

Autoharp Quarterly®

The International
Magazine
Dedicated to the
Autoharp Enthusiast

Fall 2000
Volume Thirteen, Number One
Six Dollars

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Children's Corner**
by Roberta Gerberich

Sacred'Harp
by Lura Masters

**The Field Guide to
Autoharp Players**
by Tom Schroeder

**For Veteran's Day
The Faded Coat of
Blue**

**Post-Festival
Letdown**
by Cathy Britell

**A New Look At
Chord Bars** by
Peter Bartholomew

A Waltz for Nancy
by Ivan Stiles



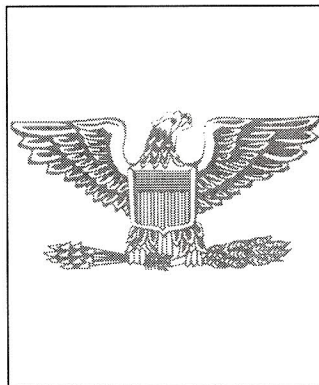
Ron Penix with Maybelle Carter's Golden Autoharp – a gift from her to him.

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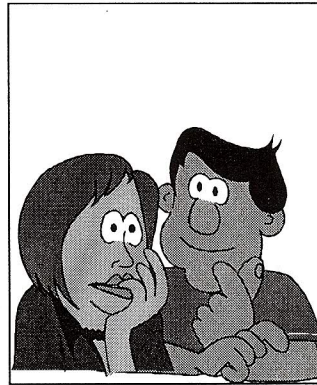
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Autoharp
Quarterly
The International
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to the Autoharp Enthusiast

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To And From The Editor



Dear Readers;

It seems each issue I start this letter by thanking everyone who sent cards, letters, emails, flowers, prayers and good wishes for my speedy recovery. (By the way, they seem to be working!) For those of you who have not yet heard, the first day of our yearly trek to Winfield, Kansas, I had a heart attack. We were near Lexington, Kentucky and so I ended up at Central Baptist Hospital. I cannot say enough nice things about this facility and its staff!! First rate doesn't even come close. Catherization showed a 90% blockage in one artery and 100% in another, so stents were placed in these two locations. As my "regular" doctor said when I got home, "God was sitting on your shoulder." I explained that God had spent a lot of time there lately. Strangely enough, in some ways I feel better than I have in a long while, but I still get tired way too soon. I will be taking cardiac pulmonary therapy three times a week for twelve weeks. The prognosis is very good! So you see, you did it again!! Your prayers and good wishes pulled me through!! THANKS.

For those of you to whom the name of Ron Penix is unfamiliar, Ron is a long-time autoharpist who was a friend of Maybelle Carter. In fact, the autoharp he is shown playing on our cover this time was a gift from Mother Maybelle.

Dear Editor;

Thanks for including "World of the Chorded Zither" in the recordings listing of AQ. I would also like to thank you for Stew Schneider's review in Critic's Choice.

Best wishes,

E. Jaimez

Letter to the editor:

I don't really want to admit exactly how I discovered this, but I have found a nifty way to get maple cross-lamination in an autoharp pin block without seeming to.

First, I drill the tuning pin holes a bit oversize (okay – you found me out). Then I use my plug cutter to cut a whole bunch of

side-grain maple plugs.

I completely fill the holes with randomly cross-grained plugs, glued profusely with Elmers and rammed down with a 1/4" dowel. Last, I carefully re-drill the holes to proper size, leaving a narrow wall of maple all around. The one 'harp I've made that way has the best pin action I've ever found.

My current project has a cherry frame all around, and I'm going to use the same pin hole construction. It will look like a solid cherry pin block, but have the action of cross-grained maple.

I love finding serendipitous solutions to self-induced problems.

Ray Sipes

Dear Mary Ann,

I just wanted to tell you about my trip home from Portland and WVAG. My son dropped me off at the airport, and after I checked my bag, I quickly ended up at the security check. As usual, I told the inspector-people that the blue Zephyr Hill case held a musical instrument. After it went through, they asked me a little about it, and they asked me (or I asked them, *grin*) if they'd like to hear it.

I was traveling on Alaska Airlines, and it was a small and not busy station, (only 3 x-ray things) and the people working there were all interested, so I set the case down and pulled out my 'harp and started playing. I've never had a better reception to my playing, so of course I relaxed and did my best. They loved it and I played 4 or 5 tunes. While I was putting my instrument away, one of the women told me that it was the first time that they'd had anyone play for them, and asked me if I had a card. I just happened to have a couple, but I told her that I lived in Yuma, Arizona. She said that didn't matter, she just wanted to have a reminder of the occasion.

Well, I was so full of confidence that when I arrived at the gate and found a chair in the waiting area, I pulled the autoharp back out and started playing again. It was amazing to me – it became quite quiet, and folks really listened. I played a variety of music, of course trying to show off the 'harp and they *loved* it. When I played

Emma's Waltz, a Finnish tune I had just recently learned from Drew Smith, I actually got applause!!!!

I'd played in airports before, but this was a first. I'm hooked now. I'm not sure whether or not I'll start setting the open case out in front of me with a couple of \$1 bills out there for teasers ... but you never know ... Ain't autoharps grand!!!

Fuey Herring

Dear Mary Ann,

... gallywagging around the countryside. While we were traveling up the Bruce Peninsula, a spit of land between Lake Huron and the Georgian Bay in Ontario, I noted something called "Scenic Caves" in red on the map and so we went over to investigate, meticulously following the road signs on the gravel road and ending up at a farmhouse, where we dutifully paid our \$4 entrance fees – then back to our mini-RV, a 20 foot vehicle built on a Toyota stretch truck chassis. Waiting for us to re-emerge from the office were two Canadian couples who are in the market for a similar camper and wanted to ask some questions about what we call our "condo-minimum." Well, of course we gave them a house tour, and I was feeling pretty proud of the tidiness of the place until my eye lit on the bra I had rinsed out which was proudly waving next to the stove to dry out. They, however, had spotted something else – the autoharp cases on top of the over-the-cab bed. "Oh, Heather, look!" shrieked one lady and Heather went into ecstasies. "Autoharps!!!"

Now it seems a little bit miraculous, but Heather had an autoharp, and she had no idea what to do with it – and *she had brought it on the vacation trip* because her husband and the other couple all played instruments.

After the initial shock of autoharp recognition and bonding, we all bounced across tire tracks through a wheat field to the start of the rocky scramble down boulders through a heavy forest to get to the caves that had aeons ago been chiseled out of the cliff by the pounding waters of Georgian Bay. Back at the parking area we again connected with the Canadians who asked us
(Continued on page 33)

'Harpers E-Mail

This is an update of the list of addresses for autoharp players and enthusiasts published in the AQ Winter '97 issue.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

aroessler@socket.net Anita Roesler

CHANGED E-MAIL ADDRESSES

neal@doofusmusic.com Neal Walters
colleen@doofusmusic.com Colleen Walters
emmasdad@swbell.net David Highland
whitmer@zma.attmil.ne.jp Charles Whitmer
marc@thebards.net Marc Gunn

NEW WWW ADDRESSES

<http://thebards.net/mp3/> Marc Gunn page

MUSIC RELATED WWW ADDRESSES

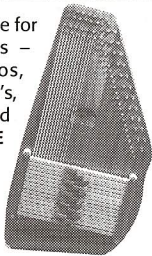
<http://www.google.com>
<http://www.folkindex.mse.jhu.edu> Folk music
<http://www.mudcat.org/threads.cfm>
 1,000s of folk songs
<http://summer.com.br/~pfilho/html/top40/>
 An archive of lyrics to top-40 songs from 1930 to 1998.
<http://members.aol.com/jazzdd/index.htm>
westrui.htm The oldest known musical score?
<http://www.webster.sk.ca/greenwich/EVIDENCE.HTM> More about the oldest song in the world.
<http://durtylinen.com/Lyrics.htm> links to lyric and sheet music sites



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Clubs

Verla Boyd reports as follows: "After six months of discussing what to call our club, we settled on 'Hoosier String Players.' I wish I could say the autoharp players outnumber the dulcimer players, but I can't. The first hour we separate into two groups. The autoharps play and practice while the dulcimers are doing the same. We then re-group the second hour and play together. In the six months we have had over 30 people come and play with us. We still get calls from people who read our announcements in the paper inquiring about what we are doing. We average around 18 each month. A lot of work has gone into organizing this club and the pay-off is so exciting each month as we hear the improvements the players are making."

Recordings

Bridge of Flowers
 Autoharp: Bonnie Leigh
 (see ad page 15)

Lift The Veil
 Laurie and John Simpson
 Autoharp: Laurie Simpson
 2102 Palmyra Drive
 Marietta, Georgia 30067

We Might As Well Be Dead
 Hobo Pie
 Autoharp: Bob Woodcock
 268 Barren Hill Road
 Conshohocken, PA 19428

One Of Mine
 Autoharp: Carey Dubbert
 (see ad page 20)

Rock-It 'Harp
 Autoharp: Tina Louise Barr
 (see ad page 15)

Contains autoharp:

Carryin' On
 The Left Handed Capricorns
 Autoharp: Ron Penix
 143 N. Lakewood Avenue
 Baltimore MD 21224

The Forgotten West

Black Irish Band
 Guest autoharpist: Tina Louise Barr
www.blackirish.com

NOTICE:

Will the couple from Michigan who sat with Jean Paul Gripon and Denise Kirie during dinner at MLAG this year please contact Jean Paul at 208 Avenue du Maine, 75014 Paris, France or email jp.gripon@groupe-andre.fr. Jean Paul would like very much to write to you.

Events

DECEMBER

7th Annual Jammin' on the Mountain
 December 1 & 2; Queen Wilhelmina Lodge, near **Mena, Arkansas**; (reservations at 1-800-264-2477) co-sponsored by the 'Harps Over Ouachita and Shreveport-Bossier Autoharp Clubs; Info: 318-686-5727 or harp6633@aol.com

FEBRUARY 2001

Winter Festival of Acoustic Music; February 11 & 12, 2001; **Irving, Texas**; Info: Linda Thompson at llt6@earthlink.net or Joe Morgan at jmm1@flash.net.

NEW "SNAIL MAIL" ADDRESS for Charles Whitmer

17th ASG CM
 Unit 45013, Box 2675
 APO AP 96338-5013

A note about this address:

1. Use domestic USA postage rates.
2. Even though this address is in Japan, the word "Japan" must not appear on the envelope as this is a US military APO address. The US postal service will return-to-sender any letters with "Japan" written on them.

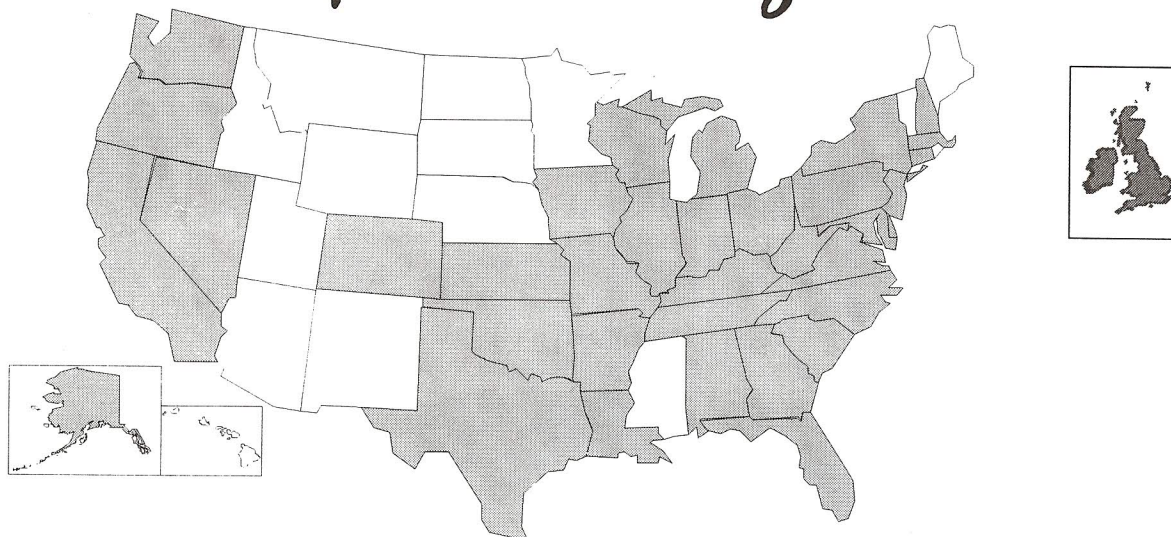
And for Bob Lewis:

15993 Cove Lane
 Montclair, Virginia 22026
 703-583-5452

tuneit@autoharpworks.com



'Harpers-At-Large



Mike Fenton's Workshop/Concert

Atlanta, Georgia

Reporting: Laurie Searle

Palmetto, Georgia

Living in Atlanta, Georgia just keeps getting better and better, what with all the autoharp talent that visits our city.

Our most recent treat was a workshop, house concert and lesson session featuring British super star Mike Fenton on July 8-9. Peggy and Bill Martin graciously hosted the workshop, house concert and pot luck dinner. And Jean and Billy Griffin graciously hosted the lesson session.

Mike's two hour workshop offered a balanced variety of music and technique for intermediate and advanced autoharpers. Mike selected three traditional pieces and showed us how to get the basic tune under our fingers before enhancing it with rhythmic embellishments and light fillers. Next we learned several Blues licks and how to play them on chromatic and diatonic 'harps. Then we learned three great songs that featured standard Blues themes—*Ain't Had No Lovin'*, *Careless Love* and the need for a good cup of coffee. The highlight of the workshop, though, was learning *Polly Swallow*, an olde-world waltz Mike wrote in tribute to a fisher girl photographed in 1880 (featured in *AQ* Winter '99). Using parallel harmonies and a "finger-walking" thumb technique, Mike added a whole other dimension to the notes on the page.

The house concert featured an unbelievable mix of talent that reminded me of Enigma Variations. When Mike plays an instrumental piece on the autoharp, he

mesmerizes the audience with sensitive harmonies, artful embellishments and incredible technique. But before the audience can recover from their collective goose bumps, Mike breaks out the jaw harps and cranks up the audience participation. What a wonderful diversion. The house concert also featured Carole Outwater—who performed a beautiful autoharp duet with Mike, and played back-up bass on several pieces—as well as Gregg Averett, who demonstrated his latest fashion in finger wear—a thimble! You haven't heard *Rock the Cradle*, until you've heard Gregg's rendition.

Three Georgia Autoharpers signed up for Mike's lesson session on Monday night, eager to learn all of the Master's tricks. Mike spent one-on-one time with each student and used a variety of teaching methods to teach his thumb lead style. What I especially liked about Mike's instruction was his "show and do" style of teaching, and his caution not to "over use" a single technique. The highlight of the evening was the group jam session and a special recorder/autoharp duet I'll remember for a long time.

Sing, Swing, & String Week

Warren Wilson College, Asheville, NC.

Reporting: Linda Huber

Hanover, Pennsylvania

I always enjoy returning to the beautiful mountains of North Carolina and the Swannanoa workshops. "Sing, Swing, and String Week" was a new program. The class offerings covered instruction on various stringed instruments, dance and singing. From the reaction of fellow students, I

would say it was a success. Most of the classes were relatively small so lots of individual attention was given to the students. Dulcimer Week was occurring at the same time, which helped to provide lots of jamming opportunities in the evenings.

I took a class on ukelele from Kenny Raskin. I have had a uke in my closet for 45 years and decided it was time I learned how to play it. I was in a Bluegrass ensemble led by Robin Bullock where I learned lots of things I needed to know about that genre. Last, but most certainly not least, was a class in "Autoharp Extras" taught by Mike Fenton. "Autoharp Extras" was a short class in the afternoon in addition to the regular morning class held during the time I was learning ukelele. I can't say enough about the teaching of Mike Fenton. He individualized his teaching so that each of us, no matter what our level, had something to work on. He was always pulling out a new tune so that we were never bored. He also most graciously made time to instruct people who weren't even in any of the autoharp courses.

The jams were great, the concerts were excellent and this "Yankee" gal made lots of wonderful new "Rebel" friends!!

Old Time Week, Swannanoa Gathering

Warren Wilson College, Asheville, NC

Reporting: Linda Sides

Chattanooga, Tennessee

Here I sit, listening to Bryan singing "Farther Along" on his latest CD, catching up on the laundry, and wondering just how I'm going to put into words a report on the

Swannanoa Gathering's Old Time Week ...

Situated in the mountains just east of Asheville, North Carolina, the Gathering is held on the campus of Warren Wilson College. Now, late July in the south – even in the mountains – is usually sweltering, but it was cold and rainy 'most all week. So we spent a lot of time tuning ... or needing to.

Each of the instructors performed at the orientation Sunday night and introduced their classes to the participants. Bryan (Bowers) played *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, beginning (I think) with patting the melody, then thumb lead melody and then with various embellishments. The audience's collective gasp spoke volumes of what was to come during the week, in terms of folks hearing the autoharp as they'd never heard it before.

I was able to take both his beginning and intermediate/advanced classes, as did Jean Griffin of Atlanta. The advanced class met first, and right off the bat, Bryan challenged us with assignments that focused on mastering the basics, such as patting out a simple melody slowly and accurately. He challenged us to not let our pride get in the way of taking those important "baby steps.

