

# HSGA QUARTERLY

Published four times a year in Honolulu, Hawai'i  
by the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association

Volume 35, Issue 138

Spring 2020



## Inside this Issue...

- 2 "Live-Streamed Steel Guitar Showcases" from HIMELE
- 3 "Introducing Ethan Goore" by Teri Gorman
- 3 Coco Wire – News and Member Gossip
- 8 "Lani Kai" – Steel Arrangement by John Ely
- 10 "Board News" by Teri Gorman
- 10 "HSGA Scholarship Update" by Alan Akaka
- 10 Hawaiian Steel Guitar Events Calendar
- 11 Vintage Photos – Lani McIntire circa 1930
- 14 Closing Notes – Ron Simpson, Paul Weaver
- 14 "A Tale of Two Marines" by Frank Della-Penna
- 15 Member Donation Acknowledgements
- 16 Treasurer's Report from Roberto Alaniz
- 16 HSGA New Member Acknowledgement



An encore photo of a very young Lorene Ruymar playing her brand new National New Yorker with her first group, the Regina-based Mauna Kea Hawaiians circa 1947.

## Aloha A Hui Hou E Lorene Ruymar!

By John Ely

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of our HSGA club founder, Lorene Lillian Ruymar, at age 89 this past June 9. There would surely be no HSGA were it not for Lorene's lifetime of devotion and dedication to our instrument and the countless hours she put in, organizing and promoting the club, producing it's newsletter, maintaining the club database and all that goes along with keeping an association like ours afloat.

This from HSGA President Frank Della-Penna: "The passing of Lorene Ruymar is a tremendous loss to the world of Hawaiian music. In addition to founding HSGA, Lorene has two books

to her credit. Her major publication, *The Hawaiian Steel Guitar and Its Great Hawaiian Musicians*, is a landmark book about the history of the Hawaiian steel guitar. The cover photo shows legendary steel guitarist Sol Ho'opi'i holding a National Tri-cone Hawaiian steel guitar. It is full of history, photos of instruments and musicians. (This book is still available online.)

"The second publication is an instruction manual using the A major tuning. Lorene told me she felt that the A tuning was an easy way to teach chord structure because the first three strings reflect the first, third, and fifth tones of the scale. Lorene always enjoyed writing in a folksy style and

*Continued on Page 4*

## HSGA QUARTERLY

Volume 35, Issue 138



### OFFICERS

Frank Della-Penna (DC), President  
Margie Mays (AZ), Vice-President  
Roberto Alaniz (CA), Secretary-Treasurer

### DIRECTORS

Jack Aldrich, Seattle  
Teri Gorman, California  
John Limbach, Montana  
Chris Ruppenthal, Wisconsin  
Mike Wittmer, Fort Collins

### FORMER DIRECTOR EMERITUS

Jerry Byrd

### JAPAN COORDINATORS

Masakatsu Suzuki, Shinichi Kakiuchi

### QUARTERLY EDITOR

John Ely <johnely@hawaiiansteel.com>

### WEBMASTER

Mike Wittmer <webmaster@hsga.org>

### SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR

John Mumford

### ORIGINAL CLUB FOUNDER

Lorene Ruymar (1985)

### 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 ARTICLES & COMMENTS TO:

HSGA Quarterly, 2145 Tiffany Walk, Manteca, CA 95336-9555 USA; E-mail: [hsga@hsga.org](mailto:hsga@hsga.org). In addition, email submitted items directly to the editor at [johnely@hawaiiansteel.com](mailto:johnely@hawaiiansteel.com). Letters to the president and general club comments should be sent to: Frank Della-Penna, P.O. Box 18323, Washington, DC 20036.

## Live-Streamed Steel Guitar Showcases!

In response to the rash of cancellations of steel guitar festivals this spring and summer, the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Showcase, a production of HIMELE, has been presenting live-streamed performances of your favorite steel guitar masters. Be advised, however, that the original schedule has been changed due to newly enacted social distancing restrictions for Honolulu County. Also, be alert to further changes, as the new schedule shown here is contingent on the lifting of those restrictions.

The next live-streamed showcase is scheduled for September 26 at 3 PM

### Mahalo, Members!

Keep those great emails, letters and photos coming! If possible, send original photographs or digital camera output. We cannot use grainy or washed out photos. Please send news, comments, or photos to: HSGA Quarterly, 2145 Tiffany Walk, Manteca, CA 95336-9555. Email us at [hsga@hsga.org](mailto:hsga@hsga.org).

HST (Hawaiian Standard Time) featuring Steve Cheney and Kapono Lopes. Also appearing will be Ke Kula Mele NextGen performers.

Jeff Au Hoy and Bobby Ingano will be featured on the October 31 showcase along with NextGen performers, also at 3 PM HST.

The Hawaiian Steel Guitar Showcases are presented free to the public. You can access the streams from either of the following websites:

- The Showcase Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/HawaiianSteelShowcase>
- The Showcase Events Page: <https://www.hawaiiansteelguitarfestival.com/showcase/hfscevents.html>

If you would like to support the showcase, you can make a contribution to HIMELE or through the virtual tip jar links posted on the Events page. Again, stay tuned for possible further schedule changes due to coronavirus concerns. "See" you there! ■

*At the 2016 Windward Mall steel guitar festival in Kāne'ohe, Jeff Au Hoy (left), Bobby Ingano, Eddie Palama, Steve Cheney and Alan Akaka. (Photo courtesy of Don Touchi)*



# Introducing Ethan Goore

By Teri Gorman

Ethan Goore, who hails from the Kona side of the Big Island, is a promising young steel guitar player, currently studying with Alan Akaka via Skype. He is now seventeen, but has played musical instruments since the age of three, and especially took to the trumpet at age four. His father, Nate, plays bass and 'ukulele and often accompanies him.

