

Delta Strummers

Newsletter 2017



From the Maestro

I have just returned from a trip to Lake Shasta and realized that all we are.... or do, pales to insignificance, when compared to the efforts of Mother Nature.....but enough of this environmental drivel. The new editor of the newsletter has warned us, we must report with quality commentary and on time or she will threaten to detune our "G" strings.....so here we go.

During August, we decided to offer some intermediate courses in strumming, picking, music theory, and eventually, tablature. Yikes.... what a trip. We had an average of 20 "students" per session (the strumming and picking headcount exceeded the music theory and tablature lecture headcounts).

The most important takeaways for me from these sessions were:

- ⇒ How attentive the "students" were to the material
- ⇒ How difficult the material was to prepare for the "students" to digest and use as homework
- ⇒ The joy of watching the "lightbulbs" go on as Strummers applied the exercises to real music

If you ever get the privilege and opportunity to demonstrate a new skill to a group of interested (and intelligently critical) people...be prepared to spend a lot of time creating the proper notes to define the techniques you are trying to teach. It's not good enough to say "watch how I do this".... You have to notate how to do it for follow on learning. Teaching others actually teaches yourself how to demonstrate new techniques and/or ideas.

Many of the techniques we use in ukuleles and guitars are "mind muscle comfortable".....but only to ourselves. Getting others to apply the technique is entirely another skill. I find that the following approach is useful in teaching skills.....be they musical, athletic, or life lessons:

- ⇒ Teach the skill in clear, concise, repeatable, and learnable segments
- ⇒ Be aware that you must connect with at least 90% of your audience... both the slow and the fast (10% are either bored or having a neural short)
- ⇒ Keep it light hearted....people learn at different speeds and repetitions
- ⇒ Don't teach it if you can't demonstrate it (don't coach a position you haven't played)

Our Tuesday night rehearsals are very refreshing to me because I watch and hear people trying new skills and enjoying sharing the skills with others....it's the fellowship of music. The Strummers are now 60 strong and making a mighty sound both in rehearsal and in performance....it's a constant reminder to me how fortunate we all are to have music in our lives....it keeps us younger and happier.

My reflection on my association with the **Delta Strummers** can be summarized by a quote from John Edward Libbel (a noted Scottish Philosopher) ~

"See that group running down the street....I must hurry and catch them for I am their leader."



Thanks for being a
Strummer,
Ernie



In This Issue

- From the Maestro
- 2017 Picnic Reflections
 - Comic Relief
- Details are Important!
- "Why I took up the Uke"
- Future Venue Opportunities
 - Webmaster Notes



Picnic Reflections

by **Fred Kamp**, Chairman

The 2017 **Delta Strummers** “Tiki Bar Luau” Picnic was another one of our great social events. We had 60 people sign up and most attended. The food, catered by Sticky Chicken, was Huli chicken, pulled pork, rice and coleslaw that was enjoyed by all. The best part, for me, were the open mic songs that highlighted the many talents of our band members. There were a dozen sign-ups before the picnic and some walk-ins. This year we had a booklet with the words to many of the songs. This was very helpful to people like me with hearing impairments (selective hearing only accounts for part of my listening problem) and for folks that knew the songs and wanted to sing along. I am continually surprised by the variety of songs and the members that play them. Members that have not previously performed are singing at open mics. I think it is the support the band members give them that allows them to overcome their anxiety to perform. Even when mistakes are made it doesn't matter. It is the joy of listening and singing that motivates us all to accept the limitations of others and ourselves. I am no great singer or player but I like to perform even when I'm so nervous I make mistakes. The applause the members give, after a performance, is a validation of our effort. The practice that is necessary to play well enough to have the courage to get up and perform is a real benefit. My nemesis was the Ernie minor (Em) chord and finally I can hit it 80% of the time.

Over the past year or so, some members have formed

small groups that get together weekly to play songs they like. This spawns potential songs for inclusion into the band repertoire. The added value of small groups is, during open mic times, individuals are not as nervous due to the support they receive from the other members. If they make a mistake, the chances are no one will notice. I don't recommend not practicing for small group performances because the rest of the group will get on your case.

