

HSGA QUARTERLY

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by the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association

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The Abrigo 'Ohana, Timi (left) on guitar, Quinn on percussion, and Emily on 'ukulele.

Jamming with the Abrigo 'Ohana

Haven't heard of Abrigo 'Ohana? That may change soon. Last fall Timi Abrigo began HSGA-sponsored steel lessons with Ronald Kanahele. And the Abrigo 'Ohana band has been highly visible of late around O'ahu's Waimea Valley, producing and performing at events featuring jam sessions for Hawaiian musicians. Here's the story, which we got from 'band mom' Lanet Abrigo.

The band was formed in 2005 when seven-year-old Emily Abrigo picked up the bass guitar to play with her 10-year-old brother Timi, who sings lead and plays 'ukulele. Add three-year-old Quinn on percussion, and like magic the little band was born.

Today, the Abrigo 'Ohana have immersed themselves in traditional

Hawaiian music including kiko'alu (slack key guitar), 'ukulele, falsetto vocals, pakini bass, and Hawaiian steel guitar. Focusing on the greats of Hawaiian music, they bring the old style back into the limelight. Together, these three young children face the future with the hope of perpetuating the music their ancestors left behind. Their music also blends in some classic rock and even a little reggae. The band recently performed at the Twenty-Sixth Annual Slack Key Festival.

You can hear home recordings Timi has made of the band on MySpace (www.myspace.com/abrigooohana). You can also hear Timi playing a cool version of "Moana Chimes" with Ronald Kanahele on YouTube. Just do a You-

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HSGA QUARTERLY

Volume 25, Issue 97



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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 LETTERS & EDITORIALS TO:

HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waioma'o Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424 USA. Our email address is hsga@hsga.org. Articles and photos should also be emailed directly to the newsletter editor at johnely@hawaiiansteel.com.

ABRIGO 'OHANA *Continued from Page 1*

Tube search using the phrase 'abrigo moana chimes'.

Lanet home schools the kids, makes their performance outfits, takes care of the busy household, and now provides 24-hour care to Tim, father of the kids, who is a mechanic and suffered an injury at work last February. Doctors expect Tim to recover, but they have no idea how long it will take.

Anyone who is in the area is invited to join the Abrigo 'Ohana for the monthly Waimea Valley Kanikapila (traditional Hawaiian jam) on the north shore of O'ahu. The kanikapila are held on the third Sunday of every month, 1-4 PM, and are *free* and open to the public. All ages and skill levels are welcome to participate. There will also be seating for guests who would like come and listen. The purpose of the event is to perpetuate the mele and honor the tradition in which it was passed on from generation to generation. Amplification will be provided, so bring your instrument cable if you would like to plug in. Sound check begins around noon.

Says Lanet Abrigo, "We hope that the kanikapila spread to other Hawaiian communities around the globe. There are so many Hawaiians (and Hawaiians at heart) who have had to move from Hawai'i for various reasons. The kanikapilas would bring everyone together to share in the music. This past Sunday's kanikapila had guests from as far away as Alaska and Washington! Thirty-seven musicians, all playing together; it was downright uplifting! Kamaka Tom was there, and we had six steel guitarists in attendance: Jack Aldrich, Earl Hughes, Kamaka Tom, Ron Johnson, Ron Kanahale, and Timi Abrigo. Others performed on 'ukulele, guitar, slack key guitar, bass, fiddle, percussion, and lots of singers."

You can go to the MySpace website cited above for the complete schedule and details. You can also share in forums on the group's Ning website at abrigooohana.ning.com. Videos of the band are posted there and HSGA members have already "weighed in."

Abrigo 'Ohana is sponsored by Hawaiian Moon Clothing (www.hawaiianmoon.com) and Waimea Valley (www.waimeavalley.net). ■

The Abrigo 'Ohana and some of the guest performers at the Waimea Valley Kanikapila. (Front row, l. to r.) Ron Kanahale, Quinn Abrigo, Lanet Abrigo, and Tim Abrigo (in wheel chair), Jade Louie, and Kamaka Tom. (Top row, left) Emily Abrigo and Timi Abrigo.



'STEEL the ONE' Kaua'i Jam

Here are Alan Akaka and Ed Punua to tell you about their newly launched 'STEEL the ONE!' steel guitar teaching initiative, which includes a series of classes and jam sessions on the island of Kaua'i. HSGA is providing scholarship assistance to support the effort. As many of you may know, Alan just launched his school of Hawaiian music called *Ke Kula Mele Hawai'i* (kekulamele.com).

Once a month at the Aston Kauai Beach on the shores of Makaiwa, Kaua'i, instructors and students of the 'STEEL the ONE!' program gather for the Kaua'i Jam along with family, friends and anybody else who just happens to drop by. Each jam session is filled with good 'ole music with the full compliment of steel guitars, guitar, 'ukulele, and bass along with hula and talk story.

The idea behind the event is to bring more exposure to the steel guitar and especially to give the students of 'STEEL the ONE!' ideas of what can be done with the steel as a solo and backup instrument. Another reason is to expose the youth to Hawaiian music with the steel guitar as the lead. The students were encouraged to join with their steels and a couple of them took the leap and jammed along with us. We want to thank the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association for the avid support of the 'STEEL the ONE!' program and the Aston Kauai Beach for hosting our classes and the Kaua'i Jam. ■

Lei Day 2010 Tentatively Set

Honolulu Coordinator Kamaka Tom advises members that HSGA is tentatively set to participate again at the Kapi'olani Park Lei Day celebration in Waikiki on Saturday, May 1, 2010. We'll have details in the spring newsletter. Members who would like to perform may contact him at 808-392-4583 or by email at gktom007@yahoo.com. Stay tuned.

A nice shot of the Abrigo 'Ohana jam session setup. Organized!



Alan Akaka (right) with Ed Punua demonstrating steel guitar at the 'STEEL the ONE' Kaua'i jam sessions sponsored by HSGA.

Joliet 2010 Announced

From Wally Pfeifer

We are pleased to announce that the 24th Annual Joliet Convention will be held on Thursday, October 7 through Saturday, October 9, 2010 at the Holiday Inn Joliet Convention-Conference Center located at 411 South Larkin Avenue in Joliet, Illinois.

As usual member performances are 9 AM to 4:30 PM daily. The program will also include seminars, special entertainment, and jam sessions for performers, collectors and lovers of Hawaiian steel guitars.

This year's Honored Guests direct from Hawai'i will be Casey Olsen and Hiram Olsen. [ED: If memory serves, this would be Casey's first appearance at a Joliet convention. Not to be missed!] Convention details will be published in the spring newsletter along with all the convention registration forms. If you wish to reserve a room now, you may do so. Just call the hotel at (815) 729-2000 and ask for the HSGA special rate.

The three-day convention package (not including the Saturday Night Lū'au) is \$25 per person. The single-day fee is \$10 per person. Ticket price for the Saturday lū'au and floorshow will be announced in the next newsletter.

As mentioned all the convention details will be laid out in the spring issue. But you can contact our Joliet Committee now for more information if you wish:

Don Weber, 205 William St., New Lenox, IL 60541, (815) 485-6765, weberdon@webtv.net.

Wally Pfeifer, 115 N Clinton St., Dwight IL 60420; (815) 351-2140, pfeiferw@comcast.net. ■

15 Nominees Slated For HSGA Board

It's time again, members, to vote for board members for the 2010-2012 term. The HSGA by-laws state that the maximum number of board members allowed is nine.

We asked all candidates to submit a brief summary of their history and qualifications. The stories of all the candidates who responded are included in this article. Using the ballot included with your newsletter, please review the 15 candidates and vote for the 9 names you wish to see on the Board. The top nine vote getters will make up the 2010-2012 Board. Instructions are on the ballot and to be counted ballots must be received by March 15.

All HSGA members and associate members are eligible to vote. Each newsletter contains one ballot. Associate members are allowed to make a copy of the ballot for voting purposes. Winners will be announced in the spring issue and officially take office on July 1, 2010. Send your completed ballot to: HSGA, 2434 Waioma'ō Road, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424.

Now, in no particular order, photos of all 15 nominees and the summaries submitted to us.

