



# ***The Delta Strummers***

## ***Newsletter*** Fall, 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 continue to grow in the quality of their music, the individual and collective quality of the players and in the total number of members in the Band. I believe the main reason for this growth is that this group really enjoys playing ukulele music together.



We should be proud of our accomplishments in learning to play well together. We are beginning to notice our own improved abilities, our audiences are starting to notice our professional performances, and now the East Bay Arts community is starting to hear about a new, important musical group over in Brentwood ..... the Delta Strummers.

Respectfully,  
Ernie Macintyre, Music Director

I've noticed that as we perform at various venues, the members of the Delta Strummers show a genuine enjoyment in playing and performing to their audiences. This enjoyment of our music and the fellowship of our group is drawing people from our audiences toward our beginners' classes.

We have now grown to 45 musicians in the Delta Strummers, including several new players from our recent beginners class. This was our 3rd beginners class in one year and this particular group rapidly learned how to play and play well.

Because our music selections span a great distance across the music spectrum including ragtime, gospel, Hawaiian, camp songs, folk songs, and vaudeville selections, we not only appeal to our audiences, but to ourselves. The joy of practice on Tues evenings is not only learning new songs, but the result of "jamming" with our fellow ukulele players.

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## Chairman's Message

by Tom Jones

The first year of my term as Chairman of the Delta Strummers has been interesting. But I couldn't perform my function without the cooperation and hard work of the entire Board. Together, we work closely with our Music Director, Ernie Macintyre. The Board meets monthly to review finances, membership, music, performances and future plans.



Our June 2nd concert at Summerset IV was a huge success, as noted by this excerpt from a review written by local musician and entertainer, Mike Spellman.

*From their rousing opener, "San Francisco Bay Blues," kicked off with a boisterous "One, two, three!" from director, Ernie Macintyre, to their closing emotionally charged, "God Bless America," the Strummers covered such diverse musical genres as ragtime, folk, gospel, even Broadway and rock for the sold out house.*

*... the pleasing hum of 35 ukuleles ... gave a new feeling to Arlo Guthrie's "City of New Orleans," while staying true to their Hawaiian roots with "Little Brown Gal", featuring Diane Korsten dancing the traditional hula. The audience joyfully joined in with the Strummers' voices on "Side By Side," "Country Roads," and the aforementioned, "God Bless America." My personal favorite, Ricky Nelson's, "Hello, MaryLou," was lively proof that not even rock 'n roll can escape a talented ukulele band's playlist.*

Congratulations to everyone who participated. You can read Mike Spellman's full review on our web site.

Tom

## Treasurer's Report

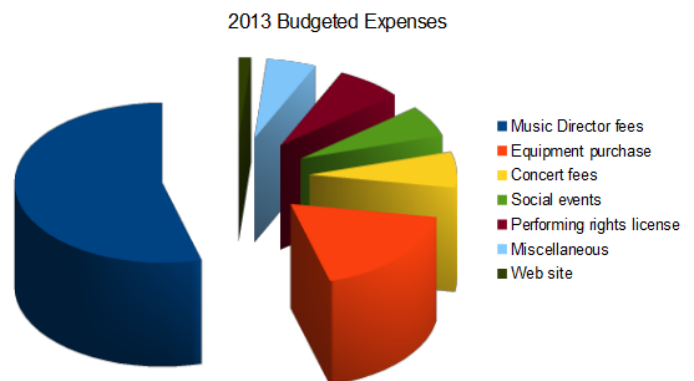
By Burga Munch

Our finances continue to stay in the black, which has allowed our cash balance to continue to build. As we continue to grow in number and our performance venues change, the Board anticipates that we will need to purchase new audio and other equipment. We'll need cash to fund these purchases.



The Board budgets conservatively, attempting to accurately anticipate costs, and keeps a close eye on expenses at our monthly Board meetings.

In 2013 we're operating on a budget of \$7,000. Income is derived from a few paid concerts and practice fees. Expenses include Music Director fees, concert expenses, printing, and web site costs. This is shown graphically below.



The Delta Strummers has been registered as an 'unincorporated association', which allows us to provide a W-9 form when we get paid for a performance. It also allowed us to open a new Delta Strummers bank account, with two Board members as signatories.

Burga

## The Kamaka story

by Diane Korsten, Vice Chairman

Published with permission from Kamaka Hawaii.

Shortly after the turn of the century, Samuel Kaiālilii Kamaka began crafting koa ukuleles from the basement of his Kaimuki, Hawaii home. In 1916, he formed his one-man shop,



Samuel Kaiālilii Kamaka

"Kamaka Ukulele and Guitar Works," and soon established a solid reputation for making only the highest quality ukuleles.

In 1921, Kamaka Ukulele established a shop at 1814 South King Street. In the mid-20s, Sam Kamaka laid out a pattern for a new oval-shaped ukulele body.