Well, let's just say that Tuesday's meeting was humbling...>). From there we moved slowly, but thoroughly, through topics on tuning, thumb lead, 'harp ergonomics et al.

I'll share a story from the first beginning class meeting, not to make fun ... but because it helps me remember that it hadn't been all that long since I was in the same boat. When Bryan asked the class if we'd all tuned our 'harps, one lady said "You mean they need tuning?" and another "Oh, I don't have to tune mine; someone else does it for me." (That someone else was *not* present.) And that, along with the humidity, got me to thinking that it might not be too late to get into the string band class that was going on at the same period. But Bryan was patience personified with these ladies. By the end of the week, with the help of Cathy Ciolac, they had chord bars moved, action improved, straps on – and had made huge progress. And you know what?, I learned a lot in that class, and I'm glad I stayed. Do we ever get "too big" for the basics?

On Wednesday night, the faculty gave a concert which turned out to be something of a marathon because of the number of incredible teachers. Bryan played his mandocello and sang a very bluesy *I'm Sitting On Top Of the World* with Ginny Hawker singing harmony, followed by his *A Friend For*

Life.

After the concert, Jean Griffin, Jean Daniel and myself were dutifully doing our homework for Bryan's class, which was to pat and play thumb lead on *Gold Watch and Chain*. Inspired by Bryan and fatigue, a parody was soon born. By 1:30 in the morning we marched with our 'harps over to the tent where Bryan and Kate, Don Pedi and James Leva were jammin' and waited for the opportunity to share it with them. Bryan was reaching for his 'harp to join us when he realized that there'd been a slight change made to the text. He confessed later that it brought a tear to his eye.

After supper each night, we had singing jams; and on Thursday, Bryan was sharing leading duties with Sheila Kay Adams and Laura Boosinger. He and Kate sang *Storms On the Ocean* – a new song to me. Their harmonies were just gorgeous. It's been the kind of song that I just can't get out of my head ever since I heard it. Jean Daniel told me the German phrase for this that translates "a worm in your ear." Appropriate.

I got to meet Mike Fenton, who'd stayed over a coupla' days from his week of teaching. A friend there told me that Mike might have some of the Herco nylon picks that I've searched high/low for for sale. When I asked him if he did, he said he had a box of them in England. And then he reached into his pocket and graciously gave me two of his picks and I was able to tighten them up using my curling iron. Thanks again, Mike.

Friday nights at Swannanoa are student showcase nights. Bryan had arranged for us to play *Gold Watch and Chain*, starting off with rhythm chords – while humming the melody, then playing thumb lead, then pinching the melody and then closing with our parody. So picture this – five ladies with 'harps seated in a semicircle singing: "Oh, I'll pawn you my gold watch and chain, love" (and the audience can be heard to sing along softly),

"I will pawn you my gold wedding ring, I will pawn you this 'harp" (here we thrust the 'harps forward) "on my bosom", (stunned silence, then laughter), "Just don't make me pat this d__m thing again!" (applause/laughter)

And there Bryan sat in the front row, grinning like a proud papa... Thanks again, Dad!!!

Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops
Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, West Virginia
Reporting: Eileen Roys

Chester, Maryland

Once again, "The Green Rolling Hills of West Virginia" provided a perfect setting for several in-depth week-long workshops for our beloved instrument. Since 1972, the picturesque of Davis and Elkins College has played backdrop to the thousands of musicians, dancers and craftspeople attracted by the Augusta Heritage Center's extensive curriculum of summertime classes.

During Week 4 (30 July through 4 August), veteran instructor Charles Whitmer taught a session entitled "Autoharp: Gospel Repertoire." His students were presented with three packets of reference material, which included autoharp tablature and standard notation for sixty-seven hymns, Sacred Harp songs and Christmas carols. Companion recordings were also available for a nominal fee. In addition to repertoire expansion, Charles placed considerable emphasis on playing techniques and varying one's arrangement of a piece of music. Each of his pupils was offered a one-hour private lesson during the course of the week. He also taught an evening mini class on Shape Note Singing in the campus chapel, and was honored by being given a fifteen minute spot on the Thursday evening concert. (On 10 August, Charles moved to Japan – where he will be teaching music to the children of American diplomats and military personnel. However he plans to return to the USA each summer to continue his autoharp activities here.)

The following week, the multi-talented Heidi Cerrigione was on hand to teach "Autoharp: Old-Time Repertoire." Heidi had prepared an impressive spiral-bound class handout of somewhat obscure songs and tunes, complete with a choice of either a cassette tape or compact disc. Her enthusiastic pupils worked their way through six pieces of music during the first half of each day. Following a lunch break, John Cerrigione joined the group on guitar for a Round Robin-type song and tune swap.

Open stage presentations by class members were also encouraged. Collectively, the group performed four of their newly-learned musical numbers on Thursday evening for the Augusta Craft Showcase. Earlier in the week, the Cerrigiones were chosen to provide background music at an evening reception for West Virginia Governor, Cecil Underwood, which took place at the residence of D&E President Thomas Mann.

The autoharp was also represented

during Week 5 as part of Vocal Week and at the Augusta Festival activities by the renowned West Virginia singer/songwriter, Kate Long, as well as by John “J.W.”

Johnson, who specializes in the music and stylings of the Carter Family. Heidi Cerrigione continued making her presence on the autoharp known by leading a two-hour hands-on workshop on 12 August at Elkins City Park. Likewise, many ‘harp were in evidence at the nightly jam sessions at various locations around the campus during the five-week duration of classes at Augusta.

Willamette Valley Autoharp Gathering
Albany, Oregon
Reporting: Nadine Stah White
Abingdon, England

My husband Ian and I made the very long journey from England to Oregon this summer for a number of reasons, including sharing a family holiday with my sister and her family, visiting friends, doing some sightseeing (both Crater Lake and Mt. St. Helens were astounding, and the high desert of Oregon was wonderful). However what really dictated our choice of this holiday venue was the Willamette Valley Autoharp Gathering. This would be the only chance this year to attend an autoharp festival, so we decided to grab the opportunity.

Having acquired 8 hours of jet-lag and a large chunk of exhaustion in the process of travelling to Portland from London, England, we enjoyed a couple of gentle days recuperation on the beautiful Oregon coast before heading inland to the Econo-Lodge in Corvallis. This proved to be a very comfortable and convenient base for three nights at the festival.

The Econo-Lodge was in exactly the right place in Corvallis for ease of access onto the route to the festival. Although Corvallis is further away from the festival site than Albany, where other hotel accommodation could have been arranged, we loved the atmosphere of this beautiful college town – and found the travelling time took between 8 minutes (late night) and 13 minutes (morning, with more traffic on the road), which was completely acceptable. As were the comfortable bed, bath and shower.

The festival was GREAT. I did find it to be both more and less than I had anticipated. There were super workshops. I know this because I heard snatches of many of the workshops, but in fact I only attended two because I spent a lot of time

talking (who, ME?) and playing music with others at the festival. I managed to get in some really enjoyable chatting and playing sessions with a number of people.

It was a real treat to meet some of the individuals I knew of from the Cyberpluckers and to share some music time – Meryl Korn, Fuey Herring, Pete Daigle, John Arthur – and too many more to mention. Another delightful meeting was with Paul Cram. I appreciated the chance to play a couple of his very fine hand-crafted autoharps. Evo Bluestein also had one of his ‘Evo-Harps’ available to try out. These are a real modern alternative to the heavier custom ‘harps and would be particularly attractive to fans of the old A-model autoharp.

The festival was in lovely surroundings, although the proximity of a creek did mean the mosquitoes could be a problem in the evenings. It took us a couple of nights to catch on to this and start applying the repellent; by this time Ian had some very nasty bites which didn’t start healing up until the middle of the following week. Seven in a row on one ankle swelled up and made one angry-looking welt. YUCK!

From this year’s experience, I would guess ‘mosquito protection’ deserves to figure highly on the festival information sheet, particularly so for out-of-state visitors like us.

From the workshops I did attend, my personal high point was the workshop given by Richard Scholtz. Richard is an impeccable chromatic player, who achieves a deceptively simple playing style, sparse and completely accurate, which uses unexpected chords to create wonderful intervals and even semi-dissonant harmony lines at will.

The workshop in question was about using fewer notes in your playing. It included advice about ‘leaving space’ in your playing (both as a solo player and when playing with others). Richard was an effective and enjoyable teacher, who managed the difficult task of structuring the workshop so that it had something useful to offer players at all levels. He plays a very well-travelled and beat-up looking old B-model 21 bar chromatic which produces a crystalline tone to die for. I guess it was probably ‘one in 10,000’ off the assembly line. If factory made autoharps could be guaranteed to sound like this one, I guess no one would be bothering to build custom instruments.

The evening concerts were very enjoyable – a chance to see the main workshop performers: Mike Fenton, Richard Scholtz, Evo Bluestein, Les Gustafson-Zook and one

delightful early evening showcase concert for Cathy Britell and Jon ten Broek, Carey Dubbert, Adam Miller and Laura Velasquez. Of the sets in the evening concerts, I particularly enjoyed Les Gustafson-Zook’s set with his wife Gwen. I am fortunate to have had a number of chances to enjoy Mike Fenton in the UK, but I was completely bowled over by his outstanding evening concert set at Willamette.

There were some good jam sessions after the concerts, and the smaller numbers taking part overall meant that you had a much greater chance of hearing yourself play. Ian enjoyed playing in these sessions with his melodeon (small diatonic button accordion).

Having been fortunate to attend one other autoharp festival (Mountain Laurel) on two occasions, I found myself making comparisons throughout the event. WVAG certainly had a different ‘feel’ to me. I particularly enjoyed a number of features of the event.

1) Willamette is much smaller than MLAG (although I heard someone say this year’s WVAG was the biggest festival so far). The smaller size of this event means that I found that I had a better chance of connecting with more individuals – either for chatting or for playing.

2) Like MLAG, the setting at WVAG was idyllic – and I gather that the weather is more likely to be ideal for playing and camping (i.e. low humidity and no rain). Sunny days saw temperatures in the upper 80s, with a rapid drop in temperature at sunset to cool nights in the 50s.

3) The workshops were first-rate, and because there was only one workshop scheduled at a time, I guess that folks might not feel quite so ‘torn’ for choices.

4) There was superb daily support for beginners at this festival, and the ‘Learning Tree’ was an alternative small-group learning venue where you could sign up for some time with the instructor(s) of your choice. In hindsight, *with* hindsight, I regret not signing up for one of Richard Stoltz’ Learning Tree sessions.

5) The set up of a small acoustic stage near part of the eating area was very good for ‘open stage’ performance.

6) At mealtimes, we all sat down at tables and ate together at one place – and this created lots of opportunities either to listen to open stage, if you chose to sit nearby, or to chat if you chose a table around the corner behind the hedge.

7) The food was a highlight for many

individuals. I particularly enjoyed the one evening when they had a range of wonderful salads.

I guess I was only disappointed with a couple of features of the Willamette experience.

1) It was FAR TOO SHORT, running from Thursday evening through Sunday lunch time. Even with a festival like Mountain Laurel, where many folks arrive on the Wednesday and stay through to Monday morning, the 'end of festival blues' tend to arrive too soon. Both Ian and I agreed that we would have happily stayed there for twice as long.

2) I found that even though Willamette is a smaller event, I still didn't manage to spend all the time I would have liked to spend with many folks who were there. Ah, well, I guess that this is pretty much the nature of any festival event like this: a great bunch of folks come together, notice that they would like to spend lots of time together and then they all travel their separate ways.

The rest of our holiday was marvelous, too; but that Willamette Valley Autoharp Gathering definitely helped to make this the trip of a lifetime. Any autoharper who lives closer-to-hand than we do and who has not yet managed to attend should seriously think about including WVAG 2001 in their plans for next year!!

Les Gustafson-Zook House Concert

Piqua, Ohio

Reporting: Marty Lane

Pleasant Hill, Ohio

What's a wonderful way to spend a rainy Thursday night? – why, a house concert with Les Gustafson-Zook is just about the perfect answer!

On October 5th, Les came to southwest Ohio to perform in a home in Piqua. Although the audience was somewhat smaller than hoped for, the music more than fulfilled the expectations of those who braved the rain to come.

Whether playing old time fiddle tunes with fingers flashing on the autoharp strings, singing and accompanying himself on more modern songs and tunes, or getting everyone's feet tapping to the rhythm and songs of the mouth bow, jawharp and limberjacks, the entire concert was a musical delight.

We're looking forward to Les' next concert in our area – whenever and wherever it will be (just as long as it's not too far in the future).

29th Annual Walnut Valley Festival International Autoharp Championship

Winfield, Kansas

Reporting: Glennus Davis

Beaumont, Texas

Once you decide to make the extended journey to the Walnut Valley Festival, you immediately start conjuring up that you want to take in everything while there. My wife, Yvonne, and I found this very hard to do due to the many performers that you want to see, and also the championship contest going on at the same time. Yvonne decided to remain in one stage area while I tried to take in a small amount of certain performances. That required some scurrying about from one stage to another. We arrived early enough on Wednesday to attend the Taylor Guitar Concert, but opted to get a good night's sleep so we could arrive early for the first shows and the autoharp contest at 12 noon sharp. Taking into account the whole area of performers, the time schedule of the performances is right on time.

There were only about 10 or 12 autoharp contestants. All but one proved very proficient and you know that when someone stumbles you sympathize with the contestant and want to help, but this he has to finish himself. Drew Smith won first place with his chromatic autoharp, which I favor, and did a fantastic performance. I acquainted myself with him later and found him to be friendly and interesting. We agreed the chromatic autoharp has its proper place. Karla Armstrong placed second and did an outstanding rendition of her music, and third place went to my friend, and favorite autoharpist, Les Gustafson-Zook. Of course I wouldn't dare take anything away from Alex Usher, Cathy Britell, Gregg Averett and Adam Miller. *You all* (I'm from Texas) did good!

After the autoharp contest, I made it a point to meet and talk to Lindsay Haisley, who arranged Willie Nelson's song, *Crazy*, in a recent Interaction Lesson. I plan to use it when I perform at the annual Rug Hooking Camp at the Tezcuco Plantation, south of Baton Rouge in Darrow, Louisiana in February 2001.

Shuffling from one area to another, I caught Bryan Bowers program Saturday night, and there were so many people in the stage area you didn't have room to move about. That was okay with me because everyone was listening to the music, and besides, Bryan is always good. Talked to him later and he was his amiable self.

Talked to Julie Davis while she was working Stage 3. Julie is extremely nice and pleasant to talk to. Made it to Karen Mueller's performance. That girl can do it all! You know she plays her autoharp hard and per usual broke a string, but kept on playing. Then she did some songs with the mountain dulcimer and guitar. Nice meeting Karen again and reminding her of some licks I learned from her in a class at Mt. View, Arkansas.

Karla Armstrong impressed me with her testimony of her Christian faith, and upon meeting her could readily see that in her bright personality. She told the audience of her experience as a Christian after she had won her trophy. This took a great amount of courage and to me it proved her to be an extra champion plus.

Would have liked to meet Cathy Britell, Alex Usher and Gregg Averett but our paths never crossed.

Moving on to the Cathy Barton and Dave Para show, I heard some great harmony singing and instrumental performance of which I had read so much about. Their repertoire of Civil War was noticeably distinctive and remarkably performed. I learned that *Aura Lee* is a Civil War song and they did it in a beautiful arrangement. I thought that I might hear *Lorena*, but it wasn't on their program. In the past, I learned some techniques from them in classes at Elkins Augusta Heritage Center.

We heard some fine music in all of the competition. The first lady ever won second place in the finger-style guitar competition out of forty plus contestants. It was 1:30 the next morning before the winners were announced.

After the banjo competition, won by a young man from Tyler, Texas, we prepared to head back to Beaumont, Texas. A \$7,000 OME banjo was presented to the champion. It was a beautiful instrument.

Getting back home, I saw that Fran Stallings was to perform at the Grand 1894 Opera House in Galveston, Texas, but we were too exhausted to go hear her. Also missed talking to Roz Brown, who was an emcee at Winfield. Oh well, it is impossible to cover all bases, but *I tried!!*



Picker's Portrait

Bob Woodcock, Conshohocken, Pennsylvania

I entered this world March 2, 1950 in a little hand-hewn log shack somewhere in the mountains of Cleveland, Ohio. My father, a simple old backwoods immunologist had just ridden out on Old Blue to see patients when my mom went into labor a month early. Out popped a 4lb. little roaster – me. Nobody was sure if they should roll me in flour or take me to the hospital. Family legend has it they chose the latter, but there are days I have my doubts. I did survive somehow, and have been making up for lost time ever since. We moved to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania one year later. There, on the banks of the painfully beautiful Susquehanna River, I grew up (there may be some debate on the last point). My life has been much like an old, meandering stream, wandering from one extreme to another; sometimes a roaring, rushing flood, other times a slow arroyo. I will save the slide show for another time. Rather, I will talk a little about my music. Suffice it to say that I work as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist. I live outside of Philly with my nineteen year old daughter Anna Althea and my fiancée Barbara Bloomfield. I have another daughter, Lisa, age 13, who lives with her mother. Yes, I used to be a part of a nuclear family, but we had a tragic meltdown. Both of my kids are the smartest and most talented kids in the world and Barbara is the most beautiful woman and the best fiddler in the world. 'Nuff said.