Mike Scott from Toronto, ON, Canada



Kamaka Tom

I am currently 57 years old and have been living in Honolulu since 1952. I have degrees in elementary education and Hawaiian studies from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I served as HSGA President from 2002-2008 and currently serve as assistant to the treasurer.

Since 2002 I have managed the HSGA office in Honolulu with my wife Luz. We are responsible for keeping membership payment and donation records, accounts management, and processing of general correspondence for the membership. I also assist by setting up regular board meetings.

I served as Honolulu convention coordinator for the 2007 and 2009 conventions. I am currently employed full time by the Honolulu municipal bus system. I am a part-time Hawaiian musician and steel guitarist. I have attended HSGA events regularly since the early 1980s and have attended and performed at all HSGA conventions from 2002 to 2009.

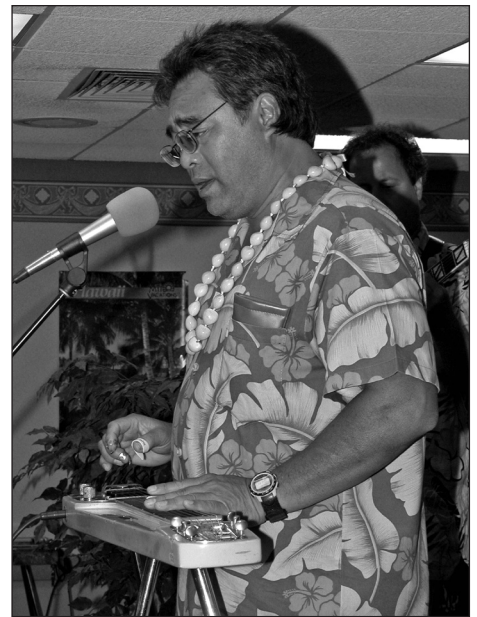
I would like to continue serving on the Board. I believe that I have qualifications that would allow me to contribute to maintaining HSGA as a viable, worthy organization that provides a valuable service to the community.

Mike Scott

I joined HSGA in 1980 but have been playing steel guitar since 1943. I served HSGA as membership committee chairman during the six years that Alan Akaka served as president.

I possess one of the world's largest collections of Hawaiian recordings and have dedicated much of my time and energy promoting interest in Hawaiian music.

Prior to emigrating to Canada I had my own Hawaiian group in England from 1949 until 1954. In Canada I formed the Hawaiianaires in 1955 and it still continues to operate today.



Kamaka Tom from Honolulu (Palolo)

Phil Bender

My background is in engineering, but I ran my own business and managed the department I worked in. I was an aircrew member on a gunship in Vietnam and was active in politics for a period of time. I have helped Don Fullmer for a couple of years with seminars for the two clubs we belong to, and I think I could bring a fresh perspective to the Board. I have organized a jam for the last 3 years, and they have been well received.

Phil Bender from Palmetto, Florida





Chris Kennison from Ft. Collins, Colorado

Chris Kennison

Aloha, all. I've been playing steel guitar since about 1983. Initially I started on pedal steel and then started playing Hawaiian steel about 15 years ago. I've been a member of HSGA since 1998. I lived in Hawai'i in 1972 through 1976 and programmed computers for the U.S. Naval Weather Service. While there I developed a deep appreciation and love of Hawaiian music. I learned slack key guitar while living there but never even thought about steel for some reason. I did hear Jerry Byrd play in Waikiki many times. I have been playing guitar for about 40 years and have performed for 30 years in bands and as a solo.

Currently I work in a few country bands on pedal steel and also in my own Hawaiian band called 'Book 'em Danno!'. During the day I manage a public radio station in Fort Collins, which is also a nonprofit corporation. I have a degree in computer science from Colorado State University and retired from the computer industry in 2005 to spend some time expanding my music and working in the community. I'm excited to have a chance to remain on the HSGA Board of Directors

and will work to support the mission of the organization and help it expand into the future.

Terry Miller

I spent nearly all of my life working in engineering and retired (for the third or fourth time) about seven years ago. I decided I needed more activities to occupy my spare time which amounted to music, fly fishing and boating.

It was at that time I rediscovered the wonderful world of the Hawaiian steel guitar after "hanging it up" more than 45 years prior. At the same time I heard of HSGA and decided to attend the 2003 convention in Joliet. The wonderful people I met and the great playing I heard convinced me I needed to return to playing and become more involved. I returned to Joliet in 2005 and have attended each convention since.

I have enjoyed serving on the Board of Directors for the past two years and am presently a member of the Scholarship Committee.

I live with my wife Verna in Vancouver, Washington, after having moved there from the East Coast in 2001. We escape the rain by spending winters in Southern California.

Terry Miller from Vancouver, Washington



Ivan Reddington from Lakeland, Florida

Ivan Reddington

I started playing steel when I was in the fourth grade. I studied under the O'ahu system in A tuning. Later on we studied E7th and C# Minor. After three courses on the steel, I took a course on the Spanish guitar and became the chord player in some groups because no one else would do it.

I had three different bands through my high school years and played for local dances and other social events in Western Nebraska. In 1955, I started college at St. Louis University and worked on weekends with a local group that played music in Callahan's Bar in Maplewood, Missouri. I got a degree in aeronautical engineering and a commission in the USAF and went on active duty in the summer of 1958 to USAF pilot training. While in the USAF, I played music with some of my instructors and we played for veterans homes and hospitals that were nearby. While on active duty, I had little time to play music so I gave it a rest.

In 1966, I got a position as pilot for American Airlines and was assigned to Washington National Airport (now Regan National). I met an operations

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clerk who played guitar so we played together for fun and company parties for a number of years. I finally discovered HSGA and joined the association and have been attending the conventions nearly every year since.

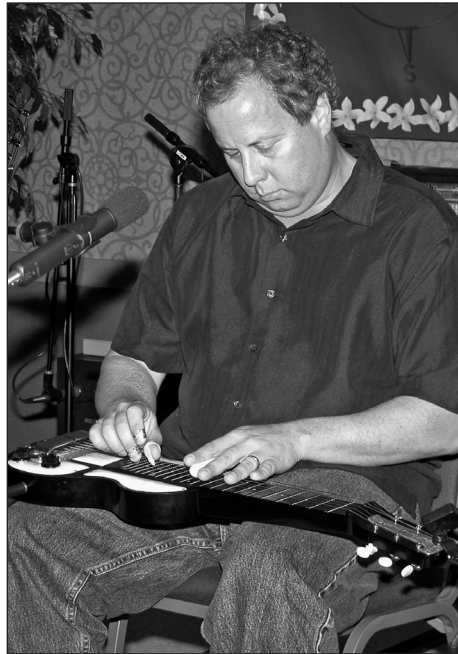
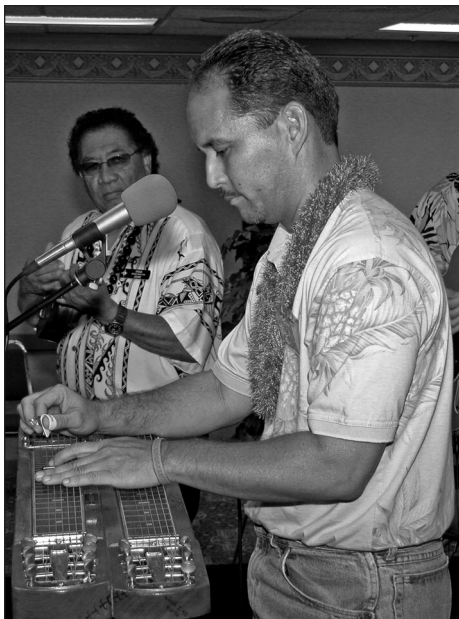
I have tried to promote the steel guitar at every opportunity and have tried to help others interested in learning. I hope we can prevent the death of lap steel playing and support those people willing to teach.

Paul Kim

I was born and raised on O‘ahu and grew up in Kailua. The first instrument that caught my interest was the ‘ukulele. I also loved to sing and while in high school, joined the youth and Hawaiian choir at my local church, St. Anthony’s in Kailua. This was the same church that Aunty Irmgard Aluli attended.

