



The Delta Strummers

Newsletter *Spring, 2015*

From the Maestro

I considered many possible vocations when I was a young man. At one time I thought I might become a surgeon, an exotic male dancer, a minister, a folk singer or an electrical engineer (fortunately for the general population, and my friends and associates both past and present, I decided to become an engineer).



My flirtation with the other vocational choices, however, gave me a broad perspective into human behavior, which I attempt to employ in my task as Music Director of the Delta Strummers.

For example, I know that the right brain controls the left hand, thus the chords and fast switching required to play the ukulele and guitar. I also know that the left brain controls the right hand...the beat, the strum, the picking required to play the ukulele and guitar. Also, your right and left foot are used to remind you of the beat of the music. Playing a song requires that the right and left brain communicate with each other and, by exercising our brain with the musical skills required to play an instrument, I believe we definitely improve our life functions.

I also pondered what part of the brain controlled the melody (the voice), the feelings of a song being played, and then I realized that it's not your brain where the melodies of life are stored or generated, it's your heart. The members of the Delta Strummers, those that are "new" with the group, or "old" with the group, all share a common characteristic; the joy of music in their hearts. I watch the sudden smiles and grins of individuals in the band every night at re-

hearsal as they figure out a lead sheet and lock into the music, and become aware of their contribution to the music. I know where the music is coming from; It's coming from the heart.

So let's keep our energy up and give our audiences a real show of the joy of our music and fellowship in the next few months. Let's enjoy ourselves; Be less concerned with the right or left brain, and play the music from our hearts. You know it's really not fair for me to sit in front of you at rehearsals; The sound of our music and the expressions on each of your faces are a constant reminder to me of how much this group means to all of us.

Ernie Macintyre, Music Director

P.S. I know some of you might be concerned with the prior "exotic dancer" reference but I'm out of space for my article; More about that in a later communication.

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Chairman's Message

by John Davelaar

To begin, I'd like to thank our Membership and Board for the enthusiasm and initiative which is expressed, and delivered, on a regular basis. We see this at every meeting, every practice, and every concert.



The level of participation is fantastic, and it is this extra effort which has caused our organization to grow in numbers, and stature.

We have an outstanding Music Director, in Ernie Macintyre, who has done a magnificent job of coaching, cajoling, never manipulating, but always developing, this band into a force to be reckoned with. We have all benefited from his enthusiasm and expertise.....and besides, he's a good whistler.

I'd also like to mention how productive our Board is. As you know, we meet once each month to address the issues and events of concern to the band. Our Vice Chairman, Ray Abeyta, is always ready to take on new projects. Last year he organized and oversaw the purchase of Polo Shirts. As we all know, he plays a mean "Jambalaya".

At every meeting our Treasurer, Fred Kamp, provides the Board with a very complete report which includes member attendance, and financial receipts. He is also responsible for paying our bills, including rent to the SSIV Association, filing our tax returns, and managing our bank account. It's a dream job, right Fred?

As Secretary, Chuck Cannon continues to amaze me, by remembering, and writing down, every word said by each board member at every meeting. I still can't figure out why they call them "minutes". Chuck has

also been principally involved with the writing of our script for the El Campanil concert.

Tom Jones is our 5th Board member, who modestly refers to himself our "Webmaster". He manages our website, our club emails, and communications, maintains the membership roster, proofreads everything submitted by the board, and publishes the Newsletter..... (We've just got to think up something else for him to do.)

Our Chairman Emeritus, Ward Pinther, is the founding member of the Delta Strummers, and continues to provide the board with the benefit of his experience and council, for which he is much appreciated.

As we begin our 2015 Season, with preparation for our performance at The El Campanil Theatre, the band has definitely turned up the enthusiasm, as well as the volume. It is quite apparent that all of our members are making every effort to produce a successful event.

A big thank you to everyone.

John Davelaar

Ray Abeyta, Vice Chairman

You can take it with you!

In the past, when going on vacation, I thought of taking my guitar along, but always decided not to take it. There was a concern about having to check it in and the airline, losing or damaging it. Renting one at the vacation spot seemed a better option.



Once, while vacationing in Kauai, I went to a music store to rent a guitar. Someone was playing a ukulele and the sound was not as good as a guitar, but the

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ukulele was more portable and could be a carry-on item on planes. So I bought a ukulele instead of renting the guitar. Now I take the ukulele with me when vacationing. On any Island of Hawaii one can go to a park or beach and sometimes find locals playing ukuleles. They are usually very friendly and sometimes invite you to join in. There are also Kanikapilas (get togethers to play and sing songs). You can find Kanikapila locations and times on the web.

