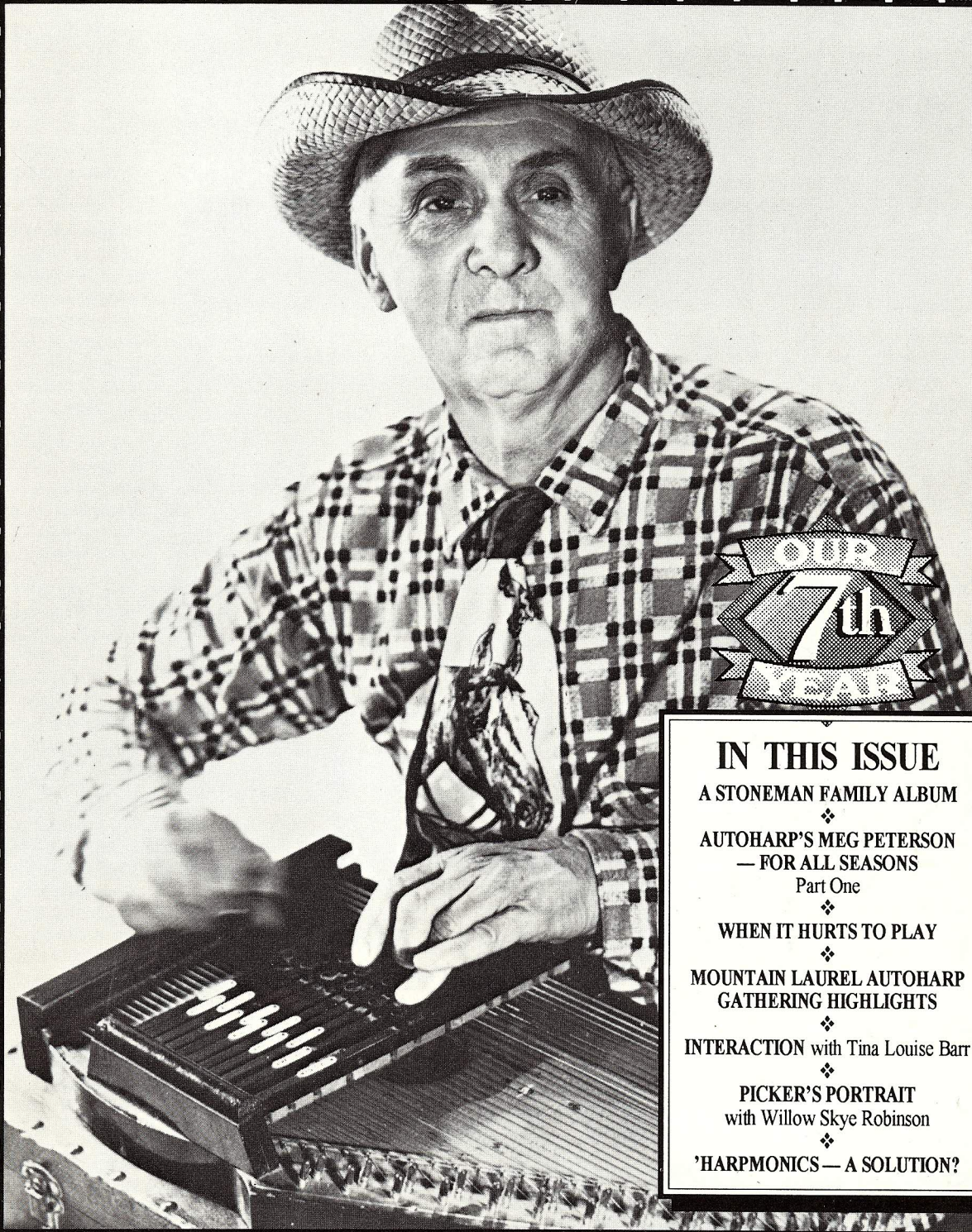


AUTOHARP QUARTERLY

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



OUR
7th
YEAR

IN THIS ISSUE

A STONEMAN FAMILY ALBUM



AUTOHARP'S MEG PETERSON
— FOR ALL SEASONS

Part One



WHEN IT HURTS TO PLAY



MOUNTAIN LAUREL AUTOHARP
GATHERING HIGHLIGHTS



INTERACTION with Tina Louise Barr



PICKER'S PORTRAIT
with Willow Skye Robinson



'HARPMONICS — A SOLUTION?

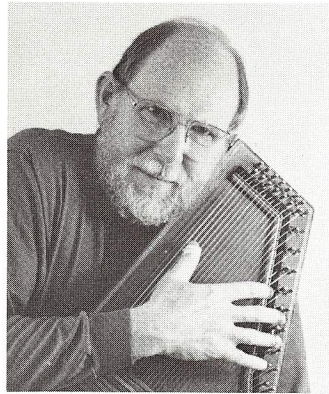
❖ ❖ ❖ ERNEST V. "POP" STONEMAN ❖ ❖ ❖

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VOLUME SEVEN, NUMBER ONE
OCTOBER 1994



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**AUTOHARP
QUARTERLY**
THE • MAGAZINE • DEDICATED • TO
THE • AUTOHARP • ENTHUSIAST

Co-editors:
Mary Lou Orthey
Ivan Stiles
Books Editor,
Recordings Editor,
Pro-Files Editor:
Mary Ann Johnston
Clubs Editor,
Festivals Editor:
Sandy Shaner
Interaction Editor:
Alan Mager
Children's Editor:
Fred Koch

Feature Writers:
James R. Adams, Esq.
Lindsay Haisley
Mike Herr
Richard N. Norris, M.D.
George F. Orthey
Judie Pagter
Mary Umbarger
Bob Woodcock

Contributors:
Gregg Averett
Heather Doyle
Les Gustafson-Zook
Laura Newton
Carol Spicer

Cover Photo:
Ernest "Pop" Stoneman
with his autoharp



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To And From / The Editors

Dear Readers:

It is with incredulous awe that we find ourselves in the position of defending the satire concerning the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering, which we printed in the last issue in our "Dear Editors" column. Becky Askey, our wonderfully whacky friend and fellow editor wrote that piece for her club's newsletter. We plagiarized it (almost verbatim), delighting in every word, supposing our readers would also. Not so, according to notes and calls we received. "How could anyone write such a terrible account of such a great festival?" "That letter is simply not true . . . I play an autoharp which is not an Orthey, but George helped me fix it so it was like new!" Ivan even received flack from his mother, who saw no humor at all in making fun of her Fraaank! – Well!

We shared what we considered to be a creative piece of twisted humor. Guess "humor" is whatever crumbles your individual crackers. That article just happened to crumble ours. Thanks to all of you who wrote or called. It's great to know that we have so many defenders and readers whose crackers are still intact!

Look for changes in our publication dates beginning with the next issue. We find that our busiest time for the magazine is also the busiest time for festivals and holidays. So – we decided to change our issue designations from the month to the season. Your next issue will be the "Winter" issue and will be mailed by the first week of February. Spring will be mailed by the first week of May, Summer will be mailed by the first week of August, and Fall will be mailed by the first week of November. Deadlines will remain 45 days prior to the mailing dates of each issue.

Dear Editors:

PTOOIE TO PYOUIE

I have patiently waited all year for each issue of *AQ* – in fog, rain, blistering heat – hoping for some mention of the winner of the most coveted trophy offered by the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering – the coveted Dribbler award. And all to no avail. 1993 has come and gone, and the 1994 Dribbler [Loser's Circle] winner [Kathy Roush] has already been crowned. My nose is so far out of joint that if it rains, I'll drown! . . . Where else could I, a beginner, enter a contest with the elite of the autoharp world (Joe Riggs, Ron Wall, Mike Herr, etc.) and come away with the prize! See picture to authenticate this memorable event.

Shannon Alexander
1993 Winner of the
Watermelon Dribbler Award

OK, Shannon, OK! Here's the picture! (Honestly, someone wins a trophy, and it just goes right to her head!)

Editors



1993's Watermelon Seed Spitting Champion Ptooie Ron Wall, with 1993's Watermelon Seed Dribbler, Shannon Alexander

PFALSE PHACTS

Re the Dear Editors column, July '94: My wife, Leigh Ann, didn't say she really understands Mark Fackeldey's ar-

ticles – she just enjoys them. You can do that . . . it's kinda like enjoying opera!

Concerning Bea Gluck's letter in the same issue – while it's doubtful there are any autoharp tab programs out there, there are lots of different really good music writing/arranging software available which might be nice to discuss the features thereof. Now, if someone would invent a digital, midi-compatible autoharp.

Don Moores

A digital, midi-compatible autoharp? And you were defending your wife's sanity, Don?

As for Bea's inquiry, here's another tip from our friend Bud Taylor –

Computers & Music, (647 Mission Street, San Francisco, California 94105 1 800 767-6161), is a company which sells music software. They will send a free catalogue, which describes in detail what each program will do. They sell all software at discount prices, and provide telephone backup.

Bud Taylor

A PLETHORA OF PANEGYRICS

It is a joy and a pleasure to share my 'harp with the readers of *AQ* and to have it featured (picture, back cover July '94 issue) in your fine publication. Thank you! . . . Hopefully, many of your readers will visit us here in Mountain View for the Autoharp Jamboree in August.

Johnny Gay

Boy, you really do a super job for the autoharp world. I'll be glad when I can get somewhat more involved with it . . . Keep up the good work with *AQ*. It is the best.

Terel Johnson

Here's a quick note to publicly acknowledge all the help I received from Genny Vaughn in getting the dances together at the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering. She called the dances, helped in the workshops, brought her own portable sound equipment, and took charge when charge needed to be taken. Thank you, Genny, very, very much!

Mike Herr

Each year I think the Gathering is the very best – and this year it was one of the very best. The pace was reasonable. You could get into the workshops you wanted, and *they were good*. There were good demonstrations, and some very impressive teaching. Each year I come away determined to spend more time with the 'harp and to work with the new ideas and skills that were given to us. Of course, I can only marvel at Marty Schuman and the technology he has developed. I fear that I can't understand most of it. I do better with the "down-to-earth, garden variety, hands-on" teaching. I saw some very good teaching in these workshops.

Byrtis Walters

Thanks for another terrific festival. It's a wonder how you meet and exceed such a high standard, year after year. For once, I was one of the last to leave instead of slipping out early. So many farewells to good friends was hard, indeed. I'm happy to have met Patsy Stoneman. She is a warm, genuine lady with real class.

I found one of the best places to get to know performers and players is at the picnic tables over lunch or dinner. Everyone is more relaxed, and conversation is not as focused on autoharp business. The hard part is choosing between the rich scratch-made soups and the baked chicken plates, and still saving room for home-made pie and ice cream. Having the Oliver Grange on the premises is a delicious convenience.

One memory that continues to tickle my funny bone is the visual image of Evo Bluestein gripping, bulldog-like, attempting to anchor a tent flap during Saturday night's storm. One more good puff of wind, and I would have had to grab him by the ankles!

Gregg Averett

You folks really got your ducks in a row for the annual Gathering. If the Saturday night storm had blown the tent

away with all those good pickers in it, the world would have lost most of its best autoharp players. [Including eight Winfield Champions!] I agree with Karen Mueller who was on stage at the time and gleefully announced, "I haven't had this much fun since I was in Kansas!" Maybe she was referring to the wind, but I prefer to think it had more to do with the general exhilaration of the crowd. Well, we didn't get blown away except by the music. What we did get was four days of great fun and autoharp picking. Thanks again!

Alex Usher

It must be a sign of my getting older, because it seems like it was just yesterday that I was writing to you and going on about what a great job you did with the 1993 Gathering. Well...ditto all that for the 1994 Gathering. You folks have perfected the art of producing the best all-autoharp event anywhere. Things run so smoothly, and the quality of the content is so high that I've just plain run out of superlatives.

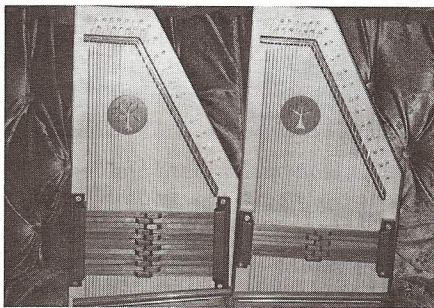
You've made this my favorite weekend of the year, even if it often separates Janice and me on our anniversary...she's already decided to join us at next year's Gathering

Alan Mager

A PHEW PHINE 'HARPS

I have built two autoharps [picture below] from the Mountain Laurel Autoharp plans available from *Autoharp Quarterly*. One is a diatonic scale in the key of D. The other is a 12-bar 'harp. I made the sound board out of 1/4" Sitka spruce. The outside trim, bars, and rosettes were made of cacique, which is hard to find. When I take my 'harps out, people ask all about them.

Greg Meyer



PHIRST-TIME READER

Thanks for sending my back issues. I got as far as Marty Schuman's article "The 15 Bar, 30 Chord Ultratonic" [Jan-

uary, '89]...Now I am wasting too much time trying to puzzle out a Metz-Ultratonic for myself. Leaving out the pentatonics and the suspended 4ths, I can do one like Marty's with 12 keys, but then I'd still have to double-push the three basic chords, which Marty does splendidly on his tape, but which scares me. For the nonce, unless some easy way to make an additive rather than a subtractive damping system occurs to me, I may try to string up something that covers the major triads, the major (or dominant) 7ths, the added 9ths, and the relative minors and minor 7ths for each of the tonic, dominant, and sub-dominant. That would take 15 bars, which is more than I'd like to mess with, but because they would not require double pushes, the layout could be simpler. But doing it that way will leave out Marty's three pentatonic bars, so I really need to have his April '94 article on the "floating pentatonics" to see if I'm giving up anything important. I made a pentatonic 'harp a couple of months ago, but it was an acoustic disaster. (The fault, however, may be in the construction, or lie in the fact that the thin pentatonic sound does not have the full diatonic sonority to play off against.)

A. J. Thieblot

Welcome, first-time reader! With Marty, whether you double-push three chords or triple-push two chords, you couldn't be in better company!

Editors

PHELLOWSHIP

I would like to form an autoharp club in Asheville, North Carolina. Please publish my name, address, and telephone number: John Carter, PO Box 15152, Asheville, NC 28813, 704 251-9676. Thanks!

John Carter

COLORADO PHESTIVAL

I am planning an Autumn Autoharp Gathering in October for the autoharp community here in Denver. We had a very successful autoharp and dulcimer festival several years ago in this area, so I decided it was time to do another. This one will be a one-day retreat with workshops, jams, open stage, and a concert with several performers – Roz Brown, Michael Stanwood, Hal Weeks, and me.

Julie Davis



A Stoneman Family Album

by Patsy Stoneman

as told to Mary Lou Orthey

Pattie Inez "Patsy" Stoneman Murphy is the fourth child of Ernest and Hattie Stoneman. As was the entire Stoneman Family, Patsy was blessed with a remarkable musical ability, and has used that talent throughout her life, playing her music at major folk festivals, The Grand Ole Opry, Constitution Hall, Lincoln Center, parties for Supreme Court Chief Justices, and members of Congress. Today, she counts innumerable music "greats" among her friends, and for 29 years has been married to, as it is in a song, "A wonderful guy," John Murphy.

Although this would be a more-than-ample life's description for most people, Patsy's goes way beyond that. She has been endowed with a constant "down home" sense of humor that won't quit, and an affection for living things that attaches her for life to baby ducks, geese, wild birds, — all small, helpless, living creatures — and gardens. She views the members of her family with love, understanding, and pride, and is chock-full of wonderful stories about them. And, she is extremely proud of her father, a pioneer of American Country Music, and a true pioneer of the autoharp.

Patsy, the Stoneman Family's chronicler, has given us all of the photos and anecdotes used in this article. We thank her for her time and effort to make this personal account of her family a special one for us.

In the picture above, notice the picks Daddy wore when he played the autoharp. His thumb pick is just a regular plastic pick, but his finger pick is one that many people have tried to copy. Until this writing, I have never shared his method of making picks. Why? I didn't want to. Now I think the time has come to share this secret with the autoharp world. I'm hoping that others will try his picks, and that Daddy's ingenuity will help today's autoharpers with their playing. I think he would like that.