Ethan became interested in the steel guitar when he attended one of the steel guitar festivals on Kaua'i in 2019, and went home and made his own steel guitar out of a 'ukulele! He and his dad are regular attendees of Hawaiian Steel Guitar Week in Waikīkī, and it was there that he approached Alan Akaka about taking lessons. He has been doing weekly Skype lessons with Alan ever since, and his dad says he practices a lot. He also is invited to play at private parties and informal events on the Big Island.

Ethan grew up in San Francisco, but his family made frequent trips to the Big Island and moved there permanently before Ethan started high school. Ethan is currently a junior at Hawai'i Preparatory Academy (HPA).

Hawaiian culture and music are a big part of Ethan's life, and his Hawaiian language class is one of his favorite classes at HPA.

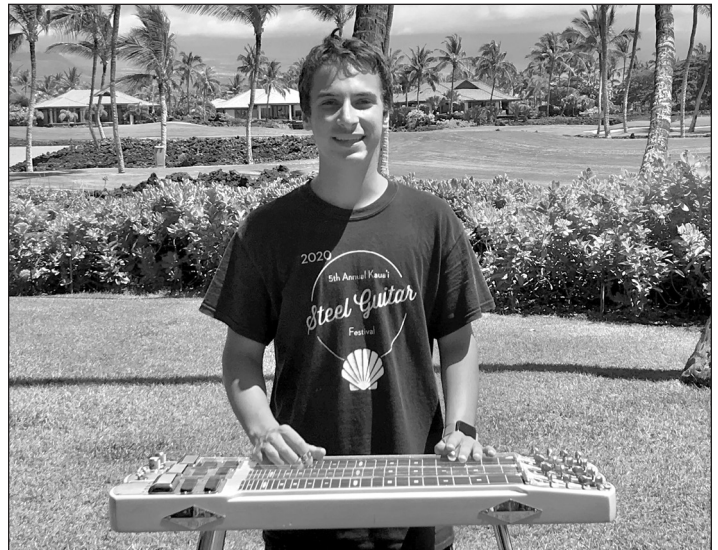
Ethan has also been a great ambassador for the steel guitar. An important mission of the steel guitar festivals around Hawai'i is to educate and "recruit" another generation of players. As such, prominent steel performers at the festivals make it a point to visit and demonstrate steel guitar at middle schools wherever they go. When they came to the Big Island, Ethan arranged the first-ever school visit, and now several students have begun playing.

Of course, the "older music" isn't always the best way to attract middle schoolers, but it turns out that kids now recognize the steel guitar from the music for *SpongeBob Squarepants!* Who knew?

## Don Keene's Donation to Ethan

Ethan was thrilled to learn that he would be the recipient of Don Keene's triple-neck Fender, seen at many a convention over the years. Here's Lynn Keene with the story:

"As stated in the last newsletter, my late husband Don Keene wished to donate his triple-neck Fender Stringmaster to a promising student of steel guitar in Hawai'i. And I have good news. Don's guitar will go to Ethan Goore who is currently studying with Alan Akaka. I have been in touch with HSGA President Frank Della-Penna as well as Ethan's father, Nate Goore. Nate has sent videos and photos of Ethan who seems to be a perfect choice. From the video, it is evident that his playing is coming along very well. He also



Seventeen-year-old Ethan Goore standing proudly by the Fender triple-neck Stringmaster Don and Lynn Keene donated to him.

appears to be a really nice young man and wanted to know how Don got started in steel, and other details of interest to him. I also sent him two CDs of Don's so he knows what style of steel playing Don had. I will be going back to Hawai'i as a tribute to Don at some point when I feel up to it and travel restrictions are lifted. And I will be meeting up with the Goores also."

The Keenes' gift of Don's steel guitar is particularly helpful as Ethan has been exploring different tunings recently. With the triple neck he doesn't have to retune as much, which makes practicing and playing much more fun. Enjoy, Ethan, and we look forward to hearing you play soon! ■

## Coco Wire

HSGA members to the rescue! President **Frank Della-Penna**, in his "Coronavirus Listening List" article in the last issue, asked if anyone knew the identity of the guitar player shown in the Myra English YouTube clip.

**Cookie Isaacs**, Barney Isaacs's widow, writes: "Aloha, Frank." "The trio at the Blue Dolphin Room was: Myra English, **Sonny Chillingworth** on guitar, and Billy Hew Len."

In addition, member **Janet King** of Watsonville, California writes, "Frank asks who the guitar player was in that Youtube clip. It appears to be Sonny Chillingworth, the third person in the Myra English trio that played at the Blue Dolphin for years." Janet also writes, "Keep up the great work with the newsletter. It is always a treat to read."

Mahalo, Cookie and Janet!

was eager to engage in discourse with anyone who wanted to know about Joseph Kekuku, inventor of the Hawaiian steel guitar. Lorene will be missed by all who appreciate her efforts to support the Hawaiian steel guitar and showcase the music we all love.”

### Lorene’s Early Years

Lorene was born on April 6, 1931 on a farm in the Canadian prairie of Saskatchewan. As Lorene wrote so colorfully in the Fall 2010 *HSGA Quarterly*, “I was second in a family of four girls. Mum completed the whole project in five years, but our dad needed boys to run a farm. Darn it! So we two oldest had to be the boys, harnessing the horses and driving them three-and-a-half miles to our one-room schoolhouse and back each day. Plus cleaning the barn, and tending the cows, horses, turkeys, ducks, chigs and pickens. Well, I guess dad and mum did do a little of that, too. No skating, swimming, or downhill sledding, because the land was so flat we could watch our dog run away for three days. Seventeen dirt road miles to the nearest town, so we only went there for church on Sunday in summer.”