I started taking steel guitar lessons with Jerry Byrd in 1987 and learned for a full year how to tune, read music, everything that a steel guitarist would need to and should learn. This man was so knowledgeable about the “real” music business. He taught you every

Paul Kim from Kaneohe, Hawai‘i



Gerald Ross from Ann Arbor, Michigan

single thing you needed to know to become a great steel guitar player and also a great all-around musician.

The first place that I played on the professional scene was at the ‘Ihilani Hotel on the west side of O‘ahu. It was there I met a lot of the musicians in the local scene, notably Ocean Kaowili. He mentioned that my style of playing was similar to “Feet” Rogers. I told him I used the same tuning and that I loved his style as well as the traditional folk music that Eddie Kamae and the Sons of Hawai‘i played. He told me that he knew Eddie Kamae and that he could take me to meet him sometime. One night, Ocean told me to bring my steel to a gig in Mānoa. I agreed and showed up at the party, not realizing that it was actually to back up Eddie Kamae himself! Gradually I began to perform more and more with Eddie. In a nutshell that’s how I became a member of the Sons of Hawai‘i. I didn’t know for sure, though, until I was given my own palaka shirt!

It is amazing to see the passion that HSGA members have for our beautiful instrument. As HSGA President, I want to thank everyone for their part in making this association a successful one. I

am honored to be a part of the mission to perpetuate this wonderful instrument for future generations to enjoy.

Gerald Ross

I have been an HSGA member since 1998 and served on the HSGA Board of Directors during the 2000-2006 term. I am currently the HSGA webmaster. I play Hawaiian steel guitar, guitar and ‘ukulele and have released four CDs featuring Hawaiian, blues, jazz and swing music.

I feel that for the HSGA to survive we must attract new and more musically diverse members. By musically diverse, I mean steel guitarists and musicians who are not exclusively Hawaiian steel guitarists or Hawaiian-style musicians. This will accomplish many positive things. One, our current membership will be introduced to new sounds that perhaps they can incorporate into their musical palettes. Two, we can educate and expose the new members to the beauty of our music. This will accomplish our goal of promoting the Hawaiian steel guitar and it’s music. Three, our membership numbers will increase insuring the longevity of HSGA and the continuity of our yearly conventions.

Frank Della-Penna from Washington, DC





Jeff Strouse from Jacksonville, Florida

Jeff Strouse

I have always been fascinated by the sound of the steel guitar. I finally got to attend my first HSGA convention in 2003. I've met many good friends and wonderful people through the club; HSGA is special and I enjoy being part of it. It would be an honor to serve the club as a board member.

Ian Ufton

Born in England in 1940 to the sound of Herr Hitler's bombers overhead, I was greatly relieved when my father returned from his "tour of duty" in North Africa, replacing the drone of aircraft engines with the sounds of Hawaiian music. As most of you know, the music produced by the early, great steel guitar players like Sol Ho'opi'i and Dick McIntire never leaves you. It's good music in any era and will always be good!

Well, along came rock 'n' roll and after mastering the steel guitar by age 11 (it's such a simple instrument), I picked up the plectrum guitar determined to dethrone Elvis et al at the ripe old age of 16. I got a little stupid and decided to take *real* guitar lessons from a member of my father's band who had played with Felix Mendelssohn's band.

I learned to read in the key of C, one flat and one sharp, and then figured the rest out myself (I think). Voila! I was employed as a big band guitarist.

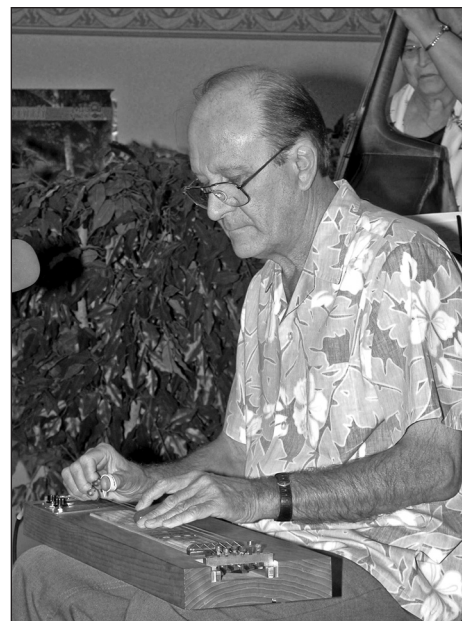
After a somewhat volatile period as a professional musician, I emigrated to Canada in 1966. My whole family had gone there in 1965.

Always with the magical sounds of Sol Ho'opi'i, Dick McIntire, Jules Ah See, and Rudi Wairata in my head, I returned to the steel, built my own pedal steel guitar, and finally produced two albums in 1988 and 1993. They made me "filthy rich" as you are all aware, and so I would like to offer my services "free of charge" as an HSGA board member.

Dave Giegerich

I have been playing steel guitar and dobro for over 30 years. In the early 1970s I was a fan of the dobro playing of slide guitar master Duane Allman, and when I saw a Tut Taylor record featuring dobro instrumentals I bought it and immediately fell in love with the sound of the instrument played lap style. I took an old guitar and, using a pencil to raise the strings, started learning the instrument. Soon after that I bought a real dobro and played blue-

Ian Ufton from Brampton, ON, Canada



Dave Giegerich from Ellicott City, MD

grass and country music for the next ten years or so.

My interest in Hawaiian music was sparked by the reissue of several records in the mid-'70s featuring the playing of Sol Ho'opi'i, Jim and Bob and other steel players from the '20s and '30s. I learned a couple of tunes and licks but didn't start seriously playing Hawaiian style until I took some ethnomusicology classes from Dr. Mantle Hood in the mid 1980s. He knew Jerry Byrd and gave me some of Jerry's tablature. I borrowed a lap steel and took some independent study classes in Hawaiian guitar, learning tunes like "Sand" and "Paradise Isle" and getting college credits for it!

In 1988 I formed The Hula Monsters, who play a mix of Hawaiian and other styles. We play clubs, concerts and weddings, often backing up hula dancers. The band has won the Washington Area Music Association's WAMMIE award for Best World Music Band numerous times.

Since joining HSGA I've had the pleasure of meeting and listening to many outstanding steel players at the Joliet convention, and I'm honored to be nominated for the Board.

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Dave Kolars

I was born in 1945 and grew up on a farm in North Central Kansas. I graduated from Kansas State University in 1967 with a B.A. in English. I've been playing guitar since about 1964 and took up the dobro in about 1972. I've lived in the DeKalb-Sycamore, Illinois area since 1967, joined HSGA in 2004, and started playing steel in 2005.

In the early '70s, I played guitar and dobro with the Pleasant Street String Band. We performed at clubs and festivals around Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Missouri, teaming up with Vassar Clements whenever he was in the area. I've played in three or four other bands over the years, playing at local clubs as well as regional festivals.

I've worked at various jobs over the years, including groundskeeping, food service, mechanic, and running a coffeehouse-restaurant in the mid-'70s in DeKalb. During that period I helped to start the Duck Soup Coop, a nonprofit food coop that is still thriving, and served on the Board twice in following years. I also served on the Board of Directors of the DeKalb County Lamb and Wool Producers in the mid-'80s for

Dave Kolars from DeKalb, Illinois



a three-year term. In 1995, I was one of the founders of the Northern Illinois Bluegrass Association (NIBA) and ran it for six years, published the monthly newsletter, and promoted three bluegrass festivals during that time. I worked with three other festival promoters as well as several other associations promoting bluegrass in a four-state area. The NIBA is still running strong with over 450 members.

In 2001, I retired from Northern Illinois University, where I was a computer support specialist. I handled state bid specifications and awarded bids for warehouse resale stock, maintained over 30 computers on three networks, and wrote programs for warehouse management. I now play in four groups, do woodworking, and build 'ukuleles and guitars as well as collect, repair and sell used instruments.

I would love to see HSGA grow and share the beauty of the steel guitar. I have many years of experience serving on boards, doing promotion and publicity, as well as the knowledge that comes with being both a promoter and a performer. With promotion, HSGA can grow and attract new members. I'd like to be a part of that!