Do you remember the old hair curlers that had a cloth covering, but on the inside, there was a steel spring wire, which held the curler in shape? I spent a lot of time hunting high and low for these particular ladies' curlers, gathering all I could for Daddy's finger picks. He would select a curler from the pile which contained a wire that would just fit around his right index finger (it would seat just beyond his first finger joint). He took the end of the curler which stuck out beyond his finger, and made a loop in that part of the wire so that the loop would just barely stick out beyond the tip of his finger. He then took the remaining wire above the loop he had just made, straighten it out, and thread it under the spring wire on his finger, catching it on the bottom loop of the wire, just below his first finger joint.



This picture of Pop was taken from an Okeh catalog cover — 1925

Daddy was an inventor, both in the musical field, and in the defense department. Because he wanted to play four different harmonicas during his performances, he invented a holder for four of them, which he could rotate easily when he wanted to switch keys.

During a period of time in his life, he was employed by the United States Navy to work on ships. No one had come up with a safe and fast way to load the big guns on the ships until Daddy invented a way. He received a plaque for this contribution to his country.

Everywhere we went, we rode in this rig. Daddy gutted the back of the car, a 1937 Chevrolet coupe, put a sort of Conestoga wagon roof over top, and built a row of benches on each side. We kids rode on those benches, both in summer and winter. At times, we thought we'd freeze to death.

Daddy had a lot of adoring female fans. Everywhere he went, he carried a brown leather satchel with him. Enclosed in that satchel were check stubs, music, and fan letters. We kids would sometimes go through the contents of that satchel when no one was around. I remember one specific letter from a lady fan, which I read over and over. She wanted Daddy to leave his family and his career. She offered to keep him forever if he would play only for her. I was worried, and mad at that woman who wanted to take our Daddy away "forever."

As I said, we rode in this car almost every where we went. On one cold and snowy winter day while we were traveling, the roads were slick with ice. We kids were surprised when all of a sudden,



An early photograph of the Stoneman Family without Patsy. Top L-R: Roni and Van. Standing, middle row, L-R: Scott, Hattie (Mom), Ernest V. (Pop), Grace, Dean, Gene, Eddie. Seated, L-R: John, Bill, Donna, Jim, Jack.

instead of riding the road smoothly, we were bumping over snow-covered terrain, finally stopping at the bottom of a hill beside the road. No one was hurt. Daddy just fixed the car and we went on. How-

ever, that was the end of the brown leather satchel. It fell out sometime during our bumpy ride downhill. We all looked and looked, but we never did find it. I think I felt a great sense of relief.



Part of the Stoneman Family in Armstrong's Restaurant, Capital Heights, Maryland. Background, L-R: Dean, Donna, Jimmy, Patsy. Foreground, L-R: Gene, Scotty, Pop.

All of the family usually didn't go to venues like the Armstrong's Restaurant. We just didn't have enough instruments to go around, so we either took turns, or some of us stayed at home. Mommie always came along to play the fiddle, but

it was here she said "Enough!"

The restaurant was a rowdy place, and Daddy put a railing up around the area where we played (see photo) so that the drunks could not trip and fall on us.

As I said before, Daddy had many

female fans. Mommie had had about all she wished of these ladies. I think she was jealous of the attention they gave her husband. On one particular night at the restaurant, there was an especially bothersome lady from Mississippi who would not leave Daddy alone - "What a man you must be! All of these children!" Mommie, at the end of her wits, put down her fiddle and announced firmly, "If you think I'm going to stay here and fiddle while you fiddle with the ladies, you're mistaken!" Daddy said, "Well, we'll need a fiddle player. Give the fiddle to Scott. He's the only one in this family with a 'fiddle wrist.'" That was a great stroke of genius and fate. Five months later, Scotty walked into the competition at Constitution Hall, Washington D.C., and beat the best - Curly Fox and Chubby Wise! I remember the excitement when, while we were waiting to hear the outcome of the competition, the doors were flung open, and in came a crowd of people, carrying Scotty on their shoulders shouting "He won! He won!" Scotty became one of the finest fiddlers ever known.

The weekends of Stoneman music at the restaurant brought in \$15.00 to take home. Then someone got the great idea of "passing the hat." Jimmy liked to do this, and would do so every half hour. He put

his heart into his work, and passed that hat with a verve. One evening, after a few turns had been taken, a customer said he had already put a coin in the hat. Jimmy informed him that was one-half

hour ago, and hadn't he listened to the music until now? Finally, the Armstrongs asked us if we would please have Donna do that job. The customers didn't like Jimmy's attitude. Well, he was good at it!



Patsy and Pop – 1944 or 45

This is my husband, Murph's, favorite photo. It was taken in Franconia, Virginia, and I was about 13 years old. Notice my legs. I always hated my legs. I called them "turkey legs."

Mommie and Daddy used to do a comedy routine while singing "The Mountaineer's Courtship." After a while, it became old with Mommie, and Daddy asked me if I would take over in this routine. I, of course, agreed. It was a sudden question, a sudden answer. We didn't know that this was to happen until just a few minutes before show time. I looked around and found something to wear – it was supposed to be a wig, an old dress, etc., but they were nowhere in sight. So I improvised and came up with the outfit above. I even tied a bow on Daddy's toe so the audience would be sure to notice that he was bare-footed.

When we got up on stage to do our song, our family, which was on stage until then, completely abandoned us. They were in shock, I guess. We were left alone on stage, but we didn't care. We had a great time! And we continued to play and sing that tune often from then on.

Later, we were to perform at Constitution Hall, and Daddy said we should

do "The Mountaineer's Courtship." We also added "The Old Maid and the Burgler Man." This time, I had the proper outfit, wig and all. Someone overheard a lady comment "Who's the old woman up there on stage with Pop?"



*Back Row, L – R: Patsy, Van, Jimmy.
Front Row, L – R: Roni, Donna.*



*Back Row, L – R: Van, Jimmy, Jerry
Monday. Front Row, L – R: Roni, Pop,
Donna.*



*Back Row, L – R: Van, Jimmy.
Front Row, L – R: Patsy, Donna.*

The banjo and guitar were my first instruments. I gave the banjo to Billy, and then just played the guitar. When Daddy became older, I played the autoharp to carry on his tradition.

Daddy walked into the offices of Ralph Peer's recording company, and performed four or so numbers. Peer had offered \$50.00 for two songs, and \$60.00 for train fare and hotel expenses.

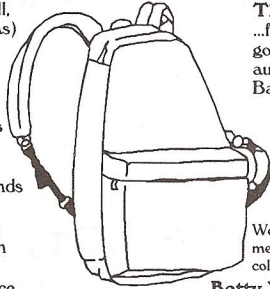
On September 5, 1924, he went to the Peer Studios with his autoharp, and recorded two songs on soft wax. The first song he recorded was "The Face That Never Returned." The second song was one that Daddy himself had pieced together. When it was time for him to record this song, he sat down, strummed the autoharp on his lap, and sang –

*It was on a Monday morning,
Just about one o'clock,
That the great Titanic began to reel and rock,
Then the people began to cry,
Saying "Lord, I'm going to die,"
It was sad when the great ship went down.
It was sad, it was sad.
It was sad when the great ship went down,
Husbands and wives,
Little children lost their lives,
It was sad when the great ship went down.*

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It is believed that "The Titanic" was one of the first recordings to sell one million copies. It was made by Pop Stoneman solely with his voice and his 'harp.

Although that song is well known today, I was stunned when I sang it at Lincoln Center, and the audience sang with me!

Notice on the cover of this issue, that Pop played his autoharp on top of his case. He built that case himself in 1924. He snapped his 'harp on the case, so it couldn't slip off his lap or table. It was also a great resonator.

Patsy recently received a copy of this letter written to the University of Illinois Press, publisher of "The Stonemans, an Appalachian Family and the Music That Shaped Their Lives" by Ivan M. Tribe:

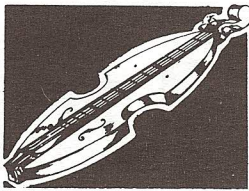
"On behalf of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections, I am pleased to notify you officially that the book by Ivan M. Tribe, *The Stonemans*, has been selected as the winner of the 1994 ARSC Award for Excellence in the field of Recorded Country Music.

"The ARSC Awards for excellence are intended to recognize the very finest work published each year in the field of record labels recorded sound research and to encourage others to emulate its high standards. We are pleased that this work has been chosen by a panel of experts as the best of the year in its field. Sincerely yours, Martin Silver, President"

The Stonemans (University of Illinois Press; ISBN 0-252-0638-2), was featured in the "I'll Buy That" column in the July '94 issue of *AQ*. This interesting, historical book covers in detail the history of the Ernest V. "Pop" Stoneman Family, and is dedicated to:

"Pattie Inez 'Patsy' Stoneman Murphy. Her labors of love for her family made it possible."

Autoharp Quarterly offers our congratulations to Ivan M. Tribe, and to the Stonemans. We stand with these folks with pride for the recognition extended to autoharp pioneer, country music pioneer, and member of The Autoharp Hall of Fame, Ernest V. "Pop" Stoneman. ❖



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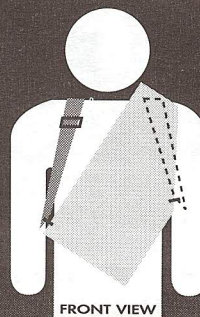
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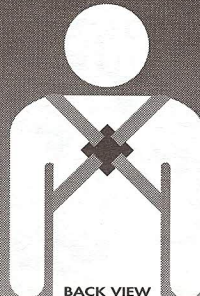
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Pro-files

If you are a professional autoharper and wish to be featured, please send your picture, biography, and schedule to:

Mary Ann Johnston
RD3, Box 190-A
New Cumberland, WV 26047

NOTE: These performance and/or workshop listings are limited to those which feature at least 50% autoharp. Contact the performer for additional information. Also, cancellations and/or changes can occur. Check with the performer before traveling long distances.

EVO BLUESTEIN *December 21*
10691 N. Madsen
Clovis, CA 93611
209 297-8966
Pro-File: AQ October 88
Performance Schedule:
September 30, October 1
Beginning Autoharp
Fresno Pacific College
Fresno, CA
November 5
Beginning Autoharp
Calif. State University
Bakersfield, CA
November 1, 19
Beginning Autoharp
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& Asso.
PO Box 9188
Colorado Springs, CO
80932
719 635-7776
Pro-File: AQ January 89
Performance Schedule:
October 22
University of California
Riverside, CA
November 25-27
Washington Convention
Center
Seattle, WA

ROZ BROWN
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Lakewood, CO 80232
303 969-9645
Pro-File: AQ October 89
Performance Schedule:
Every Wed.-Sat. night
Buckhorn Exchange
Restaurant
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Denver, CO

JULIE DAVIS
PO Box 1302
Nederland, CO 80466
303 258-3444
Pro-File: AQ July 91
Performance Schedule:
October 1-November 1
Beginning Autoharp
Denver, CO
October 4-November 1
Intermediate Autoharp
Denver, CO
October 7
Frasier Meadows Manor
Boulder, CO
October 15
Denver Museum of
Natural History
Denver, CO
Continued on fifth
column



PHOTO © SUSIE SIGMAN

Storyteller and musician **HEATHER DOYLE** is a Colorado native who picked up the autoharp two and a half years ago and hasn't put it down since. Although Heather has felt a strong connection to music for most of her life, it wasn't until she discovered the autoharp that she decided to carve out a niche for herself as a musician.

As a solo performer, Heather sings, tells tales, and plays the autoharp. She is most known for her program "Pieces of Lives," a collection of stories and songs about quilts, quiltmakers, and quilting. In January, she will be recording a tape of quilting songs and stories. She has a repertoire which includes folk music, music from movies, television, and musical theater, children's songs and stories; and folk tales.

She currently plays with the Wild Child Stringband, a five-member acoustic folk band which performs blues, rock, original music, and traditional stringband tunes. She is operations manager and school assistant at Swallow Hill Music Association, a folk music organization which presents concerts, operates a music school, and serves as a folk music resource for the Denver area. For more information, contact:

Heather Doyle Wild Child Stringband
4149½ Hooker Street Swallow Hill Music
Denver, CO 80211 Association
303 477-8339 Denver, CO
Performance Schedule: *December 8*
October 29 Arapahoe County Quilters
House Concert with Englewood, CO

Continued from second column

October 22
Broomfield Library
Broomfield, CO
October 22
House Concert
Denver, CO
November 1
Workshop (All levels)
"Singing With
Your Autoharp"
Denver, CO
November 8
Intermediate workshop
"International Dance
Tunes" with autoharp
Denver, CO
November 10, 11
Wray Public Schools
Wray, CO

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11990 Barnes Chapel
Columbia, MO 65201
314 443-2819
Pro-File: AQ October 88
Performance Schedule:
October 1, 2
Big Island Rendezvous
and Festival
Bancroft Bay City Park
Albert Lea, MN
October 15, 16
Autumn Folklife Fest.
Downtown historic area
Hannibal, MO
November 8
"The Paul Pepper Show"
KOMU-TV Channel 8
9 to 10 a.m.
Columbia, MO
December 31
New Year's Eve Ball
The Old Schoolhouse
Short concert set
Arrow Rock, MO

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503 235-3094
Pro-File: AQ April 94
Performance Schedule:
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November 22
Autoharp class
Tuesday evenings
UNN Benton
Community College
Corvallis, OR
September 28 -
November 16
Autoharp class
Wednesday evenings
Mount Hood
Community College
Portland, OR
December 10
Mount Hood RV Park
Welches, OR

PAT McINTIRE
Stewed Mulligan
Route 2, Box 229
West Union, WV
26456
304 782-3631
Pro-File: AQ January 90
Performance Schedule:
December 31
First Night Festival
Annapolis, MD

LUCILLE REILLY
PO Box 49
Basking Ridge, NJ
07920
908 604-9743
Pro-File: AQ April 92
Performance Schedule:
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St. Timothy
Lutheran Church
Wayne, NJ
October 23
St. Bernard's
Episcopal Church
Barnardsville, NJ
December 24
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October 11
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Freight & Salvage
Berkeley, CA
October 14
Mike & Peggy
San Diego Folk Heritage
San Diego, CA
October 15
Mike & Peggy
Cal Tech
Pasadena, CA
December 31
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Museum of Appalachia
Tennessee Fall
Homecoming
Norris, TN
October 8
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November 4-6
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Stringalong Weekend
Camp Edwards
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SUTHERLAND
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December 31
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Harvest Festival
Woodville, TX
December 10
Lights in the Heights
Christmas Festival
Houston, TX

MY HOME'S ACROSS THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

Transcribed by Wanda Degan

Thomas C. Ashley

Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

Musical notation for the first system, including a treble clef, 4/4 time signature, and a TAB line with fret numbers and strumming symbols.

G C / / G C F C / /
 My home's a - cross the Blue Ridge Moun - tains, My

Musical notation for the second system, including a treble clef, 4/4 time signature, and a TAB line with fret numbers and strumming symbols.

G C G C G C / / F C
 home's a - cross the Blue Ridge Moun - tains, My

Musical notation for the third system, including a treble clef, 4/4 time signature, and a TAB line with fret numbers and strumming symbols.

C / / G C F C / /
 home's a - cross the Blue Ridge Moun - tains, and I

Musical notation for the fourth system, including a treble clef, 4/4 time signature, and a TAB line with fret numbers and strumming symbols.

G / C G C / / / G C / G C
 ne-ver ex - pect to see you an - y - more. Oh no I

Musical notation for the fifth system, including a treble clef, 4/4 time signature, and a TAB line with fret numbers and strumming symbols.

G / C G C / / / G C
 ne-ver ex - pect to see you an - y - more.

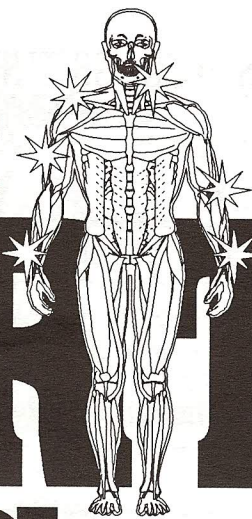
- 2. I'm leavin' on a Monday mornin'...
- 3. Rock my baby, give her candy...

- 4. Where's that finger ring I gave you?...
- 5. How can I keep myself from cryin'?...

