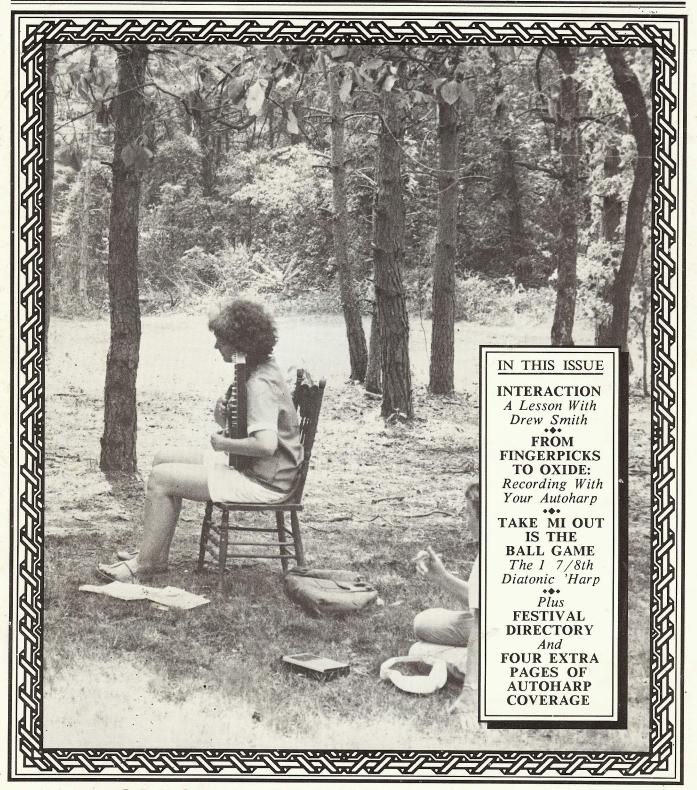
# AUTOHARP QUARTERLY THE MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO THE AUTOHARP ENTHUSIAST THE



• • • SPECIAL PREMIERE EDITION • • •



Volume One, Number One October, 1988

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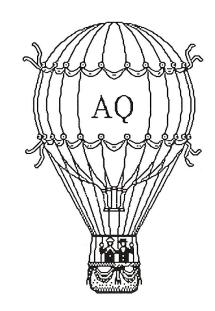
Autoharp Quarterly is published four times yearly and mailed first class to subscribers in January, April, July, and October. Subscriptions in the United States are \$15. Canada: \$17. Europe: \$19, air mail. Asia: \$21, air mail. Individual issues in U.S.A.: \$4.

Published by: Limberjack Productions PO Box A Newport, PA 17074 717 567-9469

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or years, we have been aware of many diversified and informative magazines in the music world, each augmenting the other, depending on the interests of the reader. However, there never seems to be such a thing as too much information. The sharing of ideas, tunes, and friendships is limitless. We began swapping ideas, and gradually, the prospect of a new publication

began to take form. In time, our "How about", "What if", and "Why couldn't" changed to "Why not?". With the help and support of people like Joe Riggs and Bob Wey, the invaluable suggestions of Maddie MacNeil, and the encouragement and cooperation of many autoharp devotees, *Autoharp Quarterly* has become a reality.

Autoharp Quarterly, written by, for, and about autoharp enthusiasts is dedicated to you, the reader. Because this is our first issue, we want to share with you, then, the goals of the magazine:

- 1. Provide timely information for and about the entire autoharp community
  - 2. Broaden the horizons of the individual, and so, the interests of all autoharp enthusiasts
  - 3. Gather the complete autoharp society into one family with common interests, and
  - 4. To do this with integrity and honesty with open accessibility to communication and the sharing of new ideas.

We hope you enjoy your new magazine, Autoharp Quarterly.

Mary Low Oreney

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# FROM FINGERPICKS TO OXIDE: Capturing Autoharp Sounds With Microphones

By Bob Wey

Bob Wey is the 1977 Winfield International Hammered Dulcimer Champion. He and his professional partner, Pamela Roberts, autoharpist, perform their unique music on stages throughout the northeast. Bob owns Ear-Relevant Sounds, a recording studio in Westford, MA.

Before we say anything at all about autoharps, let's imagine three photographers at the beach, a "realist", an "artist", and an "impres-sionist". The realist captures images of the beach as it actually is: sand, picnic litter, more sand, dead fish, and a broken surfboard. The artist is more concerned about creating a "pleasing" photograph: he waits for a sunny day, picks up the litter beforehand, and uses an angle which avoids the surfboard. The impressionist, too, wants a pleasing picture, but wants his photo to "make a statement". So he might do a closeup of the dead fish. choose a bizarre camera angle, or use lens filters in order to say, "This is a beach" Audio recordings of autoharps, or any acoustic instrument, for that matter, can take the same approaches. You can take a very sensitive microphone, set it up a few feet from the autoharp, and just capture

literally everything that comes out. Or you can use microphone techniques and equalization to give you an "accurate" yet very pleasing sound that's easily recognized as an autoharp. Or, you can be an impressionist and run the autoharp sound through digital delays, chorus boxes or distortion devices.

This article isn't meant to train you to be an audio engineer, and it's not my assumption that everybody who's reading it wants to make an autoharp LP or CD. You've probably found, though, that recording your own playing is a valuable learning tool: you can hear and re-hear your strong and weak techniques after you've played them. Then you can do them - or avoid them - again.

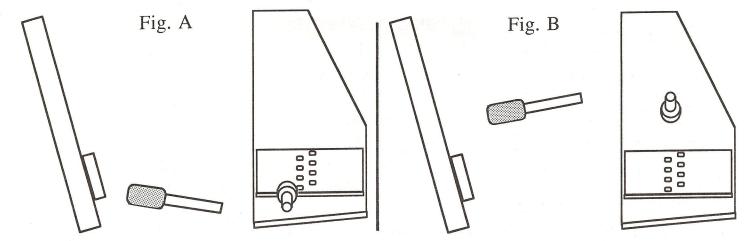
You may also want to make a short tape to share music with a friend, or as a demonstration of your playing for a coffeehouse. In any case, the net effect will be enhanced if the tape sounds good. A little audio savvy and skill will come in handy.

In my professional partnership with Pamela Roberts over the past five years, I've learned a lot about autoharps (except how to play one). And one thing I've learned is that autoharp

sounds come from three sources. First, we have the sound of the picks contacting the strings. Second, the sound of the strings and soundboard (and back) vibrating. And third, the sounds of the chord bars going up and down. Only Sound #2 is musical. Sound #1, however, seems to be necessary to make the recording sound like an autoharp. And Sound #3 is just noise. So our approach has been to reject #3, concentrate on #2, and put in enough #1 to make it sound right.

If you're doing your recording with a very limited budget, a portable cassette recorder will work fairly well. However, do us all a favor and stretch your finances just enough to buy a decent (\$50 - \$100) microphone. Portable recorders are generally better than they're given credit for, but the tiny mics built into them are dreadful. Moreover, a built-in mic will best pick up that which is closest to it, namely the recorder's motor.

If you're going to record your autoharp with a home-stereo cassette deck, you'll probably find it has microphone inputs. Because you have two inputs, though, doesn't mean you must use two mics. You're probably



better using just one, anyway. For technical reasons I won't deal with here, it's usually a mistake to use two mics on the same sound source.

So much for basics. Let's get back to those three sound sources I spoke of. From my experience, if you mic an autoharp more than two feet away, you pick up all three of those sounds - picks, music and bars. It will obviously sound very natural, but recording the completely "natural" sound may not be what you're after. If you come in closer, such as less than one foot, you'll not only avoid room noise and room sound coloration, but you'll have more control over the sounds you choose to reproduce.

The key here is experimentation. Try putting the mic below the level of the chord bars, as in Fig. A. You

probably won't get much pick noise, but you may not like the amount of chord bar noise you have. If you go straight in on the sound-board, Fig.B, you'll certainly hear the picking sounds strongly superimposed on some very nice musical sounds. The bass will probably be very full. Perhaps this will be what you'll prefer.

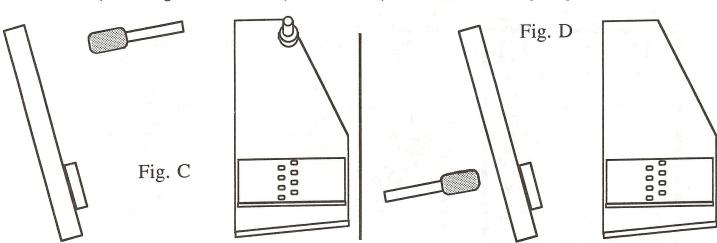
Try putting the mic up near the tuning pegs, as in Fig. C. Now you'll hear the picks plus a good bit of the musical stuff. The sound will usually be crisp, and the single-note articulation will be better than with the other positions. I say if you're only using one mic, this is the place.

Some interesting and pleasant effects can be had by mic'ing from behind the autoharp, as in Fig. D. Back there, it's all music; but

depending on how active the autoharp back is, the sound may seem muffled or thuddy to you.

If you try a contact microphone, you'll immediately hit the problem of where to put it on the soundboard. This problem is actually twofold: there's no place to put one because of all the strings, and the complex vibrations of a soundboard make it very hard to find a spot which will give a balanced sound. I personally can't recommend contact mics for autoharps.

That brings us to pickups. A magnetic pickup responds to the motion of the strings as they move through its field. (A magnetic pickup is not at all the same as a contact mic, which responds to soundboard vibrations). Thus it's fair to say that my Sound #2 is the only thing that the pickup can "hear".



My first experience with magnetic pickups was with one of Pam's Oscar Schmidt instruments. We now use them in her Orthey instruments, and although I've talked to pro autoharpers who refuse to use them in the studio or out, I happen to think they're great.

