

# AUTOHARP QUARTERLY

THE • MAGAZINE • DEDICATED • TO • THE • AUTOHARP • ENTHUSIAST •™

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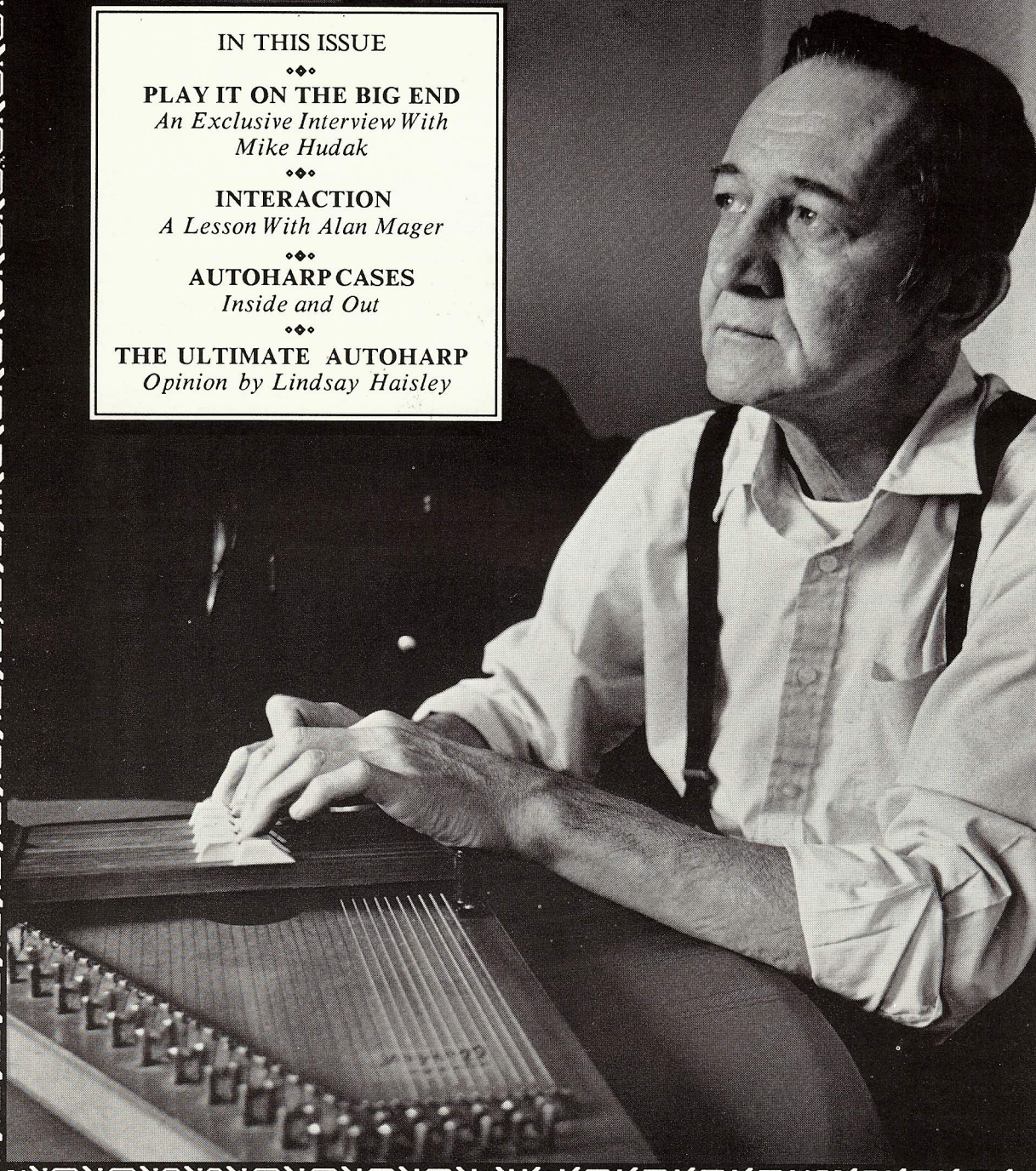
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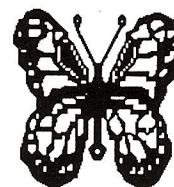
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**Co-editors:**  
Mary Lou Orthey  
Ivan Stiles

**Features Editor:**  
Pamela Roberts

**Books Editor,  
Records and Tapes Editor:**  
Eileen Roys

**Clubs Editor,  
Festivals Editor:**  
Ubi Adams

**Interaction Editor:**  
Alan Mager

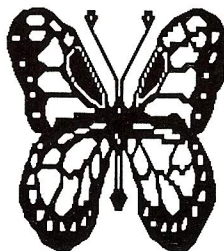
**Feature Writers:**  
Lindsay Haisley  
Richard Norris, MD

**Contributors:**  
Kathy Ferguson

**Photo Credits:**  
Alice Sebrell: Mike Hudak  
Cover, 3, 4

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**EDITORIAL**

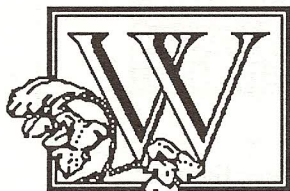

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e're doing great! (with a little help from our friends). We're not just "getting by," as the song would have it. The people who have rallied around us and this magazine to offer themselves, their talents and time, have made *Autoharp Quarterly* a fast-growing, viable, indispensable periodical. "A little help" doesn't cover it, either. These folk have turned their kitchens into offices, their homes into think tanks, and their spouses grey. They have been available to us at any time, including weekends and holidays. They reach out to other autoharp enthusiasts, glean information, new ideas, and new friends. Their tasks have been monumental, and they have performed them cheerfully, well, and with professionalism. But they don't stop there. Our phones ring often with an excited voice at the other end saying, "I'm done with the annotations, but I'm wondering if I could add --," or "I just had a brilliant idea," or "Isn't there something else I could do?"

We, with pride, and joy in the sense of sharing, would like to introduce three of these special, dedicated friends -- our editorial staff -- to you.



Pamela Roberts  
Features Editor

Autoharp performer and half of the folk music team, Wey and Roberts, Pam is a real New Englander. She is an education media specialist, and in her "spare time" does volunteer work with senior citizens, using her autoharp.



Ubi Adams  
Festivals/Clubs Editor

Ubi is a mother of two. She is a marathon runner, but has old-fashioned ideals. As an autoharp performer, she plays locally for schools and children's organizations. And, she has a smile that is four octaves wide.



Eileen Roys  
Records/Tapes/Books Editor

A friend to all and a sister to every other autoharp player, Eileen is the mother of two, grandmother of five. She does freelance writing for several music publications, including *Banjo Newsletter* and *CFMS Magazine*.

Now, we are proud to announce the addition of three new *AQ* staffmembers: Alan Mager, Interaction Editor; Lindsay Haisley, Feature Writer; and Richard Norris MD, Music Medicine Specialist. We're sure you'll enjoy their contributions in this and upcoming issues.

And so, as we approach the end of our first publishing year, we extend our sincere thanks to these people for helping make this magazine possible. And to you, we gratefully say, "Keep those ideas coming and don't forget to renew your *Autoharp Quarterly* subscription."

Mary Lou

Wan

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## PLAY IT ON THE BIG END

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An Interview with Mike Hudak by Joe Marlin Riggs

*Joe Riggs' introduction to the autoharp was in the form of a Chromaharp that he bought for his daughter, Jes, in 1981. From there, the story reads much like a textbook case of the autoharp going under the bed when it went out of tune.*

*Eventually, Joe decided to "have a go" at the 'harp. As a teacher of English As A Second Language in the elementary schools, Joe had access to an A-model Oscar Schmidt autoharp languishing in the music storage room. So Joe became a bona fide "closet musician," spending every spare moment playing in the darkened storage room so as not to be discovered. He once came out of "hiding" to find that he had an audience of four outside the door listening to him play.*

*Intrigued from the beginning by the mechanics of the instrument, Joe bravely modified his 'harps to his liking. Although he now plays a custom-made 'harp, Joe is continually making alterations to fit his rather unique style of playing. He made a neck strap so that his 'harp hangs at his waist "dobro-style" and he picks below the chord bars which are arranged a la Kilby Snow. Even his handmade brass picks are of his own design.*

*As the former editor of the Charlotte Folk Music Society magazine, Joe's journalistic experience speaks for itself. Dedicated to the preservation of the true old-time style of autoharp, it's doubtful that there is anyone more qualified to tell the Mike Hudak story.*

Master of old-time autoharp, Mike Hudak represents one of the last of the Benfield-Stoneman-Snow generation of players. For years, a backer and supporter of old-time and bluegrass music, Mike has preferred, in his unassuming way, to lead (or push) others into the limelight, often electing to organize and underpin rather than to headline and promote.

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**"MY 'HARP PLAYING IS DIFFERENT FROM MOST PLAYERS YOU HEAR NOW. MOST OF THEM HAVE A COMPLEX STYLE . . ."**

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Nonetheless, over an autoharp career that spans almost three decades, Hudak has played on stage at more festivals, conventions, and coffeehouses than he can remember. He has played with the Benfields and Pop Stoneman, and performed with the "Granddaddy," Kilby Snow. You can hear him playing autoharp and spoons on some of the songs on Kilby Snow's album. The zenith of his performing and touring days occurred in the late 1960s and early '70s, but since then he has continued to play autoharp and serve on the board of the Brandywine Friends of Old-Time Music, organized by Hudak, Carl Goldstein, Shel Sandler, and Ellen Hudak in 1973.

Mike, trained extensively in musical instrument repair, set up the 'harps that he and Kilby used in their performances. The two 'harps were

identical, as were the custom cases that Mike designed and built for them. Each 'harp had 37 strings and 10 chord bars to play in four keys. Mike and Kilby both fashioned their own picks from brass, preferring the material from the reflectors of car headlights of the 1930-40 vintage. Mike plays right-handed and uses a thumb pick and another pick on his middle finger. "The material of the picks is, although I wouldn't say 'critical', very, very important. On the other hand, the length of the picks, whatever the material, is critical," says Mike.

"My 'harp playing is different from most players you hear now. Most of them have a complex style, which is not my kind of playing," says Hudak. Mike has very definite ideas about his music, 'harps, and life itself. His is a story of tenacity, ingenuity, and music; a story both inspirational and instructional.

He was born in St. Clair, Pennsylvania on October 8, 1933. In his early childhood Mike got polio. He spent months in a body cast, underwent several operations, and spent his recuperative time often with radio music and books. Mike's brother, Joe, had a penchant for electronics, and built various crystal sets and a ham radio. Mike read his brother's electronic books, and concedes that this might have led him to his later career with the telephone company. Mike's uncle Steve gave him a harmonica when

he was seven or eight, and Mike learned to play it. His mother had a pump organ, and encouraged Mike to play it often for both physical and music therapy. Mike also remembers going to a neighbor's house where there was a stand-up Victrola. "You had to change the needle after each record," recalls Mike. About that time, Mike's dad came home with an old phonograph in a box, just pieces. "There was no arm on it," says Mike, "so I soldered a straight pin on a soup can and wore out some records with that machine. But it worked! Now my wife, Marti, and I work on the same kinds of machines. We collect them."

Mike's father worked the 4 to 12 shift in a Pennsylvania coal mine. "I remember that he would come in about midnight and take a bath in the wooden tub in the kitchen, over by the stove," says Mike. "He would spend most of the day tinkering and building things. He was good with both wood and metals. I learned a lot from him that shaped my later activities." Mike's mother died in 1949, and the family moved to Newark, Delaware, with Mike's sister.

Apart from his harmonica, music was not a major endeavor in Mike's life until about the age of 16. Brother Joe played guitar and had his own band, "Diener's Hillbillies," named after Diener's Hill nearby. Music was always there, but not as a principal focus until later. Then, sometime in the early '50s, Mike heard Ola Belle Reed and her brother, Alex Campbell, on the car radio, broadcasting from New River Ranch. He loved the music, and became a great fan, as well as a close friend of Ola Belle. The program was shortly moved to Sunset Park, Pennsylvania, and became the mecca for old-time and country music in the Northeast.

Steadily increasing his interest in music and all sorts of music-related activities,

Mike became associated with Salter's Music Store in Wilmington in the late 1950s. There he trained as a music-instrument repairman, bringing together the skills and attitudes he had learned from his father in woodworking, metalworking, and ingenuity, and the precision, detail and technology of telephone work. It was this connection that later brought Mike and Kilby Snow together, and took them both down a course



that shaped major aspects of their lives.

About 1960, Mike met someone through a model-airplane club who owned an autoharp. Until that time, he had not seen one played nor worked on one. Some friends who were going to visit them one Christmas had asked the Hudaks if Mike could borrow a 'harp for them while they were there so they could play some music. He obtained the 'harp from a friend, and -- although he knew nothing about it, not even how to tune it -- took it to work at the telephone company one day. Using a tone generator, Mike tuned all the A-strings to 440, then worked through the chords string-by-string until the tuning was complete. His friends came, the 'harp was played cross-handed on an ironing board, and Mike was taken with the beauty of autoharp music. He kept the 'harp, and became familiar with it, tuning it with his harmonica and strumming below

the chord bars with a guitar pick. Some six months later, there was a festival in Wilmington, part of which was to include an autoharp workshop with Mike Seeger and Kilby Snow.

"There were about twelve people in the workshop," recalls Mike. "The primary teacher and presenter was Mike Seeger, and he demonstrated a good bit of autoharp playing, doing his in the Carter Family style. Then Kilby Snow came on with his playing, and I never heard anything like it!"