Reading The Tablature

- = Pinch
- = Pluck
- = Strum
- = Short Strum
- = Downscratch
- = Sustain
- = Rhythm Bracket (Complete all actions inside bracket within one count)

When it HURTS to Play



by Catherine W. Britell, M.D.

Most autoharp players have experienced discomfort in their shoulders, arms, wrists, or hands at some time, and occasionally are bothered so much by pain in one or both upper extremities that their playing is severely impaired. It seems that holding the 'harp and performing rapid repetitive motions, such as picking/plucking/strumming or quickly depressing successive chord bar buttons, often make pre-existing problems more bothersome. Factors important in causing upper extremity pain include mechanical characteristics and support of the instrument, genetic makeup and bone structure, conditioning and strength, positioning and style of playing, and overall stress levels.

Conditions that I have seen in autoharp players and other musicians who perform similar upper extremity movements have included the following:

- ① *Trapezius muscle spasm*
- ② *Biceps tendinitis*
- ③ *Forearm tendinitis*
- ④ *Compartment syndrome of the forearm (pronator syndrome)*
- ⑤ *Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (median nerve entrapment at the wrist)*
- ⑥ *de Quervain's Syndrome (tendinitis of the thumb extensors)*

What do all these names mean? In the following, I'll explain what each of these conditions is, and review some ways of preventing and treating them.

TRAPEZIUS SPASM

This is a spasm of the superficial muscles connecting the shoulder girdle and base of the skull to the backbone, and is generally the place where that backrub feels oh-so-good. This often happens in people who play under stress, who don't have the 'harp supported properly by a strap, and/or who assume awkward neck and shoulder positions when playing. One significant factor in causing trapezius pain is a "slouched" posture — curving the upper part of the spine forward to reach around the 'harp. (Fig. 1a) This tends to make the upper back and neck muscles work much harder than usual to hold up the significant weight of the head. As a result, the muscles have to maintain a hard contraction over a long period of time, thereby not allowing blood to circulate to the muscle adequately and causing a lack of nutrients and oxygen and a buildup of waste products. The result is muscle pain.

By straightening the upper spine, (Fig. 1b) the head becomes balanced and the neck and upper back muscles are allowed to relax, thereby allowing optimal circulation and maintenance of muscle nutrition and oxygenation. Probably the most important thing one can do to improve the posture and increase comfort of the neck and back muscles is to get a good strap that supports the 'harp in the most comfortable playing position. Some people really like the Slider® for its uni-

form support, while others feel that a plain leather or webbing strap is better.

It's also important to avoid bending the head and neck to the side when playing the 'harp (Fig. 2a). This is sometimes a challenge for short people who play the 'harps that are built without a curve toward the treble side. It's often a good idea to stand facing a mirror and check to see that your nose and your umbilicus line up in a straight line (Fig. 2b) while playing and to carefully adjust your strap to make your head position comfortable.

Another important factor in the development of trapezius spasm is tension while playing. Any time we become nervous or tense, we tend to contract the muscles in our upper back and neck into a hard mass. This may be a primitive protective reflex used by our ancestors to protect the spinal cord and other vital structures while being chased by large carnivorous animals. Since we seldom play the autoharp in the company of lions and tigers these days, this reflex doesn't do us much good. It's a good idea every now and then to shrug your shoulders, take stock of the tension in them, and make a conscious effort to keep them relaxed even while playing the most challenging tunes.

The best way, then, to avoid those upper back and neck pains is to make sure the body and head are well-balanced and that the 'harp is optimally supported, and to "stay loose" even during those fast fiddle tunes. It's better in the long run to

use some other excuse to get a backrub.

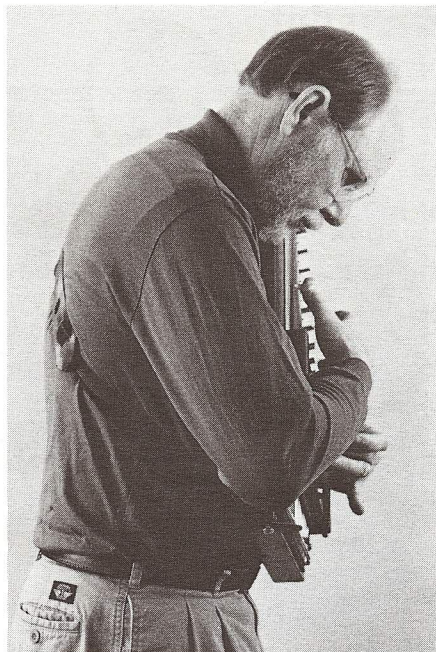
BICEPS TENDINITIS

The biceps is the large muscle at the front of the upper arm that flexes the elbow (the one that pops up when Popeye eats spinach). Many times, pain and inflammation develops in the tendon where the muscle attaches to the shoulder. This seems particularly to be a problem for people who play hard using thumb lead, but has also plagued some famous finger players. The key here also seems to be support of the instrument. It's very important not to have to keep tension in the biceps for holding the instrument in place while at the same time doing the fine movements of picking or fingering the instrument. This combination seems to invite biceps tendinitis. The cause of tendinitis seems to be ischemia, or a decreased blood supply to the junction of the muscle and tendon. This happens when a muscle is kept under tension without relaxation for a long period of time. That area where the biceps muscle attaches to the tendon is not terribly well-vascularized, and this prolonged contraction causes buildup of carbon dioxide, increased acidity, and leakage of fluid and cells out of the pores of the blood vessels. This process is called "acute inflammation" and leads to soreness and swelling of the area. Then, of course, the swelling and inflammation cause the tendon not to slide in its sheath as well as it should, and there is more pain and more inflammation... a vicious cycle that can be devastating to a committed harper. Again, the best prevention of this problem is proper support of the instrument by a strap (or for some individuals on the lap), with the hands and arms entirely free of supporting the instrument. The treatment for biceps tendinitis includes rest, followed by strengthening, and most importantly correcting the mechanics of holding the instrument and playing. Usually the physician will prescribe a potent anti-inflammatory medication for a short time if not contraindicated by any other conditions. Sometimes deep heating with ultrasound hastens the healing process.

TENDINITIS OF THE FOREARM

This is an inflammation of the tendons where the muscles insert into them and where they insert into the bone at the

Figure 1a



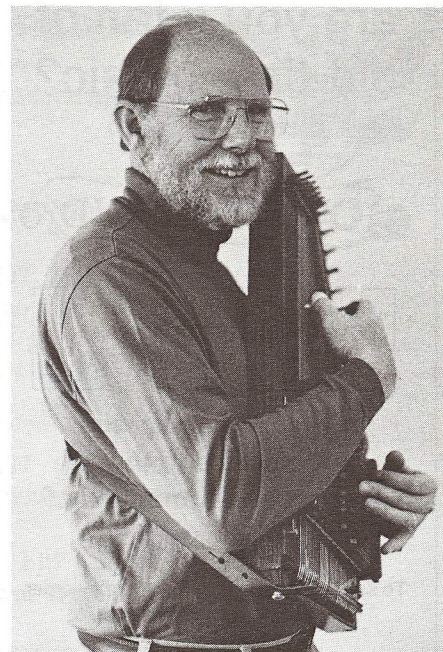
A slouched posture (1a) while playing causes overwork and spasm of the muscles at the back of the neck and in the upper back. Bringing the head and shoulders into balance (1b) will allow the neck and back muscles to relax and increase playing stamina and comfort.

elbow and is most usually seen on the extensor side of the forearm. It is often characterized by a sharp pain just below the elbow when extending the fingers and wrist under stress — a condition called "lateral epicondylitis" or "tennis elbow." The mechanism of injury is similar to that of biceps tendinitis; and

**If it stops hurting,
people tend to stop
treating it.**

instrument support and muscle strength are of major importance here. It seems that in this area, one can actually make the tendon insertions less vulnerable to injury by gradually strengthening the muscles and loading the tendons and tendon insertions. This probably has to do with orientation and cross-linking of the collagen fibers (the chemical building blocks) of the tendons. Rest, possibly a short course of anti-inflammatory medications, and a compulsive strengthening program work very well for this condition. The major problem I have in treating many of my patients is motivation to keep up with the exercise program. If it stops

Figure 1b



hurting, people tend to stop treating it.

Another thing that can be very useful in preventing tendinitis in the left forearm is maximizing the efficiency of action of the chord bar mechanism. Most mass-produced harps have chord bars that sit very high off the strings and require an unnecessarily long excursion of the bar in order to damp the strings. This problem is often compounded by sloppiness in the action and resultant variable angle of depression. In addition, worn or uneven felts require even greater pressure to effectively damp the strings. In an excellent two-part article (*AQ*, October '91 and January '92) entitled, "Bars — Where the Action Is," Dr. George Orthey tells you step-by-step how to make your bars maximally easy to work, no matter what kind of harp you play. Taking the steps outlined in that article will not only make your left hand and arm much more comfortable, but also will improve your playing immeasurably.

COMPARTMENT SYNDROMES AND PRONATOR SYNDROME

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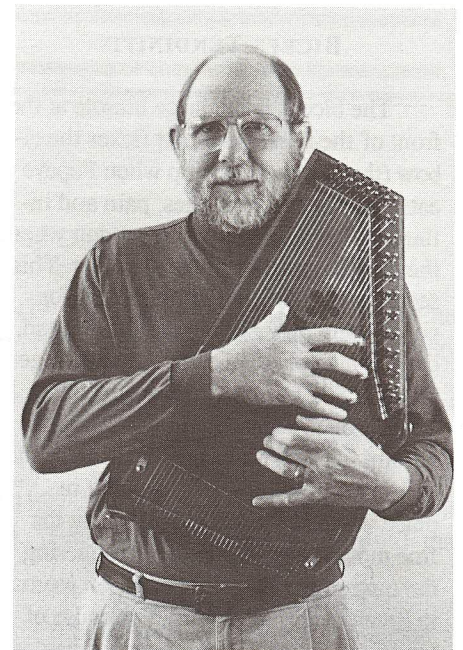
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Figure 2a



Figure 2b



Some players have a tendency to lean over the 'harp and bring the right shoulder up toward the ear; especially when playing something difficult or fast (2a). Keeping the shoulders relaxed and the body in a straight line (2b) will often make the neck and shoulder much more comfortable.

reside in firm connective tissue envelopes or "compartments," swelling can cause them to be choked in those compartments, causing pain, further decrease in blood flow, and also pressure on the nerves nearby, which leads to numbness and tingling. There are some muscles that, even though they aren't too tightly enclosed, lie in strategic positions in relation to the nerves, and swelling of them can cause some very uncomfortable nerve compression. One such muscle is the pronator teres (lying across the inside of the forearm just below the elbow). This muscle rotates the wrist and thumb in toward the body and comes into play a great deal when doing thumb lead playing.

Pronator syndrome is particularly common in people who don't play regularly and then go out and jam for an entire weekend. It can often be avoided by practicing regularly and knowing when to stop playing even though you're having a great time. Again, rest followed by slow controlled strengthening is the best way to treat this condition.

CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME

Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) is an entrapment of the median nerve as it passes through a ligamentous passage in the wrist formed by the wrist bones and

the transverse carpal ligament. It is characterized by numbness in the thumb, index, middle, and half of the ring finger, and is often associated with pain in the hand and wrist, sometimes radiating up the forearm. This is a common condition, mostly resulting from the genetically-determined size and shape of the bones and

...surgery, even
when successful, is not
completely benign...

ligaments in the wrist. CTS seldom actually results from playing the autoharp — for the most part, it is a pre-existing problem which is aggravated on the left side by flexion of the wrist with added pressure over the left edge of the harp to reach the chord buttons. CTS in the right hand often becomes symptomatic while using the right thumb and fingers in a pinching motion with excessive wrist flexion. The unifying theme here is excessive wrist flexion. This is often caused by keeping the shoulders back while playing and flexing the wrists to reach the chord bars and strings (Fig. 3a) rather than allowing the scapulae (wing-

Figure 3a



Excessive flexion of the wrists "reaching back" toward the 'harp (3a) will sometimes aggravate symptoms of Carpal Tunnel syndrome. Playing with the wrists in a more neutral position (3b) may help prevent numbness and tingling in people who have this problem.

bones) to move forward to bring the arms around the 'harp and allow the wrists to remain in a neutral position (Fig. 3b).

If you have mild CTS, you can probably avoid symptoms by supporting and holding the 'harp properly. In general, hand and wrist splints are not useful, and will tend to alter the mechanics of the hand and wrist so as to significantly interfere with playing and cause discomfort in the shoulder and neck. People who have very severe CTS will probably experience numbness and tingling no matter how they modify their

Figure 4a



Hyperextension of the thumb while playing (4a) causes more stress in the thumb joints and tendons than playing with thumb slightly flexed (4b). Additionally, if the entire hand is kept in a relaxed, slightly flexed position (4b), the muscles of the forearm won't have to work nearly as hard, and the forearm tendons will incur less stress.

Figure 3b



'harp playing and body mechanics, and will have these same symptoms with many other activities and sometimes even at rest. Often the only thing to do in this case is to have the transverse carpal ligament surgically released by a skilled hand surgeon. This surgery, even when successful, is not completely benign, however. It is important to note that carpal tunnel release will decrease grip strength and if done on the left side will most likely make chording with the thumb difficult if not impossible for a number of months or possibly permanently. This may necessitate a chord bar

Figure 4b



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arrangement that minimizes thumb use. A right carpal tunnel release may also significantly hamper thumb-lead playing for some time. Most individuals, however, can expect to be playing as well a year after CTS surgery as they did pre-operatively, and hopefully with less discomfort.

DE QUERVAIN'S SYNDROME

This is a common condition, and is a tenosynovitis of the thumb, resulting from a narrowing of the common tendon sheath of the abductor pollicis longus and extensor pollicis brevis muscles. (Whew, that's a mouthful!) These are the muscles that pull the thumb out away from the rest of the hand. What one feels is a severe pain at the base of the thumb either on the right side with strumming or pinching, or less commonly on the left side if you use the thumb aggressively to push the chord buttons.

When de Quervain's Syndrome occurs in the right hand, one should first check the hand position. Hitting the strings with the thumb hyperextended (Fig. 4a) tends to transfer force directly to the base of the thumb, whereas when one

curls the fingers and flexes the thumb slightly (Fig. 4b), the flexor muscles will tend to support and protect the joint. De Quervain's Syndrome may sometimes be alleviated with a change in thumb picks. A pick that stores energy (flexes more) may reduce torque on the joints of the thumb. Also, keeping your strings clean and using Fast Fret® string lubricant can sometimes decrease the drag on your thumb pick, thus decreasing trauma to that area.

Rest, anti-inflammatory drugs for a short time if not contraindicated, and strengthening are often recommended for this condition.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are some simple physical things, then, that one can do to prevent pain while playing. First, make certain your 'harp is supported comfortably in the best position for playing without using your hands or arms — you need those for playing. Second, check your posture and positioning, and see that

Tension and stress...need to be minimized.

your back, neck, head, arms and hands are balanced and relaxed, and in a generally neutral position. Third, make your 'harp as easy to play as possible with clean, slippery strings and optimally functioning chord bars.

It's important, also, to develop a healthy pace of playing. Autoharp playing is a highly demanding athletic activity for the muscles you use, and it's important to warm up adequately. Specifically, it's probably not a good idea to jump into a lightning-fast fiddle tune when you first pick up the 'harp, but rather warm up with a few slow, gentle songs to get those muscles working. Along that line, it's important not to be a "weekend athlete" with the autoharp. If you like to play hard and long on occasion, you need to "keep in shape" by practicing at least 30-45 minutes at least every other day. If you stay away from playing for more than two consecutive days, you will lose strength and stamina in your muscles and need to slowly build up again. If you

simply can't practice on a regular basis, you need to be aware of your own tolerance for playing and fatigue level. This is when you pull out your pennywhistle, mouth-harp, or recorder, and use some different muscles for awhile.

Tension and stress while playing also need to be minimized. One often becomes stressed when trying to play a tune that is too difficult too fast and too early. Lindsay Haisley's article on practice (AQ, October '93) offers some excellent advice on how to approach the whole issue of practice and learning. Taking seriously the guidelines therein will help prevent "getting in over your head." It also helps to remember that you are doing this for *fun and enjoyment*.