But there are two catches. First, the pickup must be installed so as to be in the optimum relationship to strings both radially and longitudinally. I'm afraid I can't go into that in this article. Maybe another time. Second, I would never rely on the pickup for 100% "autoharp" sound. Its output is too sterile. Without the non-musical attack you hear in the pick noise, and the musical information of the soundboard vibrations, it just doesn't sound like an autoharp. It might as well be a low-class synthesizer.

Hence, my personal formula for reinforcement for recording of autoharp sounds: use a directional microphone as shown in Fig. C plus the pickup output in roughly a 50/50 mix. If Pam and I are performing in concert, that's our instruction to the soundperson. If it's an unamplified gig, we use a portable amplifier connected to the pickup only to provide about half of the "autoharp"



#### I'LL BUY THAT

Compiled by Pamela Roberts

What's the best make/model for me; what's the right price; will the manufacturer stand behind its product; and what is that thing made of anyway?

In future issues, we'd like to include your input and opinions of the autoharp products you've purchased.

Some of the topics we're planning to cover are; electronic tuners, pick-ups, microphones, and other autoharp accessories. If there's any particular product you would like to see covered, please let us know.

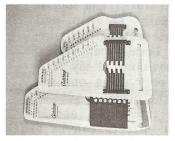
#### CARRYING CASES

Playing your 'harps is always fun, but carrying them around can get to be a real drag, (literally). At the end of the day, your arms feel two feet longer, your back is protesting, and your favorite tuning wrench is missing.

We'd like your views and opinions on the weighty subject of carrying cases. What do you use for a carrying case? What do you like about it? How would you change it? Do you use any type of wheels or luggage carrier? If you designed the perfest carrying case, what would it be like?

We're looking forward to receiving you comments. Be as detailed or as brief as you like and include photographs or illustrations if you wish. Responses will be correlated and published in an upcoming issue. Please mail your comments by September 30, 1988 to: Pamela Roberts, 174 Hayward Street, Braintree, MA 02184.

#### **NEW PRODUCT**



The Sierra Autoharp from Oscar Schmidt is a mid-size 4-key 'harp available in two models and assorted colors. With 10 chords and 30 strings, it weighs 5 pounds.

For additional information, contact: Oscar Schmidt Int'l., 2030 Lexington Drive, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089.

sound. This serves two purposes: it creates the pickup/acoustic blend I want, and it balances the autoharp sound with my hammered dulcimer.

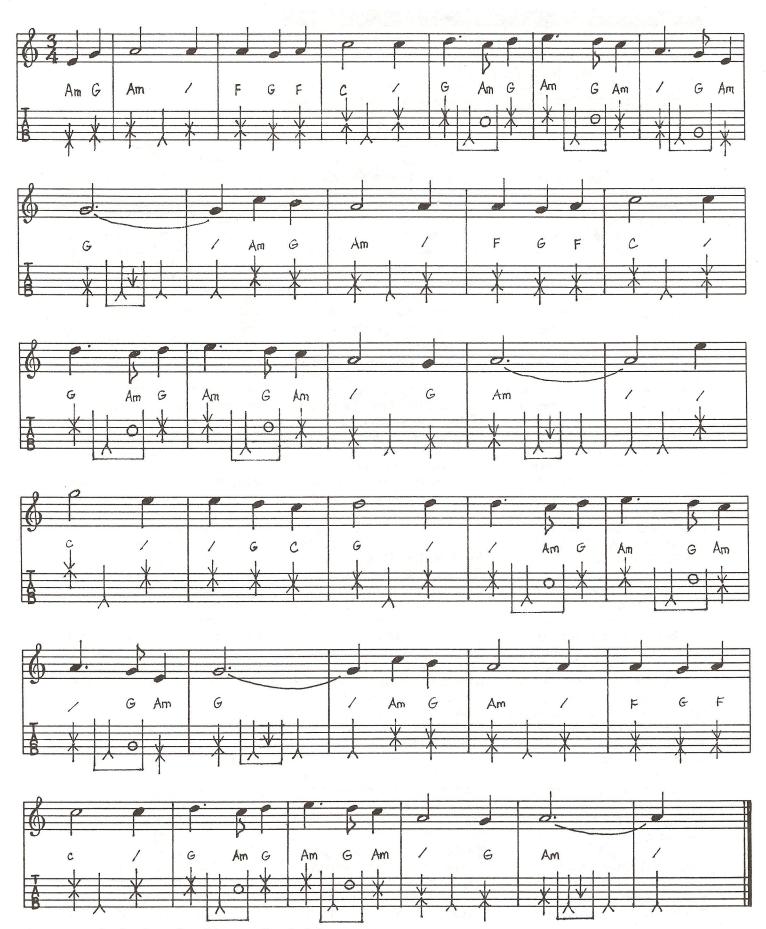
In a recording studio, of course, you can have about all the control you'd ever want. If you're working with a stereo home cassette deck, try using your microphone into one channel and the pickup in the other. Then play the tape back in the "mono" mode on your stereo and vary your left/right

settings for more mic and less pickup or vice versa. You can be an "artist", and through experimentation, portray your autoharp on tape as you think it really sounds.

And if you want to be an "impressionist", find a dead fish, tie it to your chord-bar cover, and practice scales.

>

Editor's Note: Bob's expertise in recording can be heard on "Ear-Relevance", with Pam Roberts. (See Records and Tapes list).



Arrangement for Autoharp Copyright 1988, Pamela Roberts and Ivan Stiles. All rights reserved.

# TAKE MI OUT IS THE BALL GAME How To Convert Your Old 'Harp Into A 1 7/8th Key Diatonic

By Dr. George Orthey

George Orthey has been handcrafting instruments for 25 years. He has made over 1500 lap dulcimers, 30 hammered dulcimers, and over 100 autoharps.

Just got a new 'harp? Why not convert your old one into a 1 7/8th key diatonic? 7/8? Yes! That extra bit enables you to use a 1 key diatonic scale with 7/8th of another key, allowing you to play a break in a fiddle tune, or just play along in a different key. All of the notes of the primary key are present on the diatonic harp. So, only one of the notes of the second key is missing. Therefore, the 1 7/8th key 'harp. You would for example, in a D diatonic 'harp have 7/8th of the key of A, also. So your 'harp would be set up with the following bars: F#m, Em, Bm, E7 (partial), G, A7, D, A. The G, A7, & D with their respective minors make up the standard key of D. The A, E7, & D make up the key of A, minus the third in the E7 chord. In selecting two keys for a 'harp, remember they must be an adjacent pair in the series (circle of 5ths): Eflat, Bflat, F, C, G, D, A, E. (These are the series of fifth interval chords). The second key is always immediately to the right of the primary key in this series. For example, if you want your primary key of the 'harp to be A, the 7/8th key must be E.

Now the nitty gritty mechanics of changing your sow's ear into a silk purse. There are two components of this exercise: First, determine the notes of the scale you need. Then retune the notes which are not needed in that scale.

This can be done quick and dirty by simply taking the key, for example, A, and determining the notes you need for your diatonic scale: A, B, C#, D, E, F#, G#. The key of A has three sharps. Now tune the strings of the unnecessary notes up or down, generally 1/2 step up if the 'harp body is in good condition. Thus, starting at the bottom notes of the harp, in the key of A, you would retune the standard strings: F, G, C, D, E, F, F#, G, A, A#, B, C, C#, etc. to F#, G#, C#, D, E, F#, F#, G#, A, B, B, C#, C#, etc, continuing all the way to the top strings of course, ending on the very high C#. This quick and dirty method does not make the most balanced sound quality, however. But it does work, and no string replacements must be made. Also, only a few of the tuning pin note markings must be changed.

If you are into changing some strings and you have your handy-dandy marker (Pilot SC or other glass marking pen) in tow, go for a better balance. See Diatonic Tuning Chart on next page.

You will notice certain requirements/characteristics in the diatonic tunings: 1. Usually the lowest note of

the 'harp is the tonic of the key. That is, the lowest note for the A 'harp would be A, G 'harp is G, etc. 2. The lowest 6 notes are the tonics of the six principal chords. 3. The note at the break of the bridge (the 14th string from the bottom) is the D right above middle C, or very near it. 4. The top note of the 'harp cannot exceed the D two notes above the standard top C.

String replacement requirements you would need: 1.The strings above #14(D) can be used without changing their size (wire gage). 2. Notes in the bass, strings #1-12, can be changed from standard tuning considerably by using larger or smaller wound strings. 3. The bottom bass string (F on a standard 'harp) cannot be tuned more than three notes lower. Keep these guidelines in mind. Remember if you "tune up" too much, you will get excess stress and maybe string breakage. And, too, you may behold the wonders of an instant folding 'harp. On the other hand, if you "tune down" too much, particularly in the lower midportion of the 'harp, the sound will be very dead.

The second major project in the "sow's ear to silk purse" transformation is to felt and notch a set of 8 bars and mount them on the 'harp.

You must have standard 12or 15-bar holders. Re-felt 8 bars. Place them in the lower 8 slots. Some people may want to be very neat and cut out the unwanted segment of the holder. This will require cutting off the bar holder cap also to a proper length and drilling a new hole in the cap and in the 'harp body to fix this holder in place. After cutting, plastic cement used for model building will glue the bar holder back together. If you're not handy, don't worry about all this cutting and drilling - it's not necessary at all to reach the last inning of this ball game.

After you have re-felted those 8 bars, the chords can be marked and cut. To do this, simply list the 8 chords you will use in order with notes that play in each chord listed. Place the bars in their respective slots one at a time, marking a small dot on the side of the felt above each string that plays in that chord. Using a very sharp knife or razor blade, cut a V or U in the felt so that the dot you marked is exactly in the center of the piece you cut out. Using this method, the notches will line up precisely with the strings you want to sound.. Secure the bars in the holder. By now the strings you have replaced or retuned have gone out of tune again, so tune it up and give it a strum. You will be amazed at the full grand sound you will get out of that old friend. Now, enjoy your brand new 1 7/8th key diatonic 'harp!

