

THE PLUCK-N-POST



Volume 5 Issue 2

PO Box 92 Sumpter, OR. 97877

Summer 2001

A Word from the Executive Director

Dear Jew's harp friends,

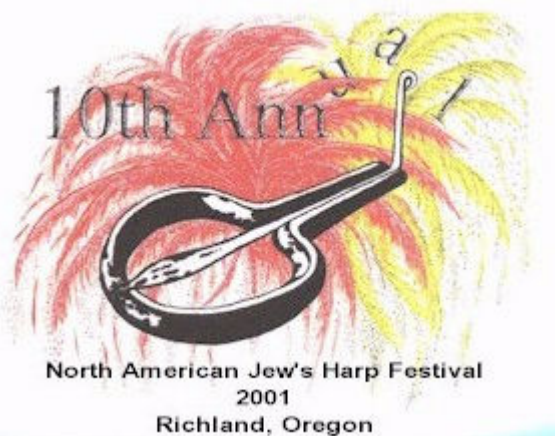
Festival News:

Summer is here (finally!) and we're all gearing up for the upcoming 10th North American Jew's Harp Festival. This year's dates are August 17th and 18th. The festival will be held again at the Eagle Valley Grange Park in

Richland, Oregon. Hopefully, we have the camping situation resolved and will have spots for RV's and tents. Remember, no dogs are allowed inside the park area. And all Saturday (Jew's Harp) performers need to pre-register by August 3rd. To register, you can mail in the registration form included with the festival flyer (which we hope to have in the mail by the end of June) ... or you can email it to rustic@eoni.com (Please mark it ATTN: Janet).

As always, we can use more volunteers to help out at the festival. If you're interested, be sure and let me know. There are lots of different areas we need help with, so I'm sure we can find something "just right for you"!

Aron Szilagyi, Jew's Harp maker and player from Hungary, and his band sadly will not be attending this year's Festival as hoped. Aron attended the 1998 festival and we very much wished to see him again this year.



Guild News:

All Jew's Harp Guild Board Members were re-elected for 2001. Board Members: Bill Gohring, Gordon Frazier, Denise Harrington, Jim Nelson; Executive Director: Janet Gohring; Secretary/Treasurer: Kathi Vinson.

Thanks to all the Guild members who renewed their membership ... and an extra thank you to all those who sent in their ballots for the Board Member Election. A great big WELCOME to all of our new Guild members. Membership is now close to 100, which means we've doubled our membership in the last 2 years!

I'm happy to announce that the Guild is in the final editing stages of our new CD. Mark Poss, webmaster and CD project coordinator, has been working very hard with his "helpers" to go through all the festival recordings from 1998, 1999 and 2000. We hope to have the CD available by this year's festival.

Recently, the 2001 Baker City Visitors Guide came out and there is a very nice article in it on our Jew's Harp Festival. This Guide is widely distributed in Eastern Oregon – it's especially nice for tourists who want information about our area. I really like the first sentence of the article: "Baker County isn't famous for one thing that it should be. Jew's Harps." Many thanks go out to Dylan Darling and the staff at the Baker City Herald for this and the many other articles they publish on the festival and Jew's harps.

In Memory of Kreg Hawkins:

In early March, we lost long time festival attendee and friend, Kreg Hawkins of Pendleton. He was killed in a tragic 4-wheeler accident. In case you don't remember Kreg, he was the "mandolin player and vocal harmony part" of Darrell and Daryl. His partner (and Road Kill Poet) Dick Kaiser summed up what all of us feel, "We are going to miss the old cuss a whole lot. It won't be the same at the festival next year." We will be dedicating the 2001 festival to Kreg and, yes indeed, he will be missed.

As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions ... and hope to see many of you at this year's festival.

Until then ... Keep twangin'.

Janet Gohring JHG Executive Director Ψ

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Jew's Harps in China?

From Peter S. Balkan

I've just returned from three weeks on the China Mainland. My daughter is studying in Beijing and has made many trips and it was finally time to visit her.