Apparently some Hawaiians have taken a liking to country music. Last year while playing with a small group of locals at a Kona beach, they asked for a country song. I played Jambalaya and they loved it.

Take your ukuleles with you on vacation and mingle with others, making music together.

Treasurer's Report

By Fred Kamp

Burga Munch did such a great job as Treasurer last year that there were no transfer problems when I became Treasurer. All of the documents and ledgers were in perfect order. The Audit Committee, comprised of Wally Coffman and Shirley Winthrop, confirmed my belief and gave a thorough report of their findings. They found that the records were meticulously organized and assembled such that all income and expenses could be verified.

There are a few things I would like to implement or already have in 2015.

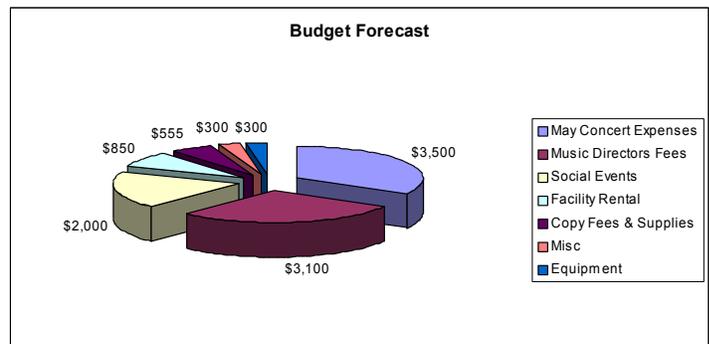
The first is to reduce the use of paper. The General and Petty Cash Ledgers have been put on a computer and can be saved and transferred on a memory stick. We are already using only one page for our sign-in



sheet. We still will be using paper for tracking authorizations and expenditures over \$50.00 as well as monthly Treasurers' reports. As time goes on, I will try to find other ways to reduce paper usage.

The second is to develop a binder that can be handed to the next Treasurer with details of how to generate a 1099 form for the Directors fees and contacts for obtaining liability insurance for future concerts, just to mention a few items. It will include examples of the Excel and Word forms that are used. It is intended to document any process that the Treasurer might encounter.

Currently we have some extra funds from 2014 that were budgeted for tall stools for performances but never purchased. This year we will use that surplus to help pay for our Ukulele Uprising Concert in May.



The 2015 Budget Forecast is broken into 7 categories and displayed in the pie chart below.

The total is \$10,605. This may seem like a lot of money but we are a growing band with expanding outreach. The May Concert at El Campanil is the largest expense, however most of it will be covered by ticket sales. The next largest category is the fees for our Music Director. There is no value that can be put on his service – if there was, we couldn't afford him. He has been instrumental in growing the band as well as improving our skills. The last large category is Social Events. This includes the subsidy for our dinners, picnics and workshops.

Fred

Strong Medicine

By Chuck Cannon, Secretary

Most of us really enjoy the Tuesday evening practice sessions. They provide an opportunity for diversion, camaraderie, accomplishment, and usually a cookie or two. But could there also be something else going on? It turns out that there is.



Music making is linked to a number of health benefits. Research shows that making music can lower blood pressure, decrease heart rate, reduce stress, and lessen anxiety or depression. There is also increasing evidence that making music enhances our immunological response, which enables us to fight viruses.

Even more encouraging, studies show conclusively that it is never too late to gain these benefits, even if you didn't take up an instrument until later in life. The University of Florida studied the impact of piano instruction on adults between the ages of 60 and 85. After six months, those who received piano lessons showed more robust gains in memory, verbal fluency, the speed at which they processed information, planning ability, and other cognitive functions, compared with those who had not received lessons. Think of the hand-eye coordination, and concentration that is required to perform many of the songs in our repertoire.

We should also consider that playing an instrument promotes happiness. It is very gratifying to play in our local community and see the enjoyment we bring to our audiences, and to hear their enthusiastic applause. It is satisfying indeed! Although playing the ukulele won't replace the need for a healthy diet, or an annual flu shot, we can definitely consider it to be a part of our daily fitness routine.

Chuck

Web Site Resources

By Tom Jones

Most folks are familiar with some aspects of our web site, but I suspect that few have fully explored all the information, resources and other tools available on the site.



The primary objectives of the web site are to communicate with Delta Strummers and with the general public. The **menu**, located beneath the header image, enables navigation around the site. Roll your cursor over the **menu** to reveal numerous links to other pages.

The **Home** page contains news items, information on recent events, and upcoming performances.

Accessible via the link labeled **Our music**, is our online **Song Book**, containing all our music lead sheets. The Song Book contains the latest revisions of all songs.

The **photo gallery** records many of our prior events. If you or your guests have photos from our events, please send them along.

