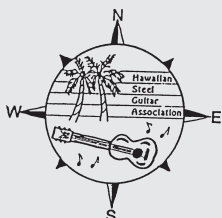


# HSGA QUARTERLY

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

Volume 19, Issue 74

Spring 2004



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A great photo of "Po'okela Hui" at the Willows restaurant, shot by Jennifer Crites for Hawai'i Magazine. (l. to r.) Gordon Freitas, Prez Kamaka Tom, and Casey Olsen.

## "The Sound of Steel" Reverberates

*Special thanks to John Berger for permission to reprint the following article, which appeared in the March/April 2004 issue of Hawai'i Magazine under the title "The Sound of Steel." Thanks also to photojournalist Jennifer Crites for the cover photo (above).*

Steel guitars once resonated throughout Waikīkī and anywhere Hawaiian music filled the air. Millions of people worldwide equated the instrument with visions of hula maidens dancing in tropical climes. The recordings of Hawaiian steel guitarists ranked among the top sellers on the American record charts in the early 1900s to 1920s. For several generations, aspiring musicians as far away as Sweden, Canada, New Zealand, and

India often listened to those recordings as they struggled to master the steel technique.

Today, relatively few steel players remain in Hawai'i, and even fewer are younger than 40 years of age. Some steel aficionados fear that the instrument may follow the zither and the mandolin—instruments that were once popular in Hawai'i—into extinction.

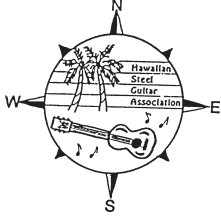
### Who Came First

Controversy shrouds the origins of steel guitar. Who came up with the idea of playing a conventional acoustic "Spanish guitar" with a metal bar and making modifications that converted the familiar 6-string into a steel instrument?

*Continued on Page 2*

## HSGA QUARTERLY

Volume 19, Issue 74



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### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association is a tax-exempt, nonprofit educational corporation in the State of Hawai'i under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Our primary purpose is to develop a global network of players and lovers of traditional Hawaiian music and to encourage the study, teaching, and performance of the Hawaiian steel guitar. Our primary financial goal is to provide scholarship assistance through donations to steel guitar students who demonstrate the ability and intent to become accomplished performers.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to all steel guitar players and non-players around the world who support the perpetuation of the Hawaiian steel guitar. Annual dues are US\$30. The membership year begins July 1. Members receive the *HSGA Quarterly* and other group benefits. The *Quarterly* is mailed four times a year First Class to addresses in the United States and by Air Mail to foreign addresses. Members can obtain an Associate Membership for a spouse or family member at a cost of \$10, added to the annual dues; an Associate Member is entitled to discounts at certain HSGA functions and can vote in HSGA Board elections.

### SUBMIT LETTERS & EDITORIALS TO:

HSGA Quarterly, 45-600 Kamehameha Hwy, Kaneohe, HI 96744 USA. Tel: (808) 235-4742, Fax: (808) 235-9591, Email: <hsga@lava.net>, Website: <http://www.hsga.org>. Photos are welcome and will be returned on request. Quality original prints or high resolution digital camera output, please. *Mahalo!*

*SOUND OF STEEL* Cont. from Page 2

Most steel fans recognize Joseph Kekuku as the inventor of the steel guitar, but two other men—James Hoa and Gabriel Davion—have die-hard supporters. A story published in the *Honolulu Advertiser* in the early 1930s reported that Hoa had invented the steel guitar in 1876 by using various metal items to press the strings of a conventional guitar against the frets.

Charles E. King (1874-1950), one of Hawai'i's most famous composers, said he saw Davion play a guitar using a sliding technique in 1884. In the first edition of *Hawaiian Music and Musicians* (University of Hawai'i Press, 1979), George Kanahale said Davion had been born in India and may have been familiar with an Indian instrument played in a similar manner.

If Hoa or Davion created a true steel guitar in the 1870s or 1880s, why was it that no one seemed to have heard about the new instrument or taken any notice of it?

Kekuku, on the other hand, is known to have played a self-made steel guitar while attending Kamehameha

*Hawaiian steel guitar inventor, Joseph Kekuku, in a classic pose.*



Schools for Boys in 1889. A teacher recalled Kekuku's hours of experimentation to design and build a steel bar that would slide noiselessly over the strings.

Kekuku also placed an adapter over the top fret that raised the strings about a quarter inch so that the steel bar wouldn't touch the frets. He discovered that wire strings were preferable to gut because they allowed him to sustain the tones longer; then he designed metal picks worn on his fingers and thumb to play them. Kekuku actively publicized his new style of playing and taught classmates, who shared his ideas with others.

### That Nashville Sound

The basic technique involves pressing the strings against the frets with a sliding steel bar instead of the fingers. Oscillating (moving) the bar produces a vibrato within the sustained pitch and creates the unique sound that distinguishes the steel guitar from other stringed instruments.

Subsequent changes in the steel guitar—the development of a resonator to increase the volume of the acoustic instrument in the 1920s, electrification in the 1930s, and the introduction of the pedal steel shortly afterward—took place outside Hawai'i. Indeed, the steel guitar has become so popular with country and western musicians that some people—even in Hawai'i—mistakenly think of steel guitar as a *haole* (non-Hawaiian) instrument.

Kekuku and the steel guitar came of age at the same time that Hawai'i was incorporated into the United States (it became a U.S. territory in 1900). Recorded sound was becoming available commercially as an improvement over sheet music and player piano rolls.

The earliest known recordings of Hawaiian music made in 1899 included the steel guitar, and many Hawaiian musicians left the islands in the first years of the new century to play and record on the mainland. Steel guitarist Frank Ferera





A nice shot of Greg Sardinha's Po'okela trio. (l. to r.) Rick Rickard on guitar, Greg on steel, and Gordon Freitas on bass.

became one of the most prolific Hawaiian recording artists of this era; others included George E.K. Awai, Herman Bishaw, Ben Hokea, David Kaili, and Walter Kolomoku. By the end of World War I in 1918, a second generation of Hawaiian steel guitarists were on the scene—Sol Ho'opi'i, Dick McIntire, and "King" Benny Nawahi, to name three.

During that time, the steel guitar became synonymous with Hawai'i. Hawaiian steel guitarists performed in vaudeville and other public venues throughout the mainland and Canada. Because of their popularity and success, Kekuku and Hokea never returned to Hawai'i. Others returned infrequently or only when they were ready to retire.

San Francisco's Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915 ignited a Hawaiian music craze that lasted for years. Instruction books, correspondence courses, and mail-order instruments became popular, and record sales boomed. Ferera, Ho'opi'i, and Nawahi became well-known recording artists, and many future virtuosos learned the rudiments of the instrument by trying to play along with the masters' recordings—sometimes until the records wore out.

