



Newsletter 151

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**MAHALO, MEMBERS!**

Keep those great emails, letters and photos coming! If possible, send original photographs or digital camera output. We cannot use grainy or washed out photos. Please send news, comments, or photos to:

**HSGA Quarterly**

2145 Tiffany Walk  
Manteca, CA 95336-9555  
Email us at [hsga@hsga.org](mailto:hsga@hsga.org).

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## Letter From the President

Aloha members,

Obviously, the biggest news to report on this quarter is another successful festival. We had a great time gathering in Cupertino, California, this year. All of the member, guest, and luau performances were lovely. You'll find various reports and memories from the festival throughout this issue. If you missed this year's festival, be sure to tune in to our next virtual festival for highlights we recorded during the event.

Speaking of the festival, the board has voted to put on another festival next year around the same time. There has already been a subcommittee meeting on festival planning for next year. We don't want to continue to have to reinvent the wheel each year, but it does seem like we're destined for another location change back towards the downtown Bay area of San Francisco. This will open up the opportunity to add to the experience of attending our festival. There's also going to be a special theme for next year's festival, which will also tie into the tabs and articles we present in the coming year. We're still investigating and formulating ideas for what might happen next year, and some exciting news will be forthcoming about our plans. Keep an eye out for the next issue and other special announcements pertaining to the festival!

I'd like to personally recognize and once again thank Josephine Johnson for her generous donation of her father's Rickenbacker frying pan, the proceeds of which went to our scholarship fund to help encourage the next generation of Hawaiian steel guitar players. Longtime and active club member Chris Kennison was the lucky winner of the drawing, which took place at the luau during our Cupertino festival. The raffle generated a whopping \$4,600 for our scholarship program. Mahalo, Josephine!

On another note, there's still a very high need for relief in the devastated Lahaina area of Maui. Through our donation drive and the sale of many of Roberto's LPs and CDs, we were able to generate \$778 for the Maui relief fund at our festival. We sent these donations back with Lahaina resident Al Nip, to families in need. Thank you to everyone who was involved in collecting these funds this year. I urge you to keep Maui's residents in mind as we come to the end of the year if you have funds still set aside that could be donated.

The board has had a very busy year. There are a lot of long-term projects that are getting closer and closer to being finished. In the coming year, we will be finishing up our newsletter archives/tab library and making them available to members. We intend to continue creating and presenting virtual festivals, as well as planning our 2024 gathering. Soon, there will be an online store where you can purchase HSGA T-shirts and other merchandise. We will also be tackling updating our out of date bylaws. New students are being added to our scholarship program. The list goes on. As you can see, we continue to grow, adapt, and modernize. Email us your thoughts: [hsga@hsga.org](mailto:hsga@hsga.org)

Mahalo,

*Christo Ruppenthal*

Christo Ruppenthal  
HSGA President

# HSGA Cupertino Festival Highlights

By Roberto Alaniz



The Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association has a long tradition of holding an annual music festival for members and non-members. The purpose of the festival is to:

- **Promote the playing of the Hawaiian steel guitar**
- **Share our musical skills and talents with each other**
- **Encourage continued learning of the instrument**
- **Attract new members.**

This year, we also used the opportunity to honor the victims of the recent wildfire that devastated much of Lahaina. We had a special display table dedicated to Maui and Lahaina and included a donation jar to help with relief efforts. I also donated some of my record and CD collection to the cause.

Proceeds from the sale of the recordings were divided between Lahaina relief and HSGA. The combined donations

and proceeds from the sale totaled \$778. (see Maui/Lahaina Disaster Relief article for more details)

The annual festival is an opportunity to gather with old friends and to make new friends from points near and far. Hopefully, some of us can even learn a few new licks, songs, or tunings along the way

Traditionally, the festival features a well-known Hawaiian steel guitarist as the key guest performer. This year, we enjoyed meeting and listening to a new, up and coming vocalist and steel guitar artist from Hawaii, Ms. Mālie Lyman. Mālie is the daughter of singer Pōmaika'i Keawe and the great-granddaughter of the legendary Auntie Genoa Keawe. Mālie, now 19 years old, started learning Hawaiian steel guitar from Kumu Alan Akaka over ten years ago. Mālie is now in college and is pursuing a career in music.

“

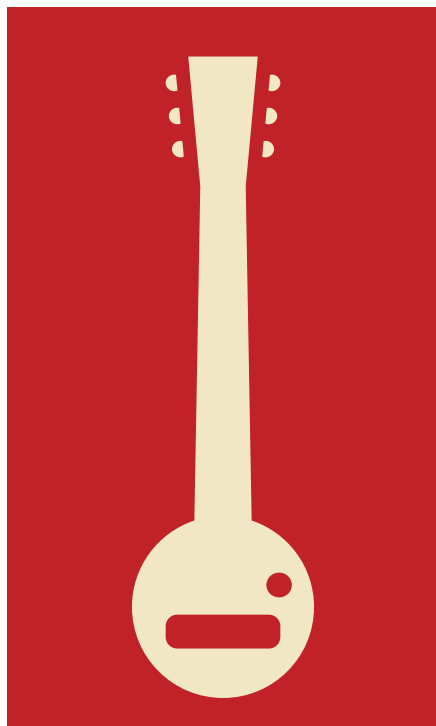
WE ENJOYED MEETING AND LISTENING TO A NEW, UP AND COMING VOCALIST AND STEEL GUITAR ARTIST FROM HAWAII, MS. MĀLIE LYMAN. MĀLIE IS THE DAUGHTER OF SINGER PŌMAIKA' I KEAWE AND THE GREAT-GRAND DAUGHTER OF THE LEGENDARY AUNTIE GENOA KEAWE.

