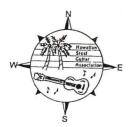
# HSGA QUARTERLY

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

Volume 13, Issue 49

WINTER 1997



#### **OFFICERS**

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John Ely <johnely@panworld.net>

#### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association is registered as a non-profit corporation in the State of Hawaiii, and as tax-exempt in the U.S. under IRS tax code 501(c)(3). Its purpose is development of a global communications network of players and lovers of Hawaiian traditional music as performed on all types of steel guitars & related instruments, and to encourage the study, teaching, performance, manufacture of all types of steel guitars. Its primary financial goal for donations & bequests is to provide scholarship assistance and opportunities to steel guitar students who demonstrate intent and skill to become accomplished performers.

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

Open to all steel guitar players and non-players around the world who support the promotion and perpetuation of Hawaiian steel guitar music. Annual dues are US\$26. Membership year begins July 1. Members receive HSGA Quarterly and other group benefits.

Mail letters and editorial submissions to HSGA Quarterly, P.O. Box 1497, Kailua, HI, 96734-1497, USA. Or e-mail <a href="mailto:hsga@lava.net">hsga@lava.net</a>>. Our Website is <a href="http://www.hotspots.hawaii.com">http://www.hotspots.hawaii.com</a>. Phone/Fax: (808) 235-4742;

HSGA Quarterly is mailed by U.S. Bulk Permit to Hawai'i and U.S. mainland; by "Printed Matter" Class Surface to all foreign addresses. Allow 4-8 weeks delivery. For Airmail: U.S. \$2 yr.; Eur. & Pac. Rim, \$6 yr. added to dues.



Their "backs to the future" of Hawaiian steel guitar popularity, Duke Ching, Alan Akaka and "Lion" Kobayashi "jam" for ever-larger crowds at Ala Moana Center "Center Stage". Next AMC HSGA event? Saturday, May 2, 1998, midday. Be there!

# SPECIALS FOR HSGA MEMBERS

HSGA's Board of Directors Votes Lots of REALLY GOOD STUFF for all HSGA members in the months to come. Don't Miss Out!

In a frenzy of "yes" votes at the Fall Board Meeting in Joliet, HSGA's Directors gave unanimous approval to some new projects that will benefit all members.

## "MEMBER OF THE YEAR"

AWARD: Starting RIGHT NOW, through June 30, 1998, the HSGA member who refers the most NEW members (who join before July 1) will be publicly honored with a special "Member of the Year" T-shirt and a framed "Member of the Year" certificate for his or her efforts.

The award will be made at the Joliet convention, next October 1,2,3. Thanks to Director **Mike Scott**, HSGA's Membership Chairman for this outstanding

idea

That's only a few months away, folks, so get started *now* and be THE WINNER. If you need HSGA brochures with Membership Application blanks in them, call, fax, write or e-mail the HSGA office, and we'll send them by return mail. Or, make copies of the membership blank in your Quarterly magazine. Be SURE to write YOUR name in on the top "Referred By" line before you hand them out. We "track" all referred memberships in our database; on July 1, we'll add 'em all up, and the winner will be notified.

Don't stop though, because HSGA Directors voted to do this EVERY year, from now on.

Continued on pg. 3

# 1997 "JOY"LIET "JAM"BOREE

# Convention Review by Bo and Betty Bahret

If you can't be in Hawai'i, where else could you find great music and fellowship than at an HSGA "Joy"liet "Jam"boree? And so it was from Thursday through Saturday, this past October 2-4.

Thanks to **Don Weber's** advance work, everything was in order and ready to go. Both private cars and limos were arriving on Wednesday, the day before. **Barbara Kuhns**, **Doug Smith** and **Floyd Alexander** drove in with their carload of electronics, and it wasn't long before things were looking and feeling like an HSGA Convention. There was lots of hugging and everywhere familiar faces were saying, "So happy to see you again, *aloha mai*".

Last year this time, construction was underway in the hotel, so it was great to see the newly renovated lobby — with a big-screen TV, many tables and chairs and comfy couches for relaxing and talking with friends. This was also where we all enjoyed our complimentary continental breakfasts each morning from 6-9 am.

#### **SHOWTIME EVERYONE!**

The opening ceremonies started on schedule (almost) at 9AM with our own Bob Waters giving the traditional Hawaiian blessing. Everyone got fired up with the music and songs from the Duke, Bob and Julie Waters and Virginia Grzadzinski, who was pinch-hitting for the 20-minute-late Bernie Endaya. (Bernie was told his "paycheck" would reflect a cut this week!) Who could miss that special Bernie Endaya smile!

Friday morning's schedule had its downside with the absence of **Ian Ufton** and **Neal Cosand.** Both were last minute cancellations due to bad backs. However, the show went on in typical Hawaiian style as others stepped in and offered their talents.

Both **Don Weber** and **Frank Miller** acted as "ringmasters" and kept the show on schedule. Oh, there were a few here and there who had to get in "just one



Don and Donna Weber, your tireless hosts for HSGA's annual Joliet convention

more piece", but everyone did a good job of keeping one eye on the strings and the other on the clock.

#### THE TIPKA'S GIFT

John and Millie Tipka had the spotlight when they presented the HSGA with a 6-string steel guitar and case made entirely by them. It is to be presented to the Seniors of Moloka'i so that they can both play and inspire others on that Island. What a great gift, and what could be nicer than taking Moloka'i's Seniors under our wing and providing them with a musical "voice" for expressing their aloha.

Vivian Bangs added excitement to each day by selling raffle tickets for items which were donated, to benefit the association.

#### **CHOW TIME**

Lunches from noon 'til 1:30pm were catered day in the hotel, with hot and cold sandwiches, soup, salad, snacks and cold drinks. Some still took advantage of the time, however, to hit a local restaurant. The evening dinner hour was a change from previous years in that everyone was on their own.

Thanks to Wally Pfeifer's and Don

area, everyone had plenty of choices of where to eat. That worked out quite well because by going our own ways, in singles, groups or packs, we were able to have a selection of both food and ambiance; it was also much less expensive than the planned meals of previous years.

Of course we didn't have music

Weber's maps of the restaurants in the

Of course we didn't have music during the dinner hour, but with so much good music during the morning and afternoon, who needs more for dinner? This way, where was no lugging of instruments all over town and the musicians had a chance to relax and enjoy their dinner hour, too.