Thousands of people learned the basics in public music schools. Millions heard the haunting sound of the instrument on the radio or enjoyed it at the movies.

Steel guitar captured the imagination of people around the world. Indeed, for many people outside Hawai'i, the steel guitar *was* Hawaiian music.

### Steel's Stock Falls

The advent of rock 'n' roll in the mid-'50s marked the beginning of the shift away from the American pop music that had dominated the charts until then—and from *hapa haole* (part Hawaiian, part non-Hawaiian) music. Then came the boom years of the '60s, when the hits of Don Ho and the Aliis represented a new style of *hapa haole* music

that coincided with the hustle and bustle of statehood (granted in 1959). The boom, however, didn't include steel guitar.

The revival in traditional music that occurred during the Hawaiian renaissance of the 1970s brought *ki hoalu* (slack key) to the forefront but not steel guitar. Many locals—particularly the young—associated the steel guitar with the "old-fashioned music" played for tourists in Waikiki or as part of the country music popular with *haole* military personnel.

### Gray Future

The future of the steel guitar looks a little brighter now than it did in 1980, but it remains clouded. Slack key is popular, and the 'ukulele is enjoying an upsurge of popularity even among 'Jawaiian' musicians who are otherwise more into the culture of Jamaica than their own culture. The Hawaiian steel guitar, however, doesn't have the same public support.

Consider for a moment that while thousands of local teenagers and "twenty-somethings" play 'ukulele or slack key, the most prominent steel guitarist in Hawai'i, Alan Akaka, son of U.S. Senator Daniel Akaka, is 48. The other "young" steel guitarists of similar stature are Greg "Rocky" Sardinha, Bobby Ingano, and Casey Olsen. Sardinha and Ingano are a few years older than Alan Akaka. Olsen is the youngest at 36.

Sardinha has been wondering in recent years if and when another generation of steel guitarists will appear in Hawai'i. Two come to mind at the moment. Jeff Au Hoy, a 1998 Punahou graduate, bought a beat-up Rickenbacker on eBay (the online auction site) and taught himself to play by listening to old records. Halehaku Seabury-Akaka, 20, a graduate of St. Louis High School, is a skilled musician and a keen student of steel guitar lore who wants to play professionally.

*Continued on Page 20*

A nice close-up of Joliet 2003 guest artist, Hale Seabury-Akaka.



## KUKAKUKA KĪKĀ KILA



By Gordon Freitas

*As many of you already know, ‘Gordo’ is one of Hawai‘i’s busiest performers and lately a Hawaiian steel guitar ‘upstart’. He has agreed to become our Hawai‘i ‘correspondent’, keeping us all up to date on steel guitar players and happenings on the local Hawai‘i music scene. Kukakuka is Hawaiian for ‘discussion’ and kīkā kila, of course, is ‘steel guitar’. Welcome to the first installment in what we hope will become a permanent HSGA Quarterly feature.*

Aloha everybody! As an enthusiastic fan of the Hawaiian steel guitar, I find myself drawn to promoting the only instrument invented in Hawai‘i. Like most of you, I have always loved that sound, especially when combined with that tropical swing groove. Since I am here in Hawai‘i and playing actively with Hawaiian musicians several times a week, I will try to lend a “typing” hand and keep HSGA members informed about our steel guitar action in the islands.

Most of us became members of HSGA to support this unique instrument. For most of us, preservation and perpetuation of what some think is a dying art form, seems to be always on our minds

and in our hearts. But no one person can carry the torch forever. We all have a part in this to some degree.

The mission of those who play the steel guitar is simply to play it and play it and play it some more. Play their best and play to the public... get out there on stage and in front of audiences and onto recorded media. Just do it! The rest of us can go out and have some fun while supporting them and the venues that feature the Hawaiian steel guitar.

The Halekulani Hotel has traditionally featured a steel guitarist in every trio playing at the ‘House Without a Key’ restaurant/patio—**Alan Akaka**, **Greg Sardinha**, **Harold Haku‘ole**, **Kaipo Kukahiko**, to name a few.

For the folks who are always asking about the **Hiram Olsen Trio** with **Casey Olsen** “on the bar,” they will be performing at the 20th anniversary of the ‘House Without A Key’ on April 11. If you really miss the steel guitar of Casey Olsen grab a “Hawaiian Steel” CD or the music of Raiatea Helm, Pai‘ea, or Nā Palapalai.

The obvious place to find new recordings of currently performing Hawaiian steel guitarists is on Greg Sardinha’s “Hawaiian Steel” Vol. 1 and Vol. 2. Greg always keeps it real and continues to be most innovative and prolific when it comes to recording the Hawaiian steel guitar today. “Hawaiian Steel” Vol. 3 is coming soon!!

Greg keeps a roster of musicians strolling at the Willows Restaurant on Hausten Street and ensures the presence of a steel guitar player. It’s acoustic and has that nostalgic flair, but there is no doubt that the music is swinging and alive now in this new millennium. Faces of all ages light up with delight to the sound of sliding steel—lots of curious looks often followed by questions.

I get to stroll at the Willows every Saturday with two of our favorite steelers in the islands, Greg Sardinha and Casey Olsen! Last week Greg was out recording **Owana Salazar** and Casey

was at another gig, so HSGA Prez **Kamaka Tom** showed up lugging that upright bass while Joe Kaimana “wielded the bar” during brunch.

Kamaka was instrumental in helping photo-journalist Jennifer Crites with her article on Hawaiian steel guitar which appeared in the March/April issue of *Hawai‘i Magazine*. Any press is good press, eh? Starting with folks like Wally Pfeifer, many of you out there have directed our HSGA members and friends to that publication. The dobro pictured on Kamaka’s lap [ED: see the cover photo on page 1] once belonged to Casey’s grandfather, **Billy Hew Len**. Where did Casey get that ‘ukulele?!

If you check out the HSGA web site at [www.hsga.org](http://www.hsga.org) you can find out Who’s Playing Where. I just saw **Eddie Palama** with Herb Lee’s trio at the Moana Hotel’s Banyan Veranda. **Bobby Ingano** is at Chai’s on Sundays with Keli‘i Kaneali‘i and Kimo Bell. Bobby also plays with Keli‘i at the Pacific Beach Hotel’s Neptune’s Garden every Friday and Saturday.