”



### MĀLIE PROVIDED US WITH THREE EXCELLENT SETS

on each of the three festival days, including the Luau Dinner Show with backing musician/vocalists that included: Alan, Bill Wynne (guitar), Mark Prucha (steel guitar), Mark Kahalekulu and Mikiya Matsuda (bass).



Annual HSGA festivals began in the mid-1980's and were held in Joliet, Illinois for around twenty-five years. Festival location was largely driven by members who were able and willing to do the required organizing and logistical work for an annual event. In 2014, the location moved to Ft. Collins, Colorado, thanks to a core group of HSGA Board members who lived in that area. Ft. Collins served as our home base until 2019, when the COVID-19 pandemic shut down public gatherings for two years. In August of 2022, HSGA resumed the Festival at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Foster City, California.

The Odd Fellows Hall in Cupertino, California was selected for the 2023 Festival. This venue was suggested by several new HSGA members for a number of reasons. There is a fairly large Hawaiian population living in the San Jose/Cupertino area and the Odd Fellows Hall already hosts community events, including a monthly Kani Ka Pila jam session, hula and ukulele classes, and occasional Hawaiian music concerts. (Long time HSGA member Alan Akaka had also scheduled a

Hawaiian steel guitar symposium at the Hall on Sunday, September 24, immediately following the festival.) The Cupertino Hotel is also within walking distance of the Hall.

All of these factors brought us to the decision to try this venue in 2023. One of our strategies was to increase public attendance and participation in our festival by leveraging participants of other Hawaiian cultural events. We saw many new faces in the Saturday audience, indicating that our strategy and advertising worked fairly well.

The festival began on Thursday, Sep 21 at 12:30, starting with the Annual Member meeting. President Christo Ruppenthal reported on the activities and accomplishments of the Board and the Association during the 2022-2023 Year.

The Annual Meeting also featured a video presentation by Director Eric Rindal on artwork developed in support of Association re-branding and marketing efforts. It is our hope that the fresh new look will appeal to the membership and help in attracting a new audience and ultimately new members for HSGA.

Member performances began around 1:30 p.m. on Thursday. First up was Mike Bonnice from Scottsdale, Arizona, and Mike played some nice selections on his Canopus steel guitar using backing tracks. It is never easy being the first performer, as there are sound and lighting adjustments still in process.

Great job, Mike!



**I WAS UP IN THE SECOND SPOT AND ALSO USED MY OWN BACKING TRACKS. FOR SOME STRANGE REASON, MY PICKING FINGERS HAD DECIDED TO TAKE THE DAY OFF,**

but I managed to stumble through a few songs. I also forgot to turn on the video camera. (Hmm, could that have been an oversight?)

Karen and Jerry Wagner and their group Maile Swing from Santa Rosa, California were scheduled for the third spot, but had to cancel. (Karen, we hope that you have fully recovered and are able to come to our next festival). Al Nip from Lahaina, Maui, volunteered to fill in and played a very nice slack key/vocal set accompanied by Alan Akaka. Their playing and vocals transported us to Hawaii for a brief time.



Christo Ruppenthal from Madison, Wisconsin was up next playing some vintage tunes on his National Style 3 Tricone. As usual, Christo played flawlessly and presented excellent background information on his vintage songs and their original recording artists from the 1920's and 1930's.

As the program was already running behind schedule, Alan combined his set with Mālie Lyman's 4:30 program. Listening to teacher and student play together was a treat. The duo was accompanied by Bill Wynne on rhythm guitar and Mark Kahalekulu on bass guitar.

I am happy to report that Thursday evening happy hour went well. Many of us adjourned to the hotel for their happy hour from 5 to 6 p.m., and yes, most of us stayed a little longer.

We returned to the Odd Fellows Hall at 7:00 p.m. for a talk story session with Mālie and our traditional Kani Ka Pila jam session at 8:00 p.m.

I will pause here to mention that we video recorded most of the member performers during the festival. Fortunately, a friend of Patti Maxine also recorded much of the festival, and some of these videos are already posted on the HSGA website (thank you, Norm Markowitz). HSGA's virtual festival series will return on January 12, 2024, and we will present our own videos from the Cupertino Festival.

Friday's festival day began at 10:00 a.m. with Tony Fourcroy from Ft. Collins, Colorado, backed by Mark Kahalekulu on guitar and Alan Akaka on bass. Tony presented a nice set of Hawaiian steel guitar contemporary classics.

Mark Kahalekulu, from Aurora, Colorado (and the Big Island of Hawaii) stayed on the stage to present his set, playing guitar and singing some beautiful Hawaiian songs. Mark has a shining personality and his heartfelt set lit up the room.



Joe Stewart from Broomfield, Colorado, a key HSGA member who mails out our quarterly newsletter and maintains the member database, was up at 11:00. Joe is one of the few players who sings most of his songs and plays his own fills and solos on steel guitar. Nice job, Joe.

Following Joe was a group of local members & first timers to the festival program. The group included Randee Chin (steel guitar/ukulele/vocals), Lillian Fujimoto (steel guitar/ukulele/vocals), Nancy Alegria (steel guitar), and Frank Vernon (bass guitar). When Randee initially volunteered the group to play, she was somewhat reluctant and suggested that their set might be one or two songs. Well, they played the entire 25 minutes and did a great job. Nancy played steel guitar on most of the groups' songs, and Randy and Lillian did a nice steel guitar duet. Welcome to the stage, folks and see you next year!

**AFTER OUR LUNCH BREAK, CHRISTO RUPPENTHAL PLAYED ANOTHER SET OF SONGS. THIS TIME AROUND, CHRIS MIXED IN SOME OLD JAZZ TUNES**

Chris has had a busy summer playing more gigs compared to previous years. All of that practicing certainly shows in his performances.