What do you do if you're suffering from pain with playing? If you have addressed the issues outlined above and still hurt, you may need to stop playing altogether for a couple of weeks (now may be the time to learn how to play the pennywhistle). It might be a good idea to see your physician to determine whether anti-inflammatory medications, physical therapy, and an exercise program would be of benefit. Sometimes, anti-inflammatory or pain-relieving agents topically applied to the skin can be quite useful, and this should be explored with your physician. Some physicians recommend steroid injections into the affected area. In most musicians and others using their upper extremities vigorously, I advise strongly against this, because of the tendency of the steroid to weaken the tendon and make it more vulnerable to rupture — a disastrous complication.

In general, once the pain has subsided, specific exercises to gradually strengthen the affected muscles will be useful in preventing the problem from recurring. One last point: Never underestimate the power of a backrub. This friendly stress-fighter probably won't cure serious neck, shoulder, or arm pain, but it certainly makes people feel a whole lot better. ❖

Dr. Britell works as a consultant in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Occupational Medicine for the Washington Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at the University of Washington. She also plays and teaches autoharp and clarinet in the Seattle area.

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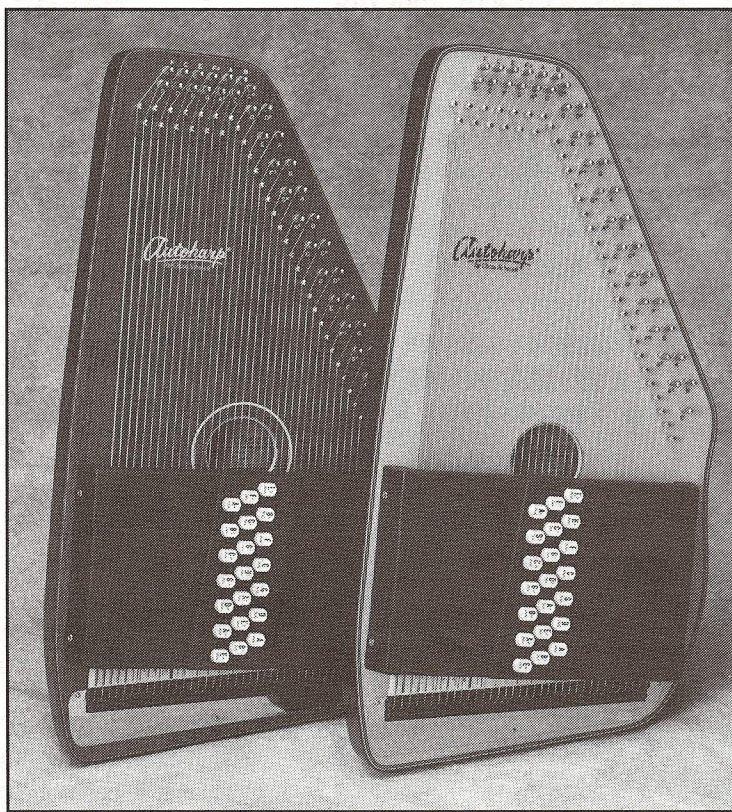
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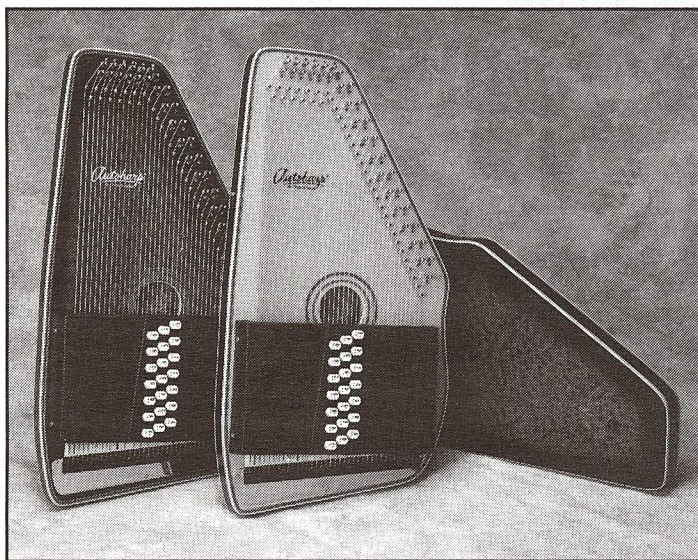
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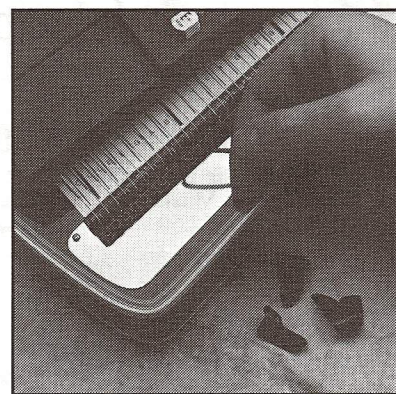
*Left: OS110 Ozark with solid spruce back
Right: OS115 Alpine with solid spruce top*



*Left: OS120 Smoky Mountain with birdseye top and back
Right: OS120 Adirondack with spruce top and birdseye back*

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Fall Festivals

Festivals Editor:
Sandy Shaner
130 Gregory Road
Salisbury, NC 28144

The following are 1994 fall festivals which feature the autoharp in contest, workshop, and/or performance. If you know a festival we have not included, please send the information to the Festivals Editor. The complete festival list is published every April, and seasonally repeated and updated in every issue.

CODE:	
AC Autoharp Contest
AP Autoharp Performance
AW Autoharp Workshop

OCTOBER

- **Big Island Rendezvous and Festival;** October 1, 2; Bancroft Bay City Park, Albert Lea, MN; Code: AP (Paul & Win Grace); 314 443-2819
- **Tennessee Fall Homecoming;** October 6-9; Norris, TN; Code: AP (Janette and Joe Carter, Bill and Laurie Sky, Judie Pagter, Ron Wall, Mike Seeger, The Stewart Family, Laura Boosinger); John Rice Irwin, PO Box 359, Norris, TN 37828
- **The Southern Nevada Bluegrass Music Society 5th Annual Bluegrass & Old Time Music Festival;** October 14-16; Clark County Fairgrounds, Logandale, NV; Code: AP; Fred Smith, 1670 Rawhide, Henderson, NV 89015, 702 564-5455
- **Heritage Village Harvest Festival;** October 15; Woodville, TX; Code: AP; (Charles Whitmer); 713 367-6260
- **Autumn Folklife Festival;** October 15, 16; Hannibal, MO; Code: AP; (Paul & Win Grace); 314 443-2819

NOVEMBER

- **Stringalong Weekend;** November 4-6; Edwards Conference Center, East Troy, WI, (1½ hours from Chicago); Code: AW, AP; (Ivan Stiles); 1 800 636-FOLK, or 414 229-4622

- **Carol Faire;** November 6; Houston, TX; Code: AP, AW (Gene Hatten); HAMMS, 21626 Gentry Road, Houston, TX 77040 713 955-6052
- **Barberville Country Jamboree;** November 5, 6; Barberville, FL; Code: AP, AW; Jan Milner, PO Box 668, Crystal Beach, FL 34681 813 784-1771

DECEMBER

- **Lights in the Heights Christmas Festival;** December 10; Houston, TX; Code: AP; (Charles Whitmer); 713 367-6260

Recordings

Recordings Editor:
Mary Ann Johnston
RD3, Box 190-A
New Cumberland, WV 26047

If you know of a new or re-released recording which contains autoharp, please send the information to the Recordings Editor. It will be listed in this column.

FEATURES AUTOHARP

You Can Teach Yourself Autoharp
Autoharp: Meg Peterson
A Mel Bay Publication
Autoharp Quarterly
The Market Place
Book and Tape Set

Old Favorites
Autoharp: Glenna Anderson
1631 Zeigler Street
Christiansburg, VA 24073

Where I'm Bound
Autoharp: Roz Brown
PO Box 150518
Lakewood, CO 80232

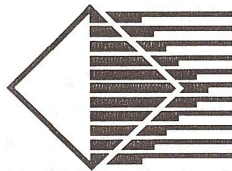
INCLUDES AUTOHARP

River of Memories
Autoharp: Bill Clifton
PO Box 123
Mendota, VA 24270

Club News

The Capitol 'Harpers Autoharp Club has scheduled a house concert on October 21st at 8 p.m. featuring Bill and Laurie Sky. Contact Alan Mager at 703 256-1068 for details. ❖

Interaction



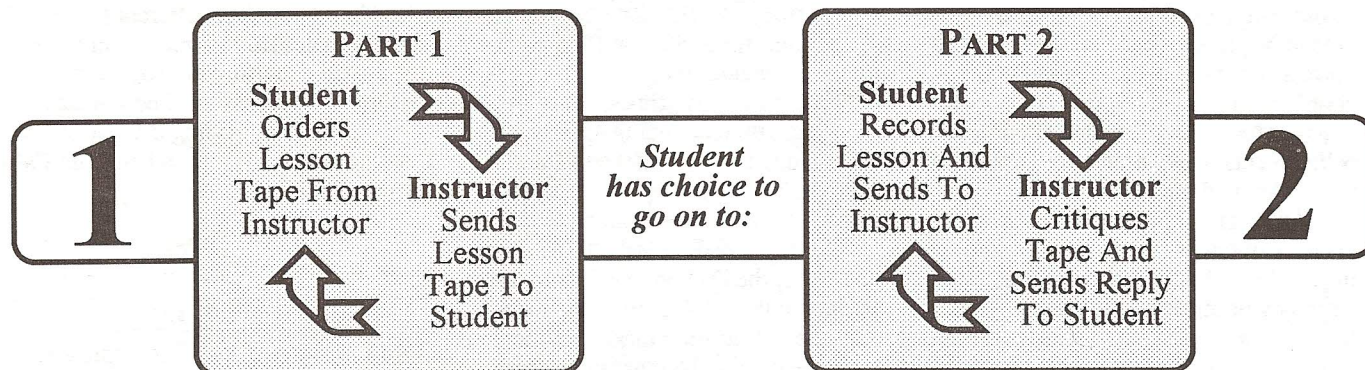
YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERACTIVE LESSON WITH TINA LOUISE BARR

Tina Louise Barr started playing the autoharp in 1970, after having seen Mother Maybelle Carter on TV. Her unique playing style is a chromatic hybrid influenced by the recordings of Bryan Bowers and Gove Scrivenor.

She has given workshops at the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering in 1993 and 1994, and over the past eight years at various California festivals. Tina was also a featured solo performer at the San Francisco Folk Music Club festival this past June.

In 1993, Tina was the second place winner at the International Autoharp Championship in Winfield, Kansas. She consistently has placed in the top three awards at regional contests, including placing second in the World Autoharp Championship in 1986. Last April, she won the overall first place M.C.'s Choice Award at the La Grange (California) Fiddle and Banjo Contest, having come within three points of a perfect score.

Currently, Tina is working on her CD/cassette album "Breakin' Tradition." In addition to playing the autoharp, Tina performs on guitar, electric bass, and percussion in her recording project.



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Part 2

A. Record your rendition of the lesson on the reverse side of the tape along with any questions, and return it to the instructor with an additional check for \$8.00.

B. The instructor will listen to your recording and following it will critique your playing, answer your questions and, if necessary, demonstrate the lesson further. The instructor will then mail the tape back to you. You will receive your personalized reply in three to four weeks.

THE INTERACTION LESSON: "SCOTLAND THE BRAVE"

Tina Louise Barr

1801 H Street, Suite B-5 #225
Modesto, CA 95354

"Scotland the Brave" brings dramatic images of kilted 'pipers marching down the street accompanied by the bass drum rumble made by drumsticks swinging side-over-side from leather straps. This lesson is geared to the student who is ready to incorporate melody playing into the basic pinch/strum rhythm pattern. The tablature is designed to be played on a chromatic autoharp, although it may be adapted to a diatonic instrument by substituting a Bm for the E7 chord in the walk-down succession of pinched melody notes that appear in the second segment of the music.

The purpose of the lesson is to build accuracy in playing melody. The only fingers used with the right hand are the thumb and index finger. The right hand techniques are basic: (1) *Pinch* (with thumb and index finger), (2) *Strum* (with thumbpick, all the way across the strings toward the higher octave range of the 'harp), and (3) *Snitch* (a quick, backward sweep of the index finger, as though you were "snitching" frosting from the top of a cake).

All of the snitches are on an "and" count; they have been designated with a short or long arrow pointing downward. Those with a short arrow are a melody note to be played. Some of them also involve a very brief chord change to the A chord bar. The snitches that appear with a long arrow are syncopated rhythm embellishments. Now, aren't you proud that you've learned how to snitch?

An essential preface in learning to play accurately is first to get the melody in your head. Listening to the tune in its entirety will reinforce the "big picture" of the tune's structure and overall meaning. Singing along ultimately will strengthen your sense of when the chord changes will occur.

An exercise that is recommended for beginners is to sit down and clap your

hands to the rhythm counts before even picking up the 'harp. This will acclimate you to keeping a steady tempo. But don't forget — music is math with emotion — put feeling into your *all* your music!

Next, place your autoharp in your lap and use the tablature to locate the melody notes on the 'harp. Pinch them out one by one, making mental notes of where they correspond to the counts. This is my secret to accuracy.

Now, you are ready to start playing. Go ahead and look at your hands while learning. This is not a typing drill. And don't worry about which fingers are appropriate in chording with the left hand; the rule of thumb is up to you. The important thing is to keep all of the left fingers close to the chord bars at all times, even touching them, without pushing down. This is the only rule to learn about the left hand, and if you need to spend a week just training those fingers to stay put without sticking out from the 'harp, then you need to request your vacation time now!

"Scotland the Brave" is broken into two sections, the A Section (first part), and the B Section (second part). The A Section is played two times, but each time has a different ending as indicated by the coda measures marked #1 and #2. Then, the B Section is played and repeated with its two different endings.

On the #1 ending of both the A and B Sections, the D chord bar is held down throughout the full length of the measure. The curved lines mean that the first D melody note in the measure is assumed by the rhythm changes that occur in the remainder of the measure. In other words, left hand holds down the D chord the full duration of the measure; right

hand only really plays the D note on counts 1 and 3, but the ear hears that D note on counts 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Something that you need to keep in mind when making the transition from the #2 ending of the A Section into the beginning measure of the B Section is to make it sound like the end of the A Section, but make sure it flows smoothly into the B Section. The listener's ear needs to define the break between the two sections and becomes uneasy if they are not separated by a logical pause. The A and D melody notes that are pinched in the #2 ending of the A Section are actually "pick-up" notes that lead into the beginning of the B Section, and the ear needs to perceive them that way.


Hopefully, this lesson will challenge you into learning to play melody smoothly and with precision. My lesson tape covers "Scotland the Brave" played in a traditional style. Once you have learned from the tape and have had your lesson critiqued, you may decide to add creative touches of your own, such as marching about elegantly in your living room.

On my album "Breakin' Tradition," I have given the tune "Scotland the Brave" an altogether different treatment that alternates from a traditional style into a total departure of "surf 's up!" rhythm and percussion. The title has been changed to "Riding a Wave to Scotland the Brave." But then I'm from California, so life's a beach!




GUIDE TO THE TABLATURE

Bold Letters = Chord Bar Depressed

P = Pinch S = Strum = 

 = Tie

Snitch (↓) =  = Backward Flick of Index Finger

SCOTLAND THE BRAVE

A SECTION

D P S P S A D P S P P D P S P S A D P P P S

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

G P S P S A D P P P P A P S P S A A G D A

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

D P S P S A D P S P P D P S P S A D P P P P

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

G P S P S A D P P P P A P S D A ¹D P S P S | ².D P S P P

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

B SECTION

A P S P S A A P P P P D P S P S A D G D P S

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

D P S P S A P P P P E7 P P A E7 A G D A

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

D P S P S A D P S P P D P S P S A D P P P S

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

G P S P S A D P P P P A P S D A ¹D P S P S | ².D P S P S

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4



PHOTO BY DICK SHANER

143 autoharpers gather to set a new record for the most 'harps playing one song at one time (more or less).