# THE MUSIC GOES ROUND AND ROUND AND....

If you thought that the music stopped for the day at 4pm, you had another think coming. Jamming started in the ballroom about 9pm, and went on until long after the cows came home. As we recall, it was after midnite on Friday when Alan Akaka called down the hall to Junior (Al Greene, Jr.), telling him to get up to the ballroom and start playing! That's known as "teaching by exposure". The session had to have lasted for many hours, because none of them showed their faces again until around noon the next day!

#### THEN IT WAS LŪ'AU TIME ...

Saturday had an early break in the schedule at 3:30pm so that the ballroom could be set up for the evening Lū'au, and everyone would have time to dress Hawaiian. A cash bar was available from 5pm and the Lū'au started at 7pm. With the 'pros' eating first, we were able to start the Really Big Shuuuu about 8 o'clock.

And on stage they came, dressed in their best Hawaiian duds: Duke Ching, Alan Akaka, Bernie Endaya, Bob and Julie Waters and, of course, our Guest Star for convention, Al Greene, Jr. (how about that jacket!) In addition to all of the great music, singing and hulas for two hours, we had an unexpected surprise, when Junior and his father,

Alfred Greene, Sr., treated us to some great slack key duets.

The convention wouldn't be complete without its hula girls and boys. For gracing our programs, a big *mahalo* to Mike Beeks, Greg Wong, Julie Waters, Gloria Murawski, and Floris, Elena and Muriel (whose last names we regret not knowing), and to Makalina Gallagher for your traditional and often humorous contributions.

The formal show ended shortly after 10pm with all singing in the traditional circle of friendship. This was followed by much hugging and aloha, smiles and tears, and greetings of "til we meet again".

#### ... UNTIL THE DAWN!

Of course the evening was still young, and jamming was on the minds of many. When some of us came down to catch our limos at 5:30 AM on Sunday, the last of the Jammers were just leaving the ballroom, so it could be locked up 'til HSGA comes again in '98.

And so ends another great three days of music, foods and fellowship, all captured by the professional camcording and photography of the diligent **Paul Weaver**.

It may be over, but the melody lingers on of the **Duke**'s sensationally sweet 'n swingy music, and the breathtaking "12th Street Rag" of our own Mr. President, **Alan Akaka**.

Already, plans are in the works for more of the same next year (plus some "can we top this" additions, we hear). So we'll see you ALL next October — same time, same place, same glorious Hawaiian steel guitar music. Can't wait. Til then, mālama pono — aloha pumehana.



"Hauʻoli Makahiki Hou" Happy New Year!



Millie and John Tipka present the case and beautiful steel guitar which John made as a gift for the Ho'olehua Seniors on Moloka'i.

HSGA Specials - continued from pg. 1

# HSGA Bumper Stickers and Sew On Patches

Some of you have been asking for these for years now. Your Directors voted "yes", because you have continued to enroll new members these past two years, and HSGA ended the '96-'97 year last June with enough cash balance to make these projects possible.

Thanks also to Mary Faith Rhoades at Breezy Ridge Instruments who has offered to print the bumper stickers. We'll have both stickers and patches for you at the Joliet convention, priced to cover the costs with a little extra donation for HSGA's Scholarship Assistance Fund and new Educational Programs fund.

### Moloka'i Ho'olaule'a Set for May Day Festival Week '98

Those of you who attended the Honolulu convention in May '97, (and went to Moloka'i) and/or the Joliet convention in October '97 know about the great steel guitar which **John and Millie Tipka** built as a most generous gift to the Ho'olehua Seniors on Moloka'i.

The presentation of the guitar, and a steel guitar concert by HSGA mem-

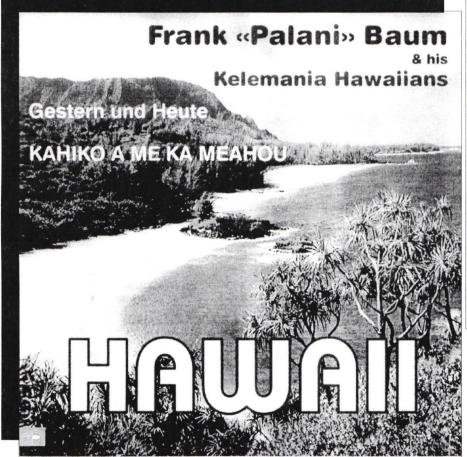
bers, coming to Hawai'i for the events that HSGA plans around May Day festivities, will take place in Kaunakakai. Alu Like Coordinator, Jeanette Kahalehoe, is very excited about it. She says "we now have a choral group practicing, and also a hula group, so we'll be able to sing and dance our songs for you, too."

It's going to be a festive day, folks, in true Hawaiian style with *aloha* to the max. The purpose for the Seniors will be to fill their Calabash full enough to purchase a long-desired video camera, for which other funding has been unavailable. The Seniors want very much to record their most interesting personal history and lineage, talk story fashion. This would be a very special contribu-

Continued on pg. 9

MEMBER ALERT: JOLIET
CONVENTION WILL BE OCT.
1.2.3 '98. It's also an
ELECTION YEAR FOR
YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS.
YOU'LL FIND VOTING BALLOT
AND CONVENTION RESERVATION FORMS IN THE SPRING
'98 QUARTERLY.

# DISC'N DATA

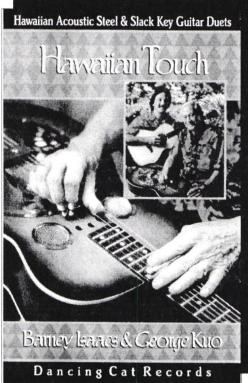


We're covering BOTH sides of the Atlantic "pond" this time, so HSGA members in Europe can enjoy a fine "local" source of Hawaiian style music and steel guitar.

From Germany "Gestern und Heute - Kahiko a me ka Meahou HAWAII" (Yesterday & Today) a very fine mostly Hawaiian style CD by Frank "Palani" Baum and his Kelemania Hawaiians. I'm listening again as I write. You'll like this one. Polynesian-born vocalist Tina Elton sounds very much like "Sistah" Robi Kahakalau, and even sings one of Robi's signature pieces "Pi'i Mai Ka Nalu". (Interesting note - Robi, all Hawaiian, was raised in Germany!). My favorite of Tina's, sung in English, is her "Makua", the Hawaiian "country" feeling is all there. Also a great rendition of Bob Dylan's "I'll Be Your Baby Tonight". Then there's a Wes Montgomery sounding arrangement by Frank of his own tune "California Beachcomber".