The committee, chaired by Marcia Morrison, was a cross section of the band. They volunteered, without being coerced, to do whatever was needed. This activism always amazes me because everyone wanted to help make the picnic a success. If a job was required someone would say, “I'll do that.” As soon as that was said, others said, “I'll help you.” **WOW!** We have such a group of doers and party people.

I would be remiss if I did not mention all that were involved.

John Davelaar – Set-up & tear down

Deb Grainger – Flyer

Pat Hebert – Caterer & decorations

Fred Kamp – Set-up & tear down

Carlos Lopes – Open mic & music book

Ernie MacIntyre – Audio

Sue Mead – Name tags/check-in & food

Marcia Morrison – The Boss

Burga Munch – Planning

Laurie Nowak – Tiki Bar, dessert

We arrived early, at the park, the day of the picnic to wash the tables, benches and chairs before adding tablecloths and decorations. When we arrived back at the park at 3 PM to complete the set up we found the decorations of the Tiki Bar that Laurie had done so well were disarrayed when the wind came up in the afternoon. We all pitched in to finish decorating, redecorating and the final set-up (folding tables, canopies over food tables and performance area plus audio system).

It wasn't enough that we had good food, entertainment and camaraderie but the picnic came in under budget.



Just For Fun!

by *Jinni Cirulli, Vice Chairman*



Rather than writing an article for this edition, I have contributed several humorous cartoons for the editor to use as she sees fit throughout the publication, including this one above right. This is **SO ME** and really what I do at Strummers.

Also, if you know me, you know that I regularly search for songs that might work for the band and have brought many to the groups' attention, however, here are a few songs you might want to check out on YouTube that I won't be playing open mic night (warning: some are a bit risqué):

The Pushbike Song—Number one song in UK and Australia 1971

I Don't Look Good Naked Anymore —by the Snake Oil Willie Band. (Must be a good song; it got over 11 million hits on YouTube.)

When You're Sad and Gonna' Cry, Squeeze Your Butt Cheeks Together—by Ben Hassenger (Only YouTube videos I have seen from Michigan; Yes, I'm a former Michigande; this got over 700 views)

Santa Lost A Ho (Now He Only Goes "Ho, Ho.")

You Can't Roller Skate in a Buffalo Herd

Plant a Santa in Your Front Lawn

Working Where the Sun Don't Shine (The Colorectal Surgeon's Song)

You're Not As Ugly As You Look (over 350K hits)

How Can I Miss You If You Don't Go Away

I Think My Dog's A Democrat

Donald Trump's Hair

The Mississippi Squirrel Revival

I Got A Pea

Marry For Money

Please Don't Pee in the Pool

Shaving Cream—by Benny Bell in 1946, & originally sung by Paul Wynn

Trapped in the Drive-Thru—by Weird Al Yankovic

Santa Bring Me A Dinosaur—by Bob Brown (over 340K views)

Put Another Log On the Fire

The Man Song

The Woman Song

The Mom Song





Details to Remember!

by *Rich Alves, Treasurer*

A Reminder: In the performance of my Official Duties as the Strummers' Treasurer, I must keep an accurate record of who attended each practice session and the amount of money that was collected. The attendance numbers are used by the Strummers Board to award Attendance Cookies. The money is used to pay for our practice facility rent, our parties, our miscellaneous expenses, and our Esteemed Music Director's Chardonnay Fund.

- **\$5** is due and payable at each practice.
- Sometimes members forget their money or pay extra to make up for what they owe. So, when you attend a practice session, please put the dollar amount you are paying in the "Amount Paid" column on the signup sheet:
 - ◇ **\$0** if you forgot to bring your money
 - ◇ **\$5** if you remembered to bring your money
 - ◇ **\$10** if you are making up for forgetting your money last week
 - ◇ **\$15** if you would like to tip your hardworking Treasurer