At age four Lorene got hooked on steel guitar. Writes Lorene, “In the darkest days of winter, mum knew how to pick the crystal set to get radio waves coming up from Council Bluffs, Iowa to hear a Hawaiian music show. Mum was hooked, too, and found that a teacher in a nearby school would teach us. She bought a wooden steel guitar with picks and bar for \$7 from the Sears catalog and then loaded the four of us up and drove to that school.”

Sadly lessons for Lorene would have to wait as her mom and older sister were the “first in line.” She learned much later that it was David K. Ka’ili who played the steel guitar on that Des Moines, Iowa radio show.

*Lorene in 1950 at around age 19, still with The Club Aces.*



*Lorene at age 16 in the early part of her stint with The Club Aces dance band (1947), which provided steady work on weekends.*

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

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

“I had worked my way up to a great salary at General Motors Acceptance Corporation and at age 22 took the opportunity to transfer to their office in Vancouver, British Columbia. Now that was a really big city! Got married, became Lorene Petersen. Music career stopped. Getting rich was the game. Bought a house for the outrageous price of

### Please Contact Us!

Send news, comments and photos to: HSGA Quarterly, 2145 Tiffany Walk, Manteca, CA 95336-9555. Email us at: [hsga@hsga.org](mailto:hsga@hsga.org) and [johnely@hawaiiansteel.com](mailto:johnely@hawaiiansteel.com). Mahalo!

\$10,000 with a suite in the basement to rent, and I was the one who had the \$2,500 down payment. Wow! Made our first trip to Hawai'i in 1954.

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

### Launching a Career in Education

In the early 1960s Lorene attended the University of British Columbia, obtained a degree in education with a music specialty, and began teaching fourth grade at Maple Grove School in Vancouver.

Part of the job was putting together a school band and Lorene's instincts to "throw away the book" and "do it her way" asserted itself. Writes Lorene, "I played the game differently. I put out the word that all kids no matter what they played were welcome to join the new Maple Grove Orchestra. Well, they turned out with every oddball instrument you could imagine. Kids from grade four to seven. I had to write the arrangements by hand.



Lorene with her fourth grade students at Maple Grove School.

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

"I also taught the music classes on the curriculum, in which every kid had a 'ukulele, read the notes, played the

*Continued on Page 6*

## Deluxe34 lap steel stands



stable  
compact  
lightweight  
adjusts to fit any lap steel

Shop our eBay store:  
[ebay.com/str/deluxe34lapsteelstands](http://ebay.com/str/deluxe34lapsteelstands)

melodies, strummed the chords and sang. So when the band played a concert, each one had a 'ukulele standing on end by his or her chair. Halfway through the concert, they'd put down their band instruments, pick up their ukes, and show their stuff. As their director, I stepped over to a table where my National New Yorker was plugged in and ready to go, and I led them with some steel guitar solos."

### The Jerry Byrd Connection

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

"The Kamaka man got on the phone and spoke to this Jerry Byrd and arranged for him to come to our hotel room and bring his steel guitar along because I didn't have mine. I still didn't believe it. *The* Jerry Byrd would certainly not be coming to our hotel room! We sat side by side while he demonstrated on his steel guitar (with no amp), and then I showed him what I could do. Yeah. I played E13th in the Club Aces band and that's all I knew. Jerry's guitar was tuned to C6+A7. But still, I guess he could see that I did have pretty good skills because he arranged to give me lessons by correspondence. I found out later that Jerry did not teach female students because they are not as dedicated as he'd like, not as free to give long hours to the guitar. Owana Salazar is an exception, too. Jerry mailed me one lesson a month, complete with a tape recording of his backup strumming. And he charged me no more than the going rate of the day."

---

*Lorene with Jerry Byrd during his visit with the Ruymars for Expo '86 in Vancouver, "plotting" together the future of HSGA!*



---

*At the first HSGA convention at the Clarion Hotel in St. Louis in 1986, Jerry Byrd (left), Lorene and DeWitt "Scotty" Scott.*

### Setting the Stage for HSGA

In 1981 Lorene's husband died and she took a leave of absence from teaching. Writes Lorene, "In past years I had heard about the International Hawaiian Steel Guitar Club (IHSGC), which held annual meetings in Winchester, Indiana. I had joined and read their newsletters, but I had not played in public since I left the dance band. Still, I had bought a double-8 Sho-Bud steel guitar from Shot Jackson under Jerry's direction. I flew to Indianapolis, sat at the airport for many hours before taking a small plane to Muncie, then a bus to Winchester. All I could carry was my 'ukulele and the Sho-Bud. I did play both instruments on stage in Winchester and felt so happy to have met those fine people. Later, the club's president, Charlie Moore, appointed me to serve on his advisory board.

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

### HSGA Takes Shape

In October 1985 IHSGC splintered off to form a new club, the World-Wide Hawaiian Steel Guitar Music Association (WWHSGMA). This new club would soon become HSGA. It was run by Fred Gagner out of Tuscon, Arizona with Lorene serving as the club's vice-president. [ED: For details on the complex history of the clubs that led to HSGA in its current form, see Lorene's "History of HSGA" series in the Winter 2004-05 and Spring 2005 newsletters.]

The club's first newsletter was published in January 1986. That same year Fred Gagner made a deal with DeWitt "Scotty" Scott to host the club's first convention three days ahead of Scotty's huge annual Labor Day bash at the Clarion Hotel in St. Louis.

Writes Lorene, "Our convention started normally, but as more and more pedal steelers arrived for Scotty's event we knew we'd be overwhelmed by sheer numbers. So one evening I called a meeting. If we were to change location, what place would be suitable? Frank and Donna Miller lived in a neat town, not too big and not too small. It was Joliet, Illinois, about 55 miles out of Chicago where an international airport, O'Hare, is situated. They could do all the arranging and setup for us. Excellent! We took a vote and decided

that our 1987 convention would be at the Joliet Holiday Inn, [our convention home for many years].