Frank, his sons and band play all over Germany and Europe, and dance music is expected, so many of the tunes are done danceable style. You could go to school on what's done on this album. Frank's own "Around the Horn" is a nice bouncy steel number, with some pure Alan Akaka/Hanalei deWilligen/Bobby Ingano "swinging jazz" stylings.

Frank not only produced the recording, but did all the arrangements, the steel solos and some great rhythm 'ukulele and guitar. Don't know where to tell you to buy the CD, except thru Frank: Frank Baum, Erzbergstrasses 8, Theuern, Germany D-92245. Frank and group have gigs and travel going constantly, and a TV show coming up,



so you may have to nag him, and wait a while to get your CD, but it's worth it, folks. Lots of variety, and the engineering is excellent.

"HAWAHAN TOUCH" is classic Alvin "Barney" Isaacs, Jr. on steel and the incomparable George Kuo on slack key guitar in fourteen mellow duets of traditional Hawaiian favorites. The CD jacket says it best. "This groundbreaking album is the first time in the history of Hawaiian music that pure duets of just acoustic steel and slack key have ever been recorded. The result is a beautiful blend of the sound of old Hawai'i and sweet slack key." Amen to that!

The album is not new; Dancing Cat Records produced it in 1995, but some of you may not have it yet or didn't buy it at Joliet '97 convention. Many mahalos, incidentally, to Ben Churchill at Dancing Cat, who donated our Joliet supply so you folks could have one, and HSGA could put all the sales income into our Scholarship Assistance Fund.

Favorite cuts? All of 'em, but perhaps the most memorable for steel players will be "Moana Chimes" and "Hula Blues" which George says was the first piece they recorded together. "It was real give and take".

Certainly the final cut "Medley: Old Plantation & Ku'u Pua I Paoakalani" is a Barney Isaacs keeper for steel players. Barney plays it solo acoustic, rare indeed.

Finally, the 12 page booklet with the CD (and we suppose with the cassette) is a well-done piece all by itself; history of the songs and the tunings George and Barney use.

If you're on the Internet, you can order directly from Auntie Maria at "Hawaiian Music Island" <a href="http://www.mele.com">http://www.mele.com</a>. Or mail order from Dancing Cat Records, Dept. SK, PO Box 639, Santa Cruz, CA 95061. They have a catalog.

Bob Stone is producing three more Sacred Steel albums for the Arhoolie label (see Summer '97 Quarterly). Should be available by now, as they were to come out by

November '97. If you can't find them, contact Bob at University of Florida, Educational and Media Services, P.O. Box 110810, Gainesville, FL 32611-0810, or phone: 352-392-2411/fax: 352-392-7902.

Data for Steel Players: Alan recommends two mail order sources for guitars, amps, keyboards, etc. He uses them for school as well as personal accessorizing "bits 'n pieces". Both have complete catalogs: "Thoroughbred" at 1-800-800-4654 or on the Net go to <a href="http:/">http:/</a> /www.tbred-music.com>. Everything from cables and cases to MIDI Interfaces and computer software. AND "Manny's" at 1-800-448-8478 website <http:// www.mannysmusic.com>. Includes sound and recording gear ... lots of more modern "Jimmy Hendrix" type stuff here, for them that wants it.



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ten course. However, since the 60-lesson course book is out being printed in its 5th edition and therefore unavailable, those of you who continue to ask can at least get the tape. Video tape i, \$54.95 + \$4 US //h. Overrear - check your port office for comparable weight. BE SURE to state YHS or PAL when ordering from Scotty's Music, 9535 Midland Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63 I I 4: phone - (314) 427-7794. You may want to ask to be on back order for the full Course book when it's ready.

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# & COCO WIRE



Got this fun note from **Ken Emerson**, on the road this past summer, from the "Hotel Uplandia" in Uppsala, Sweden. He was on a Jazz tour of Sweden, but says "I play the steel guitar and they go NUTZ! They love it." Why aren't we surprised??

**URGENT REQUEST**: any of you "old timers" out there know anything at all about steel player Frank Ferera? Malcolm (and I) are having a hard time digging up info, as Frank played most of his gigs on the mainland, and recorded in New York. Malcolm Rockwell needs family background data for the discography he's writing. Ferera worked with Sam Kainoa (guitarist) and guitarist John and 'ukulele player Franzis Pa'aluhi at times in his career. Please pass any names/info you may have, however small to Malcolm: P.O. Box 1064, Kula, HI 96790-1064; email<malcolm@maui.net>.

Interesting note from **Thomas** Malm in Sweden (via Vic Rittenband) Tom and Kalo named their new-born son "Maui". You've given him quite an act to follow, Tom — refer, the Hawaiian song "Maui Hawaiian Sup'pa Man" (recorded by the late Brudda Iz - Israel Kamakawiwo'ole - a few years back).

Long-awaited news from Robbie Larkin and Patti Lane in Australia. "Arohanui" to you busy folks. They've just returned from 3 months working "registered club" shows around Sydney and the North Coast (e.g., Football Leagues, Boating, Returned Servicemen, etc). In Queensland, they play at the Hyatt Coolum Resort. They say there's much demand for Polynesian music and send regards to all of you. 'Eh Robbie and Patti, send us a current picture and some biographical stuff. Other HSGA'rs would be interested in what's happening Hawaiian, down under.

We have some most **interesting new members** you'll be hearing more about. **Hugh Jobe** of Haverhill, MA

says he's known Jerry Byrd for 38 years. His comment "when I heard that Jerry had moved to Hawai'i, I was green with envy. It seemed that he had gone to heaven before dying!" Yes, Hugh, this IS "heaven" and Jerry's steel playing, as always, is "to die for", as the expression goes. Hugh plays steel AND is "preoccupied" with outrigger sailing and raising orchids. How do the orchids like the sound of your steel playing?

Then there's **Rich Mermer** of Florida who's a bonafide Lothier. We'll show you photos of his uniquely designed, beautiful guitars in a future issue. Also **Bill Stafford**, long-time friend of "Keoki" Lake, who's developing a space age "gismo" for steel players. No, we don't think we're supposed to talk about what "gismo" is just yet; the company hasn't introduced it; it's not quite finished as I write.