#### DIATONIC TUNING CHART

A	В	KEY Y	В	KEY	В	KEY of G	В	KĘY S*	В	KEY of A	В	KĘY 앝
36	36	С	36	C	36	C	36	В	36	C#	36	Car
35	35	A#	35	В	35	В	35	Α	34	В	35	В
34	34	A	34	A	34	Α	34	Α	32	A	34	A
33	33	G	33	G	33	G	33	G	31	Α	33	A
32	32	F	32	F	32	G	32	G	30	G#	32	G#
31	31	F	31	E	31	F#	31	F#	29	F#	31	F#
30	30	E	30	E	30	E	30	E	28	E	30	F#
29	29	E	29	D	29	E	29	D	26	E	29	E
28	28	D	28	D	28	D	28	D	25	D	28	E
27	27	D	27	C	27	D	27	C#	24	D	27	D#
26	26	C	26	C	26	С	26	C#	23	C#	26	D#
25	25	C	25	В	25	В	25	В	22	C#	25	C#
24	24	A#	24	В	24	В	24	В	21	В	24	Ca
23	23	A	23	A	23	Α	23	A	20	A	23	В
22	22	A	22	A	22	Α	22	Α	19	A	22	В
21	21	A	21	G	21	G	21	G	18	G	21	A
20	20	G	20	G	20	G	20	G	17	G#	20	A
19	19	G	19	F	19	FA	19	F#	16	F#	19	G#
18	18	F	18	F	18	F#	18	F#	15	F#	18	G#
17	17	F	17	E	17	E	17	E	14	E	17	F#
16	16	E	16	E	16	E	16	E	13	E	16	F#
15	12	D	14		15	D	15	D	15	D	15	E
14	11	C	13	D	14	D	14	D	14	D	14	E
13	9	A#	12	С	12	C	11	C#	12	CM	13	D#
12	9	A	11	C	12	С	10	В	12	C#	12	C#
11	8	G	9	В	11	В	9	A	10	В	11	В
10	8	G	8	A	9	A	8	G	10	В	9	A
9	6	F	7	G	9	A	7	F#	9	A	8	G#
8	6	F	6	F	8	G	5	E	9	A	6	F#
7	5	E	5	E	7	F#	4	D	8	G#	5	E
6	4	D	4	D	5	E	3	В	7	F#	3	C#
5	3	С	3	C	4	D	2	A	5	E	3	В
4	3	A#	3	В	3	С	2	G	4	D	2	A
3	2	A	2	A	3	В	1	F#	3	C#	2	G#
2	2	G	2	G	2	A	1	E	3	В	1	F#
1	1	F	1	F	2	G	1	D	2	A	1	E

#### KEY TO CHART:

A = string # of standard chromatic autoharp
B = standard Oscar Schmidt string # used in
adjacent diatonic tuning

<sup>\*</sup>D tuning developed by Paul E. Bowes for the Oscar Schmidt Wildwood Flower Autoharp

#### **AUTOHARP RECORDS AND TAPES**

Records and Tapes Editor: Eileen Roys Rt. 2, Box 85 Stevensville, MD 21666

If you know of a record/tape we have missed, please send the information to the Records and Tapes Editor. This list will be published every October, and updated in each issue.

The following records/tapes <u>feature</u> the autoharp.

ACROSS THE SEVEN SEAS Will Smith Virginia Arts Box 800 Louisa, Va 23093

AUTOHARP CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION Bill Clifton ELF-101

AUTOHARP CE SOIR Patrick Couton, Georges Fischer Iris Productions-France Down Home Music 10341 San Pablo Ave. El Cerrito, CA 94530 IRIS TR 1012

AUTOHARPIN'
Bonnie Phipps
Kicking Mule Records, Inc.
PO Box 158
Alderpoint, CA 95411
KM-228

AUTOHARP MELODIES Ron Wall

(AUTO) HARPS ALIVE Lindsay Haisley Further Music Productions, Inc. 2406 B, Winstead lane Austin, TX 78703

BILLY GARRISON DIATONIC AUTOHARP 366 Cottage Road, #4 S. Portland, ME 04106 BY HEART Bryan Bowers Flying Fish Records, Inc. FF-313

CHRISTMAS ON THE AUTOHARP Lindsay Haisley Armadillo Records 7093 Comanche Trail Austin, TX 78732 ARLP-82-1

COUNTRY SONGS AND TUNES WITH AUTOHARP Kilby Snow Folkways Records FA-3902

EVO'S AUTOHARP Evo Bluestein Greenhays Recordings GR-90715

THE FLOWER OF LOUDON COUNTY Becky Blackley PO Box 504 Brisbane, CA 94005 San Bruno Records SBR-001

GERMAN SONGS WITH AUTOHARP Tillie Gerber 477 Rainbow Dr. Glenhaven Sedro Woolley, WA 98294

GREAT ALL-AMERICAN AUTOHARP Play-by-Ear Home Workshop Lesson Series Drew Smith 529 Ardmore Road Ho-ho-kus, NJ 07423 HOME, HOME ON THE ROAD Bryan Bowers Flying Fish Records FF-0313

LIVE AT THE KERRVILLE FOLK FESTIVAL Lindsay Haisley Gazebo Records

MOSTLY GOSPEL David Morris

MOTHER MAYBELLE CARTER Maybelle Carter, 2-record set Columbia Records/CBS, Inc. 51 West 52nd Street New York, NY CG-32436

MOUNTAIN MUSIC
PLAYED ON THE
AUTOHARP
Ernest Stoneman, Kilby
Snow, Neriah and Kenneth
Benfield
"The Autoharp as Played by
the Old Masters"
Folkways Records
43 West 61st Street
New York, NY 10023
FA-2365

MOUNTAIN STATE MUSIC Andrew F. Boarman "Traditional Banjo and Autoharp Music from WV" June Appal Recordings JA 025

MY PRIVILEGE Mike Fenton Heritage Records 053 A RARE FIND Ernest V. "Pop" Stoneman Stonehouse Records NR 10817

ROUNDING
PICKERING BEND
Ivan Stiles
Orthey Instruments
Box 34A, Newport, PA 17074

SELF-SONG Richard Blackman 3718 Banks Street New Orleans, LA 70119

TRADITIONAL AUTOHARP Clay Jones Sunny Mt. Records PO Box 14592 Gainesville, FL 32604 EB 1006 (Companion book available)

THE VIEW FROM HOME Bryan Bowers Flying Fish Records 1304 West Schubert Chicago, IL 60614 FF-037

WHITMER AND LANGSTON, VOL. 1 Charles Whitmer, autoharp Charles Whitmer 25650 IH 45 #1107 Spring, TX 77386

WINFIELD WINNERS!
AUTOHARP
Volumes 1 - 2
Marty Schuman, Drew Smith,
Tom Schroeder, Will Smith,
Billy Garrison, Mike Fenton
Drew Smith
529 Ardmore Road
Ho-ho-kus, NJ 07423
WW-1001, WW-1002

The following records/ tapes include the autoharp

APPALWOOD Susan Francis, Sylvia DeLaney & Friends Appalwood Box 3-C, Rt. 2 Independence, VA 24348 BLUEGRASSGOLD Roger Sprung and the Progressive Bluegrassers Ginny Laengle, autoharp Sprung Enterprises Rt. 5, Papoose Hill Rd. Newtown, CT 06470 S-4

CHICKENS IN THE YARD The Mill Run Dulcimer Band 3815 Kendale Road Annandale , VA 22003 MRDB-102

THE CHRISTMAS PROJECT Harvey Reid

COLBURN & STUART
NEVER REALLY
GREW UP!
David Colburn and
Deborah Stuart
Macy Coffey Productions
20 Riverside Dr.
Ashland, NH 03217
(Companion book available)

COUNTRY HAM
Country Ham
c/o Carl Pagter
KB 2462
Lakeside Drive
Oakland, CA 94612
Vetco-512

COUNTRY SAMPLER Carol Stober Box 1275 Talladega, AL 35160 SG-102

COWTOWNS AND OTHER PLANETS
Michael Stanwood,
Bruce Bowers
Biscuit City Records
3974 Waterhouse Road
Oakland, CA 94602

CUTTIN' THE GRASS The Stonemans CMH Records PO Box 39439 Los Angeles, CA 90039 CMH-6210 DEEP SHADY GROVE Evo Bluestein Swallow Records 2002

EAR-RELEVANCE Bob Wey and Pamela Roberts Ear-Relevant Sounds One Nutting Lane Westford, MA 01886

THE FIRST FAMILY OF COUNTRY MUSIC The Stonemans 2-record set CMH Records PO Box 39439 Los Angeles, CA 90039 CMH-9029

FIFTY MILES OF ELBOW ROOM Paul Fotsch Grace and Win Horner-Grace Wellspring Music Rt. 1, Box 182 Columbia, MO 65201

HAVIN' FUN
The Memorial String Band
Monogram Records
Rt. 1, Box 240
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701
M-363

HOMESPUN CHRISTMAS The Mill Run Dulcimer Band MRDB-104

A HORSE NAMED BILL The Bluestein Family "A Children's Record" Greenhays Recordings GR-709

HOWDAYADO!
Janette Carter
Traditional Records
PO Box 8
Cosby, TN 37722
JC-573

I WUV YOU!
Bonnie Phipps
Children's songs
PO Box 9656
Denver, CO 80209

THE IRISH-BLUEGRASS CONNECTION Roger Sprung and the Progressive Bluegrassers with the Irish Crystal Band Drew Smith, autoharp Showcase Records S-7

IRISH GRASS
Roger Sprung and the
Progressive Bluegrassers
with the Irish Crystal Band
Drew Smith, autoharp
Showcase Records S-6

JANETTE AND JOE CARTER Janette and Joe Carter County 706

JUST A ROSE WILL DO Betty and Mark Waldron Outlet Recordings Box 594 Rocky Mount, VA 24151 Outlet 1053