So now that we know local steelers are doing their part to showcase the

---

*HSGA President Kamaka Tom, as ever, lending a helping hand at Joliet last fall.*







Another cool shot of Derrick Mau (left), Bobby Ingano, and Jeff Au Hoy playing together at the 2003 Honolulu Convention.

instrument, let's address the process of passing down the subtle techniques and skills required to eek out a good sound. This instrument requires far more dedication than playing 'ukuleles and guitars. No frets present an infinite number of chances to be off-pitch. Even if you have a good ear for it, not everyone is capable of putting in the kind of practice regime required to fully grasp the boundless potential of a non-pedal Hawaiian steel guitar. On a similar note, not everyone has the

gift of being able to teach so many like our friend and *kumu*, **Jerry Byrd**—Hall of Famer, Lifetime Achievement Award winner, and most importantly, dedicated teacher of this fine art. As all forms of art conspire to become music... I imagine that the 'Chief' has already translated most genres of music into the sound of steel guitar. It's no secret that he has always been most passionate about his mission to develop professional Hawaiian steel guitar players. Go to the room at the end of the hall at Harry's Music store in Kaimuki and find out how high the 'bar' can go when it comes to developing a competent man or woman of steel. If you have never heard the memorable stories that come with the lesson, don't miss out... get the book!

And let's not forget **Lorene Ruymar**. She wrote a book about Hawaiian steel guitar and also developed a course of instruction. On April 26, Lorene and Art Ruymar will be featured artists at *E Kanikapila Kakou* on Kaua'i. She will no doubt enlighten the Garden Island artists with her presentation of the steel guitar and its background. She emailed to say that **Derrick Mau**, the first graduate of her course, would be flying to Kaua'i to join in as well.

HSGA is pressing for any opportunity to stay in the public eye. The "steelers in the office" will be onstage at Ward Warehouse's *Na Mele Nei* concert on Sunday, May 2 from 1:50 to 3:30 PM. HSGA members have been invited to par-

*Continued on Page 6*

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## INTERNET UPDATE

### Attention HSGA Emailers!

Lorene Ruymar and others have called it to our attention that some member email user names have been “hijacked” by spammers and distributors of viruses of the worst kind. This means that you can receive an email with an HSGA member’s name on it, but with a bogus message the actual member never wrote, or worse, with an attachment containing some kind of file-gobbling virus.

Never open attachments unless you have verified that it actually came from the person you think sent it. But apparently the new, dreaded Bagle virus doesn’t need an attachment to do its evil work. Make sure you have the latest patches from Microsoft if you’re using a Windows-based machine.

Lorene had a good idea: How about beginning every email message area with some kind of standard greeting to authenticate it to the recipient. Something like “This is an authentic message from an HSGA member...” or some such verbiage. This strategy may not be infallible, but in most cases should help identify bogus emails and attachments. Just a thought. Ideas, anyone? ■



Webmaster and guitar fave, Gerald Ross, does a solo bit at Joliet 2003. Look for Gerald’s rhythm guitar tutorial in the Summer issue.

*KUKAKUKA KĪKĀ KILA Continued from Page 5*

ticipate. And on May Day, our dedicated HSGA crew will be performing out in Kapi’olani Park... way cool!

I could write a couple of pages full of names including the other musicians who play with the steel guitarists. They are all supporting this mission as well. So how can this art be dying? Seems to me like everyone is doing their part. Every little piece of the puzzle is still a part of the picture.

*Mahalo* to **John Ely** and **Gerald Ross** for their dedication to this newsletter and the HSGA web site. Check it out! Hopefully I can be of assistance and take up some of the field chores around here. If any of you out there have questions or trivia for me, just email me at [ainafolk@aol.com](mailto:ainafolk@aol.com). On the subject line, just type ‘HSGA/Gordon’.

There is sooo much more to tell and even more to come by the next issue. I have arranged a few interviews for upcoming issues and I am sure we will all have a better slant on the future of the Hawaiian steel and which way the bar points. I slide forward and side with those who believe it is in a position to gain a lot more momentum, and now is the time to push the bar out there a little bit more and keep telling the rest of the world.

From where I stand on this island, I can’t wait to keep you updated on all the wonderful things I see from the beach. I will be checking in with the folks on the scene, so stay tuned, cuz... Hawaiian steel guitar is here to stay! Not *pau*, but *hana hou!* *Malama pono* and *a hui hou!* ■

### Email Address Updates

Please notify us of email changes at [hsga@lava.net](mailto:hsga@lava.net). The following members have New or Changed (\*) email:

Duke K. Ching (US-CA)*	<a href="mailto:dukemanofsteel@aol.com">dukemanofsteel@aol.com</a>
Bill Creller (US-MI)*	<a href="mailto:pila@charter.net">pila@charter.net</a>
Warren J. Slavin (US-PA)*	<a href="mailto:warcar@comcast.net">warcar@comcast.net</a>
Peter Winkler (Australia)	<a href="mailto:kobeef@optusnet.com.au">kobeef@optusnet.com.au</a>
Tom Ikehata Tohma (Japan)*	<a href="mailto:sgtom@happy.interq.or.jp">sgtom@happy.interq.or.jp</a>

*Classic shot of Sonny Kamahele at the Halekulani. (l. to r.) Alan Akaka on steel, dancer Kanoe Miller, Sonny, and Kaipō Ah Sing.*





# Joliet 2004 Alert

From Joliet Chairman, Don Weber

By now some of you may have heard the news regarding the change in the dates of this year's Joliet Convention. Mark your calendars. This year the Joliet Convention will be held on October 14-16. This change was made for a number of reasons, which I won't get into here. We just want to get the word out, so that you can change your travel plans while there's still a reasonable amount of time.

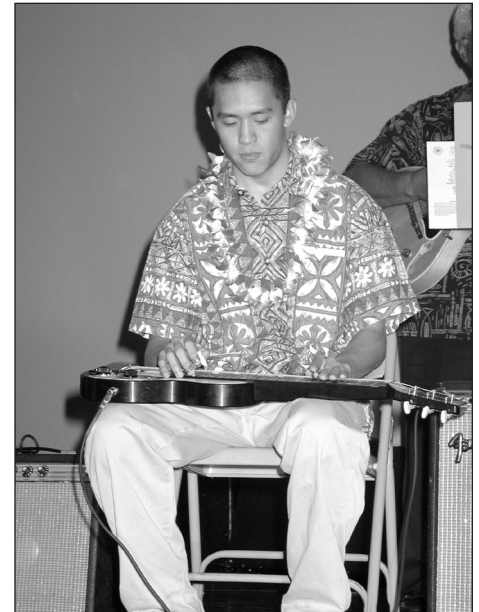
We are pleased to announce that this year's Honored Guest will be **Jeff Au Hoy**. He's been described as a "natural" on the instrument. Former HSGA President, Alan Akaka, says, "Jeff is a 1999 graduate of Punahou who is an awesome musician and steel guitarist. He can outplay anyone of his generation. He favors the David

Keli'i style. He is young and in my humble opinion *awesome*."

As we told you last year, the hotel is undergoing some renovation. The work may be continuing even while we are there. This may result in some changes, but will not affect our music sessions. The room rates stay the same as last year, \$62 plus 13% tax per day.