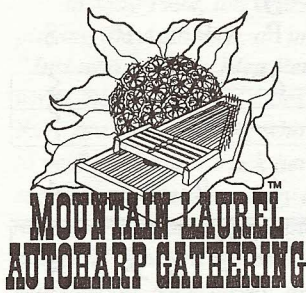


PHOTO BY DAVE ASKEY

Left to right: Teri Watanabe, Yasuo Mita, and Yoko Watanabe, winners of the Leonard Reid Memorial People's Choice Award for outstanding open stage performance.

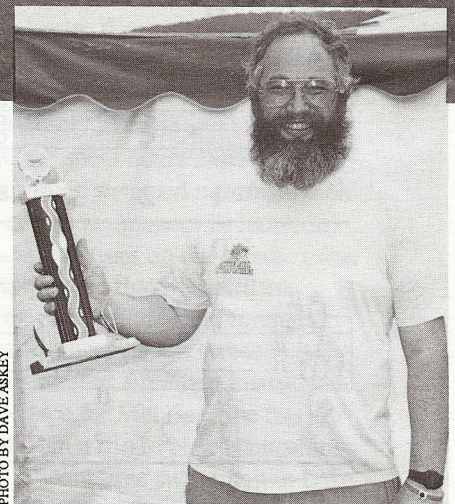


PHOTO BY DAVE ASKEY

John Hook, winner of the coveted Ptoioie Award for the Watermelon Seed Spitting Contest.

1994

Highlights



After being inducted into The Autoharp Hall Of Fame, Mike Seeger takes the stage to share a few tunes with the audience.



PHOTO BY DAVE ASKEY

Patsy Stoneman accepts the proclamation inducting her father, Ernest V. "Pop" Stoneman into The Autoharp Hall Of Fame.



PHOTO BY DAVE ASKEY

Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering Championship winners (left to right): Alan Mager, 2nd; Jim Snow, 1st; and Steve Young, 3rd.

COURTESY OF MEG PETERSON



Along the edge of Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

"I've been going to Lake Winnepesaukee since I was a little girl. I have always been an avid swimmer. Each morning just as day breaks, I leave the cottage on the lake and swim. I swim and swim until I begin to see the sun peeking out over the pines by the shore. Then I roll over on my back and look all around. It's so lovely I could just cry telling you about it. Here I am most serene.

Did you know Lake Winnepesaukee translates from its Native American name to the "Smile of the Great Spirit?"

Autoharp's Meg Peterson

- for all seasons

by Carole Outwater

Part One

Before July 14, 1994, I did not know Meg Peterson except as one is acquainted with someone's printed work. Meg Peterson was the dark-haired, winsome woman with that winning smile who first instructed me on Autoharp in the "Complete Method for Autoharp or ChromAharp" published by Mel Bay. I became smitten with the Autoharp in the early eighties, and knew no other players. My music shop recommended this instruction book and subsequent others written by Meg. Then I began to connect with other musicians through the Charlotte Folk Music Society. I moved on, but Meg Peterson is the one who helped launch me musically with the Autoharp as she has helped thousands of others.

In May 1994, ten years after I began playing the Autoharp, an urge surfaced. "Just who was this Meg Peterson who wrote these books?" "Does she know there are many like me who are indebted to her?" "Could I track her down and see if I could tell her story as one of significance to many of us Autoharp players?" I called her at her home in Maplewood, New Jersey, and told her what I wished. We chatted like old friends, and arranged a meeting. I spent July 14 and 15 at her home, and we had a terrific time together!



PHOTO BY CAROLE OUTWATER

Meg Peterson is a vibrant, beautiful woman with high, intense energy. She has a profound sense of adventure, and seems to approach life with welcome anticipation. When she smiles, her face and eyes light up with a clear, bright radiance that reminds you of sunshine reflecting off the water on a great autumn day. "Where does she get this energy?" is a question you ask when you are with Meg. Perhaps from Lake Winnepesaukee and the region surrounding it, for most of us gather our strength from those places of deep meaning in our lives. Meg Peterson is an amazing person to know. She is filled with good stories to tell, both about her experiences in life, and her associations with the Autoharp.

July 14 was a hot, sweltering day in New Jersey. Meg had warned me she had no central air conditioning in her home in Maplewood. I am from the south, and thought to myself, "It can't be that bad up North!" I was wrong about the heat in New Jersey, but I was right about my urge to know this early teacher of mine. As we got deeper and deeper into conversation, I was struck with how similar our lives are and how, even though I had only known Meg Peterson through her instruction books, there is still a lot of truth about people that can be read between the lines of print. Here was a woman who was immensely likeable and easy to get to know. We spent hours sharing stories about our lives, swapped information on friends and acquaintances in common, and discussed issues on our minds. I was deeply impressed that Meg still embarked on new ventures and meets life with excitement. She has recently completed yet another Autoharp instruction book and tape for Mel Bay. She has just returned from a trip to New Hampshire where she spent time swimming in Lake Winnepesaukee's refreshing waters and climbing mountains in that region. She also spends a lot of time writing – which is a response to her life experience.

Meg gets excited when she talks about hiking and climbing mountains. It

is certainly something she enjoys and says it keeps her in good physical shape. That and eating right. She has climbed all the 4,000 footers in the White Mountains and many in Maine. She has hiked many miles along the New England sections of the Appalachian Trail and climbed Mt. Katadin in Baxter State Park, the end or beginning point of the trail, depending on where you start. She has always loved exploring the beautiful hills in the White Mountain National Forests of New Hampshire, and the

hadn't forgotten the Autoharp! She managed two Autoharp workshops along the way – in South Africa and Australia!

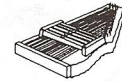
Her stories bring forth images of some kind of female Indiana Jones on the big screen in my mind. As she tells you of some of these happenings, she is dashing back and forth to bring photograph albums and framed pictures to illustrate the events and the people she encountered along the way. Her tales are spell-binding, and I hope one day we'll get to read about these travels in her writings.

And write she does. She writes the music instruction books we have seen, but she also enjoys writing articles, essays, plays, and stories as a free lance writer.

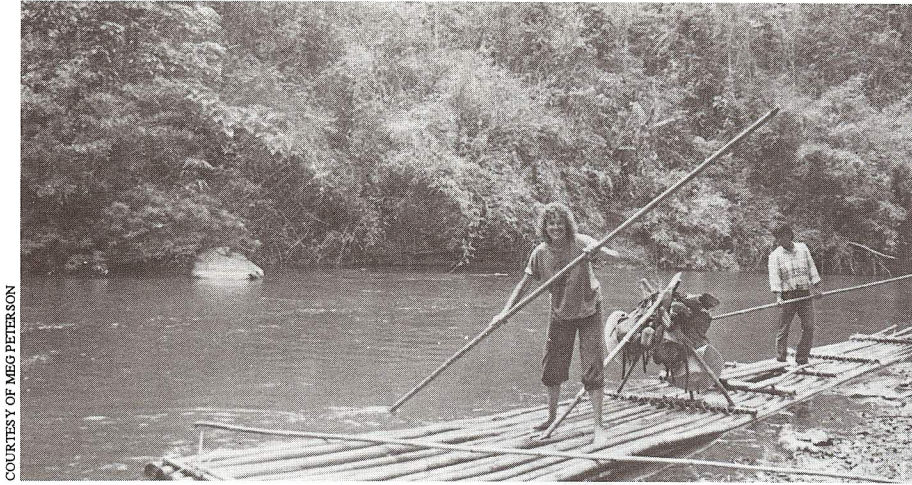
It was deep into a sultry afternoon when we finally got down to Autoharp conversations. We sought relief from the muggy weather in an upstairs room where there was a window air-conditioning unit. Now cooled and relaxed with one another, we began to talk of Meg Peterson's early days with the Autoharp.

"Meg," I asked as I folded myself cross-legged with my feet under me, "tell me some stories about the people you met through the Autoharp, back in those early years with Oscar Schmidt."

Across from me, Meg sat deep in the chair and took a sip of her cool drink and began to tell a few tales. ❖



This is the first of two parts of "Autoharp's Meg Peterson – for all seasons" The second installment will appear in the next issue of AQ.



COURTESY OF MEG PETERSON

White water rafting in the jungle of Northern Thailand

Bigelow Mountains in Maine. Further afield, she has been fortunate enough to go on treks in Idaho and rafting trips down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. Photographs of these outings dot the walls of her home, sharing space with pictures of her five children and grandchildren.

With her children, she has criss-crossed the U.S. in a trailer and hitch-hiked for six weeks in Germany and Austria. But the greatest adventure of her life was in 1987 – an eight-month, unorthodox, solo trip around the world, backpacking in Africa and Asia, and climbing in the Himalayas. Meg has a wealth of stories to tell about that trip: watching a cremation in the sacred city of Varanasi on the banks of the Ganges in India; climbing through the snow to Everest Base camp in Nepal; exploring the treasures of ancient Egyptian tombs; working as a shed hand on a sheep farm in New Zealand; going deep into the jungles of Thailand to live with the primitive Hill Tribes; and attending a Kikuyu funeral in Kenya after returning from a camping safari in the Masai Mara game reserves. But she insisted that I know that she

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Laurie's Corner

New and original music for the autoharp

by Laurie Sky



Some of my best ballads in music seem to come while riding down the highway. My father and I travel about 100,000 miles a year on tour; when schedules permit, we enjoy getting off Interstates to relax in the tranquility of byways and backroads.

Tishomingo was written late one afternoon as we drove to Nashville from shows in Louisiana.

Situated in northeast Mississippi, Tishomingo County lies along the picturesque Natchez Trace, a trail used for centuries by the Chickasaws and Choctaws, becoming in the late 1700s a wilderness road from Nashville to Natchez.

Andrew Jackson traveled this way in 1814 as he led troops southward from Tennessee to, as Jimmy Driftwood put it in a song, "the bloody British in the town of New Orleans."

Five years earlier, Louisiana Territorial governor, Meriwether Lewis, had met his untimely end at a lonely inn that stood beside the Trace in Tennessee. To this day, no one knows if it was a bloody murder or death by his own hand.

My father and I often find ourselves on the idyllic Natchez Trace Parkway when our travels take us through Mississippi. Heading northward from Natchez,

one leaves behind the gnarled, gargantuan, old live oaks draped in Spanish moss. The jasmine-laden delta gradually gives way to piney woods interlaced with split-rail fences around pastoral antebellum homes and farmsteads.

Time and distance ride lightly on the Natchez Trace, and before long, one is in the heart of Tishomingo. This is a storied land of Indian ceremonial mounds and ancient burial grounds that can only lead a 20th Century troubadour to wonder at the fabled romance and pageantry that its Chickasaw and Choctaw peoples must have known.

The Trace through Tishomingo County is something akin to an old-timey photodrama. New scenes are revealed and history reawakens around every bend of the road.

The dappled interplay between lazy summer sunlight and woodland shadows

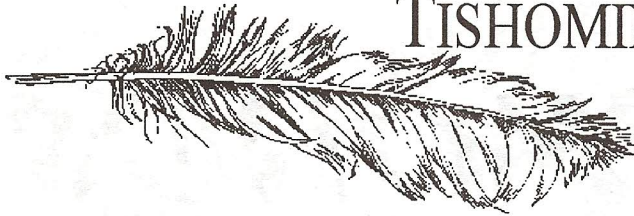
make it almost believable that one is being watched by the sharp eyes of unseen tribal hunters from the deep shade of virescent undergrowth.

Tishomingo, the man, was a Chickasaw, the last war chief of that proud nation. Born around 1730 near the Tennessee River in what is now northern Alabama, Tishomingo was elevated to lofty status among his people by virtue of his extraordinary wisdom and courageous deeds of war. He lived well past the age of 100 years and died in about 1840 in Arkansas.

Late in life, Tishomingo often returned to the hills and valleys that he knew and loved so well, where Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee meet along the old Natchez Trace. He came to renew his spirit by hunting game in the uplands, fishing the streams of his youth, and bathing in the mineral springs that still flow today in the corner of Mississippi that proudly bears his name.

Tishomingo, the tune, is dedicated in memoriam to that valiant warrior, and to the patinous splendor of the Natchez Trace, winding its way through Mississippi and into the hearts of those who go there.

TISHOMINGO



Laurie Sky

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), common time signature. The staff contains a sequence of eighth and quarter notes. Below the staff are the following chord symbols: D / / / / / A D / D / / / / A D A D /

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, common time signature. The staff contains a sequence of eighth and quarter notes. Below the staff are the following chord symbols: D / / / / / A D / / / / / A D A D /


Musical staff 3: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, common time signature. The staff contains a sequence of eighth and quarter notes. Below the staff are the following chord symbols: G D / / A D / / G D / / A D / A D A D

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, common time signature. The staff contains a sequence of eighth and quarter notes. Below the staff are the following chord symbols: G D / / A D / A D G D / / A D7 / / G

Musical staff 5: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, common time signature. The staff contains a sequence of eighth and quarter notes. Below the staff are the following chord symbols: / D G / / D / A D G / D G / / D / / G

Musical staff 6: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, common time signature. The staff contains a sequence of eighth and quarter notes. Below the staff are the following chord symbols: / D G / / D / A D / A D / / A D A D G A D

Musical staff 7: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, common time signature. The staff contains a sequence of eighth and quarter notes. Below the staff are the following chord symbols: D / / / A D / / / / G D / / A D / A D



HARMONICS

Oversimplified, Yes! Understandable? Hopefully!

by
Dr. George Orthey

'harmonics 1. (used with a plural v.) *the partials or overtones of a fundamental tone on an autoharp.* 2. (used with a plural v.) *the flute-like tones of the strings of an autoharp made to vibrate so as to produce overtones.* 3. (used with an unprintable adj.) *the dissident, loud, obnoxious, ringing notes in an otherwise respectable chord;* "What is that noise?;" *wolf-tones; #!*?@!.*

The overtones of the playing strings of an autoharp, as with any stringed instrument, add fullness and quality to the sound of that instrument. Under certain circumstances, a damped string may sound discordant overtones, which we call harmonics. This article deals with understanding this occurrence. A

follow-up (next issue) article's topic will deal with the treatment of these unwanted sounds.

First, let's review a few basics of harmonics: When you play an open string, all of these partials (the consecutive, equal parts of a string) will form as in the chart below:

In Reference to Figure A:





The fundamental and first harmonic (the octave), are usually the loudest. Other harmonics that make notes within the range of the 'harp plus one octave higher can also be substantial and annoying. There are many harmonics: 1/4, 1/5, 1/6, 1/7, etc. that make very high notes, way above the 'harp range. These are trivial to most players, and unheard by the listener.

At the point marked "node" for a particular harmonic, the string stands perfectly still, even though it is sounding a clear, bell-like note. Herein lies the crux of harmonic problems on the autoharp. If the damper bar "damps" a string exactly over a node where the string doesn't vibrate anyway, that harmonic will play loud and clear regardless of how firmly the damper is pressed. This harmonic sound will even be enhanced to the ear by the fact that the other harmonics, and of course, the fundamental of that string are damped out.

The 1/2 node, (Ⓛ) harmonic is the loudest and busiest since it plays not only the half, but also the quarter and one-sixth harmonic. All of these even numbered fractions will form a node at the half-point, of the string. On the string bed chart (Figure B), you can see by the location on line Ⓛ that these are the very loud harmonics that play in the upper octave of a chromatic autoharp.

These particular harmonics are unavoidable and keep many players from using the E^b and B^b keys. These can be

Figure A

String Action	Segment Playing	Note Playing	Node Linear Chart
	Whole	Fundamental 3C, e.g.	Bridges
	1/2	First Harmonic 12C (Middle C)	Bridges & Ⓛ
	1/3	Second Harmonic 19G	Bridges & Ⓜ
	1/4	Third Harmonic 24C	Bridges & Ⓝ

The example designation of 3C, 12C, etc. is based on standard OSI string numbering and position on the autoharp.

If you are into mathematics, you can also see that the first harmonic node, mid-point node, would also be a node of the 1/4, 1/6, and 1/8 segmented strings. Thus also playing 24C, 31G, and 36C.

avoided if you can be satisfied with a narrow set of chord bars as you would find on a diatonic 'harp.

The next harmonic, the 1/3 node, (②) is the great little ringer that plays throughout the entire range of the chromatic 'harp. Even worse, it forms an almost vertical line in the bass, resulting in one or more chord bars that play near or on the harmonic line through the entire bass octave. This harmonic line plays the 1/3 and 1/6 node of the strings.