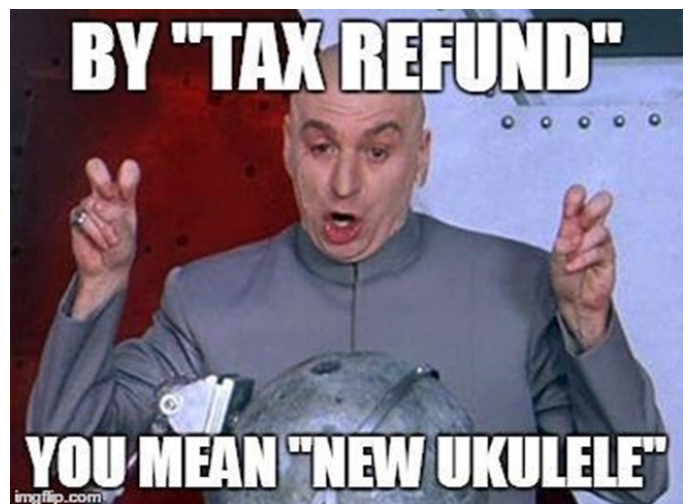
A Puzzle: At one of our September practice sessions, there was a sealed envelope left in the collection tin with a couple one-dollar bills and some change - \$4.05 in total. *Very strange.* However, the

deposit for the evening balanced with the signup sheet. Was someone playing mind games with your poor demented treasurer? If so, ya' got me!

Name Tags: Please wear your name tags to the weekly practice sessions. When you forget who you are, rather than being embarrassed having to ask some stranger, you can simply look in the mirror, turn your head backwards, and read your name.

Timely Tip: The ancient Greeks had two words for time. *Chronos* referred to chronological time, such as the 7:00 p.m. start time of our practice sessions. *Kairos* referred to indeterminate time that might allow you lose track of *Chronos* while you read an enjoyable book.

Please Forgive Me: I must leave. It's a *Kairos* for me to go play my ukulele.





Why I Took Up the Uke

by **Sue Weibe**, Board Secretary

Jerry, my husband, likes to tell the story of my trip to Hawaii with the girls. Three of my golfing lady friends went to Maui in November 2013. We played several rounds of golf and had a grand time enjoying the sun and surf. We went out to dinner a few times and listened to the music of the Islands.

As it was November, I knew requests for Christmas wishes were coming from my family. I had had a soprano ukulele as an 11-year-old and had fun with it, but never really set out to 'learn' how to play it. While pondering Christmas gift desires, I recalled my childhood ukulele. Now that we are retired and have more time for fun, I thought it was a good idea to ask for a ukulele. It had **NOTHING** to do with my trip to Hawaii and that cute ukulele dude! Honest!

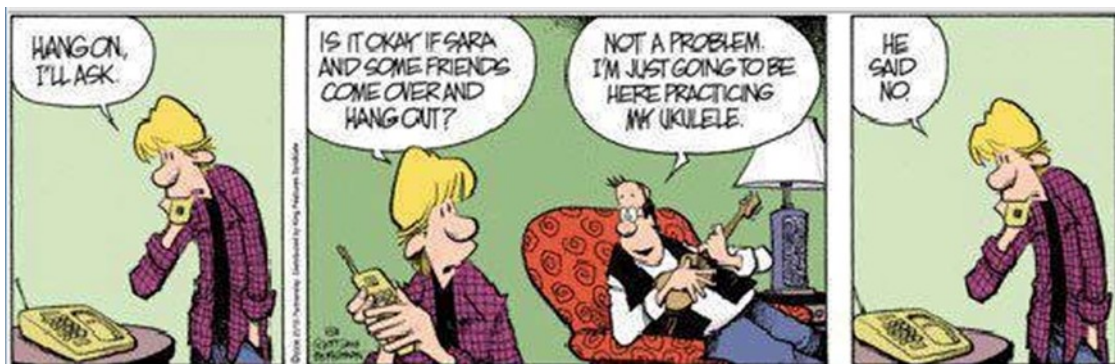
My daughter 'surprised' me with a bright shiny pink plastic ukulele for Christmas. Jerry mentioned my new acquisition to Tom Jones. Tom suggested getting in touch with Ernie for lessons. I thought, "what the

heck, why not." So, I signed up for Ernie's beginners class. I proudly walked in with my new ukulele still in its cardboard box and sat down. Ernie mentioned it looked like I had a new instrument. I opened the box, and he said, "...and it's PINK!" Diane Korsten was assisting Ernie with the class and noticed how much trouble I was having with my pink plastic toy. She kindly lent me her personal ukulele to finish the first lesson. I was hooked.