Pete Kahele

I was born in Waimanalo, O'ahu and later grew up in the Kapahulu-Waikiki district. I graduated from Kaimuki High School and enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, serving in Vietnam, Thailand, and the Phillipines.

I graduated from Northrop Institute of Technology in Inglewood and eventually worked as senior consumer electronics buyer, responsible for 22 million in sales for a ten-store chain. I'm married to my high school sweetheart and we have three children.

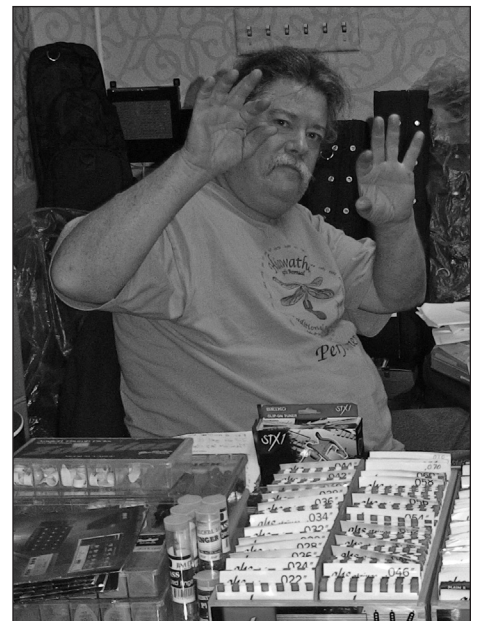
I got involved with the steel guitar about 15 years ago and am self-taught. I'm very active in the Hawaiian community playing weekly at a Hawaiian restaurant in Gardena. I am a member of "Da Hawaii Club of Cerritos" and



Pete Kahele from Cerritos, California

advisor to the Southern Ukulele Festival where I chaired the steel guitar and slack key workshops. I perform annually with three or four groups at our Ho'olaulea in Gardena and E Hulu Mau Hula Competition at the Performing Arts Theatre in Long Beach. I performed for the film premier of Lilo and Stitch, as well as at El Capitan Theater performing nine shows a day for three weeks—all of this to perpetuate "all of our aloha for the steel guitar." ■

John Hatton from Lansing, Michigan



Haw'n Music On Paris Radio

From Les Cook of Grass Skirt Records

On January 3, 2010 at midnight Hawaiian music was to be heard on the Parisian airwaves, when H el ene Hazera devoted her hour-long show "Boum-Boum" to Gino Bordin and Cyril LeFebvre. H el ene had invited Cyril on to her show to talk about Gino and play some songs from our recent Grass Skirt CD release, "Gino Bordin, Virtuose de la Guitare Hawa ienne." She also persuaded him to take along his slide and beloved old 1920s National Duolian guitar to perform some tunes himself.

Back in the 1930s Bordin was a regular on radio stations in Paris and other French cities and he even had his own show for Radio-Cit e. He was the premier Hawaiian steel guitar player in France and largely responsible for popularizing the instrument there. Recently he was elected to the European Steel Guitar Hall of Fame. His friendship with Mario Maccaferri led to the development of the "mod le hawa ien" version of the Selmer guitar in both 6- and 7-string varieties and almost all the songs on the CD were played on such an instrument. Later, in 1936, Gino adopted an electric 7-string National steel guitar and was one of the earliest European players to plug in.

Cyril is widely regarded as the leading expert on Hawaiian music in France and on Bordin in particular, and has been well known for his own guitar playing since his 1970s records and as a founding member of the Ukul el e Club de Paris. Today he is largely responsible for the growing popularity of the 'ukulele in his country.

To begin with, we were treated to Cyril playing a quite splendid version of "Moana Chimes" on his National guitar. Cyril then talked about Gino's career and his musical colleagues like the Russian born Boris Sarbeck, guitarist and close friend Alex Manara, and also vocalists such as Guy Berry and notably Tino Rossi. All told five tracks from the Bordin Grass Skirt CD were played, including the tango "Je n'ai plus personne," a march "Retour d'Hawa ii," the Sarbeck melody "Manuska," and "J' coute la guitare," the latter a hit tune performed by many French musicians in the mid-1930s and a good example of that French musical creation, the valse hawa ienne!

Listeners were given a short history of Hawaiian music in France, an introduction to the story of the fascinating commune of Hawaiians in Paris before World War II, the influence of Frank Ferera's records and history of the steel guitar and 'ukulele. Cyril played a few other tunes, with typical Parisian panache, including "Maria Helena" and Jelly Roll Morton's "Winin' Boy." He spoke about other projects he has been working on recently such as his 'ukulele books, a 2-book set with accompanying CD, Ukul el e la



A signed promo shot of French virtuoso steel guitarist Gino Bordin with his 1936 model National 7-string electric (1942).

M ethode and le Dico; and producing the soundtrack for last summer's Tarzan exhibition at the Quai Branly Museum in Paris. He spoke also of his other love, the blues, and his collection of Hawaiian shirts!

Our first two Grass Skirt releases by Sam Ku West and Sol Ho'opi'i have been pretty successful and we're hoping for similar things with Gino Bordin. Like many other musicians he had been largely forgotten, even in his adopted home country, and we'd like to think we're doing something to help put that right. These reissue projects of ours seem to take up to two years to see through, and now we've started to think about a fourth one. Maybe Sol K. Bright or Tau Moe or perhaps the Buenos Aires duo "Les Loups." Or maybe readers have another overlooked favorite from the acoustic steel era who they would like to see receive the Grass Skirt treatment. If so be sure to let us know! [ED: You can email Les at order@grassskirt.co.uk. Check out the Grass Skirt website at www.grassskirt.co.uk.] ■

Members, Don't Forget to Vote!

*Yes, it's time to elect your Board of Directors for the 2010-2012 term. **Regular and Associate members are allowed to vote.** Just mark the ballot included with your Quarterly, sign it, and return it to our office before March 15.*

My Island Paradise

(Webley Edwards – Leon Pober – W.H. Miller)

Ballad – C6th Tuning

Arrangement by John Ely

Vs

My Is - land Pa - ra - dise A - cross the sea, My Is - land

slide, let open note ring strum (thumb)

Pa - ra - dise is call - ing me. The sound of

slide

soft gui - tars, the scent of spice be - neath a

slide, let open note ring

mil - lion stars my pa - ra - dise. The waves up -

slide

Listen to audio version, if available, at: www.hsga.org/Lessons/QuarterlyAudio.html

Br

17 **D** **G#** **A**

on the shore _____ whis - per their song. _____ They say "Re -

7 9 9 7 4 9 9 4 2 3 4 4 6 4 4 6

slide then pick

21 **B7** **E dim** **E7**

turn once more _____ where you be - long. _____ Re - turn to

9 11 11 9 11 9 0 10 11 0 0 0 7 8 8 8 8

slide *slide then pick*

25 **A** **A7** **D** **B7**

pa - ra - dise _____ a - cross the sea." _____ My _____ Is - land

0 0 9 5 5 5 5 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 5 6 7 9 9 9

slide, let open note ring *strum (thumb)*

29 **E7** **A** **F** **A**

Pa - ra - dise _____ is call - ing me. _____

4 3 4 4 9 7 9 5 5 5 9 21 21 21 21

slide *rit.* *strum (thumb)* *strum then gliss*

Lorene Ruymar's Steel Guitar Course

Here's Lorene Ruymar to kick off our newsletter series on currently available steel guitar courses. For details on the course, please go to her website (members.shaw.ca/steelguitar).

I wrote my instruction course in the year 2000 designed for use in Hawaiian music classrooms. For that reason, it begins at absolute zero, and I teach with an easy-going, clear, often humorous speech, thinking that the students might be studying the pages, each one going at his or her own pace.