My musical roots run deep. My father's father was Welsh, and had that nation's love of singing. My father was also an enthusiastic singer and a very good mouth harp player. My mother's mother, born in the Portuguese Azores, loved country music and played the slide guitar for a time.

I first remember being fascinated by traditional music as a child listening to the Sunday morning country church services on the a.m. radio. Billy Jean



Bob Woodcock

and Bobby Sue would get up with the guitar and do an old Gospel number. My brothers laughed; I loved it. I clearly remember hearing *Anchored In Love* any number of times.

I got my first real guitar at age 15, during the Great Folk Scare of the 60s. For some years, I did the folk thing, with some country thrown in. In the late 60s, I was heavy into rural blues and performed with a harp player. My inevitable fame was hindered by one handicap: before I went on stage I would develop a severe case of premenstrual syndrome.

OK. So I was in the navy for a few years, then in the radioactive reserves. I found myself in Lancaster, Pennsylvania with a guitar, banjo and mandolin, playing to the walls of my house. So I put an ad in the paper announcing the first meeting of the Lancaster County Folksong and Fiddlers Society. That was over 20 years ago and they are still an active, vibrant organization.

In Lancaster my interest in old-timey music deepened and I played in a number of string bands, all of which are gone without a trace. I did some building; mostly hammer dulcimers and banjos, a few mandolins. In 1980, I came to Philly and got involved with

the oldtimey scene there. Once, while working at one of the big city emergency rooms as a fill-in nurse, I heard this gnome-like ER doc singing *Dark Town Strutter's Ball*. "Hmmmmm," says I, "We had better check this out." So we did, and Gil Palley and I have been best friends ever since. He took my old 15 bar OS and redid the bars into something that made sense and I added the 'harp to my list of poorly played instruments. Drew Smith inspired me to begin playing fiddle tunes on the 'harp. I still play primarily thumb lead style, with homemade, obscenely long thumb picks.

I consider the autoharp community to be one of the warmest, friendliest and most talented bunch of musicians around. Many musical communities can be like belly buttons: you are either an innie or an outie. If you've been around 'harpers you know that is not the case. They have enriched my musical life beyond measure, and I consider it an honor to be one of them.

And now, take out your papers for that quiz.

(Editor's note: Bob and his group "Hobo Pie" have recently released a CD titled "We Might As Well Be Dead" on which Bob plays autoharp.)



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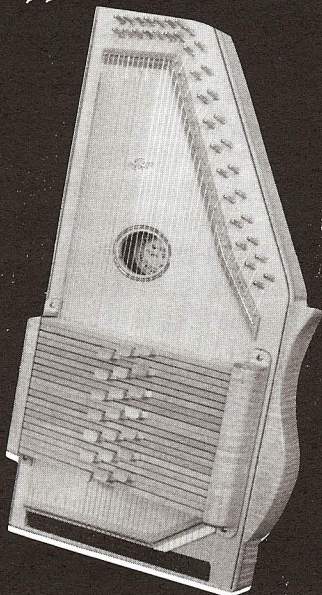
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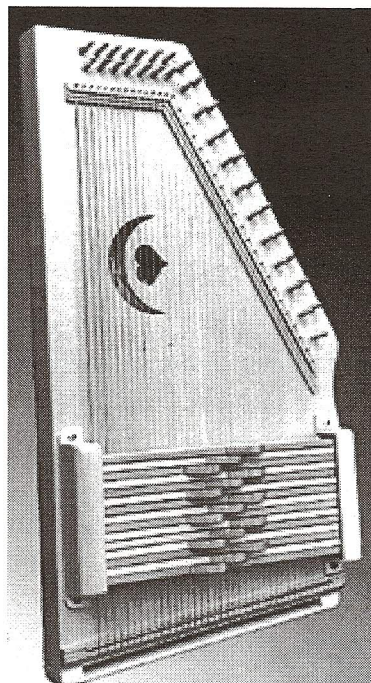
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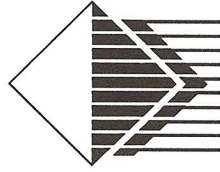
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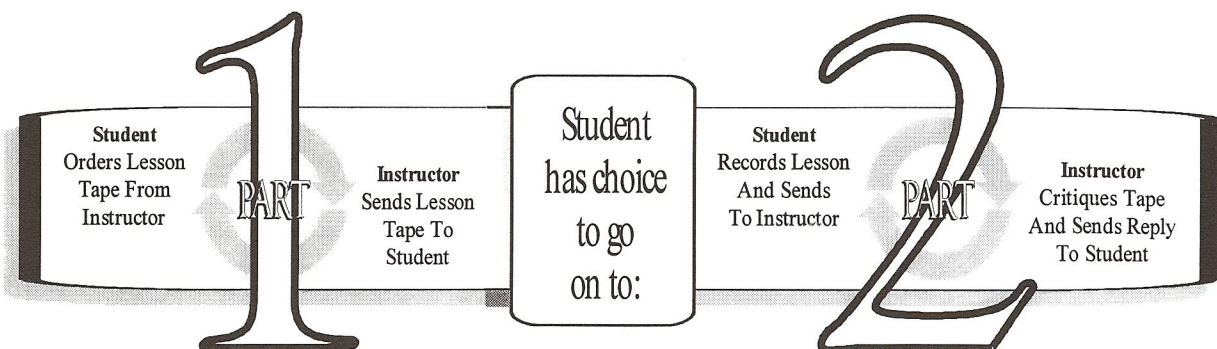
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Lyman "Bud" Taylor began playing the autoharp as a "loner" in early 1973. Leaning on the few extant books and later the *Autoharpoholic Magazine*, he remained largely self-taught. He connected with the autoharp community at Cranberry Dulcimer Gathering in 1989 and Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering in 1991 and has been attending these two festivals ever since. He has taught workshops in the former and once placed fourth in the competition at the latter.

In 1991, he developed The Jazz-Style Autoharp which plays 33 chords (half jazz-chords) on a 21 bar chromatic 'harp, especially good for playing popular songs of the Swing Era. An article describing how anyone can do this was printed in *AQ* (Volume 4, Number 3, April 1992). An updated version of this article will be reprinted in a forthcoming book by Mary Lou Orthey.

Bud has contributed music and articles to both *Autoharp Quarterly* and *Autoharp Clearinghouse* over the past nine years. He has recorded one cassette tape, "An Autoharp Repertoire", featuring a number of well known and much loved songs.

He is the composer of more than 200
(continued on page 10)



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"The Slow-Strum Push-Pluck Pinch"

There is more than one way to pluck a single string. And there is more than one way to strum a group of strings. Different kinds of sounds can be produced by making different combinations of these plucks and strums. "The Slow-Strum Push-Pluck Pinch" is a long title but, hopefully, an accurate description of this one particular stroke.

The Push-Pluck is usually played in the high octave. It is played with a finger pick placed on the fourth (ring) finger of your right hand. (If you are normally a three-pick player, you will need to get an extra pick or switch the one from your index finger.) Melody picking is normally done by curling your middle finger around to the side of the string you want to pluck and pulling it toward the bass side of your 'harp. To execute the push-pluck, extend your ring finger out as straight as you can and lay the ball of your pick on top of the melody-note string. Then, push straight down toward the wood with considerable force until the string literally snaps off the end of your pick. The sound which this produces is a note which is louder than the other notes of the chord, a sound which is less harsh than the normal pluck – a beautiful clear bell-like sound. (If you do this correctly, the ball of your pick will then be blocked against the neighboring dead string. This avoids the sometimes unpleasant sound of dragging the tip of your pick across neighboring dead strings.) Practice this technique on single notes. (You may need to tuck your thumb under your hand to get away from its habit of pinching.) When you have begun to master the technique, then play the melody line of the piece of music which accompanies this lesson.

The other half of this stroke is the Slow-Strum. A normal thumb strum is a chop where the thumb brushes across one or two or more strings so swiftly that it

sounds like a chord played on a piano. One can slow this thumb strum down by almost any degree which will result in separating the notes of the chord. In this case, the strum is slowed down only slightly, just enough to separate the sound of one string from another. This strum is usually executed in the middle and/or low octave of your 'harp. The strum is begun a split second before the beat, ending on the beat. It is like melody strumming, strumming the notes of the chord from low notes to high notes. The difference is that, instead of the top/melody note being played by the thumb, the top/melody note is played an octave higher with a Push-Pluck. This combination of Slow-Strum in the lower octaves plus a Push-Pluck in the high octave, gives a unique and beautiful combination of melody and harmony. You may want to practice the harmony strums alone before combining the two.

This technique is not for every song. But there are certain pieces, such as the lovely evening hymn *Now On Land and Sea Descending*, where it can really add to the beauty of your instrumental rendition. Please note that in the first two (and similar) measures, it is important to hold the chord button down and let the harmony notes of the first and third beats ring while you pluck the melody notes of the second and fourth beats. As is often the case, the description of the technique sounds more difficult than the actual doing of it. And once you learn to do it, I think you will love it.

Some other tunes that you might like to try using this stroke in the keys of F, C, G and Dm are: *Kum Ba Yah* (C), *Amazing Grace* (F or G), *Abide With Me* (C), *America The Beautiful* (G), *In The Garden* (F), *What Child Is This/Greensleeves* (Dm), *O Come All Ye Faithful* (F), *Aloha Oe* (F), *Home On The Range* (F), *Brahm's Lullaby* (C).

One footnote: If you are going to play the melody in the high octave (one octave higher than written) it is most helpful to have an Extra-High D (two octaves plus one note above middle C). While this string is not part of a standard set of autoharp strings, one can be obtained by buying a Gauge #4 (.013) guitar string and cutting off the excess. Some luthier made 'harps which have 37 strings already have this note. If you have 36 strings, this thinner string is installed at Peg #36 in place of the high C. F #7 is tuned up to G and each successive string tuned to the note of the next higher string. If your 'harp is playing mainly in G and D, the A # can also be skipped and a Gauge #4 string used for an extra high C # at Peg #35.

With the Extra-High D, there are many more tunes that you can play in the high octave, such as: *The Ash Grove* (F), *Nearer My God to Thee* (F), *Morning Has Broken* (C), *Lo! How a Rose E'er Blooming* (F), *There's A Song In the Air* (F).

(Lyman's bio continued from page 9) pieces of music including a Christmas Cantata and a musical Passion Play. He is also the author of a small body of poetry, with two small volumes self-published. In 1997 he placed all of his "works" in the public domain.

He is a retired minister of the United Methodist Church who, from the beginning, has used his autoharp in a music ministry which continues to this day.



NOW ON LAND AND SEA DESCENDING

Samuel Longfellow, 1859

A Selection of Popular National Arts, 1818

f C G7 C G C C7 F Dm C G7 C

Now on land and sea de - scend - ing, brings the night its peace pro - found,

p C G7 C G C C7 F Dm C G7 C

5 let our ves - per hymn be blend - ing with the ho - ly calm a - round.

f C G7 C *p* F G7 C G7 *f* C G7 C F G7 F

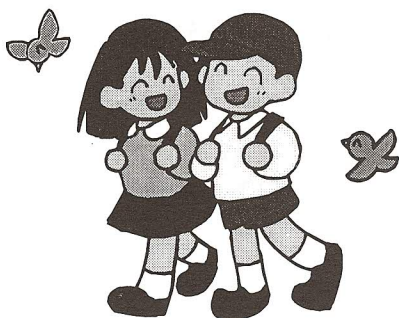
9 Ju - bi - la - te! Ju - bi - la - te! Ju - bi - la - te! A - men!

C Am Dm G7 C Am Dm F G7 C

13 Let our ves - per hymn be blend - ing with the ho - ly calm a - round.

STROKES: ♪ = Slow-Strum Push-Pluck Pinch ♪ = Thumb Strum
 ~ = Push Pluck ~ = Sustain Chord

Sing one octave lower than written.
 Check Hymnal for additional verses.



THE CHILDREN'S CORNER

by Roberta Gerberich

In the year of 1177, a master builder of France whose name was Bénédict undertook the construction of a bridge across the Rhône River at the town of Avignon.

A legend tells, on a September day, a total eclipse of the sun darkened the sky over the town of Avignon. The townspeople were frightened and gathered in the marketplace. The bishop appeared and began to preach a sermon when suddenly a ragged youth ran forward, boldly interrupted the bishop's sermon, and cried out that the eclipse was a sign from God, who had commanded him to build a great bridge. The sun returned and the boy lifted an immense stone and carried it to the edge of the river as the first stone of his bridge. The people of Avignon, recognizing that only God could have enabled the boy to carry such a boulder, commissioned him to build the bridge.

Whether this story is true or not is unknown but the bridge that Bénédict built was a masterpiece. It won a place for itself in nursery rhymes and gained the admiration of all engineers.

The Rhône River was a challenge to span, for it was wide and deep, and during the time of the rushing spring floods, it could rise more than 25 feet. Bénédict chose a site where the river is split into two channels by an island.

The Pont d'Avignon had grace and dignity as well as size. It had about 20 arches, each with a span of more than 100 feet, rising on piers 25 feet thick. The bridge was nearly 3,000 feet long, making it the longest bridge since Roman times and the longest stone bridge ever built.

The arches were rounded, not pointed, their curve was not the style of the old Roman semicircle, but of a flatter one that allowed the piers to be set farther apart, keeping the waterway

open for shipping and lessening the possible effect of damming. On the Western branch of the bridge, Bénédict built an elbow bend with a turn at a 30° angle upstream against the flow of the river. This wide V form was better able to take the thrust of the current.

The lofty bridge with its towering arches and wide set piers had a strangely narrow roadway only 16 feet wide at the broadest point. Near the Avignon side, the road was only six and one-half feet wide; a chapel took up the rest of the space. Carts and coaches could not pass across the bridge, only pedestrians and horsemen. Bénédict could have built a wider roadway had he wished, but it was a suspicious age and Avignon wanted a road that could easily be protected against invaders. A handful of men, stationed at the narrowest part of the bridge could hold it against a great army.

Bénédict died in 1184 and was buried in the chapel of his own bridge. Three years after his death, the great bridge was completed. The fierce flood waters of the Rhône did not harm the bridge, but in the 14th century one of the arches was deliberately cut to prevent an invasion of the city. Later it was repaired by engineers who lacked Bénédict's skill. The weakened bridge gradually became more weakened by the force of the river. In 1602 a strong flood knocked down the arch that had been repaired and three adjoining arches were pulled down with its collapse. Two more arches fell in the floods of 1633 and in 1670 massive ice swept down the river and nearly completed the job of destruction. Only four arches on the eastern branch have survived. To restore the bridge was too great a task for Avignon to undertake, but four magnificent arches of the ruin, including the chapel, were allowed to

remain as a memorial to the great loss of this medieval bridge.

It is not known exactly where the song *Sur le Pont d'Avignon* came from. It may have come from the people of Avignon gathering at the bridge for singing and dancing during holiday celebrations and other special events.

Now let's learn to play this lovely old French folk song.

We have arranged the music in a very easy way for you to learn. The letters above the music (G, D7) tell us which chord bar to press down and when to change to another chord bar. The word TAB under the music means it will show us what to do with the fingers of our right hand. When it looks like two arrows coming together, that means we use a pinching motion with our thumb and forefinger to "pinch" several of the strings at once. Later, we can practice taking little pinches or big pinches to see which one we like better. When the TAB looks like an upside-down Y, that means we strum the strings with our thumb. We start at the longest strings and strum away from our body. Until we have practiced the song many times and feel like we are really learning to play it, we will ignore the bottom row of letters and follow the letters over the music. If you do not have Em, just use G until it is time to change to D7. Later, if we want to, we can practice the more difficult bottom row of letters. This song is written in what is called 4/4 time, which means the notes that are all black get one beat and the notes that are open in the middle get two beats. You will notice this adds up to four beats in each section (measure). The "D.C. al fine" at the end means to play the first two lines again and finish at fine. Have a good time with this fun song.

Sur le Pont d'Avignon

Traditional French folk song

Sur le pont, d'Avignon, L'on y danse, l'on y danse,

G / / D7 / / G D7 G / D7 G D7 /

T
A
B

Sur le pont, d'Avignon, L'on y danse tout en rond.

G / / D7 / / G D7 G / D7 / G

T
A
B

Fine

1. Les mes-sieurs font comm' ci Et puis en-core comm' ça
2. Les belle dames

G / Em / D7 G C / G / D7 G

T
A
B

D.C. al Fine

3. Les soldats
4. Les enfants

These are the English words to the song:

On the bridge at Avignon,
Is where they dance, is where they dance.
On the bridge at Avignon
Is where they dance all around.

1. The gentlemen do like this, and then again like that.
2. The pretty girls do like this, and then again like that.
3. The soldiers do like this, and then again like that.
4. The children do like this, and then again like that.

The French children make up motions to this song and you can, too. Maybe when it says "they do like this" you could bow one direction and when it says "they do like that", you could bow the other direction. Since you will be holding your autoharp, the motions will have to be very simple. And you can add as many verses as you want by using mother, father, teacher, brother, sister, etc. in addition to the gentlemen, pretty ladies, soldiers and children. Perhaps you can play the song and teach your friends the words and motions.

In the next issue, watch for *The Syrup Tree Song* that is the same tune as *Sur le Pont d'Avignon* and a story about maple sap being made into maple syrup.