Now we come upon another interesting attribute of harmonics. When a harmonic is dividing the string into three or more parts and the string is touched by a damper on one node, there is another node exposed in your area of play. If you strike a string midway between nodes, the relative harmonic plays loudly. If you strike a string exactly over the node of a harmonic, that harmonic is greatly reduced, and is almost unheard. If you look at line ② across the playing area of the harp (Figure B), it roughly forms an arc up through the bass, then diagonally up through the middle and upper octaves. If your thumb sweep follows the node line, this harmonic will be minimized. If you play out toward the tuning pins, or close to the chord bars, you will be playing between the nodes, and therefore will maximize the loudness of the harmonic. This harmonic is mainly noticed in the B^b, F, and C keys on a standard 21-bar 'harp.

Now let's consider the 1/4 harmonic node line (③). The nodes form for this harmonic on the 1/2 node line (①), and 1/4 node lines (③). For this harmonic, play a bit farther out on the strings on the line, or closer to the chord bars on the 1/2 node line (①). This harmonic mainly effects the keys of G, D, and A on a standard 21-bar 'harp.

For the folks who like to play way up near the tuning pins, please take note that this will be between nodes for every harmonic on the 'harp. It is close to the principal node (bridge) for the fundamental vibration of the string. This gives a "chingy" high-pitched sound on the playing strings because of its accent of harmonics over fundamental string vibration. It also, unfortunately, plays loud and clear every dam_ped undesirable harmonic possible on the 'harp.

The "awfulest" for harmonics are the old "play below the bars" 'harps. The chord bars sat across all the harmonic

lines from top to bottom, and the strings were played close to the bridge, putting maximum accent on the partial/harmonic notes.

Ideal avoidance of harmonics can be best achieved in the diatonic 'harps with a very narrow chord bar set placed off the 1/2 (①) and 1/3 (②) node lines. You can then play in the area of the 1/4 (③) node line in the upper octave, and thus avoid all significant harmonic lines.

In Reference to Figure B:

If you really want to visualize all of

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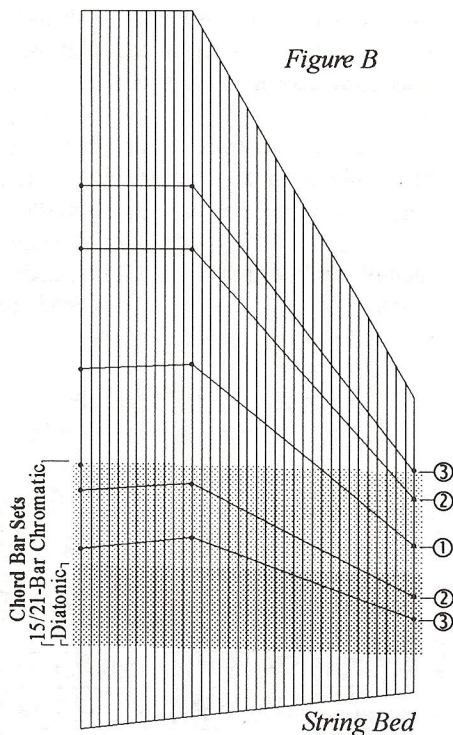


Figure B

this, take the chord bars off your 'harp and find and mark the harmonic node lines on the strings with a magic marker. (Use a magic marker that will not permanently mark your strings. Almost all

markers will wipe off with a cloth or Scotch Brite.) The approximate location of the lines can be found by measuring $1/2$, $1/3$, and $1/4$ the distance from bridge to bridge. (Note: I use the term "bridge" to define any string end stop, be it fine tuner, guide pin, anchor bar, or an actual bridge.) You only need locate the points at each end of a straight bridge section. That is for standard autoharp or Chrom-Aharp at 1F, 13 C#, and 36 C string positions. Then connect these points with straight lines. If you just want to do one harmonic, I suggest you do the $1/3$ (②) line. This will clearly demonstrate the harmonic caused by the bar damping at a node and also the ability to reduce the harmonic by playing close to the other node. If you want to put all three line sets (①, ②, ③) I suggest you use different color magic markers for each line group.

If you take a blank uncut felted bar, it will give you an excellent demonstration of the harmonics. Place the bar in each consecutive chord position, and pluck the strings slowly from bottom to top. You will hear thud, thud, thud, etc. As you cross a harmonic node line, you will hear loud and clear the bell-like "ding" of the harmonics. On the loudest of the ding strings of the $1/3$ node harmonic, pluck the string next to the chord bar, and continue to pluck, moving gradually across to the tuning pin. You will notice that the harmonics will sound the loudest between the nodes, and diminish to almost nothing when plucked directly over the undamped node. Do this for each chord bar position, and visualize the whole picture of where the harmonics are and where you need to play to reduce them. This will show you as nothing else will the importance of playing on the node line.

Many mechanical tricks have been attempted to minimize the loudness of the harmonics. If you have tried one which has been at least partially satisfactory in doing this, please send your suggestions to:

Autoharp Quarterly

PO Box A

Newport, PA 17074

before November 15, 1994. I have tried several modifications of chord bars and chord bar positions with limited or questionable success. I will tell you what I have tried and will incorporate your ideas as well in the next issue's article concerning this topic. ❖

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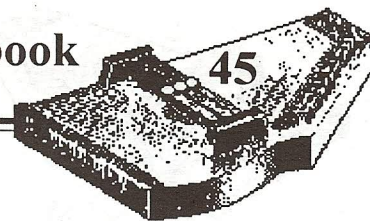
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We Gather Together (3)

C C [F] C C G7C G7[C] G7 C C
 We ga - ther to-geth-er to ask the Lord's bless-ing;
 G C [F] G C [G] G D7 [C] D7 G /
 He chas-tens and has - tens His will to make known;
 G7 C [F] G7C C C G [F] [F G] C C
 The wick-ed op-press-ing now cease from dis-tress-ing;
 C F [C] [F F] G [F] [C C] F G7 [G7] C /
 Sing prais-es to His Name: He for-gets not His own.

2. Beside us to guide us, our God with us joining,
 Ordaining, maintaining His kingdom divine;
 So from the beginning the fight we were winning:
 Thou, Lord, wast at our side, all glory be Thine!

3. We all do extol Thee, Thou Leader triumphant,
 And pray that Thou still our Defender wilt be.
 Let Thy congregation escape tribulation;
 Thy Name be ever praised! O Lord, make us free!

Come, Ye Thankful People, Come (2)

G [G] G G Em D G /
 Come , ye thank-ful peo-ple, come,

G [G] G G Em Am B7 /
 Raise the song of har-vest home;

Em [Em] Am Am D7 [D7] G /
 All is safe-ly gath - ered in,

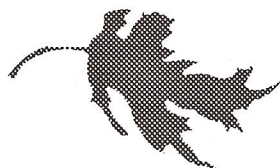
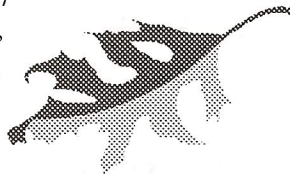
G A7 D G D A7 D /
 Ere the win-ter storms be-gin;

D [D] D D G D G /
 God, our Ma-ker, doth pro-vide

G [G] G G C G C /
 For our wants to be sup-plied:

C [C] Am Am D [A7] G /
 Come to God's own tem-ple, come,

C C G G G [D] G /
 Raise the song of Har-vest Home.



Listen to the Mocking Bird (2)

C G7 [G7] G7 [F G7] [C C] //
 I'm dream-ing now of Hal-lie,
 [F C] [G7 G7] // [F G7] [C C] //
 sweet Hal-lie, sweet Hal-lie
 C G7 [G7] G7 [F G7] [G7 C] //
 I'm dream-ing now of Hal-lie,
 [C C] [F F] [F F] [F C] [G7 G7] C //
 For the thought of her is one that nev-er dies;

C G7 [G7] G7 [F G7] [C C] //
 She's sleep-ing in the val-ley,

[F C] [G7 G7] // [F G7] [C C] //
 the val-ley, the val-ley,

C G7 [G7] G7 [F G7] [G7 C] //
 She's sleep-ing in the val-ley,

[C C] [F F] [F F] [F C] [G7 G7] C //
 And the mock-ing bird is sing-ing where she lies.

Chorus:

[C C C C] [C G7] G7 /
 Lis-ten to the mock-ing bird,

[G7 G7 G7 G7] [G7 C] C /
 lis-ten to the mock-ing bird,

C [G7 G7] [G7 G7] [G7 G7] [C G7] C //
 The mock-ing bird's still sing-ing o'er her grave;

[C C C C] [C G7] G7 /
 Lis-ten to the mock-ing bird,

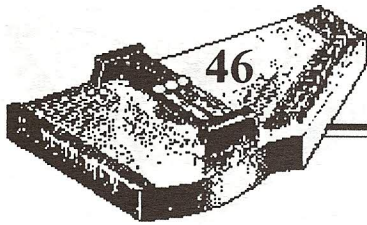
[G7 G7 G7 G7] [G7 C] C /
 lis-ten to the mock-ing bird,

C [F F] [F F] [F G7] [G7 G7] C //
 Still sing-ing where the weep-ing wil-lows wave.

Ah! well I yet remember, remember, remember,
 Ah! well I yet remember,
 When we gathered in the cotton side by side.

'Twas in the mild September, September, September.
 'Twas in the mild September,
 And the mocking bird was singing far and wide.

Chorus:



Autoharp Songbook

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Here We Come A' Wassailing (2)

▼
[G D7][G D7][G D7][G D7][G G][D D] G /
Here we come a' -was-sail - ing a - mong the leaves so green;

[C C][G G]G [C G][D7 G][D7 G] D7
Here we come a' -wass'ling the fair -est to be seen.

[G D7]G [G C]G [G D7][G G] [G C] G
Love and joy come to you and to you your was-sail too,

[G D7] G [C C][GG][D7 D7][G D7][GG] C
And God bless you and send you a Hap - py New Year,

[G D7] G [C C][G G]D7 G ///
And God send you a Hap-py New Year.

2. God bless the master of this house,
Likewise the mistress too,
And all the little children
That round the table go,
Love and joy come to you, and to you, your wassail too,
And God bless you and send you a Happy New Year,
And God send you a Happy New Year.

3. We are not beggar children
That go from door to door,
But we are neighbors' children,
Whom you have seen before.
Love and joy come to you, and to you, your wassail too,
And God bless you and send you a Happy New Year,
And God send you a Happy New Year.

Jolly Old Saint Nicholas (2)

▼
[C C][C C] [G7 G7]G7 [Am Am] [Am Am] Em /
Jol-ly old Saint Nich-o - las, lean your ear this way;

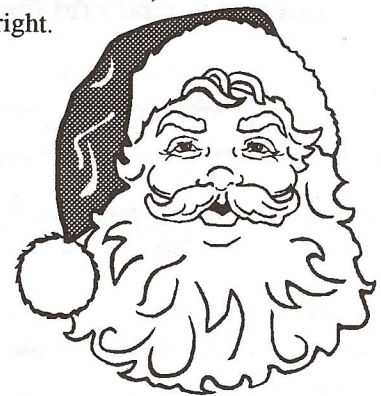
[F F] [F F][C C]C [G7 C][G7 C]G7 /
Don't you tell a sing-le soul what I'm going to say;

[C C] [C C][G7 G7]G7 [Am Am][Am Am]Em /
Christ-maseveis com-ing soon, now you dear old man,

[F F] [F F] [C C]C [G7 C][G7 C] C /
Whis-per what you'll bring to me, tell me if you can.

2. When the clock is striking twelve, when I'm fast asleep,
Down the chimney broad & black with your sack you'll creep.
All the stockings you will find, hanging in a row,
Mine will be the shortest one, you'll be sure to know.

3. Johnny wants a pair of skates, Suzie wants a dolly,
Nellie wants a story book, she thinks dolls are folly.
As for me, my little brain isn't very bright.
Choose for me, dear Santa Claus,
What you think is right.



There's Music in the Air (2)

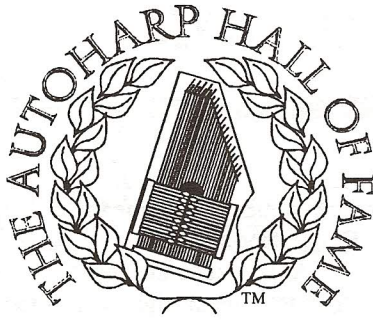
▼
A A A A A D/A/[E7 E7] [E7 E7] A E7 A //
There's mu-sic in the air, When the in-fant morn is nigh

A A A A A D/A/[E7 E7] [E7 E7] A E7 A ///
And faint its blush is seen, On the bright and laugh-ing sky.

D DD DA AA / A E7 E7 E7 E7 A A /
Many a harp's ec-stat-ic sound, With the thrill of joy pro-found

D DD DA AA [A A] A E7 E7 E7 A //
While we list en-chant-ed there To the mu-sic in the air.

There's music in the air
When the noontide's sultry beam
Reflects a golden light,
On the distant mountain stream.
When beneath some grateful shade
Sorrow's aching head is laid,
Sweetly to the spirit there
Comes the music in the air.



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1995 NOMINATION FORM

Nominations for the 1995 inductees into The Autoharp Hall of Fame will be accepted by Limberjack Productions from October 1, 1994 until May 1, 1995. Nominees should have had a significant, long-standing, positive impact on the autoharp community. Any individual wishing to submit nominations may do so by completing this form. Copies of this form are permissible. Names may be submitted for one posthumous and one contemporary nomination.

The honorees will be selected by a panel composed of knowledgeable autoharp musicians and enthusiasts, who are proficient in autoharp history. *Envelopes must contain nominations only, and*

should be addressed to: Limberjack Productions, **Attention – The Autoharp Hall of Fame**, PO Box A, Newport PA, 17074. These envelopes shall be forwarded, unopened, to the panel. Limberjack Productions shall be informed of the decision of the panel by the third week of May, 1995. The honorees shall be installed into the Hall of Fame at the 1995 Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering, and announced in the July 1995 issue of *Autoharp Quarterly*. ❖

When describing a nominee's contributions, specify the significance of those contributions, and the nominee's leadership role in the autoharp community.

POSTHUMOUS NOMINEE

Name of nominee: _____

Use a separate piece of paper for a description of achievement, contributions, and/or leadership in the autoharp community.

CONTEMPORARY NOMINEE

Name of nominee: _____

Use a separate piece of paper for a description of achievement, contributions, and/or leadership in the autoharp community.

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Picker's Portrait

I first played the autoharp in second grade in a country school in Michigan. It was required. I didn't do it very well, and I didn't much care. The second time I played the autoharp, it was in a college course on music in the elementary classroom. Again, it was required; we all had to play something. The autoharp was the only instrument available that class session since all the cymbals, tambourines, and bells had been grabbed up by the other students who had avoided the autoharp with disdain. I didn't play it very well that time either, but that time I *did* care.

There was a quality and a resonance I hadn't heard before. I mentioned this to the professor. She agreed that while the autoharp wasn't a "real" instrument, it could be useful to elementary classroom teachers who were "not sophisticated musically." Basically no-brainers. Instantly, I felt that old fight-for-the-underdog spirit rise in me. I looked at the beautiful little box of strings and buttons that lay on the table before me, and I admired the subtle curves and the play of sunlight on its lightly polished wood. It certainly looked sophisticated to me.

And what was that snotty little jab about not being sophisticated musically? Was she intimating that I was a no-brainer, too? In a wash of low-esteem, I thought about the five years of formal private lessons for violin which I couldn't play to save my soul. I remembered all that time spent in study, and I still had to struggle at reading music. I'd sung in college choruses and church choirs and even with a rock band, but always felt musically backward because I stumbled over the written measure. But, hey! my spirit rallied, I could learn any song — aria to do-wop — by ear, and I sang them very well. Who was this professor to think I was musically stupid because I heard something I liked when I strummed the autoharp? *Oh, yeah?* I wanted to shout at her smug face, "*Take that back!*"

Willow Skye Robinson Fort Devens, Massachusetts

I fumed all the way to the Sears Catalog Center and ordered a fifteen-chord Oscar Schmidt. So there! That was fourteen years ago. I've never felt sorry — or stupid — since, even though I met lots of people who turned up their noses at the autoharp. When I used it in the classroom, though, the kids loved it, and that more than compensated for the ignorant haughtiness of those others.

