



The Delta Strummers

Newsletter *Spring, 2016*

From the Maestro

This year, the Delta Strummers have enjoyed an increase in the formation of small groups within the Strummers. These small groups enjoy practicing together and performing for others and are extending the skills they have learned while playing in the Band.



Also, many members are now volunteering to riff solos during performances and auditioning new material for the Band's consideration. Getting up in front of an audience, no matter if it's a concert audience or just family, friends, or neighbors, is a true test of the desire to perform music for others and receive the joy and adrenalin rush that is created by performing. There is joy in "just jammin" but performing adds to your confidence and skills with the addition of the "roar of the crowd".

Jammin' with others is easy. Playing a solo or performing in a small group is difficult because you are aware that a mistake or poor performance will "stick out" and pride says "I'm not going to let that happen". There is also a sense of overcoming nervousness and realizing that few individuals in music (or life) are willing to risk "sticking out" the trouble is, once you've done it once successfully, it's addictive and you want to do it again.

The Strummers are proud of all the members who have volunteered to "stick out" and encourage the rest to join in the small group revolution. In performing, there's risk and reward. The risk is "why am I up

here...what am I doing what was I thinking?" The reward is the flush of accomplishment that "I did it... the audience liked it and I feel I did well". The self-confidence acquired from performing is a great addition to each of our life's resumes.

One of the main reasons I enjoy being associated with this group of friends and musicians is that the Delta Strummers seem to excel at encouraging each other to get involved in their music and extend it beyond Tuesday evenings we're not just a Band called the Delta Strummers we're a group of friends with a music problem

"Music gives a soul to the universe, Wings to the mind, Flight to the imagination, and life to everything" .[Plato](#)
Ernie

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Chairman's Message

by John Davelaar

Moving Forward:

So here we are, the Delta Strummers, averaging sixty players, playing larger venues, while maintaining our presence at independent living senior centers, and now beginning to offer ukulele lessons to middle school age kids within the community. Wow!

In late February we were asked to provide a two hour, encapsulated, ukulele lesson to a group of thirty GATE students (GATE: is an acronym for "Gifted and Talented Education") who were attending an after school program at Adams Middle School. The instructor, Connilyn Buchanan, had contacted Diane Korsten, who then asked us to follow up with Mrs. Buchanan. We held an accelerated two-hour lesson, with thirteen band volunteers, and every ukulele we could muster, on February 24th. We were overwhelmed by the enthusiastic response of the kids who, by the end of the session, were able to play a three chord song on the ukulele.

These students, age 12-14 years, are very fortunate to have been enrolled in the GATE program. This program is an extension of their regular academic studies. We have been asked to return on May 11th to teach a new group of thirty GATE students.

This has been our first attempt, for outreach as an organization. The response has been significant, and we are now exploring additional opportunities to teach more young people who have a desire to learn how to play the ukulele. As this continues to develop we will look into the establishment of a planning committee, and provide additional information to the membership as it becomes available.

John D



Treasurer's Report

By Wally Coffman

The Delta Strummers Treasury is healthy and in good order. As the 2015 Treasurer, Fred Kamp set up a detailed accounting system that tracks income, expenses, attendance, and everything else that you can think of. As an engineer, we would expect nothing less than extreme detail from Fred. On behalf of the Delta Strummers we thank Fred for developing a model that will serve us well. The Rossmoor concert generated \$1,010.00 for the Treasury. Major expenses for 2016 will again be the Picnic and Holiday Party. Both of these events were included in this year's budget.

We have seen a steady growth in the band membership and attendance at the weekly practice sessions. For the year to date we have averaged 40 players for the practice sessions. Attendance for the four weeks leading up to Rossmoor was 44 players. It's clear that the membership has remained active and committed.

We can all be excited with the direction that Ernie Macintyre has taken to challenge us to develop our ukulele skills with new strums and techniques. It is also clear that I must increase my practice time to stay up with all the new concepts that are presented by band members. If you would like to experiment playing chords at different positions on the fretboard take a look at "Moveable Chords". There is all sorts of information and charts on the internet to assist you in finding Major, Minor and Seventh Chords using the same finger placement at different fret locations. An example would be playing, as Ernie says, our favorite chord, the Bb at the first fret. If we start sliding that B flat up the fretboard we end up with the following chords, **Bb, B, C, C# or Db, D, Eb, E, F, F# or Gb, G, G# or Ab, and A at the 12th, fret.** There are a number of chord forms that work in this manner. Give it a try.