Kilby was to be in the workshop with Mike Seeger, then play on stage that night with Seeger and The New Lost City Ramblers. In the workshop playing, Kilby broke a string, and he did not have a spare with him. Mike Hudak offered him his 'harp and Kilby finished out the workshop with it. When it was over, Hudak went to Kilby Snow to thank him for the workshop and to retrieve his 'harp. He asked Kilby if he wanted to follow him down to Salter's Music Store, and told him that he would put on a new string for him there.

"Kilby followed me on down to Salter's," says Mike, "and I put on the string for him. When he was tuning it up, he got it a little too sharp, so he just took his thumb and pushed down on the string to stretch it out and flat it. He never would loosen a tuning peg, he just pushed down on the string. When he got it right, he stood there in the store and played until almost closing time. The place was full, because everyone who had come in since he got there had stayed there to hear his playing. But it was getting late, and he hadn't eaten yet, and I hadn't either, so I invited him out to the house for fried chicken and coffee. Those were favorites of his, he said, and he came out. We ate and then headed back so he could do the concert. That was my first meeting with Kilby Snow."

Remembering Kilby's music, Mike says that Kilby never bluffed his notes. "He never got angry or disturbed about himself and his music. He played every note clearly. He had only one basic law: 'Get the song in your head, and it will come out of your fingers'."

That simple axiom is the benchmark of mastery in autoharp playing, according to Hudak. Snow repeated that over and again to him through the years, and it is the one piece of advice Hudak has for any player.

After the Wilmington workshop and concert, it was some weeks later that Mike met Kilby for the second time.

"We were going to Sunset Park to see a Flatt & Scruggs show, but when we got there it was off because Flatt was sick. We started to head back home, but then I remembered that Kilby Snow lived somewhere around there, not too far from Oxford, Pennsylvania, close to the Herr's Potato Chip factory. We found him, and he gave me my first instruction on the autoharp. It was the osmosis method of teaching -- 'I'll play, and you watch.'" recalls Mike.

After the first trip there, Mike found out it was only about thirty minutes away from his home, so he began making regular trips every week to visit Kilby. Snow told him to bring his 'harps so they could play music ("More osmosis," injects Mike).

"It was in these sessions that I learned how to play," says Mike. "I learned that good, clean playing is the best, and that often you can get a note on more than one bar, but which bar you get it on makes a difference because the notes around the 'target note' are different on different bars. One bar will give you a better sound for that

note in that song than another bar. I also learned that what you don't do is just as important as what you do. Guitar players sometimes have an especially hard time following 'harp, because I might be going after a note and hit a bar to get it, and the guitar player sees me change and hits another chord too, when he ought to stay on the one he had."

Through these frequent visits, Mike grew close to Kilby and Mrs. Snow, and felt a special kinship with them. For several years, Hudak drove Kilby to concerts arranged through other contacts, principally Mike

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**"HE HAD  
ONLY ONE BASIC LAW:  
'GET THE SONG  
IN YOUR HEAD, AND IT  
WILL COME OUT OF  
YOUR FINGERS'."**

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Seeger, who was responsible for bringing Kilby's playing out of the barbershop and onto the stage at Newport and other festivals. Seeger encouraged Kilby by staying in touch with him and by obtaining concert engagements and leads for him. Hudak often completed the arrangements, did the driving, and played



on stage with Kilby.

"Stage presence," says Mike, "is the realization that the performer is a purveyor of the much larger embodiment of the spirit of the music played, and that each

musician and each listener belong to the larger audience of mankind, of humanity, and we are not all just coming together for a two-hour performance on stage to receive or give applause or some other honor or remuneration. Stage presence is sincerity and humility, with the dignity of the music binding it all together."

In the mid-'60s, Hudak and Snow conducted autoharp classes in Wilmington during the winter months. It was about that time that Hudak developed the bar and string setup that characterized the instruments both used forever after. Snow called it simply "D-Harp."

To get the D-Harp, Hudak began with a standard Oscar Schmidt 12-bar chromatic Appalachian. He asked Kilby, "If you could have your choice of anything, what kind of bar setup would you want on a 'harp?" Mike took the orders, and set up the 'harp to Kilby's specifications, but the result was not what Kilby had thought it would be. Kilby said the bass in "D" was not heavy enough, so Mike added depth and breadth to the bass. The high notes needed a final "D" for balance, too, so he added a 37th string, the hightop-D. Finally, Kilby did not like the staggered rows of buttons, and he wanted his chord bars for a song all in a straight line, that is, all in the same row of buttons. He did not want to jump over to the other row of buttons to find a bar he needed -- "He called them dog-legs," says Hudak. "I also set up the bars for the four keys on the

D-Harp so that you could play the same song in any of the four keys using exactly the same fingering in all the keys," he adds. This bar setup was so important to Kilby that, prior to the advent of the

D-Harp, Kilby did most of his work in the keys of C and F because those were the only keys on the stock autoharp which had three bars in a straight line. Since Kilby preferred to sing in "D," he could then begin to play in his favorite key, "D," on the new 'harp; that's how it got its name.

Once Mike had Kilby satisfied on the strings and bars, he engineered an identical 'harp for himself. "I had to have one like his, or I couldn't osmose any more," chuckles Mike.

Mike always tuned both 'harps before a show; it was common for Kilby to play a short run on each and then select the one that sounded better to him at that time. Mike played the other one.

Besides participating in countless performances with Kilby, Mike also contributed to the logistical execution of various engagements, such as procuring the Unionville-Chadds Ford Junior High School auditorium for recording the album *Kilby Snow, Country Songs and Tunes With Autoharp* (Recorded, edited, and annotated by Mike Seeger: ASCH Recordings Album No. AH 3902, Folkways FA 3902, 1969, now *Smithsonian*).

Mike continued to play with Kilby until the Snows moved back to Virginia. Although they saw each other a few times after that, their contacts were limited because of the distance between them. Kilby died in 1980, and Hudak retired on disability from the telephone company two years later. Post-polio Syndrome afflicts Mike now, restricting his mobility, but -- after six years of retirement -- he is ". . . just starting to get tired of it." He has engaged in writing children's stories, songs, and is working on a compilation of experiences over the years with Kilby Snow, in preparation of a manuscript. He has simultaneously begun work on an instruction book of the

original way to play autoharp, below the chord bars, and is looking for a left-handed apprentice to continue the playing style of Kilby Snow. "Since Kilby played left-handed, it is not possible for a right-handed person to duplicate his sound. The only way to do it would be to use a right-handed 'harp and a left-handed player (or a left-handed 'harp and a right-handed player). This would mimic the sounds Kilby created with his distinctive drag notes from lower to higher strings with the finger. Drag notes from higher to lower, using the finger to drag upward, as Kilby did, by a right-handed person on a right-handed 'harp just don't sound the same. Anyhow, drag notes are just an affectation, something you do after you can play the 'harp," remarks Mike.

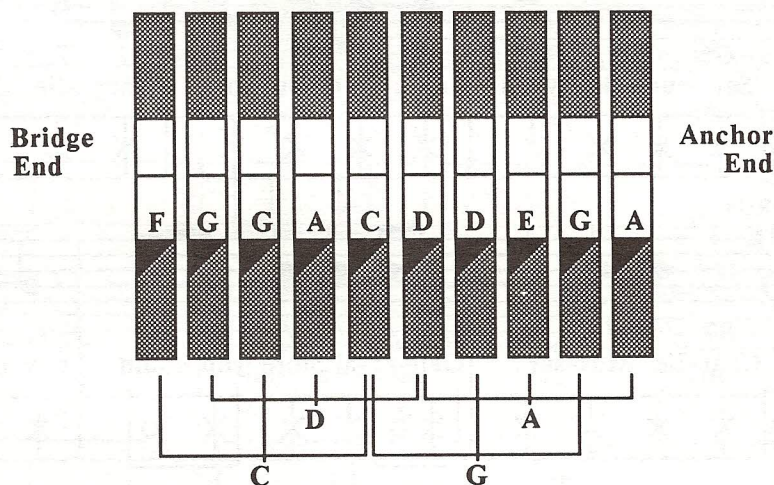
With his wife, Martha, an avid collector of antique disc

and cylinder phonographs, Mike is busily occupied in these activities, as well as continuing his active participation on the board of the Brandywine Friends of Old-Time Music. He and Martha have recently ordered a pair of "Hudak-Harps" from George Orthey.

As it did for Mike in the 1960s, the autoharp has emerged as the focal point of a kind of rejuvenation for Mike and Martha during the past year. Martha has served as interviewer, sounding board, recorder, and organizer of the encyclopedic collection of facts, musings, and vignettes about Mike's autoharp history. Thus productively engaged, the Hudaks continue their contribution to the spirit and preservation of old-time autoharp music, and are making good their commitment to share what they can with others. ■

#### AUTOHARPS USED BY KILBY SNOW AND MIKE HUDAK

##### Oscar Schmidt Chromatic, Appalachian Model, 10 Bars



No silicone on the felts.  
Four keys: A, D, G, and C.

37 strings, from low bass to high treble: G, A, C, D, E, F, F#, G, A, A# (These were all wound strings), B, C, C#, D, D#, E, F, F#, G, G#, A, A#, B, C, C#, D, D#, E, F, F#, G, G#, A, A#, B, C, and D.

Picks used: Hudak, two brass, one on right thumb, one on middle finger. Snow, two brass, one on left thumb, one on index finger.





B7 / /	/ / / /	C / / / /	/ / D7
car - bide lamps,	pots for plants, bib	ov - er - alls by the	score, and on
TAB * * *	* * * *	* o * * *	* o

G / / D7	C / / /	G / D7 /	G
Sat - ur - day we'd	all go down to	Char - lie Mus - ser's	Store.
TAB * * * *	* * * *	* * * o	* o

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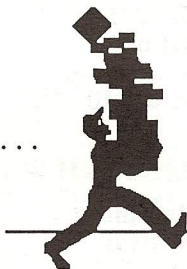
Charlie's place was full of stuff,  
Some aisles you could hardly get through.  
But, if you couldn't find what you were  
looking for,  
Here's all you had to do.  
Say, "Charlie, please do you have this  
thing?"  
And he'd smile at you because,  
He knew it was there in the store  
somewhere,  
And he knew right where it was. At . . .  
Chorus.

3.

I went to Charlie's store one day.  
I thought I had him this time.  
"I need a right-threaded whigit for a  
washing machine  
Built in eighteen seventy-nine."  
"Well, Tom," he said, "Now you're in luck."  
And I felt my knees get weak.  
"We just took 'em off'a the delivery truck,  
And they're on sale all this week." At . . .  
Chorus.

4.

Now, one sad day, we heard the news.  
That Musser's was for sale.  
He sold the store to a couple nice guys,  
But without Charlie, it was doomed to fail.  
Then some rich men thought they'd replace  
it all,  
The hardware, groceries, and such.  
So, they built the Susquehanna Valley  
Mall.  
But, they still don't have as much as . . .  
Chorus.

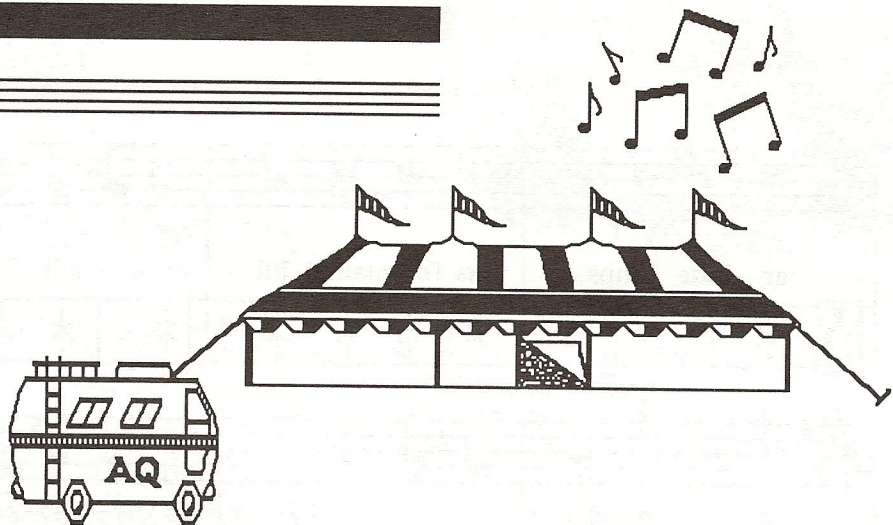


Tom Fladmark is a professional autoharp performer who, like Mark Fackeldey, plays "bare-fingered." An active member of the Folk Music Collective of Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, he also teaches autoharp and song writing in a workshop environment. Tom and his new wife, Lu Ann live in Sunbury, Pennsylvania, just across the Susquehanna River from the infamous Susquehanna Mall.