Al Nip from Lahaina, Maui was in the 2nd afternoon spot. Al is a wonderful story teller and entertainer. He engaged the audience in between songs with explanation of the songs that he played and sang. Al was backed by Christo Ruppenthal on guitar and Mark Kahalekulu on bass guitar.

Mark Kahalekulu followed Al with an impromptu set of songs. He was backed by Alan Akaka and Bill Wynne.

I was relieved to see Patti Maxine in the room on day two of the festival. We were not sure that she could attend on any day other than Saturday. Patti agreed to take my scheduled playing time. (I'd much rather listen to Patti than myself!) Patti is always a hit with the crowd. She was backed by Alan Akaka on bass and Bill Wynne on guitar.

Garry and Debbie Vanderlinde from Garden Grove, California were up next. Garry and Debbie are also a popular act with the festival crowd. Garry asked me to back him on bass guitar and sent me his chord charts in advance of the festival. That was a life saver, and I was also able to listen to some of his

songs on YouTube before the festival. Debbie sat between us, and we both played too loud. I apologize to Debbie for the stereo ear ache!

Alan Akaka, Justin Firmeza, and Mālie Lyman then took the stage to wrap up the afternoon. Mālie and Justin, both former scholarship students, did their Kumu Alan proud. Unfortunately, the memory card on my video camera maxed out, so I didn't video the dynamic trio. I'm hoping that someone else in the room captured the performance on their camera or phone.

After the Friday evening happy hour and dinner break, Alan Akaka conducted a workshop entitled "Techniques, Tunings, and Talk Story". As always, Alan's workshop was educational, informative and entertaining.

I heard that the jam session that followed the workshop was also great fun. I cannot report any details, as by eight o'clock, I needed sleep more than jam.

Saturday morning came soon enough, and I saw many of our members in the hotel breakfast area. Some were more blurry eyed than others, but all looked happy.

Around 10 AM, we made our way over to the Odd Fellows Hall for Christo Ruppenthal's special workshop presentation on Antique Aloha Vintage Hawaiian Guitar recordings.

Thanks to the Odd Fellows Hall for the use of their large screen TV. Christo is like the Ken Burns for Hawaiian steel guitar; informative and entertaining.

Mark Kahalekulu, accompanied by Al Nip on bass guitar, provided us with a set of Hawaiian songs. Mark played guitar and both Mark and Al sang duets in the Hawaiian language, which was a very nice start to the day.

Eric Rindal from San Francisco followed Mark on the program. Eric was accompanied by Christo Ruppenthal on guitar and Mikiya Matsuda on upright bass. What a nice sound they produced.

Eric brought some of his vintage instruments to play and share with the crowd, including a 1936 Rickenbacher Model B lap steel and a 1935 Model A-22 Rickenbacher Fry Pan. Perhaps the rarest item was his 1936 Rickenbacher Electro Standard Amplifier that was nicknamed "The Lunchbox". This amp has an on switch and that's it! No volume or tone control. The volume is controlled by the guitar's volume knob, and the louder the volume, the brighter the tone.





**ALAN AKAKA AND MĀLIE LYMAN WRAPPED UP THE AFTERNOON.**

Mālie and Alan both played Hawaiian steel guitar, with Bill Wynne on guitar, Justin Firmeza on ukulele, and Mikiya Matsuda on upright bass. In my opinion, Mālie has inherited the quality of her voice from her Great Grandmother, Genoa Keawe. Her vocals were sweet and her steel guitar playing was smooth. Clearly, her playing style is heavily influenced by her teacher (Alan).

We were fortunate to have hula dancers featured throughout the afternoon, as well as during our Luau Dinner Show. These included Cindy Yan from Bejiing, China, as well as delightful performances from local hula dancers. (shout-out to HSGA member Randee Chin for lining up our dancers, and coordinating the music with Alan for their dances!)

Special thanks to our dedicated festival volunteers:

Randee Chin, Teri Gorman, Nancy Alegria, Lillian Fujimoto, Jeanne Skybrooke, and luau servers Shizue Souza, Jennifer Jow and Leana Oliffe, as well as facility coordination from Jim Kabage.

More thanks to Christo Ruppenthal for helping me set up the heavy stage floor. Plus all of our members who were willing to pitch in as needed for room set-up, tear-down and clean up, make more coffee, etc.





# VIRTUAL FESTIVAL 6

RECORDED IN CUPERTINO, CA

PREMIERS JAN. 13TH, 2024  
3PM EASTERN TIME

The program will feature video of our very Special Guest Performer Millie Lyman, other special guest performers, and member performances from the Cupertino, California festival that was held in September, 2023.

VF6 is a six-hour program presented in two-hour segments. (3:00 PM to 5:00 PM, 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM, and 9:00 PM to 11:00 PM Eastern Time). The program can be accessed through our [hsga.org](http://hsga.org) website. After the premier date, the videos can be viewed at any time.



## Maui/Lahaina Disaster Relief

By Roberto Alaniz



On August 8, 2023, the town of Lahaina on the western shore of Maui was subjected to one of the deadliest wildfires in U.S. history. The fire swept through the downtown section of Lahaina all the way down to the shoreline. At least 97 people were killed and hundreds were displaced and left homeless. Fires occurred in other parts of Maui as well, but the Lahaina fire by far was the worst.

Lahaina has a cherished place in Hawaiian history. According to Lahaina's official history, "In 1802, King Kamehameha made Lahaina the capital of the Hawaiian Kingdom. He built a brick palace there, along with residences and other royal buildings, and Lahaina served as the center of the Hawaiian government for over 50 years, until permanently relocating to Honolulu for its harbor."

In 1873, Sheriff William Owen Smith planted an Indian banyan tree, where Kamehameha's first palace was located. However, Smith, the son of missionaries, didn't plant it for royal reasons, but rather "to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first Protestant mission in Lahaina," according to the town's history.