KEEP ON THE SUNNY SIDE Jean and Lee Schilling Traditional Records PO Box 8 Cosby, TN 37722 TR-021

LAY DOWN, MY DEAR SISTER Full Circle Karen Mueller 1216 Tennessee Lawrence, KS 66044

LET THE DOVE COME IN The Bluestein Family Fretless Records FR 156

LISTEN TO MY SONG Dick Staber Philo Records The Barn N. Ferrisburg, VT 05473

LIVE AT THE CARTER FOLD
Janette and Joe Carter
County 706

MEETING IN THE AIR The Red Clay Ramblers "Songs of the Carter Family" Flying Fish Records FF-219

MY OLD PAINT MARE Country Ham Vetco-517

OLD AND NEW Full Circle Karen Mueller

THE OLD COUNTRY CHURCH Country Ham Vetco-519

OLD-TIME COUNTRY MUSIC Mike Seeger FA-2325

OLD TIME MOUNTAIN MUSIC Country Ham Vetco-510

OLD-TIME TUNES OF THE SOUTH
The Stonemans
Four autoharp cuts by
Pop Stoneman
FA-2315

ON A DAY LIKE TODAY Cathy Barton and Dave Para Folk Legacy Records FSI-107

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TOO NEAR TO TURN BACK NOW Paul Hill, Jack Moose, Clyde Robinson, Morris Herbert Old Homestead Records Box 100 Brighton, MI 48116 OHS-70031

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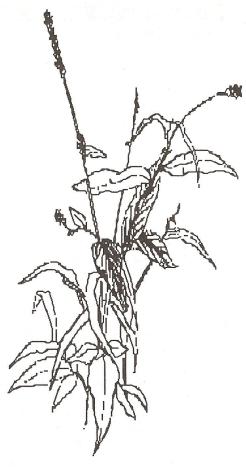
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#### THE COCOAHOUSE

By Cheryl Ange



In the spring of 1981, the Beechwood Knoll School, a small neighborhood elementary school in Quincy, MA was marked for closing due to a drop in enrollment and tax cuts. When members of the surrounding community heard this, they agreed that their school, a neighborhood focal point, was too important to be allowed to stand empty or sold to a private developer. Through their efforts and determination, the school was reopened in the fall of 1981 as the Beechwood Community Life Center. With a small regular staff and many volunteers, Beechwood now offers year-round programs for all ages, including preschool and after-school day care, elder programs, and the music school. The Beechwood Music School offers a wide range of musical activities, not the least of which are the evening coffeehouse, and its junior counterpart, the afterschool/school vacation Cocoahouse.

Everyone knows that a Saturday night coffeehouse program can make for a very enjoyable evening --- listening to music, joining in with the singing, and having a cup of coffee with a little homemade pastry.

But what if you're eight years old, enjoy sing-along music a lot, but you don't like coffee, and have to be in bed by nine?

A few years ago, some of us in the Music School of the Beechwood Community Life Center began to recognize this situation. We found that our regular Saturday night coffeehouse, possibly because of our community "image" and residential setting, was attracting a lot of families who brought along their school-age children. Children were always welcome (and still are) at our coffeehouse, but some of us began to think that there may be a better way to incorporate children into the coffee- house/folk music setting. As one of our staff put it, "Our evening coffeehouse is geared towards grown-ups who are welcome to bring children, so why not an afternoon coffeehouse geared towards children who are welcome to bring grown-ups?".

So out of the evening Beechwood Coffeehouse evolved the idea of the Cocoahouse, an afterschool/school vacation "coffeehouse" for school age and preschool boys and girls.

JP

To make this idea a reality, we settled in to do some planning. Mark Leighton and I got together to decide on what music the

boys and girls would like to sing and listen to, what instruments to play (being a 'harper myself, the autoharp was immediately included), and what kind of "feature" performers we should present. Keven Foley, Peter Fedukowski and Cathy Thornley then joined us to organize seating, lighting and publicity. And finally, with some contributions (financial and otherwise) from a few of our local organizations and merchants, plus a helping hand from our Beechwood staff, the Cocoahouse came together and opened its doors in the February, 1987 school vacation week.

The Cocoahouse was originally held during school vacations, but is now expanding to include afterschool performances as well. Each Cocoahouse begins with a sing-along, led by our staff, accompanied on autoharp, guitar, and our homemade percussion instruments. Many of our "can't miss" sing-alongs are the traditionals - "Comin' Round the Mountain", "On Top of Spaghetti", "Old MacDonald", and so on. Along with these, we add some contemporary children's songs, plus a few original tunes written by our Beechwood Music School staff. Our boys and girls

(and adults, too) tend to like the songs with repeating lines and choruses. Other favorites are the "fill in the blank" songs, and those that tell a ridiculous story, such as "Aiken Drum".

The sing-along continues until everyone is in and settled (mats in the front, and coffeehouse tables and chairs in the back rows). When everyone's ready, and in a musical frame of mind, we present our featured performance. By working with some of our local agencies, and informal networking, we've been able to present puppeteers, mimes, magicians, storytellers, and of course, lots of singers and musicians.

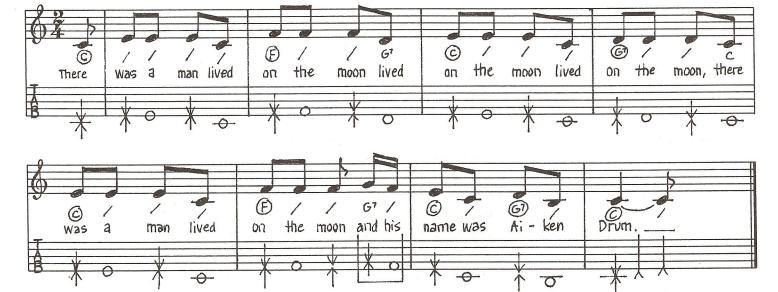
The success of Cocoahouse has been truly gratifying. What started out as a school/vacation sing-along with autoharp accompaniment,

now draws an audience that has been as high as 250 eager listeners.

At the Cocoahouse, we've found, more than ever, that music and children go together naturally. Our Beechwood Cocoahouse setting and the simple folk tunes we share have gone a long way in helping children (of all ages) to discover the joy of making music together.

#### **AIKEN DRUM**

Scottish Traditional



#### **CHORUS:**

And he played upon a ladle, a ladle, a ladle,

And he played upon a ladle, and his name was Aiken Drum.

#### **VERSES:**

His coat was made of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (roses or daisies, e.g.)

His hat was made of \_\_\_\_\_\_ (leaves or lilacs, e.g.)

His shoes were made of \_\_\_\_\_\_ (buttercups or pansies, e.g.)

His socks were made of \_\_\_\_\_\_ (milkweed or ragweed, e.g.)

and so on . . .



Let the boys and girls create their own verses and themes by filling in the blanks. Your singers will come up with so many new ideas, that the song will never be sung the same way twice.

Arrangement for Autoharp Copyright 1988, Ivan Stiles. All rights reserved.

The success of the Beechwood Community Life Center and its Cocoahouse has become a local legend. If you would like to communicate with Cheryl directly, she is the 'Harper-in-residence of the Beechwood Community Life Center, 225 Fenno Street, Quincy, MA 02170. In upcoming issues of Autoharp Quarterly, Cheryl will be sharing more of her Cocoahouse "Top 40" with autoharp accompaniment and her suggestions for presenting children's musical programs.

#### **FESTIVALS**

Festivals Editor: Ubi Adams 2659 Kissel Hill Road Lititz, PA 17543

For our first issue, we are listing all festivals which we know, and those who responded to our request for the names of "festivals in which the autoharp player is welcome". Unless specific dates are noted, the festivals will occur during the month under which they are listed. If you know of a festival we have not included on this list. please send the information to the Festivals Editor. This list will be published every April, and updated in each issue.



#### JANUARY 1989

Festival: Backbone Bluegrass

Date: Jan. 20 - 21

Place: Strawberry Point, IA

Code: BG CA CC

Contact: Backbone Bluegrass

Pro. Asso.

Box 400

Strawberry Point, IA 52076

Code: AW Autoharp Workshops

BG Bluegrass

C Concert

CA Children's Activities

CC Clogging/Contra Dance

CD Craft Demonstrations

CS Craft Sales

FM Folk Music

IC Instrument Construction

OF Oldtime Fun

OS Open Stage

S Story Telling

TD Traditional Music and Dance

#### **MARCH 1989**

Festival: Stringalong

Weekend

Date: March 10 - 12 Place: East Troy, WI Code: AW CC FM TD

Contact: UMW Folk Center, Ann Schmid, Dir.

M.A.P., PO Box 413 Milwaukee, WI 53201

#### **APRIL 1989**

Festival: The Great Black Swamp Dulcimer Festival

Date: April 28 - 30

Code: AW C CA CC FM OS Place: OSU, Lima OH Contact: Susan Porter, OSU 4240 Campus Drive Lima, OH 45804

Festival: New England Folk

Festival

Date: April 15 - 16

Code: AW C CA CC CD CS Place: Natick High School Contact: New England Folk Festival Association 1950 Mass. Ave.

Boston, MA 02140

#### **MAY 1989**

Festival: Stringalong

Weekend

Date: May 27 - 29
Place: East Troy, WI
Code: AW CC FM TD
Contact: UMW Folk Center,

Ann Schmid, Dir.

M.A.P., PO Box 413 Milwaukee, WI 53201 Festival: Northwest Folklife

Festival

Place: Seattle, WA Code: AW TD

Contact: Northwest Folklife

Festival

305 Harrison St. Seattle, WA 98109

#### **JUNE 1989**

Festival: The Schroonb Valley Bluegrass Roundup

Place: Northeast NY

Code: BG

Contact: Adirondack Bluegrass League, Inc.

PO Box 901

Corinth, NY 12822

Festival: Cosby Dulcimer &

Harp Convention Place: Cosby, TN

Code: AW C CA FM IC S

Contact: Folk Life Center of

the Smokies Inc.
Jean & Lee Schilling.

