



# *The Delta Strummers*

## *Newsletter* Spring, 2013

The Delta Strummers Board introduced this newsletter in 2011 to document recent activities, and to convey information regarding future events. It also serves to 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 continues to grow in both membership and musical ability. We recently welcomed 6 new players from our latest beginner's class into the big band and now have almost 40 members. The Strummers continue to enjoy the Tuesday evening rehearsals as well as performances at various venues in the community.



The entire ukulele experience is fulfilling for many of the members. Each of us are learning a new musical skill, becoming more comfortable performing in front of others, and joining in a fellowship of like-minded people having fun with music.

We are honored (no pun intended) to perform for the upcoming East Bay Mayors' Conference hosted by Mayor Bob Taylor at Brentwood's new Civic Center Auditorium on April 4th . We also have scheduled performances at Cortona Park on April 30th and Summerset IV's Orchard's Lodge on Sunday June 2nd.

I continue to marvel at the musical growth of each individual member in the Delta Strummers and watch the smiles and foot tapping that accompanies the

successful completion of not only our standard numbers, but also our new music.

Our group really works hard at their music, and it shows.

The message I have for all of us is simple ..... it's from a great American:

*"Alas for those that never sing,  
But die with all their music in them!"*

~Oliver Wendell Holmes

Ernie Macintyre, Music Director

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## Introducing our 2013 Board

At our November 20, 2012 General Meeting, the Delta Strummers accepted the recommendations of the Nominating Committee and elected our 2013 Board. Two of these positions, Chairman and Secretary, are 2-year terms, while the remainder are 1-year terms.

**Chairman Emeritus.** Ward Pinther founded The Delta Strummers together with his better half, Dorothy. Anyone who has been to Ward's home will know that he has a large collection of ukuleles and other musical instruments.



**Chairman.** Tom Jones joined the Delta Strummers in the middle of 2011, having never previously played a stringed instrument. He was born, raised and educated in Wales, known as *The Land of Song*.



**Vice Chairman.** Diane Korsten was born in Hawaii, and is a natural ukulele player. Diane plays vamps for some of our songs, and also hula dances at our performances.



**Treasurer.** Burga Munch was born and raised in Germany, where she played the accordion as a child. Burga started to learn to play ukulele in late 2010 in Santa Cruz. She joined the Delta Strummers in 2011 and has been having fun ever since.



**Secretary.** John Davelaar joined the Delta Strummers in 2012. John hadn't played the ukulele for 40 years. Seeing the *'Mighty Uke'* movie on TV, John dug out his ukulele from the attic. He'd heard about the Delta Strummers and sought out Ernie Macintyre for more information. And we're glad you did John!



**Board member.** Lesley Dinette has played ukulele for approximately 60 years. She plays the vamps at the beginning of many of our songs. Lesley served as Vice Chairman in 2011 and 2012, and is our backup leader when Ernie is unavailable.



**Board meetings:** The Board meets monthly to discuss finances, membership, payout dates & venues, music selection, public relations, and future direction of the Delta Strummers.

### Becoming a Board member:

All our Board positions are voluntary, and take varying degrees of time and effort. If you would like to serve on a future Board, please let any Board member or the Nominating Committee know.

### Other ways to help out

In addition to Board positions, we're also in need of volunteers for various functions associated with our practices and payouts. If you can lend a hand, let one of our Board members know.

## Chairman's Message

by Tom Jones

It was my privilege to serve as Secretary for 2011 and 2012. This role gave me extensive interface with our membership and other Board members, and also gave me exposure to the inner workings of a performing musical group. I felt truly honored when asked if I'd serve as your 2013-14 Chairman.



I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to the 2012 Board for all their hard work. I'm also grateful to the members who agreed to serve on our 2013 Board, including two members from the 2012 Board and two new Board members. Ward Pinther, who served as our Chairman in 2011 and 2012, has agreed to serve in the capacity of Chairman Emeritus; This is a permanent non-voting Board position, which means that we'll have the benefit of Ward's historical perspective, experience and advice.

The Board works closely with our Music Director as we plan future performances and music choices. We are truly privileged to have Ernie Macintyre as our Music Director.

Our first tasks as a new (2013) Board were to confirm the appointment of our Music Director, who serves at the pleasure of the Board, and to approve a budget for the coming year. We try to budget conservatively, keeping our Treasury solvent while anticipating future expenses. One of our significant purchases later in 2013, or possibly 2014 will be new audio equipment; We've been getting by using Ernie's personal equipment, but it will soon be time for us to buy our own.

An Audit Committee, comprised of Burga Munch and Judi Medeiros, conducted a thorough audit of our 2012 finances and found no anomalies. A written report was submitted to the Board, and is on file for fu-

ture reference.

2012 had several significant milestones for the Delta Strummers, including our first 'live' concerts for the Summerset III and IV communities. 2013 offers the opportunity to perform at several new venues.

Our first performance of 2013 was at The Commons at Dallas Ranch in Antioch on March 8th. 25 members played and sang to an appreciative audience, many of whom sang along on some of the songs.

Additional performances have been scheduled for 2013, and they are listed elsewhere in this newsletter.

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## The Ukulele Festival of Northern California

by Diane Korsten, Vice Chairman

Because of my Hawaiian heritage, I love going to the Ukulele Festival of Northern California in Hayward on the first Sunday in April. It was founded by the late "uncles" Hollis Baker and



John Ogao, well-known musicians of the San Francisco Bay Area's Hawaiian Community. These "uncles" organized the first Festival in March, 1994 with help from a few family members, friends and students from "Uncle" Hollis Baker's 'ukulele class. (Some of our Delta Strummers attended his class in Hayward.)