"In addition the name of our club didn't sit very well with our members, so during that same discussion we bounced a few names around and agreed on 'HSGA', the name we use today. We also set our Joliet convention dates for the last weekend of August so people could go from our convention to Scotty's in one trip. In 1996 we had to move the Joliet date to October [to avoid the higher summer hotel rates], so we lost that connection, unfortunately."

#### **Birth of the Hawai'i Conventions**

Lorene continues, "In 1986 Jerry and Kaleo Byrd came to see Expo '86 in Vancouver, and were guests in our

home for over a week. I'd been taking lessons by correspondence from Jerry for several years [by that time] and we were already friends.

"Jerry asked us not to tell anyone so he could truly relax and for a short time not be *the* Jerry Byrd. We got to be close friends that way. And we found out he loved to cook and always took his cookbook with him. We had great fun together. He'd been very supportive of us and the work we did forming the new club, so one day sitting around the table after lunch, he proposed that HSGA should hold a convention in Hawai'i. Wow!! What an idea! It had never been done by steel guitar clubs of the past. Jerry knew the right people and made the arrangements for us to hold the first ever steel guitar club con-

*Continued on Page 12*

# ***Caladesi Guitars***

**NON-PEDAL STEEL GUITAR MANUFACTURER • DAN CAMPBELL, OWNER/LUTHIER**

**(727) 385-4170 • WWW.CALADESIGUITARS.COM • DAN@CALADESIGUITARS.COM**

## ***Models:***

### **LAP STEEL**

*inspired by vintage Gibson and Rickenbacker designs*

### **SINGLE NECK CONSOLE**

*inspired by vintage Fender Deluxe design*

### **DOUBLE NECK CONSOLE**

*inspired by vintage National design*

## **THREE NEW MODELS, CAN BE CUSTOMIZED AS FOLLOWS:**

- All models available in 22.5, 23.5 and 24.5 scale
- Six or Eight Strings available on all models
- Standard - Wood fretboards with inlay options
- Standard - Solid, nickel plated brass nut and bridges
- Standard string spacing (nut 11/32, bridge 3/8 inch)
- Different wood & finishing options
- Stand & leg options



# Lani Kai

Steel Solo—The Polynesians  
Crown Records (CST-519)

Adaptation by John Ely

Swing ♩ =  $\frac{3}{4}$

**Intro** G G#° Am7 D7 G G#° D7 E7(#5)

Steel Gr. (C6th) Natural Harmonics

**A** Am7 D7 D7(b9) G Bm7 Em7 Am7 D7

11 Gmaj7 G6 E7(#5) **B** Am7 D7 D7(b9) G Bm7

16 Em7 Am7 D7 G

slide



For audio, go to: [hsga.org/newsletter-audio/](http://hsga.org/newsletter-audio/) or email [johnely@hawaiiansteel.com](mailto:johnely@hawaiiansteel.com)

**C**

C Cm6 G Gmaj7 Em7

slide

slide

slide

slide

slide

T 12 10 11 12 8 7 5 7 2 4 6 7 5 7 7

A

B 8 7 7 7

let ring-----

26 A7 Am7 G# D7 E7(#5) D Am7 D7 D7(b9)

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

A

B

For an easier version, play like Letter A or B.

31 G Bm7 Em7 Am7 D7 G

T 2 2 2 2 7 7 9 7 7 7 7

A

B 2 2 2 2

let ring-----

**Tag** Am7 D7 G Am7 D7 G

T 7 9 7 7 7 7 7 5 7 7

A

B 7 9 7 7 7 7 5 7 7

rit.

Natural Harmonics-----

## BOARD NEWS

### Board Meeting Notes—June 28, 2020

By Recording Secretary Teri Gorman

Thanks again, members, for your participation in the HSGA Board elections this past newsletter cycle for the 2020-22 board term. The current board and officers are shown on the page-two sidebar.

The Board moved to make Margie Mays chairman of the Scholarship Committee and Teri Gorman as Recording Secretary, which currently is not an official board position.

The Board approved Secretary-Treasurer Roberto Alaniz's address to be the official HSGA address for mailing dues payments and general correspondence. The address is: HSGA, 2145 Tiffany Walk, Manteca, CA 95336-9555.

### Scholarship Update

Current HSGA Scholarship students include Enosa Lyman, Mālie Lyman and Hō'ailona Mahuka. We got the following update from their kumu, Alan Akaka, around press time:

Mālie Lyman continues to excel in her studies on the steel guitar and was recently featured on KHNL's weekly entertainment variety show "Talk Story." She will be featured on HIMELE's Hawaiian Steel Guitar Showcase in the coming month. Mālie is presently learning to play solos and fills on the E13th tuning and is adept in the C6th and C13th tunings and has experience with the B11th and G13th tunings. She is also gaining experience when she accompanies her mother on stage.

Enosa Lyman's touch and sense of timing continues to improve and he is preparing to play a duet on "Beautiful Kahana" with Hō'ailona Mahuka at the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Showcase. He will also sing "Papakōlea" along with playing his steel to honor his great grandmother Genoa Keawe. He possesses the musical DNA passed down from Auntie Genoa and is eager to learn more songs.

Hō'ailona Mahuka is talent laden with an ability to play and has a very smooth voice. She doesn't realize the potential she possesses, so my goal is to pull it out of her and I can see a glimpse of hope. She will do a steel guitar duet with Enosa for HIMELE's upcoming livestreaming Hawaiian Steel Guitar Showcase. She will also sing "Alekokoi," a song passed down from both King Lunalilo and King Kalākaua. As a student in my online 'ukulele class, she is learning music theory, which will give her a better understanding of her steel guitar fretboard.