What exactly is a Hootenanny? According to the Dictionary of American Slang, the word "hootenanny" has three meanings. First, it's something small and insignificant, as in "I don't give a hootenanny!". Second, it's a term for something that may or may not have a name, but you just can't think of it, such as a thingamajig or a whatchamacallit. And third, in the mid-west, it originally meant a party that just happened. Pete Seeger, in his book, "The Incomplete Folksinger," says he first heard the term used by a group in Seattle who held regular hootenannies for fund raising, and for just having a good time. When he and the Almanac Singers had gatherings and parties, they also called them hootenannies, and before long, singing, dancing, and musical gatherings of all sizes came to be known as "hootenannies." ■

## FESTIVALS

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



*The following is a full list of festivals which feature the autoharp in contest, workshop, or performance. If you know of a festival we have not included, please send the information to the Festivals Editor. The complete list will be published every April, and updated in each issue.*

**Code:**

AC - Autoharp Contest  
AP - Autoharp Performance  
AW - Autoharp Workshop  
BG - Bluegrass  
C - Concerts  
CA - Children's Activities  
CC - Clogging Contra Dance  
CS - Craft Sales  
FM - Folk Music  
OF - Oldtime Fun  
OS - Open Stage  
S - Storytelling

### APRIL 1989

**8th Annual Pioneer Florida Old Time Music Championships**  
Date: April 14, 15  
Place: Dade County, FL  
Code: AC FM  
Contact: Ernie Williams  
4011 SR 52  
Dade City, FL 33525

**The Great Black Swamp Dulcimer Festival**  
Date: April 28, 29, 30  
Place: OSU, Lima, OH  
Code: AW C CA CC FM OS  
Contact: Susan Porter, OSU  
4240 Campus Drive  
Lima, OH 45804

**New England Folk Festival (NEFFA)**  
Date: April 21, 22, 23  
Place: Natick High School  
Code: AW C CA CC CS FM S  
Contact: New England Folk Festival Association  
1950 Massachusetts Ave.  
Cambridge, MA 02140

### MAY 1989

**10th Annual Claremont Springs Folk Festival**  
Date: May 20, 21  
Place: Claremont Springs, CA  
Code: AP AW  
Contact: Folk Music Center  
714 624-2928

**Ole-Time Fiddlers' and Bluegrass Festival**  
Date: May 26, 27, 28  
Place: Union Grove, NC  
Code: AC AP AW C CA FM OF  
Contact: Harper Van Hoy  
PO Box 11  
Union Grove, NC 28689

**37th Annual Florida Folk Festival**  
Date: May 26, 27, 28  
Place: White Springs, FL  
Code: AP AW FM  
Contact:  
Barbara Beauchamp  
Box 265  
White Springs, FL 32096

**Northwest Folklife Festival**  
Date: May 26, 27, 28, 29  
Place: Seattle, WA  
Code: AP AW FM  
Contact: Kerry Coughlin  
Northwest Folklife Festival  
305 Harrison Street  
Seattle, WA 98109

**Stringalong Weekend**  
Date: May 26, 27, 28, 29  
Place: East Troy, WI  
Code: AP AW OS  
Contact: Ann Schmid, Dir.  
UWM Folk Center  
PO Box 413  
Milwaukee, WI 53201

### JUNE 1989

**Washington Folk Festival**  
Date: June 3, 4  
Place: Glen Echo, MD  
Code: AP FM  
Contact: D. Nichols  
703 281-2228

**News**

We have too much to report, and not enough space to report it in!  
This is yet another 36-page issue. Four extra pages -- again!

**Lake Wapusun Old-Time Music Festival**  
**Date:** June 9, 10  
**Place:** Wooster, OH  
**Code:** AP (Bryan Bowers) OF  
**Contact:** John Andrews  
 7315 Waynesburg Drive, S.E.  
 S. Waynesburg, OH 44689

**13 th Annual Cosby Dulcimer & Harp Convention**  
**Date:** June 9, 10, 11  
**Place:** Cosby, TN  
**Code:** AP AW CD  
**Contact:** Jean & Lee Schilling  
 PO Box 8, Highway 32  
 Cosby, TN 37722

**Charlotte Folk Music Society Latta Festival**  
**Date:** June 10  
**Place:** Latta Plantation Park, Charlotte, NC  
**Code:** AP, AW (Ivan Stiles)  
 BG C CA CC CS FM S  
**Contact:** Joe Cline  
 500 North Graham #8  
 Charlotte, NC 28202

**The 14th Annual Grass Valley Bluegrass Festival**  
**Date:** June 16, 17, 18  
**Place:** Nevada County Fairgrounds, Grass Valley, CA  
**Code:** AC AP AW (Evo Bluestein)  
**Contact:** CBA Tickets  
 36 Second Street  
 Woodland, CA 95695

**Huck Finn's Country and Bluegrass Jubilee**  
**Date:** June 16, 17, 18  
**Place:** Victorville, CA  
**Code:** AP BG OF  
**Contact:** Don Tucker  
 PO Box 56419  
 Riverside, CA 92517

**Southern Michigan Dulcimer Festival**  
**Date:** June 16, 17, 18  
**Place:** Marshall, MI  
**Code:** AW AP FM  
**Contact:** Warren Guiles  
 9575 Peach Ridge  
 Sparta, MI 49345

**Rapid City Bluegrass Festival**  
**Date:** June 23, 24  
**Place:** Rapid City, SD  
**Code:** AP (Bryan Bowers) BG

**CA Traditional Music Society Summer Solstice**  
**Date:** June 24, 25  
**Place:** CA State University, Northridge  
**Code:** AW C CC  
**Contact:** CA Traditional Music Society  
 4401 Trancas Place  
 Tarzana, CA 91356

**9th Annual Black Hills Bluegrass Festival**  
**Date:** June 23, 24, 25  
**Place:** Rapid City, SD  
**Code:** AP (Bryan Bowers) BG  
**Contact:** Doug Thomas  
 713 7th Street  
 Rapid City, SD 57701

#### JULY 1989

**Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops**  
**Date:** Summer, 1989  
**Place:** Elkins, WV  
**Code:** AW BG C CA CC FM S  
**Contact:** Doug Hill  
 Davis & Elkins College  
 Elkins, WV 26241-3996

**Breakneck Mountain Bluegrass Festival**  
**Date:** July 8, 9  
**Place:** Crawford, ME  
**Code:** AP BG  
**Contact:** Joe and Nellie Kennedy  
 Rd 1 Box 1210  
 Harmony, ME 04942

**Brandywine Mountain Music Convention**  
**Date:** July 14, 15, 16  
**Place:** Pleasant View Stables  
 Kirk Road, Elkton, MD  
**Code:** AP FM  
**Contact:** 302 475-3454

**The Midsummer Bluegrass Festival**  
**Date:** write for details  
**Place:** Grass Valley, CA  
**Code:** AW C OF  
**Contact:** Fifth String  
 5526 "H" Street  
 Sacramento, CA

**Cranberry Dulcimer Gathering**  
**Date:** July 21, 22, 23  
**Place:** Binghamton, NY  
**Code:** AW C FM  
**Contact:** Ed Ware  
 c/o Unitarian Univ. Church

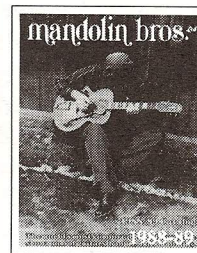
183 Riverside Dr.  
 Binghamton, NY 13905

**Swallow Hill Dulcimer and Autoharp Festival**  
**Date:** write for details  
**Place:** Denver, CO  
**Code:** AW C FM  
**Contact:** Swallow Hill Music Association  
 1905 S. Pearl  
 Denver, CO 80210

**Islands Folk Festival**  
**Date:** July 22, 23  
**Place:** Duncan, BC Canada  
**Code:** AP FM  
**Contact:** Deborah Maike  
 c/o Box 802  
 Duncan, BC V9L 3Y1

**Winnipeg Folk Festival**  
**Date:** July 6, 7, 8, 9  
**Place:** Birds Hill Provincial Park  
**Code:** AP FM  
**Contact:** Rosalie Goldstein  
 678 Tache Ave.  
 Winnipeg, MB R2H 2B7

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 Dobro - National - B&D - Paramount - Epiphone  
 Stelling - Deering - Ome - Gold Star  
 Wildwood - Bart Reiter - Fairbanks - Vega  
 Flattron - Kentucky - Monteleone

**(718) 981-3226**

629 FOREST AVE., STATEN ISLAND, NY 10310

**Prairieport Festival**  
**Date:** July 29,30  
**Place:** El Dorado, Ks  
**Code:** AP (Win Grace)

**Lark's Summer Music Celebration**  
**Date:** July 28 - August 6  
**Place:** Mendocino, CA  
**Code:** AP AW (Evo Bluestein)  
**Contact:** Lark in the Morning  
 PO Box 1176  
 Mendocino, CA 95460

**AUGUST 1989**

**Carter Family Mem. Weekend**  
**Date:** August 4, 5, 6  
**Place:** Hiltons, VA  
**Code:** AW C  
**Contact:** Janette Carter  
 PO Box 111  
 Hiltons, VA 24258

**Champlain Valley Festival**  
**Date:** August 4, 5, 6  
**Place:** Ferrisburg, VT  
**Code:** AP AW FM  
**Contact:** Mark Susic  
 PO Box 163  
 Fairfax, VT 05454

**Galax Oldtime Fiddlers' Conv.**  
**Date:** August 9, 10, 11, 12  
**Place:** Galax, VA  
**Code:** AC AW BG CC CS FM  
**Contact:** Oscar Hall  
 328 A Kenbrook Dr.  
 Galax, VA 24333

**Ozark Folk Center Autoharp Weekend**  
**Date:** August 11, 12  
**Place:** Mountain View, AR  
**Code:** AC AP AW  
**Contact:** Ozark Folk Center  
 Mountain View, AR 72560  
 501 269-3851

**22nd Annual Willow Folk Festival**  
**Date:** August 12, 13  
**Place:** Stockton, IL  
**Code:** AP BG FM OS  
**Contact:** 815 947-3601

**Old Time Fiddlers and Bluegrass Convention**  
**Date:** August 18, 19  
**Place:** Fries, VA  
**Code:** AC BG  
**Contact:** The Fries Vol. Fire Department  
 Fries, VA

**Summerville Fire Co. Bluegrass Festival**  
**Date:** August 18, 19, 20  
**Place:** Memorial Park, Summerville, PA  
**Code:** AP BG  
**Contact:** 814 856-2051

**SEPTEMBER 1989**

**Old-Time Country Music Contest & Festival**  
**Date:** Aug.30, Sept.1, 2, 3, 4  
**Place:** Avoca, IA  
**Code:** AC (National Autoharp Contest) BG CA CC CS FM S  
**Contact:** Bob Everhart  
 106 Navajo  
 Council Bluffs, IA 51501

**Kerrville Folk Festival**  
**Date:** Sept. 1, 2, 3  
**Place:** Kerrville, TX  
**Code:** AP FM  
**Contact:** Rod Kennedy  
 PO Box 1466  
 Kerrville, TX 78029

**Seventh Annual Labor Day Musical Family Weekend**  
**Date:** September 2, 3  
**Place:** Brandywine, MD  
**Code:** AW C FM OS  
**Contact:** Keith Young  
 3815 Kendale Road  
 Annandale, VA 22003

**12th Annual Fox Valley Folk Festival**  
**Date:** Sept. 3, 4  
**Place:** Island Park Geneva, IL  
**Code:** AP FM  
**Contact:** Juel Ulven  
 755 N. Evanslawn Ave.  
 Aurora, Il 60506

**Dock Boggs Old Time Music Festival**  
**Date:** September 9  
**Place:** Wise, VA  
**Code:** AP OF  
**Contact:** Anna Breeding  
 Rt. 1 Box 529-B  
 Norton, VA 24273

**Walnut Valley Festival**  
**Date:** Sept. 14, 15, 16, 17  
**Place:** Winfield, KS  
**Code:** AC (International Autoharp Championship)  
 AP AW BG C CS FM  
**Contact:** Walnut Valley Association  
 PO Box 245  
 Winfield, KS 67156

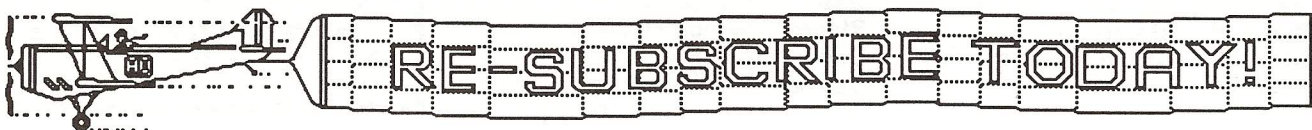
**SMU Eisteddfod**  
**Date:** Sept. 15, 16, 17  
**Place:** Southeastern Mass. University (SMU)  
**Code:** AW C CA CC CS FM  
**Contact:** SMU Eisteddfod  
 North Dartmouth, MA 02747

**Autumn Hills Dulcimer Festival**  
**Date:** Sept. 23, 24  
**Place:** Winsted, CT  
**Code:** AW C CC FM  
**Contact:** Autumn Hills  
 Box 807  
 Winsted, CT 06098

**NOVEMBER 1989**

**Stringalong Weekend**  
**Date:** November 3, 4, 5  
**Place:** East Troy, WI  
**Code:** AP, AW (Ivan Stiles) OS  
**Contact:** Ann Schmid, Dir.  
 UWM Folk Center  
 PO Box 413  
 Milwaukee, WI 53201

**Barberville Fall Jamboree**  
**Date:** write for details  
**Place:** Barberville, FL  
**Code:** AP  
**Contact:** Jan Milner  
 PO Box 668  
 Crystal Beach, FL 34681



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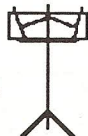
**CLUBS UPDATE**


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



*The following is an update of the full Clubs list which was published in our January issue. If you know of a club in which the autoharp player is welcome, please send the information to our Clubs Editor. The complete list will be published every January and updated in each issue.*

**CANADA**  
**BRITISH COLUMBIA**  
 Cowichan Folk Guild  
 c/o Deborah Maike  
 Box 802  
 Duncan, BC V9L 3Y1  
 Canada

**ILLINOIS**  
 The Chicago Center for the  
 Autoharp  
 2651 North Central Park Ave.  
 Chicago, IL 60647-1101

**IOWA**  
 Happy Hearts Autoharp Club  
 c/o Dora Miller  
 2111 N. 5th Avenue, East  
 Newton, IA 50208

**MARYLAND**  
 Folklore Society of Greater  
 Washington  
 c/o D. Nichols  
 703 281-2228

**PENNSYLVANIA**  
 Off-The-Wall Dulcimer  
 Society  
 c/o Marcia Bowers  
 10 South Broad Street  
 Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