Lahaina has always been on the "must see" list for persons visiting or vacationing in Maui. The tremendous banyan tree in the town's square was a sight to see. Natural and man-made disasters, regardless of where they occur, are always a shock to mankind. Whether caused by flood, fire, earthquake, tornado, hurricane, war...whatever, we feel them deeply. Whether this is true or not, it seems to me that they are occurring more frequently than any time in history.

When the Lahaina disaster occurred, one of our first thoughts was with long time HSGA member Al Nip and his family, who live in Lahaina. We were relieved to find out that Al and family were OK and that their home, just outside of the burn zone, was spared. Prior to the devastating fire, Al had signed up to attend the 2023 Festival in Cupertino. Frankly, we were unsure that Al would still be able to attend, so we were more than happy when he confirmed that he would be there.

We were all moved by Al and his wife Dale's presence with us in Cupertino, which hopefully was a bit of a respite for them too. He said he was just beginning to be able to perform without crying. Al is always a favorite musician at our gatherings, and this year performed some very moving music honoring Lahaina. Dale graced us with hula as well.

The Lahaina fire may be slightly more personal for many HSGA members because of our musical and emotional attachments to Hawaii and Lahaina. For this reason, our desire as an organization to help in some way is strong and clear. Immediately after the fire, we included information and links on the HSGA website on how to donate to relief organizations in Hawaii. In planning the Festival, we also decided to include a couple of tables honoring Maui and Lahaina, and accepting donations from those attending. The Maui/Lahaina memorial table included a donation box, and attendees were generous.

I donated some of my (out of control) collection of Hawaiian music CDs and albums for the second table. Proceeds from the sale of these recordings were to be shared 50/50 between Lahaina relief and HSGA Donations. As I approach



my 75th birthday, my wife encouraged me to begin to "share the joy" of my Hawaiian music collection with other HSGA members. In other words, "don't leave me all of this stuff to deal with after you're gone".

Between the two tables, we raised \$779 for Lahaina relief. Mahalo to all who donated.

In talking with Al Nip during the festival, we realized that Al had the best vantage point for determining how to distribute the funds. As a longtime resident of Lahaina, Al has deep community roots and knows many individuals and families that lost their homes and jobs/income as a result of the fire. Al graciously agreed to take on this responsibility.

The following is Al's report on use of the HSGA donation:

"... Much mahalo for helping to raise funds for needy families. Here's how I will distribute the donations.

\$350 to a couple in the Wahikuli subdivision whose home burned and they lost all their possessions. He is the head coach of Napili Canoe Club and also an assistant football coach at Lahainaluna High School. They have 3 sons, one working, a 2nd on the UNLV football team, the 3rd a senior at Lahainaluna High School.

\$300 to ... a single mom lost her job as a tennis pro where she earns less than \$30,000 per year, She and her parents lost their home in Lahaina, she has 3 sons. One just joined

One just joined the Marines so he could help the family, a 2nd moved to Spain to be with his dad and be less of a burden on the family, a 3rd a sophomore at Lahainaluna. Her dad was just placed in hospice this week. He was doing fine up until a couple weeks ago. He served in the Vietnam war and likened going through the fire like fighting in the Tet offensive.

\$129 to a local business owner. He and his company ... lost their whole base yard including trucks, vans, forklift, and 3 shipping containers of supplies and personal items. This is the 2nd fire which destroyed a lot of their assets. The 2nd being their main warehouse burned." Thank you Al for sharing this information.

If you would like to donate to help Maui and Lahaina, please consider one of the following organizations:

Maui Food Bank — Helping the Hungry in Maui County <https://mauifoodbank.org/>

Hawaii Wildfires <https://www.redcross.org/about-us/our-work/disaster-relief/wildfire-relief/hawaii-wildfires.html>

The Red Cross is providing assistance to families and communities affected by wildfires in Maui and Oahu. Learn more... <https://www.redcross.org/about-us/our-work/disaster-relief/wildfire-relief/hawaii-wildfires.html>







## “Carefree”

By Phill Walker

Carefree is a slow 3/4 (waltz) tune written and first recorded as a 78 by Andy Iona & His Islanders in 1938. The “Islanders” lineup included George “Tautu” Archer, Harry Baty, Harry Evans, Joe Nawahi & Sam Koki. The original recording can be accessed here: [https://archive.org/details/78\\_carefree\\_andy-iona-and-his-islanders-andy-iona-charles-henderson-edward-heyman\\_gbia0092788b](https://archive.org/details/78_carefree_andy-iona-and-his-islanders-andy-iona-charles-henderson-edward-heyman_gbia0092788b)

A more recent version featuring both Andy Iona and Jerry Byrd excellently displays the steel guitar styles of these two giants. It can be found on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UzLSRu7K5pk>

I discovered the tune initially when starting out on steel guitar using Bruce Clarke’s terrific “Hawaiian Hotshots” course. Bruce was an Australian lap steel guitarist who evangelized Hawaiian-style music “Down Under” with his training courses and Cumquat Records releases. I got to speak with Bruce before his death in 1997 and was fortunate to purchase his collection of Hawaiian arrangements as well as his Dobro guitar.

