal Sessoin in Mesa, Arizona this past January.*

- Chuck Lettes played his Rickenbacker 6-string Frypan on "Coconut Grove," "Sweetenin'," "Secret Agent Man," "Yesterday," "Corrine, Corrina," and "Walking After Midnight" (both with vocalist Lynne Popkowski) and "My Little Grass Shack."
- Singing and playing a Benoit Resonator and Cajunborne guitar, Bob Blair (with Peter Burak and Denny Sarver) performed "Lorena," "Maiden's Prayer," "Someday Soon," "Sam Bonnifield's Saloon" and "Summer Wages."
- Carco Clave used an 8-string Audiovox made in Seattle around 1952. His set included "Panhandle Rag," "Coconut Grove," "Midnight in Amarillo," "Bowman Hop" and "Secret Love."
- Bobby Black played a custom West Coast non-pedal steel. Some of his tunes included "Out of Nowhere," "My Tane," "I Love You Because," "On the Alamo" and "Blue Lei."
- Ivan Reddington played a double-neck National steel guitar. His tunes were "I'll Hold You in My Heart," "In the Mood," "Born to Lose," "In a Little Hula Heaven," "Kalua Lullaby," "Candy Kisses" and "Coconut Grove."
- Tim Wallis played his original Drip Pan, a four-string lap steel, using his custom Pedal Slide ([www.axtremity.com](http://www.axtremity.com)), a two-piece tone bar that "swivels" to allow pedal steel-like bends. He and bassist Jerome Vogel performed some instrumentals that included "Steel Guitar Rag" and "Sleepwalk."
- Margie Mays used her Excel double-8 Jerry Byrd model. Her set included "Jazz on the Steel," "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain," "The Hukilau Song," "Hawaiian Paradise" "Echoes of the South Pacific," "Beyond the Reef," and "Hilo March."

Behind every successful show there are the musicians and the people who help us run the Non-Pedal Session.

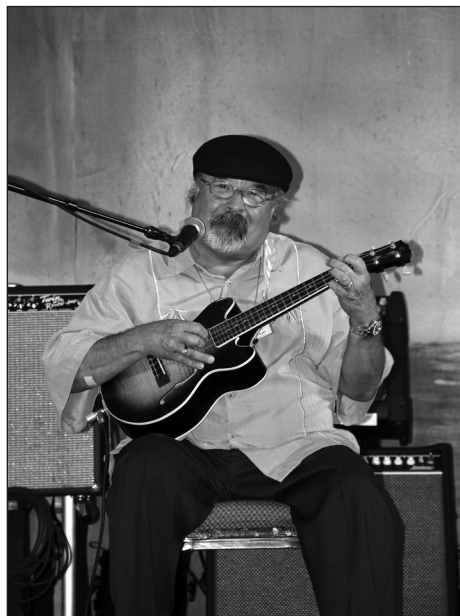
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## Ft. Collins 2016 Photos

*(Clockwise from upper left) Philip Swain of the Denver Pi'ilani Hawaiian Civic Club "cutting up" with vendor John Hatton; dancers from Janna Yoshimoto's Northern Colorado Hula Studio, (l. to r.) Liza Hunn, Renee Beri and Veronica Brush; Fort Collins 2016 Guest Artist Owana Salazar with Duke Kaleolani Ching on steel and Mark Kahalekulu on guitar; California member Garry "Byrd" Vanderlinde playing a nice set; from the Island of Kaua'i, stringed instrument wizard, EP Davis; and Colorado artist Keoni Lagunero with his fine display of hand-drawn items.*



## E Komo Mai! Welcome, New Members

Is your address correct? Please notify us!

### UNITED STATES

GEORGE ROTHENBERGER, 2524 31st Ave S., Minneapolis, MN 55406

JIM SLIFF, 4442 W 169th St., Lawndale, CA 90260

STANLEY M. BEJMA JR., 620 N. Cumberland St., Metairie, LA 70003

### OVERSEAS

SHOICHI HIRANO, 2-30-31 4-909 Sumiyoshi-cho, Fuchu-shi, Tokyo 183-0034 Japan

### *SWSGA NON-PEDAL SESSION Continued from Page 18*

Thanks to all of the musicians who backed us up: Rick Schmidt, Denny Sarver, (the tireless) Carco Clave, Pete Burak, Lynne Popkowski and Jerome Vogel. Thanks to the crew from Telonics (tpa-az.com), Joe Naylor, and SWSGA's Fred Justice and Troy Porter for providing a room, microphones and sound for us out-of-towners. Thanks to Jim Harrison for the great photos. Thanks also to my brother Andrew for moving stuff around, and a special thanks to Bob Blair for co-hosting this annual event with me. I'm already looking forward to next year in sunny Arizona. ■

## Delivery Problems?

Please let us know of any problems with delivery of your Quarterly. Contact us at: HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waiomao Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424. Email us at [hsga@hsga.org](mailto:hsga@hsga.org).

*Naohito Okubo playing his "surfboard steel" at the Japan show with Tomomichi Suzuki, Shuzo Kohno and Kunio Sakai (right).*



together since their university days—performed four songs including “Kiss Me Love” with a rich, flowing sound from Kuniharu’s 12-string pedal steel guitar and soft tones from Yoshihiko’s vibraphone.

- Yoshinori Nihachi, backed up by Kohei Makino on guitar and Masahiro Abe on bass. Yoshinori sat behind his Fender double-neck steel in full western attire delivering country standards like “Blue Spanish Eyes” and evoking the feeling of the American West of yesteryear.

- Masakatsu Suzuki and the Mahana Lua Band with Tomomichi Suzuki on ‘ukulele and vocal, Kunio Sakai on upright bass and Shuzo Kohno on guitar. The group was very well received and featured Tomomichi’s falsetto singing along with the group’s three-part vocals. They performed four songs including “Ahi Wela.”

- Closing the show were Kiyoshi “Lion” Kobayashi, Yohko Tanaka, Masahiko Ibamoto, Kayoko Iwade and Norio Usui performing as a steel guitar quintet on beautiful arrangements of “King Kamehameha” and “Blue Hawaiian Moonlight.” “Lion” played a steel solo on “Nalani” and a steel duet with Tetsuya Ishiyama on “E Malii Mai” backed by Yoshinori Nihachi on guitar and Masahiro Abe on bass.

Each of our performers demonstrated unique skills, the result of daily, diligent practice and our audience showed their appreciation with frequent applause. There were a total of 59 participants, 33 members and 26 guests.

### **From Event Coordinator, Yoshihisa Okano**

Once again, we had a hard time finding a venue for our HSGA Japan Convention. Public facilities are cheap but arranging for good sound equipment and other aspects of the production can be challenging. We thought the best choice was the Ho‘okipa at Roppongi in Tokyo. Before long we had the required number of members and guests signed up. Many of them already knew each other from other Hawaiian-related events around Tokyo, and it was apparent that everyone enjoyed the performances and their social time together.

### **From Event Timekeeper Shinichi Kakiuchi**

I participated in the HSGA Japan convention two years ago and at last year’s HSGA Honolulu convention as a performer—I got to know many steel guitarists. I helped decorate the stage at the Honolulu Convention and was the official timekeeper for the Japan 2016 Convention. It was a very good experience for me because, in my role as timekeeper, I was able to watch all the performances close up! I am happy to report that the show went very smoothly and that the performers were very close to “on schedule” with their setup time and performance time. ■