**Frosty Valley Dulcimer  
 Friends**  
 c/o Helen Miller  
 713 Bloom Road  
 Danville, PA 17821

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**RECORDS AND TAPES UPDATE**


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



*The following is an update of the full Records and Tapes list which was published in our October issue. If you know of one we have missed, please send the information to the Records and Tapes Editor. The complete list will be published every October and updated in each issue.*

*The following Records/Tapes include the autoharp.*

**ANCHORED IN LOVE**  
 Country Ham  
 Judy Pagter, autoharp  
 Rt. 1, Box 280  
 Barboursville, VA 22923  
 Vetco 528

**BLANKET BAY**  
 Karen Billings, autoharp  
 Box 277  
 Bloomington, IN 47402

**BAREFOOT BOY WITH  
 BOOTS ON**  
 John McCutcheon  
 Appalseed Productions  
 1025 Locust Avenue  
 Charlottesville, VA 22901

**FAREWELL TO THE  
 HOLLOW**  
 New England Tradition  
 Peter Colby, autoharp  
 New England Tradition  
 PO Box 731  
 Durham, NH 03824

**GONNA RISE AGAIN**  
 John McCutcheon  
 Address: See *Barefoot Boy  
 With Boots On*

**FAMILY BIBLE**  
 The Stonemans  
 Patsy Stoneman, autoharp  
 Rutabago Records  
 Box 100  
 Brighton, MI 48116  
 RR-3012

**GRANDFATHER'S  
 GREATEST HITS**  
 David Holt, autoharp  
 High Windy Productions  
 PO Box 28  
 Fairview, NC 28730

**HANDPICKED**  
 Appalwood  
 Susan Francis and  
 Sylvia Delaney, autoharp  
 Heritage Records  
 Rt. 3, Box 278  
 Galax, VA 24333  
 HRC-072

**HOLDING ON**  
 Elise Witt and  
 Small Family Orchestra  
 Beth Heidelberg, autoharp  
 EM World Records  
 124 W. College Avenue  
 Decater, GA 30030  
 EMW 1003

**HOW CAN I KEEP FROM  
 SINGING**  
 John McCutcheon  
 Address: See *Barefoot Boy  
 With Boots On*

**HOWJADOO!**  
 John McCutcheon  
 Address: See *Barefoot Boy  
 With Boots On*

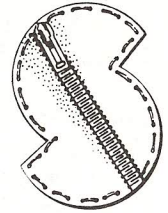
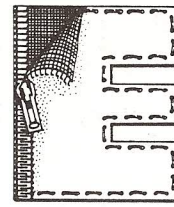
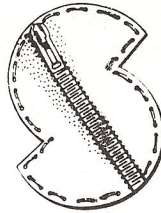
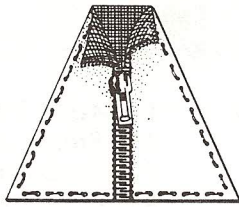
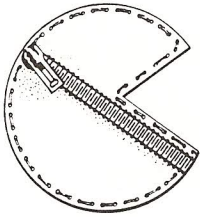
*Continued on page 34*

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*Clubs Editor's Note: I received the following interesting response: "We welcome performers to appear live on our folk shows. We are a non-commercial radio station in the midcoast Maine area." WERV-FM, The Hen House, Blue Hill Falls, ME 04615*

## I'LL BUY THAT

Compiled by Pamela Roberts



In our October 1988 issue, I asked readers to send me their concepts of the perfect autoharp case. Quite a few of you responded with ideas and suggestions that ranged from the totally pragmatic to the truly imaginative. I heard from 23 readers, and spoke to quite a few autoharp-toting people at various festivals and gatherings. Three companies who produce autoharp cases also responded to my inquiry. I then correlated all the facts and opinions I received. Prices were left out intentionally, since discounts can differ widely, I recommend that readers contact their individual music stores and distributors for current prices.

### ONE-HARP CASES

A lot of people are still using the basic chip board case -- the one that may have come with your autoharp when you bought it. On the plus side, this case is inexpensive and very light weight. On the minus side, it is not too durable and does not provide a lot of protection, and being autoharp-shaped, it has no space or compartment for storing picks, wrenches, tuners, etc. If you tuck in a tuning wrench, you run the risk of having it nick or scratch your instrument. (Incidentally, one solution to this was sent

**"The perfect carrying case holds two harps, small ice chest, tools, cassette recorder, comes with a removable handle, wheels, and is waterproof. When open, it becomes a chair. I'm hoping to build one for next year's festivals."**

-- Bill Bryant

in as an Auto-Suggestion, and appeared in our 10/88 issue. Suzanne Mrozak uses a plastic pencil case for picks and wrenches. Because it lies flat, it will fit into a chip board case).

I also had some comments on the small, hard-plastic handle. Some people felt that it was uncomfortable and inconvenient.

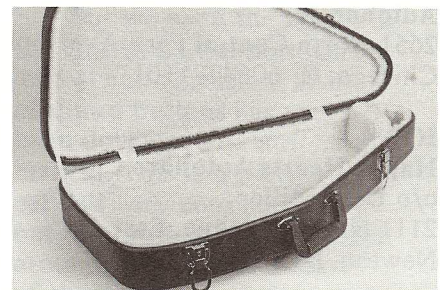
One person commented that his case would only fit autoharps made by the same manufacturer, and was not interchangeable with different makes and models, necessitating a different case for each 'harp.

#### Basic chip/fiberboard cases :

I heard from two companies: Oscar Schmidt Int'l., maker of the Autoharp, and Rhythm Band Inc., producers of the Chromoharp. These two companies are both producing and selling the basic



chip board/fiberboard case. Along with the basic case, Rhythm Band also makes a deluxe model which, according to its catalog, is a heavy-duty, reinforced case. It has a



convenient space for accessories. The case is built slightly longer on the tuning pin end, and thus leaves space for picks and wrenches.

Oscar Schmidt also puts out a deluxe, heavy-duty, lined case (hard-shell) which does offer more protection for the instrument, but also weighs more. Because it is a rectangle, it does have a small compartment for picks and accessories. It is also lined with a fleece material to prevent scratching. It has only the small, hard plastic carrying handle, with no options for shoulder or back

pack straps. If you're carrying only one instrument, this is not a real problem.

Quite a few people are still using their chip/fiber-board cases, and find them adequate and functional. (According to Yvonne Dickerson at OSI, "Chip board is defined as chips of raw material. The raw material is handled in a batch process that recycles rags, cardboard, etc. with a material known as Kroft fiber. It is then extruded into chip board.") Others commented that they have switched to a more durable case, one that can take a summer of camping and festivals.

#### Soft cases - Gig bags:

Another style of case is the soft case, otherwise known as the padded gig bag. Oscar Schmidt, Rhythm Band, and Main Street Case Company put out this type of case. There are also some individual craftsmen who are producing the padded gig bag in various fabrics and colors. All padded gig bags are lightweight, and provide some protection for the instrument. All come with at least one accessory pocket, some with two, and possibly more. Due to its soft construction, this case will fit different makes and models of instruments. Materials used in construction differ according to the manufacturer. Rhythm Band advertises its bag as a "Heavy padded vinyl bag, complete with accessory pocket and handles." Oscar Schmidt describes its bag as made of "ultra-deluxe nylon." It also comes with handles, a detachable shoulder strap, and accessory pocket. Main Street Case Company, a company that custom-designs a case to your specifications, advertises that its bags are constructed with cordura

nylon, lined with foam padding and hollifill, (an insulating material that protects your instrument from sudden changes in temperature). They also offer the purchaser a variety of options, among them pleated, expandable accessory pockets, shoulder strap, and back pack and waist strap. Main Street Case Company constructs each case individually, using a tracing and measurements of the instrument.

Along with the aforementioned companies, there are also some individual craft people who are making padded gig bags for the autoharp. Lynn Trace of Elliotsburg, Pennsylvania is primarily a quilter, but makes autoharp cases as well. She makes her cases out of a heavy-duty duck cloth, with handles, shoulder strap, accessory pocket, and heavy-duty zipper.

I did not receive any negative comments on this style of case. However, one person did caution potential buyers to make sure the case closes with a heavy-duty zipper that runs smoothly, and also to make sure that there is some overlapping material under the zipper. Zippers can let water in, if you're caught in a rainstorm. Main Street Case Company, incidentally, advertises its cases as waterproof, and emphasizes their

use of high quality, metal-toothed zippers.

Two miscellaneous comments were made in favor of the padded gig bag. One owner liked the soft case because it will fold up and stuff in a corner when not in use. One reader liked her hand-sewn bag because it was not only a good, functional case, but also an attractive piece of handicraft that complemented her instrument.

In the spirit of hand-made cases, I had one person call me and describe her current project in autoharp case making. Susan Tobin of Framingham, Massachusetts is currently at work designing the ultimate "easy-to-make-at-home, do-it-yourself, one-size-fits-all" case. Unfortunately, as we go to press, Susan has not totally mastered the process, but tells me that success, she believes, is just around the corner. She is experimenting with an old sleeping bag, a second-hand quilted bedspread, velcro fasteners, and other such items. Good luck, Susan. When it all comes together, send us your recipe.

Joe McLean came up with an interesting idea for a case. He uses a standard back pack. He purchased it with his autoharp in mind. He finds it's very light-weight, water repellent, and easy to carry around. The best

## UNIQUE BEAUTIFULLY HANDCRAFTED AUTOHARP

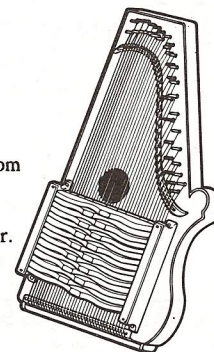
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feature, he tells me, are the many pockets. He carries his electronic tuner and wrenches in one, and uses the side pockets for personal items. Joe finds that this case does have two shortcomings. First, his particular case is not padded, and doesn't offer too much protection. And second, sliding the 'harp in and out of the case can be tedious because the buttons and pins can catch on the material. Still, he finds these problems minor, and overall says this is the best case for him.

**TWO-HARP CASES**

For those of you who travel with two autoharps, it's a real convenience to have a case that will hold both instruments, plus all the accessories as well.

**Ready made suitcases:**

Two readers tell us they are using a standard, 26" pullman suitcase. I use a 26" hard-shell American Tourister pullman suitcase, myself. I purchased it on sale and find

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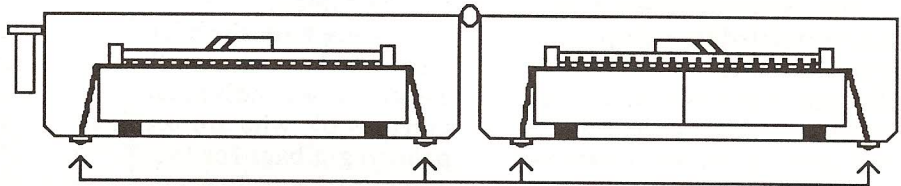


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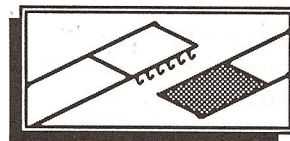
it works well as an autoharp traveler. When I pack my autoharps, I line the bottom of the case with a thin sheet of foam padding, also bought at the discount store, which I have cut to 'harp shape. I stack one 'harp on top of the other, and put a lining of padding between. Then I put another piece of padding between the top 'harp and the lid. The instruments fit snugly with the lid closed, and

tised as waterproof, and considering that it is large enough to carry two autoharps, very lightweight.

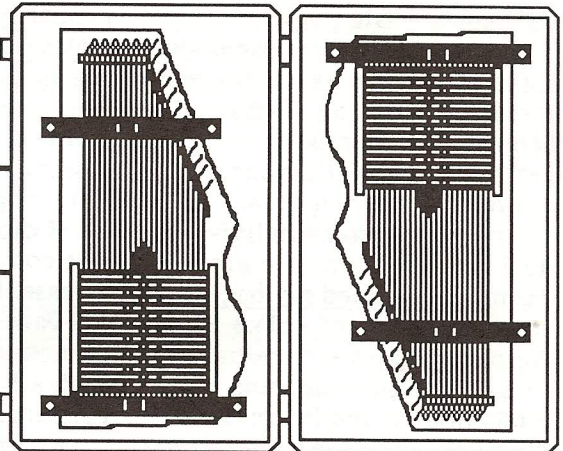
If you want to go lighter-weight and don't mind sacrificing some of the protection of the hard-shell case, you can opt for a soft-sided suitcase. There are dozens of models, ranging from totally "soft" with no support frame, to a more rigidly supported design. To serve as an instru-



Pop-riev straps to suitcase. Reinforce rivet site.



Sew velcro to end of straps.



Top view shows strap locations.

there's room in the unfilled corner for picks and tuners.

Jim Funk and Walt Clark came up with the same idea: to carry two autoharps, get a Samsonite 26" case that does not contain a lining. The case splits in the middle with room on each side for one 'harp. The instruments are held firmly in place by 1 1/2"-wide nylon straps which can be pop-rieveted to the side of the suitcase (which has been reinforced). The straps close over the autoharps and attach with velcro fasteners; one across the base, and one across the strings. The hard-shell suitcase is durable, (as the American Tourister Gorilla points out), adver-

ment case, however, the soft-sided model with a rigid frame would be more practical. When packing your 'harps, line the case with padding, or find some way of securing them within the case.