I returned the toy ukulele for a music stand and invested in my Luna. It was love at first sight. Jerry noticed how much fun I was having and decided to come see what the lessons were all about. He walked in and Ernie asked him where his ukulele was. He admitted he didn't have one. Ernie said not to come back without a uke. This was the beginning of Jerry's stable of ukuleles.

We have so much fun with the Strummers. There are times, I must admit, I'd rather just sit and watch TV in my sweats and not attend practice. Then we go. I'm always energized by the music and fellowship and so happy to be there. Hopefully we have many years ahead of us playing with the **Delta Strummers**.

If you had to sum up the band using one picture, what would it be?





Performances

by **Craig Wilson**, Member

We will be having a few changes and additions to our schedule for the balance of this year and moving on to next year's programming.

Though it was tentative we, unfortunately, we had to

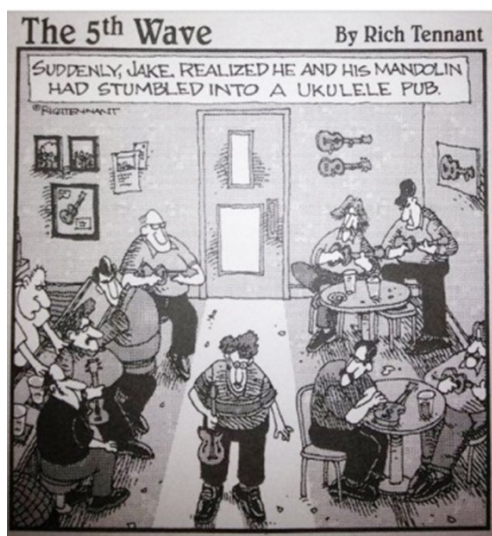
scratch our pending performance at Summerset III for various reasons.

Of course when you receive this news letter we will be well aware of our pending performance at Knightsen School in just three days.

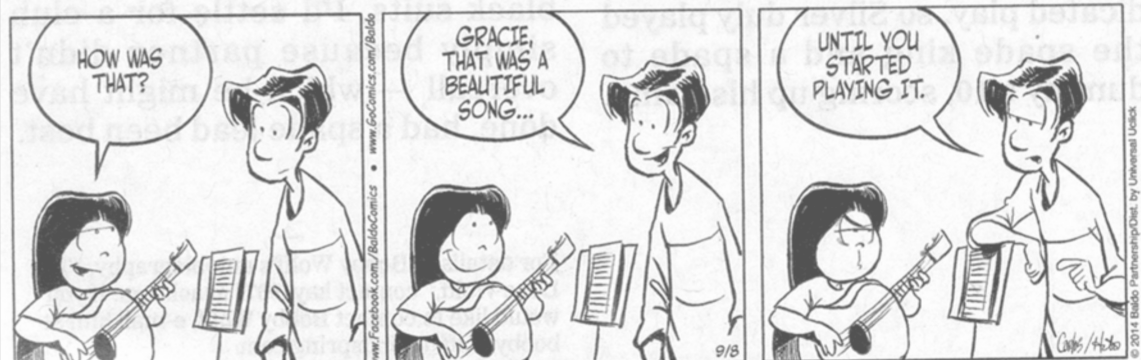
Following Knightsen School we will be putting all of our efforts towards the December 7th performance at Dallas Ranch, which will include some Christmas tunes to get us ready for our annual performance at Garin Elementary on December 14th.

Looking forward to the coming year we have a commitment for a planned performance date of March 9th at Summerset IV. And of course we will be scheduling performances for our local senior living facilities along with potential community and school destinations.

We will keep you informed with practice announcements and thru emails of all the details for each of our events.