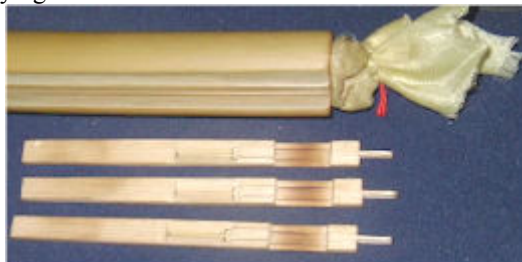
Prior to leaving, I purchased some inexpensive Austrian Trumps with the intention of trading and/or giving them away. I did give quite a few away but found that Jew's Harps were not all that well-known in China.

I had some luck (but expected more) in SW China in Yunnan Province. We were just a couple hundred miles due north of Hanoi and I expected to find Hmongs in abundance but I did not. There is even a minority nearby named Hmong but they did not have many trump-type instruments. The Naxi (pronounced Naa-shi) people are very musical and play very ancient tunes on ancient instruments. I have listened to their records and they have "something" that makes a twang! However, when I inquired, they had no idea. When I played a few notes from my metal, Austrian Harps, they went nuts. The music stopped and they were incredibly interested in the instrument. They had heard bamboo Kubing-type instruments, but nothing with the tone or volume of the metal trumpets. They were also mystified that the trumps took some skill to play and were very hesitant to place the trump on their teeth!

I have some shots of myself, teaching 80+ year old musicians how to play the trump. The Naxi have a great tradition of having their oldest men play their classical music.

My acquisitions were disappointing. In a Naxi village, I heard of a rather famous doctor, named Dr. Ho, who claims to have cured cases of Leukemia with Chinese herbs. He has all kinds of letters from American M.D.'s to document his claims. His wife played a bamboo type trump that required her to pull a red string to form notes. She then sang thru the instrument. However, her trump was not for sale and I was told that they were only available during the week of market, once a year. I don't know where they were made.

Later in the day, one of the women dancers told us that there was a woman who made and played Jew's Harp and we accompanied them, late in the day, to their courtyard. Indeed, the woman had a 3-piece set of bamboo Kubings (crude but nicely made) in a bamboo case, that she played and told me, she would sell. I immediately struck at deal (I had already given away my daily supply of Austrian trumpets) and the courtyard broke into dancing and singing, while I tried to play (pictures available on request). I played them OK, but they certainly lacked the range and volume of metal trumpets. I was only able to play one at a time, have had little luck, playing all three at once as she did.



In the city of Lijian, I happened upon a music store that had several items. He had the bamboo Kubings but without the case. He also had this matched set of Humongs, that he was also able to play simultaneously. They are very delicate and I play them very rarely for fear of breaking them, but they do appear to be nicely tuned to a progressive scale. They were relatively expensive (for China) and were the only set that he had available. Perhaps my luck would have been better if my "friend" had been available!



Getting home, I had the delightful surprise of receiving the best trump of all. It was a long-awaited cased trump from Tuva in central Asia. It has a very nice range and tone and incredible volume. The case and trump shape, make this a unique addition to my collection.



My globe-trotting daughter travels to Vietnam this summer and promises to continue my Asian search there. My fingers are crossed and you'll be the first to know if we have any success.

Peter S. Balkan, Flagstaff, Arizona, USA

**Are you interested in giving a workshop at the
North American Jew's Harp Festival?**

Please contact us at

PO Box 92 Sumpter, OR. 97877

or email to:

info@jewsharpguild.org

Trumping the Earthquake in India by Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy

Nazir Jairazbhoy and Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy made a video in Kacch, Gujarat, India in 1998 entitled *Musical Instruments of Kacch and its Neighbors* (Van Nuys: Apsara Media for Intercultural Education, 1999. 60 minutes). In the video, the local trump, called *morchang* or *chang*, is featured in two scenes. One shows the Kacchi ethnomusicologist Umesh Prabhulal Jadia, with a shot of his business card stating that he is a "morchang maestro," as he modulates through several rhythms, accompanied by a drummer. The second performance is by Pathan Samanth Sajan who plays the morchang while simultaneously singing a narrative song. He is said to be the only musician capable of this feat in Kacch, or anywhere else in India for that matter.