Some models come with the always-handy extra storage compartments on the outside of the case.

Just about all soft-sided luggage is advertised as water repellent, and some are advertised as waterproof, depending on the model and kind of material used in construction. Be aware that water may be able to leak through the zipper.

Just about all pullman



cases come with wheels of varying size, and the general rule is the bigger the wheel, the better it can navigate on uneven surfaces. If you're considering buying one, select one with the larger 2' to 3' wheels, the bigger the wheels, the better. I also find the two-wheel models more maneuverable than the four-wheel type.

As a final note, if you're looking for a case and are still not sure what you want, check the yellow pages under "Musical Instruments: Supplies and Accessories." Also, check computer stores and places that deal with professionals. They will probably be able to direct you to a company that produces customized carrying cases for sensitive equipment, such as a computer, video equipment, or even an autoharp.

To summarize, the general consensus of my survey was that a good, functional autoharp case should have the following features:

1. Lightweight
2. Durable, able to take rough treatment
3. Waterproof
4. Protective
5. Extra-compartmental
6. Substantial, easily-gripped handles
7. Option for shoulder, back-pack straps
8. Designed to fit your autoharp

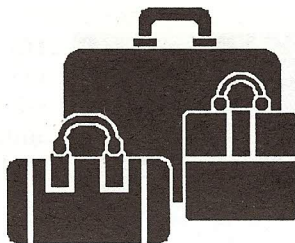
Other suggestions include:

9. Additional compartments for tape recorder and incidentals
  10. Substantial enough to use as a seat
  11. Include humidifier
  12. Light in color to reflect the sunlight and heat
- One of our readers, who obviously is not too crazy about roughing it requested
13. Cellular phone
  14. Mirror
  15. Portable shower.

## TABLATURE EXPLANATIONS

The songs presented in *AQ* 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 you are interested in having.

*Autoharp Cases,  
from front to back:  
OSI Easy-Chord,  
OSI Hardshell,  
26" Pullman,  
OSI Gig Bag,  
Padded Bag by  
Lynn Trace,  
OSI Chip Board.*



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- Great Black Swamp Dulcimer Festival, Lima, OH - April 28, 29, 30
- Cosby Dulcimer and Harp Convention, Cosby, TN - June 9, 10, 11
- Luthiers' Symposium '89, Nazareth, PA - June 22, 23, 24, 25
- Brandywine Folk Festival, Elkton, MD - July 14, 15, 16
- Cranberry Dulcimer Gathering, Binghamton, NY - July 21, 22, 23
- PA Craft Guild, F&M Craft Show, Lancaster, PA - July 27, 28, 29, 30
- Carter Family Memorial Weekend, Hiltons, VA - August 4, 5, 6
- Galax Oldtime Fiddlers' Convention, Galax, VA - August 9, 10, 11, 12
- Philadelphia Folk Festival, Schwenksville, PA - August 25, 26, 27
- Walnut Valley Festival, Winfield, KS - September 14, 15, 16, 17

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# INTERACTION

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AN INTERACTIVE LESSON WITH

**ALAN MAGER**

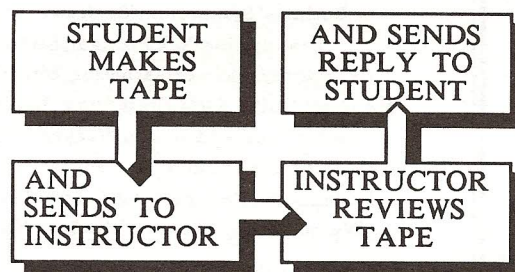


Alan Mager bought his first autoharp in 1962 and, throughout the folk music revival of the early '60s, he accompanied his singing with guitar and autoharp at New England clubs and coffee houses. As the '70s approached, Alan abandoned the autoharp for career and family.

In 1984 he heard Bryan Bowers perform and his interest in the autoharp was instantly rekindled. The next day, he bought a new autoharp and began exploring its potential. Although he enjoys per-



forming, his musical efforts are now directed toward arranging music for the autoharp and teaching others the joy of playing this instrument. Alan now teaches private and group lessons using his own book, *The Autoharp Tutor*, which was published last year. He is constantly at work arranging unusual pieces of music for the autoharp that expand the limits of the instrument. We are pleased to welcome Alan as our Interaction Instructor and Editor.



*Are you interested in becoming an Interaction instructor?  
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Alan F. Mager, P. O. Box 1221, Annandale, VA 22003.*

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The instructor will listen to your tape, and on the blank side, critique your playing, answer your questions, and record a 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.

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## THE INTERACTION LESSON: "AFTER THE BALL"






Alan F. Mager  
P. O. Box 1221  
Annandale, VA 22003

After I had been playing the autoharp for several months, I noticed that I had unconsciously developed a characteristic rhythm-fill pattern. By "rhythm-fill pattern," I mean a series of strokes that fills in "empty" space following melody notes that are held for two or more counts. In talking to other 'harpers, I have found that virtually everyone develops one or more of these patterns that are often quite unique to the individual player.

Rhythm-fill patterns accomplish two things: (1) They help the player keep time more easily while playing, and (2) they fill long pauses with more of those beautiful autoharp sounds. This isn't to say that you can't have too much of a good thing -- often it is more effective to let a whole note or half note sound by itself without filling in behind it. The most interesting arrangements employ a variety of techniques for dealing with long-held notes.

Having said this, you will notice that my arrangement of "After the Ball" fairly crawls with rhythm-fills, but then, this lesson is about rhythm-fills. I'll leave it to you to come up with a more imaginative arrangement.

**Tablature.** I have used the following tablature symbols in "After the Ball:"

-  -- Pinch (All pinches should be made with the thumb and # 2 [middle] finger).
-  -- Long and short thumb strums (always made toward the treble strings). A strum symbol appearing low on the staff means that the strum should be made on the low strings, and vice versa. (See measure 32.)
-  -- Short, upward and downward finger strums, covering only 3 or 4 strings.
-  -- Pluck (a single melody note played by plucking one string).
-  -- Sustain or pause. The previous note continues to sound.

**Making the Strokes.** The short thumb and finger strokes used in rhythm-fill patterns should be very light -- the picks (or fingers, if you don't use picks) should just brush across three or four strings. Keep in mind that the basic idea is to create a rhythmic rather than a melodic or harmonic accompaniment.

The fingers I use in playing the rhythm-fill patterns are indicated through the first 12 measures, and remain the same throughout the piece. All the pinches are made with the thumb and number 2 (middle) finger. All the rhythm-fill patterns start with an upward stroke using the number 2 finger. Many players avoid making upward finger strokes because their picks tend to get caught in the strings. To cure this problem, try this:

- As you execute a pinch, rotate your wrist so that your finger tips move toward the bass strings. Do this with your wrist only -- DO NOT MOVE YOUR ARM!
- Now, rotate your wrist back in the opposite direction, as if preparing to execute another pinch. As you do this, let your #2 finger drop down a little and lightly brush a few strings.

If you let your wrist do the work, the side of the pick, rather than the end, will brush against the strings and will not get caught. All of the strokes in the rhythm-fill patterns should be made using this same wrist movement. Don't consciously push these strokes. Just rotate your wrist while letting the thumb or finger brush against a few strings.

## AFTER THE BALL

Charles K. Harris, 1892

Key of G

Af - ter the ball is o - ver,

Af - ter the break of morn,

Af - ter the dan - cers' lea - ving.

Chords: G, C, G, C, D7, Am, E7, Am, E7, Am.

Rhythm patterns: 1 2 3 &, 1 2 & 3, 1 2 & 3 &, 1 2 & 3 &, 1 2 3.

Af - ter the stars are gone;

TAB

1 2 3 & 1 2 & 3 1 2 & 3 & 1 2 3

Man - y a heart is ach - ing

TAB

1 2 3 & 1 2 & 3 1 2 & 3 & 1 2 3

If you could read them all:

TAB

1 2 3 & 1 2 & 3 1 2 & 3 & 1 2 3

Man - y the hopes that have van - ished

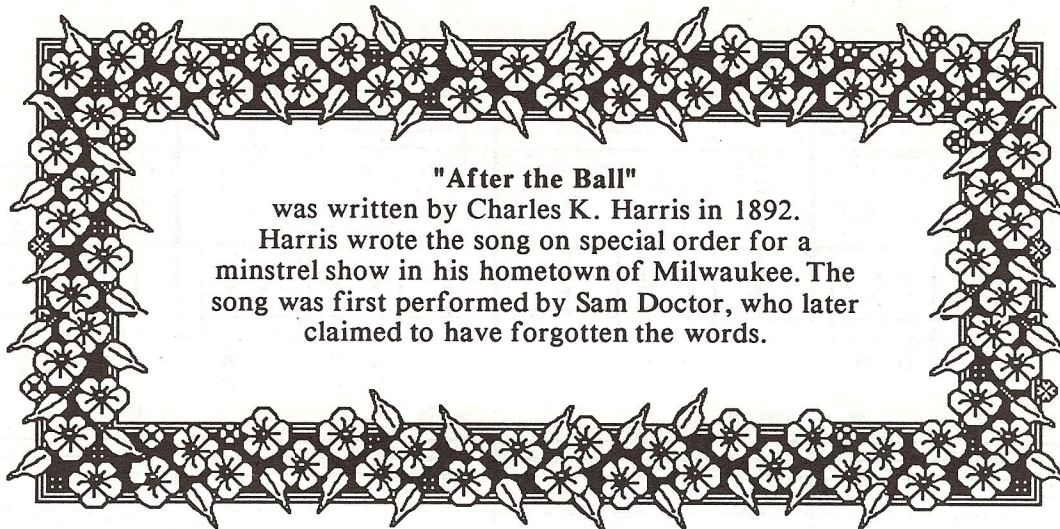
TAB

1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 & 3 & 1 2 3

Af - ter the ball.

TAB

1 2 & 3 & 1 2 3 1 2 & 3 & 1 2 3



**The Rhythm-Fill Patterns.** My basic rhythm-fill pattern following dotted half notes can be seen in measures 3, 4, and several others throughout the piece. Try to be quite forceful in sounding the melody note (pinch). Keep the rhythm strokes that follow very short and soft -- they shouldn't overpower the melody. At first, try this rhythm pattern while damping all the strings on your autoharp. When you are comfortable with the pattern, let the G chord sound and try playing measures 3 and 4 over and over.

When you have this worked out, try some of the variations of this pattern which appear throughout "After the Ball."

- In measure 12, is a variant of the rhythm-fill pattern following a dotted half note which simply omits the strokes that occur on the half beats.
- In measures 20 and 28, the above variation is given another twist by replacing the short thumb stroke with a longer stroke to emphasize the chord being played.
- Measure 2 shows the first half of the original pattern being used following a half note. This same pattern, minus the stroke on the half beat, is shown in measure 10.
- Perhaps the toughest rhythm-fill pattern in this lesson is the one that appears in measure 1. In this measure, and in several others, the third melody note occurs on a half beat. To keep the proper timing, I find it a great help to add a rhythm-fill stroke (in this case, an upward finger stroke) on the third beat before plucking the melody note on the half beat.

**Putting It All Together.** Work on all these patterns individually, then try playing them in random order until you feel quite comfortable with them all. At that point, take a deep breath and try playing "After the Ball" from the top. Oh, by the way, there are a couple of tricky chord changes in there just to keep your left hand from getting bored.

I'm eager to hear how well you can manage my rhythm-fill patterns. Many of you probably have your own well-established patterns, too. When you send me a tape of the lesson, I'd also love to hear you play "After the Ball" or some other piece using your unique rhythm patterns. Good luck, and have a ball!

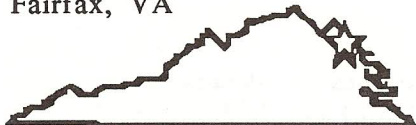
Alan Mager



## 'HARPERS-AT-LARGE

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

**Concert:**  
**Mill Run Dulcimer Band**  
Place: Colvin Run Mill Park  
Fairfax, VA



**Reporting: Kathy Ferguson**  
Fairfax, VA

During their Sunday November 20th concert, the band played the songs on their new album, "You've Been A Friend to Me," as well as songs from earlier albums and a beautiful new love song, "Late in the Day." Woody Padgett sang the gospel song, "Deep Settled Peace," and Neal Walters sang "Sister Kate" to which

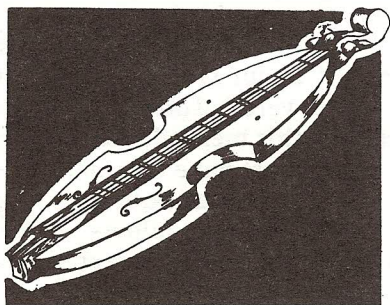
Murphy, the limberjack member of the band, clogged.

A real treat for both band and audience was having their former member, Robin Gaiser, join in on several pieces including "Trumpet Vine," "A Place in the Choir," and the lovely duet she does with Neal, "Lorena."

The MRDB's traditional Christmas Concert was held December 10th to a packed house. They started off with a selection of the traditional Christmas songs: "Lord of the Dance," "Jingle Bells," etc. Woody played an autoharp solo, "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring." In the second set, Neal played the concertina and Kit played the bowed

psaltery with Woody on autoharp and Keith on bass on a medley of Christmas carols. They had new words to "Hop-along Peter" -- "Hopalong Santa" -- to describe the frantic pace of the holiday season. Their limber horse got dressed up with a red nose, antlers and a red hat to clog to "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer." Woody's autoharp solo, "The Music Box Dancer" is always delightful -- an example of how absolutely enchanting the autoharp can sound in the hands of a talented musician, and Woody is that in spades!