Valse Nancy

Ivan Stiles

D / / G D / / / A7 D

TAB

D A7 / Em / A7 G D G D A7

TAB

D / / G D / / / A7 D

TAB

D A7 / Em / A7 Em A7 D A7 D

TAB

D A7 Em A7 G A7 Em A7 / Em A7 / D

TAB

D A7 Em A7 G A7 Em A7 / / D A7 D

TAB

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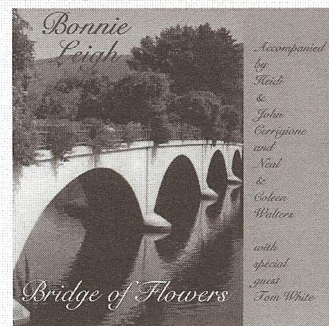


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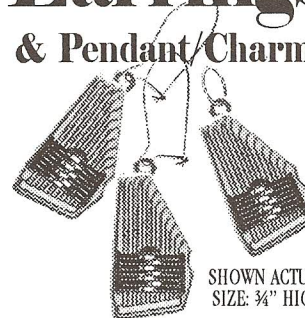
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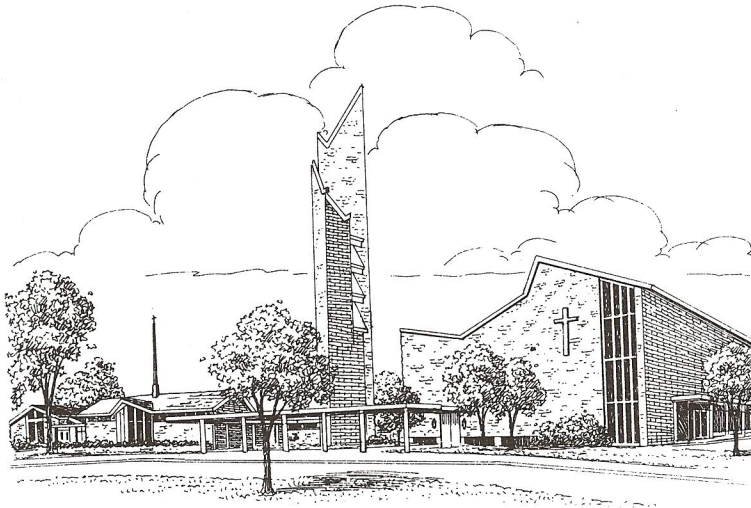
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Sacred 'Harp



Twelve Corners Presbyterian Church was started in October, 1949. It is located in Brighton, a suburb of Rochester, New York. We have been celebrating our first fifty years by a series of activities through the year. We chose Romans 12:12 as our

biblical theme.

As I thought about that, I was curious to see what the verse Romans 12:12 was. (The number 12 being part of our church name.) I looked it up and found "Rejoice in hope. Be patient in trouble. Persevere in

prayer." How rich it was in clear directions to lead our life, in community and individually. How simple. How complete. As I thought about the words and sought understanding, a poem formed. And as I prayed and played my autoharp, a song came!!!

Rejoice in Hope


by Lura Masters
© Used by permission

Refrain:


<p>Re - joice in hope! Re - joice in hope!</p>									
C	G7	C	F	C	/	G7	C	F	C

<p>Je - sus is Sa - vior, re - joice in hope!</p>										
F	G7	F	C	/	/	G7	C	F	G7	C

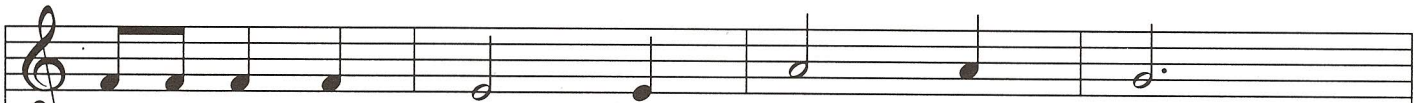
Verse 1:

														
<p>Be pa - tient in trou - ble in sor - row and pain.</p>														
C			G7 / /			C / /			F / /			C		

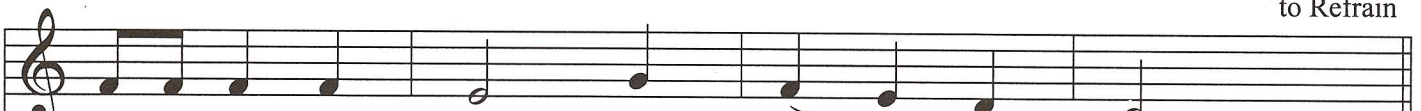
to Refrain

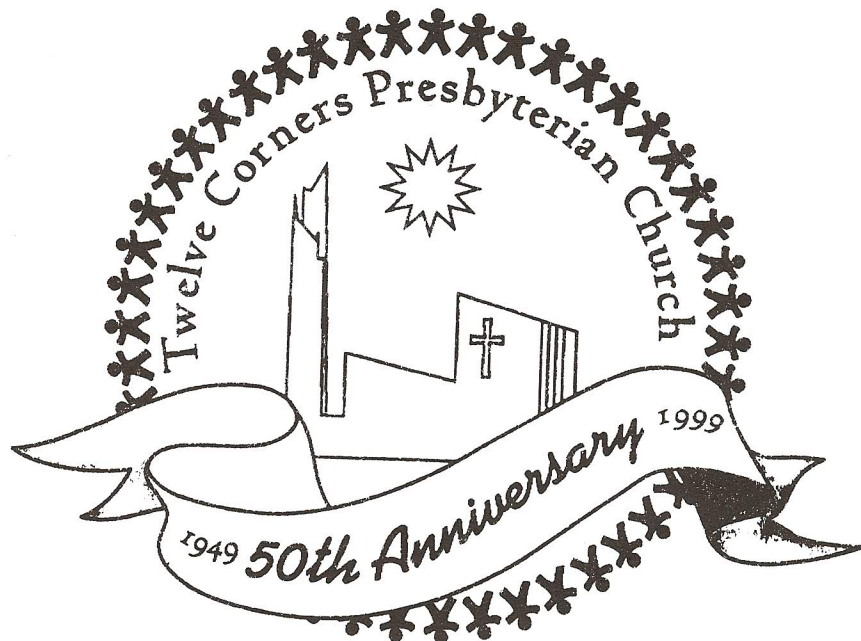
																							
<p>Christ's love en - folds you His love does sus - tain.</p>																							
F			G7			F			C / /			G7			C			G7			C		

Verse 2:

															
<p>Per - se - vere in prayer, Thy king - dom come.</p>															
G7 / / /				C / /				F / /				C			

to Refrain

																							
<p>Per - se - vere in prayer, Thy will — be done.</p>																							
G7 / / /				C / /				G7				C				G7				C			



Pro-Files

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

Karen Daniels
9002 Grandview Drive
Overland Park, KS 66212
autoharpgal@minpin.com

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 far.

EVOBLUESTEIN

10691 N. Madsen
Clovis CA 93612
559 297-8966
evo@evobluestein.com
evob@csufresno.edu
<http://evobluestein.com>

Profile: AQ October '88

Performance schedule:

November 13 - 17

Folk Rhythm and Dance Residency
Jefferson School Track C
Fresno CA

December 4 - 8

Folk Rhythm and Dance Residency
Big Creek School
Big Creek CA

December 11 - 15

Folk Rhythm and Dance Residency
Sierra High School
Tollhouse CA

January 22 - 26, 2001

Jefferson School Track A
Fresno CA

January 30, 2001

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Assemblies
St. Leander Catholic School
San Leandro CA

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PO Box 9188
Colorado Springs CO 80932
719 635-7776
somagency@aol.com

Profile: AQ January '89

Performance schedule:

November 18

University of Utah
Salt Lake City UT
December 15

Crossroads Mall
Bellevue WA

December 16

Traditions Cafe
Olympia WA

January 13, 2001

Hogeye

Evanston IL

January 14

Billy's Trestle
Monticello IL

February 3

Strathcona Community Center
Bow Valley, Alberta Canada

ROZ BROWN

1549 S. Holland Court
Lakewood CO 80232
303 969-9645

rozzie@rozbrown.com

<http://www.rozbrown.com>

Profile: AQ October '89

Performance schedule:

Every Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and
Saturday night

Buckhorn Exchange Restaurant
1000 Osage Street
Denver CO

JULIE DAVIS

PO Box 1302
Nederland CO 80466
303 258-3444

jdavis@indra.com

Profile: AQ July '91

Performance schedule:

November 4

Swallow Hill Music Association (concert)
Denver CO

November 29

Colorado State University (concert)
Ft. Collins CO

WANDA DEGEN

PO Box 6187
East Lansing MI 48826
517 337-2264

Profile: AQ July '90

Performance schedule:

November 4

The Colt Center (8 pm)
Comstock MI

November 9

Cappuccino Cafe (8-11 pm)
East Lansing MI

December 3

Victorian Christmas Open-House (1-4 pm)
Mann House

Concord MI

December 10

A Traditional Christmas (2-3 pm)

Orion Twp. Public Library

Lake Orion MI

December 14

Cappuccino Cafe

East Lansing MI

PAUL and WIN GRACE

11990 Barnes Chapel Road
Columbia MO 65201
573 443-2819

pgrace@coin.org

www.folkfire.org/graces

Profile: AQ October '88

Performance schedule:

November 17

Mid-Missouri Traditional Dance (7:30 pm)
First Christian Church

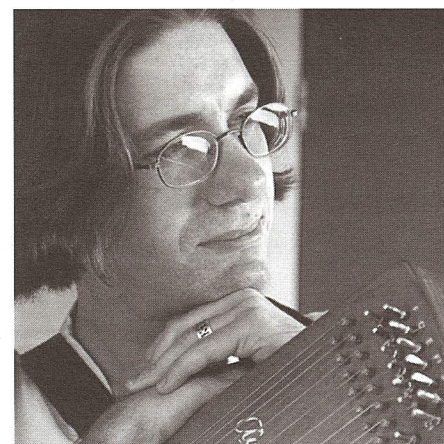
Columbia MO

January 18, 2001

Mid-Missouri Traditional Dance (7:30 pm)

First Christian Church

Columbia MO



MARC GUNN

PO Box 650128
Austin TX 78765
512 804-0468

marc@thebards.net

<http://thebards.net/mp3/>

In 1997, **Marc Gunn** borrowed an autoharp from his dad and began teaching himself to

play and write music. "It's a fairly simple instrument to play", says Marc, "but it is a difficult instrument to play well." He started writing music immediately, and in May 1998, he released his first album, *Geography*. In October, he followed up that release with a four-song EP, *October Sessions*. In February, 1999, Marc teamed up with Andrew McKee to perform at the Excalibur Fantasy Faire in Smithville, Texas and the Brobdingnagian Bards were on their way. The blend of Andrew's recorder and mandolin with Marc's autoharp lends itself very well to the Celtic-Renaissance music they play. Together, the Bards have three recordings to their credit: *Marked By Great Size*, *Gullible's Travels*, and *Songs Of the Muse*.

Performance schedule:

November 4 - 5

Texas Renaissance Festival (9 am)
Plantersville, Texas

November 11 - 12

Texas Renaissance Festival (9 am)
Plantersville, Texas

November 17

Ye Olde Bull & Bush Pub (9 pm)
Fort Worth, Texas

November 18

Borders Books and Music (3 - 5 pm)
Fort Worth, Texas

November 29 - December 2

Madrigal Dinner (6:30 pm)
Austin, Texas (Call 512 477-6060)

February 2, 2001

Sweet Eugene's (9:30 pm)
College Station, Texas

KAREN MUELLER

PO Box 80565

Minneapolis MN 55408

kmharpo@aol.com

<http://shorock.com/folk/Karen>

Profile: AQ July '93

Performance schedule:

November 4

Heartland Dulcimer Festival
Autoharp Concerts and Workshops
Elizabethtown, Kentucky

November 17 - 19

NGFDA Unicoi Dulcimer Festival
Autoharp Concerts and Workshops
Helen, Georgia

HARVEY REID

Woodpecker Records

PO Box 815

York, ME 03909

207 363-1886

info@woodpecker.com

Profile: AQ January '89

Performance schedule:

November 17

Walpole Unitarian Church
(Concert 8 pm)

Walpole, New Hampshire

December 2

Imagine Studios Presents
Holiday-flavored concert 8 pm
Location TBA

Amesbury, Massachusetts

December 3

Annicchiarico Theater, 4 pm Concert
Concord, New Hampshire

December 8

Connecticut Audubon Center
Holiday-flavored Concert, 7:30 pm
Glastonbury, Connecticut

December 9 & 10

Orange County Community College
Morrison Hall

Holiday Concert 7 pm

Middletown, New York

December 15

Blackstone River Theater
Holiday Concert 8 pm

Cumberland, Rhode Island

December 17

Blixt House Concert, 8 pm

Wayne, New Jersey

December 21

Four Corners Grill

Concert 8 pm

New London, New Hampshire

December 22

First Parish Church

Holiday Concert, 7:30 pm

Dover, New Hampshire

TOM SCHROEDER

300 W. 113th Street

Kansas City, MO 64114-5319

anartauro@hotmail.com

Profile: AQ October '88

Performance schedule:

December 2

MVFS Barn Dance

Merriam, Kansas

BILL & LAURIESKY with VICKIE YOUNG

PO Box 70060

Nashville, TN 37207-0060

615 859-1419

billandlauriesky@hotmail.com

Profile: AQ April '90

Performance schedule:

November 5

Marion, Arkansas

November 8

Church of the Nazarene
Dalhart, Texas

November 9

Indian Nation RV Resort
Thackerville, Oklahoma

November 10

Harrisburg, Illinois

November 11

Booneville, Mississippi

November 12

Belleville, Alabama

November 16

Lake, Mississippi

November 17

Hattiesburg, Mississippi

November 18

Winona, Mississippi

November 19

Monroeville, Alabama

November 24

Ida, Louisiana

November 25

Pelican, Louisiana

November 26

Merchant's Market 2 pm

Shreveport, Louisiana

November 26

United Methodist Church 6 pm

Doddridge, Arkansas

November 27

Norphlet, Arkansas

November 28

Des Arc, Missouri

December 1

Indian Nation RV Resort

Thackerville, Oklahoma

December 2

Rodessa, Louisiana

December 3

First Baptist Church 10:30 am

Deberry, Texas

December 3

First Christian Church 6 pm

Palestine, Texas

December 8

Alamo, Arkansas

December 9

Flat Creek, Tennessee

December 10

Shelbyville, Tennessee

December 13

Dallas, Georgia

December 14

Byne Memorial Baptist School 9:30 am

Albany, Georgia

December 16

A Smokey Mountain Christmas

Sylvester, Georgia

December 17

Mercy Medical Center

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Daphne, Alabama
December 17
Lily Orchard Baptist Church 6 pm
Moss Point, Mississippi
December 30 - 31
South Mississippi Bluegrass Festival
Leakesville, Mississippi
January 6, 2001
Crowley, Louisiana
January 9
Las Cruces, New Mexico
January 12
Rivers Edge RV Resort 7 pm
Yuma, Arizona
January 13
Western Sands RV Resort 7 pm
Yuma, Arizona
January 14
Araby Acres RV Resort
Yuma, Arizona
January 20
Britain's Chuckwagon Restaurant
Yuma, Arizona
January 21
Yuma Lakes RV Resort 7 pm
Yuma, Arizona
January 25
Imperial Hot Mineral Spa 7 pm
Niland, California
January 27
Sky Vally Parks 7 pm
Desert Hot Springs, California
January 28
Salton City, California
February 3
Branch, Louisiana
February 4
Church Fellowship International
Kilgore, Texas
February 4
West Lake Baptist Church 6 pm
Shreveport, Louisiana

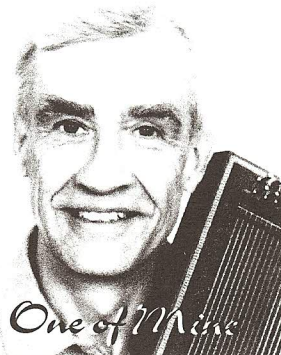
DREW SMITH
529 Ardmore Road

Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey 07423
201 444-2833
drewharpsmith@netzero.net
Profile: AQ July '89
Performanceschedule:
November 4
People's Voice Coffeehouse
New York City
November 8
Valley Health Care Center
Emerson, New Jersey
November 9
Pinecrest Center
Ridgewood, New Jersey
November 11
The Cupola
Paramus, New Jersey
November 11 - 12
The Nomad Festival
Newtown, Connecticut
November 21
Young At Heart Club
Clifton, New Jersey
November 29
Inglemoor Center
Englewood, New Jersey
December 3
Daughters of Israel
West Orange, New Jersey
December 6
Ridgewood Library
Ridgewood, New Jersey
December 19
Valley Health Care Center
Emerson, New Jersey
December 20
Christian Health Care Center
Wyckoff, New Jersey
December 31
First Night Program
TBA
January 24, 2001
Valley Health Care Center
Emerson, New Jersey



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One of Mine

Critic's Choice



Stew's Choice

Stew
Schneider

We Might As Well Be Dead

Hobo Pie

Autoharp: Bob Woodcock

Run Mountain • Fifty Miles Of Elbow Room • Bob Wine's Tune / I'm Gonna Get My Moustache Blacked • Goodbye Lisa Jane • Salty Dog Blues • I'm Going To the West • Johnson Gal • Leaving Home • I've Had A Big Time Today • Hannah Won't You Open That Door • Methodist Pie • Oklahoma Rooster • She's Got That Money, Too • Whistling Rufus • Diamond Joe • The Last Shot Got Him

This is a collection of tunes so fiendishly crooked, cross-keyed and twisted that by the time it was over, my mule and musical mentor, Aunt Sukey, was so dizzy she couldn't walk to the barn and the only thing we harvested out of that field the rest of the season was curlicue beans and corkscrew corn. This is indeed Wonderful Music to Make Your Heart Sing, and I love everything about it.