The arrangement on the following pages is based on Bruce Clarke’s and features a key change for G to Eb and back to the original key of G. Here is the backing track: <https://hsga.org/wp-content/uploads/Carefree%20HSGA%20Backing%20MP3.mp3>

# "Carefree"

Charles Henderson & Edward Heyman - 1935

(C6 Tuning ECAGEC) 65 bpm - waltz

1 Dmaj7 D<sup>b9</sup> D<sup>6</sup> B<sup>b13</sup>

12 14 12 13 12 11 12 11 10 12 13

T  
A  
B

E  
C  
A  
G  
E  
C

5 E<sup>b6</sup> B<sup>7</sup> Fm<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b7+</sup>

10 10 9 11 11 10 12 12 12 11 11 11 11 12 11

T  
A  
B

9 E<sup>b</sup>maj7 Gm<sup>7</sup> Cm<sup>7</sup> Gm<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7+</sup>

10 10 10 10 10 10 10 9 9 9 9 9

T  
A  
B

13 Fm<sup>7</sup> Fm<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b7+</sup> E<sup>b</sup>maj7 A<sup>b7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup>

8 7 3 3 9 10 11 9 10 8

T  
A  
B

2

## Carefree

17 B Fm<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b13</sup> E<sup>b</sup>maj7 Cm<sup>7</sup>

8 8 8 7 7 6 11 10 9 8

T  
A  
B

21 Fm<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b13</sup> E<sup>b</sup>maj7 Fm<sup>7</sup> F<sup>#m7</sup> B<sup>b7</sup>

8 8 10 10 8 9 10 10

T  
A  
B

### C

25 E<sup>b</sup>maj7 Gm<sup>7</sup> Cm<sup>7</sup> Gm<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7+</sup>

10 10 10 10 3 3 10 9 9 9 9

T  
A  
B

Fm<sup>7</sup> Fm<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b7+</sup> E<sup>b</sup>maj7 A<sup>b7</sup>

8 6 6 11 10 9 8 7 7 6 10 11

T  
A  
B

D

Carefree

3

3 A<sup>b</sup>m<sup>7</sup> Fm<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b</sup>13 E<sup>b</sup>9 D<sup>9</sup> D<sup>b</sup>9 C<sup>9</sup> B<sup>9</sup>

37 Fm<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b</sup>13 E<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup> E<sup>b</sup>

E

41 B<sup>7</sup> Gmaj<sup>7</sup>

45 Gmaj<sup>7</sup> Bm<sup>7</sup> Em<sup>7</sup> Bm<sup>7</sup> E<sup>7</sup>+ B<sup>9</sup> Am<sup>7</sup>

4

F

Carefree

50 Am<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup>+ B<sup>9</sup> Gmaj<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup> Cm<sup>7</sup>

54 Am<sup>7</sup> G<sup>9</sup> F<sup>#9</sup> F<sup>9</sup> E<sup>9</sup> E<sup>b9</sup> Am<sup>7</sup>

58 D<sup>13</sup> G<sup>6</sup> G C<sup>9</sup>

62 F<sup>13</sup> B<sup>b</sup>13

66 E<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup> Gmaj<sup>7</sup>



## Lunch with Bobby III

By Roberto Alaniz

Three years ago, Bobby told me that he just played what probably was his last gig. The picking fingers weren't working like they used to and it was increasingly difficult to drive at night. This sounded perfectly reasonable to me. I figured that we would just hang out in Manteca and try and stay out of trouble.

After this initial declaration, we would periodically get together for lunch and invariably Bobby would tell me about a recent telephone call that he received, asking him to do a recording session or to play a special gig. He would usually decline at first, but end up agreeing to do the job. He'd say, "They were very insistent and how could I say no. They would even offer to pick me up, take me to the gig, and bring me home." Three years later, this is still happening and I just smile when he shares his last musical outing with me.

Most musicians hope to play music throughout their lives, and I am glad to see that Bobby is still able to do what he loves. He can no longer play for extended periods of time, or pick as fast as he used to, but his lifelong playing of the steel guitar and his intimate knowledge of the C6 tuning shines through every time that I hear him play.

On a rare occasion, I will play a gig with Bobby & my brother Jorge. Whenever we do, Bobby's fills and leads are a treat to hear. It is just as entertaining for us as it is for the audience.

I recall that in my first "Lunch With Bobby" article, I mentioned that Bobby's recording of The Midnight Sun (under the artist name The Five Whispers) was recorded in 1960 on the Dolton record label. I had assumed that this was Bobby's first commercial recording.

Recently, Bobby corrected my assumption and provided me with a little more background information on his first recording contract endeavor. He recalls that prior to the Dolton recording, he and his brother Larry had compiled a tape with twenty-three recordings. They decided to take their reel-to-reel tape to Hollywood to shop around for a record company.



Without any advance appointments, they drove from their home in San Mateo (Bay Area) down to Hollywood. Once they arrived, they did a search for record companies in the telephone directory...the Yellow Pages. Most of the larger, well-known companies that they called were not interested in hearing their recordings.



Fortunately, the drummer in the Black Brothers band "knew a guy" and had given Bobby his telephone number. The guy was Lew Bedell and the company was Doré Records. Bobby called and the "secretary" (probably an answering service) provided them with the business address. The office was located in an apartment on a side street just off of Hollywood Boulevard.

The Black Brothers proceeded to knock on the door of the apartment. They were greeted by a gruffy looking Bedell clad in a bathrobe. His greeting was "Yea, what do you want?" The boys explained the purpose of their visit, and

Bedell invited them in and proceeded to finish brushing his teeth. Impatiently, Bedell asked them to select their best song of the twenty three recordings for him to listen to. Bobby exclaimed that it was difficult to pick out a favorite. Bedell loaded the tape on his reel-to-reel recorder and skimmed through the recordings, playing the introductions or first eight bars of each song and then fast-forwarding to the next. The last song on the tape was an instrumental that featured Bobby on the steel guitar. Bedell asked for the name of the song, and Bobby replied "we haven't come up with a name yet."

Bedell instructed the boys to leave and come back later that day. When they returned, Lew Bedell had a recording contract ready for them to sign....and they did so. He also came up with a name for the song: Gently, My Love.

So, the first commercial recording by Bobby Black was actually entitled Gently, My Love (under the artist name The Triplets) on the Doré Record label. Bobby still remembers the thrill of hearing their recording being played on local radio stations in the Bay Area.