*Editors Note: The MRDB helps celebrate National Library Week with a concert at Masonville Regional Library, 7100 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA on April 11 from 7:30 - 8:30. They will also give a concert at Colvin Run Mill Park, Fairfax, VA, 1- 4 pm on April 9, May 7, and again on June 18. ■*



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## THE DOCTOR IS IN



### LOOSE TUNING PINS

By Dr. George Orthey

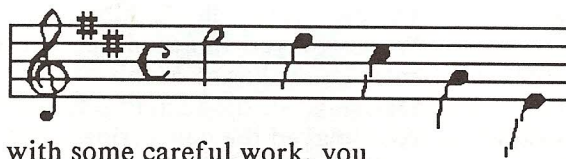
*George Orthey has been handcrafting instruments for 25 years. He has made over 1500 lap dulcimers, 30 hammered dulcimers, and over 100 autoharps.*

Original tuning pin holes for zither pins found in everything from \$30,000 harp-sichords to Made-in-Hong Kong door chime souvenirs are drilled at 3/16 inch. The zither pins are supposed to be about 12/1000 inch larger. Converting this to decimal, 3/16 becomes .187 inch, and the pins should be .198 to .200 inch. In truth, the pins vary from .185 to over .200 in routinely available commercial pins. Any replacement pins you use should be at least .196 diameter. ( If you are not mechanically inclined, don't get excited about all of this technical minutia. Take this article to a handy friend, who will be glad to know these facts before drilling into your 'harp.) Keep in mind that the pins are like a very finely threaded screw. Turned clockwise they go deeper, and turned counter-clockwise they come out.

**Rx** If a single pin in an instrument is "soft" loose, simply replacing it with a larger standard pin may do the job.

**Rx** Pin tightener available from someone who does piano repairing may tighten slightly loose pins. Pin tightener is a liquid that causes permanent swelling of the wood. A drop at the base of the pin, allowed to soak in overnight, will tighten it.

**Rx** If the pins are set shallow in the pin block, setting the pins deeper may improve tightness, but some caution needs to be exercised here. Remove a few pins and check the pin hole depth. It may be as little as 3/8 to 1/2 inch. If this is the case, you are in luck and



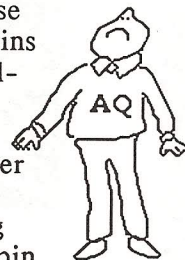
with some careful work, you can do wonders.

As noted earlier, the standard pin drill (3/16") is .187 in diameter. If you drill the holes with this, it'll just make it worse.

The next smaller standard drill is 11/64" or .015 less. That's too small. So now what? Thanks to machinists who must do very exact work, drill bits are made in .002" intervals. So, visit your local machine shop folks, explain how desperately you need their help, play them a tune, throw yourself on the floor and kick and scream if you must, but get them to sell you a drill bit about .180" diameter. Using this drill, increase the depth of the hole to about 1" deep. *Caution! Don't drill through the back of your 'harp!* (An easy way to be sure of drill depth is to wrap a piece of masking tape around the drill bit 1" from the tip. You are 1" deep when the tape

reaches the surface of the 'harp.) The drilling is best done on a drill press to be exact -- always just one clean motion, in and out. Do not re-enter with the drill, or you will ream the pin hole. When drilling this deeper hole, start with the drill turned off. Lower the drill into the hole until it touches bottom, then turn the drill on and drill to the desired depth. Bring the drill out all in one smooth continuous motion. Turn the drill off, and go on to the next hole and repeat the procedure.

Now turn your pins in about 1/4" deeper than they were before. To use this method, the pins must have originally been set quite high thus allowing the 1/4" deeper position without bringing the string windings on the pin too low.

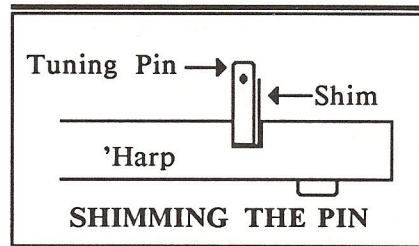


**Rx** A method I particularly like is shimming the pin hole. This procedure will only work if the pin hole depth is 1" or more. If the depth is less than one inch, drill the hole deeper as described above.

Cut strips of hardwood veneer 1/8" wide by about 2" long. Put a very small amount



of "yellow" glue on one face of the strip and stand it in the back of the pin hole. Be sure the glued surface of the strip is facing the pin-hole wall, *not* the pin. Take the tuning pin and drive it gently into the hole. The pin should go in, and the wood strip should stand still.



After setting the pin about 1/4" deep into the 'harp, use your tuning wrench to turn the pin slowly to its normal depth. The strip should not turn with the pin. When the pin is in place, cut the excess shim at the surface of the 'harp. The next day your 'harp will be ready for re-stringing. *Don't forget to back the pin out one full turn for every 5/8" of wire you intend to wrap around the pin.* Usually 3 to 4 turns are just right. Check your 'harp before taking the strings off to see how many turns you have on your pins. (Aargh! Now he tells me!) If the pins are still too loose, you can repeat the shimming.

**R** Plugging and redrilling can also be used for very loose pins. A metric hardwood dowel 1/2 cm in diameter works perfectly. Use a very thin coat of yellow glue on the sides of the pin hole, and also a very thin coat on the sides of the plug. Insert the plug. You must wait at least 24 hours before redrilling. I prefer waiting a week. Redrill the hole using an undersize machinist drill about .180" diameter. Do not create a shallow pin hole. Make the depth an absolute minimum

of 3/4". The ideal depth is about 1".

**R** There are also commercially available oversize (.215") zither pins. They have some real drawbacks in my hands in that they are not as

well-finished as standard pins, and are so much larger that it is difficult to get a tuning wrench onto the pins. They do work, and are quick and easy to use in a low-value 'harp where simple functional integrity is the main issue.

#### MATERIALS NEEDED AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

**UNDERSIZED DRILL BITS** - Machine shop, machinist, or machinist supply

**YELLOW GLUE** (Elmer's Craftsmen, Franklin Titebond) - Any hardware store

**TUNING PINS** - Any hammered dulcimer, autoharp, zither, or psaltery maker; piano supply house; Oscar Schmidt Int'l. Be sure to ask for *zither* pins. Oversize pins are available from OSI dealers.

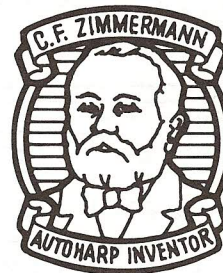
**VENEER** - Major lumber yards; Constantine's, 2050 Eastchester Road, Bronx, NY 10461; Craftsman Wood Service, Chicago, IL

**MICROMETER** (For measuring pin sizes) - Car repair shop, machine shop

**DOWEL** - Lumber yard

**1/2 cm HARDWOOD DOWEL** - No known source in the United States. If you know, please tell me.

## A Tribute to Charlie



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**Ivan Stiles**

Route 29 - RD 2, Phoenixville, PA 19460

# UNDAUNTED

A Tribute To Oscar Schmidt

Dauntlessly

Words & Music by Mary Lu Walker

	<p>D / / / / / / /</p> <p>When I was just a bab - y my</p>	<p>G / A7 / D /</p> <p>moth - er sang to me, a</p>		
	* * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ ˆ	* ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ * ˆ ˆ	* ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ	* ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ

	<p>G / / / / D / / /</p> <p>song her moth - er sang to her in</p>	<p>E7 / / / / A7 /</p> <p>eigh - teen nine - ty three. She'd</p>		
	* ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ	* ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ	* ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ	* ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ

	<p>G / / / / D / /</p> <p>hold me close and rock me, she'd</p>	<p>A7 / / / / D / /</p> <p>kiss my sleep - y head, and I'd</p>		
	* ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ * ˆ	* ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ	* ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ	* ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ

	<p>G / / / / / D / Bm /</p> <p>fall a - sleep to the mu - sic of "The</p>	<p>A7 / / / / D / /</p> <p>Old Grey Goose Is Dead," sing - in'</p>		
	* ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ	* ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ	* ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ	* ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ

	<p>D / / / / /</p> <p>Go tell Aunt Rhod - y,</p>	<p>A7 / / / / D /</p> <p>go tell Aunt Rhod - y,</p>		
	* ˆ ˆ ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ * ˆ ˆ	* ˆ ˆ ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ	* ˆ ˆ ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ	* ˆ ˆ ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ

	<p>/ / / / / / /</p> <p>go tell Aunt Rhod - y, The</p>	<p>A7 / / / / D /</p> <p>Old Grey Goose Is Dead.</p>		
	* ˆ ˆ ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ * ˆ ˆ	* ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ	* ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ	* ˆ * ˆ * ˆ * ˆ ˆ

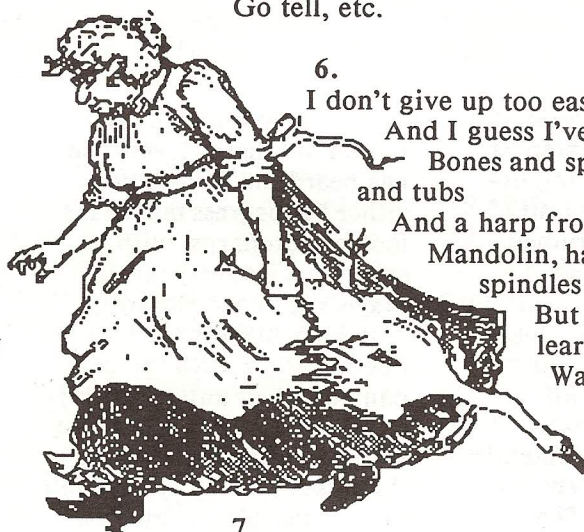
## VERSES

2.  
When I got a little older,  
I bought me an old guitar  
With a book on how to play it  
And become a recording star!  
But no matter how I practiced,  
My fingers wouldn't follow my head  
And the only tune I learned to play  
Was "The Old Grey Goose Is Dead," playing  
Go tell, etc.

3.  
One day I passed a pawnshop  
And a banjo caught my eye  
Had one string less than the guitar  
So I thought I'd give it a try.  
Well, I blistered my thumb  
And I sure felt dumb  
'Cause my fingers wouldn't  
follow my head  
And the only tune I learned to play  
Was "The Old Grey Goose Is  
Dead," playing  
Go tell, etc.

4.  
At a county fair a guy was there  
Who played the dul-ci-more  
Two strings less than the banjo!!  
I can play that for sure!  
But the bum-diddy-bum just never did  
come  
And my fingers wouldn't follow my head  
And the only tune I learned to play  
Was "The Old Grey Goose Is Dead," playing  
Go tell, etc.

5.  
I took a trip to Ireland  
And I heard the pipers play  
No strings at all on the little tin flutes  
So I bought me a flageolet.  
When I blew high, the whistle blew low  
And my fingers wouldn't follow my head  
And the only tune I learned to play  
Was "The Old Grey Goose Is Dead," playing  
Go tell, etc.



6.  
I don't give up too easy  
And I guess I've tried them all  
Bones and spoons and saws  
and tubs  
And a harp from Tara's halls.  
Mandolin, harmonica, and the  
spindles on my bed  
But the only tune I  
learned to play  
Was "The Old Grey  
Goose Is Dead,"  
playing  
Go tell, etc.

7.  
Somewhere up in heaven  
Where the music angels sit  
There's a spot reserved for a special saint  
And his name is Oscar Schmidt.  
'Cause I've finally found me an instrument  
I can play with my fingers and my head  
And I'll knock you out with my AUTOHARP  
And "The Old Grey Goose Is Dead!" Playing  
Go tell, etc.

Mary Lu Walker is a talented composer, performer, and songwriter who has obviously gone through "the autoharp experience." Here, she shares this with us in the delightful song, "Undaunted, A Tribute To Oscar Schmidt." As Mary Lu states, "The song tells a true story, except that I have never been to Ireland and I can play six chords on the guitar -- (only not Bm)."

Mary Lu has performed on three continents, to audiences of all ages. Her albums and books are for and about children, yet they offer a universal appeal. Walker's credits include a sixth Popular Award from ASCAP (The American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers), given in 1988.

"Undaunted, A Tribute To Oscar Schmidt" is on the album *Middle-Age Middle-Class Mama Songs*, K and R Music, Trumansburg, NY 14886.

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**IN MY OPINION:**


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By Lindsay Haisley

## THE ULTIMATE AUTOHARP

The autoharp has an odd history. To a certain extent it has always been more important as a market commodity than as a musical instrument. I can think of few other instruments which have been primarily marketed for close to 100 years by one company (currently Oscar Schmidt International). And I can think of no other instrument's name which is actually a registered trademark. The autoharp has caught on as a parlor and novelty instrument, a teaching aid, and as a specialty instrument within a specific music market. (Folk music folks will excuse the description). The many owners of Oscar Schmidt International have always kept a steady weather-eye on the bottom line and so the autoharp has survived many a dry season by hanging on as the mainstay of elementary school music teachers and church youth choir directors. Unfortunately, the instrument has not caught the fancy of an overwhelming number of performers. These are musicians who require that their instruments meet standards of quality far above those which would satisfy the average elementary school music classroom.

Let's admit, also, that the autoharp has an "image problem." We can all see Bruce Springsteen, Elvis Presley, or even Sylvester

Stallone playing a guitar -- but an autoharp? Everyone has heard the term "idiot zither." Bluegrass musicians look at autoharps with suspicion. Country music players are condescending. Autoharp players are frequently stuck with the company of other autoharp players. This is certainly not the worst of fates, but is something less than fully rounded in its musical possibilities.

