

THE PLUCK-N-POST



Volume 4 Issue 3

PO Box 92 Sumpter, OR. 97877

Autumn 2000

A Word from the Executive Director

Hello Jew's Harp Friends,

All of us are still "aglow" in the aftermath of the 9th annual North American Jew's Harp Festival held last month in Richland, Oregon. As usual, it exceeded our wildest expectations! The crowd may have been a little smaller than usual, but the group of attending musicians was just about the best ever!

FESTIVAL NEWS:

A great big THANK YOU to all of our sponsors, we appreciate you more than you know!: Eagle Valley Grange; Guyer, Lindley, Bailey & Martin, CPA's; Eagle Valley Communications; Betty's Books; Cliff's Saws & Cycles; Rustic Realty, Inc.; Vic Bobb; Dr. Charles Hoffman; Warren and Janet Karon-Howe; Marilyn's Music Plus; Kathleen Bergland, Attorney; Sumpter Secretarial Services; Mouth Music Press; Bill Gohring Jew's Harp Maker; Roland Bades, Jew's Harp Maker from Austria; Ron Vinson, Artist; Common Sense Computer Services; David Bellinger; Longbranch Grill.

For me, seeing the end of another festival is almost a let-down ... I work on the festival all year long and once its over I always feel like, "Is that it?" But usually as soon as we return home, there will be a letter in the mailbox saying "send info on next year's festival" ... and it starts all over again. Well, this year, in the mailbox we got an extra special nice letter from first time festival attendee, Clive Julianus. His letter really brought home what we are all about. He said, "Just a note of thanks for one of the best experiences of my life. The festival was certainly a turning point in my relationship to music. The encouragement and support I experienced was phenomenal ... thanks to the increased self-confidence from the support of fellow Jew's harp players, seeing their performances ... my playing has improved quite rapidly." Thanks for the letter, Clive, it "made my day"!

We are all looking forward to next year's festival - our 10th! We're planning some extra special things: Valerie Bruesch will be making a quilt made from past festival T-shirts to be raffled off; Ron Vinson will be doing a 10th anniversary Festival T shirt in 4 color. 2001 fest dates will be August 17th and 18th, so mark your calendar now. We hope to hold the festival again at the Eagle Valley Grange Park in Richland, Oregon and confirmation of that will come after the first of the year.

GUILD NEWS:

At the meeting just following the festival, the Jew's Harp Guild voted to increase annual membership dues to \$15 for individuals and we have added a new family rate of \$25. We will be sending out a membership renewal reminder just after the first of the year. We will offer the "renewal special" again this year where you can get a 2000 fest T shirt for \$10 when you renew your Guild membership.

The Guild also decided to start working on another "Festival Highlights CD". This new CD will feature highlights from previous festivals. We hope to have it available by early summer 2001.

OTHER NEWS:

We recently received notice that the **International Jew's Harp Society** is now accepting applications for membership. See article and info on the following pages.

Guild member, Des VanDyke from Amsterdam, recently produced her first CD "ENJOY". The music is full of driving rhythms (rhythmic drums, keyboards, bass and, of course, Jew's harps. For info or to order, write Des at: Desiree VanDijk, Zaanhof 60, 1013XX Amsterdam, The Netherlands ... or email dees@flash.a2000.nl. Well, that's all for this time! I wish all of you a wonderful fall and Holiday season.

Janet Gohring, JHG Executive DirectorΨ

We've just heard from Fred Crane and Franz Kump! that the Congress to be held in Norway in 2001 was unable to be organized. They are going to try for 2002



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from Mark D. Poss

HISTORY

The North American Jew's Harp Festival (NAJHF) is an annual retreat held for and by musicians to celebrate and preserve the art of making and playing the small instrument. Unusual instruments of all types are also welcomed and featured. Held every third weekend of August in the North-eastern Oregon village of Richland, the two day event draws musical pilgrims from around the continent and the world.

