



The Delta Strummers

Newsletter *October, 2012*

Welcome to this third issue of our newsletter. The Delta Strummers Board introduced this newsletter in 2011 to document recent activities, and to convey information regarding future events. We'll also communicate decisions made by the Board. However, this newsletter is not intended to replace emails sent to the group with more current information.

From the Maestro

The Delta Strummers Ukulele band has had a very successful 2012. The year has seen the group perform 2 major concerts (Summerset IV in May and Summerset III in October) to rave reviews, as well as 6 more concerts at retirement homes in the East Contra Costa area, SIRs in Discovery Bay and the Women's Group in Trilogy. We have been recognized in both the Brentwood Press, the Contra Costa Times Brentwood edition, as well as the Discovery Bay Newspaper.



The group grew from 12 players in January to 27 players by October. I am pleased to announce that the first beginners class formed in August has recently graduated and been invited to join the Delta Strummers Band; This will bring us up to 35 members for the Christmas concerts at Cortona Park and The Commons at Dallas Ranch. We are now working with another beginner class numbering 10 more "students" who are in the process of working toward playing in the Tuesday night group starting in January 2013. Thanks go out to our trainers Lesley Dinette, Diane Korsten, and Janet Nadol.

We continue to enjoy our Tuesday evening rehearsal time together and continue to add to our repertoire (70+ songs). Plans for next year are being discussed by the Board and it is our intention to become a greater musical influence and recognized source of fun music for both the members of the Delta Strummers and our expanding East Bay audiences in 2013.

"Music is the universal language of mankind".

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Respectfully,

Ernie Macintyre, Music Director

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History of The Delta Strummers

by Ward Pinther, Chariman

The idea for a ukulele group began in 2004 when Ward Pinther and Dorothy McKellar decided to enjoy ukulele music. We put out the word in the community, and Fritz and Joan



Dueming joined us. After advertising in The Press, we were lucky enough to have Lesley Dinette, Jim Rundles and Will Taylor become members.

Our goals were to have fun, enjoy all kinds of music, to learn, grow in number, and improve our ability to play.

The Delta Strummers practiced weekly at our homes, Presbyterian and Methodist churches in Byron and Discovery Bay, Perko's restaurant and other restaurants in Brentwood. The venues gave us exposure in the community, and we were invited to play at assisted living homes, church events, luaus, and local clubs and organizations. We were now able to extend happiness and joy to others through ukulele music.

Through the years our group continued to grow and improve. In August, 2011 we were fortunate to have Ernie Macintyre join us as Music Director. With Ernie's leadership, we grew to over 25 members, and our beginners ukulele classes have become popular.

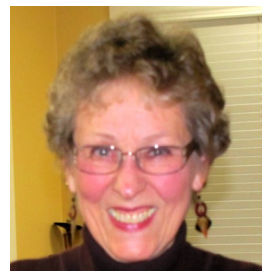
The Delta Strummers meet weekly "for the fun of it", and we perform for assisted living homes and various venues in Brentwood.

Ward Pinther

About Our Music

By Lesley Dinette, Vice Chairman

The ukulele was popular in the 1920's and early 1930's, as it was a symbol for romance and a carefree life during the depression years.



In the 1950's it had a second wave of popularity because of Arthur Godfrey and returning World War II servicemen who were based in the Pacific and had an interest in Hawaiian music.

The ukulele is now in its third wave of popularity. With ukulele groups and ukulele festivals throughout the U.S. and the availability of new ukuleles for purchase, the "uke" is available to anyone with a desire to play.

Songbooks for the ukulele are now plentiful, and ukulele groups usually generate their own arrangements.

The music we play consists of words to a song and ukulele chord letters printed above the words. This is called a "lead sheet". There is no need for our players to be able to read notes on a musical staff; We just learn to sing a melody and play the accompanying chords. This also makes it relatively easy for attendees at our beginners class to learn to play.

It's good for our minds to learn and memorize ukulele chords. We develop good hand-eye coordination by playing chords with our left hand, strumming with our right hand, reading chords and words on a lead sheet, and singing along with the music we play. All it takes is practice!

Lesley Dinette

Delta Strummers Christmas Season Performances

December 7th, 2:30pm: The Commons at Dallas Ranch.

December 11th, 3:30pm: Cortona Park.

As usual, directions, playlists, attire and other information will be communicated via email.

A Little Ukulele History

by Diane Korsten, Board member

When the Ravenscrag arrived in Honolulu on the afternoon of August 23, 1879, it was carrying 419 Portuguese immigrants from the island of Madeira to work in the sugar cane fields.