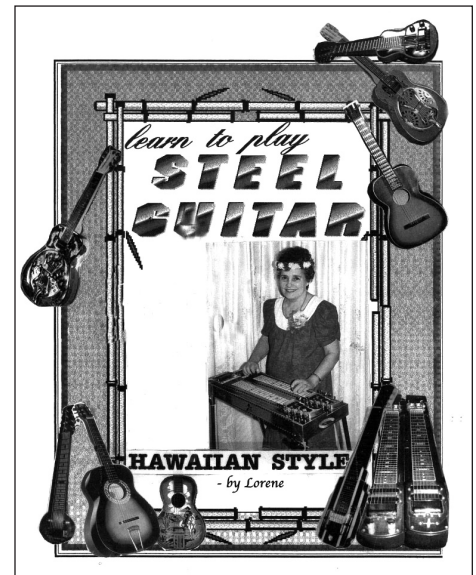
What moved me to do this? Well, I taught in the Vancouver public school system for 18 years as music specialist and band director. Each class in those days had up to 38 kids, and the school board was generous in supplying me with guitars and 'ukuleles. The kids learned to read the notes of the C scale in grade 4 by playing recorders, learned to play the 'ukulele in grades 5 and 6, and were given the chance to switch to guitars in grade 7 or stay on 'ukulele. They didn't just strum and sing—they read notation and played melodies. I led the class on a big acoustic bass. The kids loved it and so did I. In the middle of a band concert, they'd put down their horns, pick up their 'ukuleles, and sing a couple. I directed them with my steel guitar. The parents loved it. So did the school board.

So when I see instruction courses on the market teaching tablature, I wonder why. We send our 6-year-old to take piano lessons and she learns to read both treble and bass clef and how to manage all 10 fingers. In the classes I taught, there were the bright kids and the not-so-bright. But we all played together. So there's no way this old school teacher could possibly design an instruction course except in the good old-fashioned way. I believe it's the only one on the market. After completing the 30 lessons of my course, a student can learn to read tablature in

five minutes and have the best of both worlds. It's very important, too. To read and play a Jerry Byrd tab arrangement is priceless! But if we don't teach note reading, who will write the tab in the next generation?

My other "weird" tactic was to teach in the tuning used by the very first steel guitarists, the A Major low bass tuning. Why? Because it's the easiest, simplest tuning. It's the grandfather tuning, which leads so easily to the professional tunings used in Hawai'i, like C6, E13, B11 or A6. It's also closely related to the Spanish guitar tuning. Compare Spanish guitar (EBGDAE) to A Major low bass (EC#AEAE). Do you see the three strings that are tuned the same? Why do I favor the low bass over the high bass? Because the students can strum and sing as well as play melody with it. No other tuning allows that, except G Major low bass. [ED: It's worth noting that G Major low bass or high bass also share 3 strings in common with the Spanish guitar tuning—the ones not shared by the A Major low bass!]

On the mainland, the G Major tuning—either low or high bass—is the popular tuning among blues, bluegrass, and folk musicians. The banjo is tuned to G Major, so perhaps it was easier for banjo players to double on steel or dobro tuned to G Major. It's a good tuning too, just as easy as the A Major low bass. But, it does not lead easily to C6, E13, B11, or A6. They call it the taropatch tuning to give it authenticity. Yeah, but that's a slack key and 'ukulele tuning name. This is a steel guitar. Where do you suppose Joseph Kekuku got the A Major idea from? Well, maybe the teachers at Kamehameha School suggested it, taking the strings off a Spanish guitar. But I understand they gave piano strings to young Joseph for his new guitar. The metal strings sounded much better with a steel bar than the catgut strings of old.



My course has 90 songs in it divided into 30 lessons. Half of the songs are Hawaiian traditionals. In the last few lessons I show the student how the great professional tunings like C6, E13 or B11 are played. The student can choose to either stay with A Major forever, or switch to a more intricate tuning and get back to work learning to play it. Knowing music theory, they don't need to buy another course to go onto one of those tunings.

I know my website says the course consists of a 240-page instruction book plus two DVDs. That is not correct. There are three 7-hour DVDs in the course. Yes, dual layer burned in PAL or NTSC. The camera is focused on my hands as I play every song in the book, slowly enough that the student can play along. The student can watch how I handle the bar and hear me talk about technique. My poor hubby, Art, got stuck with playing rhythm guitar to all this, *plus* managing the camcorder. They say nothing sells these days unless it has sex and violence in it. We got the violence going pretty well. The recording work took all winter.

The first DVD (Lessons 1-10) has a rather lengthy introduction. The other two DVDs with lessons 11-20 and lessons 21-30 each close with almost an hour of stage performances with the

Continued on Page 20

Tokyo's NUA Offering Steel Guitar Classes

From HSGA Japan Coordinator, Tom Tohma

This past fall, the Japan Ukulele Association (NUA) launched a steel guitar class with 18 novice students. You see, NUA member Masami Kobayashi had been shopping for steel guitars on the Internet with a possible steel guitar class in mind. Well, he found a very good deal on 20 steel guitars made in China. He quickly contacted the seller, and issued a notice to NUA members, hoping for a class of around eight to be admitted on a first come, first served basis. It turned out that he had to rush to buy all 20 guitars since 18 candidates signed up the first day the notice was made. Masami said with great surprise that he did not realize that NUA members had such an interest in learning to play Hawaiian steel guitar.

NUA was established in June 1959 by Harry Haida, a first-generation Japanese-Hawaiian, who came to Japan in 1929 with his younger brother Katsuhiko and organized the first Hawaiian music band in Japan, the Moana Glee Club. Harry was a steel guitar player and Katsuhiko was a great singer who thereafter became a movie star in Japan.

Since both Eddie Kamae and Herbert Ohta helped NUA launch in 1959, they were the distinguished guests at its 50th anniversary celebration held last June.

Currently NUA has about 300 members, mainly residents of greater Tokyo, and they get together for a "ukulele party" on monthly basis. Its key members have performed



The newly launched steel guitar class for NUA members in Tokyo.

quite often at Roy Sakuma's Annual Ukulele Festival in Hawai'i and they are now planning on performing again at the 2010 event.

After time-consuming preparation, Masami Kobayashi has just published a 54-page steel guitar instruction book for beginners entitled "Basic C6th Lap Steel Guitar Method," which will be used for the NUA steel guitar class. Masami says that students who aspire to greater steel guitar skill will be referred to professional players for private lessons. ■

Uke News

From Gerald Ross

It was a busy year for me with the release of my new CD "Ukulele Hit Parade" and appearances [at the Texas Steel Guitar show in Dallas, the HSGA convention in Joliet, the AISGC convention in Winchester, Indiana and numerous ukulele festivals around the U.S. and Canada.]

Now, news about my free virtual CD! In August 2009, my family rented a beach house for a week on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan at Sturgeon Bay. I packed my Talsma tenor 'ukulele and my portable Zoom digital recorder.

My plan was to record solo 'ukulele songs using traditional 1920-1950s recording techniques. I've always admired the musicians of that era and their ability to go into the studio and play a song from start to finish flawlessly, starting over if they made a mistake. Here's what I did:

My "studio" was an upstairs bedroom with a panoramic view of Lake Michigan. At 7 AM Monday-Friday, I recorded 12 songs in sequence. I recorded each song once (and only once) during that day's session. If wasn't happy with my performance or made a mistake during the cut, I would not record a retake until the next day's session.

You can listen to Gerald's virtual CD cost-free at his website (www.geraldross.com). ■

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Gage Brewer – Wichita’s Electric Guitar Pioneer

From Eric Cale, Director of the Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum

Until recently it went unrecognized that an unassuming Midwestern city gave rise to the twentieth century’s most remarkable musical instrument, the electric guitar. In the summer of 1932 an enterprising guitarist, orchestra leader and music educator from Wichita, Kansas named Gage Brewer made a trip to California and acquired the first electric guitars from their inventor, George Beauchamp, and whisked them to Wichita for a triumphal debut through a series of Halloween performances. It would take several years for the instrument to catch on, but Brewer proceeded through a career spanning five decades prominently featuring the instrument.