Hobo Pie is encouraged in its assault on everything you thought you knew about music by Cyberplucker's own Bob Woodcock, whose autoharp playing is featured on only two cuts. This is the CD's only weak spot. Bob is a wonderful, high-energy 'harper, and I wish they had included more of his playing.

But honestly, I can't stay mad at them for long. It is that good. I'm particularly impressed with the vocals, Bob's dyslexic reversal of the victim's name in the last cut notwithstanding. (OK ... it's high time Frankie got blown away, if you ask me). Not only are the harmonies sharp, but the whole thing plays like a Gilbert and Sullivan

patter song, and leaves you breathlessly asking for more. Try *Methodist Pie*, if you really want a sample of what these talented musicians can do.

This is music in the vein of Uncle Dave Macon and the Red Mountain White Trash – music to make you skip and dance, and music to lift your spirits. It is a CD that should be in every old time picker's box of things to treasure. Aunt Sukey darn near kicked the barn down when I turned it off.

Oh, and that title? You'll have to get a copy to learn the secret there.



Les' Choice

Les
Gustafson-Zook

One Of Mine

Autoharp: Carey Dubbert

18000 Coleman Valley Road
Occidental CA 95465
carey@monitor.net

Cradle Song • Massasoit/Dundee's Hornpipe • L'enfant • The Harp In Tara's Halls • Alis' Waltz • It's In Every One Of Us • Mrs. Maxwell • George Brabazon • Mist Covered Mountain/Mac's Fancy • Fischer's Hornpipe/Southwind • Miss Rowan Davies • Tender Shepherd • Hewlett/Carolan's Draught • Canon In D • Zebra Wounded By Spear • Bourree/Hornpipe • Jesu Joy Of Man's Desiring • Planxty Jim Stewart

Carey's sensitive, creative style of playing has drawn attention in autoharp circles since he began playing the autoharp after winning the National Hammered Dulcimer championships at Walnut Valley Festival in 1992. When he won first place at the Mountain Laurel Championships in 1999, folks really began to take notice. Carey's clean picking, his intentional bass lines and his refreshing musicality

make this album a wonderful collection to add to anyone's music library.

Eight of the eighteen tracks are hammered dulcimer and the rest are autoharp. He also overdubs a synthesizer on several tracks and is joined by Mark Summer on cello on several cuts, and Ray Frank on guitar and Risa Aratyr on bodhran on one other track.

This album is characterized by sparse, distinctive melody lines, methodically steady rhythm (perhaps a reflection of his training as a percussionist), relaxed tempos and unusual and interesting chording choices. Tracks where this chording is highlighted are *Carolan's Draught*, *Mrs. Maxwell* and *George Brabazon*. I especially enjoyed his adding of the 7 chord in the second half of *Brabazon*. It creates an unusual but very interesting and enjoyable effect. These O'Carolan tunes are some of my favorite autoharp tunes on the recording, with their nice melodies and tasteful arrangements. My favorite hammered dulcimer pieces are *Mist Covered Mountain* and the beautiful cello playing the melody with HD backup on *Miss Rowan Davies*.

Carey has done a wonderful job on this recording. It is nicely mixed, relaxing, enjoyable to listen to and demonstrates new, creative autoharp technique. It is great music to relax to after a hard day at the office. I highly recommend it!

Bridge of Flowers

Bonnie Leigh

Autoharp: Heidi Cerrigione

Maywind Records

PO Box 4160

Brick, New Jersey 08723

Bonnie@BonnieLeigh.com

Bridge of Flowers • Grandpa Loves Grandma • Dandelion Wine • Life's Railway To Heaven • The Lonely Soldier • The Women Of My Family • In The Cabin • Out Behind the Barn • Shopping In Coleen's Closet • Tails In the Woods • My Family Quilt • Sailing

Bonnie Leigh is a singer/songwriter who hails from Brick, New Jersey. Bonnie plays guitar, banjo and mountain dulcimer on this recording and has Doofus (Neal and Coleen Walters, John and Heidi Cerrigione) as her backup band to fill out harmony vocals and additional instruments on each song. All but two of the songs on this recording are written by Bonnie with themes of love, life, family and outdoors.

This recording has an easy, flowing feeling to it. Eleven of the fourteen songs are in G, giving a congruous feel to the whole album, but making many of the songs sound somewhat the same. Instrumentation is all very nice, with a pleasant variety of instruments, including dobro, hammered dulcimer, banjo and autoharp. You won't find the autoharp real prominent on this recording, but there are a few tracks with Heidi playing some nice autoharp intros and breaks, and several other tracks which use the autoharp as backup.

This nice collection of songs will be a welcome recording for those of you who are fans and friends of Bonnie, and a good way to get more familiar with her gentle, homegrown music for those of you who haven't yet heard her.

After listening to all 18 selections, I wished there were more! Ending with *How Can I Keep From Singing ...* a very inspiring a capella version, with Laurie's clear melody vocal harmonies ... the song beginning with a touch of guitar, and ending with a touch of autoharp.

John and Laurie Simpson are each sight impaired, but you know, that never stopped them from creating the beautiful music they love and at which they excel!!

Their CD, titled *Lift The Veil*, has wonderful renditions both instrumentally, with Laurie playing autoharp and John playing guitar... and vocally, with Laurie and John trading absolutely thrilling melodies and harmonies. Should you get their CD just to learn how to interpret harmonies, it would be a "best buy." But their autoharp and guitar work are so good that you could also learn how to do tasteful accompaniments, too.

It was hard for me to select favorites, but I sure liked their *The Castle Of Dromore* (an Irish air), and their *Crow On the Cradle*, which has a wonderful mix of major chords within a minor key song.

You could purchase this CD for any one of these reasons and have a winner:

- 1.) Tasty song and tune selections.
- 2.) Straightforward, strong, beautiful singing.
- 3.) As a lesson for how-to handle vocal harmony blends.
- 4.) How to play good introductions and endings.
- 5.) Just plain good listening pleasure.

So there you have it, folks - get it and you won't regret it!

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John and Laurie Simpson
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Guest Review

by Drew Smith

Lift The Veil

John and Laurie Simpson
Autoharp: Laurie Simpson

Red Is The Rose • The Water Is Wide • The Darby Ram • Southwind • Last Train From Poor Valley • Reedy River • Suzanne • Rosin The Beau • Moon River • God Bless the Child • The Castle Of Dromore • The Crow On The Cradle • The Golden Vanity • Farther Along • Precious Memories • God Put A Rainbow In the Clouds • Lift the Veil • How Can I Keep From Singing

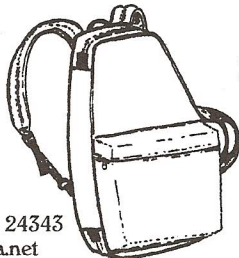
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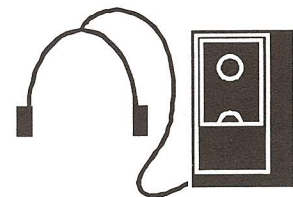


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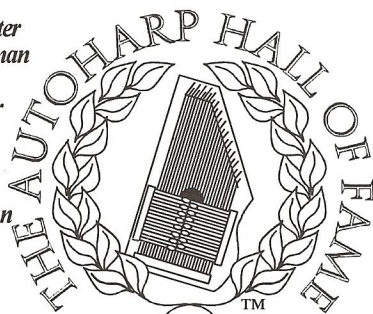
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Mike Fenton
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Mary Lou Orthey
Patsy Stoneman
Ivan Stiles

2001 NOMINATION FORM

Nominations for the 2001 inductees into The Autoharp Hall of Fame will be accepted by Limberjack Productions from September 1, 2000 until May 1, 2001. 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. Posthumous honorees must have been deceased for three years to be eligible.

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: **The Autoharp Hall of Fame**, Limberjack Productions, 18 Burd Road, 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, 2001. The honorees shall be installed into The Autoharp Hall of Fame at the 2001 Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering, and announced in the Summer 2001 issue of *Autoharp Quarterly*. **When describing a nominee's contributions, specify their significance, and the nominee's leadership role in the autoharp community.**

POSTHUMOUS NOMINEE

Name of nominee: _____

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

CONTEMPORARY NOMINEE

Name of nominee: _____

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

Name, address, telephone number of person submitting nomination:

NAME _____ TELEPHONE _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

I am an AQ subscriber. I am not an AQ subscriber.
I received my ballot from:

NAME _____

IMPORTANT

Form must be filled in completely and a description of achievement, contributions, and/or leadership in the autoharp community, must be completed to validate the nomination. You may submit your nomination for posthumous, contemporary, or both.

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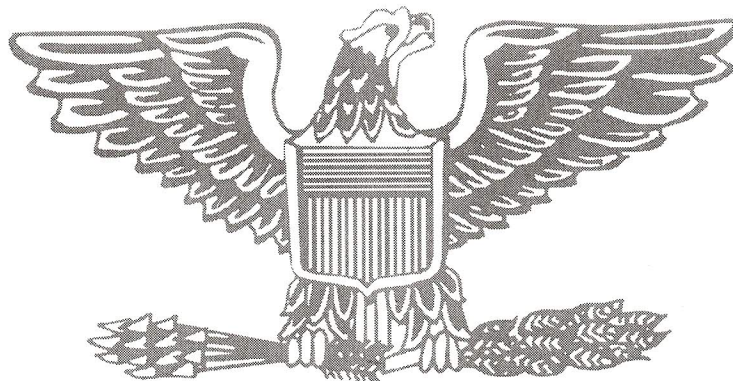
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The Faded Coat of Blue

by J.H.McNaughton



Oh my brave lad-dy sleeps in his fad-ed coat of blue in a

C G7 | C / F | C / / | F / / / | / G7 F

lone - ly grave un - known, lies a heart that beats so true.

C / / F | C / / | D7 / / | C G7

He— felt faint and hun-gry— a - mong the van-quished brave and they

C G7 | C / F | C / / | F / / / | / G7 F

laid him cold and lone - ly— with - in a name-less grave.—

C / / F | C / / | G7 / C G7 | C

Arranged by Heidi Cerrigione

Chorus

No more the bu - gle calls the wear - y one

Rest no - ble spir - it in a grave un - known

We may find you and know you a - mong the good and true where a

robe of white is giv - en for a fad - ed coat of blue.

He cried, "Give me water and just a little crumb
 And my mother she will bless you, through all the years to come
 And tell my sweet sister, so gentle good and true
 I will meet her up in heaven in my faded coat of blue."
 (chorus)

Oh, he cried, "my dear comrades, you cannot take me home
 But you can morn my grave for mother, so she'll know me should she come
 For I fear she'll not know me among the good and true
 When I meet her up in heaven in my faded coat of blue."
 (chorus)

Oh the long years are vanished and though he comes no more
 Still my heart with startling beat, with each foot fall in my door
 And I gaze on the hillside, where he waived his last adieu
 But no gallant lad I'll see in his faded coat of blue.
 (chorus)

the

FIELD GUIDE TO AUTOHARP PLAYERS



by Tom "Audubon" Schroeder



I was just out in the Missouri woods with my binoculars and lovely wife. We had both seen this little bird flit through the bushes and were arguing about what it was. I was sure it was a yellow-rumped whatchamacallit with a grey back. She was convinced it had to be a grey-backed somethingorother with a yellow rump. Darned if we had not left the field guide at home. When we got home and looked it up, my yellow-rumped whatever only lived in evergreen forests in Canada and her grey-backed thingy lived in mangrove swamps. We were back to square one but had fun trying to figure it out.

Here is a field guide to autoharp players. I have put this together after listening to countless performances, autoharp contests and recordings in the last twenty years. My hope is you can use it to have fun identifying the elusive autoharp player.

Although "yellow-rumped" may be a good visual description of some autoharp players, it doesn't really describe the musical and mechanical nature of the instrument. In "The Field Guide", I am using the characteristics of how the instrument is played, the structure of the music played, the techniques often used and the quality of the

sound produced. All of these are put under the term, playing "Style." The guide names certain playing techniques, but does not explain them. You can find their explanation in past articles by others or me in this magazine.

You can categorize things in limited categories as a Splitter – "that's a Green Heron" or in broad categories as a Lumper – "that's a Heron." In the Field Guide, I am going to use the broad categories of a Lumper, as I think it is more useful. Often, autoharp players are Splitters wanting to see each person as unique in their playing style. Let me show you how being a Lumper can be fun and how this Guide is useful to you as a listener, player or teacher.

To have fun with the Field Guide, make a copy of it. Take it and your binoculars to the next autoharp concert or gathering. Why you need to take the binoculars, I am not sure but all those other field guides say to take them. While listening to an autoharp player, compare what you hear them doing with the playing styles described by the Guide. Try to figure out what style(s) they are playing in. This will make you a much better listener. You might even notice something you want

to learn. If a non-playing spouse or friend comes, give them a copy to use while they listen.

As a player, try to recognize what style you play in. Most people play in the Carter Style, so check out that one first. Once you know which one you use, try learning the techniques, sound, and music of another style. You have four others to pick among. Learning them all will challenge you for a long time and keep you out of the rut of doing the same old thing over and over.

As a teacher, help your students recognize the various ways to play the instrument. You can still teach them what you know, but you can use the Guide, with recorded examples, to show them the range of Styles they can learn.

For maximum fun, take the Field Guide, binoculars and spouse to the next autoharp gathering and have this conversation:

He – That's a yellow-rumped, open chord style player.

She – No, dear, it's a grey-bearded, dynamic style player.

He – But he is sometimes doing open chording.

She – But notice how he uses a variety of right hand techniques to form an arrangement of the tune.

He – But it says here they are rarely found east of the Mississippi River.

She – But the footnotes say that occasionally they migrate to Pennsylvania in the summer.

He

You get the picture. ❖

Tom can be reached at:
AnArtAuto@hotmail.com



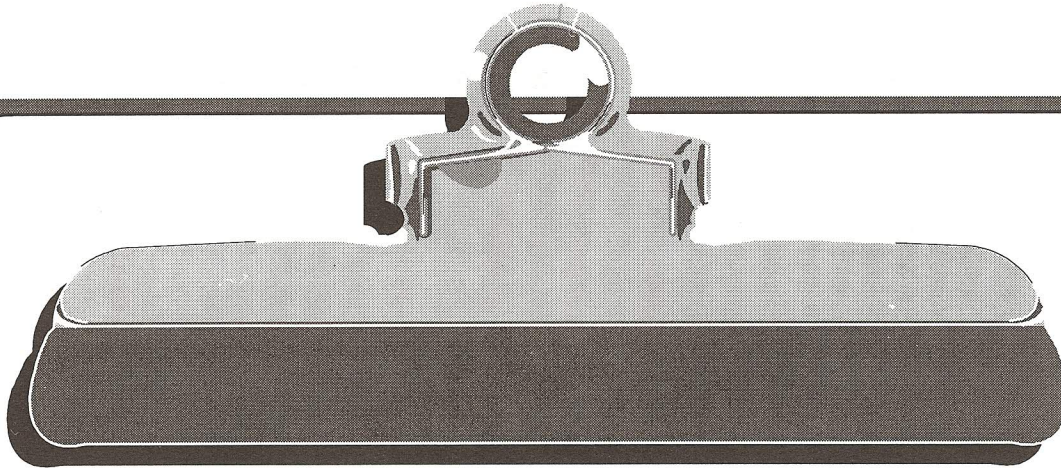
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THE FIELD GUIDE TO AUTOHARP PLAYERS

Carter Style: The most commonly played style. The melody is played using the "pinch" so there is a continuous bass sound. The rhythm is played by use of a fingerstroke or thumbstroke done in only one direction (up or down). The music usually uses 4 or less chords and they are played using closed chording.

Banjo Style: The melody is played with thumbplucks and/or fingerplucks and these are done in either direction. There is usually a distinctive sound made by doing "drag notes" and "hammer on" technique. There is little or no bass sound with the melody playing. The rhythm is done using thumbstrokes and fingerstrokes going in either direction. The music uses 4 or less chords and they are played using closed chording.

Multichord Style: The focus is on left hand techniques and the use of complex chord progressions in playing melodies. Chords are played using closed chording. The right hand technique is usually the "pinch" so there is a continuous bass sound. The rhythm is done using thumbstrokes and fingerstrokes traveling in one direction.

Open Chord Style: The focus is on producing a flowing sound by use of the open chording technique. The melody is usually done by alternating the "pinch" and a fingerpluck (Pinch-Pluck Technique). The music uses 5 or less chords. The rhythm is done using thumbstrokes or fingerstrokes in one direction.

Dynamic Style: The focus is on musical arrangements using the elements of texture, key, volume and tempo. This style emphasizes a variety of right hand techniques in the same arrangement for playing melody and rhythm. The music uses 5 or less chords and the chords are played using open and closed chording.