More information on the history of the festival may be found at:
<http://www.jewisharpguild.org/festindx.html>

PREFACE

Being the soundman for the festival, I have a unique perspective from my perch on the sound-trailer above the crowd. The drawback is that I don't get to rub elbows with folks as much as I'd like, nor have the opportunity to take adequate notes. So I quietly observe. Keep track of my knobs and notes. And do my best to reconstruct it all later. This report is the result and may be viewed, with all the pics at: <http://www.jewisharpguild.org/fest2000.htm>

The 9th Annual North American Jew's Harp Festival August 18,19 - 2000

To say that Richland, Oregon is remote is an accurate statement. But I refuse to say it's in the middle of nowhere... for the somewhere that it is, is wrapped in natural mountainous beauty and an envelope of silence which is broken only by the sounds of animals; the cry of coyotes, hoots of owls, screeches of night hawks, honks of passing geese. For the last six years a remarkable number of musicians have braved the trials of travel to escape to this location for a weekend of music and comradeship. This year, moderate temperatures, abundant sunshine, and total absence of rain, allowed for a near-perfect outdoor experience.

Unusual Instruments Day

An official total of forty-two musicians performed during the "Unusual Instruments Day" on Friday, and "Jew's Harp Day" on Saturday. I suspect that there were a dozen or more additional players present. Open-mic performances commenced at noon on Friday and continued non-stop until dinner break at five p.m. Amongst those performing were Ray Jacobs of Montana who builds and plays a variety of instruments built primarily, or exclusively, of cardboard. Most notable of these instruments was an acoustic dreadnought guitar which is loud and easily mic'd. Its tone and playability had folks awestruck.

Dave Bellinger (kalimbas@spiritone.com) of Portland, OR., impressed us all with his array of electric kalimbas, and an instrument he calls a Violimba. The Violimba is made from steel-strap(s) on a kalimba shell and is bowed. Its eerie sound is captured by a piezo element. Dave also introduced us to his salad bowl bass and other "found-object" creations. He offered all these instruments for examination and sale at his battery powered "Instrument Petting Zoo."

Musical saws were represented by well known sawyer Allan deLay of Portland, OR. and Rick Myers, also of Portland. Both are virtuosos and delighted the crowd with their sweet-sounding skills. Rick also plays guitar and banjo and provided a great amount of energy throughout the event.

John Palmes (johnpalmes@gci.net) of Juneau, Alaska made the long trek to perform on MouthBow and conduct a mouthbow workshop. He was joined by Jon Faddis of Seattle and Wayland Harman of Boise. Wayland also demonstrated some of his new projects: globular didjeridu, cubular didjeridu, horn-in-a-can water didjeridu, and the "parrot" in-the-mouth microphone.

Of course, our band, The OddTones, also did a set on Saturday which included our song "Water Jar Rock" (a Ball canning jar played against electric guitar and Clackamore/Trump), and a progression for Nose Flute. (<http://www.mouthmusic.com/oddtones/>)

Many other less unusual odd-instruments (autoharp, bones, cigar-box fiddle, djembe, kazoo, washtub bass, etc.) were present among the myriad of guitars, mandolins, fiddles, banjos, accordions, harmonicas and other traditional instruments. Among those performing with these were, Dick Kaiser (the Road Kill Poet) & Craig Hawkins (Pendleton, OR.), Jack Roberts (Goldendale, WA), Jim Sqibb (Nampa, ID), John James (Cheney, WA) and many others.

As the sun set in a vivid red hue from the forest fire smoke that settled in the valleys in the not-so-far distance, Friday continued with Featured Performances by some of the folks already mentioned above. A surprise visit was "cowboy poet" Pat Fielding (Summerville, OR) who recited humorous poems strictly from memory, and his wife who startled us all with some excellent yodeling.

The night closed with the "Star-light Jam" as most folks left the audience to join those on stage. I finally shut down the sound-system at 12:50 a.m. after a curious jam of "Hit the Road Jack" indicated that most folk had run out of steam.

(continued)

Jew's Harp Day

Saturday started off with a group photo and "Band Scramble" sign-up and selection. A "Band Scramble" is a sort of organized jam where interested players throw their names into a hat. Names are then drawn to form a number of bands with six or seven players each. The newly formed bands then disperse to various locations to practice and pick a spokesperson, a band name, and three songs to perform in an hours time. The black headed and footed sheep in the pasture adjoining the park made a slow walk to graze next to the band at the fence. A quail observed the same practice with a steady gaze.