It was more than a teaching tool, of course. For me, my autoharp's quiet, sweet voice became a companion. She



... doing what I love best — sharing the 'harp and a good song with a kindred spirit.

was a constant in my ever-changing world. I am an Army wife; we move every two or three years. Always, the 'harp has stayed with me and given endless comfort to me and to my family.

Until a few years ago, I didn't even know anyone else played autoharp, let alone had festivals featuring them. It didn't matter, though, because in my isolation, the 'harp taught me what I needed to know when I needed to know it. The first 'harp and I sang mostly alone in places we loved. We sang to the Atlantic Ocean at old Fort Story in Virginia, re-galed an ocean of golden prairie with song at Fort Riley, Kansas. We gave mu-

sic to a misty-blue pine forest at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

At last came the day that the old 'harp told me to advance, so I took her down to a music shop and, with a lump in my throat, traded her in for a new twenty-one chord ChromA'harp. The shopkeeper looked at me oddly when I made my purchase and suggested that I forget autoharp and buy a "real" instrument. This time, I didn't feel the slightest twinge of defensiveness or insecurity; I just smiled sympathetically. He didn't know what he was missing, poor dear.

The "new" 'harp is almost ten years old now, and she, like her predecessor, has taught me well. Together, we have sung to students in Prince George, Virginia; we have worshipped under a Sunday sky at Fort Lee, Virginia; we have sung beautiful mountain music for fellow campers long into the Blue Ridge summer nights. We sang quietly for my father in his last days of life.

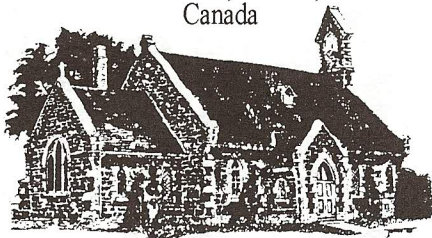
The new 'harp went to Panama where my husband and I lived for two and a half years. 'Harp and I sang for the congregation of the Balboa Union Church in the Canal Zone and for a group of Cuna Indian children on the front porch of an old back-country hotel in Panama — in a clearing of the rain-forest at the center of an extinct volcano!

Always, the 'harp fascinates and excites children and interests adults, many of whom have told me that after hearing me play, they plan to go home and get their 'harp out of the attic and play it. I am awed that 'Harp and I brought them to that decision.

Now, we sing for the patients in an extended care home near Fort Devens, Massachusetts. But, mostly, it's just she and I, alone. That's when, in the soft whisper of her strings, she teaches me ancient songs that she learned from the wind and the passing of seasons and the rustling of grass around the trunk of the tree from which she was born. It is then that I am most honored and humbled to know her. ❖

Sacred Harp

Vi and Ken Elliston's
Saint John the Baptist Anglican Church of
Lake Field, Ontario,
Canada



group includes autoharp, guitars, fiddles, and harmonicas. A fine children's program is implemented, as well.

Vi and Ken arranged this hymn for us. These talented folks also play harmonica, and as Ken played "Abide with Me" on his harmonica, Vi copied his chords with her autoharp. Although this great hymn was featured several years ago in Sacred 'Harp, we could not resist featuring this different arrangement for you, our friends the Ellistons, and the members of Saint John the Baptist Anglican Church of Lake Field, Ontario, Canada. ❖

Vi and Ken Elliston's eyes sparkle with enthusiasm when they speak of their church. One of the many things they love is its openness regarding new and unusual ideas. Their minister, Peter Bishop, has just moved to Lake Field from the Northwest Territory, and has introduced many Eskimo traditions to the members of that community. The church's music program is strong and exciting. There is a musical group within the church which meets weekly. The

Abide with Me

Words by Henry Lyte. Music by W. H. Monk

Sheet music for the hymn "Abide with Me" in D major, 4/4 time. The music is presented in four systems, each with a vocal line and a guitar tab line. The lyrics are: "Abide with me fast falls the eve - 'n tide, The dark - ness deep - ens, Lord with me a - bide. When oth - er help - ers fail and com - forts flee, Help of the help - less oh, a - bide with me."

The guitar tab lines include chord diagrams and fingerings. The chords used are D, A7, D7, G, E7, B7, and Em. The music concludes with a final chord of D and a decorative flourish.

'Harpers-At-Large

On-Site Reports of Concerts, Workshops, Festivals, and Other Major Autoharp Events



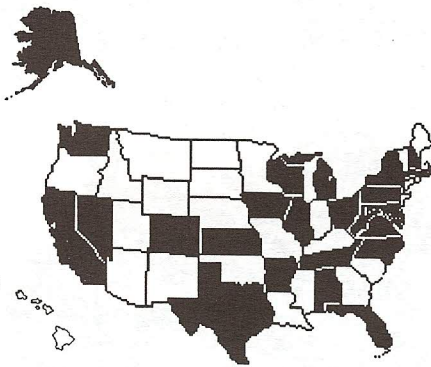
Festival: 4th Annual Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering
Place: Newport, PA
Reporting: Laura Newton
Las Vegas, NV

Another Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering has come and gone, leaving some wonderful memories to tuck away to bring out and enjoy throughout the year.

For those of you who have been unable to attend this annual event, it is chock full of 'harp concerts, workshops, jams, merchandise, and The Contest – enough to satisfy the most rabid autoharp enthusiast.

The official schedule began on Thursday morning with a "Meet the Workshop Leaders" session. This gave an overview of the workshops to be presented, and helped to plan one's schedule of events. From that point on, it was a non-stop learning and sharing experience. Workshop choices ran the gamut from Evo Bluestein's "Old-time Autoharp" to Marty Schuman's "Floating Pentatonics." Beginners got a great start with Alex Usher's "Off and Strumming," and Carole Outwater and Karen Mueller's beginning classes. Advanced techniques were offered by Mike Fenton, Mike Herr, and Les Gustafson-Zook. Alan Mager offered instruction in a variety of strumming patterns, and Tina Louise Barr had us rockin' with her rocket autoharp. Fran Stallings' answer for "Is that a harpsichord?" was revealed in her story-song workshop. This year's schedule presented several "An hour with ...," mini-concert/workshops with Judie Pagter, Bryan Bowers, Joe and Janette Carter, and Jim Snow. George Orthey even conducted tours into the inner sanctum of his barn where all those Dulci-harps are created. I kept watching for Igor, but he never showed – or is that Ivan? I guess he *was* there!

Speaking of Ivan, he and Jim Hud-



son as emcees kept the in-between action jumping as they exchanged barbs, and Ivan continually interrupted Jim's jokes. No ifs, ands, or "butts," Mary Umbarger put Jim Hudson in his place by presenting him with appropriate cover for his "behind" the scene tee shirt.

There were several drooling (and I thought banjo players weren't invited) participants in the watermelon seed spitting contest. John Hook was the Chief Drooler and Spitter, walking off with the Ptooi Trophy. Kathy Roush was the lightweight, coming in last, earning the right to have her name added to the stale doughnut plaque. [The Losers' Circle.]

During the breaks for lunch and dinner, the open stage showcased all those who wished to participate. Ballots were provided for everyone to vote for a favorite performance, and the Leonard A. Reid People's Choice Award went to the autoharp trio of Yasuo Mita, and Terry and Yoko Wanatabe, friends from Japan who did a terrific job on their renditions of Carter tunes.

The Mountain Laurel Autoharp Championship offered an entertaining evening as we watched the 19 contestants pace and sweat. The music was good, too. Jim Show walked off with first place honors, selecting a Fladmark 'harp as his prize. Being number one also gives Jim entry into the festival and contest at Winfield Kansas, and a spot in the lineup at next year's Mountain Laurel Gathering. Alan Mager captured second place and an Orthey Dulci-harp, with Steve Young coming in third, and taking home an Oscar Schmidt Autoharp. June Maugery and Bud Taylor were also in the top five finishers. Congratulations to each of them who were victorious over a field of

very talented contestants.

Once again there was a strong lineup of performers to top off the holiday weekend. Marty Schuman as the 1993 Gathering Champion opened the concert spots. The talents of Evo Bluestein, Judie Pagter, Joe and Janette Carter, Bryan Bowers, Mike Fenton, and Karen Mueller added to the excitement and entertainment. The popular DeBusk/Weaver Family was again on hand for the Sunday morning gospel set.

Each evening ended with a contra-dance on the road. For a change, autoharps took the musical lead, with a couple of fiddles and banjos joining in for good measure.

A highlight of the Gathering was the announcement of the 1994 induction into The Autoharp Hall of Fame. Ernest "Pop" Stoneman was honored as the 1994 posthumous inductee, with his daughter, Patsy, accepting on his behalf. Mike Seeger was named the contemporary inductee, and followed his acceptance with two tunes which were a treat for all in attendance. Sharing in this bit of history with those two folks made a lasting memory.



Festival: Cosby Dulcimer and Harp Convention
Place: Cosby, TN
Reporting: Gregg Averett
Marietta, GA

The eighteenth annual Cosby Dulcimer and Harp Convention was held at Jean and Lee Schilling's Folk Life Center of the Smokies on June 10 and 11. Each year brings some enhancement of the facility. This time, it was a bandbox-style gazebo for workshops and mini-concerts. A school bell in the peak announced the commencement of important events.

Autoharp workshops included: Playing by Ear; Generic Autoharp; Beginning Autoharp; and Autoharp Tips,

Tricks, Maintenance, and Modification. One-on-one tutoring or advice was available throughout the weekend.

Those who gathered for the watermelon seed-spitting contest were treated to a simultaneous twenty minute eruption of gossamer-winged termites from a nearby old stump. It looked for all the world like a volcano of dandelion seeds drifting off on the wind.

Each night featured hours of outstanding music on the main stage. Saturday night opened with a deluge that threatened to wash us off the mountain and the performers wound up sharing stage space with some of the audience. Shelter was ample, however, and the ensuing lull accommodated even the softest dulcimer passages. Between acts, emcees Ben Wade, Steve Mayfield, and Robin Mohun conducted an auction to benefit the Memorial Scholarship Fund and broke up the audience with their antics.

Innovative 'harps have a way of finding their way to the Cosby Festival. This year it was Bill Newton's Ultra Harp – a new concept on a favorite instrument. Look for details in an upcoming issue.

Come on out to the Cosby Festival. See you there next year – second weekend in June!



**Festival: Willamette Valley
Autoharp Gathering**

Place: Corvallis, Oregon

Reporting: **Les Gustafson-Zook**
Portland, Oregon

One couldn't have asked for a nicer spot or nicer weather for the Willamette Valley Autoharp Gathering held on July 16, 1994. Over 30 folks from Oregon, Washington, and California gathered at the river in Willamette Park in Corvallis, Oregon for good autoharp playing, workshops, food, friendship, sunshine, and a great river view.

Cathy Britell used the song, *Aragon Mill* to teach a beginning autoharp workshop. It was a song that was particularly suited to the North West with the difficult timber situation. Les Gustafson-Zook shared the latest common wisdom on how to alter 'harps to make them more playable and also led a melody-playing workshop. Meryl Korn, a wonderful player from Portland, led a workshop on Old-Time Songs and Styles which rein-

troduced many old songs made famous by the patriarchs and matriarchs of the autoharp.

Plenty of jamming happened between workshops and around meals. Special treats were having Homer Welty show and play some of his oversized 'harps, and Gregg Schneeman doing some of the best bowed psaltery playing around. (Some of you may remember seeing him at Winfield, playing a black psaltery with two or three bows.)

The open stage gave us a chance to share with each other, with performances by a number of folks including Merle Korn, Horse and Buggy Music, Gregg Schneeman, and Les Gustafson-Zook. In all, it was a real fun day, and a fine start for what will hopefully become a yearly North West autoharp gathering!



Festival: 59th Annual Old Fiddlers' Convention

Place: Felts Park, Galax, VA
Staff Report

Four days this past August, the oldest and largest music convention in the world fiddled on in the predictable rain, heat, and mud. And, predictably, the weather was counter-balanced with enough great music to more than make the whole mess well worth it.

This sprawling city of tents, RVs, autoharps, cars, banjos, vendors, fiddles, bands, dulcimers, etc. grows from an open field to a metropolis in about five hours the Sunday before it officially opens.

The festival is mainly a nocturnal one. Music throbs and soars in every direction from dusk until dawn. The quiet of the wee hours of the mornings (7 a.m. until around noon) reminds one of the

pastoral silence deep in the woods on a Sunday afternoon.

The heart-beat of this festival is the contest. Competitions (nine instrument contests, folk song and dance, old-time and bluegrass bands) start every evening at six, and continue until at least 2 a.m. This year's autoharp contest winners were: 1. Evelyn Farmer; 2. John Hollandsworth; 3. Bill Burchfield; 4. Drew Smith; 5. Jo Ann Redd; 6. Sandy Shaner; 7. Troy Brammer; 8. Jama Lee Edwards; 9. Mary Lou Orthey; and 10. Glenna Anderson.

On Friday morning, Drew Smith

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A cassette recording of autoharp tunes by

Alan Mager

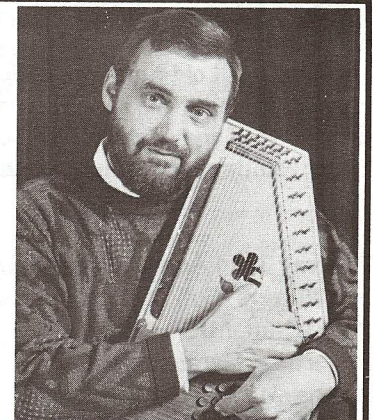
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- ▶ Ain't Misbehavin'
- ▶ Chariots of Fire
- ▶ Georgia on My Mind
- ▶ When You Wish Upon a Star...and many more!

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lead an autoharp workshop, which was dedicated to Rosa Cox, a former Galax autoharp personality.

If you should decide to spend a few days in a wondrous mix of musical greats, near-greats, and ever-trying greats, you should write to Galax before July to assure your place in a contest line-up, thus assuring your place in the main camping area (if you arrive early enough that first Sunday.) Then, when your contest time is announced, you can decide "Shall I play, or not?" If you play in the contest, you get your camping fee back. Great incentive to compete. And at Galax, the music is the incentive that calls you and your umbrella back, again and again.



Festival: 20th Annual Carter Family Memorial Weekend

Place: Carter Fold, Hiltons, VA

Staff Report

Regardless of how many times you have attended this festival, the moment you step out of your vehicle at the Carter Fold, the history of the place rushes over you. There is Clinch Mountain. Over that ridge is the grave on the green hillside. You are standing in Poor Valley, and here is A.P. Carter's store. Across the road is the railroad bed he walked so many times pondering his music. Kitty-cornered across the road is the white house where A.P. and Sara raised their children. Maybelle, her husband and girls lived just beyond those trees.

Janette and Joe sing and play at the Fold, sounding so much like their parents. Local folks come to dance, jam, and sell their crafts. Jamming takes place anytime, anywhere, and the autoharp is welcome.

This year, Norman and Nancy Blake, Mac Wiseman, Bill Clifton, John McCutcheon along with other professionals performed on stage.

This small old-time-friendly festival is a must for folks who appreciate the music performed and celebrated by the great Carter Family of yesterday and today.



Festival: 32nd Annual Original Dulcimer Players Club Musical Funfest

Place: Evart, MI

Reporting: Carole Spicer
Alpena, MI

When I think of the 1993-94 winter,

I shiver to think that the next one will be a replay, but if that's what happens, then my mind will go back to July in Evart and the O.D.P.C. FunFest for instant warmth. It was wonderful meeting friends of years past, and making new ones.

An impromptu get-together the day before the actual Thursday 8 a.m. start of the festival set the tempo for workshop attendance to come. The autoharp workshops began on Friday with Lou Ann Jerome, Carolyn Egelski, and Carole Spicer leading players of all levels in several tunes which would be used in a stage performance on Saturday afternoon. On Saturday morning, Wanda Degan led a well-done and well-attended workshop. Saturday afternoon, Ranka Mulkern taught a class for beginning 'harpers. Learning how to play a full scale in any key by using three fingers, and learning how to strum, pluck, and play melody lines were covered in this workshop. Well-done and helpful hand-outs were given in all of these workshops.

On Saturday afternoon, 32 autoharpers assembled backstage ready to perform the tunes we practiced in our Friday workshop. Everyone did a fine job except for a mistake made by the leader – me. I started with the wrong song – and in the wrong key! We stopped and started over, and then all went well.