As part of record promotion, Bedell arranged to have The Triplets be the opening act for Chubby Checker who was doing a concert in the Bay Area. When The Black Brothers asked how much they would be paid for doing the show, Bedell laughed and advised them that there was no pay. Well, that was the end of the contract with Doré Records. Not surprisingly, the radio stations almost immediately stopped playing Gently, My Love.

That's showbiz!





## Hula Club In Switzerland

By Beat Iseli

It was on 3rd October, a sunny Tuesday, when our trio, Hawaiian Guitar Dreams, consisting of Jorg Gerhardt on bass, Jack Heaton on acoustic guitar and myself on steel, boarded a train in Winterthur to get to Basel where we would play at the Hula Club. As far as I had recently found out, (the Hula Club is) the only place in Switzerland where Hawaiian music is still being played almost every week, actually every Tuesday.

The club is a reminder of the famous quintet Hula Hawaiians, which were all the rage in the late 40s and 50s in Switzerland and Germany with its fabulous steel guitarist Walter Roost and the brothers Werner and Ruedi Kunz, the latter, 85 years old and still active. They had big hits with their versions of Hilo March and Hula Moon. More about them can be found in John Berger and George Kanahale's encyclopedic history: Hawaiian Music and Musicians.

When we got to the club we were warmly greeted by Esther Soland, manager of the club and Heinz Haag, steel guitarist and musical director for the now called Hawaiian Memories band, still featuring an original member of the Hula Hawaiians, ukulele player and singer Ruedi Kunz. After setting up our gear, plugging into the Hawaiian Memories' amps and checking their microphones we did a short sound check. I used the same amp set-up with heavy echo as Heinz Haag. The first set was played by the Hawaiian Memories with Heinz Haag brilliantly displaying his skills on the steel guitar with the Hilo March and other steel instrumentals. Ruedi Kunz sang a few songs, such as On the Beach at Waikiki, The Little Grass Shack, which he had already performed in the late 50s and 60s. He showed his good humor and strummed vigorously on his vintage Martin ukulele.

After their set it was our turn to play. For most of the songs I used the C6 tuning, the one I feel most comfortable with. We started with Hula Blues in the version I had learnt from listening to Bobby Ingano's first CD, followed by Sleepwalk

from Santo and Johnny. I got a bit lost on the The Hawaiian Wedding Song I had practiced based on an HSGA transcript, but our first vocal tune Sophisticated Hula went down quite well. Then it was Jack's turn to play the long intro to the Steel Guitar Rag, courtesy of Merle Travis. My steel part came from an old version I had heard by Jimmy Day. I was not as nervous as I had anticipated, this was certainly due to the fact that we played in front of a very receptive audience who enjoyed the music. We closed the first part with two instrumentals in B11th tuning: How D'Ya Do and Sand out of Jerry Byrd's instruction course.

After a few beers and some chatting we continued with our own arrangement of St. Louis Blues in which Jack Heaton showed his picking virtuosity on acoustic guitar. With Jack on Ukulele for one song we also played Hene Hene Kuo Aka, to which Alan Akaka had introduced me the last time I had taken classes at his Ke Kula Mele Music school in 2015. Most of the vamps I tried were OK, but not all. Sorry Alan! I still have to improve on this. Our last instrumental was a version of an old Jazz tune: Limehouse Blues which featured solos by Jack, myself and Jorg roughing it up on his bass guitar and receiving a great round of applause from the audience.

Of course we ended our encores with Hawaii's anthem Aloha Oe, some listeners singing softly along. At the end there was a lot of chatting and exchanging information on Hawaii, its beautiful music and steel guitar details, until we could retire to our hotel nearby.

Even though the Hula Club is a tiny location in Switzerland's third largest city, Basel, at the border with Germany and France, it made us happy that Hawaiian music can still be heard in our country. For us it was a fantastic evening being able to play for an audience who appreciated this music and the steel guitar. Aloha!



The Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association  
**Treasurer's Report**



**1ST QUARTER, 2022-2023**

Beginning Balance (7/1/23)	\$32,007.93
General Fund	\$26,802.57
Scholarship Fund	\$3,539.20
Certificate Of Deposit (Savings)	\$10,000.00 (1)
Ending Balance (9/30/23)	\$40,341.77
Japan Account Ending Balance	\$1,044.54 (2)

**Expenses**

Printing	\$114.42
Postage	\$227.80
Scholarship	\$550.00
Software/Tech Subscriptions	\$94.97
2023 Festival Expense	\$7,923.39 (3)
Miscellaneous Expense	\$54.99
Total Expenses	\$8,965.57

**Income**

Dues	\$3,565.84
Donations (General Fund)	\$195.00
Donations (Scholarship)	\$635.00
2023 Festival Ticket Sales	\$12,901.90
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$1.50
Total Income	\$17,299.20

- (1) \$5000 From Gen Fund/\$5,000 From Scholarship Fund Transferred To Open 11 Cd With 3.00 Interest
- (2) Japanese Yen = 155,871
- (3) Approx \$2,000 Festival Expenses Not Yet Paid.

**The HSGA, Inc. Fiscal Year 2022 to 2023 Annual Financial Report**

The following is a summary of our finances for the 12 month period beginning July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023

OVERALL FINANCIAL STATUS

As of June 30, 2023, The Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association, Inc. (HSGA) had cash assets totaling \$32,202.22, which consisted of:

- **\$23,663.26 in the Chase Checking (Operating) Account, and**
- **\$ 8,538.96 in the Chase Savings (Scholarship Fund) Account.**

The Japan Branch of HSGA had an account balance of \$1,184.04 (164,361 Yen).