BALDO | Hector D. Cantu and Carlos Castellanos





Webmaster Notes

by **Tom Jones**, Past Chairman

LaMorinda Music Discounts

If you're thinking about buying a new or replacement ukulele or guitar, don't forget the great deals offered by LaMorinda Music in Lafayette. They match advertised prices and give **Delta Strummers** members an additional 10% discount. It's tough to beat these deals and, of course, you get to handle and play the instrument in the store before buying. They also have some competent techs who can help with simple repairs, re-stringing, and tuner replacement.

Jordan Music Services

For larger or more complex repairs, Jordan Music Services in Concord is a skilled luthier who charges

very reasonable prices. A number of our members have had work satisfactorily done there on various stringed instruments..

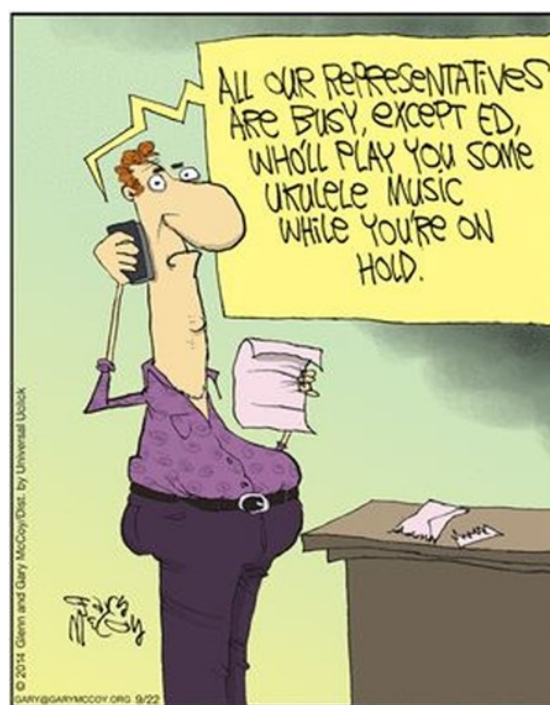
Web Site Resources

If you haven't already done so, explore the numerous ukulele/music related resources accessible via our web site. Visit the site at www.deltastrummers.org and explore the various buttons in the menu near the top of the page. You might be surprised by what you find.

Mailing List Unsubscribe Link

You may have noticed that our mailings are sent via a 'blind' mailing list. In addition to avoiding errors due to repeatedly typing email addresses, the list prevents others from seeing everyone's email address. More importantly, it limits the possibility of someone's computer with malware from harvesting the email addresses.

Recently I added an 'unsubscribe' link to the bottom of our email template, a spam-limiting measure dictated by law. Folks in various clubs have been clicking the link, either accidentally or out of curiosity. Fortunately, I have our mailing list set to report such unsubscribe requests to me, rather than automatically unsubscribe (or remove) people from the list.



Delta Strummers Newswire

Fall 2017-18 Performances

October 18: Knightsen School, Wednesday, 9:00 a.m.

December 7: The Commons at Dallas Ranch

December 14: Garin Elementary

March 2018: Summerset IV

More details and other end-of-season 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 off their price (ask a Board member for the Discount Code). 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***.

Alternative ladies' performance attire

In response to member requests, the Board approved the wearing of a dress or muumuu in place of black pants. Links to the approved designs are on our web site under ***Ukulele Resources/Clothing***.

Delta Strummers name badges

Delta Strummers name 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 needing a badge, please contact Jerry or Sue Wiebe. Let them know how you want your name(s) spelled.

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.

Delta Strummers on YouTube

We have a number of videos from our past performances on *YouTube*. If your friends or relatives have video of us performing, please encourage them to either upload them to *YouTube* or send them to Tom Jones.

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, Sue Wiebe. 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.



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. 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 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, Ernie.

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, and some prior music offerings have not yet come out the other end; Specifically, music submitted in different formats, or which is not readily playable, 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 Jones, Past Chairman/Advisor

Nominating Committee - 2018 Board



The Board has chartered a Nominating Committee to come up with a slate of officers for 2018. 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 2018, please seek out one of the Nominating Committee members or a current Board member.

Nominations will be presented to a Delta Strummers General Meeting, and the membership will be asked to vote on the nominations.