### Virtual HSGA Convention Update

A committee of four volunteers will be working on a potential November online convention. These heroes are: Bob Alaniz, Mike Wittmer, Jack Aldrich and Chris Ruppenthal. ■



At a party outside Sacramento circa 1930, Frank Plescia (foreground) and Lani McIntire (left) seated with the rest of the band.

### It's Dues Time Again!

If you received a Renewal form with your newsletter then it's time to renew. Dues are \$35 for a hard copy newsletter and \$30 for the electronic version. Renewing via our website is a snap!

### Events Calendar

#### August 15, 2020—Steel Festival - Keiki Kine

Canceled due to coronavirus guidelines.

#### September 17-19, 2020—HSGA Ft. Collins Festival

Canceled due to coronavirus guidelines.

#### September 26, 2020—Live-Streamed Steel Showcase

Cure coronavirus stress and catch Steve Cheney, Kapono Lopes and NextGen performers live-streamed at 3 PM Hawaiian Standard Time on September 26. Access the stream at: [facebook.com/hawaiiansteelshowcase](https://facebook.com/hawaiiansteelshowcase) or [hawaiiansteelguitarfestival/showcase](https://hawaiiansteelguitarfestival/showcase). *Tentative pending lifting of Covid-19 restrictions.*

#### October 16-18, 2020—Maui Steel Guitar Festival

Canceled due to coronavirus guidelines.

#### October 31, 2020—Live-Streamed Steel Showcase

Catch the final showcase featuring Jeff Au Hoy, Bobby Ingano and NextGen performers live-streamed at 3 PM Hawaiian Standard Time on October 31. Access the stream at: [facebook.com/hawaiiansteelshowcase](https://facebook.com/hawaiiansteelshowcase) or [hawaiiansteelguitarfestival/showcase](https://hawaiiansteelguitarfestival/showcase). *Tentative pending lifting of Covid-19 restrictions.*

#### Hawai'i Island Steel Festival—TBA

The Hawai'i Island Steel Festival is on hold due to coronavirus concerns. Location: Mauna Lani, Auberge Resorts Collection, Kamuela, Hawai'i Island. For event updates check the website at [www.hawaiisteelguitarfestival.com](https://www.hawaiisteelguitarfestival.com).

## VINTAGE PHOTOS

*We received the following from Tony Plescia, who is seeking info from our vintage Hawaiian music experts!*

HSGA members, your help is needed! I'm trying to identify some Hawaiian musicians pictured in one of my grandfather's old photo albums.

In the late '20s and early '30s, my Sicilian grandfather, Frank Plescia, and his friends and relatives would often hold informal gatherings in the country outside Sacramento, California. These get-togethers often involved lots of wine, beer, and spirits, an extensive BBQ layout (my grandfather was famous for his BBQ skills), and occasionally some form of entertainment. He told me about these parties, but I never knew that Hawaiian musicians were featured until I saw photos (shown here) of one such get-together. As you can see, the band used metal dobro-style guitars, standard guitars played lap-style, and 'ukuleles.

Well, naturally I wondered who was in the band and if any of them were known performers. One of the musicians looked a lot like Lani McIntire so



*Lani McIntire (left) posing with the band.*

I contacted vintage Hawaiian music maven Chris Ruppenthal to see what he thought. I told Chris that based on my grandfather's apparent age in one of the photos (he was born in 1902), they were likely taken around 1929-31. Chris wrote back, "That photo (shown above) is quite the family treasure! Everybody in the Golden Age of Hawaiian Music Facebook place seems to agree that the man holding the national resonator on the left is Lani McIntire. I agree. The other musicians are tougher to pin down.



*Lani reaching over the dobro guy's shoulder.*

They may have just been his local band in California before he got picked up by Decca records."

These gatherings usually took place in the Gardenland area just north of Sacramento, which afforded lots of open space and freedom to party freely. My understanding is that after the hired musicians were finished playing, they were free to join the rest of the attendees in drinking and having a good time. As you can see in some of the photos, Lani and his musicians participated in lively fun with the group, as evidenced by them posing for the camera in mock roughhousing with certain individuals, like the man in the bandana shown above. In that same photo, one of the Hawaiian musicians appears to be holding up the upper portion of a chair, as if strumming it like a stringed instrument. There is a very pretty Polynesian girl in some of the photos, and I have seen her in other photos with one of my grandfather's friends, suggesting they were a couple. I believe she may have known Lani and helped get him and his band linked up with my grandfather's group.

So, HSGAers, please take a look at these and let me know if you recognize any of the musicians shown. Thank you! [ED: Please send any answers you have to: [johnely@hawaiiansteel.com](mailto:johnely@hawaiiansteel.com). Mahalo nui loa!]

*A group shot with band members and guests. Lani McIntire is top row, third from left.*



vention at the Waikīkī Plaza Hotel during the first week of May 1987.

“We had a great turnout. We had some high-profile people turn out, like Scotty; industrialist Isao Wada of Japan; Chuck Norris, president of the Texas Steel Guitar Association; and Clay Savage from the Pedal Steel Guitar Association. Clay and Lois Savage became our official club photographers. When Clay passed away, Paul Weaver took over.

“We played steel guitars at the Sunday service in Kawaiaha‘o Church, a noon-hour concert at Tamarind Park, at the Poi Luncheon at the Willows, and at the Polynesian Cultural Center (PCC). The Tau Moe Family gave us a tour of the PCC and then invited us to their home to hear Tommy Au play steel.