Check our website for late breaking developments. We'll post the finalized information in the summer newsletter, including a schedule of planned activities and workshops.

One other thing that will be new this year is a change in playing time. Due to the fact that we have so many members wanting to perform (and that's a good thing), we have been forced, in past years, to have night music sessions as well as a standby list. This year the playing time will be 25 minutes, including setup time. This will amount to one, or maybe two less



*Jeff Au Hoy, Joliet 2004 Honored Guest.*

songs in your set. We hope this will add enough slots so that everyone wanting to play will be afforded the opportunity, and still have ample time to show their talent. ■



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### Fender Steel Guitar Legs

Looking for Stringmaster-type steel guitar legs. Contact John Ely at (218) 750-7832 or johnely@hawaiiansteel.com.

### Frypan, 'Ukulele, and Amplifiers

Longtime members, Edward and Virginia Kuchenbecker, have retired from playing nursing homes and clubs around Mesa, Arizona and are making the following package available for a single price: a Jerry Byrd 8-string Frypan with case, bars, and picks—excellent sound and condition, an electric 'ukulele with case, a Fender Harvard Reverb II amplifier, a Fender Frontman amplifier, and a Peavey Rage 158 amplifier. Also included are beautiful handmade music stands with Hawaiian scenes and cases of sheets music. \$1000 for the entire package. Please contact the Kuchenbeckers' daughter, Karen, at (910) 295-6063. ■

## Honolulu 'Off-Year' Convention Update

From Wayne Shishido

HSGA will not be putting on a Ho'olaule'a at the Ala Wai Clubhouse this year.

Ho'olaule'a attendance in non-convention years (2004, 2006, etc.) is less than half of that in convention years, and the cost of producing the concert is just as expensive whether it's a convention year or not. Holding the Ho'olaule'a in convention years (2005, 2007, etc.) will enable us to maximize our effort and HSGA will get better attendance at each concert. We will hold a Ho'olaule'a in 2005, which is a convention year.

We are planning performances this year for those coming to Hawai'i. The following events are confirmed:

### Saturday, May 1, 12-3 PM

May Day at Kapi'olani Park. HSGA members are invited to participate.

### Sunday, May 2, 1:50-3:30 PM

Ward Warehouse Shopping Center stage (corner of Ward Ave. and Ala Moana Blvd.). Gail Mack and "George Street" perform from 1-1:45 PM. HSGA will follow immediately with music from 1:50-3:30 PM. Backup musicians will include the Kila Brothers Trio (Wayne Shishido, Isaac Akuna, and Kamaka Tom) joined by Kimo Stone on 'ukulele.

HSGA members, if you'd like to perform at either of the above events, please send an email to Kamaka Tom at tomg007@hawaii.rr.com or phone him at (808) 392-4583.

This year, more steel is in the air. New regular performers in Honolulu include Jeff Au Hoy, Hale Seabury-Akaka, and Buck Giles. Wiki Waki Woo also performs, mostly at malls and the International Market Place. ■

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## Board of Directors Election Results

A big *Mahalo Nui Loa* to HSGA members and nominees who participated in our election for positions on the HSGA Board of Directors this past quarter. Members had a tough job choosing from our field of exceptionally qualified nominees.

We are pleased to welcome the following members to our Board for the 2004-06 term, which starts on July 1, 2004:

Betty Bahret (New York)  
Duke Ching (California)  
Joanne Hanawahine (Nevada)  
Gerald Ross (Michigan)  
Lorene Ruymar (Canada)  
Tom Ikehata Tohma (Japan)  
G. Kamaka Tom (Hawai'i)  
Julie Waters (Kentucky)  
Don Weber (Illinois)

Thanks again to all for making your voice heard. Your contributions, feedback, and vote are what makes HSGA tick.



## MEMBERS' CORNER

**Bruce Morrison, Longueuil, Quebec**  
I have been a member for many years and love your *HSGA Quarterly* because I'm a Hawaiian music lover and also a Hawaiian steel player.

**Gordon Freitas, Wahiawa, 'Oahu**  
I just got back from L.A. recording a folk project with Peter Apo and some friends he used to tour with in the sixties. Way cool. All the ole folkies on the session—his gang from Travelers Three, Hearts and Flowers, Rick Cunha, Mike Botts, Charlie Oyama, Joe Lamano, Tery Paul. Everybody get gold records lidat. Guys that been on the road for years with the likes of John Hartford, Cash, Kristofferson, Fogelberg, blah, blah, blah. The best part was all the stories and the steaks after the weeklong session was *pau!* I was the lead fingerpickin' dude—hoda fun—plus, I didn't have to drag my



*Quebec member, Bruce Morrison, a true steel guitar fanatic!*

guitar across the pond. Plenty expensive Martin guitars at my disposal. I was in heaven with an old D-41 dreadnaught. Although I made some great

connections for my songwriting, relax was the word for seven days! I have not checked, but I hope I lost weight. Ha ha aka aka! Talk story soon. ■

### A Word on Photos...

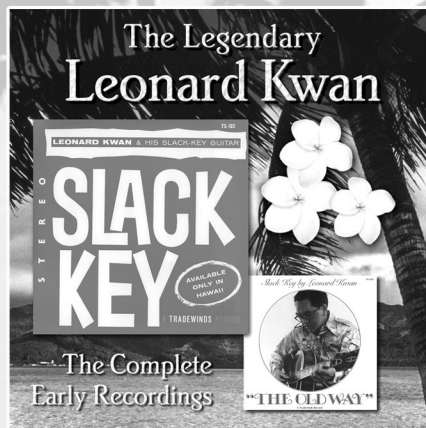
*We love to get photos from members! A few things to keep in mind: Please avoid sending prints that are grainy or faded. Originals work best and we promise to send them back on request! Digital camera output usually works very well—photos from the internet do not! Mahalo!*

### Mahalo, Donors!

Thanks to the following members who donated at least \$10 to our General Fund this past quarter: **Bernie Magness** of Grass Valley, California and **John and Joanne Plas** of Wellington, Ohio.

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# Twelfth Street Rag

(Sol Ho'opi'i Solo)

C# minor (hi to low) E C# G# E B E

Transcribed by Bruce Clarke (1944)

F C<sup>7</sup>

F

C<sup>7</sup>

G<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup>



F C7

T  
A  
B

F

T  
A  
B

F F7 Bb Bbm

T  
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## BOOK REVIEW

### “Lap Steel Guitar” by Andy Volk

Review by John Ely

Steel guitar is properly the centerpiece of any Hawaiian group and shines brightly in its native setting. But the steel guitar has had a profound impact on other styles of music from country and western, to cajun, to western swing, to the blues, to world music, and on and on. In our industry, which suffers from a terminal lack of press, exposure, and reliable information, any serious entry into the book market is a welcome sign; Andy Volk, with his new book “Lap Steel Guitar” from Centerstream Publishing, has done a superb job of showing how the Hawaiian steel guitar has changed forever the landscape of American and world music in its many forms.