We're getting good response from all over the world to doing **John Tipka's** "Build Your Own Steel Guitar" booklet. Because it contains a large "schematic" in addition to complete step-bystep instructions, we want to do it RIGHT, so it'll be a few months yet. We won't be printing a large order, so if you haven't got your name on the list yet, write us ASAP. Price? Don't know; depends on cost to produce, but it'll be in line, probably cheaper, and a lot better than some on the market.

Okay folks, next October's Joliet convention will have STICKY RICE, if we have to make it here first and fly it over! Gotten a few "complaints" from them what knows about "this anemic fluffy stuff they pass off as rice in the mainland". And *that* comment came from a mainlander (albeit "displaced"—

"Members Corner" is on "Holiday leave". The column will be back in Spring '98 issue. right **Doug Smith**? No forget da shoyu (soy sauce). Should Alan bring some Hawaiian Pepper Water, too, for da feesh? How 'bout fresh *poi*? 'Fraid the *poke* wouldn't make it, although I can't envision a Lū'au without it.



## Wanted: 8-string Fender Stringmaster double-neck

(possibly triple neck). Contact Gerald Ross, Ann Arbor, MI (313) 994-0535 or email <gbr/>gbross@umich.edu>

Wanted by Collector: Hawaiian Label 78's & LP's. Also ALL models lap steel & acoustic guitars, amps & basses! This is a continuing request by Michael Cord, Ventura, CA; phone - (805) 648-7881. FAX- (805) 648-3855.

Looking for Fender double-neck Stringmaster, short scale only (22 1/2). Also for a JB Frypan, short scale. Contact JT Gallagher at (718) 768-6182 or email <maka@idt.net>

For Sale: MAC "Classic" COM-PUTER by HSGA. Excellent for home, student, beginner. Inc. keyboard, mouse, padded case. Loaded w/word processing, database software. Asking \$350 OBO donation. Not recommended for Internet because of small screen, which is why we bought larger unit. Proceeds will go to HSGA's Scholarship Assistance Fund. Shipping extra.

For Sale: Frypan, 7-string lap steel w/case. Write for additional info or email James McCoy, Rt. 2, Box 2786, Quitman, TX 75783-9692; email

<jlmccoy@lakecountry.net>

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Charter - 3,12,14(sap),17(sap),49,55,56 Comcast - 3,19,22,28(sap),53,55,65,68

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TCI - Cable Radio - 103.3

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Falcon Cable - 15 South Utah Cable - 28 TCI Cable - 6,9

Vermont Helicon - 2,7,38 Virginia

Media General - 27,31,51,113,115

Cox Comm. - 9 Washington Century - 11 Summit -54,62 TCI - 3

West Virginia \* Wisconsin

Triax Cablevision - 10

Wyoming \* Canada\*

# LIFE WITH THE GUITAR

# Visiting Werner and Elisabeth Bauhofer

(Reprinted in translation from "Dolomiten Magazin" Bozen [Bolzano] Italy, with kind permission of the Editors. Story and Photos by Journalist Michael Mûhlberger.

It would be ideal if the house was shaped in the form of a guitar and the windows and doors were strung with strings.

But this is not possible in the downtown area where Werner Bauhofer lives, so he concentrates on having the furnishings oriented toward the guitar. The guests' coffee is served in cups with the logo of a guitar company.

Bauhofer lives with Elisabeth (he calls her "Lies") and daughter Magdalena (4-1/2 years old) at the corner of Weggensteiner and Andreas Hofer streets, straight across from the Maximilian office and next to the Batzen House.

The whole life of the 37-year-old has been devoted to the guitar. When he was ten years old, he started to play the instrument; he left high school early to devote himself to music. Performances too him around half of the world, and it is not exaggerating to say that Bauhofer belongs to the best guitar players of the world.

In Bauhofer's living room string instruments hang on the wall as if they were paintings. Rally they are pieces of value. Two Hawaiian steel guitars were built in 1938 and 1948, and the other instruments have an approximate value of a midprice automobile.

The small guitar from the South Seas has a funny name: "'ukulele" (jumping flea). Bauhofer acquired most of his instruments in Nashville (USA) in shops where the big stars of Rock music also buy. But the valuable instruments are not there for decoration. A corner of the living room is a recording studio, and 140 songs have been re-



Werner Bauhofer, very much "at home" with Hawaiian steel guitar and the HSGA Quarterly!

corded there.

Not only Werner Bauhofer plays guitar, his wife does too. Together they perform as "Country Palace Duo" and the name reveals the kind of music they play — mostly Hawaiian and Country music.

In addition to their job as parents, Werner and Elisabeth have two other careers each. He's a salesman, she's a teacher, and both teach guitar. The busy couple enjoy their house mostly on the weekends.

Through a long hallway (race track for Magdalena's tricycle) one gets to an

area which contains family, bedrooms and kitchen. On the walls are momentos from their many travels, and drawings from their daughter.

A special story is how the Bauhofers found each other. After they were together for a year in high school, they lost contact until in 1990 there was a show in Neumarkt and one of the guitar players couldn't make it. Werner filled in for him. A friend of Elisabeth had bought a ticket for that performance but couldn't go, and gave the ticket to Elisabeth. Soon after seeing each other again, they became a couple.

Werner and Elisabeth in their living room/recording studio.





Magdelena tries her hand at steel guitar

HSGA SPECIALS - continued from pg. 3

tion for HSGA to support, as Moloka'i is the most spiritual and most Hawaiian of the Islands. See what you've created, John and Millie?

# "HOT LIX Hawaiian Style" is May 3 in Honolulu

While it's an "off year" for the Honolulu convention, HSGA's pro steel stars

Continued from previous page

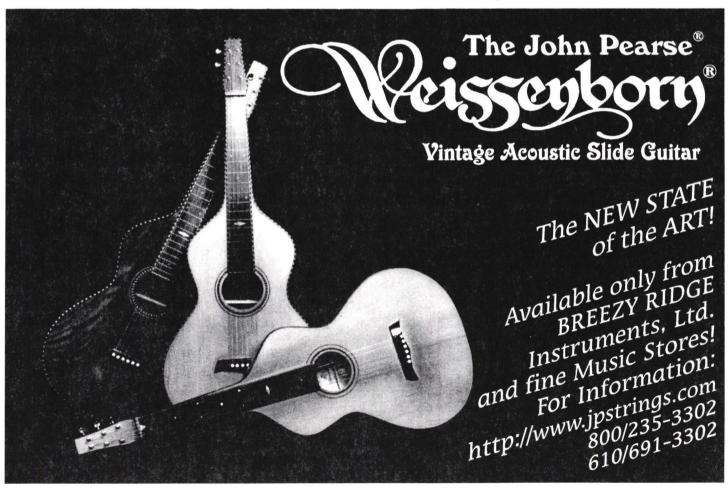
[Ed. Note: Werner has been an HSGA member for three years, and gave us the wonderful drawing of the Hawaiian band. Betty Bahret won HSGA's "Name This Band" contest with the name "The Five Sharps", and won a Jerry Byrd CD and drawing of the band, signed by Werner. (See Winter '96-'97 HSGA Quarterly.) "Dolomiten" is a daily newspaper published in Bozen/Bolzano, (South Tyrol / Italy) in German language for the German speaking minority in this very northern Dolomite mountain area of Italy. HSGA member, Michelle Di Vella lives there, too.]