It had been a long and hard journey of over 4 months and some 15,000 miles. In celebration of their arrival, Joao Fernandes borrowed his friend's braguinha, jumped off the ship, and started playing

folk songs from his native land on the wharf.

The Hawaiians who came down to the dock were very impressed at the speed of this musician's fingers as they danced across the fingerboard, and they called the instrument "ukulele", which translates into English as "jumping flea." You see, that was the imaged conjured up by those dancing fingers. At least that is one of the stories about the origin of the name "ukulele".

Over the years, the "jumping flea" legend has become the most accepted, probably because Hawaiians like a cool story.

Diane Korsten

Election of the 2013 Board

The nominating Committee will shortly be presenting their recommendations to the membership for election to the 2013 Board.

Our Board meets monthly to provide future direction and to centralize communications. If someone taps you on the shoulder and asks if you'd be prepared to serve, please consider it.

The *Board Charter* sets out in detail the composition and responsibilities of the Board, the election process, and terms of office.

Christmas Party

When: Tuesday, December 4th at 6:00pm.

Where: Sticky Chicken & Ribs, 6670 Lone Tree Way, Brentwood, CA 94513. (Adjacent to Best Buy.)

The event is open to all Delta Strummers members, including recent beginners class graduates, and your significant other. The Delta Strummers Board voted to subsidize the event by paying part of the cost.

Make your reservation with Diane Korsten; She'll

need your \$5/person, either cash or check payable to the Delta Strummers, to secure your reservation.

Bring your ukulele and we'll have some impromptu playing and singing after we eat!

Delta Strummers Logo Shirts

Attendees at a recent practice were shown a selection of golf shirts and other apparel. Shirts will have the Delta Strummers logo embroidered.

The Board voted to pay the software charge to convert the logo to the relevant embroidery format.

More details, catalogs and order forms to follow.

Delta Strummers on the web

www.deltastrummers.org

The web site is our primary communication to the outside world, and contains various resources for use by the group. A password-protected **Song Book** allows members to download music and updates. Details on accessing this resource are communicated via email. Contact Tom Jones if you need help.

How do I play this thing?

by Tom Jones, Secretary

Ernie Macintyre and I have been acquainted, both socially and professionally, for a number of years. We both worked in the hi-tech semiconductor industry, albeit at different companies. We were (and still are) active members of other local clubs and organizations.



Ernie is an accomplished musician and singer, and is also the Music Director for the Summerset Singers choral group.

I first met Ward Pinther, co-founder of the Delta Strummers, in 2010 at a Christmas dinner held by the Byron Delta Lions Club. Ward talked about the Delta Strummers, and we loosely discussed creating a web site for the group.

In May, 2011 I talked briefly to a Delta Strummers gathering, and stuck around to listen to the group practice. There was something special about their music that caused me to purchase a ukulele, and join the Delta Strummers in June, 2011, having never previously played a stringed instrument.

For the first month, I struggled to master a basic strum, and was on the verge of giving up when I received an email from Ernie Macintyre who was on vacation in Maui; It said simply *"Thinking of you"*.



Attached to Ernie's email was this picture showing Ernie's wife, Dana, and a couple of mutual friends outside a ukulele store. My immediate reaction was to reply, pleading with Ernie to buy himself a ukulele and come home to teach me how to play.

One week later, my doorbell rang, and there stood Ernie holding a ukulele! He had not played a ukulele before, but created his own chord charts and taught himself to play during his vacation, much to the chagrin of other condo residents. With his talent for teaching, it didn't take Ernie long to get me strumming and playing a few chords.

I asked Ernie if he'd consider doing some coaching for me and others who might want to attend; He thought about it briefly and agreed. I invited several Delta Strummers players to join us. The coaching sessions were held at a local church and at several members' houses.

Fritz and Joan Dueming, both talented singers and accomplished ukulele players, returned from vacation in time to attend the third coaching session. Joan was impressed with the way Ernie was *"able to get us to do things"*, and asked if Ernie would take over the music leadership. That was a little over a year ago and the rest, as they say, is history.

I never fail to be amazed at Ernie's energy and how he puts 110% into whatever he does. In addition to the time he puts into beginners classes and weekly practices, he spends a lot of time behind the scenes arranging music, organizing concerts and doing public relations on behalf of the group. We are truly blessed to have such a talented and energetic person leading our group.

Errata

Apologies to Joe de Victoria because his last name was incorrectly spelled in the last issue of our newsletter. As Joe told me:

"just think of Queen Victoria"