The book focuses on lap-style and console steel guitar and includes over 200 pages of interviews, profiles, and photos of more than 35 of the greatest electric and acoustic steel guitarists of the past and present. Andy organizes the profiles by musical genre. Here is a rundown of the players and styles covered:

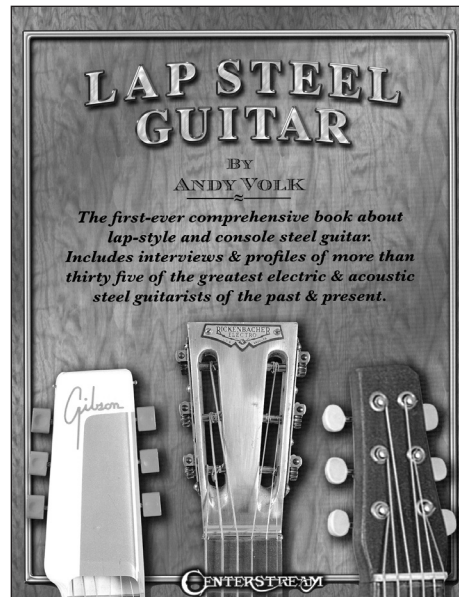
**Hawaiian Music**—Sol Ho‘opi‘i, Ralph Kolsiana, Dick McIntire, Andy Iona, David “Feet” Rogers, Barney Isaacs, Billy Hew Len, Jerry Byrd, Greg Sardinha, John Ely, and Bruce Clarke.

**Country Music**—Don Helms, Billy Robinson, Marian Hall, Kayton Roberts, Jeremy Wakefield, and Junior Brown.

**Western Swing**—Bob Dunn, Leon McAuliffe, Joaquin Murphey, Cindy Cashdollar, Herb Remington, and Tom Morrell.

**American Roots Music**—Ed Gerhard, Pete Grant, Greg Leisz, Freddie Roulette, Lee Jeffries, and Jody Carver.

**Sacred Music**—Darick Campbell and Aubrey Ghent.



**Cajun Music**—Papa Cairo, Shirley Bergeron, Clarence “Junior” Martin

**Roll ‘n’ Roll**—Santo and Johnny, David Lindley, Gary Brandin, and Steve Howe.

**World Music**—Harry Manx, Bob Brozman, and Debashish Bhattachacharya

Hawaiian steel guitar fans will find some gems in the Hawaiian category. The Jerry Byrd profile has an excellent section from Jerry on how to execute harmonics. Greg Sardinha, always the vanguard, has interesting things to say about his approach to the steel guitar. The Bruce Clark profile has fascination information on how Cumquat goes about restoring and reissuing steel guitar classic recordings. There is even an interview of Billy Hew Len taken from a long-lost cassette of a lesson Billy gave in some Honolulu hotel room.

Also included in the book is an Instruments section, which includes background and historical information on vintage and currently built steel guitar models with great photos on glossy paper. Very nice.

The final section, Lap Steel Guitar Resources contains a wealth of information on every imaginable steel guitar necessity: steel guitar dealers, amplifiers, steel guitar pickup and

repair sources, tone bars, volume pedals, bridges... you name it. There is a good listing of available instructional materials and websites at the forefront of disseminating steel guitar information. Andy also includes a select discography of the players covered in the book.

The book is laid out nicely and is peppered with great photos and graphics of nostalgic steel guitar memorabilia, ads, sheet music, and other items of interest.

“Lap Steel Guitar” is clearly a labor of love and Andy’s reverence for the instrument is apparent throughout. This from Centerstream publisher, Ron Middlebrook, echoing the sentiments of many who have seen the book: “Andy’s book will be an excellent complement to Lorene’s book, “The Hawaiian Steel Guitar and Its Great Hawaiian Musicians”. Enough said!

*Orders can be taken online through PayPal at Andy Volk’s website (www.volkmedia.com/book1.htm). List price for the book is \$35.*

*Andy is currently offering signed copies of the book shipped via USPS Media Mail (4-10 days) to U.S. addresses for \$33 per copy. Send a check or money order to:*

*Volk Media Design—Orders  
631 Great Plain Ave.  
Needham, MA 02492*

*Outside of the U.S. mailing costs will reflect the actual shipping charges. To get the shipping fee for your location, send Andy an email at avolk@volkmedia.com or write him at the above address.*

*You can also order the book directly from your local bookstore. You will need the following information:*

*“Lap Steel Guitar” by Andy Volk  
Centerstream Publications  
ISBN: 1-57424-134-6  
SAN: 683-8022*



## DOC'S GIG BAG

From Isaac Akuna

Aloha, friends. As my term of office comes to a close, I wish to extend a word of thanks to all who have made my participation on HSGA's Board of Directors a fun, productive, and insightful experience.

First on that list would be all officers and members of the Board, past and present. My experience has been that the Board attracts people who are seriously dedicated to the preservation of HSGA. Keep in mind that the Board of Directors is your conduit to the inner workings of the club. Know who they are. Communicate with them. Let them know what your needs and concerns are. While you're at it, let them know when they're doing a good job, too. Service on the board is purely voluntary and can involve a significant output of energy and time.

I also want to thank past presidents Lorene Ruymar, Alan Akaka, and Don Weber. Their insight and leadership at the helm has kept this club going through some challenging times.

Thanks and best wishes go to your current president, G. Kamaka Tom. It's not an easy job. He is deserving of everyone's support.

Big Mahalos to the co-editors of the *HSGA Quarterly*, John Ely and Brenda Shishido. It's not enough to say that they have gone way beyond the call. Both of them have invested an enormous amount of effort to better our publication and better serve its readers.

Of course I can't forget a heartfelt *mahalo nui* to my very good friend and partner in crime, Wayne Shishido. Wayne is a behind-the-scenes kind of guy. He has a wonderful work ethic that far exceeds my own. He is a fine steel guitarist, an accomplished musician, and very busy in the local music scene. Yet, he has worked tirelessly for HSGA, often shunning the limelight and disavowing any credit that might come his



Isaac "Doc" Akuna shines at Joliet 2003 with Gerald Ross on rhythm guitar.

way. Let's hope we can find someone to replace him on the Board.