Directors

PO Box 8, Highway 32

Cosby, TN 37722

Festival: Mountain Folks'

Music Festival

Place: Silver Dollar City, MO Code: BG C CC CD FM OF

Contact: Rex Burdett

417 338-8261

Festival: Southern Michigan

Dulcimer Festival Place: Marshall, MI

Code: AW

Contact: Pat Hesselgrave

517 750-3472

Festival: CA Traditional Music Society Summer

Solstice

Place: CA State University,

Northridge

Code: AW C CC CD Contact: CA Traditional Music Society

4401 Trancas Place Tarzana, CA 91356

Festival: Fiddlehead Music &

Dance Week

Place: Baltimore, MD Code: CC FM TD

Contact: Fiddlehead Music &

Dance Week 3106 Barclay St.

Baltimore, MD 21218

Festival: Annual Bluegrass Festival of the Southwest

Bluegrass Club

Place: Glen Rose, TX Code: BG CA CD

Contact: Larry Witt Tres Rios, PO Box 278 Glen Rose, TX 76043

Festival: Charlotte Folk Music Society Lotta Festival Place: Latta Plantation Park,

Charlotte, NC

Code: AW BG C CA CC CD

CS FM S TD

Contact: Joe Cline 500 North Graham #8 Charlotte, NC 28202

Festival: Bill Harrell's Bluegrass Festival

Place: Fredericksburg,

Code: C

Contact: Bill Harrell

703 274-1291

**JULY 1989** 

Festival: Augusta Heritage

Arts Workshops Date: Summer, 1989 Place: Elkins, WV

Code: AW BG C CA CC CD

FM IC TD S

Contact: Augusta Heritage

Center

D & E College

Elkins, WV 26241-3996

Festival: Breakneck

Mountain Bluegrass Festival

Place: Crawford, ME

Code: BG

Contact: Joe and Nellie

Kennedy

RFD 1, Box 1210 Harmony, ME 04942

Festival: Cranberry Dulcimer Gathering

Place: Binghamton, NY Code: AW C FM

Contact: Ed Ware c/o Unitarian Univ. Church

183 Riverside Dr. Binghamton, NY 13905

Festival: Backbone Bluegrass Festival

Place: Strawberry Point, IA

Code: BG CA CC

Contact: Backbone Bluegrass

Pro. Assn. Box 400

Strawberry Point, IA 56207

Festival: Swallow Hill Dulcimer & Autoharp

Festival

Place: Denver, CO Code: AW C FM

Contact: Swallow Hill Music

Association 1905 S. Pearl Denver, CO 80210

AUGUST 1989

Festival: Carter Family Memorial Weekend Place: Hiltons, VA

Code: AW C

Contact: Janette Carter

PO Box 111

Hilton, VA 24258

Festival: Galax Annual Oldtime Fiddlers Convention

Place: Galax, VA

Code: AW BG CC FM TD Contact: Oscar Hall 328 A Kenbrook Dr. Galax, VA 24333



Festival: Ozark Folk Center

Autoharp Weekend

Place: Mountain View, AR

Code: AW C CD

Contact: Elliot Hancock,

Ozark Folk Center

Mountain View, AR 72560

Festival: Valley of the Moon Scottish Fiddling School

Code: TD

Contact: Jan Tappan, SFC

1938 Rose Villa St. Pasadena, CA 91107

Festival: Champlain Valley

Festival

Place: Ferrisburg, VT

Code: AW CA CD CS S TD Contact: Champlain Valley

Festival

PO Box 163

Fairfax, VT 05454

Festival: The Michigan

Festival

Place: MSU, E. Lansing, MI

Code: C CA CC S
Contact: The Michigan

Festival, Inc.

4990 Northwind Dr. Suite 230 East Lansing, MI 48823

#### SEPTEMBER 1989

Festival: Walnut Valley

Festival

Place: Winfield, KS

Code: AW C (International

Autoharp Contest)

Contact: Walnut Valley

Association PO Box 245

Winfield, KS 67156

Festival: Old-Time Country Music Contest & Festival

Place: Avoca, IA (National

Autoharp Contest)

Code: BG CA CC CD CS FM

S TD

Contact: Bob Everhart

106 Navajo

Council Bluffs, IA 51501

Festival: Annual Fall Bluegrass Music Festival

Place: Tres Rios, TX

Code: BG CC

Contact: Larry Witt

Tres Rios, PO Box 278 Glen Rose, TX 76043

Festival: Autumn Hills

Dulcimer Festival Place: Winsted, CT

Code: C CC FM TD Contact: Autumn Hills

Box 807

Winsted, CT 06098

Festiva l: Arcadia Annual

Bluegrass Festival Place: Arcadia, MD

Code: BG

Contact: Arcadia Bluegrass

Festival,

c/o Wm. Hale 15723 Dover Rd.

Upperco, MD 21155

#### OCTOBER 1989

Festival: Calico Days

Place: Yermo, CA

Code: OF

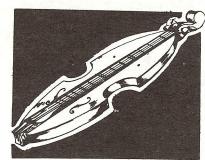
Contact: Don Tucker

DVT Marketing Enter. Inc.

PO Box 56419

Riverside, CA 92517

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### INTERACTION

YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERACTIVE LESSON WITH

#### DREW SMITH



Drew Smith has performed throughout the northeast for over 10 years with Roger Sprung and the Progressive Bluegrassers. He has been

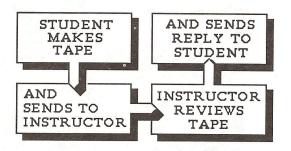
playing autoharp about 20 years, and has developed a distinctive thumb-lead style which he uses to play single string melody notes for fast fiddle tunes. He considers himself a "string band" player, using a chromatic autoharp almost

exclusively. Besides bluegrass, he has a large repertoire of Old Time Southern Mountain tunes, and also plays Irish, French, and Russian music.

He has performed at such places as Lincoln Center and the Philadelphia Folk Festival. He also is a workshop instructor. He has founded the

"Great All-American Autoharp" Play-by-Ear Home Workshop Lesson Series, as well as two excellent hour-long cassettes, "Winfield Winners! Autoharp", featuring six different winners at Winfield, Kansas, including Drew, the 1984 Champion. A forthcoming album will feature the

autoharp played one-on-one with many varied instruments. We are most happy and fortunate to welcome Drew Smith as our first Interaction instructor.



Interaction is your opportunity to have a personalized lesson with a top-notch performer.

#### HERE'S HOW INTERACTION WORKS

- 1. Record your rendition of the lesson, along with your questions on a good quality cassette tape. Record on one side up to 15 minutes. Leave the other side blank.
- 2. Mail the cassette (in a small padded envelope available at the post office) along with \$11.25 (lesson fee plus return postage) to the instructor. Make check payable to the instructor.

The instructor will listen to your tape, and on the blank side, critique your playing, answer your questions and record his own rendition of the tune (or portion of the tune) with explanation and comments - no less than 15 minutes, and mail the tape back to you.

YOU WILL RECEIVE YOUR PERSONALIZED REPLY IN 3 - 4 WEEKS

#### THE INTERACTION LESSON: "JENNY LIND POLKA"

Drew Smith 529 Ardmore Road Ho-ho-kus, NJ 07423

Here's a sprightly dance tune that can't help but make you tap your foot to its beat, "Jenny Lind Polka". I have played it in autoharp contests at Galax, Virginia, and at Winfield, Kansas. You may also recognize this tune by the title, "Heel and Toe Polka".

I have developed a tablature for illustrating the notes of the scale, and the hand movements for melody picking and rhythm strums. For the notes of the scale, I use a generic system of numbers. It works regardless of the key you are playing in. The notes of the major scale are all found in the I, IV, V and V7 chords.

Notes of the scale:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 (1)
Found in chords:	(do) I	(re) V	(mi) I	(fa) IV V7	(sol) I	(la) IV	(ti) V	(do) I IV

Hand movements for melody picking:

PINCH
Melody Note

SINGLE
Melody Note

The note the middle finger plays melody note

3 - the note the middle finger plays

- thumb stroke

The note the middle finger plays

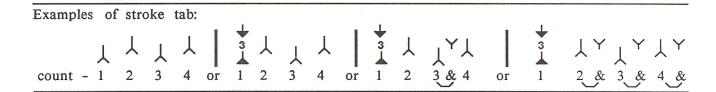
The note the above finger alone plays the melody note

3 - the note the above finger plays

Rhythm strums and fills:

- thumb brush ( high strings, Llow strings)

- index finger "back scratch"

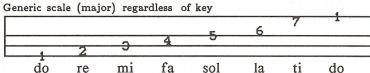


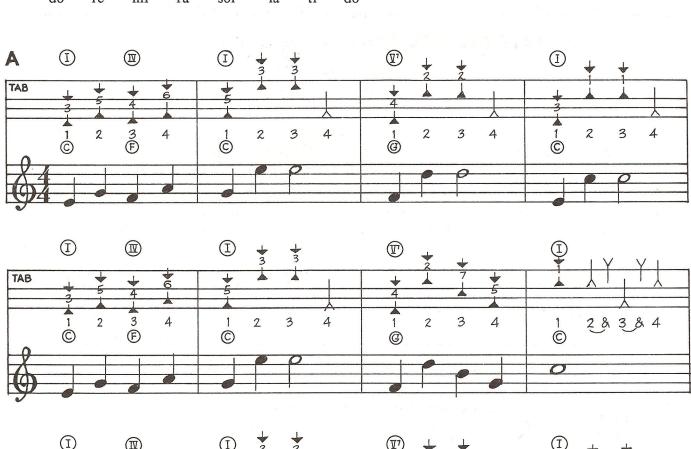
You can play almost any tune in any key in which you have the I, IV, V and/or V7 chords. Decide which key you will play in, and stroke the key (I chord) to establish your "do" or 1 note. The tune in this lesson starts on the "mi" or 3 note of the scale.