will, as we do every year, present our free Ho'olaule'a for the public. It's planned once again for Kapi'olani Park Bandstand, Sunday May 3.

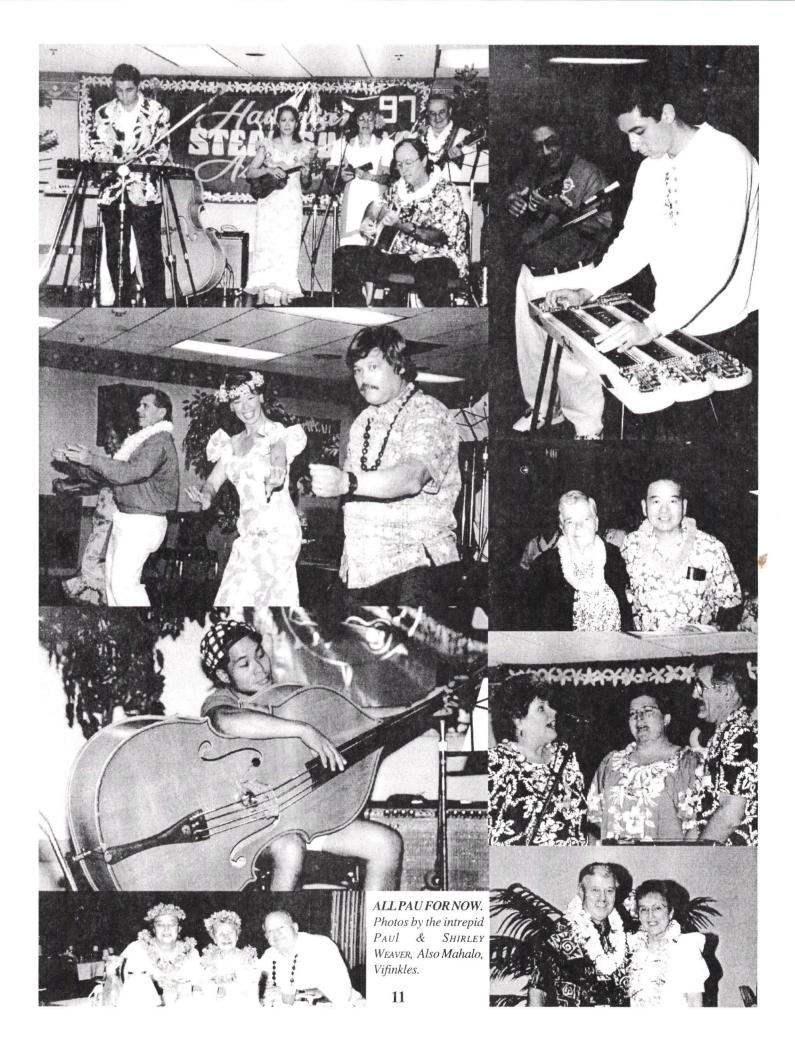
May Day, Friday, May 1, HSGA members will play, as always, during the day-long festivities at the Park, and we expect to do our usual Ala Moana Center concert, probably Saturday, May 2. So, plan to be in Honolulu for MORE good steel music and camaraderie. Details in the Spring Quarterly.

## **HSGA's Educational Program**

President Alan Akaka opened discussion with the Directors on initiating a school assembly concert project, to be carried out throughout the Hawaiian Islands. The purpose will be to expose young people to Hawaiian music and steel guitar, and encourage them to play. Board members agreed on a plan to seek Grant funding to train a "Superteens" group and provide for their playing needs and transportation. Structuring the project and further discussion will take place in the months to come.







# JOHN ELY INTERVIEWED

(Mahalo to Russ Rask at Steel Guitar World Magazine for allowing HSGA to adapt this from a 1991 Robbie Bossert interview of John Ely near the end of John's 7 year stint with western swing band Asleep at the Wheel)

**RB**: Tell me a little bit about where you come from, where you were raised, do you come from a musical family? etc...

JE: I was raised in Grand Rapids, a small resort town in northern Minnesota. Both my parents are classical pianists, and they found me a great piano teacher who focused a lot on music theory. I burned myself out playing piano in grade school and high school, but this early exposure to harmony served me quite well later on.

**RB**: When did you receive your first steel guitar? What kind was it?

JE: In the fall of 1972 I got hold of an old Gibson lap steel. It belonged to a classmate's uncle who picked it up in Honolulu during World War II. It's ironic because all I could think of at the time was how to get pedal steel sounds out of it. I never dreamed that I would eventually learn how to tune the thing and play some of the music that was originally played on it (and end up enjoying it more!). That original connection to Hawaii proved prophetic for me.

**RB**: Who do you consider to be some of your biggest influences?

JE: I remember "woodshedding" for two years at school, playing five, six, eight hours a day, wearing the grooves out of Hank Williams LP's (Don Helms and Jerry Byrd on steel) and anything else I could find. After moving to Austin in 1975, where western swing was still big, I was exposed to the western swing classic recordings of Joaquin Murphy, Noel Boggs, Leon McAuliffe and live performances featuring Maurice Anderson, Bobby Black, and others. In



recent years I've focused a lot on Hawaiian music and have been inspired by players like Dick McIntire, David Keli'i, Jules Ah See, and Jerry Byrd.

**RB**: Have you taken any formal instruction on the steel or are you a self-taught musician?

JE: I guess I'm basically self-taught on steel. To be honest, when you take licks off records and develop your ear that way, it's practically like taking lessons from the masters. I have recently taken two or three lessons from Jerry Byrd, who has an incredible way of opening up your ears to the phrasing capabilities of the instrument.