“We did a steel guitar get-together at the old Bandstand in Kapi‘olani Park. I had sent out letters to all the island steel players I knew of, asking them to come play for the mainland steel players. I wasn’t smart enough to keep record of their names. Many came who we’d say are not “big names” but beautiful players and so nice to get to know. But it’s for sure that Billy Hew Len, Buddy Hew Len, Kamaka Tom, Greg Sardinha, Peter Dillingham, Andy Cummings, Fred and JanJoy Barnett, and Bobby Black were there to play for us. I suspect Jerry pulled a few strings for us, because the Deputy Mayor of Honolulu turned up at the Kapi‘olani Park Bandstand and presented to me (as acting president of the club) a Proclamation declaring it to be the Week of Steel Guitar in Hawai‘i.

“It was decided to hold a convention in Hawai‘i every other year on odd years. *But*, the Waikīkī Plaza Hotel wasn’t the perfect location, so after all the hoopla was over, Art and I walked the length of Waikīkī Beach checking hotels to see which ones had ballrooms and what they charged. Like, \$1000 per day, back in 1987?? So weren’t we lucky to find the Queen Kapi‘olani Hotel, which had a much better location and charged zero, zilch, nothing per day for the use of the Ākala Room, provided we have the buffet luncheon served to us there. Perfect! And the rooms only half-price. What luck! Although we only held conventions every other year in Hawai‘i, a good number of us went on the ‘off-year,’ too, so the Bandstand show at Kapi‘olani Park, the Ho‘olaule‘a and other events were kept up as annual events.”

### **HSGA Registered as “Nonprofit”**

As HSGA grew over the years, Charlie Moore folded his club. And starting in 1987, Fred Gagner assumed a lesser role in the club. In June 1989, Lorene became president of HSGA and registered the club with the IRS as a nonprofit social club under code 501(c)(7). Then Lorene and board members got busy drafting the required by-laws.



*Lorene receiving her treasured Jerry Byrd Lifetime Achievement Award with Scotty presiding at his 2009 St. Louis Convention.*

### **The 1989 Steel Guitar Centennial**

In 1989 HSGA was set for its second Hawai‘i convention, the first one to be held at the Queen Kapi‘olani Hotel. Lorene figured out that it was around one hundred years since Joseph Kekuku invented the steel guitar, so why not use that information to get publicity for the instrument?

Writes Lorene, “I asked Elizabeth Tatar at the Bishop Museum to authenticate the date (and she did), then I got busy and invited all the other steel guitar clubs I knew of to join with us in celebrating the centennial in 1989.” Despite doubts among some of these clubs concerning the authenticity of the Kekuku claim, HSGA celebrated the event and presented a plaque in a steel guitar concert at Kamehameha School where the invention took place when Joseph was a student there. The state governor and Honolulu’s mayor declared 1989 to be the Year of the Steel Guitar.

### **HSGA Highlights Under Lorene’s Leadership**

Under Lorene’s guidance HSGA continued to grow by leaps and bounds. The Scholarship Fund was created. The club funded steel players to go into Hawai‘i schools and play for students. Funding from the Hawai‘i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts allowed Barney Isaacs, John Auna, Henry Allen and others to teach steel guitar. Jerry was the sole teacher for the HSGA Scholarship Fund.

To promote the steel guitar in Hawai‘i, Lorene came up with a “Compliment and Complain” plan. Writes Lorene, “The way it worked was, you’d phone a lū‘au show, and say you want to book 24 guests for tomorrow night. You’d ask,

‘By the way, who is your steel guitar player?’ And when they give the inevitable answer you’d say, ‘Well, in that case can you direct me to a lū‘au that *does* have a steel player?’ Or, you go to a live show and see no steel player. You ask to speak to the manager and complain that the signature sound of Hawai‘i was not there. If there *was* a steel player, you ask to speak to the manager just to compliment. Hey, we did have some kicks in those Good Old Days. Are we getting too old now, or where has our spirit gone?’”

In 1990 HSGA produced an educational video with Jerry doing the teaching and Fred Barnett doing the [production work]. Hundreds of copies were sold until the cost of producing it was recovered. It was then given to Jerry as his property for future sales.

Lorene writes, “Our Honolulu ‘off-year’ May Day performance in the park was extra exciting that year because Bob Brozman brought a cameraman to film the Tau Moe Family playing and singing for the finale of the *Tau Moe Story* film he was producing.

“In 1991 we started the procedure of taking the group to a ‘neighbor’ island after the formalities of the Honolulu convention were over. A big group of us went to Kona on the Big Island. John and Ginger Auna arranged many playing venues for us, including a lū‘au at Hulihe‘e Palace. In 1993 we went to Kaua‘i (after hurricane Iniki), in 1995 to Maui. In 1997 we stayed on O‘ahu and visited the far side of the island. In 1999 we began the cycle again in Kona. There was a day trip to Moloka‘i in there somewhere, too. John Auna did all the organizing so there’d be places to play and back-up equipment waiting for us on the other island. Those were the fun days!”

---

*Lorene circa 2008 in Honolulu, posing with Ronald Kanahele, who played steel in the style of his uncle Benny Rogers.*



*Art and Lorene Ruymar as most of our current HSGA members will remember them, this one taken at our Joliet 2007 Convention.*

---

### **HSGA Moves to Hawai‘i**

By the end of 1992, Lorene had been writing the newsletters, working with the HSGA Board, and making all the arrangements for the Hawai‘i conventions. Writes Lorene, “We had a great team working in Joliet to run the conventions, but it was pretty much my job in Hawai‘i, and I had not yet gone on the Internet so ‘email’ was not in my vocabulary yet. Hey, the old way is the hard way, licking stamps and all.

“From the time we started the club we had maintained a mailbox and a bank account in Bellingham, Washington, which is a 55-mile drive from our home in Vancouver. That meant driving down there once or twice a week to pick up the mail, taking it out to our cabin on Toad Lake, and sitting there until 2 AM, Art doing the accounting work on membership checks and me answering letters by hand. Next morning we’d head back to Bellingham to do the post office and the bank, then scoot home. In summer that was okay, but not so good when the roads were slippery with ice. When there were newsletters to mail, it was tricky. We produced them in Vancouver, packaged and labeled them according to U. S. Postal Service’s bulk mail requirements, and then carried them in our car across the international border. We never knew if that was legal or not, and since they didn’t ask us, we didn’t ask them.