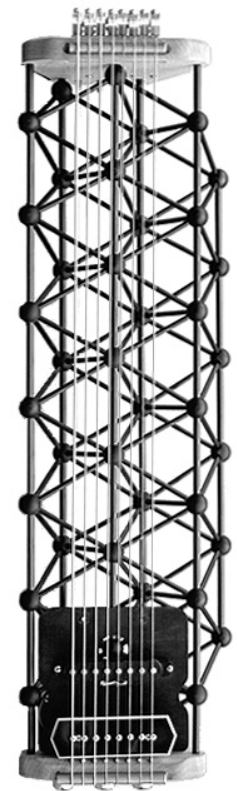
I must also thank all the members of HSGA who have supported the efforts of this club over the years. As the club's treasurer, I can state confidently that the association is in a very good financial situation, operating well within the boundaries of good fiscal management. We also maintain a dedicated scholarship account that totals nearly \$5,000.

I am grateful for having made many friends through my active participation in HSGA.

On a more personal note, I would like to thank all of my very dear friends in the music industry in Hawai'i who have so generously allowed me to grace the stage with them. It would be impossible for me to mention them all, but at the very least I would have to mention Jerry Byrd. Through his instruction I was allowed to gain some insight into the world of the steel guitar. That blessing opened up a whole new arena of performance opportunities for me. *Mahalo*, Jerry.

Until we meet again, seek out your inspiration and play from your heart. *Ho'omanawanui*, Doc ■

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# Kekuku Celebration in Dover, New Jersey

From Lorene Ruymar

Hi, guys 'n' everybody. I imagine you all read the articles in the Winter *Quarterly* about the *big* (we hope) Kekuku celebration of steel guitar to be held in Dover, New Jersey in 2005? Sure you did. And the other thing, my article about the October 10, 2004 event, which we hope will be the warm-up for the big one in 2005. I was talking about a group of us going there immediately after the October 2004 convention in Joliet.

Well, all that has changed now that the Joliet convention dates have been moved up to October 14-16 of 2004. So where does that leave us with the Dover plans? The Dover event is the weekend before October 14-16, so we're still free to go there. It's just different now, since we cannot organize a group at the convention.

Members who live within driving distance of Dover, it's up to you! Many of you are excellent steel guitarists. How many of you would take your steel guitar to Dover for their festival on Sunday October 10, 2004 and play some beautiful Hawaiian music for them?

So, what we need to do is get a list of members who would like to attend or perform in Dover on October 10. Members Bob and Barbara Garth, who many of you know from Joliet, live about 15 minutes from Dover and have agreed to help coordinate the Dover effort. If you are interested in attending or performing, please contact them at:

Bob and Barbara Garth  
70 Stanhope Rd.  
Sparta, NJ 07871  
bbgarth@earthlink.net

*Lorene Ruymar delights the Joliet 2003 audience with Kamaka Tom (left), Julie Waters, and Bernie Endaya on backup.*



*Bob Garth playing an impressive set at Joliet. Bob is your contact person if you are interested in attending the Kekuku celebration.*

Members with email can mobilize and start a group discussion on Dover and periodically update those without internet access. We'll publish the results of this discussion in the Summer *Quarterly* and hopefully a definite plan will be in place by mid-summer.

George Laurie of the Dover Area Historical Society is our go-to person doing the planning in Dover. Write or email him if you have questions:

George Laurie  
10 Hillside Avenue  
Dover, NJ 07801  
(973) 361-6205  
george@picatinnycu.org

You can also write to the Dover Area Historical Society at:

The Dover Area Historical Society  
c/o Joseph Kekuku Celebration  
P.O. Box 609  
Dover, NJ 07802-0609  
Attn: Betty Inglis/President

Let's do what we can to mobilize over the next few months. This could lead to a nice turnout by HSGA in 2004 and a fabulous Dover gala in 2005. Say "hi" to Joe Kekuku when you're there! ■

## It's Dues Time Again!

*Remember, HSGA's membership year begins on July 1, 2004. Dues are now \$30 and all issues go out 'Air Mail'.*



## CLOSING NOTES

Many of you know that steel guitar great **Alvino Rey** passed away this past February at the age of 95. We could not do justice to his memory and his string of accomplishments given the space limitations of this issue, so we are planning a special spread on Alvino's life and work in the Summer *Quarterly*. Email or write our office if you have a photo or anecdote you'd like to share with us.

After just having printed an article in the last issue about the retirement of **Sonny Kamahahele** from the Halekulani Hotel, we are sorry to report Sonny's passing this past February. Former HSGA President, Alan Akaka, forwarded us the press release, which we are including below. Sonny was very popular among HSGA members and often turned out for many of our events in Hawai'i just to meet us and play steel for us. Many do not realize that Sonny was a fine steel guitarist. Here is the press release:

"Sonny Kamahahele (Solomon 'Sonny' Kamahahele, Jr.) has passed away today [February 11, 2004] at his home in Hilo at 11:06 AM, with his wife Margaret at his side. Sonny was 82. He was born in Honolulu on August 28, 1921. Sonny had been battling cancer recently.

"Numerous friends had been keeping in touch with him via telephone for the past several days, as he began to decline. Several entertainers sang his favorite songs to him over the phone. At the moment that he slipped away, Amy Hanaiali'i Gilliom was singing "Sweet Little Baby" over the phone to Sonny. The tune was composed by Sam Koki, who was Amy's father's stepfather. Sonny performed with Sam Koki for several years in Los Angeles and was known for his performance of the song. Sonny released an updated version on his last recording.

"The legendary Hawaiian musician retired from performing last year, and

relocated to a newly built home in Hilo. A grand farewell celebration was thrown for him at the Halekulani Hotel, where he had performed for several years.

"Sonny had performed Hawaiian music since he was taught by his father, another noted Hawaiian entertainer, Solomon Kamahahele, Sr. Numerous recordings and a long stint with "Hawai'i Calls," as well as a member of Alfred Apaka's famed Hawaiian Village Serenaders group, are just some of Sonny Kamahahele's career highlights. Since the 1950s, Sonny was a close friend of Benny Kalama, who preceded Sonny in death."

"They're the last of the famed Hawaiian Village Serenaders, so they must be jamming together now," said Alan Akaka, in an article on Sonny by *Honolulu Advertiser* staff writer, Wayne Harada. ■

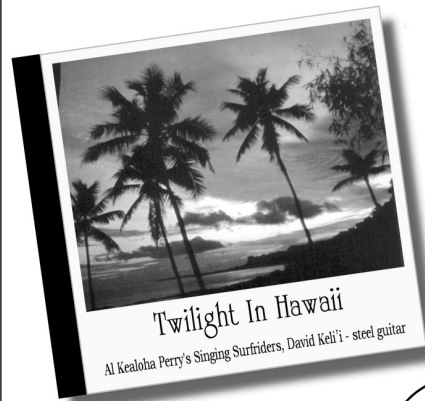


A classic shot of Waikiki favorite, Sonny Kamahahele, performing at the Halekulani Hotel's 'House Without a Key'.