**RB**: Do you feel that it is necessary to be able to read music and understand theory in order to become a good steel player?

JE: I definitely feel like my music training has helped me. Reading is pretty handy in the studio for jingles and what not. I don't feel, however, that these things are essential to be a good player. I can't think of anyone who would dis-

agree with me. Theory is a tool to assist in communicating musical ideas and organizing musical ideas in your head, but it is no substitute for hearing music which is our first and foremost task. You can list musical geniuses by the score (no pun intended) who never read a note of music and who had no idea what they were playing. I'll trade with those guys!

**RB**: What was the most difficult thing for you to learn about playing the steel guitar?

**JE**: One of the hardest thing for me was learning how to finger right hand single string runs and how to get a decent sounding vibrato with my left hand. I think a couple of lessons would have made my learning curve less steep. I've basically had to unlearn a lot of stuff I'd been doing for years. The biggest thing I've had to learn is more of a mental thing - that steel playing is not a horse race. You need time and thoughtful consideration to realize and communicate what you're feeling inside, and I believe that anything that detracts from this process is going to be destructive. It's something I've got to constantly remind myself of.

**RB**: What thoughts should be going through a steel player's mind while on the bandstand backing a singer?

JE: In the role of backup the steel guitar can really shine. It is a singing instrument that can complement a human voice. Because it is a true voice with many of the phrasing capabilities of a singer, it can also really detract from what is going on. It's important to play around the singer's lines as much as possible, and even avoid the singer's register at times. The main thing is to listen to the singer as if you were in the audience. Focus on the vocalist and let your playing enhance what is being sung. It's not easy to talk about and is one of the big challenges of the instrument.

RB: Did you ever make such a big mis-

take on stage that you just knew [or felt like] the whole audience noticed?

JE: I wish I had a dollar for every time I felt like I blew it on stage. But I'd rather have a quarter for every time I hit a clinker and hardly anyone knew it. Steel players tend to have a narrow perspective on their own playing. They concentrate so much on the little details of their performance that they tend to be removed from the overall effect they create. How many times have you been blown away by someone's playing and afterwards listened to that person downgrade himself? It's sad. I think we need to give ourselves a break. Just so you don't think I'm covering up the importance of my mistakes, I'll confess that at one big show I let my bar squirt out toward the crowd during an attempted bar slant! No injuries to report...

**RB**: What do you consider to be some of the greatest highlights of your career to date?

JE: The biggest highlight for me was winning my first Grammy with the Asleep at the Wheel band in 1988 for the instrumental track "String of Pars". It was also my first songwriting credit on a record, so the occasion was doubly exciting for me. It was early in my stint with the Wheel, and I remember being pleased with the live feel of the performance. It was a first take for everybody, I believe.

**RB**: What was the largest audience that you ever played for?

**JE**: Probably Farm Aid at the Hoosier Dome or halftime at a 1988 Forty-Niners game at Candlestick Park. I guess that's cheating, isn't it?

**RB**: Why do you prefer a non-pedal steel to a pedal steel?

**JE**: I love the sound of non-pedal steels, for one thing. They seem to have a more natural sound as opposed to a pure pickup sound. I feel that most pedal in-

struments are forced into more of a pickup tone because of all the hardware required to make accurate pedal pulls. That can tend to inhibit body vibration and the natural interaction of body and pickup. I'm making a general statement here... There are great sounding pedal steels out there. I just seem to prefer the sound you get when you slap a pickup onto a piece of wood or bakelite plastic.

The other reason I gravitate toward lap steel has to do with playing style. I think without pedals you are forced to do everything with your hands, and that can tend to make your playing more individualized. There are more parameters. You have to slant the bar to get a lot of chords, and everyone is going to do that a little differently. What I found when I started playing lap steel all the time, was that I really had to pay attention to things that I had neglected on pedal steel. With pedals you can ignore your left hand and get away with it, while your right hand rips off fast runs or grabs big chord combinations. The left hand has incredible powers of expression through vibrato and the ability to connect phrases by glissing in and out of notes. Obviously all these things can be done on pedal steel, but for some reason you don't hear it being done as much.

**RB**: What sort of advice would you give to new steel players that might get them through the potentially frustrating times of practicing?

JE: I would tell them to pace themselves and allow themselves to enjoy the instrument and their own progress independent of what the next guy is doing. That's a tough one. I certainly didn't follow this advice. Everybody has something to say. And there's no rush to get that message out. There's always room for another player. I guess it was my love for the instrument that got me through those early hard times. I still fall prey to self-evaluation, but not so often anymore. It's a syndrome that's rampant in our field, and I would discourage any

young player from feeding into it.

(Ed. Note: John's arrangement of "Mapuana" in B11th is in response to Sam Floyd's request. Hope you like it, Sam. Also, for the curious reader - yes, Ely, Minnesota is named after John's great grandfather who had a missionary school up there for the Indians. John says it's "kind of an upscale little yuppie town" now; old time newscaster, Charles Kurault owns a radio station there.)





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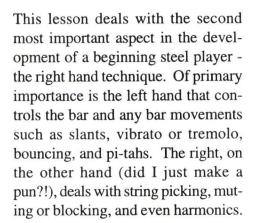
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# SO YOU WANT TO PLAY STEEL GUITAR HAWAIIAN STYLE

# THE QUARTERLY INTERVIEWS ALAN AKAKA

# PART IX - RIGHT HAND TECHNIQUE



In the beginning, I allow my students to get the feel of the strings offering encouragement as they "get comfortable" playing the steel guitar. As their technique starts to develop, I guide them on the usage of the right hand. As a potential problem surfaces, I nip it at the bud before it becomes a habit - and you know how difficult it can

be to unlearn an old habit.

Below are some of the major areas I address in lessons:

- 1. Keep your finger nails trimmed for any protruding surface can and will act as a pick. In other words, your nails can be an auxiliary to the finger picks.
- 2. When picking, keep your hand close to the strings shortening the distance between the hand and strings. This makes particular sense since lifting the hand several inches after every attack would increase the chance of sloppy picking. Here's an analogy. Which would give you a better chance of nailing a bullseye,

shooting from a distance or within inches of the target? Do you see my rationale?