FY 2022-23 (12 MONTH) OPERATING REVENUES & EXPENSES

Revenue:	\$ 21,109.41
Expenses:	\$ 21,980.44
Net Income/(Loss):	\$ ( 871.03)

Revenue for the year included: \$5,112.49 in dues; \$1,140 in Scholarship Donations; \$3,503.21 in General Fund Donations; \$10,857.27 in Festival Ticket and Raffle Sales; and \$496.44 in Virtual Festival Donations. We are grateful to our members who made donations to the Scholarship and General funds throughout the year. We also wish to acknowledge the Hawaiian Institute for Music Enrichment and Learning Experiences (HIMELE) for providing matching funds for our music lesson scholarships. Finally, we thank the Roeder Family Charitable Fund for its generous donation to the General Fund.

The Foster City Festival in August of 2022 was our largest expense at \$13,938.85, which was partially offset by \$10,857.27 in festival revenue. The Quarterly Newsletter was our second largest annual expense. Newsletter compilation and editing was conducted by members who volunteered to perform the required tasks to produce a quarterly publication. Printing cost for the year was \$1,904.86 and postage for mailing the newsletter was \$694.20. HSGA has increased "technology" expenditures in relation to the website, social media platforms and the development of the e-newsletter.

Four scholarships were awarded for a total expenditure of \$2,200 for the year. The Hawaiian Institute for Music Enrichment and Learning Experiences (HIMELE) donated scholarship funds to HSGA on a 50/50 matching basis, offsetting \$1,100 of scholarship expenses.

Our financial goal is to maintain this positive trend in future years by:

- **Managing revenues and expenses to maintain financial solvency.**
- **Pursuing additional revenue opportunities**
- **Increasing membership, thereby increasing Dues Revenue and Member Donations**

# Mahalo to those HSGA Members Who Have Gone Above and Beyond!

By Christo Ruppenthal

At a board meeting earlier in the year, we decided to thank and recognize a number of volunteers who have contributed in large part to the success of our club. At our most recent festival in Cupertino, preceding the Luau show, I spent some time presenting thank-yous to a few HSGA members who have really gone above and beyond to help the club in various ways. We presented each one of these members with a specially engraved Mahalo cup. Board member Eric Rindal was responsible for designing and obtaining these special thank-yous.

I wanted to include a recap of these recognitions of special members for their contributions in this newsletter, so the rest of the members who could not attend are aware of our appreciation.

**John Ely** - If you've been a member of the HSGA at any time throughout the 2000s you have literally held John's contribution in your hand. For many years, John was our editor, designer, and regular content contributor to our quarterly newsletters. John was also



responsible for managing our membership database and keeping member contributions organized and managed. We would certainly not be the club we are today had it not been for John's many hours each month. So I'd like to recognize and thank John profusely for all his contributions to our club.



**John Mumford** - If you've tuned into any of our virtual festivals that started during the pandemic, you've witnessed John's work. He's been in charge of accepting video submissions and organizing all the various parts of these broadcasts into an enjoyable program. He was also in charge of getting these programs posted to our

various social media outlets. This has entirely been done on a volunteer basis. Each one of these broadcasts took many hours to piece together and create. We would like to thank John for all his time spent, allowing us to enjoy both steel guitar and our own community of players throughout the lockdown and going forward!

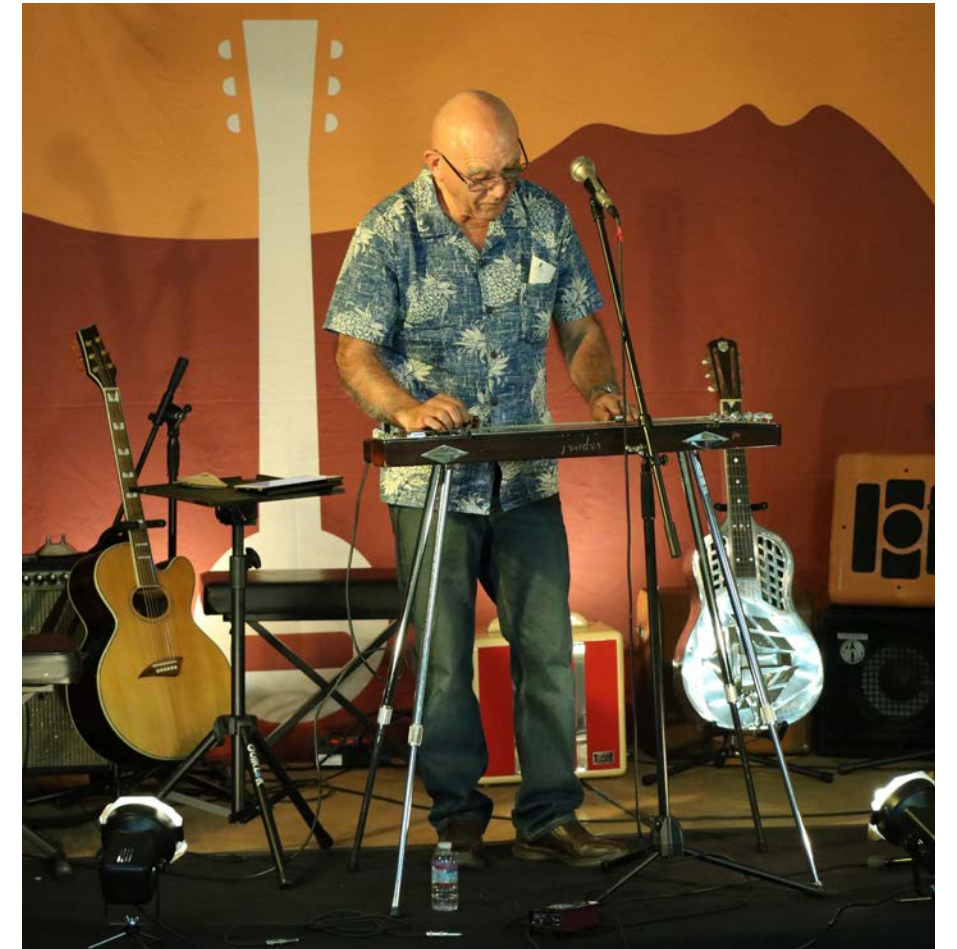
**Teri Gorman** - Even after her time as a board member, Teri continued working closely on many projects in



the HSGA. Since John's departure as newsletter editor, Teri has been our primary proofreader for the newsletter and has also helped in the transition to a team of us now managing the newsletter. She was also involved in the logistics for both of our post-pandemic festival gatherings in Cupertino and Foster City. She helped Roberto with logistics between the club and the hotel and viewing and confirming locations. She also helped in a large way with publicity, as far as lining up radio and print advertisements. She also spent a large amount of time at the gate, greeting and taking admission from attendees at our last two festivals. Mahalo to Teri for all of her many contributions.