At ten a.m. the call-to-arms is given from stage and each band in turn performs their hurriedly learned arrangements. I am told this is great fun for the musicians, but from the soundman's perspective it is the most challenging aspect of the entire weekend. (If there are any other soundmen out there with this kind of experience mixing on-the-fly so many unusual instruments, I'd love to hear from you!) In most cases the extreme talent of these musicians is obvious at this time, as the performances already have a polish with only an hour of practice.

The sunny day warmed up with Jew's harp performances. A couple of fine trumpists from California, Chris Towne (Nevada City, CA.) and Clive Julianus (Prpltig@aol.com) (Fairfax, CA.), showed innovation and versatility in their sets. Pluck editor and world-known jawharpist, Gordon Frazier of Seattle, played 'harp with several groups throughout the day and gave a short beginner's workshop on stage. He also shared a look at his extensive collection of 'harps with everyone during a relaxed workshop in the cool of shade tree. Again we took a break for dinner at five p.m. (Reasonably priced food provided by the Grange folks from their little cook shack on site.)

A gusty summer breeze picked up as day slid into evening. The sunset still spectacular in the smoky sky. Saturday evening is when the local folks from this mainly agricultural and tourist driven area come to enjoy the only show in town. The parking lot swelled and every spot in or around the area in front of the stage was covered with seat or backside. This small community has always supported and enjoyed our annual visits.

The band scramble bands repeated their morning performances. Then there was a mood-shift as the night's Featured Jew's Harp Performances opened after a short stage presentation of all the kids that had made "Unidentified Musical Instruments" during the "Kids Events" of the weekend.



A new design by Bill Gohring

Clive Julianus opened with a bit of hot improvisation as people got settled then gave up the stage to The OddTones.

Other featured performers were Bill & Janet Gohring (Sumpter, OR.) Larry Hanks (Berkley, CA) Roland Bades (Molln, Austria), and Gordon Frazier. Matt Glasson (alias Mugwump Jizm) of New York City absolutely stunned the crowd with his high energy, theatric performance. I'm not sure what Matt expected from a crowd of this nature, but he tailored his set quite nicely and received a loud and furious round of applause.

As the night grew cooler the music got hotter as we filled the stage with wall-to-wall musicians for what we call the "Grand-Jam." Again it was pushing one in the morning when I threw the last switch and gathered the mics. I then laid my back on the grass in the middle of the park grounds to soak in the milky way and full red moon. Satisfied the world was right I crept into my sleeping bag somewhere near two.

New 'Harp News

One of the things I look forward to every year is examining new designs of 'harps, or those of other cultures that I'd not had a chance to lay my lips on before. Unfortunately there were not many of that description present this year. It was a great pleasure to see and hear Roland Bades (Wimmer) playing multiple (usually four) 'harps. While this may be common in Europe, it is out of the ordinary in North America. I felt fortunate to be tutored in the technique by such an excellent player.

Bill Gohring did introduce us to his newest designs of 'harps. Two of his tiny new creations fit into an extra-small Altoids box with room to spare!! They played as good as they looked, with excellent volume, and incredibly long sustain with very little air required. These could be blow started, and were precisely tuned as usual.

Tying on the Ribbons

The NAJHF is not a large festival and I personally feel it's not destined to be. I refer to it as a retreat, a getaway from the world to concentrate on my art and to share and absorb a common experience with fellow musicians. It is a unique event in many, many ways and one of the most enjoyable I've ever been part of. I felt a certain amount of dread as we descended from the mountains and crept back up to the speed of a fast lane world. MarkΨ

Other Notes:

Jew's Harp makers:

Gohring Jew's Harps

(www.jewsharpguild.org/wgharps.html)

Roland Bades - Wimmer Maultrommeln

(www.maultrommel.at)

Distributors:

Mouth Music Press

(mouthmusic.com)

Other:

Pointillist artist **Ron Vinson**

Jew's Harp greeting cards and prints

(rvinson@eoni.com)