“In 1993 our club membership was 535, and Art and I felt we’d done our job, and if any further growth were to be achieved, the club would have to be more authentic. So we moved the club to Hawai‘i, with Alan Akaka as the new president. My last newsletter was April, 1993. Then I was free to spend more time writing [my] book.”

*Continued on Page 15*

## CLOSING NOTES

# Farewell to Ron Simpson

## A Tale of Two Marines

By Frank Della-Penna

It is with sadness that we report the recent passing of HSGA member Ron Simpson of Darian, Illinois at age 73. Ron and his wife Nancy were fixtures of our Joliet conventions and also of the AISGC conventions in Winchester, Indiana. Ron was always eager to listen to other performers and to play the steel guitar on stage and with others in jam sessions.

Despite the fact that I sat talking with Ron and Nancy many times at conventions, I never knew Ron served as a U.S. Marine. We both served in the Far East. I was on Okinawa and Ron served two tours in Vietnam at the U.S. military base at Danang. We both shared the same occupational code of MOS 0842 (artillery radio operator). Had I known this I would have talked his ear off, sharing my own memories and listening to his. But Ron was very quiet and reticent to engage in dialogue. I don't know whether this was due to shyness or the result of the horrors of war he may have experienced.

Ron, Nancy, my wife Stephanie and I enjoyed one another's company and shared many meals together over a period of several years. Ron is survived by his loving wife of 52 years, Nancy. Ron's voice and music will be missed.

We received the following from Wally Pfeifer, also a U.S. Marine: "We are very sad to hear this. Ron was a good friend and a great steel player. Also, a fellow brother Marine.

*A great shot of former HSGA photographer and videographer, Paul Weaver, with his wife Hideko.*



*Ron Simpson (center) with wife Nancy and "Pineapple" Jack Walsh at our 2012 Joliet Convention Saturday Night Lū'au.*

I was just about to send him a CD of one of our favorite Hawaiian steel players but I wasn't fast enough and time ran out.

"We live about fifty miles from each other and Ron and Nancy were always inviting Peg and me up to go to the Tiki Hut near them. Unfortunately, we never made it as we didn't want to drive in city traffic at night. I believe Ron and Nancy attended every Joliet convention and a lot of the Winchester conventions. One year they brought their whole family to Joliet and filled a whole table. We all have good memories of them." ■

### Paul Weaver

We are also sad to report the passing of former HSGA photographer Paul Weaver. Not long ago Wally Pfeifer advised us that, after residing in a nursing home for a couple of years following a stroke, he recently moved back to his home for hospice care. Paul is survived by his wife, Hideko.

From Alan Akaka: So sorry to hear of Paul's passing. He gave so much of his time documenting the many artists and members at HSGA events and conventions. Sending my deepest condolences to Hideko san and the 'ohana. May he rest in love and peace.

From Bobby Ingano: Hideko, my deepest condolences to you and family. May Paul Rest In Love. ■

### It's Dues Time Again!

HSGA's membership year began on July 1, 2020. If you received a Renewal form with your newsletter then it's time to renew. Dues are \$35 for a hard copy newsletter and \$30 for the electronic version. Renew via our website and click on Membership/Pay Annual Dues. It's a snap!

### Lorene's Book and Steel Course

After seven years of research, Lorene finished work on her book *The Hawaiian Steel Guitar And Its Great Hawaiian Musicians*, published by Centerstream Publications in 1996. In the year 2000, she designed an instruction course for use in the Hawai'i schools. Writes Lorene, "I'm still working at bringing steel guitar into the music curriculum of the Hawai'i high schools. It's never been done before. I directed all proceeds of my book (and then some) toward circulating courses to schools on all the islands. Whether any of the courses are being used, I do not know."

## HSGA Donations

Many thanks, members for your fantastic donations this past quarter.

Mahalos to steel ace **Greg Sardinha** and his wife **Sandra** of Kailua for donating a generous \$100 to our General Fund and \$50 to our Scholarship Fund. **Bo Bahret**, our former newsletter delivery guy (aka Mr. Efficiency!) donated \$100 to our General Fund. **Lynn Keene** donated \$100 to the Scholarship Fund in memory of her late husband and former HSGA Board member, **Don Keene**. **Neill Schoening, Sr.** of Ewa Beach gave \$50 to each of our funds. And perennial donor **Bill Thomson** from Ocean City, Maryland gave \$100 to our Scholarship Fund. Mahalo, everyone!

The following members donated at least \$10:

Robert Backlund, Boulder, CO  
Frank D. Brandenburg, Largo, FL  
Pete Burke, Shell Beach, CA  
Terry Cass, Ashkum, IL  
Margo L. Klundt, Sherrard, IL  
Delano D. Kruzan, Macomb, IL  
Jess Montgomery, Kapa'a, HI  
Mary Neudorffer, Koloa, HI  
L. Bogue Sandberg, Chassell, MI  
Don and Donna Weber, New Lenox, IL  
Richard Wilson, Seattle, WA

### The Joseph Kekuku Statue

Much of Lorene's work in honoring the steel guitar art form centered around the establishment and commemoration of Joseph Kekuku as inventor of the instrument, an endeavor that was impetus for her book and led to the Centennial celebration described earlier. One of her dreams was to have a Kekuku statue commissioned, created and then placed prominently in some venue in Hawai'i. Writes Lorene, "It started when the Hawaiian government considered naming the 'ukulele as Hawai'i State Instrument, and all of us who give a hoot put up a big protest, reminding them that the honor should be given to the Hawaiian steel guitar. Well, I guess we have been heard. They have hired a man to build a statue of Joseph Kekuku, [which will assume a prominent place] at the entrance to the Polynesian Cultural Center on O'ahu."