Who gave us the first electric guitar? The invention of the twentieth century’s most amazing musical instrument has been attributed to everyone from George Breed to Lloyd Loar to Les Paul. Even experts wave the question off as impossible to answer, insisting that, since many were attempting to amplify the guitar, no one person can take credit for the invention. So far, none of these responses are ultimately satisfactory. But there is a quantifiable answer to this question, if one defines what an electric guitar is. By the concept to which we’ve become accustomed: a standard-Spanish style instrument with a visible electro-magnetic string driven pick-up (or pick-ups) mounted to the top and next to the strings which sends a signal to an amplifier and speaker for increased volume. The fact is, only one candidate qualifies as the first: the Ro-Pat-In Electro Spanish guitar, companion to the company’s better known Hawaiian guitar, often referred to as the “Frypan.” Its inventor, George Beauchamp, not only spent many months developing the instrument but began to market it concurrently with the “Frypan” in the fall of 1932. Beauchamp is to the electric guitar as Alexander Graham Bell is to the telephone or the Wright Brothers, to the airplane. So once it came to existence, who was the first to publicly feature and unveil the instrument?

Like so much else having to do with the obscure origins of the electric guitar, the name of Gage Brewer had slipped into the foggy past. Brewer is not easily researched; in spite of being well connected to the music world, Brewer never recorded a record, published a hit song or performed at any length as part of a nationally recognized organization. It seems, however, Brewer knew a good thing when he saw it and he acquired two pre-production electrics from Beauchamp. The problem is that he simply wasn’t working in the right place at the right time. Brewer, one of the very few



A promo shot of Gage K. Brewer’s Hawaiian Entertainers circa 1930. Gage is seated playing what looks like a National Tri-cone. Missing from the photo is the celebrated Solomon M. Kaiawe.

orchestra leaders to use the guitar as his primary instrument, reigned as an electric guitar god during 1932 and 1933. There was, practically speaking, no competition.

Gage Brewer was born in 1904 in Gage, Oklahoma Territory near the Panhandle region, which had been recently divided from Indian Territory and opened for settlement. The place was a sparsely populated expanse representative of the last of the old west, a frontier to which many of the nation’s indigenous tribes had been banished. Five hundred miles away, this same year, Hawaiian music featuring the guitar would gain important public exposure at the St. Louis World’s Fair. This music inspired musicians across the continent and eventually worldwide. Its influence on the music of the mainland would be profound through mid-century. Even as a child out in the hills of Oklahoma, Brewer became captivated by what his business card later described as “that music of weird character and irresistible charm.”

By about 1918, 14-year-old Gage was entertaining the people of Shattuck, Oklahoma just five miles down the road from his birthplace, giving lessons and working in the theater. Driven by a love of Hawaiian music and its primary instrument, Gage soon enjoyed a following and would perform throughout the area where sometimes, for the lack of a dance hall, local auto dealerships would move their cars and hold dances on lots and in the showrooms.

Talent and popularity soon compelled the young guitarist to seek instruction at the foot of the masters, so he traveled to California in 1920 for the first of many visits. There he studied with Victor recording artist, Sam P. Moore, who was a well-known artist of the Hawaiian-style guitar and also known for his abilities with the singing saw. Moore was one

of the earliest mainlanders to apply the Hawaiian style of playing to more traditional American folk songs foreshadowing the instrument's prominence in country music. While in California [according to "Who's Who in the World of Music - 1936"], Brewer also studied under Sol Ho'opi'i, Jack Miller, and D. S. Delano; all three, musicians of extraordinary significance. Brewer's formal musical education continued when he returned to the Midwest and attended Northwestern Oklahoma Teachers College in Alva. Gage's lesser known teachers included William Kelonia, Edward Marconi and Sailor Puella. At about this time Brewer also began working the Vaudeville, Lyceum and Chautauqua circuits.

By the mid-1920s Brewer had relocated to Wichita, Kansas, where he would establish his home base. Wichita, centered between Kansas City on the east, Denver on the west, Omaha to the north and Oklahoma City to the south, was a remote but vital outpost and fast becoming known as the nation's air capital, home to many of the pioneering airplane manufacturers. From Wichita he began touring with his own orchestra and, not one to miss an opportunity presented by new technology, Brewer endeavored to add radio broadcasts of his performances to further promote his work. Stations responding to his advances included KFXL, KOA and KVOB in Denver, KFUM in Colorado Springs, KSL in Salt Lake City, KFAB in Lincoln, Nebraska, WOW in Omaha, KOIL in Council Bluffs, Iowa, KVOO in Tulsa, KFBI in Abilene, as well as KFI in Los Angeles. He gained a solid local following, broadcasting regularly with his own show on Wichita's KFH. At this point his orchestra's name was changed from Gage Brewer's Hawaiian Entertainers to the Gage Brewer Versatile Radio Orchestra.

Brewer's group could range from an agile three-piece consisting of Spanish guitar, Hawaiian guitar and 'ukulele, to a much larger assemblage including piano and xylophone. At some point during this time, Gage returned to Wichita in the company of a Polynesian gentleman by the name of Solomon M. "Mose" Kaiawe, known as "the famous Hawaiian Baritone." Kaiawe, also a fine 'ukulele and guitar player, had recorded for Victor and was a most exotic and celebrated presence in Wichita, adding authenticity to Gage Brewer's outfit. (Sadly, Kaiawe died in a late night automobile accident in 1931 on his way back to Wichita from Newton, Kansas.)

Brewer proved to be an enduring and entrepreneurial figure. Between teaching students in his home under the name 'The Hawaiian Conservatory of Music', performing, and promoting his own music to publishers, Brewer had as much work as he could handle. It was during this time that Brewer established many professional relationships with other performers, notably the "King of the Strings," Nick Lucas who would one day inscribe the following on a pho-



Gage Brewer standing next to his wife with pupils at his Hawaiian Conservatory of Music in Wichita (photo taken around 1930).

tograph of the two of them seated at Brewer's Club: 'To my Pal Gage - Nick Lucas'.

In the late 1920s, Brewer's group traded in their Martin guitars and Gibson bass mandolin for National resonator guitars. By about 1930 he was performing with his own National Tri-cone, with 'GAGE BREWER' custom engraved on the side. It's not known exactly when Brewer first met George Beauchamp, then a principal and founder of National Resonator Guitars, but this special National Tri-cone order would have very likely put Brewer in direct contact with him. It is more likely that their acquaintance was made years earlier, perhaps through Jack Miller, Gage's early mentor. The Tri-cone purchase soon led to Brewer's patronage of Beauchamp's new product, the electric guitar, made available through what would become the world's first electric musical instrument company: Ro-Pat-In, later and more famously known as Rickenbacker.

It was during the summer of 1932 that Brewer took possession of two of the earliest electric guitars made by Beauchamp. When he returned to Wichita he contacted the local newspaper about his marvelous acquisitions. The story ran in the October 2, 1932 edition of the Wichita Beacon announcing that the old guitar had been replaced with the new electric. The photograph published with the story shows Brewer smiling, holding an aluminum knobless A-25 Electro Hawaiian guitar atop his "now obsolete" custom engraved National Tri-cone, which is perched atop an Electro amplifier and speaker unit. The article goes on to say that Brewer was only the third person to play the amazing instrument (George Beauchamp, an accomplished guitarist himself, and Jack Miller, his friend presumably being the predecessors). With this, Brewer gets credit for being the first to publicly feature the instrument. A press release, promoting a series of Halloween concerts at a roadhouse on the south end of

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Steelin' in Japan

By Isaac "Doc" Akuna

It is no surprise that some of HSGA's most enthusiastic support comes to us from the Land of the Rising Sun. For many years the people of Japan have held a strong interest in the music, dance, and culture of Hawai'i.

Over the years, many steel guitarists from Hawai'i have had the opportunity to perform there. For the last five years or so I have had the good fortune of being able to accompany Ms. Kuuipo Kumukahi as her steel guitarist. "Ipo-chan" is a multiple Nā Hōkū Hanohano award-winning vocalist, and she performs full time throughout the islands. She has made the trek to Japan many times while maintaining a loyal group of fans in that country. Most recently, she has worked very closely with Ms. Karen Aiu, *kumu hula* (instructor). In addition to leading her own *halau* (dance company) in Hawai'i, Karen maintains a close working relationship with several hula *halau* in Japan, and as a result, she will engage Kuuipo to provide live musical accompaniment at their *Ho'ike* (recitals).