Wally



The Real Hawaii, here in our own back yard

By John Davelaar

My wife and I have been to Hawaii three times. And we have enjoyed every minute of each visit. We've enjoyed the beaches, mountains, countryside, little villages, the music, and the people, (not to mention the food). But, what we had never experienced, until a recent weekend, is the "real" Hawaii. Oh, we've been to the Hawaiian Cultural Center, and seen the all shows, but we had never experienced what Diane Korsten, (our own real Hawaiian) calls "the real Hawaii".

Recently, we took her advice and went to The 22nd Annual Ukulele Festival, at the Chabot College Performing Arts Center. This was a special year for the festival, because it's primary sponsor, Kamaka Ukulele Co., is currently celebrating their 100th anniversary, and as a special treat for event visitors, they sent a group of incredible musicians, to perform, including two members of the Kamaka family. There were food booths and specialty vendors, and ukuleles on sale from Kamaka, Sonny D, Nalu Ukulele Co., and D&B Music.

The entertainment lineup began at 10:45am, and continued until about 5:30pm.

During the day we saw and heard numerous groups from amateur to professional. Some came from as far as Ventura and Los Angeles. Most were from Northern California, including The Pleasanton Ukulele Band.

The "Pros" arrived from as far as South Carolina and, of course, Hawaii.

The common thread of community amongst performers and attendees was ever present during the day, as small groups formed to "jam" throughout the event. It was not uncommon to see one of the professionals



playing along with the locals, and many of the locals were incredible players as well. Most of the music was Traditional Hawaiian, with a generous sampling of traditional Hula dancing. Virtually all of the groups included at least one guitar and a bass player.

The "Pros" concert started at about 3:45pm, and was the perfect capper for the day. Their music included traditional Hawaiian, and also a large sampling of contemporary and original music.

Their laughter, their jokes, and clear admiration for one another was ever apparent to the audience. Picture a Garage Band, whose players include Frank Sinatra and the Rat Pack, just hang'en out.

During the concert, we were trying to figure out which player was Chris Kamaka. It was interesting to note that Chris played the stand-up bass, not a ukulele. His daughter, Ihilani Kamaka, who is known to be a "Kumu Hula", (highest level Hula dancer and teacher, aka "Hawaiian Culture Keeper"), danced twice during the concert, beautiful, talented, and graceful.

Following the concert all of the entertainers and the audience (almost everyone) sang the traditional Hawaiian song of parting "Aloha Hawaii", in the Hawaiian language, as all five hundred swayed to the music.

There were other celebrities in attendance, we know this because during the afternoon a gentleman was heard asking one of the staff "Are the 'Delta Strummers' here?". True Story! The attendant shook his head no, and the fellow walked away, very disappointed. Truth is, there were Delta Strummers there, including, Fred Kamp & Lois Riddle, Jerry & Sue Wiebe, Dave & Jinni Ciruli, Craig & Mary Wilson, Shirley & myself. . . . and. . . .our own" real Hawaiian", Diane Korsten. A great time was had by all.

Mahalo,

John D

Understanding Sheet Music

by Fred Kamp

I wanted to be able to play the melody of a song on my ukulele by reading sheet music. So using Mel Bay's Guitar Method Grade 1 as a guide, set out to develop my own Grade I for the Ukulele. The idea that other members might be interested, prompted me to put some of my unfinished Grade 1 in this newsletter.



Step 1 – The Staff and Clef

Each line in the Staff denotes a specific note.



Each space in the staff denotes a specific note.



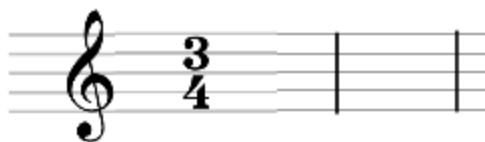
Going from the bottom line to the top line using both lines and spaces gives an ascending scale from E to F to G to A to B to C to D to E to F or if you prefer to use the Sound of Music scale Do, Ray, Me, Fa, So, La, Te, Do.

The Clef defines the pitch range of the Staff. The G or treble Clef is shown and is the most common for vocal music.