An Invitation to Join the International Jew's Harp Society

At the Third International Jew's Harp Festival and Congress in Molln, June 1998, a special committee met in two sessions to discuss the future of the Jew's harp movement. Participants of this committee were renowned researchers and outstanding performers from all over the world, like Ivan Alexeyev from Sakha-Yakutia/Russian Federation, Phons Bakx from the Netherlands, Anton Bruhin from Switzerland, Fred Crane from the USA, Anon Egeland from Norway, Franz Kumpl from Austria, Rimma Madvarova from Kyrgyzstan, Tran Quang Hai from France, Manfred Russmann from Austria, and Robert Zagretdinov from Bashkortostan/Russian Federation. The board agreed that an international organisation was needed, for communicating and co-ordinating among persons interested in the instrument, and established the basis for one. The organisation is to be called International Jew's Harp Society, Internationale Maultrommel-gesellschaft, Mezhdunarodnoye Obshchestvo Vargana; the equivalent of these names in any other language is to be considered official as well. Official communications are to be in English, and if necessary in Russian. As much as possible, the Internet and e-mail will be used for communications; a special Website will be set up.

It was decided that the initial membership will be offered to all the members of present Jew's harp societies; in the meantime, it was proposed to add the subscribers to the various Jew's harp journals and newsletters. This invitation, in fact, is going out to a large number of persons who have shown an interest in the instrument.

The Fourth International Jew's Harp Festival and Congress has now been scheduled; it will be held in Norway in [2002], most probably in the month of July. We will keep you informed on this important event. The Fifth International Festival-Congress is planned for Amsterdam in 2004. With next year's Congress as a goal, we feel that it is time to take the step of announcing the new society widely, and inviting membership.

For the present, no dues are being asked. However, once the Society gets fully under way, an annual fee of approximately US \$ 15 to 20 will undoubtedly be necessary, to pay for such communications as maintenance of the Website, an annual journal, a newsletter, and a membership directory. For the immediate future, we expect to communicate by e-mail to those who have such an account, and by traditional mail to others. We encourage members to register for an e-mail address if they do not have one (free e-mail is widely available to anyone with an Internet connection).

So here's a chance to be part of the International Jew's Harp Society, and to be informed on what's going on globally with our favourite instrument! All you need to do is fill out the form below, and send the result as a reply, back to the address above. [Traditional mail: All you need to do is fill out the attached form, and mail it to the [listed] address]

Franz Kumpl, Austria, President kumpl@ibm.net
Ivan Alexeyev, Russia, General Secretary
alexeyev@sci.yakutia.ru
Frederick Crane, USA, Publisher of the Jew's harp journal VIM fcrane@lisco.com
August 2000

Please enrol me as a member of the International Jew's Harp Society

Organisation (if applicable):

Comments:

Name:

Address:

Email to: Maultrommel@stn.at

Return to:

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c/o **Österreichischer Maultrommelverein**
Postfach 26,
A-4591 Molln, Austria

VIM 9 – 2000 in review

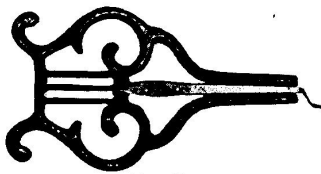
As the new VIM 9 – 2000 slipped from its envelope, I was immediately struck by the full color cover. Editor Frederick Crane has put his new press to work by filling out this issue's 84 pages with color photographs and images, as well as several striking illustrations by Steven Stwalley.

VIM's scholarly mission is continued with updated information on trump related websites, recordings, and printed resources. Articles by Fred, José Luis Pignocchi, and Robert Basara, allow the reader to travel through time and space. From the middle ages to the present. From South America to South-east Asia. Fred's penchant for folklore is exhibited in the wonderful collection of tales entitled "Trolls and Trumps" which feature the fanciful illustrations by Stwalley.

The nine issues of VIM cover trumpdom from 1982 to 2000. Cost is US\$ 9 each, postage-paid worldwide. Contact: VIM - 601 N. White St. - Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641 U.S.A.



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Chris Towne at NAJHF 2000

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