They shared a vision for this festival, and their legacy lives on through their mission statement:

*"To promote and perpetuate the playing of 'ukulele music through an annual event for all levels of 'ukulele players while exposing the youth in hopes that they will carry on the traditions and music".*

This year the festival will be held on Sunday, April 7th at the Chabot College Hayward campus. For more information check [www.ukulelefestivalnorcal.org](http://www.ukulelefestivalnorcal.org).

## Who was George Formby?

by John Davelaar

Born May 26th, 1904, George Formby was once known in the UK, and elsewhere, as the “most famous performer/movie-star of the 1930’s”. His instrument of choice was the ukulele, more specifically the banjo ukulele. He began performing at the age of eight in the music halls of England. He used the banjo uke because it projected well in these venues, and enabled him to perform with a single microphone, and sometimes no microphone at all.



As a young man George was making movies. They were light, comedic productions, and each included at least four of his hit songs. We would compare him to the likes of Laurel & Hardy, or

Abbott & Costello, except for the banjo uke. His music was considered to be a bit “racy” in those days; It was filled with innuendo. Today it would be considered quite tame.

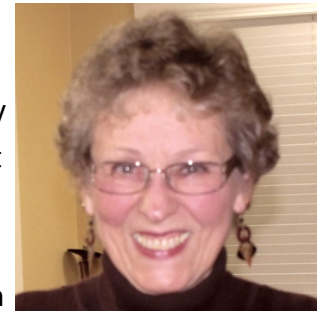
So, here’s why he is still revered by ukulele players all over the world. His playing style is known as “Formby Style”; You’ve got to hear it and see it to really appreciate it. Check out the “Split Stroke” and the “Fan Stroke”, often done with what he called a “shake”. Rather than giving you a single web address, just Google, “George Formby”. Also, look him up on YouTube; You will find everything from video clips of his tunes, to full length movies. Oh, and one more thing, when you hear his voice, just remember it was developed to project in the music halls of the 20’s and 30’s.

Have fun, John

## The Banjo Ukulele

by Lesley Dinette

The banjo ukulele is a 4-stringed musical instrument with a small banjo-type body and a fretted ukulele neck. It is sometimes called a “banjolele”. An instrument of this type was first made in 1917 by Alvin Keech. It achieved its greatest popularity in the 1920’s and 1930’s because of its small size, ease of playing, and distinctive sound of a banjo. Most piano music of popular songs in the 20’s and 30’s included ukulele chords.



Some banjo ukes are built of wood with metal accoutrements, and others of all-metal construction. The traditional older banjo ukuleles’ heads were made of calf skin and the strings of animal gut. Modern instruments have synthetic heads and nylon strings. The banjo uke is tuned GCEA and played like a ukulele.

The most well-known musician associated with the banjo ukulele was George Formby (1904-1961). He developed his unique style of playing to accompany his comic songs. George Harrison of the Beatles also played the banjo uke.

Early manufacturers of the banjo ukulele were the Gibson and Dixie brands. In Oakland, CA a manufacturer, S. Sandstrom, made banjo ukes from a variety of woods, including burl redwood. Banjo ukes were sold by the Montgomery Ward catalog in the 20’s and 30’s. Modern instruments are manufactured in the USA, UK, China and South Korea.

We are fortunate to have ten banjo ukulele players in the Delta Strummers. They play a variety of antique and modern instruments, all appealing to look at. The banjo ukulele lends itself to popular music of the 20’s and 30’s, American folk music and campfire songs.

## Delta Strummers Newswire

### Delta Strummers on the web

[www.deltastrummers.org](http://www.deltastrummers.org)

The web site is our primary communication to the outside world, and contains various resources for use by the group. Several new members came to us through the web site.

A password-protected **Song Book** on the web site allows members to download music and updates. Details on accessing this resource are communicated via email. Contact Tom Jones if you need help.

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### Check your email

email is our primary vehicle for communicating with Delta Strummers members. New or revised playlists and updated music are uploaded to our web site, and are announced via email. So be sure to check your email regularly.

### Group discounts

We've negotiated the following discounts for Delta Strummers members:

**Good Hawaiian Shirts** will give a 25% discount. Ordering information is on our web site under **Ukulele Resources | Clothing**, but be aware there are different ordering links for men's and ladies shirts.

**Lamorinda Music** in Lafayette will give a 10% discount to Delta Strummers members. They have the largest selection of ukuleles in stock of any music store within driveable distance. Store information is on our web site under **Ukulele Resources | Ukulele Stores**.

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### The Delta Strummers logo



Our Delta Strummers logo features the ukulele and the hibiscus, a flowering plant native to warm-temperate, subtropical and tropical regions. The hibiscus is also the flower on the red Hawaiian shirts we wear at public performances.

The logo is displayed on our web site, business cards and promotional materials. A larger version is also displayed on a poster at our layouts.

Several years ago, Ward Pinther commissioned a quilt maker to create a large (approx. 4' x 4') quilt to reflect the Delta Strummers, our instrument and its link to Hawaii. The beautiful quilt, shown on the left, hangs in Ward and Dorothy's home.

### Delta Strummers Upcoming Performances

**Thursday, April 4th, 8:30pm:** Brentwood Civic Center (Mayors of the East Bay conference).

**Tuesday, April 30th, 3:30pm:** Cortona Park.

**Sunday, June 2nd, 3:00pm:** Summerset IV.

*As usual, directions, playlists, attire and other information will be communicated via email prior to each event*