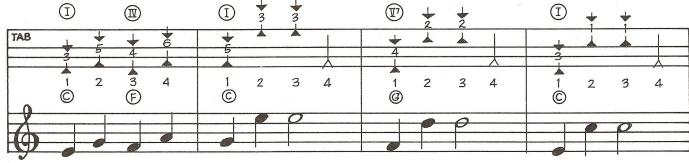
In order to make it as easy as possible, I've written out the entire tune, including the repeats, in both my own tab and standard music notation.

#### JENNY LIND POLKA

Traditional









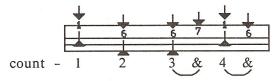
Arrangement for Autoharp Copyright 1988, Drew Smith. All rights reserved.

In the musical notation/tab shown,

- the A part is played fairly simply with: 1. All pinches (e.g. the first measure)

- 2. Pinches with thumb stroke to maintain the beat (e.g. the second measure)
- 3. Pinch with thumb strokes and back scratches used as rhythm fillers (e.g. eighth measure)

- the B part gets a bit fancier by adding 1/8 melody notes (played with your index or middle finger) before or after the pinches. For example, in the first measure in part B:





Don't be fooled by this - pinches and thumb strokes continue to occur in the exact same 1/4 note timing. You can think of your thumb as a metronome, keeping the rhythm beat. The melody or rhythm notes *not* on the thumb beats are 1/8 notes, and fall in between.

Never feel that you *must* be limited to playing this tune (or any tune, for that matter) exactly as it is written. You can add 1/8 melody notes for faster melodies, or for syncopating wherever you feel appropriate, as long as you keep your thumb beat steady. You may pinch your melody note with the thumb beat, or for variety, strike the melody note with your middle or index finger just before or after the thumb beat. When you get used to doing this, it gets easier and easier - and will add a lot of interest to your playing.

Thumb Lead is another style of playing that can be exciting. I developed this style so that I could play fast tunes up to fiddle speeds. In this style, the melody is picked primarily by the thumb. Try substituting melody thumb strikes for the melody pinches in "Jenny Lind Polka". Catch the 1/8 melody notes with your index finger. Do this by making a loose fist with your thumb and index finger slightly extended, so that they form a reverse "C". Then swivel your wrist slightly so that the thumb strikes the melody note with the upward motion, and the index finger strikes the next melody note with a downward motion. You'll find that with this technique you can really pick up some speed, and keep up with those fast fiddle tunes. Don't be discouraged if at first it seems difficult as it will improve with practice. Also, when you want to extend the note you have struck with your thumb, you can move into a rhythm fill in the lower string area: e.g.

using alternate thumb strokes and index finger "back scratches".

Try playing "Jenny Lind Polka" in a plain style, and when you feel comfortable with that, try embellishing it with syncopations and/or thumb lead. Use your creativity!

I'll be interested to see how you have mastered this lesson, and hope that you will send me your tape, even (and especially), if you seem to be having trouble. I will review your tape and send you my comments, rendition, and encouragement.

#### Drew Smith

Editors' Note: See "Winfield Winners! Autoharp", Volumes 1 and 2, and the "Great All-American Autoharp" Play-By-Ear Home Workshop Lesson Series, (Records and Tapes).



#### **AUTOHARP BOOKS**

Books Editor: Eileen Roys Route 2, Box 85 Stevensville, MD 21666

If you know an autoharp book which we have missed, please send the information to the Books Editor. This list will be published every July, and updated in each issue.

AUTOHARP ACCOMPANIMENTS TO OLD FAVORITE SONGS Lillian Mohr Fox

THE AUTOHARP Alexander Shealy Lewis Music Pub. Co. Inc. 263 Veterans Blvd. Carlstadt, NJ 07072

CHORDS AND STARTS FOR GUITAR AND AUTOHARP Collection of Children's Songs. Mary Lou Colgin Colgin Publishing Box 301-CA Mon Lius, NY 13104

FOLK STYLE AUTOHARP Harry Taussig Oak Publications 701 7th Avenue New York, NY 10036

JIGS AND REELS FOR THE AUTOHARP Arranged by Ivan Stiles Ivan Stiles Route 29, RD 2 Phoenixville, PA 19460

MEET THE AUTOHARP AND MAKE MUSIC Maria Lang Boston Music Co. 116 Boylston Street Boston, MA 02116 AVAILABLE FROM:
OSCAR SCHMIDT INT'L
230 LEXINGTON DRIVE
BUFFALO GROVE, IL 60089

AUTOHARP PARADE VOLUME 1 100 Songs for Children P-1001-A

AUTOHARP PARADE VOLUME 2 Folk and Familiar Favorites P-1001-B

AUTOHARP PARADE VOLUME 3 Hymns and Spirituals P-1001-C

AUTOHARP POCKET SONGBOOK P-1027

AUTOHARP SONGBOOK Meg Peterson P-1038

BEATLES GREATEST HITS P-1005-C

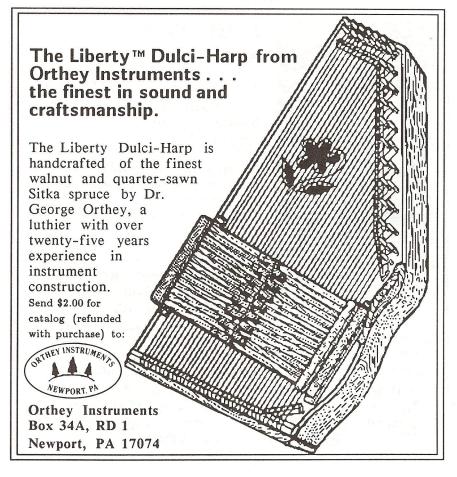
BEGINNING AUTOHARP Bonnie Phipps P-1016 BEGINNING AUTOHARP CASSETTE FOR BOOK T-1016

COLLECTION OF CHILDREN'S SONGS P-1117

COMPLETE METHOD FOR AUTOHARP AND CHROMAHARP Meg Peterson P-1007-D COMPLETE METHOD CASSETTE FOR BOOK T-1007-D

COUNTRY PICKIN' FOR AUTOHARP Meg Peterson P-1100 CASSETTE FOR BOOK T-1100

FUN WITH THE AUTO-HARP P-1007-B



HARP, THE HERALD ANGELS SING Becky Blackley P-1012

HYMNS FOR THE AUTOHARP Meg Peterson P-1007-A

JOHN DENVER'S GREATEST HITS P-1005-A

KENNY ROGERS SONGBOOK P-1015

LETS PLAY THE AUTOHARP Meg Peterson P-1067

MANY WAYS TO PLAY THE AUTOHARP, VOL 1 Beginners P-1002-A

MANY WAYS TO PLAY THE AUTOHARP, VOL 2

Advanced P-1002-B

MORE SONGS FOR AUTOHARP Meg Peterson P-1047

PLAY ALONG WITH THE EASY CHORD P-1014-A

PLAY ALONG WITH THE EASY CHORD/TEACHER P-1014-B

SESAME STREET SONGBOOK P-1506

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Clay Jones, Barbara Koehler
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MUSIC FROM MISSOURI Arranged by Tom Schroeder

THE AUTOHARP BOOK Becky Blackley

THE BECKY BLACKLEY SONG BOOK B. Blackley

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#### WHISPERING HOPE Verse 2

If in the dusk of the twilight,
dim be the region afar,
Will not be deepening darkness
brighten the glimmering star?
Then, when the night is upon us,
why should the heart sink away?
When the dark midnight is over,
watch for the breaking of day.
REFRAIN



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#### WHISPERING HOPE

Septimus Winner



Words continued on facing page.

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#### 'HARPERS-AT-LARGE

On-The-Spot Reports from Festivals, Concerts, Workshops, and other Autoharp Events

#### MIKE HERR

210 Reservoir Rd., Beckley, WV 25801

Festival: Bill Harrell's Bluegrass Festival Place: Fredericksburg, VA

Frantic - the first, and best word that came to mind. Frantically got my things packed the night before. Frantically drove six hours, stopping only at the side of the road to make a stand for relief. Finally, frantically getting the tent pitched while hearing the Osborne Brothers' music across the motocross raceway at Bill Harrell's 9th Annual Bluegrass Festival.

Aaaaah - to sit on the folding chair, lean back and relax to some gentle strains of bluegrass music. Right? Wrong! After the Osborne Brothers, a genteel family from Georgia - the Lewis Family - strolled out on stage to perform. Genteel, that is, except for one Little Roy Lewis. What was the first-and- best word that came to mind to describe him? You've got it! I found myself sitting straight up, feet and fingers tapping to this guy who was frantically hopping around stage while playing; frantically changing instruments three, four, five and six times during one tune: frantically telling jokes and rattling off stories

while tuning three different instruments; frantically playing with his bright red suspenders during one tune and tying himself up with them before another tune. What a show! One of his favorite tricks was to progress down the row of Family women and - while standing behind each one -"play" their necks with the left hand and "strum" their right legs with his right hand, perfectly in time with the bass player. The crowd was obviously quite at home with and appreciative of his antics.

Now, Little Roy also plays the autoharp (in addition to several types of guitars, banjos, mandolins and dobros). What can I say about his autoharp playing? Lord, was it frantic - fit right in with the rest of the tunes. In between signing albums and personally designed capos, he remembered that he'd started with the autoharp in 1959, one that he and his sister "didn't know what to do with". But an Army buddy showed him how to play, and within "...three or four days I was playin' pretty good." Eileen Roys has become a close friend and has introduced the diatonic 'harp to Little Roy- he loves it, but "I can't play it with the Group, 'cause it doesn't have

enough keys."