Thus the lowly autoharp has had to suffer a variety of problems, the likes of which were long ago eliminated in the evolution of more "serious" musical instruments.

I would like you, therefore, to consider the following -- my ideas for the "Ultimate Autoharp."



**Let's begin with the way the instrument looks.**

One of the main things that has always struck me as odd about autoharps is the way the names of the chords are printed in **BIG BOLD** letters right there on the chord buttons. How many

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*Lindsay Haisley is a well-known autoharp performer and recording artist who hails from Leander, Texas. He travels extensively across the country giving concerts and workshops, and now, will be a regular contributor to In My Opinion in AQ.*

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instruments have the names of their notes or keys printed conspicuously on them? Most of the ones I can think of are children's instruments which are usually down-sized editions of adult (unlabeled) instruments. We might start, therefore, by removing the names of the chords from their conspicuous locations on the buttons. Perhaps we could also eliminate the names of the notes from the face and bridge of the instrument.

But we need the names of the chords on the buttons! No logical and consistent layout of chord buttons has ever been developed by autoharp makers. This is a pity. A logical and very consistent layout of chord buttons has been around for years as a result of the evolution of the accordion -- which does not need to have its buttons labeled! I would suggest, therefore, that the "Ultimate Autoharp" would have, within the limits imposed by mechanics, an accordion-style chord button pad with no chord names, please. Anyone who can learn to play the accordion can also play the autoharp (and vice versa), even though it may be limited to 12 or 15 chords. Accordions come with different size chord pads too, but the relationship between button positions and chords holds constant across models and brands.

**How about the musical quality of the instrument -- its "playability" and its sound?**

The next requirement I would make of the "Ultimate Autoharp" is a good resonant box -- deeper than is customary. It should be built with the skill and understanding normally put into a quality guitar, violin or other stringed instrument. Once again, serious autoharp players are so few that the manufacturers have had little incentive to optimize the musical quality of the instrument. I was reasonably satisfied with the acoustic sound of the average commercial autoharp until I heard one of the 'harps made by Bob Welland of Evanston, Illinois. Bob is a math professor by trade and an autoharp maker by choice. His daughter, Adelle, played with Bryan Bowers many years ago. At that time, Bob realized that he could easily design and build a much better autoharp box than the commercially manufactured ones -- and so he did. His autoharps have a quality of sound and a projection that is truly phenomenal. His boxes are deeper and lighter than the plywood boxes used on most commercial autoharps yet still have the strength necessary to support the high string tension required for good volume and tone. Bob's 'harps are to commercial autoharps what Martin guitars are to the old Sears and Roebuck Silvertone guitars.

◆◆◆  
**My next requirement of the "Ultimate Autoharp" is that it must have a reasonably quiet action.**

There indeed may be people who feel that the clicking and clacking of the chord bars in an autoharp is authentic and pleasing. I am not one of them. When I

recorded "Christmas on the Autoharp," the first thing we noticed about the autoharp in the studio was the abundance of clicks, squeaks, and rattles produced in the process of working the chord buttons. We immediately removed the 21-bar chord cover and laid it about with pads of folded paper towels. In short order we had significantly reduced the noise inherent in the instrument to something approaching a manageable level. The same paper towel pads reside in that 'harp to this day. If you have ever looked into a piano, an accordion, a harpsichord, or any other instrument with many moving parts, you will see that almost every potential contact point which could possibly produce noise is padded with felt or some similar substance. This is in marked contrast to many current commercial autoharps, which almost seem designed to produce a rattle.

◆◆◆  
**The "Ultimate Autoharp" (electric model) must have electronics which pick up the strings evenly. It must have controls which possess the range and control characteristics of those on a good electric guitar.**

The autoharp is a relatively quiet-voiced instrument, as instruments go, to which anyone who has ever been in an ensemble with an autoharp player will attest. This is in large measure due to the relative muteness of the standard autoharp box. This, combined with the volume of noise produced by the action, generally requires something more creative in a performance or recording session than a microphone placed squarely in front of the performer.

Professional autoharp players have developed

many ingenious methods of amplifying their instruments. Bryan Bowers uses a microphone behind his instrument. Harvey Reid uses three pickups of various sorts at once. I prefer to rely on the simple magnetic strip pickup as provided by Oscar Schmidt for my commercial autoharp. I have over the course of time become quite fond of the range of tone and quality of sound available with it. Fortunately, more engineering savvy goes into the design of autoharp pickups and volume and tone controls now than when they were first introduced. My first autoharp pickup didn't even cover all the strings! I still have trouble with the tone control. I am thankful that, at least, I can use my volume control on stage with somewhat predictable results.

Any autoharp maker who reads this will immediately say "Yes, all this is good, and all these improvements are quite possible, but such an instrument would be so expensive that no one would buy it." I would have to agree that some of the characteristics of the "Ultimate Autoharp" would indeed be costly. Real quality doesn't come cheap. If autoharp players are unwilling to pay the price, there will be no incentive for makers to build better instruments. On the other hand, standardizing the chord layout and eliminating the chord names from the buttons would certainly not raise the production cost of an instrument. In fact, they might reduce it.

What is basically necessary here is a change in attitude and a leap of faith on the part of autoharp makers. They must believe there is indeed a market for a "Serious Autoharp" outside the music

education and even outside the folk music market. Leaps of faith don't come easy when one is constrained by market economics.

Perhaps it's up to us, the community of players, to lead the way. We must explore and push the potential of the autoharp in our playing, performing and recording to the point where it will be no longer be thought of as an "idiot zither."

Many musical instruments have evolved because of the work of a few performers who have discovered new and beautiful music in them. The guitar, for instance, was widely considered a "low-life" instrument at the turn of the century. It was the music of people like Joe Pass and Django Rienhardt which gave the instrument a new voice and a lot more respect. This respect fueled the development of the high standards of craftsmanship which the guitar enjoys today. I would like to think that the same fate awaits the autoharp. ■

**In our next issue**, we will be presenting some further recommendations for developing the "Ultimate Autoharp" from another point of view.

Dr. Richard Norris, Program Coordinator of the Performing Arts Clinic at Braintree Hospital in Braintree, Massachusetts, will offer his observations on the structure and design of the currently mass-produced autoharp, and make recommendations for improving its "playability" with the physical abilities and limitations of the player in mind.

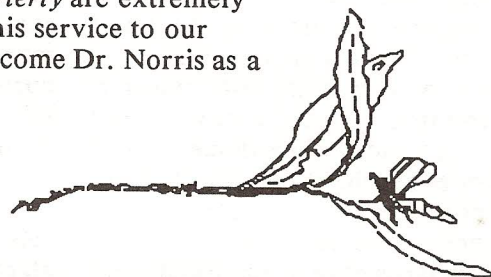
As Program Coordinator of the Performing Arts Clinic, Dr. Norris heads a program which addresses a broad variety of musicians' problems, including physical complaints such as neck and back pain, tendonitis, and problems related to stress and performance anxiety.

If you have a particular medical question related to your autoharp playing please write to:

Richard Norris, MD  
c/o *Autoharp Quarterly*  
PO Box A  
Newport, PA 17074

Dr. Norris will respond to your letter in an upcoming issue.

The editors of *Autoharp Quarterly* are extremely pleased and proud to offer this service to our readers. We are happy to welcome Dr. Norris as a member of our staff.



## IN MEMORIAM

*"The music in my heart I bore, long after it was heard no more" -- William Wordsworth*

The traditional music and dance world mourns the death of Peter Fletcher Colby. Pete passed away in early December while undergoing emergency heart surgery. While he may best be remembered in the capacity of banjo player with the dance band New England Tradition, Pete was also an accomplished autoharp player.

In 1972, Pete designed and built a 46-string, 20-chord chromatic autoharp. He also constructed the banjo that he played, drawing upon his experience as an employee of the old Vega company in Boston in the early 1960s. While modest about his own talents, Pete always encouraged the musical efforts of others. His self-taught style of three-finger banjo playing and his unique autoharp (known affectionately as the "pickup truck") were both a familiar and welcome sight to festival goers throughout the northeast.

Pete, along with Bob McQuillen and April Limber, released the band's first recording in 1988. Entitled "Farewell to the Hollow", this tape was four years in the making. With the almost simultaneous death of April, perhaps it would be fitting at this time to bid farewell to the *New England Tradition* as we knew it and to say an especially fond farewell to Pete Colby.

## PRO-FILES UPDATE

The following information is an update of the schedules of professionals who have been featured previously in this column. If you are a professional autoharp player and wish to be featured, please send your picture and information to Ivan Stiles, Route 29 -- RD 2, Phoenixville, PA 19460

### EVO BLUESTEIN

4414 E. Alamos  
Fresno, CA 93726  
Pro-File: AQ October, 88  
Schedule:

*Grass Valley Bluegrass Festival*  
Grass Valley, CA  
June 16-17  
*Freight and Salvage*  
Berkley, CA  
June 17  
*Yosemite Folk Festival*  
Wawona, CA  
July 2  
*Festival of American Fiddle Tunes*  
Port Townsend, WA  
July 2-9

### BRYAN BOWERS

c/o Scott O'Malley & Asso.  
PO Box 9188  
Colorado Springs, CO 80932  
Pro-File: AQ January 89  
Schedule:  
*Beddington Heights Community Center*  
Calgary, Alb., Canada  
April 8  
*Hayaboro Community Center*  
Calgary, Alb., Canada  
April 8  
*Foothills Bluegrass Club*  
Calgary, Alb., Canada  
April 9  
TBA (Write for details)  
Wooster, OH  
June 10  
*Rapid City Bluegrass Festival*  
Rapid City, SD  
June 23-24

### PAUL and WIN GRACE and Family

Route 1 Box 182  
11990 E. Barnes Chapel Rd.  
Columbia, MO 65201  
314 443-2819

Pro-File: AQ October 88

Schedule:  
*Dallas Folk Music Society Concert & Hootenanny*  
Dallas, TX  
April 8  
*Uncle Calvin's Coffeehouse*  
Dallas TX  
April 14  
*Party In The Park*  
Arkansas Art Center  
Little Rock, AR  
April 22  
*Shepherd School and Benton School*  
Columbia, MO  
May 5  
*Campground Amphitheatre*  
*National Ozark Scenic Waterways*  
Van Buren, MO  
June 24

### TOM SCHROEDER

819 W. 77th Street  
Kansas City, MO  
Pro-File: AQ October 88  
Schedule:  
*CTMS Summer Solstice Festival at CSU*  
Northridge, CA  
June 24-25

### Marty Schuman

1645 Rocky Point Road  
Gainesville, FL 32608  
Pro-File: AQ October 88  
Schedule:  
*Pioneer Days*  
Dade City, FL  
April 14  
*Folk Sampler*  
*Townsend's Plantation*  
Apopka, FL  
May 6  
*Florida Folk Festival*  
White Springs, FL  
May 26-28

### MIKE SEEGER

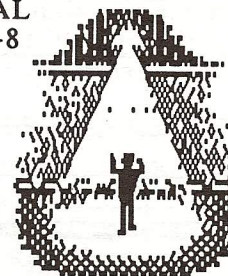
Pro-File: AQ January 88  
Schedule: See listing in *Bluegrass Unlimited*

### IVAN STILES

Route 29 - RD 2  
Phoenixville, PA 19460  
Pro-File: AQ October 88  
Schedule:  
*Free Library of Phila. East Falls Branch*  
April 12  
*Andorra Branch*  
May 1  
*West Chester May Day*  
West Chester, PA  
May 7  
*Camp Swatara*  
Bethel, PA  
May 28  
*CFMS Latta Festival*  
Charlotte, NC  
June 10  
*Pensacola Vol. Fire Dep't.*  
Pensacola, NC  
June 11

### CAROL STOBER

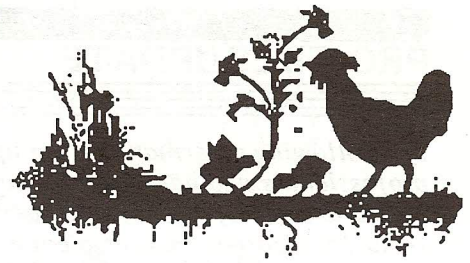
PO Box 1275  
Talladega, AL 35160  
205 362-6471  
Pro-File: AQ October 88  
Schedule:  
*May On The Mountain Louvin Festival*  
Henegar, AL  
May 12-13  
*Talladega Music Club*  
Talladega, AL  
May 18  
*Armuchee Bluegrass Festival*  
Rome, GA  
May 26-28  
*American Music Festival*  
Silver Dollar City, MO  
June 20-26  
*Frontierland Music Park Bluegrass Festival*  
Boaz, AL  
July 7-8



Note: Date changes or cancellation of events can occur. Please contact performer for details before travelling long distances.

# FROM THE COCOAHOUSE

The CocoaHouse meets at the Beechwood Community Life Center, 225 Fenno Street, Quincy, MA 02170. Here is another children's favorite from Cheryl Ange and the Beechwood staff.



**I**f you're working with a group of enthusiastic boys and girls who are not quite ready to settle down for some music, this traditional American folk tune is an ideal song for pulling the group together, while still releasing some of that extra energy.

This is a very good song to accompany with Drew Smith's thumb-lead style. Play the song with your thumb and index finger, using a swivel motion. When you want to play the melody, strike the melody note with your thumb on all but the second sixteenth notes. (Use your index finger to strike the melody on these notes.) See AQ October 1988, "Interaction" with Drew Smith for more information on the thumb lead.