- 3. When looking at the right side of your hand, make sure the edge of your palm is parallel to the frets with the thumb slightly extended. When picking, turn the thumb and fingers in a clockwise motion as if opening a bottle cap. In this way, the thumb and fingers will not collide.
- 4. What to do with the the pinkie and ring fingers? It is better left up to your own judgment. I normally keep them curled like my other fingers.
- 5. As with any new exercises, take it slow and easy in the beginning. Practice rudimentary drills and exercises methodical at a deliberately slow tempo picking up the pace during the session a little at a time. This way the hand speed, dexterity, and precision can develop sooner.

Most important is that you enjoy your steel guitar. As your skills, technique, musical knowledge, and repertoire increase so will your satisfaction and the enjoyment that your steel can bring to many others. Come and watch our members play at the Joliet and Honolulu conventions and you'll see what I mean.

## **JOLIET '97 CONVENTION VIDEOS**

These videos are the property of HSGA and for personal viewing only. Order by tape number from: Paul Weaver, Jr., 25462 Classic Dr., Mission Viejo, CA 92691. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

- 1-J-97 Opening w/ Bob & Julie Waters & Duke Ching; Lane Vifinkle & family; Ivan Reddington; John Tipka.
- 2-J-97 Dick Lloyd; Claude Brownell, Maurice Junod; Ron Simpson.
- 3-J-97 Dale Nightwine, Duke w/Bob & Julie; Rex Reike; Frank & Donna Miller.
- 4-J-97 Lorene Ruymar; Coral Islanders w/Bernice Honold; Bob & Julie Waters, Mae & Art Lang.
- 5-J-97 Doug Smith & Barbara Kuhn; J.T. Gallagher & Makalina; Al Greene Jr, Sharon Denny; Alan Akaka on John Tipka's "Moloka'i steel guitar"
- 6-J-97 Don Woods; Ken "Dusty" Nall; Mike Scott; Kay Koster & Friends; Fred Fallin "'Ukulele Fred"
- 7-J-97 Art Ruymar; Jack Moore; Ray Gaitsch, Al Greene Jr.
- 8-J-97 Joliet '97 Lū'au

SPECIAL HLX II-97 - Aloha Festival Week (9/97) in Honolulu "HOT LIX" II '97 at Ala Moana Center: "Po'okela" w/ Greg Sardinha; Ken Emerson & Michaelle Edwards; Bobby Ingano; w/Rev. Dennis Kamakahi, George Kuo, etc.; "SUPERTEENS": Al Greene, Jr., BB Shawn (slack key), Imua Garza ('ukulele) and Gary Aiko; JAM: Alan Akaka, Casey Olsen, John Ely, Hanalei deWilligen.

ORDERING (All tapes are US Standard; PAL & SECAM not available) Single Video inc. postage: US\$15/US & Canada; US\$17, Europe; US\$19 Pacific Rim (Japan, Australia, New Zealand). Cash, US\$ M.O. or US Bank check ONLY please.

# **TECH TIPS**

By John Ely

#### **Tablature Key**

BELOW IS A GUIDE TO THE SYM-BOLS AND NOTATION USED IN JOHN'S ARRANGEMENT OF"MAPUANA" (pp. 16-17)

#### Basics

- 1. Each tab staff line represents a string, arranged to resemble your fretboard. Numbers tell you what fret to play for the indicated string. For visual clarity, fret numbers are placed just above the string to be played. In the first example, pick strings 2,3, and 5 at the 9th fret.
- In the second example, the zero indicates an open string to be played. Pick string 2 open, and strings 3 and 6 at the ninth fret.
- These are fingering symbols for: thumb/finger/thumb.

#### **Left Hand Phrasing**

- Pick a fret below the marked fret and quickly slide the bar up to the marked fret.
- 5. Pick at the indicated fret and then slide the bar down, toward the next note. (Pick next note.)
- 6. Pick at the indicated fret and then slide the bar upward, toward the next note. (Pick next note.)
- 7. Pick the first note group and slide upward to the next. Do not pick the second note.
- 8. Pick the first note group and slide downward to the next. Do not pick the second note.

#### **Picking**

- 9. Rake across the indicated strings with your thumb starting with the lowest string.
- 10. Palm harmonics indicated. Use the thumb, raking upward across the marked strings.

PH 2 = Second position harmonics.Harmonic the indicated note 7 frets above bar.

PH 3 = Third position harmonics.Harmonic the indicated note 5 frets above bar.

- 11. Rake across the indicated strings with your finger, starting with the highest string.
- 12. h = hammer-on ... Let open string ring, then use bar to sound note instead of picking.
- 13. p = pull-off ... Do not pick the open string - lift bar off string to sound note.

#### Special Markings

- 14. Let all of the bracketed notes ring together with no muting.
- 15. slide all of the notes above the bracket without picking.
- 16. Play finger harmonics for the duration of the bracket. Finger harmonics are played in the open position (no bar) using the left hand pinkie. Additionally they may be played with the bar on the strings, using a right hand knuckle or finger tip (4th or 5th finger).

FH 2 = Second position harmonics. Harmonic the indicated note 7 frets above bar.

FH 3 = Third position harmonics. Harmonic the indicated note 5 frets above bar.



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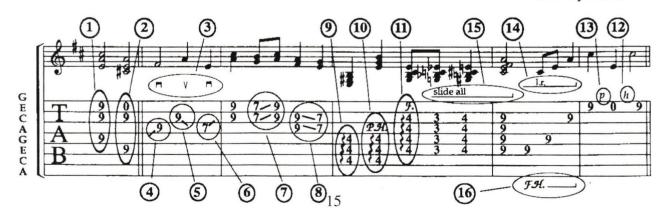
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If you want a steel arrangement for a special song, write John c/o HSGA, or at his address: Ely Music/Publishing • 1155 Fort Street Mall, Suite 138 • Honolulu, HI 96813, or email him < johnely.panworld.net>. Writing steel arrangements and general music publishing is part of John's business — his "day job", that is!

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# MAPUANA







Hawaiian "down home" style kanikapila at Greene Acres in Kona. (L to R) HSGA'rs John Keana 'āina with Julie and Bob Waters and Bernie Endaya, following Al Greene Jr.'s steel guitar lead. Photo courtesy of Momi Greene.

# **Hawaiian Word List**

In response to a number of requests over the past year, here's a list of commonly used Hawaiian words and phrases. For your reference in pronouncing them correctly:

ALL vowels are pronounced, even if some are spoken fast. For example, the word "kai" is pronounced "kah ee", not "keye". Vowel pronunciations are: A (ah), E (ay, as in say), I (ee), O, U (oo). There's actually NO "w" in the Hawaiian language; "w" is spoken as a soft "v".