The center of the spiral assigns the line G (above middle C).

The Staff is divided into measures by vertical bars. Each measure will be assigned a specific number of quarter notes by a Time Signature. The example below is called three quarter time. So each measure will have a time equivalent to 3 quarter notes.



If the Signature was 4/4 time then each measure would have a time equivalent to four quarter notes. Most of our music is written in 4/4 time so there are 4 quarter notes to a measure, often called 4 beats to the measure.

Step 2 – The Notes

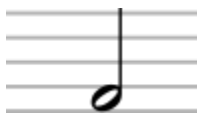
This article will confine itself to just 4/4 time since that is what we mostly sing. The quarter note or beat is the building block for the music.

Its symbol is:



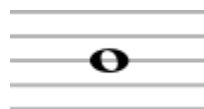
The half note time is the equivalent to 2 quarter notes or two beats.

Its symbol is:



The whole note time is the equivalent to 4 quarter notes or 4 beats,

Its symbol is:



Sometimes there will be one-eighth notes used for a faster tempo. They are equivalent to half of a quarter note.

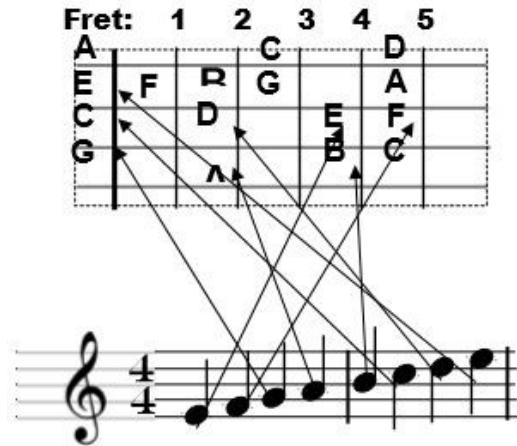
Its symbol is:



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Step 3 – Playing the Notes

The Ukulele fret board - first 5 frets



The Ukulele has limited range on the low end of the scale so those notes must be played one octave higher. The best way to start learning the scale is to pick one string and memorize three or four notes until they can be picked without thinking. An exercise for the C string is shown below.



The “C” is just the open third or “C” string. The “D” is made using the first or pointer finger on the second fret of the “C” string. The “E” is made using the second or salute finger on the fourth fret. The “F” is made using the third or ring finger on the fifth fret.

Fret: 1 2 3 4 5



This process can be used for each individual string until the note on the Staff and the finger on the correct fret come without a pause. Pads of paper with the lines of the staff can be purchased so little melodies can be made for each string first then as skill increases additional strings can be added to make more complex melodies. At this point you will be able to

read sheet music.

Picking is another subject that is probably more difficult than reading music (at least for me). No attempt will be made to cover this subject except to note two methods.

Two finger picking using the first two fingers. Many in the band use this method.

Thumb picking where the fingers are anchored on the Ukulele face that give the thumb a solid base.

We’ve grown!

By Tom Jones

When I joined the Delta Strummers in 2011, we practiced at a Church in Discovery Bay, and occasionally at a member’s home. The photo gives you some idea how we’ve grown in just a few years, thanks largely to Ernie’s beginner classes.



The photo gallery on our web site has numerous photos from early Delta Strummers practices and performances.

Delta Strummers on the web

Our web site functions as a communication tool, both to the band and to the external community.

In addition to news and links to numerous ukulele-related resources, the site hosts our Song Book, and our photo gallery. The web server also hosts our member mailing list.

Please take some time to explore the site; You might be surprised what you’ll find.

Planning Our Concerts

By Patti Leek

Have you ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes at one of our full-scale shows like the ones at Rossmoor or El Campanil?



There are lots of details to arrange, but the key tasks are to create three things: the MC script, the show “rider”, and the seating plan.

The purpose of the MC script is to not only introduce each number, but to tell a story about the music we play. Notably, it tells the history of what was happening in America during the time each number was originally written and performed. It also serves to tell the audience about the many musical genres that have become relevant to the ukulele.

One other important purpose the MC script serves is to build in needed time between numbers to allow the band, soloists, or small groups to prepare for the next song to be performed. Things like collecting instruments and props from backstage, getting to the right microphone and music stand on stage, and/or quickly changing costumes.