I have made nearly a dozen trips to Japan with Ipo, including four trips last year to Osaka, Sapporo, Tokyo, and Shizuoka. It's a long trip over and there's some immigration red tape to navigate, but overall it's a good cultural exchange and for me a chance to see something outside my own limited circle of experiences.

Japanese women are particularly fond of the hula and so they study it over here in Hawai'i, but also will import instructors to teach over in Japan. It is believed that there are upwards of one million hula practitioners in Japan. That's where the groups from Hawai'i come in because the dancers over there, particularly the most experienced instructors, want to have live musicians from Hawai'i singing and back-

French steel player Gino Bordin in the 1960s (see page 9 story).



A nice shot of the Japan touring band: (l. to r.) Danny Kiaha, Joey Winchester (?), Karen Aiu, Isaac Akuna, and Ku'uipo Kumukahi.

ing them up, and they are willing to bring in what they perceive to be top talent. While the entire show might go four to six hours long, the live musicians only perform the last hour, if that. For the earlier hours of the show they use CDs to backup their girls. But it's a very big deal for them to have live Hawaiians singing behind them.

The scope of these stage performances is rather impressive. Since these dance companies are very large—membership at each one of these individual *halau* often exceed 2000—the theaters that host these shows must be able to accommodate a few thousand attendees. At a recent show I played in Okayama, they had 800 dancers for a 4-hour show. They have a few thousand in that group, which is part of a larger group that started in Osaka and has since spread to several other cities.

Our hosts in Japan are very gracious and generous. They provide accommodations in some of the nicest hotels in Japan, absolutely first rate. Everyone who returns from Japan is always raving about the kindness of the people and... *the food*. It's true. The dining experiences in Japan have been among the most memorable.

Above all, I can say that we have enjoyed the hospitality and generosity of people who are very appreciative of our performances. ■

HSGA Donations

Yes, times are tight and members are tightening their belts. Job one is getting through these hard times!

Special thanks to two donors who really came through for us: **Dr. John W. Aldrich** of Seattle gave a phenomenal \$500 to our General Fund! Mahalo, John. In addition Board member **Capt. Ivan L. Reddington** gave \$170 to our Scholarship Fund. Many, many thanks for these generous donations.

COCO WIRE

For those of you who haven't heard, you can listen to traditional Hawaiian music on **Harry B. Soria's** radio show "Territorial Airwaves" on demand 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To access the shows, look for the Territorial Airwaves clickable item in the right sidebar at hawaiian105.com or www.am940hawaii.com. There's a new show every week, and you can access shows from the previous two weeks. Hawai'i members can listen to the show live on AM-940 or at www.am940hawaii.com.

Apropos, **Lorene Ruymar** just got an interesting email from Scotty's son **Michael Scott**. He manages an Internet radio show featuring all steel guitar music. Very hot tip! Just go to steelradio.com. Email him at steelradio@scottysmusic.com for more information.

On the China front, Lorene's protégé, **Haijing** from Shanghai reports: "Hello, Mrs. Ruymar! On the 27th of the month I'm take part in a concert at Sichuan Agriculture University. The concert is for a indoor band. Most of the songs are classical music. It's the first time I was invited putting on a show. I played the song called "El Bimbo" with a piano, a drum, and 6 violin. While I was stand on the stage, my feeling can describe as: enjoyable. It's also the first time for most audience to hear the sound made by steel guitar. What made me most excited is this song bring the atmosphere in the hall to the top! Thank you very much. Without your help I couldn't play the steel guitar like today, and couldn't get to know the students who love classical music in that school. 2010 is on the corner. Happy New Year!"

Another nice vintage shot of Dusty Nall playing steel guitar during the war years with his "hillbilly and western" band, the Jubileers.



Kay Das demonstrating how to play electric guitar Hawaiian style at Joliet, pictured here with Gerald Ross and Barb Kuhns.

Hot news from the Recording Academy. "Masters of Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar, Vol. 2" has been nominated for a Grammy this year. It's the fifth compilation of live recordings from the Masters of Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar Concert Series on Maui. Once again, our own **Bobby Ingano** is featured on steel guitar. Go, Bobby!

The annual Hawai'i Music Awards sponsored by Johnny Kai feature two nominees in the Steel Guitar category: **Kay Das** with his CD, "The Plumeria Journey," which takes the listener on a musical journey starting from Hawai'i and ending in Europe with several stops "to smell the flowers"; and **Gerald Ross** with his CD, "Ukulele Hit Parade." Although 'ukulele is featured, there is enough steel guitar on the CD to merit a nomination in the Steel Guitar category. Look for news on the results in the spring newsletter. Writes **Duke Ching**, "Congratulations to Gerald and Kay for their participation in the HMAs. I will vote for the both of them. Good lick and good luck!" By the way, Duke has just rolled out his new website (www.DukesHawaiianMusic.com) with lots of audio taken from his various recordings.

Karen Nall, daughter of now departed **Dusty Nall**, informed us that she has created a website in honor of her father at www.dustynall.com. Says Karen, "Please pass this on to anyone who knew him." (See the Closing Notes feature we did on Dusty in the Summer 2008 issue.) ■

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The Chanos International Steel Guitar Festival

Just as the world of Hawaiian music tends to be “Hawai’i-centric” so the greater steel guitar world tends to be America-centric (Hawai’i included). The Chanos International Steel Guitar Festival represents the attempt to create some serious steel guitar focus in Europe, something I’m sure our European friends have been waiting for, for quite some time. Here’s U.K. steel guitarist Digby Hardy to tell you the story. He has an interesting take on the special challenges facing European steel guitar players.

This past year’s Chanos International Steel Guitar Festival [CISGF], held in Chanos-Curson, France, was a significant step up from its inaugural event in 2008. Attendance for 2009 was way up. We seem to be on our way to achieving our aim of creating the first yearly international steel guitar festival in Europe and we hope others will look at what we do and start something up in other parts of Europe. Already we are developing a relationship with the Rencontres de Steel Guitar meet, which takes place at Easter in Charlieu near Lyon and acts as a feeder into CISGF six months later and, of course, CISGF returns the complement. We are actively pursuing ideas for encouraging the development of similar meets in other European countries.

As a result of the experiences of CISGF 2008, I realized that we needed a steel guitar forum that covered the European scene. Most of the players who came seemed unaware that there were players in the other countries of the [European Union] and although there are excellent national forums in some countries there is no single contact point for players all over Europe. As a result I roped Basil Henriques

Helen and Ernie Coker at a recent Joliet Convention. The Cokers were also in attendance at this past year’s Chanos festival.



Digby Hardy with steel guitarist Tam Le at the 2009 CISGF meet.

in to help set up the European Steel Guitar Forum which is hosted on the CISGF website. The result has been a well received forum with members from across the EU, USA, Canada and South Africa. We’re up to member number 285 and if you haven’t joined up yet it’s at www.chanos-isgf.org/ESGForum/.

Basil, on the other hand, had wanted to create a European Steel Guitar Hall of Fame (ESGHoF) to recognize and honor the people, past and present, who had popularized the steel guitar in Europe. This seemed to me a wonderful idea, and we soon teamed up to create the organization and the means to do it. First, we assembled a selection panel of seriously knowledgeable people to nominate the first inductees, then we set about creating a commemorative medal to present each inductee. This part turned out to be expensive due to the cost of getting a professional artist to design the medal from our specification and getting molds created for stamping them. So far, we have raised 1,500 euros from the international steel guitar community and the mayor of Chanos-Curson kicked in a check for another two grand so we’re good for another 3 years. On January 24, 2010 we presented medals to the four U.K. inductees at a steel guitar gathering in Cambridgeshire.

All contributors become members of ESGHoF and, subject to certain rules, will be entitled to nominate their candidate for the ESGHoF 2010 inductions. If you haven’t contributed yet and want to become a member, go to www.european-steel-guitar-hall-of-fame.com. We also decided that the ESGHoF inductions would be ceremonial and that the Chanos festival would host it. So that’s what happened last year at CISGF 2009.