The diacritical mark ' ('okina) is used with double vowels to remind you to pronounce the vowels separately — takes a short "glitch" in the throat; the macron over a vowel is an accent mark to show which syllable gets emphasized.

'Olu'olu = pleasing Nahenahe = sweet Pilikia = trouble Huhū = scolding, anger

Mahalo = thank you A hui hou (ho oo) = see you again Mālama pono = take care of yourself Mele = song Pa'ani = play Ho'okani pila = play solo Hana hou = encore/"again" Kanikapila = play music

Pau = end Pau hana = end of the work day Lawa = enough (let's take a break) Mana'o = thought, idea

Makai = towards the sea Mauka = towards the mountain Ewa = direction ref. on O'ahu only Diamond Head = direction ref. on O'ahu only

Malihini = visitor, someone foreign to the area

Kama'āina = resident of the land

'Āina = land Wai = fresh water Kai = sea, salt water



# **CLOSING NOTES**

Our good friend, and HSGA member **Buddy Hew Len** passed away in October, after more than a year in a coma. (Buddy had suffered irreversible damage to his head in a fall.)

George "Keoki" Lake said it well: "I enjoyed playing fun sessions with Buddy so very much...he was a great rhythm man and such a gentle person in so many ways. His steel guitar playing often reflected much of the style of his late brother Billy. However, I do feel his expertise was focused as a superb rhythm guitarist and bassist, as well as being an excellent vocalist.

"Buddy's main characteristic was definitely a very warm personality, much of it obviously a reflection of being married for so many years to his lovely wife, Pearl. They were a wonderful couple together. Her love for him only intensified over the past eighteen months as he lay in a coma. Pearl, and the entire Hew Len family gave Buddy the constant loving care he so desperately required, but God must have had other plans for this fine musician and friend whom Mary and I will dearly miss. He wasn't very tall in physical stature, but in our vision, he was a giant."

Buddy was always "on call" for our HSGA steel guitar Ho'olaule a's at Ala Moana Center, and is forever preserved in picture on the front of our HSGA brochure (standing next to Alan). Buddy played and recorded with "Barney" Isaacs, and we're sure "Barney" is happy to see his friend again in their heavenly Hawaiian music group. Listen up, folks.



# E komo mai! Welcome! New Members

ALL YOU FOLKS WHO JOINED VIA THE INTERNET, BE SURE WE HAVE YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS SO OTHER MEMBERS CAN REACH YOU TO TALK STORY. MEMBER LIST OF OCT. '97, AVAIL. @ \$1.50 TO COVER S/H COSTS.

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OOPS! Another CORRECTION:

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ebig@1x.netcom.com

odom\_c@hccs.cc.tx.us

Thirdman@hiline.net

billwynne2@aol.com

ulf.bro@t-onLine.de

MochaDave@AOL.COM

luigifer@fi.flaschnet.it

mermer@gate.net

George Lake ADDRESS CHANGE

Jim Wilbur

New: <two0jj@aol.com>

...And an "uptown" Sunday jam at Shipley's in Mānoa Marketplace, Oahu's "In" spot for musicians to hoʻokani pila. (L to R) Mike Kaʻaʻawa, Dennis Kamakahi, Kāwika Kamakahi, unnamed bass player, and ... as usual ... Bobby Ingano on steel. With just a hand in the picture, far left, is BB Shawn. Place to be, way to go folks, on a Sunday evening.



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Web:<a href="http://www.hjotspots.hawaii.com/hsga.html">http://www.hjotspots.hawaii.com/hsga.html</a> "linked" by Marjorie Scott, Editor

Hooray! Both Bernie Endaya and Duke Ching are now on the Net. Bernie: <BENDAYA@aol.com>. Duke:<Dukestlgtrmagic@webtv.net>. Sure beats "snail mail" for getting fast answers, and pays for itself in no time, in terms of the cost of phone calls.

Eight new members this issue came in via HSGA's website, and one "returnee": Bill Wynne. Bill is a veritable encyclopedia of Hawaiian music history—especially recorded songs. Welcome back! We've been chatting via a newsgroup: <alt.music.hawaiian>. If you haven't checked in, do so. Sometimes there's junk, but we serious Hawaiian music devotees are discouraging the trash. The newsgroup could use

some more international flavor — **Derek Young** and **Christian Esther**, do you read?

Derek Young wrote a few months back: "Really good that this electronic communication can bring the Islands so much closer. Not the same as being in Hawai'i, but the best next thing." He says he wishes John Marsden and some other UK members were on the Net, even though the charges are high in the UK. You'll find Derek at <derekyoung 1 @compuserve.com>, That's too bad about the charges, Derek. In the US, we can email around the world within the small monthly Server fee...no extra charges.

Randy Lewis, Kapa'a, Hawai'i <a href="mailto:randy@kapaa.com">randy@kapaa.com</a> - "I have played guitar for 37 years, often as my main means of support, and steel for about 25 years on and off, including 5 years of E9 pedal. I moved to Kaua'i from California in 1988, in part for the music.

Once again, I am becoming very serious about steel guitar, and was **delighted to discover your wonderful organization through your website**. There don't seem to be a lot of steel players here on Kaua'i, but there is a lot of Hawaiian music, so hopefully a student like myself will actually get a fair opportunity to play."

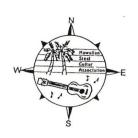
Netizens alert: THE place to search, choose, and buy Hawaiian music and a few selected books is Auntie Maria's "Hawaiian Music Island" <a href="http://www.mele.com">http://www.mele.com</a>. Impressive selection — over 1,000 titles, old and new. Also Maria has linked all the really good Hawaiian info sources.

Members in the Northwest USA/ Western Canada: Jerry Pickard reports that important info on the Hawai'i tour "Mahalo Hana Hou" (the Five O Cruise) is at <a href="http://members.aol.com/blurb/myweb/conpage.htm">http://members.aol.com/blurb/myweb/conpage.htm</a>.

# **HSGA QUARTERLY**

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# **WINTER 1997- '98**

- NEW "MEMBER OF THE YEAR" AWARD! (page 1)
- JOLIET '97 REVIEWED by Bo & Betty Bahret
- Werner Bauhofer and John Ely INTERVIEWED
   PLUS: TECH TIPS Hawaiian Word List •
   Alan's Steel Lesson

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