The autoharp is alive and well at this festival. There were many autoharp performances on stage, including John Kelly, Wanda Degan, Jane Kuhlman, Larry Carpenter, Lou Ann Jerome, Carolyn Egelski, and Carole Spicer.

In the 12 years I've attended this festival, I've watched the autoharp community grow. I hope next year will see some of this year's onlookers in a workshop, autoharp in hand! See you there July 13-16, 1995. Come early for even more fun!



Concert: Julie Davis

Place: Denver CO

Reporting: Heather Doyle
Denver, CO

If you have ever seen Julie Davis perform, at a festival, autoharp gathering, kids sing-along, or senior tea, then you know the warmth, talent, and depth she brings to the stage every time she performs. Julie's album release concert,

for her new recording, "Traveling Light," was no exception.

The evening of July 9 found Swallow Hill Music Hall filled to SRO, and the audience was treated to a beautifully rich and diverse concert. Julie showcased several of the songs on her "Traveling Light," and also included a few favorites from other performances and from her previous tape, "Heart Full of Song." Backing Julie up were some of the Denver area's finest musicians, including Mary Stribling on bass, Roy Laird on banjo and bowed psaltery, Daniel Jones on pedal steel, and Rich Moore on guitar. Using the talents of all these musicians to the fullest, Julie's skill and exquisite taste in arranging was evident.

Julie masterfully played several different instruments during the course of the concert, including guitar, bowed psaltery, wooden flute, and recorders, and also told two stories (a South American folk tale and a Jewish story), which were a rare and unexpected treat. Julie created a world for the audience with each piece she performed, taking us from a Montana bar in which she was the only woman to a trip through the Renaissance via a bowed psaltery duet, to Aboriginal Australia. From singing to telling stories to sharing bits of light humor, Julie's warm, melodious voice helped to carry us through the evening. Her superb autoharp playing, however, was the highlight of the concert for me. From finding the perfect strum for an accompaniment for "Traveling Light" to knowing just when to use an unusual chord, to her precise picking on challenging tunes, Julie's 'harping was – and is – amongst the finest that I have heard.

Julie took the audience on a journey of magical moments, where listeners were carried away into the beauty and depth and richness of each song; her concert was one of the most fulfilling and inspiring musical evenings I've had.



Correction

In the July 1994 issue of *Autoharp Quarterly*, Harpers-At-Large, (Concert: Mill Run Dulcimer Band by Kathy Ferguson), the statement "the bad news is that their autoharpist, Woody Padgett, is recovering from his illness..." should have read, "The bad news is that their autoharpist, Woody Padgett, is not fully recovered from his illness..."



HARPER'S WALTZ

Mary Umbarger

Count: 1 & 2 & 3 &

Spring was in the air, Sweet music ev-'ry - where At the fes - ti - val
 in the 'Grove' Full moon was bright a - bove, And
 there we fell in love As we danced to Harp - er's Waltz
 We cour - ted and an - oth - er year came It was
 there I changed your name We pledged our
 love as we danced that night To beau - ti-ful Harp - er's
 Waltz. Oh come, let's go back a - gain
 To the time that we knew then It's
 you I still a - dore Let's Em vow our love once more And C dance to
 Harp - er's Waltz

Critics' Choice

If you have a recording you would like to have considered for review, please send it to Autoharp Quarterly, PO Box A, Newport, PA 17074. Submitted recordings cannot be returned.



Mike's Choice

Mike Herr

Live at The Downs

Autoharp: Mike Fenton
Heritage Records HRC-C-1262
Recorded "Live" at The Downs
CE Primary School, Walmer, England

The more I hear of Mike Fenton's work, the more I stand back in awe of this guy. While it may seem like a piece of cake to just go play for some school kids, Mike's been able to make a living traveling around the British Isles performing for, and especially *with* school children of many ages. Now, kids can be among the most gratifying types of audiences, but they can also be among the most demanding, as they are usually brutally honest and give instant feedback to the performer. If this live cassette is any indication, Mike's got these kids tucked into his back pocket with room to spare.

In order to hold the attention of his pint-sized audience, Mike displays masterful skill at changing the musical scene frequently. Now he's playing the 'harp with a sing-along, now he's using his wide array of jew's harps for all sorts of songs and humorous effects, now he's entertaining with a solo instrumental piece. All of this clips along at a reasonable speed and I found myself as absorbed as any fourth grader could hope to be.

Information gleaned from Mike, but which does not come across on the tape, reveals that he travels with a van full of 40 or 50 'harps to many schools along with a large display of photos and other musical instruments. Recently a young lad paid Mike a great compliment by comparing him favorably to Bryan Bowers, who appeared with Mike on a photo taken several years ago at the Grange concert following the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering. I'll leave the particulars of the story and the punch-line to

Mike, who uses this in his show for adults – you'll just have to go hear him to taste the full funky flavor of the lad's comments.

But back to the tape – I found myself thinking, who would be the market population for this tape? Obviously, the school children, parents, and teachers of the British school system would want to relive their experiences with Mike again and again. For those of us not in the grade schools of Great Britain, what would be the attraction of this work? This tape is not about virtuosity on the autoharp, though certainly it is demonstrated most adequately. Likewise, this tape is not about performing for an audience, though obviously this is the format in which music is being made. No, this tape is about connection with an audience, specifically children, and making them feel comfortable with making music, being silly, having fun, and learning something new all in one happy session in a classroom. At all of this Mike Fenton is an expert, and so, for the transcendence of his musical experience of drawing young humans together, this tape really is for us all.



Bob's Choice

Bob Woodcock

Father and Son

Autoharp: Jim Snow and Kilby Snow
277 Baltimore Pike
Nottingham, PA 19362
Greenback Dollar • No More Lies Little Darlin' • Old Country Church • From the Heart of a Lonely Man • Banks of the Ohio • Flop Eared Mule • Gospel Ship • Life's Railway to Heaven • When Our Lord Shall Come Again • I Will Arise • Old Time Christian • Sinner's Dream • While Eternal Ages Roll

In 1993 something happened that hit the autoharp community like a comet crashing into Newport, Pennsylvania. Jim Snow, after 15-odd years, picked up his dad's 'harp and played for the folks at the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gather-

ing. Some of us were numb for weeks – the legend is not gone, rather it has been passed on to another generation. In 1994, the aftershock hit Newport: Jim Snow placed first in the autoharp championship. Between these two events, Jim released a tape that should be in the collection of anyone interested in autoharp music in any fashion. Wanna know why?

Kilby Snow was a giant among autoharps, without question. He had hands the size of Virginia hams, and a voice somewhat like a grizzly bear that swallowed a chain saw. But out of those hands, and that voice, came some of the most complex, soulful, earthy and inspiring music I have ever heard. I saw him once, in a campground of the Brandywine Mountain Music Convention, playing with John Cohen. I remember it like it was last Tuesday.

Jim Snow played guitar and sang backup with his dad for many years. Kilby apparently planted some musical seeds into very fertile ground, as side one of this tape will tell you. Jim has the style and Jim has the voice (of Jim's voice, a good friend commented, "My God, it's Kilby with teeth!"). The 'harp is a little rougher, a little less refined, but still pure genius, and a treat to hear. The voice is younger, a little less powerful, and to my ear, a little more soulful than Kilby's. But my friend was right.

Another treat was Jim's choice of backup – David Reed. David is the son of another legend, Ola Belle Reed. He began performing with his mother playing hot guitar when he was around 14 or so. Twenty years later the guitar has gotten hotter and the music better. He knows when to hold back, and when to tear up the strings, and he does both very well. Side two consists of tapes of Kilby from Jim's collection. What can I say? They are pure, raw, gutsy Kilby Snow. Backup vocal and guitar is, who else, Jim Snow, who shows that his is no sleeper in either role. I am delighted with the clarity of these tapes. If you listen, you can hear Kilby's finger picks hit the strings.

So, I will go out on a limb and state categorically – you have to buy this tape. There is no excuse. Historically and musically, this tape contains milestones that should not be missed by anybody interested in the 'harp. It deserves an honored place in your collection.

AQ

Postscripts

FROM HARPLAND

Mary Umbarger
1360 Tabor Road
Harmony, NC

Wonderful! That's what this summer has been with all kinds of festivals and the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering. I have fingers that are flat on the tips from playing the 'harp for hours on end; I have music ringing in my ears and stars in my eyes. (*You try sleeping in that condition.*) I met so many 'harp buddies, both old and new – as the man on TV says, "Life is good!"

P.S.

We heard from **Margie Earles**, Winfield finalist from Mountain View, Arkansas. Margie is a member of the Dixie Darlin's, a great band that entertains at such venues as the *Delta Queen* on the Mississippi and Lincoln Center in New York City. She was in the hospital earlier this year, when the band was scheduled for a gig. **Charles Whitmer**, who was in town leading autoharp workshops at the Ozark Folk Center, gallantly filled in for the recuperating Margie. (Photo on back cover.)

P.S.

On a more somber note, **Marty Schuman** is seriously ill and hospitalized in West Virginia. He'd be delighted to hear from his friends, so send your "Get Well" cards to Marty Schuman, Room 247, Raleigh Hospital, 1710 Harper Road, Beckley, WV 25801. A fund has been established to help Marty with his medical expenses. If you can contribute, make your check payable to Friends of Florida Folk, Marty Schuman Fund and send it to Friends of Florida Folk, c/o Sue Bullock, Treasurer, 2019 Sadler Street, North Fort Myers, FL 33917. And – get well soon, Marty!

At the summer festivals, we ran across several folks on April '94's "minor key" list. I'm happy to report that **Vi and Ken Elliston**, **Alan Mager**, **Bud Taylor**, **Marian Clark**, **Art Gluck**, **Anita Carter**, and **Jack Johnston** are all on the mend. **Nancy Pittock** has had a stay in the hospital and is now recuperating. We sure hope she's "8 to the bar" and back in her second grade class strummin' her autoharp.

P.S.

While the Ortheys were in Evart, Michigan for the Original Dulcimer Players Club Music Festival, they ran into **John Kelly**. John was a finalist in the autoharp competition at Winfield in 1983. He is the maker of a well-respected instrument called the Maple Valley Hammered Dulcimer. John now sports a beard, but watch it, autoharpers! He may have changed, but he stills plays a mean 'harp – with enthusiasm, finesse, and skill! If you would like to get in touch with John to talk autoharps and/or ask about his fine hammered dulcimers, call 517 669-8219.

P.S.

I had the pleasure of pickin' and grinnin' with **Betty Waldron** at the Galax Fiddlers Convention. What a treat! Betty took a trip to Branson, Missouri with the Roanoke Fiddle and Banjo Club. She played her autoharp – on stage at the Mel Tillis Theater – with Jim Travis and his band. Keep up the good work, Betty – someday we just may get to visit the "Waldron Theater" in Branson.

Judy Ganser from Winconsin was also visible at Galax. She has spent some time this year taking her 'harp to political rallies and strumming for her favorite candidate. She must have done something right – he won! Good idea, Judy.

P.S.

Rumor has it that **Les Gustafson-Zook** has been working on a new tape which will be out this fall; and his wife, **Gwen**, has been working on a baby which will be out this fall, as well!

P.S.

Wedding bells just keep ringing in 'Harpland. **Bill Schilling** of Salem, Ohio let us know that **Jean Lawlis** and **Norm Oyster** of Dulci-More Folk & Traditional Musicians, also from Salem, were wed on June 16. Jean teaches autoharp and dulcimer, and Norm plays the harmonica and dulcimer. Talk about your dedication; they played and camped overnight with the club at Hale Farm's Music In The Valley before leaving on their official honeymoon. Best of luck to the "musical" Oysters.

Iva Conner introduced her fiance, **Quinton Stilwell**, to all the 'harpers at Galax. We surprised them with a party where **Gregg Averett** and I played the "Wedding March" on our autoharps to get everyone in the right mode. October 8th is the big day – and, "Hey, Iva and Quinton, Gregg and Mary want you to

know that we are ready with the music!"

P.S.

Jim Hudson has a request. He'd like to start a "song swap." At the moment, he is looking for a tune called "Monastery Bells." Anyone know this one? Call Jim at 313 677-6009, or send *AQ* a card, and it'll be sent on to him. Anyone else trying to track down a tune? Let us know.

P.S.

Tina Louise Barr is featured in a summer issue of *Bluegrass Breakdown*, published by the California Bluegrass Association. She was named "Member of the Month!" Congratulations, Tina!

P.S.

The autoharp community has been well-represented in *Bluegrass Unlimited* lately. **Mike Fenton** had a fine article entitled "Pete Stanley and Brian Golbey – Roots of British Bluegrass" in the July 1994 issue. In the August issue, **Ivan Stiles** wrote the article "The True History of the Autoharp," and **Karen Mueller's** recording, *Clarity*, received a fantastic review in *BU's* September issue! Good for these folks, and good for the autoharp!

P.S.

Next year's Alaska Folk Festival will not be the same with the passing of its patriarch, **Bob Pavitt**. Thousands will remember the tradition of Bob with his autoharp finishing the Sunday night concert with "Goodnight Irene."

Bob died of a stroke on April 28th, but not without leaving a legacy of service to the folk community. Beyond the folk community, he co-produced the KTOO-FM radio senior citizen talk show program, "Our Town," and was a leader of the AARP legislative task force.

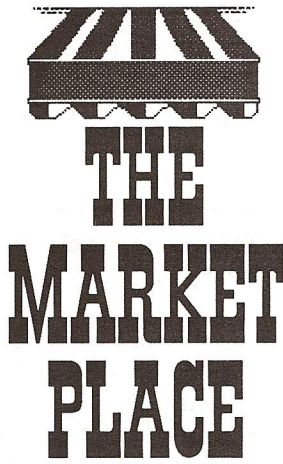
In a note from Bob's wife, Barbara, she wrote, "The outpouring of love and respect from the community was overwhelming – but comforting, too."

"Uncle Bob" Pavitt was an avid autoharp player and enthusiast. The autoharp community joins his family and friends in mourning the loss of this respected, dedicated, much-loved man.

❖ ❖ ❖

Correction

In the July 1994 issue of *Autoharp Quarterly*, *AQ* Postscripts, the statement concerning Will Smith "... Will played on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry with Holly and Barry Poshian," should have read "... Will played on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry with Holly and Barry Toshian."



TAPES: \$9

Titles with "*" feature the autoharp. New titles marked with ☆. *Autoharp Quarterly Music from Autoharp Quarterly, Volumes One* Two* Three**
Bryan Bowers *For You**
Roz Brown ☆ *Just Kiddin' Around **
Bill Bryant *Grizzly Flat 'Harper #1**
*Grizzly Flat 'Harper #2**
Janette Carter *Bouquet Of Dandelions**
Bill Clifton *Autoharp Centennial Celebration**
Country Ham with Judie Pagter



Country Ham *I'll Be Leaving*
Julie Davis ☆ *Traveling Light*
Heart Full of Song
Margie Earles *Blue Eyes & Sad Songs**
Mike Fenton *My Privilege**
*Accent On Autoharp**
Mike Fenton & The Bill Sky Family *Welcome to Galax**
Lindsay Haisley ☆ *Harps & Hammers**
*(Auto) Harps Alive!!**
Mike Herr *Lost in the Woods**
John & Kathie Hollandsworth ☆ *Pickin' Time*
Alan Mager *The Fairhaired Boy**
The Original Orchard Grass Band *Old Time Music*
Keeping Old Time Music Alive
Mary Lou Orthey *1863-Songs From Home**
*Memories-Songs From Home**
The Bill Sky Family *Sweet Sunny South*
Will Smith ☆ *Across the Seven Seas**
Jim Snow (with Kilby Snow) ☆ *Father and Son**
Ivan Stiles *Rounding Pickering Bend**
*Pickin' on the Porch**

Alex Usher *Harper's Ferry**
Betty & Mark Waldron *Just A Rose Will Do**
*Parlor Pickin' ***
Ron Wall *Autoharps**
Old Time Gathering #1
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When the Dixie Darlin's found themselves without member Margie Earles, chivalry blossomed in the guise of Charles Whitmer, who came to their rescue — with poke bonnet, pinochle, and smile. Can you spot him in this picture?