Another key task is creation of the ‘riders’. Riders are both a detailed description and an agreement between the band and the venue staff for the stage set-up, lights, and sound we need during the performance. Our band uses two forms of riders: One is a full show rider, and the other is a ‘technical’ rider.

The full show rider is used by the show committee. It describes every move and every light and sound change that will take place during the show. It serves as a cue for moving microphones, music stands and other instruments or equipment to and from the stage. It also tells whether performers are going to stand in place for a breakout solo, or whether the performers will come on stage, and if so, where they will both enter and exit.

The technical rider is a scaled-down version of the full rider, and it includes only the instructions for sound

and lighting for the venue technical staff. It describes the number and type of microphones, leads, and monitors the band needs. It also tells the technical staff exactly when to turn up or turn down a microphone, or one or more lights during the show.

As you can imagine, stage movement and technical support are both pretty complex, given the increasing number of talented musicians we showcase at our performances. Each individual or group has unique sound needs that are addressed in the rider. As a finishing touch, the rider is color coded to make it easier to read: MC comments in red, stage movement in blue, technical changes in green.

The next big task is figuring out the band’s seating plan. That task begins with a basic count of the number of performers committed to participating in the concert. Once that information is available, the dimensions of the stage and number of performers per row is determined. Also considered is the number of risers the venue has available for us.

That’s when the hard part starts! Each performer that has to move to the stage has to be seated in a place that allows an unobstructed pathway to the stage. With the number of solo and group performers we had at Rossmoor, that was no small task, and performers were located all across the front row, as well as along the sides of each row.

There are many more details involved in the ‘behind the scenes planning’, but the most important part of a successful show is each of you! What really “makes” a concert, and where the Delta Strummers excel, is the energy, enthusiasm and smiling faces of each band member!

Editor’s note: Patti chairs the Concert Committee and, with hubby Bob and Committee Member Chuck Cannon, has done a great job of planning and organizing our last few “large” concerts, including El Campanil Theatre and the Rossmoor Event Center. You may wish to thank them individually for their hard work, helping to make our concerts a success.

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, Patti Leek. 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

We're sometimes asked who makes the decision to include or exclude a song, and what's 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 need to 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.

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 gets 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 - 2017 Board

Some time after our Summer hiatus, the Board will charter a Nominating Committee to come up with a slate of officers for 2017. 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 2017, 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.

Tom's Quote from the olde country.

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.

From the 1967 poem 'In Passing' by Brian Harris.

Delta Strummers Newswire

Delta Strummers Spring/Fall 2016 Performances

April 29, 2016 (1:00pm): Quail Lodge, Antioch.

June 17, 2016 (3:00pm): The Commons at Dallas Ranch, Antioch.

November/December (Dates TBA): One or more assisted-living facilities.

December, 2016 (Date TBA): Garin School, Brentwood.

Final performance dates/times will be announced in due course.

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 2016 Board

Chairman Emeritus. Ward Pinther founded The Delta Strummers together with his wife Dorothy.



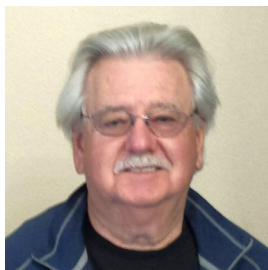
Chairman. When John Davelaar learned that there was a ukulele Band in Summerset, he dusted off his old concert uke and called Ernie. John had played the ukulele in high school, but never had training, or the opportunity to play in a group. He says he's not much of a singer, but loves playing the uke,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



Vice Chairman. 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.



Treasurer. Wally Coffman became involved with the ukulele quite by chance, when he arrived too late for a Delta Strummers performance. He was met by neighbor Norm Soucy and Ernie who pressured him to sign up for a beginner's class.



Wally admits to having a 'weakness' for ukuleles and, within a relatively short period, he owned seven, and it was necessary to place Lamorinda Music on the "Off Limits" list. Ernie feels that an intervention would be in order.

Secretary. Patti Leek grew up in a family of musicians who all played at least one instrument, and family gatherings always included singing and playing together. But, she didn't play a ukulele until finding out about the Delta Strummers in 2014. She thoroughly enjoys playing and singing with the band.



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 growing up in Wales. 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 became Music Director 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.