## You ain't heard nothin' yet...

That is, until you've heard the Steel Guitar magic of David Keli'i with Al Kealoha Perry's Singing Surfriders in Cumquat Digital Sound!

Also just released: *Tropical Heatwave*, featuring the Steel Guitars of: David Kaili, Pale K Lua, Freddie Pilipo, Sol Bright, Eddy Bush, Bob Knight.



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## Joliet 2003 'Off-Stage'

*Joliet is all about after-hours jamming and talk-story when the pressure is off! (Clockwise from upper left) "Round table" discussion with Don Weber (facing the camera), Bill Creller (back to camera), bassist Floyd Alexander, and Ivan Reddington; a framable shot of La Verne Ching (left) and John Tipka with wife, Millie; a nice shot of Donna Weber (left) and Gloria Murawsky with Kamaka Tom and hula dancer, Mike Beeks, in the background; Don Woods and Isaac "Doc" Akuna talk story; Joliet Honored Guest, Hale Seabury-Akaka, shows off his guitar chops.*







## Joliet 2003 'On-Stage'

*(Clockwise from upper left) What would Joliet be without Bob and Julie Waters? Dick Lloyd from Glendora, California shows his stuff on a nice-looking Excel steel guitar; Member Tom Pickett from Columbus, Indiana providing guitar backup; Wanda Bruening from Allen Park, Michigan plays some pedal steel with L.T. Zinn on backup; Ron Simpson from Darien, Illinois with his son Joel on backup; Floyd Alexander on upright bass—a godsend to our convention sound crew and backup team. Vancouver's Art Ruymar playing some seriously sweet steel.*





## COCO WIRE

Steel guitar legend **Tau Moe** was recently honored as one of this year's Living Treasures of Hawai'i. The program was created in 1976 by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai'i and rewards those who work to preserve the culture of the Islands. This year's honorees made their contribution through music, hula, education, or spiritualism. The six being honored this year are: the Rev. Mitsuo Aoki, Patience Namaka Bacon, Fujio Matsuda, Genoa Keawe, Tau Moe, and Edith Kawelohea McKinzie. They were recognized at a ceremony on February 13 at the Sheraton Waikiki. Last year Tau was recognized for his lifetime contribution to Hawaiian music by the Legislature, HSGA, Governor Linda Lingle, and Mayor Jeremy Harris.

Our own **Kamaka Tom** played behind Kawai Cockett at this year's

Hawai'i Academy of Recording Arts awards show at the Sheraton Waikiki. Cockett had just received the coveted HARA Lifetime Achievement Award and sang his signature song, "Beautiful Kaua'i" with support from Hailama Farden, Sam Kamuela, and Kamaka on upright bass. In his acceptance speech, Cockett spoke eloquently in both English and Hawaiian of his love for his family, his Hawaiian culture, and the elders who had shared their knowledge with him.

Look for the **Tiny Bubble Band** with steel guitarist **J.T. Gallagher** on June 6, 2004 at the Brooklyn Museum from 3-5 PM. The performance is part of the City of Brooklyn's Music in the Garden Series.

Interest is picking up for the music of **Nancy Gustafsson** and **Vic Rittenband**. Nancy recently received recognition in two directions. University of Hawai'i School of Ethnomusicology doctoral candidate,

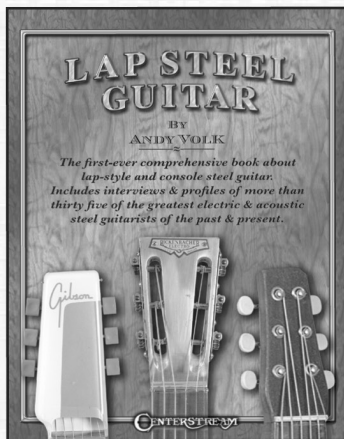


*Vic Rittenband and Nancy Gustafsson performing for the Honolulu 2003 audience.*

**Yuko Kurokawa**, was writing her dissertation on the theme of how Hawaiian

*Continued on Page 20*

# New Book! Lap Steel Guitar



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By **Andy Volk** (From Centerstream/Hal Leonard) 285 pages softbound

A comprehensive look at lap & console steel including profiles & interviews w/ 41 of the greatest electric & acoustic steel guitarists of the past & present in Hawaiian, country, western swing, American roots, sacred, cajun, rock, & world music styles. 40 pages of color photos & commentary on vintage Martin, Weissenborn, Fender, Gibson, Rickenbacher, National & Bigsby guitars as well as a portfolio of new guitars from the best modern builders. You'll also find resources for instruments, amplifiers, accessories, CDs, instructional materials, steel guitar tunings and more!

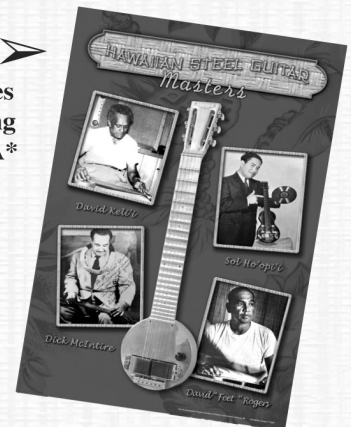
"Andy's book deserves to be up there with Lorene Ruymar's as a standard reference for steel guitarists. The two books compliment each other well and are a must-have for every steel player's library."

*Brad Bechtel, Editor,  
Brad's Page of Steel*

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### Hawaiian Steel Guitar Masters Poster

11"x17" poster shows a 1934 Rick frypan with vintage photos of legendary Hawaiian steelers, Sol Ho'opi'i, David Keli'i, Dick McIntire & David "Feet" Rogers. Professionally printed on 100 lb, UV coated gloss stock at photo-quality, 300 DPI resolution.



\* Please write/email for international shipping costs

# Isle Musician Tau Moe Saved Lives in Holocaust

**His place in music is matched solely by his importance for saving Jews**

*Reprinted with permission from staff writer Mary Vorsino and the Honolulu Star-Bulletin. Mahalo nui loa!*

He'd have them impersonate groupies or say they were his stage hands or relatives. Once, he even snuck a few over the border tucked in his trunk and hidden among the colorful folds of his stage costumes.

In all, McKinley High School graduate and Laie resident Tau Moe, who traveled the world playing Hawaiian music with his family for more than 50 years, estimates he helped at least 150 of his Jewish musician friends escape Germany and Austria just before the height of Adolf Hitler's reign.

"It's a Polynesian 'Schindler's List,'" said Hawaiian music historian Ishmael Stagner. "He's done all this stuff. He thinks nothing of it."

Stagner has pledged to write a book about Moe and his troupe after a number of failed attempts at interesting others, mostly ghostwriters, in the family's story—a saga that encompasses dozens of countries and a slew of big names.