## JIM ALONG, JOSIE

Chorus

Traditional

Hey jim a - long, G / / / /	jim a - long Jo - sie. D7 / C** / /
Hey jim a - long, G / / / /	jim a - long Jo. D7 / / C
Hey jim a - long, G / / / /	jim a - long Jo - sie. D7 / C** / /
Hey jim a - long, G / / / /	jim a - long Jo. D7 / / G



**A**fter the first one or two verses, let the boys and girls make up their own (they will, anyway) and match the style of the singing to the action in the verse. If there's enough room (and no chance of a stampede) they might also act out the motion in each verse. Use your own judgement.

When playing accompaniment, play the chords with the asterisks after them *two notes* before indicated. Otherwise, play the chords as shown for melody playing.



VERSES

Run along, jim along, jim along Josie.  
Run along, jim along, jim along Jo.  
(Sing this one fast, fast, fast.)

Bounce along, jim along, jim along Josie.  
Bounce along, jim along, jim along, Jo.  
(Can you make your voice "bouncy"?)

Sssh! along, jim along, jim along Josie.  
Sssh! along, jim along, jim along Jo.  
(Sing softly before the big finish.)

Creep along, jim along, jim along Josie.  
Creep along, jim along, jim along Jo.  
(This verse should sound "creepy".)

Skip along, jim along, jim along Josie.  
Skip along, jim along, jim along Jo.  
(Put a "skip" in your singing.)

Shout along, jim along, jim along Josie.  
Shout along, jim along, jim along Jo.  
(Warning: This will be the loudest.)  
... and so on.

Verse

Sing a - long jim a - long, G / / / / /	jim a - long Jo - sie. D7 / C** / /

Sing a - long jim a - long, G / / / / /	jim a - long Jo. D7 / / C /

Sing a - long jim a - long, G / / / / /	jim a - long Jo - sie. D7 / C** / /

Sing a - long jim a - long, G / / / / /	jim a - long Jo. D7 / / / /

---



---

**YASUO**


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A Staff Report

It's an August night in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Mist has settled into the valleys. The air is crisp in Galax, Virginia. The Old Fiddlers' Convention is in full swing. Vendors are selling their wares along the dirt track. Old friends have met and settled down for a long-weekend visit. Fiddle music fills the air from every direction, converging on any one given point in a happy disarray of beats and notes. And the crowd in the stadium has gathered for the autoharp contest.

Twenty-some people are ready to try their skills on the stage, and the audience is pleased with what they are hearing. This is what they expected -- what they came for -- Michael King's "Whiskey Before Breakfast," Drew Smith's "Under the Double Eagle," Marty Schuman, Betty Waldren, Mike Fenton, and others.

The crowd passes the popcorn. They talk about good buys in the used instrument booth down on the track. They shift their chairs, call to a friend three rows over. They interrupt this business to marvel at an autoharp run, applaud at the end of a song, -- until --

At first there is an almost imperceptible hush. "What is that song?" someone asks. The hush becomes louder. "What is that song, anyway? I know it,



but it's different." "Jerusalem Ridge.' It's 'Jerusalem Ridge'!"

In the spotlight is a slight, 27-year-old Japanese man making his 15-bar autoharp sing "Jerusalem Ridge" as it has never been heard in this neck of the woods. "Jerusalem Ridge" with oriental overtones. The Blue Ridge Mountains are replaced by Mount Fuji for a few minutes -- too many minutes. The time light goes on. The contestant has overplayed his time. He is disqualified, but the audience is enchanted, quiet. In his own good time, the player replaces Mount Fuji with the Blue Ridge Mountains once again, and as the last notes fade, the crowd gives a roar of approval.

Yasuo Mita smiles, nods to the audience, and leaves the platform as the next contestant is introduced. The moment is gone.

Yasuo Mita -- home, Ebetsu City, Japan. He is visiting the United States for four months. How did he hear about Galax, Virginia? How and when did he start to play the autoharp?

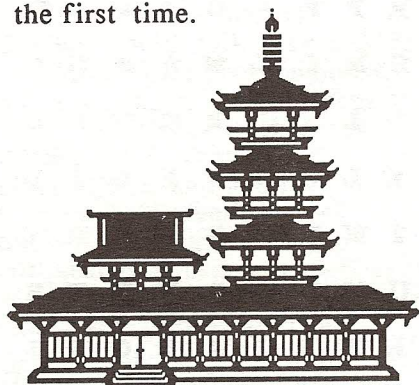
Yasuo was born and raised in a small town outside of Tokyo. When he was 18 years old, a friend introduced him to the music of Flatt and Scruggs. From that time on, he was in love with bluegrass music. He followed the professional musicians of

Japan, who researched American Bluegrass and Old Time music, translated it into the Japanese language and performed it on stage.

Yasuo was a follower only until he heard the Natarsher Seven play a medley of Carter Family songs -- and use an autoharp. Then a college student, he waited until his first two-week holiday break, got a job in a warehouse, saved his two-weeks' salary and ordered his first 15-bar autoharp.

For two years, he strummed chords and sang. He listened to all the old-time and bluegrass tapes he could find. One day he heard a Bryan Bowers tape. Yasuo's eyes light up when he recalls, "He played 'Blackberry Blossom!' What you can do with an autoharp!" -- and then, "Day and night, day and night I played 'Blackberry Blossom' over and over and over."

After graduating from college, he worked for a year to save his money, and came to visit the United States for the first time.



At the Winter Hawk Bluegrass Festival in New York, for the first time since he heard an autoharp, Yasuo saw a live autoharp player -- Bryan Bowers. And Bryan played, (you guessed it), "Blackberry Blossom!"

After his visit to America was over, Yasuo returned to Japan, resumed his work and, of course, refined his autoharp playing. He played

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**YASUO'S EYES LIGHT UP WHEN HE RECALLS, "HE PLAYED 'BLACKBERRY BLOSSOM!' WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH AN AUTOHARP!"**

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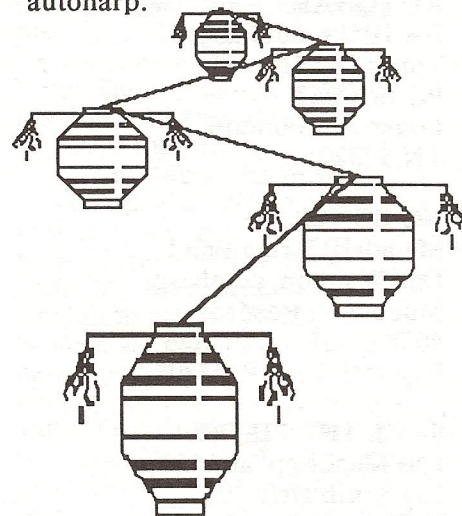
in a coffeehouse, gathering interest in the instrument, teaching and encouraging others. Last year he once more began saving his money for the long trip from Japan to the land of the bluegrass music.

When Yasuo arrived in Nashville, he read about the 53rd Annual Old Fiddlers' Convention in "Bluegrass Unlimited," and decided to "Give it a try."

And so he came to Galax, bringing with him his 15-bar autoharp, an insatiable love of bluegrass and old-time music, and the ability to transform a rollicking Virginia countryside, for

just a few moments, into a serene Japanese landscape called "Jerusalem Ridge."

In four more years, if you are in the neighborhood of Galax, Virginia on the right Wednesday night in August, you may witness yet another transformation performed by Yasuo Mita from Ebetsu City, Japan, and his 15-bar autoharp.



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Continued from page 11

### LIVE IN HOLLAND

Traver Hollow  
Peggy Harvey, autoharp  
PO Box 91  
Coventry, CT 06238

### THE MOUNTAINS' FADING SOUND OF THE DULCIMER AND AUTOHARP

Joe Hicks, autoharp  
Tom's Dulcimer Shop  
PO Box 262  
Lookout Mountain,  
TN 37320

### NO BONES

Memorial String Band  
Dan Weithop, autoharp  
Monogram Records  
4068 Sunflower Circle  
Fayetteville, AR 72703

### SAVE THE PIECES

Ros Magorian, autoharp  
133 South Drive  
Buffalo, NY 14226

### SWEET REST

Karen Billings, autoharp  
Box 277  
Bloomington, IN 47402

## BOOKS UPDATE

#### Books Editor:

Eileen Roys  
Rt. 2, Box 85  
Stevensville, MD 21666

*The following is an update of the full list which was published in our October issue. If you know of a book we have missed, please send the information to the Books Editor. The complete list will be published every July and updated in each issue.*

### HOW TO PLAY THE AUTOHARP

Richard Carlin  
Music Sales Corp.  
24 East 22nd Street  
New York, NY 10010

## FIND THE HIDDEN WORDS

Find and circle the words associated with the autoharp in this puzzle. The words may appear horizontally or vertically, forward or backward, or diagonally. Good luck.

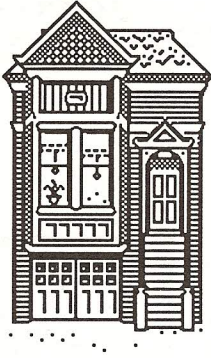
ZIMMERMANN  
DOLGE  
SCHMIDT  
CARTER  
STONEMAN  
BENFIELD  
SNOW  
PHONOHARP

CHROMATIC  
DIATONIC  
CHORDS  
BARS  
STRINGS  
PINCH  
PLUCK  
STRUM



J W U D M O W S P E C M A E L Q K G  
F K C U L P E S T M A L C U E W K P  
G B E N F I E L D O K S H K W R D T  
B W J F D M L S E R N G R J Z R M W  
E F U X O W N S H L J E O I W F X I  
R W K F L T U D K W U O M L S A F N  
U T A Q G B A R S K L M A A H E U F  
T D W O E F A O N R E J T L N D Q I  
A Y P H O N O H A R P P I O W K S E  
L F O W R M L C M E M I C W A K G L  
B E L W U R M A K D L N C K R U N D  
A R K T O F N Q Z K L C H K E D I L  
T E G J X N R T D I M H C S U K R W  
C T G W K E S T R U M L O S X P T S  
L R M D N T U W N L P R I U B Q S J  
H A O U K F D I A T O N I C L W P S  
D C T O F Y M W F P K R C Z Q O L R  
L C R U N W F H C N E R W O P R V T

Do you have a favorite word game or puzzle you'd like to see in *Autoharp Quarterly*? We invite you to send your word game or puzzle for consideration. Please be sure to keep the theme related to the autoharp. Submissions should be typed or clearly printed and sent to: Pamela Roberts, 174 Hayward Street, Braintree, MA 02184. Answers to this Find The Hidden Words puzzle will appear in the July issue of *Autoharp Quarterly*.



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### WANTED TO BUY

Used autoharp needed for widowed father of four. Call Ubi Adams at 717 569-8465.

Kyle Creed banjo in playable condition. Send price, information to Sue Stude, 70 Nottingham Road, Elkton, MD 21921

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

NOTICE: Autoharp Quarterly is sent via first-class mail. If you do not receive your issue within five days of postmark, we'd like you to call this to our attention immediately.

CLASSIFIED RATES: \$.25 per word. TERMS: Prepayment is required. Check or money order in US dollars, please. Make payable to Limberjack Productions. Ad will appear in next available issue after receipt.

FORM: Ads must be legibly printed or typed.

NOTICE: Limberjack Productions cannot be responsible for offers or claims of advertisers, but will make every attempt to screen out misleading or questionable copy.

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### ADVERTISING INQUIRIES

*Autoharp Quarterly* is the perfect place to reach a dedicated autoharp audience. To advertise your product or service, send inquiry to *Autoharp Quarterly*, c/o Ivan Stiles, Route 29-RD 2, Phoenixville, PA 19460. Advertising closes sixty days prior to issue date.

### EDITORIAL INQUIRIES

Editorial inquiries should be addressed to: Editors, *Autoharp Quarterly*, PO Box A, Newport, PA 17074.

### MUSIC CONTRIBUTIONS

*Autoharp Quarterly* welcomes contributions from its readers. Submissions must be in the public domain or your own original material. *Autoharp Quarterly* cannot be responsible for unsolicited manuscripts or guarantee publication. We retain first rights only. Send to: *Autoharp Quarterly*, c/o Ivan Stiles, Route 29-RD 2, Phoenixville, PA 19460.

Oscar Schmidt  
Introduces . . .

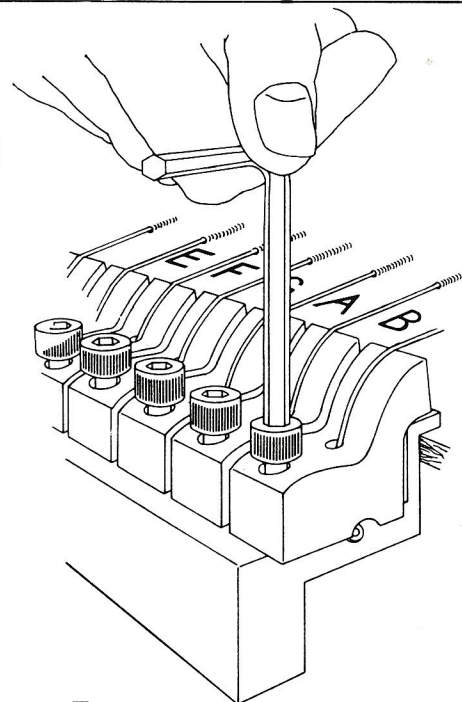
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**ON THE SCENE:** *Left to right* -- Betty Waldron, Mike Fenton, and Drew Smith pause for an impromptu jam session at the 1988 Old Time Fiddlers' Convention in Galax, Virginia.