During "Glory Land", Little Roy had thrown several guitars and banjos off his shoulders, finally arriving at the autoharp. As he lifted it up to the mike and played one break - at break-neck speed, (break-string, breakchord bars, break-sound barrier), I was amazed at the swell of cheers and excitement that rose from the crowd! It was clearly a response to the presence of the autoharp. I mentioned it later to Little Roy and he said: "You can play a banjo all day long and you can play one autoharp song and they'll like it better than they do the banjo. They really do!"



In closing, thank goodness the whole weekend didn't continue as frantically as it started. Little Roy and the Lewis Family entertained the crowd in more ways than any of the other worthy Festival players. And it was obvious that the autoharp continues to increase in stature as a "real" instrument, worthy of our fingers and ears.

PAUL PETER
Box 573, Woodsfield, OH 43793

Festival: The Great Black Swamp Dulcimer Festival Place: Campus of OSU Lima, OH

In prehistoric times the site of Lima, Ohio was smack in the middle of the Great Black Swamp. Thanks to the draining efforts of farmers in the late 1800s, Lima is now the site of an annual dulcimer festival - The Great Black Swamp Dulcimer Festival. This year was the tenth annual and was held on the campus of Ohio State University.

While the festival originally focused on the mountain and hammered dulcimer, it has evolved into a weekend of over eighty workshop classes spanning a much wider spectrum. Of particular interest here were the nine classes and concerts dealing with autoharp music.

Topping the list of harp performers/instructors was the 1987 World Autoharp Champion, Ivan Stiles. Ivan taught two classes: Jigs and Reels, and Autoharp Ornamentation for Vocals. Both classes were eagerly and well attended. However, each class was only an hour long, which was too short for Ivan's presentation and the participants' practice.

On Saturday afternoon,
Ivan gave a one hour "mini concert". His selections included "Arkansas Traveler",
"Rounding Pickering Bend",
"Ragtime Annie", "Swallow
Tail" and "Oh Daddy".

A second autoharp performer/instructor was Wanda Degen from Michigan. Ms. Degen, a music education student, employee of Elderly Instruments and a member of the performing group

"Lady of the Lake", taught two classes, one dealing with playing the autoharp, and the other dealing with using the autoharp as a demonstration instrument. The first class, Traditional and Contemporary Folksongs with the Autoharp, really dealt with the use of the autoharp to accompany and augment singing. While labeled as "Hands-on", the presentation covered basic chords, tunings, picks and a demonstration of some of the techniques Wanda uses with the songs in the handout. Her second class addressed children's music, and she demonstrated several of the songs in her handout with the autoharp. Ms. Degen also gave a "mini-concert" on Saturday afternoon with several of her songs utilizing the autoharp.

Gail Ruhl from Nashville, Tennessee, taught the Beginner/Intermediate Autoharp classes to a packed classroom. The instruction was reduced, however, as the range of ability/experience was too great to be accommodated in a single class period.

Finally, Brenda Vetter led a spirited Singalong from Tin Pan Alley, focusing on songs from the 1890 to 1930 eras.

Within the main classroom building was an area for displays of instruments, equipment, music, recordings, and a cafeteria with an eating area that doubled as a spot to swap songs and techniques.

All of the autoharp classes and concerts were very well attended even though this festival is primarily dedicated to dulcimers.

I have several observations. First, these classes were much too short. A person coming to this festival intent on learning something about playing the autoharp, especially at the beginning level, needs a half - or a full-day class. Next, beginners need to have classes of their own. Too much time is lost to players of more experience. Furthermore, given the number of people who were interested in playing the autoharp, the festival organizers could well allot more class time to autoharp instruction/performance.

Despite the aforementioned observations, The Great Black Swamp Dulcimer Festival was a well organized, wide-ranging and enjoyable experience.



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KATHY FERGUSON 9033 Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22031

Concert: Bryan Bowers
Place: Wolf Trap/DC area

Autoharp music lovers in the Washington area had a real treat when Bryan Bowers played at the Barns of Wolf Trap. He opened his show with the story about getting a dog whom he named Hairy, "Just because that's how he is, that's how he was, and that's how the house gets more and more as days go by." The program had a grand mix of love songs like "Hot Buttered Rum", folk songs - eg. "Gold Watch and Chain", gospel songs, and fun songs like "Zen Gospel Singing". New to his repertory was the delightful "Cowboy Fireman," who "Killed 300 passengers, but thank God he saved the child".



Concert: Mill Run Dulcimer Band Place: Fairfax County Colvin Run Park Contact: Keith Young 3815 Kendale Road Annandale, VA 22003 703 941-1071

The Mill Run Dulcimer Band, headed by Keith Young, continues its outstanding performances at the Park. On the evening of March 26th, despite a horrendous thunder storm. they played to a packed, standing-room-only crowd in the barn. And on April 17th and May 15th, they performed on the outdoor stage to an enthusiastic audience. Autoharpist Woody Padgett does a rendition of Scott Joplin's "The Entertainer" that just knocks your socks off!

Club: The Dulcimer Disorganization of Greater Washington (DDGW) Contact: Keith Young 3815 Kendale Road, Annandale, VA 22003 703 941-1071

The Dulcimer Disorganization of Greater Washington, (DDGW), sponsors a jam session at the Pohick Library which welcomes autoharpists, hammer and lap dulcimer players, and guitarists, etc. DDGW has pot luck gettogethers and camp-out weekends with open stages to give folk musicians a chance to perform before a friendly, non-threatening audience.

Keith Young organizes group lessons in the spring and fall on Wednesday evenings for dulcimers, and yes, the autoharp! Michael King instructs the 'harpists and offers a wide variety of music and techniques.

#### **BILL BRYANT**

PO Box 840, Grizzly Flats, CA 95636

Club: Slippery Fingers Autoharp Club Place: Sacramento, CA Contact: Paul Lyle 7017 Larchmont Dr. N. Highlands, CA 95660

Slippery Fingers, run by Paul Lyle, has for the past two years been represented at almost every major and minor festival. Also they have had a strong part in participating in contests. Each regular member, in the last year, has appeared on TV. Yes, playing autoharps!

I've been told that there's an impressive number of Canadian 'harpers on the West side. I'll keep you informed!

Festival: Pow Wow Place: Valley Springs, CA Contact: Bill Bryant

On the West Coast there are a number of large festivals that have autoharpers in attendance, but never overlook the small festivals. One in mind was the 13th Annual Pow Wow at Snyders Ranch, Valley Springs, CA in May. Inclement weather did not dampen the spirits of the hearty autoharpers, who joined in with the Old-Time Fiddlers to provide music for the festival.

Festival: NW Folklife Fest. Place: Seattle WA

This is a good festival to go to - there is at least one autoharp workshop. Sure, it's fun to seek out other autoharpers to jam with at festivals, but think about this - staying in small, select groups doesn't do much for promoting our instrument. In fact, it makes us reclusive.

By joining in with other instruments, other people learn about the autoharp, while you learn more about other instruments. Don't stop jamming with other 'harpers, but expand to a variety of groups. Go to small festivals, fairs, parades - whatever, and you will enlighten people that have probably never seen an autoharp!

Festival: CA Trad. Music Society Summer Solstice Place: CA State Univ. Northridge Campus

The CTMS Festival has passed with some disappointments, but mostly worthwhile. One disappointment was the cancelling of the autoharp contest. None the less, autoharpers appeared in large numbers to attend the many workshops. I won't expound on every 'harp class, but a couple need to be mentioned.

Stevie Beck's and Becky Blackley's classes for beginners were always full and received rave reviewsclear, understandable lectures and good worksheets.

Will Smith's playing ability and musical knowledge are well known. However, the topics for his workshops were difficult and needed a clearer presentation.

An interesting note: watching a professional perform on stage, one rarely notices an error. During this festival, however, I noticed one autoharpist make faces as a mistake was made, and another even say "Oops!" to an error. Most people would never have noticed those goofs if the performers didn't tell them.



#### **PRO-FILES**

If you are a professional autoharp player and wish to be featured in this column, please send your picture and information to Ivan Stiles, Route 29 - RD2, Phoenixville, PA 19460.



Louise Hamon Heilig is a native of eastern Kentucky. She grew up on a farm near the small town of Grayson, the county seat for Carter County, in the Appalachian Foothills. Her early musical experiences centered around the local Methodist church. First acquainted with the folk music of that area in her childhood, it has become a lifelong interest.

Louise has collected the ballads for her programs from many sources. Her selections are both secular and religious, reflecting variously the British heritage of the mountaineers, the isolation, difficult life, and a dependent closeness to nature and God. Ms. Heilig brings to the music the insight of a native of that region. In her performances, she accompanies herself on the autoharp and mountain dulcimer.

For further information and performance schedule, contact: Louise H. Heilig Box 1995 Media, PA 19063



Paul Fotsch Grace and Win Horner Grace have been performing together for over twelve years. They began playing professionally after they were "discovered" while on vacation in a small town in Colorado. They have entertained at music festivals, craft fairs, folklife festivals, concerts, weddings, dances, and more.

Their music includes a large repertoire of American Old Time and Traditional music and a unique genre they have dubbed New Old Time. They like to keep their music varied and have been known to throw in bluegrass, cajun, country, Irish and gospel music. Paul and Win combine fiddle,

accordian, mandolin, autoharp, and guitar with their singing, and have two recordings, "A Place In The Choir" and "Fifty Miles Of Elbow Room".

Paul and Win live on a farm near Columbia, Missouri with their two daughters, Leela and Eleanor.

Performance Schedule
October 1-2, Louisburg
Cider Fest, Louisburg,
Kentucky
October 7, Dance,
Champaign-Urbana, Illinois
October 12, Greencastle of
Elmhurst, Elmhurst, Illinois
October 17, Jam & Sing
Class, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
October 21, 22, 23, Antique
Extravaganza, Bartle Hall,
Kansas City, Missouri
November 18, Focal Point, St.