His friends remarked that it looked like a pineapple, so one of Sam's artist friends painted the front to duplicate the tropical fruit. A few years later in 1928, Sam Kamaka patented the design. Thus began the original Pineapple Ukulele, which produced a resonant, mellow sound distinct from the traditional figure-eight. The Pineapple Ukulele became an instant success worldwide, and continues to be Kamaka's signature ukulele to this day.

During the 30s, Sam Sr. introduced his two sons, Samuel Jr. and Frederick, to the craft of ukulele-making, even though the boys were only in elementary school. In 1945, the business was reorganized as "Kamaka and Sons Enterprises." Sam Jr. and Fred Sr. were then drafted into the Army, and after serving in WWII, both brothers attended college on the GI bill. After graduating from Washington State University, Fred Sr. began a career in the Army, while Sam Jr. earned a masters degree and went on to pursue a doctorate in entomology at Oregon State University.

In 1952, due to illness, Sam Sr. went into semi-retirement and hauled his equipment to his Lualualei Homestead farm in Waianae. When he became seriously ill the following year, Sam Jr. abandoned his studies and moved back to Hawaii to care for his fa-

ther. Sam Sr. died in December 1953, after hand-crafting koa ukuleles for over 40 years.

Immediately following Sam Sr.'s death, Sam Jr. put aside his personal career aspirations to continue the family business. Building on the knowledge he had picked up from his father, Sam Jr. restored the factory at the previous 1814 S. King Street location. Five years later in 1959, the company expanded to its current location at 550 South Street.

Kamaka and Sons incorporated in 1968 and became "Kamaka Hawaii, Inc." After retiring from the Army in 1972, Fred Sr. joined the business as its general manager. Along the way, Sam Jr.'s sons, Chris and Casey, also got involved with the company as did Fred Sr.'s son, Fred Jr. The sons now play major roles at Kamaka Hawaii, Inc.: Chris is the production manager, Casey crafts the custom orders, and Fred Jr. is the business manager. Other young family members are also helping with the business, carrying the Kamaka tradition into the fourth generation.

As the Kamaka legacy moves forward, it is important to reflect on what has made the company endure. The guiding philosophy at Kamaka Hawaii has always been the candid, but sensible advice handed down from Sam Sr. to sons:

"If you make instruments and use the family name, don't make junk."

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### Musical debut

Who's the Delta Strummers member shown here in their musical debut?

If you have an old music-related photo you'd like to share, please pass it along for inclusion in a future issue of this newsletter. If you're unable to scan an old printed photo, we'll return the original.



## Quest for the ultimate Zoom-bang!

by John Davelaar

When it was suggested that my article explore other instruments which might be incorporated into a ukulele band, I immediately made a mental inventory of the unique instruments which have already been used to enhance the texture of our music.



There is the exceptionally well played “Will Taylor Bb Washboard”, also Norm Soucy’s “Gut Bucket Bass”, and of course Ward Pinther’s inimitable “Zoom-Bang”. In past concerts, we have also employed the use of Maracas, thanks to Joe de Victoria, the Tambourine (first chair Cheryl Ortiz), and who could forget Fritz Dueming’s “Disco Bay Kazoo”.

But Wait! There could be more ..... so I researched some of the more eclectic music makers: Jug Bands, Vaudeville acts from the 20’s, Post Modern Jug Bands (whatever that is), Street Performers, and something called “New Age”. I watched a video of the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain, playing “the theme from Shaft”, what a thrill. One of the videos that popped onto my screen was that of a scantily clad lingerie model, demonstrating how to install a ceiling fan. But I digress.



So, in my quest for the ultimate “Zoom Bang”, I found the human race to be quite inventive, able to turn almost any object into a musical instrument. From the simple hair comb, to the kitchen sink, from an old jug to a pair of spoons, people who enjoy making music will always find a way to do so. Therefore, in the spirit of expanding our musical experience, may I suggest a few additions to our musical

arsenal. We play chords, with our ukuleles, and sing the melody, however a bit of percussion might be nice. A snare drum will work, but it’s too conventional. A Cuban Cajon, which is a wooden box, used as a drum, played with the hands, would work very well. Also a couple of unique Latin rhythm sticks would work well. And finally let’s not forget the lowly whistle; Police whistle, slide whistle, train whistle, only to be used as punctuation.



In order to write this article, I visited a number of internet sites. Here’s just a few to google or check out on YouTube: “Hoosier Hot Shots”, “jug bands –Perch Creek Family Band”, “Ukedelics Nashville”, “Sour Grapes Music”. And, for anyone about to install a ceiling fan, I found a great website for you too.

Keep Strumm’en !

John Davelaar

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### Ukuleles for sale and wanted

If you have a ukulele to sell, or are in the market for one, check out the For Sale page on our web site. You might find a bargain or a buyer for that unwanted ukulele.

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### A quote

From the 1967 poem ‘In Passing’ by Brian Harris:

*To be born in Wales, not with a silver spoon in your mouth, but with music in your blood and with poetry in your soul, is a privilege indeed.*

On a plaque in my office, Tom

## Ukulele by Kanile'a of Hawaii

### by Lesley Dinette

In July four members of the Delta Strummers (Lesley Dinette, Tom Jones, Leslie Muse, and Dan Rowe) attended the Kanile'a Ukulele workshop hosted by Lamorinda Music in Lafayette.