The devastating earthquake of January 26, 2001 had its epicenter in Kacch, killing some 30,000 people and destroying the entire capitol of Bhuj, its museums, heritage buildings and monuments. Umesh Jadia describes the present state of musicians in Kacch as a truly miserable one. Amy and Nazir will return to Kacch this December to study the effects of the earthquake on Kacchi traditional music and to help in the rehabilitation of musicians and instrument makers. Umesh was preparing a trump museum, but the earthquake destroyed his entire collection of trumps (as well as globular flutes) and their recordings from throughout the world. The Jairazbhoyes are facilitating replacement of his collections. Donated instruments may be sent to the Jairazbhoyes at the Department of Ethnomusicology, UCLA, Los Angeles 90095 and will be hand-delivered to him this Winter.

A small exhibition entitled "*After the Earthquake... Applied Ethnomusicology!*" about this project is on display in the Ethnomusicology Archive at UCLA through the month of May, with this limerick appeal. It was written partly to help my students remember how to pronounce the vowel and the final consonant cluster in "Kacch" - the final aspiration is stronger than in "much and such" - more like a sneeze (acch - ooo!).

LIMERICK APPEAL

An ethnomusicologist of Kacch
Liked globular flutes and guimbards so much
He collected, made, and played them
Til the earthquake wrought its mayhem...
Let's send ocarinas, jew's harps, and such!

Fred Lieberman offered the following revision which scans less trippingly and reflects current trump usage:

A world music scholar from Kacch
Liked globular flutes very much.
He made guimbards and played 'em
'till the Earth quaked and slayed 'em
Please send trumps, ocarinas, and such!

From Fred Crane:

I hope that readers who have a spare trump or two will send them to Los Angeles. He also would welcome ocarinas or other globular flutes.

From Mr Jadia's letter:

"I have lost Jew's harps collected from Siberia, Mongolia, Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia in the earthquake. It was my desire to make a museum of Jew's harps, so I am very sorry for that."

His house was destroyed, and anyone who wants to contribute to the \$1000 that a new one will cost can contact Catlin at: acatlin@ucla.edu.

[Amy] reports on the video *Folk Musicians of Kacch*, which includes sequences on trumping. It's available from Apsara Media, 13659 Victory Boulevard Suite 577, Van Nuys, CA 91401. It lasts an hour, and costs \$85, plus \$2.50 postage and handling.

Regards, Fred Ψ

**Join us at the
North American Jew's Harp Festival
August 17, 18 2001
Richland, Oregon USA**

Pictorial Archive

The Jew's Harp Guild Pictorial Archive needs photos of your favorite 'harps. Send (*non-returnable*) pics and info to:

The Jew's Harp Guild Pictorial Archive: c/o Mark D. Poss
924 10th. Ave. N. - Nampa, Idaho 83687



**"It is an Altai Harp from, I believe Siberia."
Peter S. Balkan**

FROM THE WEB

Please help these folks if you can

From: stephane weber

Email: stephane_weber@mailcity.com

I'm looking for any information about jew's harp playing in Ukraine, more precisely in the carpathian mountains, by the Bojken, Lemkos, Huzuls people. Can someone help me with books or contacts? Thanks a lot! stephane weber

From: Frank Kolb Germany

Email: fkolb@khomeus.de

Hi Friends! A new Website is born! <http://www.khomeus.de> will be a good place to get informations about this wonderful instrument. greetz Frank

Name: charles a jacobus , auburndale, florida

Email: bigbandnut@excite.com

Would like to converse with someone who has heard of Red Mckenzie, who played jazz on a comb and wax paper. Great sound!

North American Jew's Harp Festival 1997 Highlights CD

The CD features 20 of the best Public Domain, spontaneous music, or original composition performances of the 1997 festival.

The CD was well accepted at the Molln Congress.



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(US\$60.⁰⁰ per year)

We hope that the additional revenue will enable us to produce a better newsletter.