Notes on the Field Guide: Most people play in only one style. There are a handful of autoharp players who have mastered more than one style. This Guide categorizes the style, not the person. There are a smaller handful of players who are talented enough to cross styles. So, for example, they can play a tune using both a Multichord and a Dynamic style. This makes it hard to identify them (just like with the few bird species that can crossbreed!). Lucky for us they are "rare birds."

SIMPLY. Classic

by Linda Huber

"Vaga luna, che inargenti"

Vincenzo Bellini (1801 - 1835)

For the most part, I have been presenting "well known" classical tunes. This time the arrangement is of a more obscure melody. It was suggested to me by Gordon Baker. It is a beautiful Italian song which was sung by Luciano Pavarotti in

his February 12, 1987 recital at Lincoln Center. The song contains the words of a rejected suitor confiding his sorrow to the moon.

The music that Gordon sent to me was in A \flat but the key of G fits better on

the autoharp. I have included chords so that it can be played on a chromatic 'harp but it is much prettier when open chorded on a diatonic. The only problem would be the B \flat in measure 12. You could just "cheat" and make it a B natural!

dolce
(sweet & soft)

G D G C G D G D C G / / / D C D G Bm D

T
A
B

/ / / G D G C G D G D C G / / / D Am D G Am Bm Am / D

T
A
B

G D G D / D7 G D7 G D G D G D B \flat / / D G
(C# $^{\circ}7$)

T
A
B

Musical notation for the first system, including a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a guitar tablature staff below it. The tablature staff is labeled with T, A, and B strings. Chords and notes are indicated by 'x' marks (pinch) and 'o' marks (pluck) on the strings, with some notes connected by brackets. Chord symbols are written below the staff: D, G D, G C G D G D C G, / / / D, Am D G Am Bm Am / D.

Musical notation for the second system, including a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a guitar tablature staff below it. The tablature staff is labeled with T, A, and B strings. Chords and notes are indicated by 'x' marks (pinch) and 'o' marks (pluck) on the strings, with some notes connected by brackets. Chord symbols are written below the staff: G, S T O P /, C G, S T O P /, D G.

TABLATURE

Pinch Strum Pluck Rhythm Bracket

(could be repeated an octave higher)



KEY - BARS ??

by Peter Bartholomew
with a forward by Nadine Stah White

When I first heard about Peter Bartholomew's designs for a chord-bar system which would enable him to play three chords from one bar, I was intrigued. Then I had a brief chance to see one of his prototypes at the Sore Fingers Week this past Easter, and was impressed with the 'play-ability' of his bars. I guess I had been expecting to see something cumbersome like the 'shifters' on the early autoharps from the 1800s, but Peter's system is much more flexible. It actually allows the player to achieve any of the three chords 'built in' to each bar by simply changing the angle at which you push - straight down or to either side on his notched chord buttons.

My brief experiment had me wondering if Peter had come up with a design which would push back the borders of what is achievable on our instrument. It certainly appears to be the answer to a guitar player's 'wish-list' of chords on the autoharp. On the other hand, if any experienced player wanted to swap to his design, it would require a big leap in playing technique. Mastering this three-way push system would require even more re-training for your button-pushing fingers than a total reorganisation of the chord buttons on your conventional autoharp.

Then I had a second 'close encounter' with Peter's 'harp at our June UK Autoharp Day, and this time I was able to hear Peter playing the instrument during the evening's showcase. I was mesmerised! I've never heard the autoharp played with such wonderful use of chords and modulation between keys (for the very good reason that other autoharp set-ups, even a 21 bar chromatic, just doesn't have all those chords available). I look forward to seeing (and hearing) how this design develops. ❖

And this from Peter

I had better introduce myself. I am Peter Bartholomew MIPI (Member of the Institute of Patentees and Inventors). Those letters sound very grand, but all they mean is that my brain keeps on inventing things. I am a musician, a guitarist, who back in the 1960s, bought an Oscar Schmidt Autoharp, strummed it for a few days and gave up on it. Beautiful sound, shame about the instrument, which I regarded as an expensive musical toy and put it back in its box for 35 years. However, in southern England there is a magazine called "Folk on Tap", in which a well meant but ill-informed autoharp article appeared arousing a lot of interest, and the justifiable anger of the likes of Mike Fenton.

I dusted down my autoharp and in my ignorance confirmed that it was a left-handed lap 'harp - difficult to finger like a guitar, easier to strum up to the notes of a tune, impossible to change key up a semitone, and I had to change key to suit the 'harp, as the 'harp could not play in the keys that singers or I wanted.

So I settled down to design and build my own right-handed version with wider spaced strings for finger picking that could be played slung in front of you just like a guitar. I call it a Harpsiket. (However friends have suggested the name Multiharp.)

But ... I had one major improvement over the autoharp's chord bar system. My instrument could play the major, the minor, the augmented and the diminished chords in all twelve keys, using only 15 Key-bars. Sixty chords in all unless you're a musician who may have worked out that it is 43 chords total.

In trepidation I called Mike Fenton, who invited my partner Barbara and me up for a day in Oxfordshire. He would be hosting a "Sore Fingers Week" in mid-April with Nadine Stah White and about twenty

dedicated autoharp students. I would like to thank him for that enlightening day. I gave an hour's demonstration of my instrument's merits and learned a vast amount about the grossly underrated autoharp. I also learned of the advantages of adding the minor 7th in all keys to my instruments and leaving those beautiful diatonics well alone, though any autoharp could be fitted with my Key-bar system, or variations of it.

I was so impressed by Mike, Nadine and the whole group's brilliant, expert playing, that I came back down south (80 miles is a long way in England) and started making some autoharps with my Key-bar system.

My idea (for which I have applied for a patent), is very simple. If you press the C Key-bar straight down on to the strings you get the C Major chord; 1st, 3rd, and 5th. If you push it away to the right as you press it down, the Key-bar now allows the chord to have a flattened 3rd, i.e., the minor chord. If you pull it to the left as you press the Key-bar down, you get the 1st, 3rd, 5th and add the flattened 7th; i.e., the 7th chord. One other Key-bar does all the diminished chords in its three positions and two more Key-bars do two augmented chords each. So 15 Key-bars give us 5 chords in every key.

By adding four more Key-bars, each with three minor 7th chords, we not only add those chords, but by using double barring, we can get 1st + 3rd; and 1st + minor 3rd (sounds like tenths). 1st + 5th (power chord in Rock 'n Roll), and a 1st + 5th + 7th (Power 7th if there is such a named chord, sounds great!) Pop music, here we come with 120 chords! Not bad for nineteen Key-bars, and we can change key on the fly in mid-tune.

Time passed, and on 3rd June, Barbara and I went back up to Oxfordshire for an Autoharp Day with Mike Fenton organised by Nadine Stah White.

We had a really wonderful day. There were about seventeen 'students' with nine of us in the beginners group. Even if I am boasting, I think we all did very well. Nine newcomers – and I used to think the autoharp was dead! That was until 17th April when I first heard it played brilliantly as it can be played. I was again able to demonstrate my Harpsiket to everyone there and show Mike one of my almost completed Auto-harps with my Key-bar system, and admired the craftsmanship of the Ortheys and Fladmarks.

As mine is a new idea, I have arranged the Key-bar buttons as illustrated below, with the F uppermost and the E lowest in the top or right-hand line of Key-bars (from the player's view).

This arrangement keeps the # keys

Min. 7th	Min. 7th	Min. 7th	Min. 7th	Aug.	Aug.	
B	F#	C#	G#	D#	A#	Dim.
	F	C	G	D	A	E

close to their natural keys and slightly to the right just as on a piano. If the player is looking from above, they move their fingers left one and down one to move up a semitone. If you are at the bottom end of a line playing the E or A#, then the semitone up is the top end of the same line of buttons. The Key-bar buttons are arranged in the same way as accordion buttons and most autoharp buttons, with the tonic flanked by its dominant and subdominant, i.e. 4, 1, 5. If you run off the end, you go to the other line. Simple, but it works.

One more thing. My Harpsikets and Auto-harps (or Multiharps?) are fully chromatic. I use 37 strings covering three full octaves from two As below to two As above middle C, or A-2 to A+2. I like the sound, as it goes well with guitar and other instruments, but it loses some of the bass that conventional autoharps have with a spread of four octaves over 36 strings. I am, therefore, experimenting with lower tunings, but they are still fully chromatic. (No notes missing.)

At last there is an autoharp which can play in any key and change to any other key easily. A useful instrument

for teaching and learning about music. An instrument with that distinctive sound that first attracted me and thousands of others to the autoharp, only to abandon them in their thousands to the attic. I have not been able to include some of the more exotic chords with flattened 5ths, major 7ths, jazzy 13ths or 11ths. To get those in every key, Bill Newton's piano keyboard is a wonderful idea and I look forward to seeing one some day soon. What I have aimed at is an easily learned and adaptable instrument, which I can happily use to accompany anyone from a temperamental tenor to a raucous rocker and follow that with *Fur Elise* or the Beatles song, *Michelle*, with its chromatic run. (My favourite.)

Thank goodness that infamous

article appeared in "Folk on Tap." If it hadn't aroused such a furor of justifiable consternation, I would never have realised that I had had a good idea. My good friend, Sam Satyanadhan, the Editor, was also very happy to print as much of the resulting correspondence as he could and help the cause of the autoharp and its staunch allies. ❖

(Editor: Peter adds the following, plus

Min. 7th	Min. 7th	Min. 7th	Min. 7th	Aug.	Aug.	
Dim.	F	C	G	D	A	E
	B	F#	C#	G#	D#	A#

another diagram.)

Latest news... on Harpsikets and Multiharps from Peter Bartholomew.

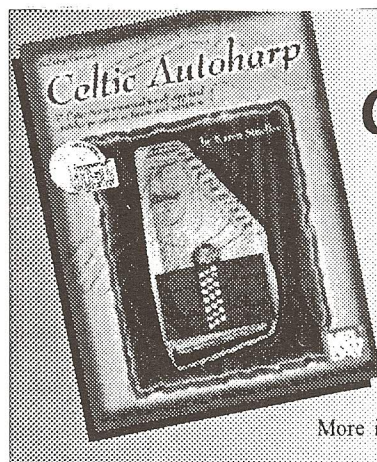
After some deep thought, I have tried arranging the Key-bar buttons and bars on my 'Multiharp' in various experimental ways, of which two seem good.

The first is as I meant to write it at the end of my first page. The second way seems easiest with the main keys down the middle and I am able to get to the sharps and flats as easily as the Augmented and Minor 7ths. I am using that Key-bar arrangement at the moment.

As I am a Learner, (with a capital L) speed playing eludes me, however some songs sound good. As an example: the second chord of Buddy Holly's "Raining In My Heart" is an augmented chord. And, if you give the song a lift at the end by going up a semi-tone, the second Key-bar layout seems to be more convenient. Other songs, like "Kisses Sweeter Than Wine" that go up a semi-tone each verse, are very easy, and very effective, but show my age!

The diagram in the previous columns is the first way. Below is the second way.

Peter can be reached at:
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SO19 2HU United Kingdom



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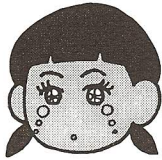
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I've Had Such A Good Time, Why Am I Crying??

Or: The Neurochemical, Physical and Psychological Aspects of Post-Festival Letdown



by Cathy Britell

Wow!! Wasn't that autoharp festival great? You saw people you hadn't seen in years, you danced and played into the night, you played stuff on your autoharp you never thought you could, you were a little scared about performing on the open stage, but by gum, you did it and did great ... you even played in a contest and didn't do too badly for yourself. And how about that jam with all those great players? Did that push you to new heights of autoharping, or what? What a blast!!

But as you get home, clean out the car, shake the dead earwigs and ants out of your autoharp case, put in a load of laundry ... it hits! you have an unexplainable, overwhelming sadness. Nothing to be sad about, really ... your family is healthy, the house is standing, you still have a job, your spouse loves you and the dog is happy to see you ... everything should be fine ... but you are not fine. You are feeling sad and empty and needy and miserable, and you can't figure out why. You have POST-FESTIVAL LET-DOWN (PFLD).

PFLD can be scary for people who haven't experienced it before. They worry about whether they are suffering from major depression. Also, they sometimes feel guilty about being sad when there's nothing to be sad about. If you understand that PFLD is a normal psychophysiological phenomenon, you can be reassured that you're really "OK" and also you can use some strategies to diminish it or prevent it from happening.

Brain function depends on a fascinating series of chemical reactions. Whenever we move a muscle, hear or feel anything, think a thought, or experience an emotion, little packets of chemicals called "neurotransmitters" shoot across membranes from one

nerve cell to another, bind on receptor sites, and cause inflow and outflow of ions which in turn causes electrical charges to travel along sensory and motor nerves and lots of other nerves as well. All of this happens at lightning speeds and in immense numbers of cells simultaneously. Each nerve cell has a miniature factory inside it that makes these neurotransmitters out of precursors (stuff we eat) so that there will hopefully be plenty on hand each time the cell is asked to "fire." Also, each cell has to constantly maintain its membranes and receptor sites so that there is room for new neurotransmitters coming from the next cell up the line, and so that it can respond by pumping ions in and out and "fire" its response to the next cell down the line when called upon to do so. This self-maintenance of the nervous system requires some "down time." We call that "rest" and "sleep" and "inactivity." Now you're beginning to get the picture ... essentially what happens during a festival is that motor nerves, sensory nerves, attention-maintaining nerves, emotion-producing nerves and thinking nerves are often busy almost constantly. We rest little during the day, and we often get very little sleep. We can often be emotionally quite involved and our attention is always in a high state of alertness. Also, we're using our muscles to play in very complex ways for very long periods of time. This leads to depletion of neurotransmitters, sluggish nerve conduction, and the end result is a feeling of listlessness, sadness and emptiness.

Well, nobody wants to feel this way. How do we prevent or deal with PFLD? Well, first of all, knowing what's happening you can be reassured and just "wait it out." Within a few

days, you'll be fine again. Prevention is possible but often requires some compromise. One thing that happens with experience is "training." Your nervous system actually gets used to this kind of all-out activity and gets better at handling it. Second, you may want to pace yourself. Getting an adequate night's sleep at a festival is not always feasible, but knowing when to quit can be helpful. If you can sneak a nap sometime during the day that will help, too. Meditation (achievement of theta brainwave state) has been said to be useful in neurotransmitter repletion. If you can get good at that (it's really quite enjoyable) you'll tend to require less sleep to keep functioning. Also eating a nutritious diet with a balance of carbohydrates, complete proteins and good fats as well as good vitamins will provide the precursors for a healthy nervous system.

Probably the best way to deal with PFLD is to "keep the festival going." That means giving yourself the opportunity to continually make music with friends, learn new things, perform, grow, and laugh, dance and play into the night. Plan to get together with local musical friends the weekend after the fest. Hide the dirty laundry in the closet, throw some chips and salsa on the table, put out some lemonade, and have a party. Go to local jams and song circles. Keep performing at local open stages, church and other opportunities. Take the opportunity to invite your favorite autoharper or other musician to come visit and set up a house concert and workshop for him/her. When you do this you'll be less tempted to stay up all night squeezing every last musical experience out of a festival, and you'll handle the stuff of the festival with less stress on your nervous system

as well.

There are some things that can actually make PFLD worse. In some people, melatonin (an over-the-counter herbal remedy sometimes used for sleep) can precipitate severe depressive symptoms under these circumstances. Also, "kava-kava" (another herbal remedy used for anxiety) can make these symptoms worse. Alcohol is a very significant depressant, as are certain muscle relaxers, such as Robaxial, used by some musicians for muscle aches and pains.

If you get PFLD despite all your best efforts to avoid it, get out a good novel and a big handkerchief, eat right and get plenty of sleep ... you'll be better real soon. But if your symptoms don't go away after 2-3 days of good rest and sleep, see your doctor. Your problem could be due to something else. ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

(Letters to the Editor continued from page 1.)


our camping plans for the night. Wouldn't we like to go to a beautiful place called Cape Croker, enjoy a rustic camp site right on the rocky edge of the beach – and make music?

Now, this was not exactly the music ordinarily associated with the demur autoharp. Two of the gents played guitars, and one played a mouth harp at the same time. The lady, Donna, played a set of deep-voiced three-foot-tall drums and her husband, Fred, sang with a rich baritone, the songs of the 60s.

I took Heather and her autoharp over to our campsite and gave her a crash course in melody picking. Miraculously, she had a thumb pick and finger picks that had come with the used instrument when she bought it and they fit her perfectly, so she was off and strumming in no time at all. Furthermore, she's very musical and fell right into playing melody. Talk about serendipity!

Willow Robinson had given me two leftover complimentary copies of *AQ* at the end of the Evart Fun Fest – so guess who has one of them now?

Alex Usher



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IN THE BEGINNING.....

by Mary J. Park

A New Dum Dit-ty Strum

In this article, I thought it would be nice to tackle a new tune with a few more chord changes and a different “dum dit-ty strum” than the one taught in the last article. I chose a Christmas tune that is familiar to many.