At 95, Moe is the world's oldest living steel guitar player. His mentor, Joseph Kekuku, invented the instrument.

Moe's contributions to Hawaiian music have been recognized, mostly through Stagner's urging, by Mayor Jeremy Harris, Gov. Linda Lingle, the state House and Senate, and the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association.

Most recently, Moe was named a "Living Treasure" in a program sponsored by the Honpa Hongwangji Mission of Hawai'i. Stagner submitted Moe's biography for that award committee's consideration as well, hoping that the title would generate some long-overdue exposure for the musician's career.

Despite touring for decades and performing for Hitler, Aristotle Onassis, Mahatma Gandhi, and Egypt's King Farouk, to name a few, Stagner says word of Moe's popularity abroad has never become common knowledge in his home state. Many Hawaiian musicians began to hear of Moe only after he had retired to Laie in 1982.

Moe's efforts for his Jewish friends in Nazi Germany and Austria are even less heard of, receiving only brief mentions in a few biographical write-ups. On top of that, Moe does not think his actions for his Jewish colleagues, which continued until weeks before America's involvement in World War II, were all that big a deal. "I wasn't scared with anything," Moe said recently, with a hearty laugh. "Hitler didn't know."



*HSGA honors Tau Moe at our Honolulu 2003 Convention. (bottom row, left to right) Kamaka Tom, Tau Moe, Rep. Colleen Meyer, and (standing, left to right) L.T. Zinn and Dr. Ishmael Stagner.*

But Stagner says he cannot help but be fascinated by Moe's life—the story of a boy born in a small Samoan village and raised in Laie who traveled the world seven times and learned 10 languages while doing what he loved best: playing the Hawaiian tunes he had learned as a child.

The Moe family was a sell-out act during their heyday. They toured Singapore, the Middle East, Germany, Italy, and India. They found fans of Hawaiian music in Egypt, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Denmark, England, Sweden, and Finland.

Moe was in charge of the steel guitar and tap dancing for the group. Moe's wife, Rose, took care of the singing while also sprinkling in some dancing and playing of her own. The Moe children—son Lani, who was born in Japan, and daughter Dorian, born in India—played instruments, danced, sang, and were featured in a number of European films.

Lani, who died in 2002 at age 73, was something of a child star and became so popular in Germany that when he raised thousands of dollars for an orphanage charity through his performances, he was selected to ride in Hitler's car during a parade.

"It's all documented," Stagner says excitedly. "The whole thing is right out of 'The Sound of Music,' complete with a number of close calls with Nazi authorities." One came just as the family was opening a show. Friends warned them that the Gestapo had heard of Moe's efforts for his Jewish friends and had come to arrest him. That night, the family finished their act, took their encore, snuck out the theater's back door, and fled to the train station with the police only minutes behind.

Moe and his wife were almost caught a few years earlier while trying to smuggle their Austrian agent's possessions out

*Continued on Page 20*



of the country. Their friend had had to leave with nothing. So the couple hid some of her jewelry and other belongings in their car. And Moe's wife wore three fur coats—all of which belonged to their agent—to get the goods out and to their original owner. Moe's daughter said that when guards at the border asked Rose Moe why she was wearing more than one coat, she replied, "We come from Hawai'i and it's really cold here."

Dorian Moe said her father "tried to help them (his friends) as much as he could." "Sometimes you don't think and your life is in danger, but you do it," she said. Dorian, who has worked at the Polynesian Cultural Center for the past 21 years, was born after the family's stint in Hitler's Germany. But she grew up hearing about it.

One story she remembers occurred when the Moe family was living in an apartment above a Jewish bookstore. The Gestapo showed up at the home late one night, built a bonfire with the store's books and, when the blaze had reached its height, threw the store's Jewish owners atop the flames. The Moes watched, horrified and unable to help, as the entire scene unfolded.

"Sometimes you don't realize what's happening until it actually happens," Dorian Moe said. "Their lives in those days, my brother used to say, were scary." But Tau Moe, whose wife died five years ago at age 90, says he was never very worried for his family's safety during their stay in Nazi Germany.

Sometime in the early 1960s, when the Moe family was walking through a marketplace in Israel, Tau ran into one of the musicians he had helped escape Nazi Germany. Dorian Moe said of all the events of that day, she remembers most vividly her father's former colleague thanking him for passage out of the country more than two decades earlier.

"I don't care about anything else, but at least they remember," she said. "Sometimes a lot of people forget." ■

## E komo mai! Welcome, New Members

*Is your address and email correct? Please notify us!*

### AUSTRALIA

PETER WINKLER, P.O.Box 232 Fairfield, Sydney , NSW 1860 Australia

### COCO WIRE Continued from Page 18

music has influenced a "yearning for distant enchantment." She came to know Nancy's song "The Sound of the Islands" and asked permission to quote the lyrics. Of course, Nancy was happy to allow her that privilege.

Secondly, **Ayako Detwiler**, a Japanese-American artist and teacher of the Japanese stringed instrument known as the Taishokoto (something like an autoharp but played on a flat surface), also contacted Nancy asking permission to perform "The Sound of the Islands" at an upcoming concert at Blaisdell Exhibition Center. Nancy was happy to give permission for that, too.

Capping this sudden interest, Nancy and Vic received a letter from on-air personality, **Nancy Iwanicki**, broadcasting on WPKN in Bridgeport, Connecticut. She had interviewed a visiting Hawaiian entertainer who mentioned their music. This prompted her request for recordings for her programs. Nancy and Vic responded by sending three of their CDs, "Ukulele Tree," "Memories of Waikiki's Bandstands," and "Postcards From Hawai'i" containing 43 of their original songs. Since WPKN broadcasts reach several other nearby states, Nancy and Vic's Hawaiian and *hapa haole* songs should be warming the New England air by now! ■

### It's Dues Time Again!

*Remember, HSGA's membership year begins on July 1, 2004. Dues are now \$30; all issues go out 'Air Mail' (see the insert that was mailed along with this issue).*

### SOUND OF STEEL Cont. from Page 3

The future of steel guitar received support from the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association. Committed advocates and promoters of the instrument, the HSGA members hold an annual convention in Illinois—near Chicago during October—and have presented a *ho'olaule'a* (gathering) in Waikiki during odd-numbered years. The HSGA has funded scholarships and artists-in-schools programs, presented concerts, and conducted letter-writing campaigns urging greater use of steel guitar in Waikiki.

As for the future, who knows? Several instruments that were once popular among Hawaiian musicians—the mandolin, zither, violin—are now gone from that scene. If all goes well, the steel guitar will regain the prominence it once enjoyed. ■

*Herbert Hanawahine of Las Vegas plays a superb set at the Joliet 2003 Convention.*