The actual Convention was a great success, although with only a single hall, we are reaching the limit of how many players can be given two 20-minute sessions. The point about

MEMBERS CORNER

CISGF is that we promote the steel guitar by insisting that it be played by all the conventioners. No matter what your level, you get to play. Nothing concentrates the mind so wonderfully as knowing you're going to be on a stage and the center of attraction; it really increases your will to practice. The improvement in standards of some of those whom we met last year was really remarkable. They came with more songs and played with more dash and élan. They actually played some of their own songs instead of regurgitating some tab they had scripted in their head. It was very satisfying to see and hear—just what the doctor ordered. Not only did we have more players, but they came from more countries: France, UK, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy, Germany and the USA. The age range was interesting—from Aaron Williams, age 10, who played rhythm guitar for his granddad Ron Kew, to Ernie and Helen Coker, still performing at over 80. Instruments played included pedal steels, lap and console electrics, resonators and Weissenborns.

On Saturday night, the ESGHoF induction ceremony was held. Ten players were inducted, four deceased and six living—they are listed on the ESGHoF website. Basil hadn't expected to be nominated and we surprised him by naming him as the final inductee. The evening was judged a huge success and the actual event has been posted by Basil in several installments on YouTube.

The Sunday morning session started at 9 AM in a seldom used village church. Ron Kew kicked off with a talk and demo of how to play steel guitar backing to a song. Ron plays in a style based on the late Jeff Newman, and his seminar was very well received. Basil Henriques then gave a dissertation of playing Hawaiian music on a pedal steel. Brilliant as usual, everyone marveled at his technique and knowledge. A great morning's work and the first time in a church for a decade or so for some.

Interestingly we attracted the attentions of a very musically gifted young lad in the village, who attended every minute he could. He just loved the steel guitar and went away with an 8-string lap steel, amplifier, picks and steel. We're expecting him to play next year. I believe that if we are to encourage the young to play steel, we must help them get started but leave them to choose the music they want to play. Europeans and the Brits, too, must look to their own cultural music if they want to convince their fellow countrymen. For too long Hawai'i and Nashville have been the dominant styles and songs. They're fine in the U.S. where they are the actual indigenous music, but in Europe they were adopted for their exotic and escapist qualities. Nothing wrong in that—I do it all the time—but what is exotic and escapist for us 60+ year olds is not so for the teens and twenties. The world moves on. People love familiar songs and steelies will attract even more folks if they add familiar national songs to their repertoire. ■

Gerald Ross, Ann Arbor, Michigan

I just got an email (November 24) from a 'ukulele friend who lives in New York. He is friends with John Hamilton. John was profiled in the last *HSGA Quarterly* where he sent in a glowing review of his first Joliet convention. Here is what my friend wrote: "I also want to thank you for making my friend John Hamilton feel welcome at the HGSA convention. He was still floating two weeks after he got back."

Gary "Kali" Catrone, Pleasant Hill, CA

I have always loved music. I played accordion when I was a kid, and in my teen years played guitar and rhythm on rock, blues, and a bit of jazz, all during the '60s until I was drafted into the service. After three years in the army, I would on occasion pick up my accordion or guitar and play a bit, but raising a family forced me to put it aside for a long time.

I started to play again in my fifties. When we were on Kaua'i, my wife Dotty bought me a Tangi 'ukulele and a couple years later, a steel guitar as a Christmas present. Then I met a fellow in Livermore, California who plays uke, guitar, bass, has a beautiful voice and can hula. Well, we have been playing together for about a year and a half off and on, playing *hapa haole* and traditional Hawaiian. So we are just having a great time.

My lap is tuned to 'taro' open G, but it's hard to find music or tab in that tuning. I just joined HSGA and see that there is a lot more tab for C6th. What I would like to do is find someone who is willing to show me some stuff, either in G or C6th. Being retired I can't afford to take lessons, but I am willing to work hard to learn, and to share my music and experiences with others. [ED: Welcome aboard, Gary! Members, if you have any suggestions, you can email Gary at cattrone.family@sbcglobal.net. Mahalo.] ■

Bernice Honold with the Coral Islanders at Joliet this past fall.



E Komo Mai! Welcome, New Members

Is your address correct? Please notify us!

UNITED STATES

BILLY GILBERT, 483 Glenn Drive, Canyon Lake, TX 78133

GARY CATTRONE, 431 Coleman Ct., Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

KEN FEIL, 5965 Camray Circle, Carmichael, CA 95608

OVERSEAS

DENNIS DAY, 203 Mornington Tyabb Road, Tyabb, Victoria 3913 Australia

STEIN-FREDRIC SVENDSEN, Olavsvei 112, Nesodden, Akershus 1450 Norway

LORENE'S COURSE *Cont. from Page 12* *GAGE BREWER* *Continued from Page 15*

big-time steel guitarists of Hawai'i and HSGA. The camera zooms in on their hands so the student can watch their technique, and learn to recognize their new heroes by name. I did get permission from all of them to include their show in my course. Steel guitar teachers are hard to find these days. But with email, I can be as close as a student's computer, to clarify or encourage. Ain't the modern world grand?

[ED: Some late-breaking info from Lorene: "One thing I did not mention is that my course is designed for classroom teaching *or* beginner learning at home. If someone far away buys it they are welcome to email me any time they wish for explanation or guidance, no charge. If they are near Vancouver they are welcome to come to my house once a month, or just whenever they need. No charge. The beauty of this simple A Major low bass tuning is that the student can strum and sing with it, a very nice way to learn where all the major chords are." For more information on Lorene's course including purchase info, email her at ruymar@shaw.ca or go to her website at: members.shaw.ca/steelguitar.] ■

Please Contact Us!

Send news, comments and photos to: HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waiomao Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424. Email us at hsga@hsga.org. Mahalo!

Wichita called Shadowland, pronounced the instrument a "combination of natural personal technique and electrical perfection."

Brewer and his wife Doris would come to own Shadowland and continue its operation until the club was destroyed in a suspicious early morning fire in 1936. Along with the club went thousands of dollars worth of musical equipment. At this time Brewer was depicted playing mostly pre-Rickenbacher brand, Electro instruments from about 1933. In later photos his orchestra used a wide range of electric instruments produced by National-Dobro and Gibson as well as a lone A-25 "Frypan" with the Rickenbacher badge, an instrument which he apparently felt was so good he would order an exact duplicate.

After the fire Brewer relocated operations to the former Swallow Aircraft facility on the north side of Wichita, retaining the name Shadowland. His musical empire flourished with the publication of his music, the operation of the club, and through extensive touring. A lengthy tour, which included a sabbatical in Tahiti, provided the Brewers with quality time with cult figure painter Edgar Leeteg and the authors of the famous Mutiny on the Bounty books, Charles Nordhoff and James Norman Hall. The outbreak of World War II cut short this tropical sojourn and sent the Brewers back to

Wichita where they were greeted with a detailed account of their journey chronicled in the Wichita Eagle.

Brewer returned to Wichita and regaled an eager public with his tales of world travels. Settled again, Brewer commenced operations at his club. He hosted guest acts, though his own performances remained his mainstay through the war years. Mid-century was a boom time for Wichita, which was now center stage in the production of aircraft. During the war the city's population doubled and Brewer included extra shows for extra shifts and for all ages, adding bus shuttle service to the club. By this time dance lessons and beer had also become major profit makers at Shadowland.

After the war Brewer felt the need to modernize and eventually changed the name of his establishment to the Mambo Club. This remodel transformed the old club into a nocturnal postwar paradise, a versatile venue hosting Lavern Baker one night and Billy May the next. As time wore on the aging entertainer began to diversify his business interests, performing less and less. His last notable performance was on New Years Eve, 1962 when he and the band featured the new hit song, "The Peppermint Twist." By 1965 the club was sold and Gage Brewer devoted his remaining time to other business interests and finally retirement. Brewer and his wife Doris died just a few months apart in 1985. They are interred at the cemetery across the street from their nightclub, which still stands now as a church. ■

Don't Forget to Vote!

It's time to elect your Board of Directors for the 2010-2012 term. Regular and Associate members are allowed to vote. Just mark the ballot included with your Quarterly, sign it, and return it to: HSGA, 2434 Waiomao Road, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424. To be counted we must receive your ballot by March 15, 2010.