We were greeted by Lamorinda Music owners John and Colleen McCormick, who introduced Joe and Kristen Sousa, owners of Kanile'a Ukulele of Hawaii.

Joe Sousa presented a program (with slide show) on the construction of their heirloom-quality ukuleles. The instruments are handcrafted by a team of artisans and are made of sustainably-harvested Hawaiian-grown koa wood. Each ukulele can be customized when ordered (i.e. wood choice, fretboard inlay, edge binding). The company was established in 1998 and the factory/showroom is located in Kaneohe on Oahu.

The neck of these ukuleles is made of mahogany. Unlike koa, mahogany is not indigenous to Hawaii. Kanile'a has developed a creative source for this wood; When Taylor Guitars receives mahogany for the neck of their instruments with a knot or other defect near one end, the defective area is cut off the block of wood, and the remainder is sold to Kanile'a. Samples of raw wood, fretboards, ukulele bodies, and the interior bracing system were passed through the audience. We enjoyed handling these various parts that make up a ukulele. Finally, Joe how the instrument was formed and glued together. And then showed us several finished ukuleles.

The program concluded with Joe singing and playing his Kanile'a, followed by Kristen performing a beautiful hula. Ukulele players in the audience were then invited to join the Sousas in playing and singing a Ha-

waiian song.

In addition to the hand-crafted Kanile'a ukuleles, the company offers the Islander brand of ukulele; This is a less expensive instrument manufactured in China using Kanile'a's design and construction methods.

For more information on Kanile'a Ukulele visit their web site at [www.kanileaukule.com](http://www.kanileaukule.com)

Lelsey

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### Nominating Committee

The Board has chartered a Nominating Committee to come up with a slate of officers for 2014. If someone taps you on the shoulder and asks if you'd be willing to serve, please give it serious consideration. Anyone wishing to serve as a Board member in 2014, please seek out one of the Nominating Committee members or an Board member.

Nominations will be presented to an upcoming Delta Strummers General Meeting, held concurrent with a weekly practice, and the membership will be asked to vote on the nominations.

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### The Skills of a Luthier

Several Delta Strummers have used Jordan Music Services in Concord to repair and adjust their instruments. John Jordan works in a converted garage which is full of woodworking machines and instruments in various states of disrepair. Everything from a mini-ukulele to a double bass can be seen. In addition to purchasing metal parts, John makes many of the wooden parts he replaces on damaged instruments.

Following repair / adjustment, John tunes and plays each instrument before having the owner play it. John's prices are very reasonable, and a visit to his workshop is quite enlightening.

More information can be found on our web site under **Ukulele Resources | Instrument Repairs**.

## 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.

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### 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**.

### Delta Strummers name badges



In response to multiple requests, the Board approved a de-

sign for Delta Strummers name badges, and a local source was secured. The badges use magnets for attachment, rather than making holes in clothing. However, they can also be procured with a pin attachment if folks have concerns about any effect

on a pacemaker. (Check with your doctor.)

Anyone who needs a badge, please contact Tom Jones. Badges are sold at our cost.

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### Delta Strummers Polo shirts

Our supplier of Delta Strummers polo shirts decided to exit the business. We are currently looking for an alternative source.

### Delta Strummers Upcoming Performances

**Friday, November 1st:** Summerset I.

**Tuesday, December 8th:** El Campanil Theatre, Antioch. (Appearance in the Summerset Singers concert.)

**Tuesday, December 10th:** The Commons At Dallas Ranch, Antioch.

**Wednesday, December 18th:** Cortona Park, Brentwood.

*Directions, playlists, attire and other information will be communicated via email prior to each event.*

## Delta Strummers 2013 Board

**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.



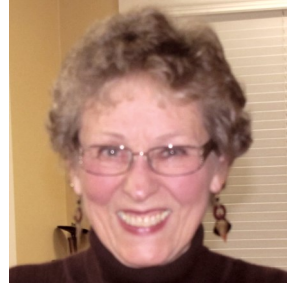
**Treasurer.** Burga Munch was born and raised in Germany, where she played the accordion as a child. Burga started to learn to play ukulele in late 2010 in Santa Cruz. She joined the Delta Strummers in 2011 and has been having fun ever since.



**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.

### Music Director.

Ernie Macintyre was born in Glasgow, Scotland and came to the U.S. as a "wee little laddie". Ernie is a talented musician and accomplished singer, and has a unique approach to teaching musical skills and leading musical ensembles.



He joined the Summerset Singers in 2003 and, after serving as Assistant Music Director, became Music Director and Principal Conductor in 2010.

Ernie joined the Delta Strummers as Music Director in June, 2011, and has helped grow the group, both in numbers and musical skills. His 'ukulele beginners classes' have been well attended, and graduates are able to transition to the main band.