The current and prior issues of our newsletter are available for download via a link in the menu.

We have numerous links to other sites, clubs, and external resources via the **Resources** link.

Our mailing list is also hosted on the site; Since email is our primary method of communicating, it is important that you let me know of any changes to your email address. Tom

A quote on a plaque in my office.

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.

Questions For The Board

We were previously made aware of the fact that some members may have questions for the Board. If you have a question or issue you feel needs to be raised with the entire Board, we make time available to discuss it.

The preferred way is to document your question or issue, and submit it to our Secretary, Chuck Cannon. If you need to address the issue in person with the Board, we allocate a brief time slot in our agenda. The Board will follow up in writing to let you know the result of their discussion and any conclusions or decisions reached.

Music Selection

Board members are occasionally asked about our music selections for performances; Who makes the decision to include or exclude a song, and the protocol for adding them to our song book.

The process starts with our "Open mic" sessions, typically held twice a year at the end of a season. Members are encouraged to offer up new music for consideration, and to audition these selections at designated practice sessions. If a member is uncomfortable auditioning their song, they may delegate the audition to another willing member.

Most of our new music is derived from these offerings and, in fact, over 50% of the songs in our current practice list came from this source.

Music submitted for consideration needs to be in a standard 'lead sheet' format. Songs that could be too difficult for most members to sing, or too difficult for our newer members to play, may be transposed into a different key &/or rearranged by our Music Director.

Following audition, music is selected for inclusion in upcoming practice lists by a Music Committee. In 2015, the Music Committee is comprised of Chuck

Cannon, Wally Coffman, Bob Leek, Patti Leek, Mary Ritner, and our Music Director, Ernie Macintyre.

When a practice list is created for upcoming performances, lead sheets for all the songs are reviewed, played and sung, to identify further changes and, following editing, are added to our online Song Book.

This entire process, from submission to publication, is time consuming, which means that some prior music offerings have not yet come out the other end; Specifically, music submitted in different formats, or which is not readily playable, sits in a queue and will be dealt with as time permits.

As we get closer to a performance, Ernie will take note of which music we play well and which we're struggling with. This usually results in songs being removed from the practice list to eventually end up with a "playable" performance list.

Having participated in a number of groups who don't have this discipline, I can say that their group playing leaves a lot to be desired. Tom

Nominating Committee - 2016 Board

The Board will soon charter a Nominating Committee to come up with a slate of officers for 2016. 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 2016, please seek out one of the Nominating Committee members or a current Board member.

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

Delta Strummers Newswire

Delta Strummers Spring/Summer Performances

Wednesday, April 8, 2015: Cortona Park, Brentwood.

Saturday, May 2, 2015: El Campanil Theatre, Antioch.

Monday, June 1, 2015: Knightsen Elementary School, Knightsen.

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

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***.

Delta Strummers name badges

In response to multiple requests, the Board approved a design 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 Jerry or Sue Wiebe. Badges are sold at our cost.

Delta Strummers Polo shirts

We have a local supplier of Delta Strummers polo shirts. Ordering information is on the ***Clothing*** page of our web site.

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.

Delta Strummers 2015 Board

Chairman Emeritus. Ward Pinther founded The Delta Strummers together with his better half, Dorothy.



Chairman. When John Davelaar learned that there was a ukulele Band in Summerset, he dusted off his old concert uke and called Ernie. John had played the ukulele in high school, but never had training, or the opportunity to play in a group. He says he's not much of a singer, but loves playing the uke, especially old time Vaudeville tunes, Rag Time, and Bluegrass.



Vice Chairman. Ray Abeyta bought his first ukulele while vacationing in Kauai in 2010. He heard the Delta Strummers rehearsing at the Summerset Orchards Pavilion, and joined in 2012.



Treasurer. Fred Kamp loves all kinds of music from opera to pop (omitting rap). He started playing the Ukulele in college and singing with his fraternity brothers but never followed through until he joined the Delta Strummers in 2013. It has added another dimension to his joy of music.



Secretary. Chuck Cannon remembers being 'totally blown away', the first time he heard the Delta Strummers play. "I sat in the audience, not only enjoying the music, but also



carefully studying the hand movements of the performers as they strummed and formed chords." Chuck knew immediately that this was something he really wanted to do. That same evening he called Ernie, signed up for the beginner class, and has been happily strumming ever since. The Tuesday evening classes have become an important part of his social life.

Board member. Tom Jones joined the Delta Strummers in the middle of 2011, having never previously played a stringed instrument. He had sung a cappella since he was a child, but playing the ukulele finally gave him the opportunity to accompany himself.



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

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.