**Joe Stewart** - When John retired as newsletter editor and database manager, Joe took over running the database. He worked closely with John to learn the ins and outs of our complex program for tracking membership and donations. Joe is responsible for keeping our membership roles up-to-date, month-to-month and year-to-year. This process requires regular communication with the newsletter staff to make sure current members receive



all the benefits that the HSGA has to offer. Thank you, Joe, for your many volunteer hours!

**Roberto Alaniz** - When the board decided to recognize volunteer members, we also decided not to include current board members, as we have expectations as officers to spend time on the club. Because I thought it was more than justified, Eric and I decided to include an extra bonus Mahalo cup for Roberto. Roberto has done so much for the club since becoming an officer. He is club secretary, treasurer, regular newsletter contributor, and virtual festival committee chair. Above and beyond all of this, Roberto has been integral in seeing that we were able to gather again to do these

annual festivals in California. Not only was he there throughout all the planning phases, but he was also our primary contact point on the ground in the area to be able to go to a few possible locations and work with the locals on logistics. He also stores the vast majority of the club's physical assets, including our lovely banners, ephemera, and other things. Roberto was responsible for supplying and bringing all the gear that we used on stage for the last two festivals, including his own amplifier collection and the club's PA. We quite literally would not be having festivals in the same way that we are without Roberto's many hours of extra work.

# Our Scholarship Students Performed in Hawaii This December

Aloha HSGA Members!

The HSGA scholarship students performed at the 5th annual Hawai'i Island Steel Guitar Festival, December 14 - 17. The annual festival sponsored by HIMELE (Hawaii Institute for Music Enrichment and Learning Experiences) featured many of the best pro players as well as Alan Akaka's Nextgen students.

Four of the five NextGen students that performed are HSGA scholarship students:

- Isabella Bertelmann
- Hi'ipoi Lindsey
- Enosa Lyman
- Makamae Lyu-Napoleon

The performances were livestreamed on Facebook and Youtube. NextGen steel guitar students of Ke Kula Mele Hawai'i School of Hawaiian Music performed for festival attendees' enjoyment during the Open Stage and Twilight at Kalihuihua'a programs. Info at: [Hawaiisteelguitarfestival.com](http://Hawaiisteelguitarfestival.com)



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Featuring the Hawai'i Island Steel Guitar Festival

## December 14-17, 2023

Mauna Lani, Auberge Resorts Collection

68-1400 Mauna Lani Dr, Waimea, HI 96743



Alan Akaka



Pomai Brown



Ethan Goore



Bobby Ingano



Kapono Lopes



Mālie Lyman



Dwight Tokumoto



Geri Valdriz

- Entertainment at Surf Shack and HāLani Restaurant
- Vintage Steel Guitar Exhibit
- Ho'olaule'a - Hawaiian pageant featuring the Hawaiian Steel Guitar, singing and hula
- Livestreamed on  LIVE and  YouTube
- Kanikapila Jam Session
- Steel Guitar hands-on opportunities
- Steel Guitar Workshop
- Open Stage Session at Surf Shack
- Twilight at Kalāhuipua'a

### NextGen Steel Guitarists



Hi'ipoi



Enosa



Tai



Isabella



Makamae



Presented by Mauna Lani, Auberge Resorts Collection and Hawaii Institute for Music Enrichment and Learning Experiences



This program is supported in part by the Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA), through appropriations from the Legislature of the State of Hawai'i or grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

Open to the Public • Free Admission

[hawaiisteelguitarfestival.com](http://hawaiisteelguitarfestival.com)





# Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association

MEMBER



## OFFICERS

Christo Ruppenthal (WI), President  
John Limbach (MT), Vice-President  
Roberto Alaniz (CA), Secretary-Treasurer

## DIRECTORS

Mike Wittmer	Daryl Brooke
Eric Rindal	Thomas Hammerman
Shinichi Kakiuchi	Phill Walker

## FORMER DIRECTOR EMERITUS

Jerry Byrd

## JAPAN COORDINATORS

Masahiko Ibamoto, Shinichi Kakiuchi

## MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

Daryl Brooke

## NEWSLETTER DESIGN

Eric Rindal

## WEBMASTER

Mike Wittmer [webmaster@hsga.org](mailto:webmaster@hsga.org)

## SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR

John Mumford

## ORIGINAL CLUB FOUNDER

Lorene Ruymar (1985)

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

## MEMBERSHIP

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

## SUBMIT ARTICLES & COMMENTS TO:

HSGA Quarterly, 2145 Tiffany Walk, Manteca, CA 95336-9555 USA; E-mail: [hsga@hsga.org](mailto:hsga@hsga.org). In addition, email submitted items directly to the editor at Mike Wittmer [webmaster@hsga.org](mailto:webmaster@hsga.org). Letters to the president and general club comments should be sent to: Christo Ruppenthal at 552 Apollo Way, Madison, WI 53718 or emailed to [christo@christoruppenthal.com](mailto:christo@christoruppenthal.com).