For those of you who already know this tune, it will probably be easier to begin by singing or humming while you strum the chords. Remember, the circled chords are the only ones you play when you are providing accompaniment. Strumming the accompaniment will allow you to both locate the chords and practice the new strum. Even for those of you who may not know or remember the melody, it is a good idea to tackle a new song by strumming the chords in the order that they appear so that you can get used to where the changes come and

each “dum” gets a whole beat and each “dit” and “ty” gets a half beat, adding up to one whole beat. If you count the measure the way it should be played, you would count “one, two-and, three.” The dit-ty part is shown in a bracket (┌┐) indicating that this part takes one beat.

Below, I have shown you the strum as it would be played on the first line of the song. Each thumb stroke (shown as an upside down Y) is strummed from the low strings toward the high strings. The first thumb strum in each measure should begin with the very lowest strings and continue to the middle of the autoharp. The other thumb strums should be played in the middle section of the autoharp. Each “1 arrow” is played in the opposite direction with your index finger on the middle section

the thumb stroke that is written when you come to the very end.

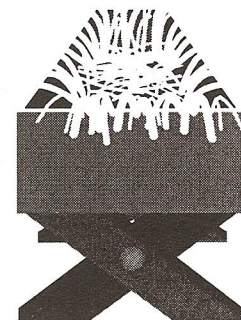
Something else that is new in this song is a dotted quarter note. This first appears in the first whole measure. It is the note with the dot after it. This note gets one and a half beats; therefore, in the tab this note will be played as a pinch followed by a thumb stroke. The eighth note (the note in the measure with the tail) gets the other half of the second beat. If you just think of it as playing a pinch on the “ty” part of the “dit-ty” rather than the “1 arrow”, then you will have the idea.

I hope you enjoyed this lesson and remember, if you have any further questions, you can either contact me by writing to *Autoharp Quarterly*, or you can email me at dulcify@itol.com.

where the chords are located on your autoharp. This is a three chord song except for the one A minor thrown in near the end for effect. Notice that in the second line there is a “G*.” This means that when you are playing accompaniment, you play that chord at the beginning of the measure. When you are playing the tune, you will begin that same measure using a C chord in order to play the “e”, which is not in the G chord.

You will probably find that this new “dum dit-ty” strum pattern will be easier than the last one. In 3/4 time, each measure gets a “dum dit-ty dum.” Remember that

also. Once you have learned the line below, you can apply it to the rest of the song. Now that you have mastered the strum, you are ready to play the tune. All of the notes will be pinched with your thumb and middle finger just as described in the last article. You will notice that there are a couple of places in the song where a “dit-ty” that is played on a note held for two beats is played the same way as you just learned in the new strum pattern. Also, if you continue from one verse to another, you will probably want to play this same “dit-ty” for the last note of the song and only play



Away In a Manger

Traditional
Key: G - Played slowly

Arranged by Mary J. Park
Arrangement ©1998

A way in a man - ger, no crib for His bed, The lit - tle Lord

G (G) C G D7 G (C) D7 C (G) (D7) C D7

TAB

d d c b b a g g f# e d d d e d

Je - sus laid down His sweet head. The stars in the sky looked

C (G*) G C G D7 G

TAB

d a f# e d g b d d c b b a g

down where He lay, the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.

(C) D7 C (G) (C) G D7 (G) D7 G (Am) (D7) (G)

TAB

g f# e d d c b a b a g a e f# g

Note: The "G*" in line two means that when you strum the chords as accompaniment, you play the G chord at the beginning of the measure

2. The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from
the sky,
A stay by my cradle 'til morning is nigh.

3. Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay,
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray;
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And take us to heaven, to live with Thee there.

The Evoharp

An Affordable Custom 'Harp

by Evo Bluestein

Designed as a 15-bar 'harp, *The Evoharp* may also be ordered in an 18- or 21-bar configuration. People with bursitis or arthritis take pleasure in this 'harp because of its weight, size and action. Best of all, it retails for a little more than a new Oscar Schmidt autoharp. A series of events, coupled with my stylistic preferences, led to the development of my own signature 'harp.

The obvious question is, "Why doesn't anyone make an economical custom-built autoharp that incorporates all the things we love about the old black A-model Oscar Schmidt?" I've always appreciated the bright, open sound of those chromatic 'harps. Unfortunately, their small, light weight bodies and distinct timbre were lost in the newer 'harps when Schmidt began producing the B and C models. The A-models went out of production in 1972.

In recent years, I have been hired by school districts for long-term inservices. For these contracts, they purchase my instructional

videos, books and used 'harps. Acquiring enough of the only 'harps I believed in, and modifying each one to my specifications, became quite an undertaking.

Restoration involves scraping off years of crud, replacing and tuning strings, lowering the 12-bar chord assembly, and adding felt under the lids to quiet the action. Many had to be glued and clamped under the end cover where they tend to separate. Some of the 'harps were so far gone, I used them only for parts.

After modifying over a hundred A-model boxes, I began to seriously consider which custom builders could create a new 'harp that would reflect

contemporary standards of craftsmanship and the wonderful qualities of the old A-model. The highly-respected builder, Tom Fladmark, agreed to the task. Months later, after numerous discussions and dissecting a few A-model carcasses, Tom produced a prototype that we further amended. Finally, production began for our first order of 22 *Evoharps* for an elementary school in Central California.

Reflecting on this past year of R&D, I realize, now, that the *Evoharp* was many years in the making. Back in the '80s, when I taught at a local music store, the Oscar Schmidt rep asked me why people out here were requesting 12-bar 'harps. I explained that after learning my style and hearing my rationale for the old 'harps, my students had no use for what the stores were

selling new. Particular sound on the autoharp. Prior to the summer of '77 though, I'd never paid much attention to either Kilby or the autoharp. All that changed, one day, when my father asked me to teach autoharp at his summer folk institute at Fresno State (CSUF). I decided I had better learn how to play.

A week beforehand, I listened to the two Folkways autoharp lps that included Kilby Snow and did my best to emulate his style. I was already an old-time musician playing fiddle, mandolin, banjo, dulcimer and guitar. When I heard Kilby's autoharp, I realized his music was as intriguing as any of the Appalachian masters of the more popular instruments.

Kilby's music reminds me that the blues is inherent in oldtime and bluegrass. Instruments are designed in different ways that permit unique techniques of individual expression. We can't bend notes on the autoharp too easily, nor can we slide up or down to a note. The *chromatic* drag note is the most sensible

answer to achieving something like a blues slide. Kilby refined this technique, and it was one of the characteristics of his playing that inspired me. Eventually, I determined my own style and began using the autoharp in performance and recordings.

Today, I'm very excited to offer an instrument that is both an exceptional entry-level 'harp and an excellent choice for accomplished players. I am truly grateful to Tom Fladmark for his expertise, understanding and craftsmanship. We've had an excellent response to the *Evoharp*, and players like the combination of big sound, light weight and craftsmanship.

(See *Evo's ad on page 8*)



... first order of 22 *Evoharps* for an elementary school in Central California...

selling new.

I still encourage people to play the old A-models, and my students know where my preferences lie. With the black 12-bar 'harps, you can really play all the way across to the high strings for rhythm and especially melody (after lowering the chord bar assembly). Those 'harps, in fact, have greatly contributed to my own style, which was almost completely inspired by listening to Appalachian musician Kilby Snow.

If you are familiar with Kilby, you know he played the A-model 'harps in a style that could be likened to bluegrass. He was exceptionally inventive, and no one had ever achieved that par-

Winfield Diary : first timer impressions

by Cathy Britell

Sunday, September 10 – Winfield 57

2 pm: The sign at the Pratt, Kansas city limits had proclaimed that this town had been the home of three Miss Kansases and a state champion high school football team. I ponder about what these beautiful and talented folk might be doing today as I drive out of town, on through Medicine Lodge, and am jolted out of my reverie by a green sign with “Winfield 57” on it ... the first real evidence that I’m going to GET THERE ... to Winfield ... in 57 miles ... about an hour! I had left Seattle 10 days earlier, driven through California visiting friends, through the snow over the Sierras, down to Las Vegas for a meeting, then up through Utah and the beautiful Rockies, and now I’m finally going to experience WINFIELD!

3 pm: First impressions: HOT... BIG... FRIENDLY...HOT...CROWDED... and did I say...HOT? As I check in and look over the rows and rows of RVs, cars and tents, I have serious misgivings about ever finding the kind folks of OTTER 'HARP HEAVEN who are saving a camping and parking spot for me. Armed with a map downloaded from the internet, I drive in ever-widening circles, straining to see through the forest of motor homes, trailers and tents. As I begin to wonder whatever possessed me to come to this place, I spot Chuck Daniels motioning me toward a roped-off parking space under the friendly OTTER. Whew! Exchange hugs all 'round, deposit the instruments in Barb Barr's RV to keep them from cooking, drag out the camping gear, inflate my “princess-and-the-pea” air mattress and pitch the tent (over about 2 hours fortified by 2 quarts of water). I'm still not quite sure I'm going to like this, but I've driven a LONG way, so figure I might as well give having a good time the best chance I

can.

8pm: After sunset, the place is transformed. The hot, frenetic day is redeemed by a glorious, velvet, soft, beautiful moonlit night. The lights come on. Lights of all colors and descriptions. And the music begins. Beautiful soft singing from the Metaphysical Camp, wonderful magical stuff at the Harpies' Camp down the road, and an almost symphonic sound from a huge and growing jam of familiar fiddle tunes at the Carp Camp across the street. After bidding the Otter 'Harp gang goodnight, I mosey on over there, sit down and play along for awhile, absorbing the lush, tuneful sound 'till my eyelids get heavy. Retire to the tent and fall asleep to the sweet Carp Camp tune cycle, thinking, “Yes, this is gonna be a good time.”

Monday, September 11 – SPONTANEAC???

2 am: Ah, the joys of being an “older camper.” Nature calls at 2 am and you simply must answer. I stumble out of my tent in the general direction of the portapotties and into the arms of a man. As I hug him back, I realize it's Adam Miller who is just arriving from a very late flight, so I figure I'm redeemed from being known as “the woman who blindly and indiscriminately hugs anybody in her path while half asleep.”

9am: Excellent lattes at the espresso stand. Greg Schneeman is hanging out over there with his bowed psaltery, so we play a few of our old tunes on psaltery and autoharp. Greg seems to have this penchant for turning me into a street musician wherever and whenever we're together.

1pm: Too hot to do anything but sleep. Thank goodness for friends with air-

conditioned RVs.

8 pm: I simply must wander around and experience this place. Stage 6 ... hmmm ...I thought there were only four. Who *are* these guys? Four people doing classical, Gospel, folk, bluegrass verging on rock, swing tunes... and this bass player...this bass player is magnificent. I sidle up next to him and just watch his fingers fly across those impossible arpeggios and runs and even melody breaks. I note the startled look on his face as he notices my interest, and reassure him at the next break that I'm not stalking him...just a bass player soaking it all up. This guy is Leo Eilts, the band is Spontaneous Combustion from Kansas City, and I'm a brand new fan... or as Leo puts it, “Spontaneac.” This, to me, is the best of music...taking what has gone before, making it your own, adding some original stuff, joining up with good friends and taking the music for a ride wherever it brings you. I must admit to quite a few hours spent at Stage 6, listening and watching, jamming, yacking, learning. Yup, I'm a Spontaneac in the worst way. Much of the night is spent here with a trip to Stage 5 and a walk about the Pecan Grove just to see how the night is unfolding over there. A fascinating little city, this.

Tuesday, September 12: WINFIELD TIME

12 noon:I hear the autoharp workshops by Karen Mueller and Drew Smith were fantastic, with good attendance, but I am in no condition to do anything like that. I get myself up and shuffle over to the Swift-Grier camp to shell some beans... a Winfield tradition having to do with a family that has the largest seed catalogue in the world and preserves historical varieties of beans. A nice time to sit and chat and meet new people and...shell beans. Time stands

still. People move slowly. We all drink a lot of water.

8 pm: We have a "critical mass" of autoharpers at last...enough for a little jam and singaround. Bryan and Kate Bowers and Dan Duggin arrive...good to see them. The jam goes along for awhile, but some of the folks from town go home, and the night is still young. The Hammerheads have arrived. Some very fine hammered dulcimer players set up camp down the road. Really nice folks playing familiar tunes at a nice pace. I am thrilled to watch one of my HD heroes, Rick Thum, in action. His approach to fiddle tunes is simply magnificent, and I'm torn between playing along and just watching and listening to this master of the HD. They stop around 1a.m. and I head back over to Stage 6 and soak up some more progressive bluegrass at its finest. Wandering back toward my tent, I stumble upon a little jam with a bass lying on the ground. I ask if I can play along, and everybody smiles and says, "by all means...the bass player has gone to bed"...so I just had a lovely time plucking away to waltzes and cowboy songs late at night with some nice folks whose names I'll ever know but whose gentle sweet music I'll remember forever.

Wednesday, September 13: Otter 'Harp Heaven

10am:I have the pleasure of "helping" Bryan Bowers with a beginner's workshop (more like watching and learning and admiring). This guy is a master at teaching and inspiring new autoharpers. He makes each individual feel as if they were the most important person in his life and that teaching them how to play the autoharp is his only concern. Always lots to learn here.

8pm: A nice autoharp jam/sing followed by relatively early to bed, in preparation for the day to come.

Thursday, September 14: CONTEST DAY

10am: Otter 'Harp Heaven is quiet ex-

cept for the sounds of tuning here and there, some soft conversation, a little playing. At about 11, we all gather up our instruments and walk over to Stage 4, to draw our numbers and show our stuff. The atmosphere is friendly and a little excited, but nobody seems too jittery. There are 12 people registered for the contest, but only 9 show up. The officials decide to go for two rounds since the requisite were registered, and might yet appear. I am number 10, almost at the end. As I watch, I am particularly impressed that everyone plays well. The one contestant who seems to me to stand out is Les Gustafson-Zook. I've never heard him play so well. His tunes are very difficult, very well-arranged, played with speed and accuracy and grace and feeling...and simply a delight to hear. My turn. The crowd is friendly, the room is not too hot, the monitors are nicely balanced... I'm a little shaky on the slow parts, but both tunes come off nicely. That's what I want from the contest...to play some well-arranged tunes well. I am a little disappointed that I don't get to do the other two...but not everybody could make the finals, and those who did deserved it. It is a nice surprise for me to have a number of people from the audience, most of whom I don't even know, come and tell me how much they enjoyed my playing and appreciated that I'd done some stuff that nobody has ever done on the autoharp. That, and seeing people who are very dear to me and whose playing I really love win makes the contest an all-around success for me. The great thing about the autoharp contest at Winfield is that you simply can't lose. I reflect on how wonderful it is to have all these great players as friends.

3pm: LET THE FESTIVAL BEGIN! Barb and I go up to the cool grandstand, eat some ice cream, and stretch out for a nap while listening to "No Strings Attached", and then the beautiful, magnificent mind blowing guitar work of Steve Kaufman. Listening to Steve, believe it or not, always gives me new inspiration for stuff to do with tunes on the autoharp or hammered dulcimer. He has become a friend

through producing his concerts in Seattle, and it was a pleasure getting together with him and his family and seeing him in his element at Winfield. Then I picked up my chair and listened to Karen Mueller's always wonderful set on the way back to Otter 'Harp Heaven and the evening's jamming.

Friday, September 15: LISTENING, LEARNING, AND LOVING THE MUSIC

I have always been in love with the playing of guitarists Pat Kirtly and Beppe Gambetta (who isn't) and it was a delight for me to see them in person for the first time. And of course John McCutcheon whom I've seen many times, but who has a special chemistry with Tom Chapin with a result on stage that is simply elegant. And "Cherish the Ladies." This was the first time I'd ever seen them in person. And "Marley's Ghost." And Byron Berline! What a fiddler! What a band! Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Gregg shows up with two bowed psalteries, and he and I and Karla have a bowed psaltery jam (the first ever recorded, I think), with Drew adding some wonderful autoharping. And later some more autoharp jamming, and then Barb and I put on our dancing shoes and greatly enjoyed a contra dance at Stage 4 with the Plaid Family...what a treat! Afterward, we wander over to the Pecan Grove and past the man-made pond with croaking plastic frogs, through the covered wagon bridge and into the Bluegrass Cafe...where of all things, there was a lonely unoccupied bass...

Saturday, September 16: THE HORDES DESCEND

Well, if I thought the place was crowded before, that was nothing compared to Saturday. People all over the place. Venues filled to bursting. Jams crowded. Time to chill out, enjoy the concerts, crafts (absolutely beautiful by the way) and friends. We all went down for Bryan's Saturday night show, followed by an amazing set by Beppe who had Dan Crary as a guest, followed by an even more amazing show

by Tommy Emmanuel, great Aussie guitarist who does stuff *nobody* else does. Went back to the camp for a short break to find Jo Ann Smith sitting there playing tunes, taking a break from intense mothering of her dear new baby. I took out a 'harp and started playing with her, and suddenly we were joined by flatpicker Randy Rodgers (1st place winner in 1990) and another equally skilled guitarist friend. We had some jamming the likes of which I have seldom experienced. After a couple of hours, we went on to new things...I went over to see concerts by Mike Cross, John McCutcheon, Cherish the Ladies...and then the fun began. All the performers showed up at Stage 5 (the "open mic" stage) from midnight on for an absolute free-for-all. I watched in wonder and awe until about two, then wandered back toward home, to find a bunch of autoharps winding up a jam with the hammered dulcimer folks, sang a closing song with them, and went back to enjoy the Carp Camp jam for awhile before turning in.