**READ THIS
SECTION!
Could this be you?**

GET TO KNOW YOUR DELTA STRUMMERS BOARD OF DIRECTORS... bios below

Fred Kamp - Chairman

Fred started playing the Ukulele in college and singing with his fraternity brothers but there was a 60 year ukulele void until he joined the **Delta Strummers** in 2013. Music has been an important part of his life, mostly as a listener of classical music. The **Delta Strummers** gives him an outlet to play and sing.

Jinni Cirulli - Vice Chairman

First conversations with fellow ukulele players usually include explanations of how we found our way to this fun, little musical instrument. So, here's my story: I had read that some ways to keep your brain healthy were to:

1. change your routines (like driving alternate ways home or brushing your teeth with your non-dominant hand)
2. read and work crossword puzzles or Sudoku
3. learn a foreign language (I'm so not up to this one), so I decided to replace this one with shopping
4. stay active with others, and
5. learn to play a musical instrument, which works several parts of your brain at once: audio, visual and motor functions (hmmm, a uke has four strings, this works)

So, now I'm working on all five (sort of).

1. Although, I don't brush my teeth at practice, Delta Strummers has definitely changed our routine.
2. We're learning to read chord charts and tablature.
3. Hey, Feliz Navidad counts as a start.
 - A. We're enjoying acquiring and playing different ukuleles: banjukes, low G strings, and maybe a populele in the near future.
4. We're meeting great people in the **Delta Strummers**. And,
5. We're learning how happy you feel while ukulele playing.

Along the way, we've learned there's a formula for the maximum number of ukuleles you need.

F = the optimal number of ukuleles

X = your current number of ukuleles

Then $F = X + 1$.

Rich Alves - Treasurer

He was introduced to the ukulele as a young child, but his interest waned as he grew older. He played a little mid-life crisis guitar, but his interest waned as he grew older. In 2015 he sat in front of a **Strummers** performance and noticed what a fun time the musicians were having. He thought, "Fun time? Count me in!"

Sue Wiebe - Secretary

Hi, I'm Sue Wiebe. I was born in Oakland and grew up in Castro Valley. I am married and have two kids, a boy and a girl--now a man and woman. We have two grandsons and a granddaughter. I retired from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in 2006. In an effort to stay young and vital, I took up golf, expanded my sewing and crafts activities and thought taking up the ukulele would help in these efforts. Jerry, my husband, likes to tell a story about my ladies golf trip to Maui being the cause for my desire to get a uke--well, maybe.

Jer and I have been playing for three years and truly enjoy the instrument, the music, and most of all, the friends we have made. I don't know about the youthfulness and vitality, but we sure are having fun!

Craig Wilson - Member

I was born in the Bay Area and have been married to Mary, my wonderful wife for 43 years. We have lived in Discovery Bay for 12 years. We have four grandchildren, three girls and one boy, ages 16-22. I've had many interests that have come and gone but continue with my lifelong sport of fly fishing.

Since retiring six years ago I've kept busy:

- ♦ Fly fishing
- ♦ Learning to play golf (it plays me)
- ♦ We deliver Meals on Wheels
- ♦ Teaching fly fishing and fly tying to Veterans for Veterans First Fly Fishing, and
- ♦ Ukulele for the last 3 years (of course!)

My interest in playing the ukulele came as a teenager when my uncle played with a group of friends on water skiing trips and various family gatherings. Ever since, I wanted to learn until now finally, at 72, I'm enjoying learning and playing.

Ernie Macintyre - Music Director

He has a BSEE from Northwestern and is a retired Semiconductor Executive. Music is an important part of his life and he has sung in soloed and/or directed High School, College, Church and Community Choirs for over 50 years in Illinois, Scottsdale, Los Angeles, and now Brentwood. He joined the Summerset Singers in 2003 and became the Music Director and Principal Conductor in 2010. He also plays the guitar, Five-string banjo and now the Concert and Tenor Ukulele. He joined the **Delta Strummers** Ukulele Band as Music Director in June 2011 and is extremely proud of the group's growth, performances, fellowship, and accomplishments.

John Davelaar - Past Chairman

When John 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.

Tom Jones - Past Chairman

Tom 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**.