For further information and performance schedule update, contact; Paul & Win Grace Route 1, Box 182 11990 E. Baker Road Columbia, MO 65201

November 20, Childgrove

Country Dancers, St. Louis,

Louis, Missouri

Missouri



Mike Fenton is the 1987 International Autoharp Champion and makes his living providing workshops and concerts to schools and other institutions in England and abroad. He employs a variety of melodic styles on the autoharp, specializing in a two-finger "open-string" style which allows him to play at a true "fiddle speed". Mike's first recording, "My Privilege" is produced by Heritage Records of Galax, Virginia. He can also be heard on "Winfield Winners! Autoharp", Volumes 1 and 2, and "Galax International", a two-LP set collection of old time and bluegrass music by non-Americans.

Mike is usually in the United States in August and September for convention, folk center, and school performances.

For more information and performance schedule, contact:
Mike Fenton
High Park Cottage
Pershore Road
Whittington
Worcester, WORCS. WR5-2RT
ENGLAND



Marty Schuman, 1981
International Autoharp
Champion, is a graduate of
the University of Florida
with several degrees and 23
years of social service work.
He now enjoys his semiretirement travelling and
playing music. His
acquaintance with Woody
Guthrie strongly influences
his style on autoharp, guitar,

5-string banjo, dobro, and bouzouki. Marty's music covers a wide range of traditional, old time, country, blues, Celtic, New Orleans jazz, and his favorite, the old standards.

His autoharp chord bar set-up is as unique as his playing style, enabling him to play over twenty chords with just 15 bars. He is currently working on a multi-track, multi-instrumental album, featuring the autoharp.He is also included in the "Winfield Winners! Autoharp", Volumes 1 and 2.

For further information and performance schedule, contact: Marty Schuman 1645 Rocky Pt. Road Gainesville, FL 32608



Tom Schroeder, the 1985 International Autoharp Champion, is a performer, writer, and music arranger. He is the author of Music from Missouri - Dance Tunes For The Autoharp. Tom performs on both the chromatic and diatonic autoharp doing music from his home state of Missouri as well as Celtic music. He is featured on "Winfield Winners! Autoharp", Volumes 1 and 2. Performance Schedule November 26, Jamesport Christmas, Jamesport, MO.

For further information and performance schedule update, contact: Tom Schroeder 819 W. 77th Street Kansas City, MO 64114



Carol Stober performs on the autoharp and leads workshops at festivals throughout the south and midwest. With her daughter, Jackie, Carol's music reminds listeners of simpler, less stressful times, and reflects a way of life that Americans yearn for.

Carol has two recordings, "Patchwork", and "Country Sampler", featuring a variety of mountain music and country-flavor originals. In addition to the autoharp, Carol plays the guitar and mountain dulcimer. She has also been a finalist in the 1986 and 1987 National Songwriting Championship Contest at the Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield, Kansas. Performance Schedule October 22-23, Renaissance Faire, Florence, Alabama November 26-27, December 3-4, 17-18, 24, 26, De Sota Caverns Christmas Festival of Lights, Childersburg, Alabama

For further information and performance schedule update, contact:

Carol Stober Box 1275 Talladega, AL 35160



Evo Bluestein has been performing and teaching folk music since the mid '70s. He and his brother, Jemmy, are multi-instrumental and deliver a variety of music and vocal styles. Evo has more recordings than space allows (see Records and Tapes) as well as a video on how to play the autoharp.

Evo and Jemmy have performed from the U.S. to Europe to the Far East.

For further information and performance schedule, contact:
Evo Bluestein
4414 E. Alamos
Fresno, CA 93726

Ivan Stiles is the 1987 World Autoharp Champion and the Third Place winner in the



1987 International Autoharp Championship. He brings a unique blend of folk music to his audiences incorporating old time, jigs and reels, traditional ballads, and original songs.

Ivan plays the autoharp, mountain dulcimer, bowed psaltery, and, on occasion, the musical saw.

Stiles has a recording,
"Rounding Pickering Bend",
and has authored Jigs &
Reels for the Autoharp.

Performance Schedule
October 16, Lancaster Folk
Music & Fiddlers Society,
Lancaster, Pennsylvania
October 17, Bothy Folk Club,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
November 14-18,
Coffeyville, Kansas

For further information and performance schedule update, contact: Ivan Stiles Route 29 - RD2 Phoenixville, PA 19460

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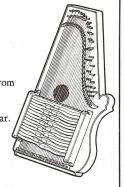
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#### NANCY DILL



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This tune has been arranged for a diatonically-tuned autoharp in the key of G. You may wish to transpose to another key if you have the option.

Tablature:

X = Pinch

O = Finger Pluck

= Strum

Chords:

"Letter" = Play chord indicated "O" = Play "open chord" (No bar depressed)

" / " = Play chord released prior to "open chord"

#### TABLATURE EXPLANATIONS

The songs presented in Autoharp Quarterly come from many sources using different tablature systems. If you would like a complete explanation of any of the tablatures, simply send us a self-addressed, stamped envelope (business-size, please). Be sure to indicate the song associated with the tablature that you are interested in having, so that we will know which explanation to send you.

#### **CLUBS**

Clubs Editor: Ubi Adams 2659 Kissel Hill Road Lititz, PA 17543

For our first issue, we are listing all clubs we are aware of, and clubs who responded to our request for "Names of organizations in which the autoharp player is welcome". If you know of a club we have not included on this list, please send the information to the Clubs Editor. This list will be published every January, and updated in each issue.

ARKANSAS
Old Time Music Association
c/o Valta Sexton
3643 Wilma or 4818 Grand
Ft. Smith, AR 72904

CALIFORNIA
California Traditional Music
Society
c/o Elaine Weissman
4401 Trancas Place
Tarzana, CA 91356
El Dorado County Autoharp
Club
c/o Lynn Wick
4197 East Road
Placerville, CA 95667
Scottish Fiddlers of
California
1938 Rose Villa Street

COLORADO
Denver Area Autoharp and
Zither Club
c/o Margaret Bakker
1501 S. Estes Street
Lakewood, CO 80226

Pasadena, CA 91107

ILLINOIS
The Old Town School of
Folk Music
909 W. Armitage Ave.
Chicago, IL 60614

NEW YORK Adirondak Bluegrass League PO Box 901 Corinth, NY 12822

NORTH CAROLINA Charlotte Autoharp Club c/o Martha Kiker 1336 Harding Place Charlotte, NC 28204

OHIO
Buckeye Autoharp Club
c/o Lisa Chandler
1876 Mt. Carmel Rd.
Jamestown, OH 45335
Toledo Dulcimer Club
c/o Mrs. Gene Lyons
1521 Watova St.
Toledo, OH 43614

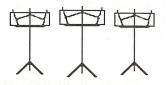
OKLAHOMA
Flying Fingers Autoharp
Club - Ok City TMA
c/o Anita Roesler
823 N.W. 43rd
Oklahoma City, OK 73118

PENNSYLVANIA Appalachian Folk Club, Inc. PO Box 169
Hookstown, PA 15050
Lancaster Folk Music & Fiddlers Society
524 Spruce St.
Lancaster, PA 17603
Susquehanna Folk Music Society
3109 N. 2nd St.
Harrisburg, PA 17110

TEXAS
The Southwest Bluegrass
Club
Hugh Childress, Pres.
PO Box 278
Glen Rose, TX 76043

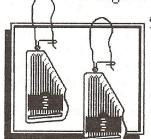
VIRGINIA

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Greater Washington (DC)
c/o Keith Young
3815 Kendale Rd.
Annandale, VA 22003



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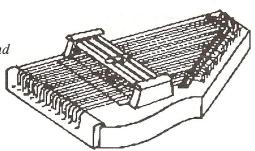


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#### **AUTO-SUGGESTION**

Many folk musicians have developed a lot of time-savers and shortcuts for tuning, transporting instruments, maintenance, and much more. We invite you to share your ideas with your fellow readers. Please send them (with or without photos or illustrations) to; Pamela Roberts, 174 Hayward Street, Braintree, MA 02184.



Dear AQ,

When I'm writing for the 'harp, or jotting down notes for a program, I like to strum a few bars, then write a little, strum a little, and so on. Taking my picks off is inconvenient and time-consuming, but if I try to write with them, the pencil just slips through my grip.

One solution is a pencil "gripper". This small, plastic cylinder (sold in most stationery stores) fits over the pencil, making it much easier to hold. The pencil "gripper" was originally designed for people with arthritis, but it sure has been the "cure" for me.

Cheryl Ange Quincy, MA

P.S. They're inexpensive. Mine cost 25 cents.

Dear AQ,

For all the assorted small items that 'harpers are required to carry around, some kind of small carrying case is very useful, often essential. I use a small, clear plastic zippered pencil case. It's the right size for picks and wrenches, and will lie flat or fold up to fit in my case or pocket. Also, because it's clear, I can see if I'm missing anything without dumping everything out.

Besides pencil cases, you can also use cosmetic bags. They are a bit sturdier, but are also more expensive, and they don't always come in clear plastic.

Both pencil cases and cosmetic bags are sold just about everywhere, and are inexpensive.

Susan Mrozak Newton, MA Dear AQ Readers,

Never underestimate the usefulness of a checklist. I keep one in each of my cases, and always give it a brief once-over when I'm packing for a long trip, important booking, or a practice or playing session. My list runs from the most to the least important items, such as: all autoharps I will need, picks, tuning wrenches, electronic tuner, AC cord, batteries, repertoire list, etc. Yes, it does list autoharps, ever since the day I packed in a rush for a practice session and arrived with two diatonic 'harps, and no chromatic. Your list will reflect what's necessary for you. It takes a minute to type one up and for just a small investment of time, it might save your day!

Pamela Roberts Braintree, MA

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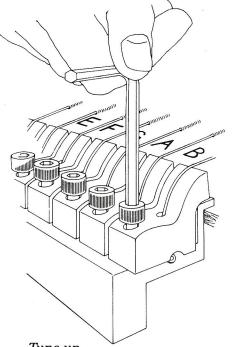
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