Sunday, September 17: GOODBYE, WINFIELD, SEE YA NEXT YEAR!

I have visions of being there in my little yellow tent after everyone else had pulled out, with tears in my eyes, calling, "Come back, come back...I'm not done yet!" So, decide to leave early in the morning. As I come out of my tent, a hand comes out of the door of Bernie Buller's trailer with a warm, wet washcloth, "for your face, madame." Then a glass of orange juice. And a bowl of granola. (Hey, you single ladies...this is a guy to KNOW!) I pack up and load up the car, hug everyone goodbye and slowly drive out of the gates for the last time this year. Schneeman is riding along as far as Denver and so we sing a little "goodbye Winfield" song as we head down the road. And listen to the preliminary mix of his new CD. Life is good. I'll be back!



AUTOHARP PLAYERS

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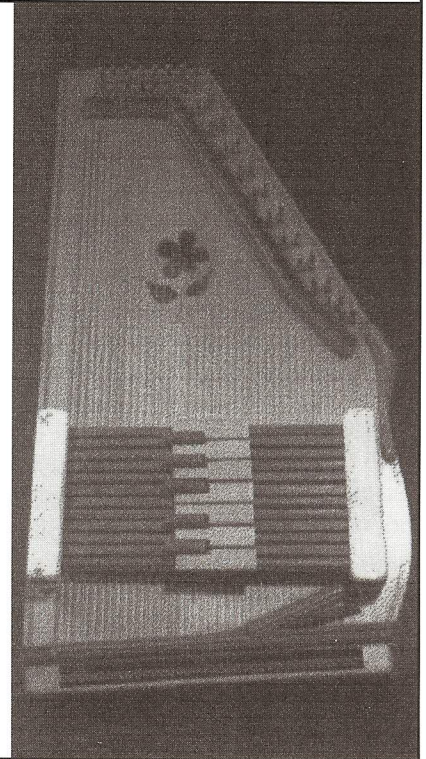
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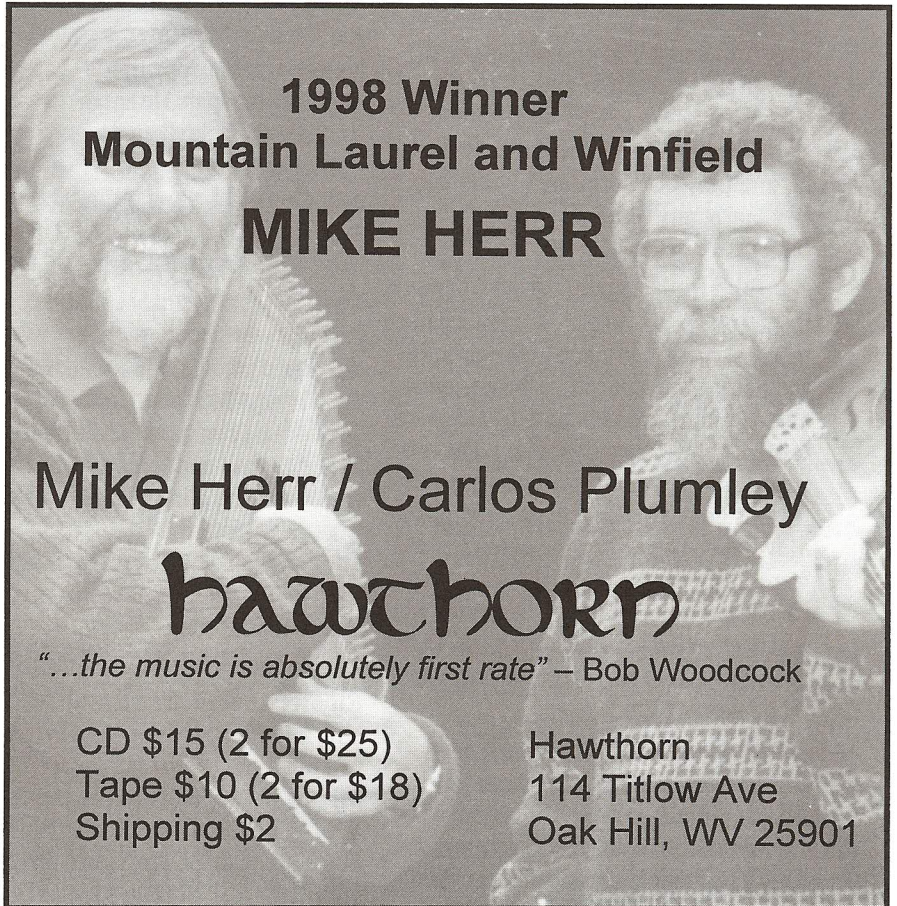
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A Q

Postscripts

FROM HARPLAND

by Mary Umberger

If you have news you would like to share with your 'harper friends, send it to Mary Umberger, 114 Umberger Road, Harmony, North Carolina 28634-9300; or you can email Mary at Maryonharp@YadTel.net.

Hi! I read something awhile back that deems repeating. Dr. George Petrie, a collector of Irish tunes in the early 1800s said of music: "In the hours of worldly trials, of cares and sorrows, I have felt its power to soothe and console, to restrain from the pursuit of worthless and debasing pleasures, of soul-corrupting worldly ambitions destructive of mental peace, and to give contentment in a humble station." *Beautiful!!!*

Just so Stew Schneider's mule, Aunt Sukey, will get the full meaning of this, let me interpret in simple terms. Aunt Sukey, darlin', "If you really have a hankerin' for music, it will make all your troubles smaller, keep you out of trouble, keep your mind cool and you will make the Carnation Contented Cow look like a basket case!"

With all this in mind, let's just tune up and play our autoharps – any key, any 'harp, any tunings!!
'Harpers on the go! :

♫. **John Dallas** reported from Germany that he played a solo gig – a private party where they wanted some Irish music. He showed up with concertina, banjo, guitar and autoharp. He says that the Germans there did not know the autoharp. They had no fond memories of primary school music lessons on it, nor did their grandmothers play them. They liked the autoharp and were really curious about the instrument. He had to play an encore for someone who had been in the kitchen during his 'harp set – everyone said, "You gotta hear this!" Good work, John.

♫. This is one for the books – **Karen Stevenson** was hired to play her 'harp at a dog's birthday party!! The birthday boy was a St. Bernard that had just turned one. The cake was in the shape of a bone and everyone loved *B-I-N-G-O, How Much Is*

That Doggie in the Window, and Puppy Love! Lack-a-mercy on me, how can we top that?

♫. **Sydney Hollandsworth** has taken a wonderful trip with her Radford University choir. They left *Friday the 13th* for a ten day tour of Russia and will spend some time in Moscow seeing the sights and singing. I wonder if she took a 'harp?

♫. **Verla Boyd** and her church band, which includes two autoharps, played again for some mentally handicapped folk in a town near them. Isn't that a worthwhile mission?? Verla, husband James and some friends also had a chance to jam with **Maurice Dill**. She says that Maurice was great. He gave them information and tips to improve their technique. To quote Verla, "It is always a special treat to gather with friends and share our lives and the music we love." – And right she is!

♫. **Laurie Searle** and friends performed at the Campbell Folk School's Fall Festival. "We did this," Laurie said, "for the fun of it." And fun it was! All of the performances were not perfect, but she said you could just see enjoyment on every face there. That *is* what it's all about.

♫. **Charles Whitmer** is settled now in his new teaching position at Camp Zama, near Tokyo, Japan. He has met a Japanese autoharper, Taeko Ikegaya, and just raves about her playing! He was to meet with a gathering of 11 autoharp groups that were meeting to meet *him*. I haven't heard anything about that meeting, but I'll bet it was awesome!!

♫. There has been only one "sighting" reported. A movie, "The Wedding", from the 70s on AMS, starring Carol Burnett, had a scene in a garden. Children were playing when suddenly was heard and seen a fleeting glimpse of a child playing what sounded like *Like a Bird On a Wire*. The reporter couldn't find anything in the credits to shed light, but said the playing was excellent and clean.

♫. Not everything is on a happy note. **Elliott Fruman**, friend to all who knew him, and special buddy of **Beryl Martin**, was diagnosed with lung cancer just after MLAG in July and died on September 6th. A memorial service was held for him in the home of **Linda Smith** on October 15th. This was a celebration of Elliott's

life with music and fellowship – as he would have wanted. I'm glad they took George Petrie's advice and used music to soothe their hearts.

♫. **Alex Usher** reports she and Rich attended Mule Days in Perry, Missouri. She is gathering material to include in her upcoming concerts for the Missouri Humanities Council. Busy as always, Alex has a new CD due out very soon. It is titled *Heathery Isle*. In addition, she has a new book for Mel Bay which will be out next summer. The Boston Museum of Fine Arts has an exhibit, "Dangerous Curves – the Art of the Guitar" which includes a double-bodied one-necked guitar lent to them by Alex.

♫. **Anita Roesler** will be teaching teachers the art of the autoharp for the state of Oklahoma's arts programs. We know she will do a great job. By the way, this is the second time she has been asked to do this, so we know she made a good impression!!

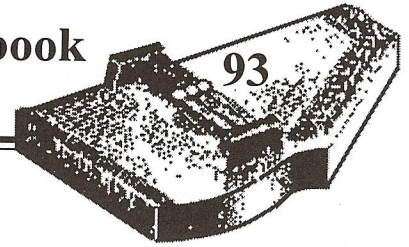
♫. **Denise and Brian Albriton** have a new CD out. It is titled "WE could." Denise plays autoharp and Brian plays guitar and they call themselves "Cocanut".

♫. According to **Joe Cline** the Fries (Virginia) Volunteer Fire Department reported the largest Saturday night crowd ever at its 34th Annual Oldtime Fiddlers and Bluegrass Convention. Autoharp competition winners were: 1st, **Joann Redd**; 2nd, **John Hollandsworth**; 3rd, **Bobbi Roberts**; 4th, **Evelyn Farmer**; 5th, **Peter Evans** of Berlin, Germany. **Kathy Hollandsworth** placed 4th in the dulcimer competition and Evelyn was given the Henry Whitter award for best all-around performer.

♫. I really *do* like to end on a happy note! Mistress **Hannah Renee Smith** arrived to be a joy to her parents, **JoAnn** and **David Smith** and siblings on July 13, 2000. What a joy to know we have another generation of prospective autoharp players coming up! CONGRATULATIONS!! By the way, Hannah has already attended her first Winfield Festival!

Have a great autumn! Remember what I tell you, "Music is the golden thread that weaves it's beauty through the tapestry of our lives."

Mary



Brother John (2) C

▼
C / / / / / / / /
Are you sleep - ing, are you sleep - ing?

C / / / / / / / /
Bro - ther John, bro - ther John;

[C /][/ /] / / [C /][/ /] / /
Morn - ing bells are ring - ing, morn - ing bells are ring - ing,

C / / / / / / / /
Ding, dong, ding; ding, dong, ding.

In The Evening By The Moonlight (2) G

▼
[G/] G / Em Em G7 / /
In the eve - ning by the moon - light,

[D7 G7] C / / D7 [G /] //
You could hear those voi - ces sing - ing.

[G/] G G Em Em G7 / /
In the eve - ning by the moon - light,

[D7 G7] A7 / / Em [D7 /] //
You could hear those ban - jos ring - ing.

[G /] G / Em / G7 / //
How the old folks would en - joy it,

[G7 D7] C / / D7 [G /] //
They would sit all night and lis - ten

[G /] G / C G / A7 Em D7 / G
As we sang in the eve - ning by the moon - light.

For The Beauty Of The Earth (2) G

▼
G [D7 G] D7 G C / G /
For the beau - ty of the earth,

C D7 G C G D7 G /
For the beau - ty of the skies,

G [D7 G] D7 G C / G /
For the love which from our birth

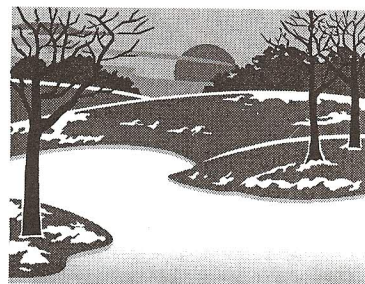
C D7 G C G D7 G /
O - ver and a - round us lies,

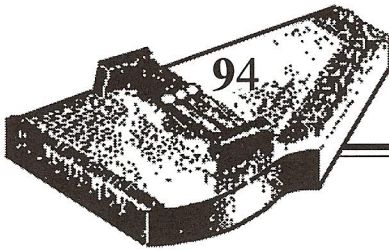
G D7 G / D7 / G /
Lord of all to Thee we raise

C D7 G C G D7 G /
This our hymn of grate - ful praise.

For the beauty of each hour
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale and tree and flow'r,
Sun and moon and stars of light,
Lord of all to Thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.

For the joy of human love,
Brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth and friends above,
For all gentle thoughts and mild,
Lord of all to Thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.





Autoharp Songbook

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As With Gladness Men Of Old (2) G

▼
G [//] D G C D7 G/
As with glad-ness men of old

C / G C D / G/
Did the guid-ing star be-hold;

G [//] D G C D7 G7/
As with joy they hailed its light,

C / G C D / G/
Lead-ing on-ward, beam-ing bright;

G / / / D / G/
So, most grac-ious Lord, may we

C / G C G D G/
Ev-er-more be led to Thee.

As with joyful steps they sped
To that lowly manger bed;
There to bend the knee before
Him whom heaven and earth adore;
So may we with willing feet
Ever seek Thy mercy seat.

As they offered gifts most rare
At that manger rude and bare,
So may we with holy joy,
Pure and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to Thee, our heavenly King.

The Friendly Beasts (3) D

▼
D / A7 D/ / A7/ / D/
Je-sus our bro-ther kind and good

D / / / G/ [//] A7/ / D/
Was hum-bly born in a sta-ble rude;

[D /] / / / G/ D A7/ / D//
And the friend-ly beasts a-round Him stood,

D / G D/ Bm Em/ A7 D//
Je-sus our bro-ther kind and good.

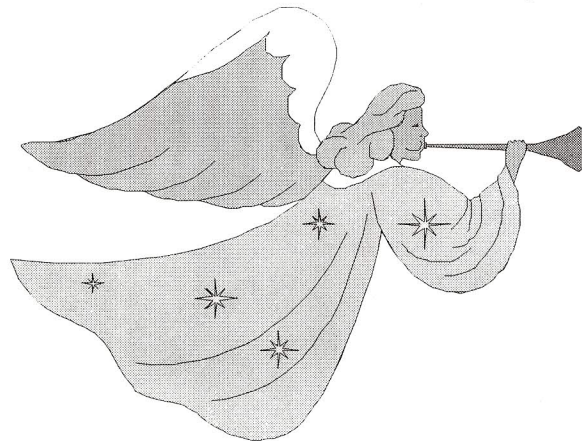
"I", said the donkey all shaggy and brown,
"I carried His mother up hill and down;
I carried His mother to Bethlehem town."
"I", said the donkey all shaggy and brown.

"I", said the cow all white and red,
"I gave Him my manger for His bed;
I gave Him my hay to pillow His head."
"I", said the cow all white and red

"I", said the sheep with the curly horn,
"I gave Him my wool for His blanket warm;
He wore my coat on Christmas morn."
"I", said the sheep with the curly horn.

"I", said the dove from the rafters high,
"I cooed Him to sleep that He would not cry;
We cooed Him to sleep, my mate and I."
"I", said the dove from the rafters high.

Thus every beast by some good spell,
In the stable dark was glad to tell
Of the gift he gave Emmanuel,
The gift he gave Emmanuel.



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 ☆ Denotes new item.

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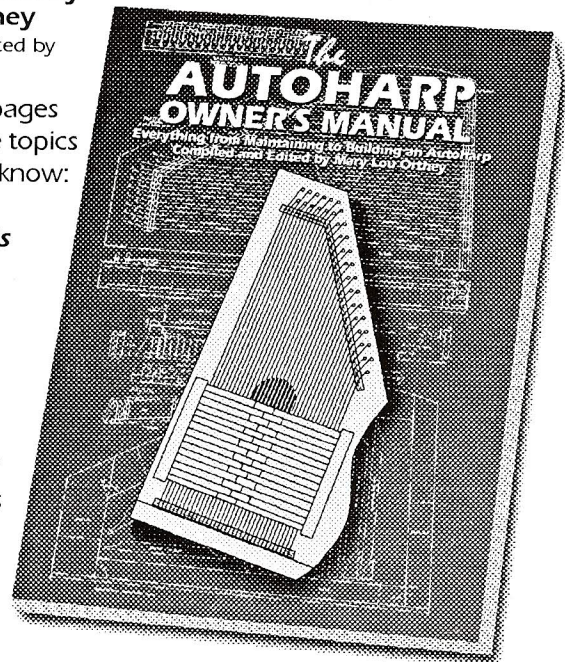
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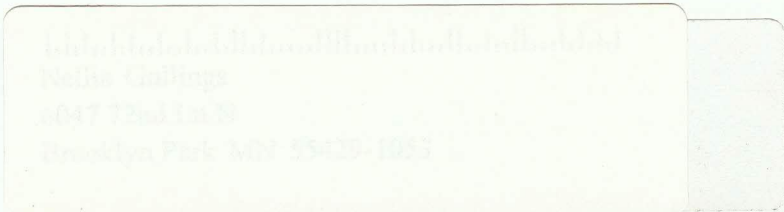
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