The statue, created by New Zealand-born sculptor LeRoy Transfield, was unveiled on April 27, 2015 with many dignitaries on hand including Lorene herself and representatives of the Kekuku 'Ohana, including Ka'iwa Meyer, grandniece of Joseph Kekuku. Well done, Lorene!

### Conclusion

By now readers who did not know Lorene personally should have a flavor for this "one-woman wrecking crew," our fearless founder, who with love, enthusiasm and dedication launched our club and relentlessly pushed it forward, navigating many a mine field along the way. And it should not surprise readers that we left out countless stories of Lorene's contributions and personal sacrifices on behalf of the club and the greater steel guitar world. We'll close with another classic Lorene Ruymar quip: "Art and I have been a musical duo much in demand in senior care homes around Vancouver where Hawaiian music is loved. He plays steel and I play backup, then we switch and I play steel while Art plays backup. We

are known as 'The Couple That Would Rather Switch Than Fight.' They say that playing a musical instrument keeps Alzheimer's away."

### Remembrances from Members

From Robert Padwick: "I met Lorene and Art a handful of times. The first time was to pick up a copy of her instructional manual at the Jade Rabbit restaurant, now shut for a number of years, where a few steel players would meet to jam a bit and celebrate birthdays. After a bit of time practicing, I stopped by their house once to demonstrate my new-found skills (they survived through the ordeal). Lorene had infectious enthusiasm for the steel guitar, and both she and Art were very welcoming and helpful as I got going. Last week I started flipping through her manual and picked 'Yellow Bird,'

*Continued on Page 16*



**BAR & PICK HOLDER**  
Convenient storage for accessories!

**LAP STEEL STANDS**  
3 & 4 leg models  
Fully adjustable stands for lap steel and resophonic instruments  
Case included!

**Deluxe 34**  
[www.Deluxe34.com](http://www.Deluxe34.com)  
phone 262.728.2686  
*Ask about customizing it!*

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

Is your address correct? Please notify us!

### **OVERSEAS AND CANADA**

WU XUANXUAN, 380 Rue Robert Est, Rosemère, QC J7A 3Z8 Canada

TERUO HIRATA, 2-22-5 Kameino, Fyjisawa-shi, Kanagawa-Pref 252-0813 Japan

*LORENE RUYMAR Cont. from Page 15*

something I had not tried before. RIP Lorene, and condolences to Art and the family. Thanks for the music, and thank you for helping some stranger get going on the steel.”

From Wally Pfeifer: “So sad to hear that our good friend Lorene has passed. We have been friends since the first time she and Art came to the Joliet conventions. We also spent lots of time in Hawai‘i together, especially in Maui. If you’ve never heard her play ‘Yellow Bird’ on her steel, you sure missed out. You all probably know that she was instrumental in getting the Joseph Kekuku statue made and placed at the Polynesian Cultural Center.”

From Chris Kennison: “I met Lorene twenty years ago when I attended my first HSGA convention in Joliet. I had her book and took it with me—she was so nice to talk to me and sign the book. She had a huge passion for Hawaiian steel and worked hard on events and programs to showcase the

music and get more young people interested in steel, especially in Hawai‘i. Often spending her own money to buy guitars and lessons for kids. As years went by I always made time to talk to her at conventions and eventually I was on the HSGA board and got to work with her for a short time. I have missed seeing her and Art. RIP Lorene. You made a difference.”

From Mike Neer: “I was very sorry to read this. [Lorene] was a colossal figure in the Hawaiian steel guitar world as an ambassador, historian and academic. She will be missed even by those of us who never had the pleasure to meet her.”

From Chuck Lettes: “Sorry to hear this news. Lorene was a great friend to the steel guitar community and I will miss her.”

From George Rout: “[This is] very sad news. While I never met Lorene in person, I feel as though I’ve known her and husband Art for many years thru our active correspondence. Lorene really made her mark on the Hawaiian

## **Changed Email?**

*We have quite a few bad email addresses in our database. Please send changes in your email to both our office (hsga@hsga.org) AND to John Ely (johnely@hawaiiansteel.com). Mahalo!*

steel guitar in many ways, all very interesting. Life is so fragile. On behalf of my wife Faye, I send condolences to Art and the family.”

From Mike Perlowin: “Sad news. I met Lorene at Scotty’s one year. She was a very gracious lady and a terrific Hawaiian steel player.”

From Don “Kona” Woods: “The Hawaiian steel guitar family has lost a valued member. I can attest that Lorene was one of the major players in organizing the Hawaiian steel guitar community. She founded HSGA and was its first president. She was a friend for over 30 years. I will miss her.”

From Bob Stone: “A huge loss to the Hawaiian steel guitar community. She will be missed.”

*Note: The translation of the cover page headline is: “Farewell until we meet again, Lorene Ruymar.”* ■

*Lani McIntire (center) with musicians and guests outside Sacramento circa 1930.*



## **Treasurer’s Report**

*(Balances as of June 30, 2020)*

<b>Beginning Balance</b>	<b>\$24,806.88</b>
General Fund	\$15,258.55
Scholarship Fund	\$10,855.57
<b>End Balance</b>	<b>\$26,114.12</b>
Japan Account	\$182.98

<b>Major Expenses</b>	
Newsletter/Postage	\$1,950.58
Scholarship	\$550.00
Misc	\$275.00

<b>Major Income</b>	
Dues	\$2,271.20
Donations (General)	\$716.50
Donations (Scholarship)	\$645.00
Bank Interest	\$445.62